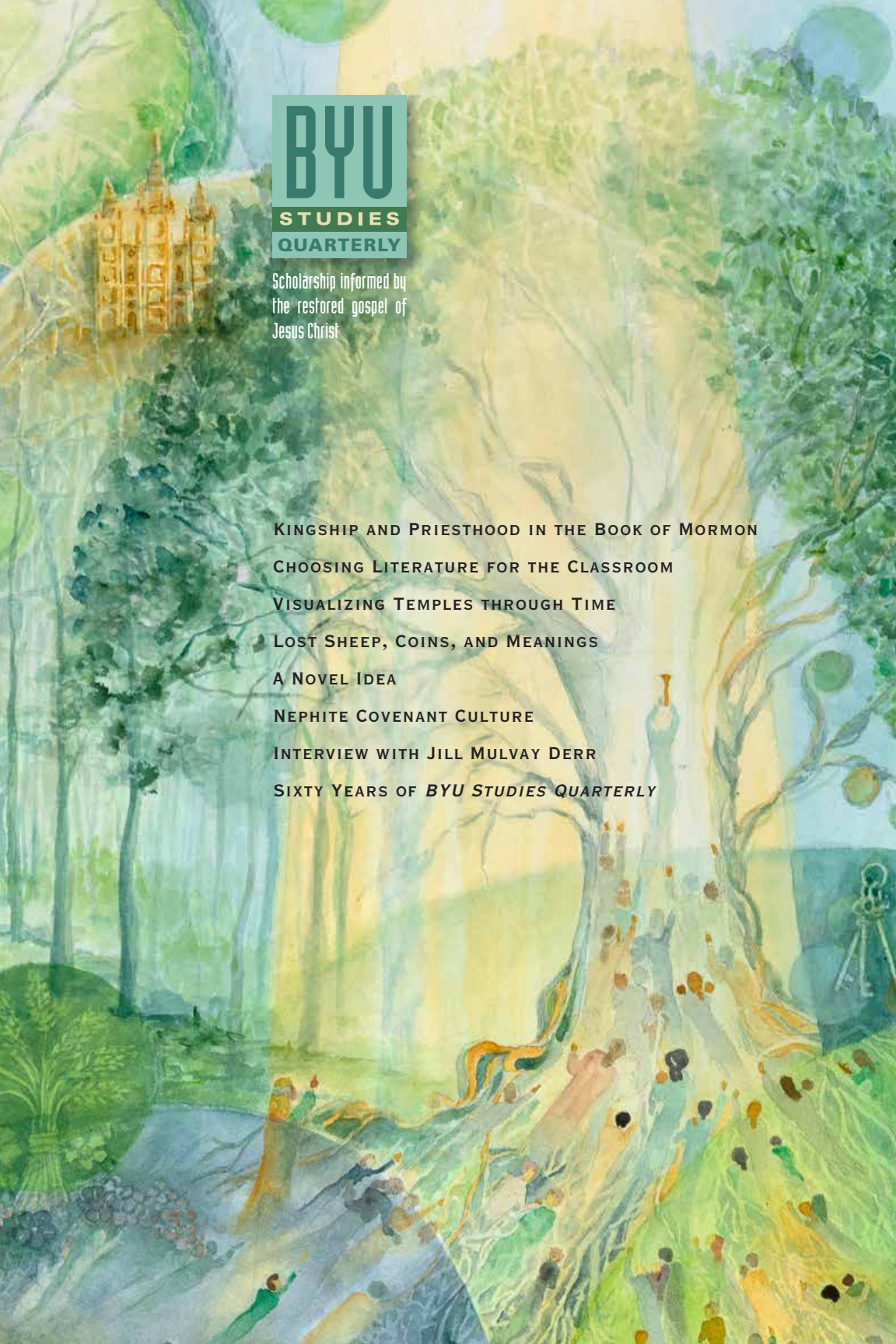

BYU STUDIES QUARTERLY

Scholarship informed by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ

Kingship and Priesthood in the Book of Mormon

Choosing Literature for the Classroom

Visualizing Temples through Time

Lost Sheep, Coins, and Meanings

A Novel Idea

Nephite Covenant Culture

Interview with Jill Mulvay Derr

Sixty Years of *BYU Studies Quarterly*

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Scholarship Informed by the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ

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FIGURE 1. Chris Crowe delivering the Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Faculty Lecture in the Marriott Center on May 25, 2021. All screen captures from the forum assembly courtesy BYUtv.

FIGURE 2. Dan Flavin, untitled (corner piece), 2011, Tate Museum, Liverpool, England. Photograph by Chris Crowe.

A Novel Idea

Chris Crowe

The following is a transcript of a forum address presented by Chris Crowe, recipient of the 2020 Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Faculty Lecturer Award. Crowe is a professor of English at Brigham Young University and an author who writes books for the young-adult market. This forum assembly took place on May 25, 2021.

I hope you'll forgive my blatant display of ignorance, but I'm going to begin today by discussing something I know very little about, then I'll move on to a topic I'm relatively familiar with, and I'll conclude my part of the forum by showing how these experiences, ideas, and movements have influenced—and continue to influence—my own writing.

I've learned most of what I know about art, especially contemporary art, from the time I've spent with my wife, Elizabeth (an accomplished artist herself, with BFA and MFA degrees), walking through museums in the United States and Europe. Over the years, she's been patient with my lowbrow, traditional view of "art," and she's helped me see—and appreciate—the beauty and complexity of most contemporary art. But I have to admit that despite her guidance, I still have a lot to learn.

Here are three brief examples:

In 2011, we spent a day in Liverpool, England, where we toured several museums. One piece I saw in the Tate Museum that day remains especially memorable. It was an untitled work by Dan Flavin, an artist who was, not surprisingly, unfamiliar to me. Elizabeth recognized it immediately (fig. 2), but I was baffled.

How is *this* a work of art?

Figure 3. Félix González-Torres, *"Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.),* candies in variously colored wrappers, endless supply, ©Félix González-Torres. Photograph by Chris Crowe at the Art Institute of Chicago, 2017.

A few years later, as we strolled through the Art Institute of Chicago, we came upon this art installation (fig. 3). The free candy immediately appealed to me, but, despite my wife's artistic contextualization and explanation, I couldn't accept a pile of candy as a work of art.

And not long ago, we visited the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., and entered a room where a contraption in the ceiling dropped a piece of white paper every few seconds (fig. 4). This was, I knew, some kind of art—we were in an art museum, after all—but I didn't have the background knowledge to appreciate it for what it was.

Figure 4. Ann Hamilton, *at hand,* 2001, reinstalled at the Hirshhorn Museum of Art, Baltimore, 2017–20. Photograph by Chris Crowe in Washington, D.C., 2011.

Clearly, to me, anyway, art ain't what it used to be.

When it comes to art, I acknowledge my ignorance, and I understand, sort of, why contemporary, conceptual art often leaves me flat-footed: most of it lacks the defining characteristics, the traditional traits I must have learned somewhere along the way, of what makes art art.

But here's the thing: when I think about my various encounters with what I call nontraditional contemporary art, I have to admit that the three works I just shared with you have generated more thought, discussion, and interest than all the paintings and sculptures I speed-walked past in the world-famous Louvre Museum combined.

My art-appreciation quandary can be explained in a number of ways, but I'd like to explore how my understanding of *genre* might influence my ability to broaden my understanding of contemporary visual and other forms of art.

Genre for a particular thing can be explained as the commonly accepted essential characteristics of that thing. For example, if I ask you to imagine a pencil, you'll very likely envision an image that's similar to what I have in mind: a yellow wooden instrument that's around seven inches long, with a pink eraser on one end and a graphite tip on the other.

Consider now a box of facial tissue. But how do you *know* it's a tissue box? What are its defining characteristics?

It has tissue, you say, and it's a box, and it has a label or brand on its side.

If I remove the last tissue, is it still a tissue box?

Well, it may not hold a tissue, but it has the characteristics of a box of tissue. It has a label on the front, a slot for dispensing tissues, it's made out of thin cardboard, and so on.

But what if I break the box apart? What is it now? How do you know?

What if I flatten it? Is it still a tissue box? At what point does it cease to be a tissue box?

Like a box of facial tissues, most things have defining characteristics, qualities that, especially in writing and literature, help us define or classify things according to a genre. We recognize most works by their defining, generally accepted traits. And while it's nice to know something about genre and what it defines, as a writer I've learned that an understanding of genre can also help artists create or make or perform things: a painting, a poem, a polka, or a prelude, for example.

Important as they are to our understanding of what makes something something, these traits are not usually static. In large or small ways, they often change and evolve over time, and in some cases (like those

three works of art I shared with you), they may have almost none of the defining qualities that would have been expected a century—or even a decade—earlier.

Even something as traditional as a Brigham Young University devotional has changed over time. For decades, the speakers stood behind a pulpit and read from notes; sometime later, they read from teleprompters. Around the turn of the twenty-first century, the format began to include visuals, usually photographs, but then more elaborate graphics and even video. More recently, the speakers have moved off the rostrum to stand on a round stage with images projected directly behind them. We still recognize the gathering as a devotional, and we could quickly, if we wanted to, make a list of essential qualities that define this kind of BYU assembly despite the recent changes it's undergone.

In the last couple of decades, my area of study, young adult literature, has undergone significant, interesting, and exciting genre changes. The traditional work of fiction, what we've always called "novels," has been the centerpiece of YA literature for more than a century. Novels were clearly defined as extended prose narratives, works of fiction that told stories using settings, characters, and dialogue to create a plot for readers to enjoy. Novels had a reliable set of rules, genre traits that readers, writers, and publishers accepted and expected.

But as the twentieth century drew to a close, the YA novel began to change. I don't have time to go into a lot of detail here, but let me give some examples to give you a quick rundown: *Bull Run* had not one or two but sixteen narrators. *Maus,* a long comic book/memoir, was called a graphic novel. *Make Lemonade* was written in articulated lines, not prose paragraphs, and then *Out of the Dust* was composed as a long series of free-verse poems. *Whirligig* blended time, setting, and characters, seemingly at random. Likewise, instead of a singular, unified plot, *Holes* had three distinct story strands, each from a different point in time. *Monster* blended genre—prose, screenplay, and illustration—to tell a single story. In the days before texting, *TTYL* was a novel composed entirely in chatroom instant messages. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* was a hybrid novel: half traditional prose and half wordless illustration. And then *The Arrival* was a novel composed entirely of illustrations—and no words!

And these are only the tip of the literary iceberg.

Nowadays, it appears that traditional genre rules no longer apply, and trying to contain the creative evolution of YA literature is like trying to draw boundaries on water. The traits are fluid and ever-evolving, and sometimes it seems that as soon as someone redefines what a YA novel

is or must be, some author takes that as a challenge to write a book that blurs or obliterates those boundaries.

As a teacher and as a writer, I've followed this evolution of the novel form with great interest, and as a writer who most of the time has no idea of what he's doing, I'm always on the lookout for an approach or a method that will make novel writing easier. And I have to admit that the student in me often wonders, "Exactly how long does a novel *have* to be?" or, in other words, "What's the shortest acceptable form that will still count as a novel?"

Let me illustrate how genre evolution has influenced my writing by telling you about my most recently published novel (I've written several since this one, but they remain—probably with good reason—unpublished).

I like writing historical fiction because it allows me to blend the creative pleasure of writing fiction with the intellectual pleasure of exploring history. A few years ago, I decided I wanted to write a novel set in the 1960s, a complex, turbulent decade in American history, and after researching the '60s, I decided to settle on 1968, a year packed with civil unrest, political turmoil, and heartbreaking assassinations, all taking place while the steady static of the Vietnam War thrummed in the background. I learned that '68 was a turning point in the war for several reasons, not the least of which was the staggering death count. More American soldiers died in Vietnam that year than in all the previous years combined.

In a manner similar to the daily COVID case counts we currently receive, in 1968, newspapers reported the war casualties every Thursday. That year, 16,592 U.S. soldiers died in Vietnam.

When I had finished my research, I started writing the story of a seventeen-year-old boy dealing with conflict at home complicated by the specter of Vietnam. I wanted this young man, a kid who would soon be draft bait, to be forced to confront all kinds of crises and ultimately have to sacrifice for someone he loved more than he loved himself.

With all this in my head, I pounded out a first page, then a chapter, then another chapter, but as the novel grew, so did my sense of despair. My story was boring!

That's a terrifying revelation for a writer, and it's also a sign that the book has some undiagnosed fatal flaw.

Knowing that first drafts are usually flush with fatal flaws, I pushed ahead, but as the pages piled up, so did the boredom, and I knew that if I couldn't fix whatever was wrong, I'd have to dump the entire project.

I woke up early one morning, stewing about this stupid book and what I could do to save it. One of the few things I liked about it was the odd appearance of the number 17. My main character was a seventeen-year-old born on May 17. His father had played college football and had worn the number 17. I liked how that prime number had worked its way into my story, and I wondered if seventeen might somehow be the key to fixing my novel.

But how?

Well, maybe I could divide the book into seventeen sections. Or maybe the story could be told from seventeen different perspectives.

What else? Haiku have seventeen syllables: five in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third. Could I use that? Maybe a haiku epigraph could head each chapter, or maybe the main character could write haiku messages to his girlfriend, or maybe . . . this was going nowhere. Thinking about numbers usually isn't a way to solve a novel problem.

But then, in my desperation, I wondered, was 1968 divisible by 17? Turns out it wasn't, but even if it had been, what could I have done with that?

What else?

The death count: 16,592. Was *that* divisible by 17?

Turns out it was: 16,592 divided by 17 was 976!

Nice coincidence, but how does that help me revive a dying manuscript?

After a bit more stewing, I decided to start over and to write a novel contained by a syllable count of 16,592, one syllable for every American soldier who died in 1968.

I had no confidence that it would work: with fewer than seventeen thousand syllables to work with, I'd have to leave out so much novel-ish detail that my book might fail simply because its many gaps would make it impossible for it to feel or read like a novel.

Let me read you the first page so you can see what I came up with:

There's something tidy
in seventeen syllables,
a haiku neatness

that leaves craters of
meaning between the lines but
still communicates

what matters most. I
don't have the time or the space
to write more, so I'll

write what needs to be
remembered and leave it to
you to fill in the

gaps if you feel like
it. In 1968,
sixteen thousand five

hundred ninety-two
American soldiers died
in Vietnam, and

I'm dedicating
one syllable to each soul
as I record my

own losses suffered
in 1968, a
year like no other.

The challenge of writing and revising an entire novel in 976 haiku stanzas breathed life into my dead manuscript, and eventually it turned out that at least one publisher considered it a "novel."

So how did all the strange modern art, the thinking about what makes a tissue box a tissue box, and those unusual YA novels influence me? Well, if I hadn't already been familiar with all the genre-bending, boundary-blurring artistic work that came before, I couldn't possibly have conceived of something like this weird little haiku novel.

My current book project is a cousin to my haiku novel. After learning so much about the Vietnam War era, I wanted to write another novel, one that explores how the tragedy of a young man declared MIA, missing in action, affects not just his family but his entire community. And I wanted to figure out a way to have the Vietnam draft lottery play a role in the story.

I also wanted to write this novel in a nontraditional format; I wondered how many genre traits I could leave out of a novel and still have it be a novel.

Could I write a story that approximated an impressionist painting? Could I use broad, vague brush strokes that omit essential, traditional elements of a novel? Could I trust my readers to fill in the gaps? Could I ignore chronology? Could I write a story where the main character, the young man who would eventually be declared MIA, never appears, is never even named?

While I was poking around for a method to this project's madness, I read a novelly kind of book published in 1915, Edgar Lee Masters's

Spoon River Anthology. That book got me thinking that maybe I could write my novel in the form of free-verse poems written/spoken by family members and friends left behind by this MIA soldier.

And because I was already appropriating one American classic, I decided that I might as well make it two, so I also used the title and character names from Shirley Jackson's 1948 short story, "The Lottery," in my story.

This project is far from complete. My current draft has about 115 poems from 30 different characters, and despite its current lack of polish, I like how it's shaping up.

I'll conclude my lecture by sharing with you a brief excerpt from this novel experiment, but rather than read it myself, I've enlisted the support of nine kindhearted former students (fig. 5), who will read the roles of nine characters from *Lottery*. As you watch and listen, I invite you to think about genre and your expectations of what a novel must be and how boundaries can be bent, and most of all, I ask you to consider Dan Flavin's lightbulb in a corner to see if it sheds any light on the potential of my work-in-progress to one day be some sort of novel.

Thank you for being such a kind audience.

Now, on to *Lottery*.

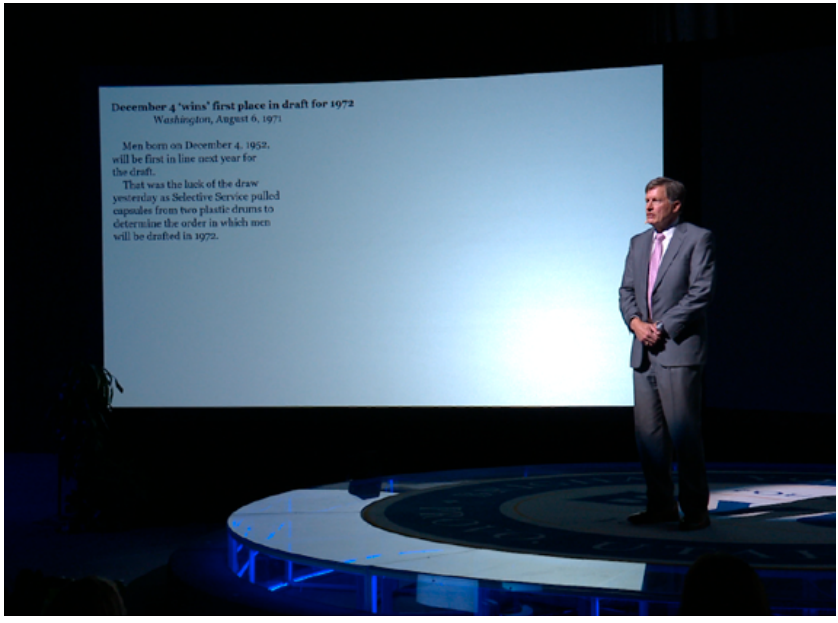
Figure 5. Chris Crowe and former students who read the roles from his novel *The Lottery* during the forum. Photograph by Laura Holt.

December 4 "wins" first place in draft for 1972

Washington, August 6, 1971

Men born on December 4, 1952, will be first in line next year for the draft.

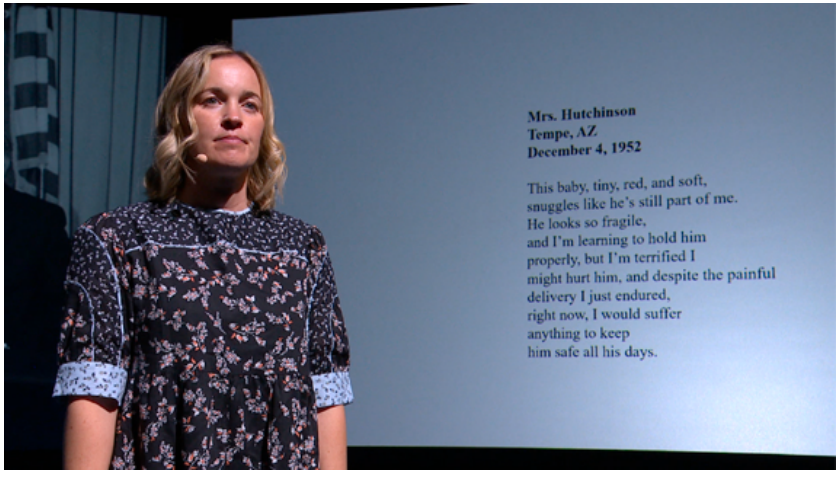
That was the luck of the draw yesterday as Selective Service pulled capsules from two plastic drums to determine the order in which men will be drafted in 1972.



Chris Crowe

Mrs. Hutchinson
Tempe, AZ
December 4, 1952

This baby, tiny, red, and soft,
snuggles like he's still part of me.
He looks so fragile,
and I'm learning to hold him
properly, but I'm terrified I
might hurt him, and despite the painful
delivery I just endured,
right now, I would suffer
anything to keep
him safe all his days.



Katie Irion

Brad Downing

We were born on the same day,
he and I, and
I'm older by a few hours.
We joked that I'm his big brother
even though he's almost a foot taller than
I am. He was the new kid,
and we rode the same
bus to McKemy Jr. High every morning.
He was tall and skinny back then—
and awkward.

"I'm Brad," I told him when
we shared the sidewalk waiting for the
bus that hot August morning.
He said he was from California.
His dad worked in Phoenix.
He had a younger brother and a sister.
He'd never been in Arizona before.
What he didn't say, but what I
could tell, was this:
he was scared to death.

Washington Pearce

Twyla

that boy he didn't
tease me like the others did
he was kind to me

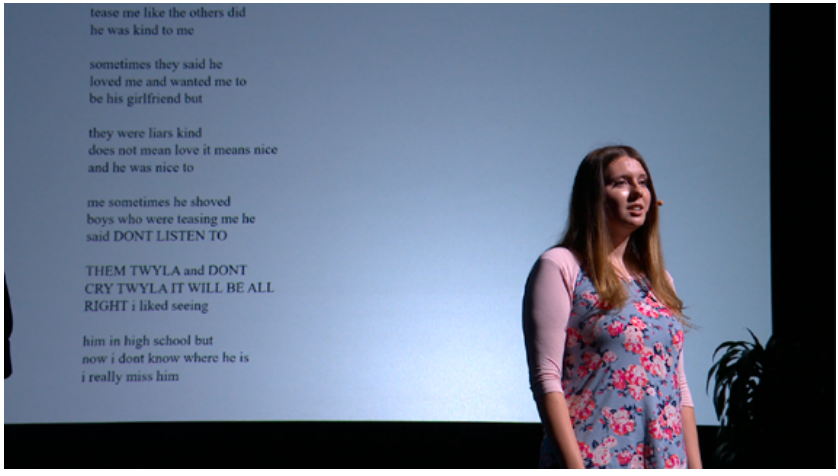
sometimes they said he
loved me and wanted me to
be his girlfriend but

they were liars kind
does not mean love it means nice
and he was nice to

me sometimes he shoved
boys who were teasing me he
said DONT LISTEN TO

THEM TWYLA and DONT
CRY TWYLA IT WILL BE ALL
RIGHT i liked seeing

him in high school but
now i dont know where he is
i really miss him

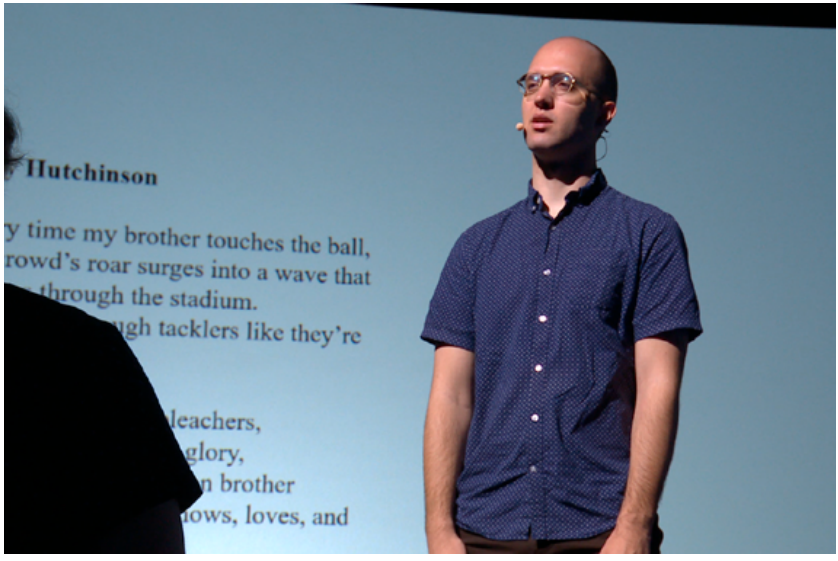


Madelynn Jones

Davy Hutchinson

Every time my brother touches the ball,
the crowd's roar surges into a wave that
crashes through the stadium.
He breaks through tacklers like they're
wooden puppets.

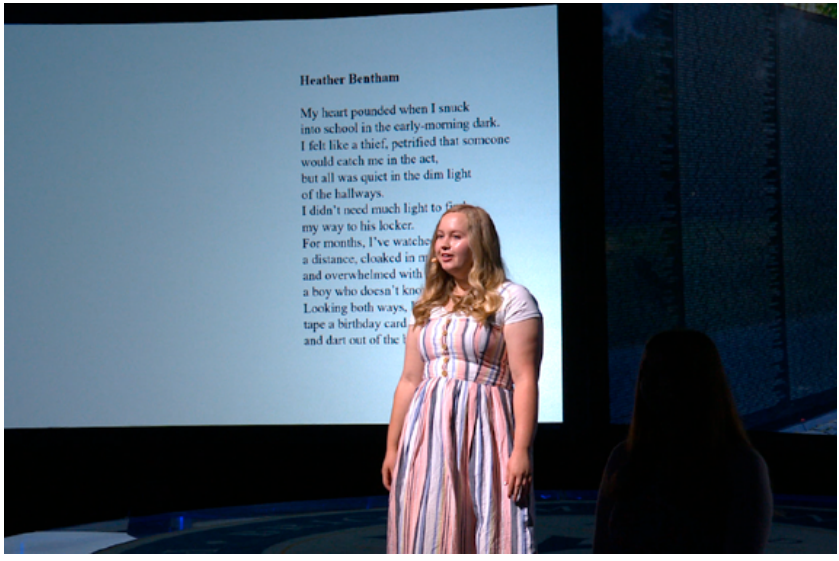
Watching from the bleachers,
I bask in his reflected glory,
proud to be the freshman brother
to the guy everyone knows, loves, and
cheers for.



Jeremy Holbrook

Heather Bentham

My heart pounded when I snuck
into school in the early-morning dark.
I felt like a thief, petrified that someone
would catch me in the act,
but all was quiet in the dim light
of the hallways.
I didn't need much light to find
my way to his locker.
For months, I've watched him from
a distance, cloaked in my shyness
and overwhelmed with love for
a boy who doesn't know I exist.
Looking both ways, I quickly
taped a birthday card to his locker
and darted out of the building.



Ellie Smith

Brad Downing

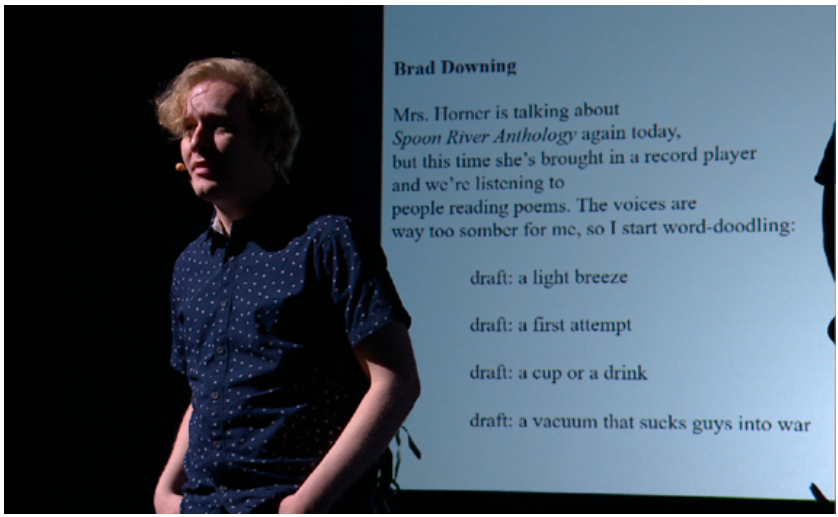
Mrs. Horner is talking about
Spoon River Anthology again today,
but this time she's brought in a record player
and we're listening to
people reading poems. The voices are
way too somber for me, so I start word-doodling:

draft: a light breeze

draft: a first attempt

draft: a cup or a drink

draft: a vacuum that sucks guys into war



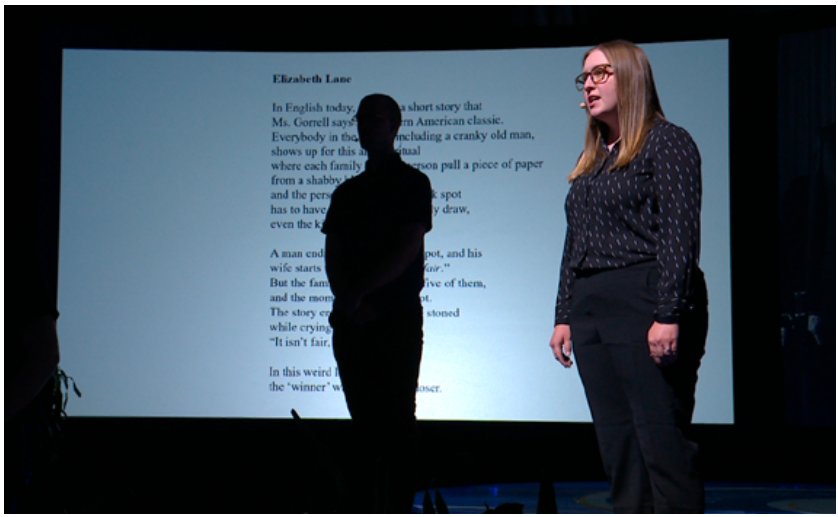
Washington Pearce

Elizabeth Lane

In English today, we read a short story that
Ms. Gorrell says is a modern American classic.
Everybody in the village, including a cranky old man,
shows up for this annual ritual
where each family has one person pull a piece of paper
from a shabby black box,
and the person who gets the black spot
has to have everyone in his family draw,
even the kids.

A man ends up with the black spot, and his
wife starts whining: "It wasn't *fair.*"
But the family has to draw, all five of them,
and the mom gets the black spot.
The story ends with her getting stoned
while crying out
"It isn't fair, it isn't right."

In this weird lottery,
the "winner"
was actually the loser.

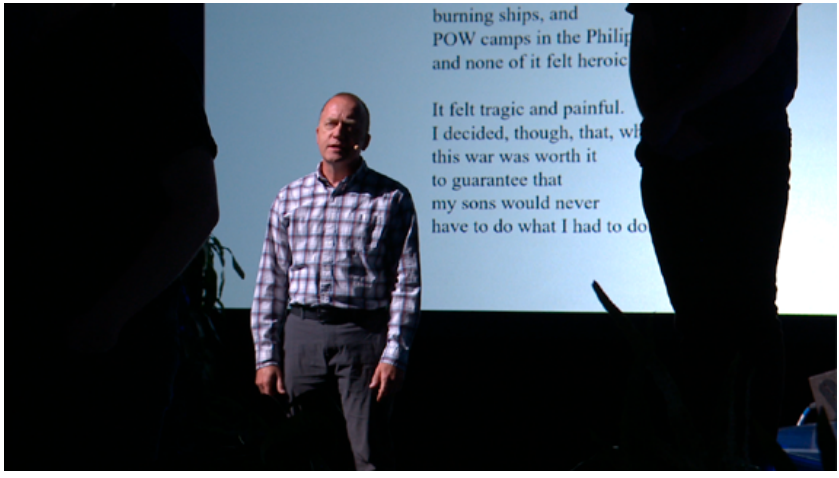


Amy Banks

Mr. Hutchinson

After Pearl Harbor, we didn't think,
we just enlisted, swept up in the
call to serve our country, and
before I knew it,
I was on a Navy ship in the
middle of the South Pacific.
I saw tropical storms,
burning ships, and
POW camps in the Philippines,
and none of it felt heroic.

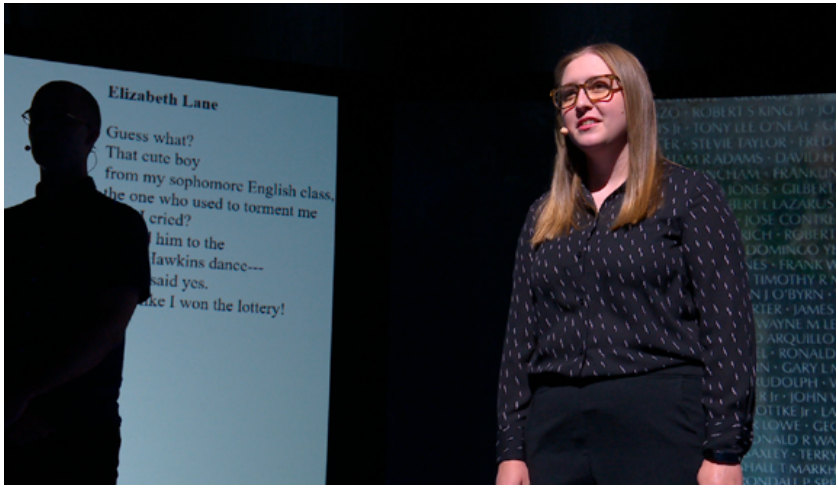
It felt tragic and painful.
I decided, though, that, whatever it cost,
this war was worth it
to guarantee that
my sons would never
have to do what I had to do.



Jon Ostenson

Elizabeth Lane

Guess what?
That cute boy
from my sophomore English class,
the one who used to torment me
until I cried?
I asked him to the
Sadie Hawkins dance—
and he said yes.
I feel like I won the lottery!



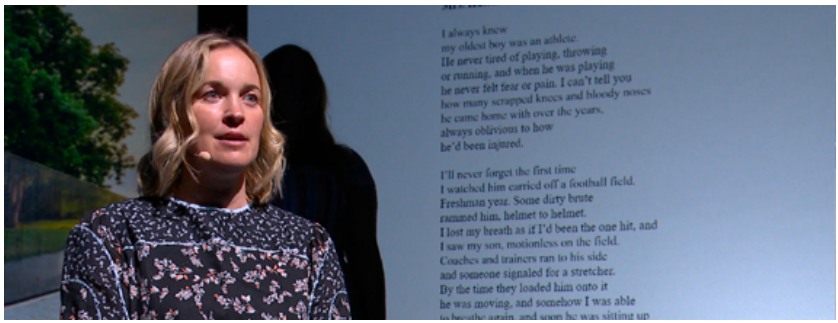
Amy Banks

Mrs. Hutchinson

I always knew
my oldest boy was an athlete.
He never tired of playing, throwing
or running, and when he was playing
he never felt fear or pain. I can't tell you
how many scraped knees and bloody noses
he came home with over the years,
always oblivious to how
he'd been injured.

I'll never forget the first time
I watched him carried off a football field.
Freshman year. Some dirty brute
rammed him, helmet to helmet.
I lost my breath as if I'd been the one hit, and
I saw my son, motionless on the field.
Coaches and trainers ran to his side
and someone signaled for a stretcher.
By the time they loaded him onto it
he was moving, and somehow I was able
to breathe again, and soon he was sitting up
and talking to the trainer and then standing up
and telling the coach to let him back in the game.
Thank God the coach sent him back to the bench
where he sat and pouted until the game was over.

But the images of my poor boy flat on the field and being
carried off on a stretcher, they haunt me still.



Katie Irion

Elizabeth Lane

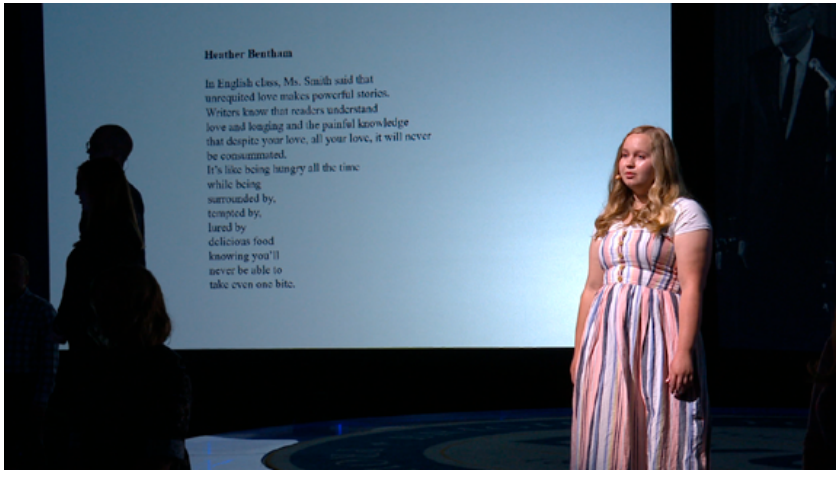
I used to hate him, you know.
He teased and tormented me endlessly
in our sophomore English class.
Some days my tears spilled over before
I could escape into the hallway,
but a year later, he changed, grew into his body,
I guess, but in the right way. Less foolish, more kind.
And I saw in him a sensitivity that had been hidden
beneath his stupid sophomore veneer.

He had always been easy to look at, but
somehow he also became easy to love.

Amy Banks

Heather Bentham

In English class, Ms. Smith said that
unrequited love makes powerful stories.
Writers know that readers understand
love and longing and the painful knowledge
that despite your love, all your love, it will never
be consummated.
It's like being hungry all the time
while being
surrounded by,
tempted by,
lured by
delicious food,
knowing you'll
never be able to
take even one bite.

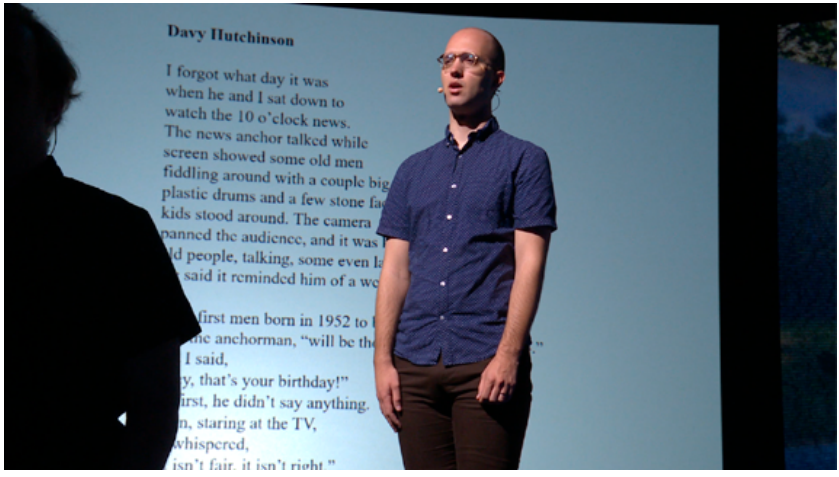


Ellie Smith

Davy Hutchinson

I forgot what day it was
when he and I sat down to
watch the 10 o'clock news.
The news anchor talked while the
screen showed some old men
fiddling around with a couple big
plastic drums and a few stone-faced
kids stood around. The camera
panned the audience, and it was kids and
old people, talking, some even laughing.
He said it reminded him of a weird short story.

"The first men born in 1952 to be drafted,"
said the anchorman, "will be those born on December 4."
and I said,
"Hey, that's your birthday!"
At first, he didn't say anything.
Then, staring at the TV,
he whispered,
"It isn't fair, it isn't right."



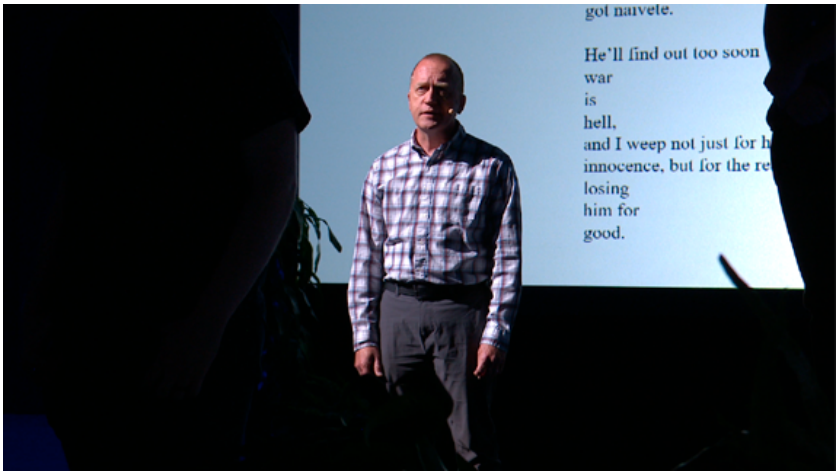
Jeremy Holbrook

Mr. Hutchinson

When he left, I wept.
Not that he saw, I made sure of that, but
watching him get on that bus tore
my heart.

Now I understand why my mother cried
when I went away to war, and
why my father seemed so distant.
The young soldier that was me looked ahead with
faith in the system, in the cause, and with a bit of
patriotism.
I'm proud my boy has that, but he's also
got naivete.

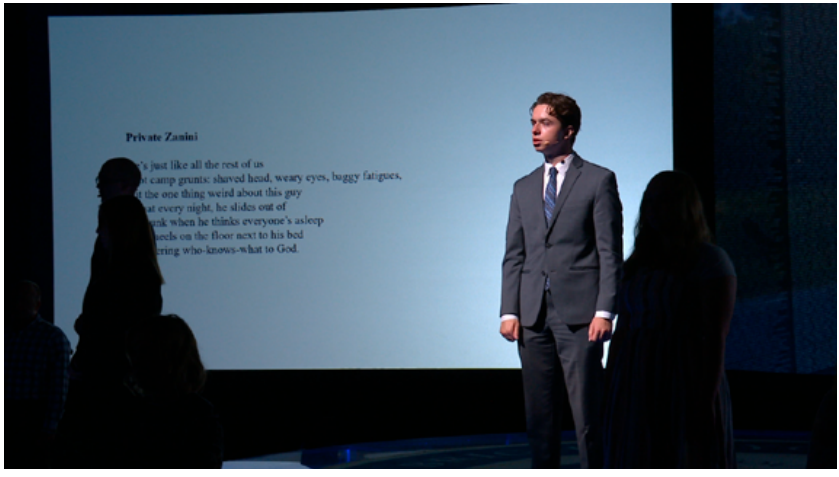
He'll find out too soon why they say
war
is
hell,
and I weep not just for his loss of
innocence, but for the real risk of
losing
him for
good.



Jon Ostenson

Private Zanini

He's just like all the rest of us
boot camp grunts: shaved head, weary eyes, baggy fatigues,
but the one thing weird about this guy
is that every night, he slides out of
his bunk when he thinks everyone's asleep
and kneels on the floor next to his bed
whispering who-knows-what to God.



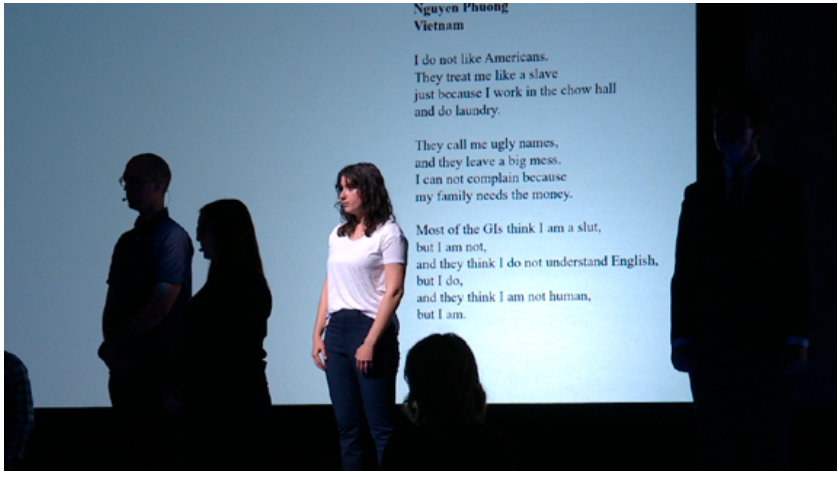
Hale Croft

Nguyen Phuong
Vietnam

I do not like Americans.
They treat me like a slave
just because I work in the chow hall
and do laundry.

They call me ugly names,
and they leave a big mess.
I cannot complain because
my family needs the money.

Most of the GIs think I am a slut,
but I am not,
and they think I do not understand English,
but I do,
and they think I am not human,
but I am.



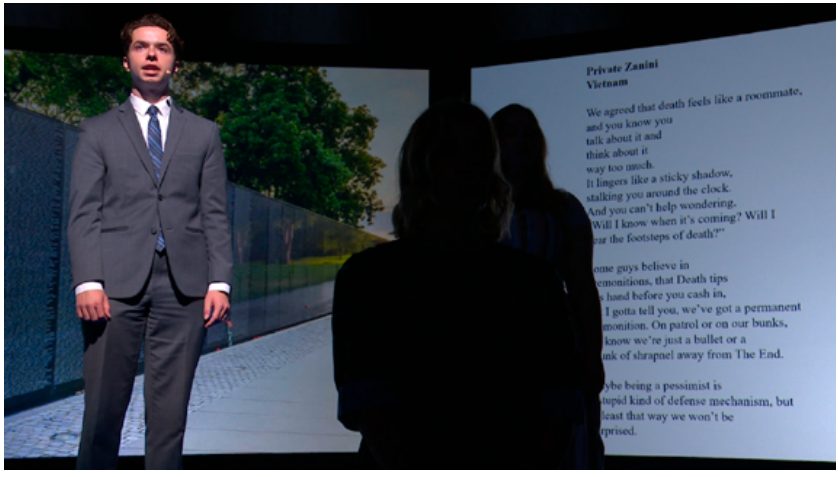
Rebecca Cazanave

Private Zanini
Vietnam

We agreed that Death feels like a roommate,
and you know you
talk about it and
think about it
way too much.
It lingers like a sticky shadow,
stalking you around the clock.
And you can't help wondering,
"Will I know when it's coming? Will I
hear the footsteps of Death?"

Some guys believe in
premonitions, that Death tips
His hand before you cash in,
but I gotta tell you, we've got a permanent
premonition. On patrol or on our bunks,
we know we're just a bullet or a
chunk of shrapnel away from The End.

Maybe being a pessimist is
a stupid kind of defense mechanism, but
at least that way we won't be
surprised.



Hale Croft

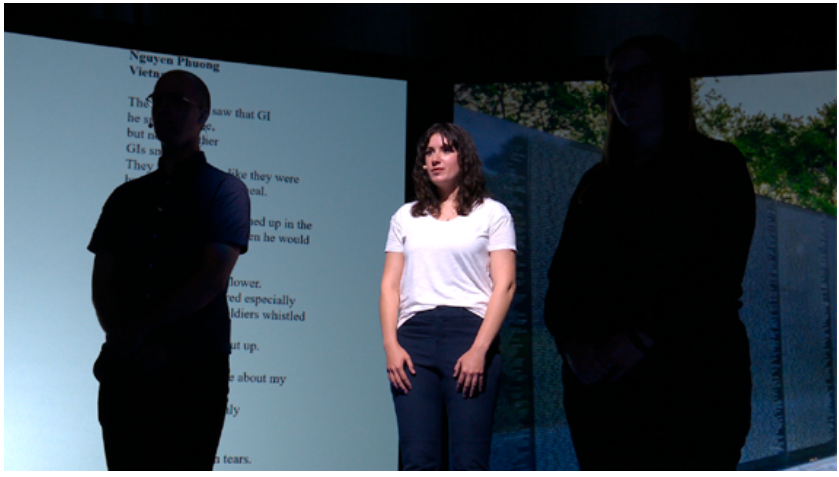
Nguyen Phuong
Vietnam

The first time I saw that GI
he smiled at me,
but not like other
GIs smiled.
They smiled at me like they were
hungry and I was the meal.

Sometimes when I cleaned up in the
chow hall after he'd eaten he would
thank me.

Once he gave me a flower.
That made me turn red especially
when all the other soldiers whistled
and yelled.
But he made them shut up.

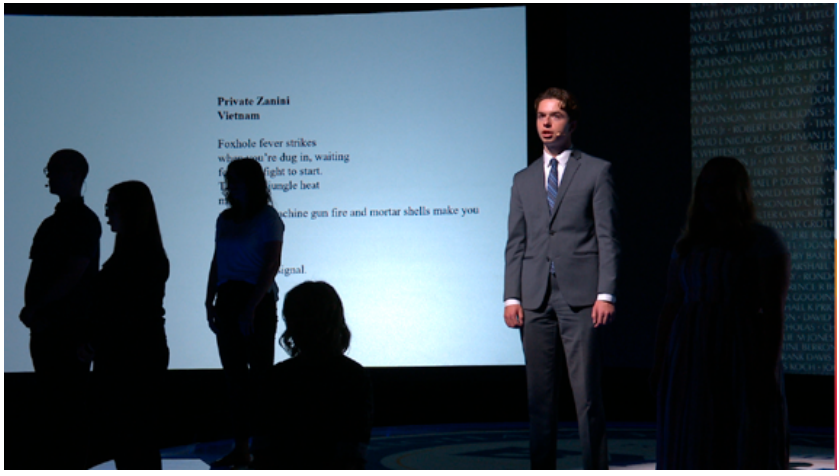
One time he asked me about my
family.
I could not answer only
cry.
He said sorry and
wiped away his own tears.



Rebecca Cazanave

Private Zanini
Vietnam

Foxhole fever strikes
when you're dug in, waiting
for a firefight to start.
The damp jungle heat
makes you
sweat; the machine-gun fire and mortar shells make you
shiver.
The cure?
Daylight and
the all-clear signal.



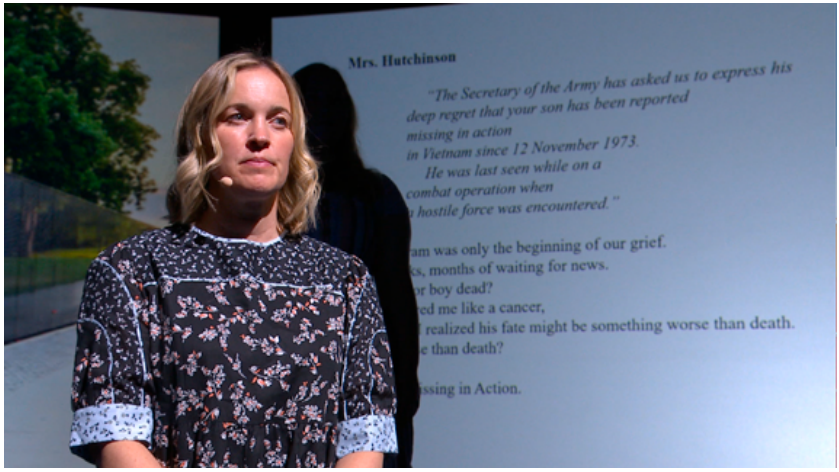
Hale Croft

Mrs. Hutchinson

> *"The Secretary of the Army has asked us to express his*
> *deep regret that your son has been reported*
> *missing in action*
> *in Vietnam since 12 November 1973.*
> *He was last seen while on a*
> *combat operation when*
> *a hostile force was encountered."*

That telegram was only the beginning of our grief.
Days, weeks, months of waiting for news.
Was my poor boy dead?
Worry gnawed me like a cancer,
and in time I realized his fate might be something worse than death.
What's worse than death?

Missing in Action.



Katie Irion

Elizabeth Lane

missing in action
missing in action missing
in action missing

in action missing
in action missing in act
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ing in action miss

ing in action miss
ing in action missing in
action missing in

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missing in action

Amy Banks

Davy Hutchinson

I never minded
living in his shadow.
But now,
now that
shadow is
longer and
darker.

Jeremy Holbrook

Brad Downing

If you had asked me who,
of all the guys who went to 'Nam,
was the most likely to return a war
hero, I would have said him.
And I would be half right.
He 100% is a war hero, but
he has not
returned.

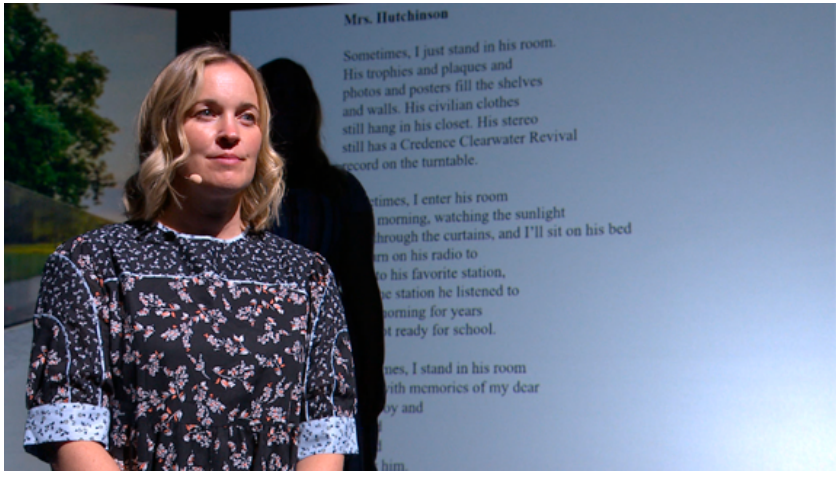
Washington Pearce

Mrs. Hutchinson

Sometimes, I just stand in his room.
His trophies and plaques and
photos and posters fill the shelves
and walls. His civilian clothes
still hang in his closet. His stereo
still has a Credence Clearwater Revival
record on the turntable.

Sometimes, I enter his room
in the morning, watching the sunlight
filter through the curtains, and I'll sit on his bed
and turn on his radio to
listen to his favorite station,
the same station he listened to
every morning for years
as he got ready for school.

Sometimes, I stand in his room
awash with memories of my dear
sweet boy and
cry and
cry and
cry for him.



Katie Irion

Twyla

sometimes at night i
remember him from school days
and it makes me real

sad so i look at
his picture in my yearbook
sometimes and i cry

a little i wish
i knew where he went i wish
he would come back home

Madelynn Jones

Elizabeth Lane
Washington, DC

I brought my children, grown now,
to DC to see the sights.
The city overflows with
history, museums, and monuments,
and we saw them all.

On our last day on the Mall,
we made our way to the
Vietnam
Veterans
Memorial
Wall.
Walking downhill, seeing the wall of names
rise higher,
I felt a growing sadness,
a sense of loss long buried but hardly forgotten.

One of my daughters noticed my pace had slowed,
touched my elbow, and moved on, leaving me alone to
search for his name.

It had been more than 40 years,
and my life had gone its own way.
I'd had real joy and real sorrow
in those decades, but I was not prepared
for the emotion that swamped me
when I saw his name and ran my fingers
over the letters carved in black granite.
All the grief flooded back, fresh and sudden,
as I leaned against the wall silently sobbing
over his loss—and mine.

Amy Banks

Lost Sheep, Lost Coins, and Lost Meanings

Jenny Rebecca Rytting

Three of the best known and most loved of Jesus's parables occur together in the fifteenth chapter of Luke as a response to the Pharisees' disapproval of Jesus's association with sinners: the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin (also known as the lost drachma or lost groat), and the lost (or prodigal) son.[1] In the teaching and preaching traditions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, these parables (especially the first two) have primarily been interpreted as a call for missionary work, particularly reactivation. For example, President David O. McKay suggested that the three parables represent different ways of getting lost: the sheep stands for those who wander from the fold unwittingly; the coin, for those who are lost through the carelessness or neglect of leaders; and the son, for those who rebel.[2] In the

1. The Gospel of Matthew instead records the parable of the lost sheep in the context of God's love for little children (Matt. 18:12–14); the other two are unique to Luke. Brad H. Young (following Robert Lindsey and David Flusser) speculates that the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin originally appeared alongside the call of the publican Levi (later the Apostle Matthew) to follow Jesus. Brad H. Young, *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 188 n. 1, 190. Indeed, the questions posed in Matthew 9:11, Mark 2:16, and Luke 5:30 are nearly identical to the complaint recorded in Luke 15:2.

2. David O. McKay, in *One Hundred Fifteenth Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1945), 120–23. James E. Talmage had already written about the wandering of the sheep, the "custodian's neglect" of the coin, and the deliberate choice of the son. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1922), 298. See also J. F. McFadyen, who mentions ignorance, negligence, and free choice in *The Message of*

Ensign article "Rescuing the Lost: Counsel for Parents and Leaders," Roy Bean explains how these parables demonstrate "three separate options for *how* the rescue can be carried out."[3] And even the *Come, Follow Me—For Primary* manual asks the teacher to "testify that these parables teach that God wants us to help people who are lost come back to Him."[4] The charge to Church members, then, is to join those seeking diligently until the lost sheep and coins are found and to watch and wait with open arms and hearts for prodigals to return.[5]

However, in the April 2016 general conference, then-President Dieter F. Uchtdorf suggested that there may be another level of meaning to the parable of the lost sheep:

> Over the centuries, this parable has traditionally been interpreted as a call to action for us to bring back the lost sheep and to reach out to those who are lost. While this is certainly appropriate and good, I wonder if there is more to it.
>
> Is it possible that Jesus's purpose, first and foremost, was to teach about the work of the Good Shepherd?

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the Parables (London: Clarke, 1933), 142; George A. Buttrick, who speaks of "weak will and heedlessness," "another's fault or the mischances of life," and "calculated self-will" in *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1930), 180; and William Barclay, who writes, "The coin was lost because someone lost it. . . . The sheep was lost because of its foolishness. . . . The son was lost because he quite deliberately took his own way," in *And Jesus Said: A Handbook on the Parables of Jesus* (1952; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 185, emphasis removed.

3. Roy Bean, "Rescuing the Lost: Counsel for Parents and Leaders," *Ensign* 47, no. 1 (January 2017): 59.

4. *Come, Follow Me—For Primary: New Testament 2019,* May 6–12, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-primary-new-testament-2019/18?lang=eng. The older manual it replaces likewise says the object of this lesson is "to help each child have the desire to help those who are less active return to full activity in The Church of Jesus Christ." "Lesson 19: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son," in *Primary 7: New Testament* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 63–65.

5. See Brent H. Nielson, "Waiting for the Prodigal," *Ensign* 45, no. 5 (May 2015): 103. Elder Mark E. Petersen similarly says, "The Savior expects that we will participate in a rescue operation." Mark E. Petersen, in *One Hundred Twenty-Fourth Semi-annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), 74. See also N. Eldon Tanner, "Search for the Wanderers," *Ensign* 1, no. 6 (June 1971): 59–61; Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Restoring the Lost Sheep," *Ensign* 14, no. 5 (May 1984): 39–41; Ben B. Banks, "Feed My Sheep," *Ensign* 29, no. 11 (November 1999): 9–11; Thomas S. Monson, "Ponder the Path of Thy Feet," *Ensign* 44, no. 11 (November 2014): 86–88; and Gary E. Stevenson, "Shepherding Souls," *Ensign* 48, no. 11 (November 2018): 110–13.

> Is it possible that He was testifying of God's love for His wayward children?
>
> Is it possible that the Savior's message was that God is fully aware of those who are lost—and that He will find them, that He will reach out to them, and that He will rescue them?[6]

The answer to these rhetorical questions is, of course, a resounding "yes!" In addition to President Uchtdorf's apostolic insight, this interpretation of the parable of the lost sheep in fact has a long tradition in patristic and medieval writings, as this essay will show. Jerome (c. 347–420) was the first to connect the parable with the title Good Shepherd from John 10:11–18, but Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310–67) and Ambrose (c. 340–97) had already established the allegorical reading of the parable with Christ as the man with one hundred sheep.[7] Looking at such readings opens up this parable, along with its sister parable of the lost coin, in new—or rather old but forgotten—ways.

As it happens, all of the biblical parables were read allegorically from at least the second century, as shown in commentaries by Irenaeus (c. 130–202), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215), Origen (184/85–253/54), and others. Although Origen has been called the "father of allegorical

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6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "He Will Place You on His Shoulders and Carry You Home," *Ensign* 46, no. 5 (May 2016): 102. President Uchtdorf was by no means the first to make this connection: Elder David B. Haight said, "The Savior's analogy of the lost sheep vividly portrays the concern he has for all, but especially those that might stray. The Savior's mission is to try to save all." David B. Haight, "Feed the Flock," *Ensign* 5, no. 5 (May 1975): 12. Elder M. Russell Ballard adds, "Why did Jesus teach these parables [in Luke 15]? He wanted us to know that none of us will ever be so lost that we cannot find our way again through His Atonement and His teachings." M. Russell Ballard, "That the Lost May Be Found," *Ensign* 42, no. 5 (May 2012): 100. And a representative retelling for children says, "Jesus Christ is like the shepherd in the story, and we are like the sheep. . . . That is why the scriptures call Him the Good Shepherd." Margo Mae, "The Shepherd and the Lost Sheep," *Friend* 43, no. 6 (June 2013): 36. Also, while the Primary and Sunday School *Come, Follow Me* manuals focus on reactivation, the individual study guide notes both that "we all need rescuing" and that "we can all participate in the rescue." *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families: New Testament 2019,* May 6–12, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-new-testament-2019/18?lang=eng. Furthermore, even talks that use this parable to focus on the rescuing role of Church members or leaders (as does Elder Haight's above) often combine it with references both to scriptural passages that identify the Lord as a shepherd, or *the* Shepherd, such as Psalm 23, John 10, and Alma 5, and to those that call on others to be shepherds, such as Ezekiel 34, John 21, and 1 Peter 5:2–4. See, for example, L. Tom Perry, "Bring Souls to Me," *Ensign* 39, no. 5 (May 2009): 109–12.

7. Stephen L. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 129.

interpretation in the Christian Church," he attributes many of his explications to church "elders," suggesting an already established exegetical practice.[8] Later patristic, medieval, and early modern writers built upon these allegorical interpretations and included them in glosses on the Bible (roughly the equivalent of the footnotes and Bible Dictionary in editions issued by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) and in sermon collections meant both for preaching and for private study. It was not until the late nineteenth century that these readings fell out of favor.[9] The mid-twentieth-century biblical scholars Charles H. Dodd and Joachim Jeremias went so far as to claim that the allegorical interpretations of the parables of the sower and of the wheat and tares recorded in the synoptic Gospels[10] were not in fact part of Christ's teachings but based on traditions that had developed after his death.[11]

However, the English word "parable" is essentially a transliteration of the Greek πάράβολή (*parabolē*), which means "comparison," "analogy," or "juxtaposition" (literally, "to set beside"), and suggests a correspondence of literal and symbolic meanings. In their study of New Testament parables, Jay A. Parry and Donald W. Parry affirm that the "principle of comparison is a major feature of Christ's parables" and that things, people, animals, and events in them "may serve as symbols of eternal

8. M. L. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe, A.D. 500 to 900,* rev. ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957), 65; *Origen: Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke,* trans. Joseph T. Lienhard, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, vol. 94 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 138; Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 59.

9. The seminal work in rejecting the allegorical readings of biblical parables is Adolf Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu,* 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Sieback, 1888–99); he was followed by Charles H. Dodd, especially *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet, 1948), and Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus,* trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: Scribner, 1955). Matthew Black complains that Jülicher's total rejection of allegory "has dominated [biblical parables'] interpretation almost as tyrannically as the allegorical method of the earlier centuries." Matthew Black, "The Parables as Allegory," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 42 (1960): 275. Implicit in his complaint, however, is a tacit agreement that medieval allegorical exegesis was also "tyrannical."

10. Matthew 13:18–23, 36–43; Mark 4:13–20; Luke 8:11–15; compare Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7.

11. Dodd, *Parables,* 2–3; Jeremias, *Parables,* 10–11, 52–70. Jeremias further blames allegorization for "centuries of distortion and ill-usage" that covered the parables with "a thick layer of dust" (16–17). For an overview of the history of parable interpretation, see Warren S. Kissinger, *The Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography,* ATLA Bibliography Series, vol. 4 (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979).

truths."[12] Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Richard Trench says that parables differ from allegories "in form rather than in essence" (in that the parable compares two things while allegory blends them together, though this difference seems trifling). Also, while Alexander Bruce objects to allegorization on the grounds that it robs parables of "human pathos" and real-life immediacy, the widely acknowledged allegory of the Good Shepherd pulls at the heartstrings with "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15).[13] Besides, whether called allegorical or not, nearly all parable interpretations are figurative in some way.[14]

Furthermore, moral and allegorical readings are not mutually exclusive; scripture was commonly interpreted on four different levels from the fourth through the sixteenth centuries: "*Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, / Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.* (The letter shows us what God and our fathers did; / The allegory shows us where our faith is hid; / The moral meaning gives us rules of daily life; / The anagogy

12. Jay A. Parry and Donald W. Parry, *Understanding the Parables of Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), xi. In the Greek Septuagint, the term *parabolē* is typically used to translate the Hebrew *mašal* (from a verb meaning "to be like," although Jeremias defines it as "riddle, dark saying" based on an Ethiopian cognate and the Hebrew synonym *hidha*); *mašal* is used to refer to everything from metaphors and bywords to derisive songs, prophetic oracles, and allegorical parables similar to those in the New Testament. In the Greek New Testament, *parabolē* also covers a range of meanings, from "proverb," "riddle," and "rule" to "parable" itself. Since the terms *mašal* and *parabolē* are so elastic, attempts to draw careful distinctions between biblical parables and related forms such as metaphors, similitudes, and allegories are not linguistically justifiable based on Hebraic or Greek usage. See Jeremias, *Parables,* 14 n. 21; Henry Barclay Swete, *The Parables of the Kingdom: A Course of Lectures* (London: Macmillan, 1920), 1–2; and John Drury, *The Parables in the Gospels: History and Allegory* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 8–15.

13. Richard Chenevix Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord,* 5th ed., rev. ed. (1847; London: John W. Parker, 1853), 8; Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ: A Systematic and Critical Study of the Parables of Our Lord* (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1883), 279. The repeated plea "What could I have done more for my vineyard?" in the allegory of the olive trees (Jacob 5:41, 47, 49) seems equally poignant. Also, analogy ("Christ is like a shepherd") and allegory ("The shepherd symbolizes Christ") differ no more than simile and metaphor do.

14. For example, the coins and sheep in the parables from Luke 15 are not usually taken to signify actual coins and sheep, whether the interpretive approach is labeled allegorical or historical—except in an anomalous article that reads these parables as a lesson on taking risks because the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine behind to seek the one, while the woman uses costly oil to light her lamp while looking for the coin, and both chances pay off: "The kingdom became visible in the risky and unexpected action of an unexpected person." Ernest van Eck, "A Realistic Reading of the Parable of the Lost Coin in Q: Gaining or Losing Even More?" *HTS Theological Studies* 75, no. 3 (2019): 7, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i3.5656.

shows us where we end our strife.)"[15] Though medieval sermons seldom develop all four levels, many contain allegorical readings relating to salvation history accompanied by more personal moral applications.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that identifying the original context of a parable is crucial to its interpretation: "I have [a] Key by whi[c]h I understa[n]d the scripture. I enq[u]ire what was the question whi[c]h drew out the answer."[16] And this is just what most medieval sermons on these parables do. Speaking of the parable of the lost sheep, a sermon cycle known as the Middle English *Mirror* explains, "The Pharisees . . . complained against [Christ] that he who forgave sins came among the sinful. But he told them a parable that touched himself and them both: himself because he rescued the sinful and them because they should not complain."[17] And the *Northern Homily Cycle* says bluntly, "A parable to them he taught / To prove that they in the law knew naught."[18]

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15. Robert M. Grant, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible,* rev. ed. (1948; New York: Macmillan, 1963), 119, translation in original. The moral level is commonly known as tropological.

16. "Journal, December 1842–June 1844; Book 1, 21 December 1842–10 March 1843," [157], Joseph Smith Papers, accessed March 1, 2021, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-1-21-december-1842-10-march-1843/165. Admittedly he says this in the context of rejecting allegorical readings of the parable of the lost son that refer to "nations"—for example, Jews and Gentiles (p. [158]). (It is noteworthy that he knew of these interpretations, which have patristic origins and a long tradition.)

17. *The Middle English "Mirror": An Edition Based on Bodleian Library, MS Holkham Misc. 40* (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), 282–83. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. The *Mirror* was translated into Middle English prose in the fourteenth or early fifteenth century from Robert de Gretham's *Miroir,* a mid-thirteenth-century cycle of homilies rendered in Anglo-Norman verse and dedicated to the lady Aline, with the hope that she would find them to be more uplifting than her usual fare of secular romances and *chansons de geste.* K. V. Sinclair has identified "Aline" as Lady Elena of Quency; see "The Anglo-Norman Patrons of Robert the Chaplain and Robert of Greatham," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 28, no. 3 (July 1992): 193–208.

18. *The Northern Homily Cycle: The Expanded Version in MSS Harley 4196 and Cotton Tiberius E VII,* ed. Saara Nevanlinna (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 1972), 2:285 (lines 15300–301). The *Northern Homily Cycle* exists in three versions: the original (or unexpanded) version, an expanded version in a Midlands dialect, and a separate expanded version in a Northern dialect, quoted here. H. Leith Spencer tentatively suggests that the *Northern Homily Cycle* "may belong to that world of private biblical study by the laity." H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 154–55. Thomas J. Heffernan rather "believe[s] it was composed for oral delivery in church." "The Authorship of the 'Northern Homily Cycle': The Liturgical

In other words, since the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin counter criticism of Jesus's actions, it makes sense that their primary purpose was to clarify his own role as Savior. The basic situation, as given in Luke, can be summed up with a simple question-and-answer exchange: "Why do you eat with sinners?" "Because I'm here to save them."[19] In Matthew, the parable of the lost sheep follows Jesus's comments about little children, which were in turn prompted by the disciples asking, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:1). In Joseph Smith's translation, the verse leading directly into the parable reads, "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost, and to call sinners to repentance; but these little ones have no need of repentance, and I will save them" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matt. 18:11). The connecting thread between the two parable settings seems to be the inherent worth of—and God's redemptive care for—all who are overlooked by those puffed up with self-righteousness. The typical missionary-minded application is not directly related to either situation; while still valid, it relies on extrapolation: Jesus seeks those who are lost; thus, so should we. Admittedly, this extrapolation is made easier by the rhetorical questions used to open the parables and the resurrected Christ's instructions to the Apostle Peter to "feed my sheep."[20]

Because liturgical calendars assign specific passages of scripture to each day of the year, medieval churchgoers would typically hear the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin at least annually. Luke 15:1–10 was the gospel reading for the third Sunday after Trinity (the eleventh after Easter) in both the Sarum and York Uses; in the Roman rite, it was used the previous week, for the third Sunday after Pentecost.[21] Some sermons

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Affiliation of the Sunday Gospel Pericopes as a Test," *Traditio* 41 (1985): 289, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0362152900006929.

19. Henry Calderwood imagines a similar exchange in *The Parables of Our Lord: Interpreted in View of Their Relations to Each Other* (London: Macmillan, 1880), 19. G. R. H. Shafto remarks that these parables "vindicate Jesus' friendship with the religious outcasts of His day against the sneers of Pharisees." G. R. H. Shafto, *The Stories of the Kingdom: A Study of the Parables of Jesus* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1922), 63. And Hugh Martin adds, "These stories are Jesus' defense of Himself for keeping bad company." Hugh Martin, *The Parables of the Gospels and Their Meanings for Today* (New York: Abingdon, 1937), 160.

20. John 21:16–17. See also "How think ye?" (Matt. 18:12); "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them . . . ?"; "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece . . . ?" (Luke 15:4, 7).

21. Francisci Henrici Dickinson, ed., *Missale ad usum insignis et praeclarae ecclesiae sarum* (Burntisland, Scotland: E prelo de pitsligo, 1861–83), 467; Wailes, *Medieval*

based on this pericope explicate both parables; others focus just on the lost sheep.[22] This present article draws primarily from Middle English sermons, though the fact that most of these sermons were translated from either Latin or French suggests that the commentary they contain was widespread.

In a previous issue of *BYU Studies,* John W. Welch explores the early Christian allegorical interpretation of the good Samaritan and argues that this parable "become[s] even richer when understood in terms of restored Latter-day Saint doctrines of God's plan of salvation." In a version of that article adapted for the *Ensign,* he further explains how understanding the parable in this way "adds eternal perspectives to its moral imperatives."[23] The same is true of the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, which, like the parable of the good Samaritan, were traditionally connected with Christ's incarnation. In fact, I argue that this is their primary meaning and that subsequent moral lessons are valuable but subordinate.

One Hundred Sheep

Most modern readers probably assume that all one hundred of the sheep represent people, with the ninety-nine as those who are righteous (or active in the Church) and the lost sheep as the sinner (or those who are less active or not members). However, in the early interpretations of the parable (beginning with Hilary of Poitiers), the ninety-nine sheep are most commonly seen as the angels in heaven, while the lost sheep is humankind,

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Allegories, 7. Sarum Use, which originated at Salisbury Cathedral, was the most commonly used liturgical calendar in late medieval England. Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages,* 22. Also, sermon cycles based on Sunday gospel readings are better attested than weekday collections, and the parable of the lost son (which remains outside the scope of this essay) was assigned to the second Saturday in Lent in all three of these rites.

22. This pattern also seems to hold in modern preaching, including that of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have not found a single general conference talk that mentions the lost coin without also referring to one or both of the other two parables in Luke 15, while those two are often discussed singly.

23. John W. Welch, "The Good Samaritan: A Type and Shadow of the Plan of Salvation," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 73; John W. Welch, "The Good Samaritan: Forgotten Symbols," *Ensign* 37, no. 2 (February 2007): 47. See also John W. Welch and Jeannie S. Welch, *The Parables of Jesus: Revealing the Plan of Salvation* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2019). Their commentary on the parable of the lost sheep does not consider patristic sources, though their discussion of the parable of the lost son does (96–98, 102–9).

as in this influential explanation by Gregory the Great (c. 540–602):[24] "As one hundred is a perfect number, God had one hundred sheep when he created angels and men. But one sheep was lost: for man sinned and abandoned the pastures of life. But their shepherd left the ninety-nine in the desert: he left all those lofty choirs of angels in heaven. How can heaven be called a desert, unless it is because it is deserted? Man deserted it when he sinned, but the ninety-nine sheep remained in the desert while God went to seek the straying one here on earth."[25]

Gregory's homily, whether directly or indirectly, appears to be the main source of the lost sheep sermon in the Middle English *Mirror*: "God himself had a hundred sheep when he made angels and man. But he lost one when man sinned, when he forsook everlasting life for the lust of his flesh. . . . And when the number that God had made to his bliss was broken, in order to restore again that same fault, God came to earth to seek man. The man that was lost he sought on earth to fulfill the number that he had made. He sought man, in truth, when he became man for us."[26]

The doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints clearly has a different view of the Fall (which is recognized as part of God's

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24. Wailes identifies a handful of alternate interpretations but explains that this one gained the widest currency. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 128–29. Indeed, by the Middle Ages, this reading was nearly universal, appearing in every sermon indexed by Veronica O'Mara and Suzanne Paul that explicates the ninety-nine sheep. Veronica O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons,* 4 vols. (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007).

25. Pope Saint Gregory the Great, "Homilia XXXIV in Evangelia," in *Parables of the Gospel,* trans. Nora Burke (Dublin: Scepter, 1960), 124–25. To account for both versions of the parable, he adds, "But where Luke tells us, 'in the desert,' Matthew, in the same context, says: 'in the mountains,' as if to indicate that the ninety-nine which did not stray remained in the heights, that is, in heaven" (125). Here a significant discrepancy must be noted: in the Latin Vulgate, the phrase "in the mountains" clearly applies to the location of the ninety-nine sheep who were left behind ("nonne relinquit nonaginta novem in montibus, et vadit quærere eam quæ erravit"); in the Greek, its antecedent is ambiguous ("οὐχὶ ἀφήσει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη καὶ πορευθεὶς ζητεῖ τὸ πλανώμενον"). *Biblia Sacra Vulgata,* The Clementine Text Project, updated December 15, 2020, http://vulsearch.sourceforge.net; *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Nestle-Aland), 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), https://academic-bible.com. Modern translations are split between attaching the phrase to the ninety-nine sheep and to where the shepherd goes to seek the lost one; the KJV does the latter. Joseph Smith moved the phrase "in the wilderness" in his translation of Luke 15:4 so that it also refers to the location of the lost sheep rather than that of the ninety-nine left behind. In addition, some later exegetes distinguish between Matthew's πλανηθῇ (strayed) and Luke's ἀπολέσας (lost). See Young, *Parables,* 190.

26. *Middle English "Mirror,"* 283.

plan) and of angels (who are pre- or postmortal people rather than a different class of beings). However, seeing the lost sheep as humankind as a whole accords with Church teachings about the universality of Christ's Atonement and its applicability to those who die without law or as little children (who are incapable of sinning).[27] This perspective is particularly germane to Joseph Smith's inspired addition to the parable setting in Matthew 18, which is reinforced by the verse directly following the parable, "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. 18:14). The medieval interpretation also erases the false distinction among those who are accountable, between those who are "righteous" and those who are "sinners." Isaiah's words are especially apropos: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Recognizing that all are in need of being found by the Shepherd recenters the parable's focus on the Savior's rescuing mission.

In a less-common patristic interpretation of this parable, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) identifies the ninety-nine sheep as the proud and the one as the repentant.[28] Interestingly, this is similar to Joseph Smith's reading of the parable: "[Jesus] spoke this parable.— what man of you having an hundrd. sheep <&c> 100 saducees & Pharisees If you pharisees & saduces [Sadducees] are in the sheepfold. I have no mission for you sent to look up sheep that are lost will back him up.— & make joy in heaven— . . . [There is] joy in [the] presence of the angels over one sinner that repe[n]teth [The Pharisees and Sadducees are] so righteous they will be damned anyhow you cannot save them."[29]

Of course, the statement that any group of people is "so righteous they will be damned" must be taken ironically. Speaking of the three parables in Luke 15, James E. Talmage remarks, "There is no justification

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27. As in Mosiah 3:11, 16; Mosiah 15:19; and Alma 34:9; see also Jeffrey R. Holland, "Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Jesus Christ and His Gospel: Selections from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 1994), 23–30.

28. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 130. The *Northern Homily Cycle* also depicts an individual lost sheep but without mentioning the ninety-nine at all: "This man that has one hundred sheep / Is Jesus Christ, who mankind keeps. / And of his sheep he loses one / When any soul with sin's undone, / When he can't know the Savior's voice / Or follow in Christ's law by choice, / But to the fiends then forth he strays / And so is lost through evil ways." *Northern Homily Cycle,* ed. Nevanlinna, 2:286–87.

29. "Discourse, 29 January 1843, as reported by Willard Richards–A," [158–59], Joseph Smith Papers, accessed February 20, 2021, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-29-january-1843-as-reported-by-willard-richards-a/6.

for the inference that a repentant sinner is to be given precedence over a righteous soul who has resisted sin." But he also notes that some readers "catch [a] note of just sarcasm in the Master's concluding words"—that is, "just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).[30] Barring little children and others who are not accountable—which the Matthew setting of the parable seems to associate with the one lost sheep, not the ninety-nine—those "which need no repentance" simply don't exist, except, perhaps, in these Pharisees' and Sadducees' imaginations. One could plausibly expand Joseph Smith's comment to read, "[They think they are] so righteous [that they need no repentance nor Savior, and therefore] they will be damned anyhow."

One early sixteenth-century homily, without associating the scribes and Pharisees with the ninety-nine sheep, characterizes them in a similar way: "The scribes . . . [are] swollen with human knowledge which is more presumption than cunning: and have no knowledge of the spirit of god. And the Pharisees . . . [are] they that have their justice after the works and the traditions of men and have nothing of the justice of god, which is done by the spirit of god in faith."[31] While Augustine and Joseph Smith speak of individuals rather than all humankind, in both of their interpretations it would be better to be a lost sheep than one of the ninety-nine. In fact, whether the lost sheep is interpreted individually or collectively, all of these readings place the ninety-nine outside the scope of Christ's redeeming mission, either because they do not need it (the angels) or because they will not accept it (the proud).[32]

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30. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ,* 295, 298.

31. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Epistres et Evangiles des cinquante et deux sepmaines de l'an, Readings from the Gospels and Epistles, Translated for Anne Boleyn by Her Brother George,* MS Harley 6561, fol. 131v, British Library, London, spelling modernized. See *Catalog of Illuminated Manuscripts,* The British Library, accessed December 28, 2020, http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8826&CollID=8&NStart=6561. Brad Young notes, however, that not all first-century Pharisees felt this way; there is a significant strain of rabbinic writing that, like this parable, celebrates the recovery of the sinner. Young, *Parables,* 189.

32. Two Middle English sermons make this explicit. Both identify the ninety-nine *sheep* as angels, but one extends that reading to the ninety-nine "just persons" (Luke 15:7), explaining, "The angels never sinned and needed no repentance" (MS Additional 40672, fol. 57r, British Library), while the other says, "These people signify not the saints but those who consider themselves righteous like the proud Pharisees" (MS 4, fol. 72r, Longleat House, Warminster, England), both summarized and translated in O'Mara and Paul, *Repertorium,* 469, 2549.

The Lost Coin (or Drachma or Groat)

In the most prevalent patristic and medieval interpretations, the lost coin is treated very much like the lost sheep, as a symbol for (fallen) humankind, while the other nine coins, as Gregory the Great says, represent "the ninefold order of angels." But even more interesting is Gregory's claim (based on Augustine of Hippo's writing) that "since the groat is a coin which bears an image, the woman lost the groat when man, created in the image of God, strayed by sin from this resemblance to his Maker."[33] A Middle English homily from the sermon cycle known as *Filius Matris* (*Son of the Mother*) further explains that the ten drachmas represent "nine orders of angels and man that he made after his own image. One he lost (that is to say man) when man by breaking of his commandment went away from the similitude of his creator. . . . And so the drachma that was lost before was found again when the similitude of our creator was found again in man by steadfast faith and admirable works."[34] While the concept of being created in the image of God is a simple restatement of Genesis 1:27, the idea that the similitude of God can be lost or found within a person resonates with Alma 5:14, which famously asks, "Have ye received his image in your countenances?" The subsequent verb "engraven" (Alma 5:19) suggests a metal surface such as a coin's face. Augustine notes that the lost coin's effigy belongs to "our emperor," while James E. Talmage speaks of it as "a genuine coin of the realm, bearing the image of the great King."[35]

This reading of the coin's significance is also interesting in light of a discourse by Joseph Smith. Commenting on the image of God in mortals in the context of Genesis 1:27, he said,

> After God had created the Heavens and the Earth. He came down and on the sixth day said let us make man in our own image. In whose image[?] In the image of Gods created they them. Male and female: innocent harmless and spotless bearing the same character and the same image as the Gods. And when man fell he did not lose his image but his character still retaining the image of his maker Christ who is

33. Gregory the Great, *Parables,* 127–28. The nine orders of angels are traditionally angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim.

34. Filius Matris, MS Royal 18 A xvii, fol. 124r., British Library. *Filius Matris* is a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century Latin sermon cycle with four extant English manuscripts dating to the early fifteenth century.

35. Augustine, *On the Psalms,* trans. in Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 235; Talmage, *Jesus the Christ,* 295.

> the image of man [and] is also the express image of his Father[']s person. . . . And through the atonement of Christ and the resurrection and obedience in the Gospel we shall again be conformed to the image of his Son Jesus Christ, then we shall have attained to the image glory and character of God.[36]

It is notable that the image of God as spoken of in the medieval sermon quoted above appears not to be regained but rather rediscovered within the person.

The significance of the coin's image continued to be acknowledged well into the nineteenth century, even as allegorical interpretation was beginning to fall out of favor. Henry Calderwood, writing about a decade before Adolf Jülicher's anti-allegory tirades, writes that in the coin "has been uniformly recognized an allusion to the image of God in the soul of man." And he sees additional symbolic meaning in the coin's other attributes:

> A piece of money *does not lose its value,* though it be for a time lost to its owner. So the intelligent immortal spirit continues to be precious in the sight of God, even when separated from Him by all the distance which sin implies. Yet lost silver is soon *tarnished,* and is the more obscured the longer it continues in neglect. . . . But *lost money is useless while lost.* It continues of the same value; but while lost, its present usefulness is gone. . . . So does God lose the service which man was created to render, and which he would have rendered but for this separation from righteousness.[37]

Interestingly, modern commentators seem to focus more on the coin's value than medieval sermons do, and their understanding of that value varies widely. While some (like Calderwood) see the coin as being of high value intrinsically, to others, such as Alexander Bruce, it is rather the trivial amount of the coin's worth that demonstrates God's care for all his children, no matter how insignificant they may be in the world's eyes.[38] However they arrive at it, though, their point is ultimately the same: God values those who are lost—or, to put it in modern revelatory

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36. James Burgess, Notebook, July 9, 1843, in *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph,* ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980), 231. My thanks to an anonymous reader for pointing out this quotation.

37. Calderwood, *Parables,* 33–34, 37, emphasis in original.

38. Bruce, *Parabolic Teaching,* 278. Although Bruce mostly rejects the traditional allegorical meanings, his bringing them up suggests they were still circulating widely.

terms, "The worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). Moreover, these commentaries demonstrate not only that many of the patristic readings had been handed down through the centuries but also that the allegorical method in general opens the parable up to a deeper understanding of the relationship between God and his children.

The Shepherd's Shoulders

Beginning with Ambrose in the fourth century, that the shepherd bears the lost sheep on his shoulders is often tied specifically to the Incarnation and Crucifixion, with the shoulders of the shepherd representing the arms of the cross.[39] Following this tradition, Gregory the Great writes, "He put the sheep upon his shoulders because, taking on himself our human nature, he bore our sins."[40] The lost sheep sermon in the Middle English *Mirror* says, "Upon his shoulders he laid man when he was crucified for our sin." The one from the *Filius Matris* collection further explains, "Christ's shoulders are the arms of his cross, on which he was pierced in both body and arms for the love of sinful man, . . . and by love [he] put [the sheep] upon his shoulders, which is to say suffered therefore many pains upon his body."[41] A sixteenth-century homily adds, "And truly he has set us on his holy shoulders when he has taken upon him all our sins on the cross . . . for to bring us unto the celestial flock."[42] This powerful visual image links the spiritual rescue described in the parable with the physical act of atonement. And the juxtaposition of lifting the lost sheep and being lifted onto the cross creates a striking symmetry that echoes the Book of Mormon: "And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me" (3 Ne. 27:14).

The Woman and the Lamp

Since the sheep and the coins signify the same things in most medieval and patristic interpretations, it is not surprising that the same is

39. Saint Ambrose, *Exposito Evangelii Secundum Lucam,* Corpus Christianorum Series, vol. 14 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1957), 286–87; see also Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 128–31.

40. Gregory the Great, *Parables,* 125; intriguingly, this echoes Alma 7:13, which reads, "Nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people."

41. *Middle English "Mirror,"* 283; *Filius Matris,* fol. 123r.

42. Lefèvre, *Readings from the Gospels,* spelling modernized.

Jesus as the Good Shepherd, Carthage, Tunisia, fourth century, Bardo Museum, Tunis. Courtesy Kent P. Jackson.

Jesus as the Good Shepherd, Corinth, fourth century, Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens. Courtesy Kent P. Jackson.

Jesus as the Good Shepherd, Athens, fourth century, Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens. Courtesy Kent P. Jackson.

The similarity between these artworks highlights the consistency of artistic representation in the early Christian world. It is interesting that all of these images date to the fourth century, which is when Jerome first connected the parable of the lost sheep with the Good Shepherd passage, and that John 10 makes no reference to the Good Shepherd carrying the sheep on his shoulders as depicted in these sculptures.

generally true of the shepherd and the coins' owner. The *Filius Matris* homily says, "Just as Christ is represented by the shepherd so is he represented by the woman who had ten drachmas."[43] While a modern audience might find it odd to see Christ likened to a female figure, this comparison has biblical precedent: Jesus compares himself to a hen who "gathereth her chickens under her wings"—an image that is repeated in both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.[44] And a well-known passage in Isaiah (also quoted in the Book of Mormon) reads, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."[45] One medieval sermon makes this connection explicitly: Christ "compares himself to a woman" in this parable partly because he "loves humankind more than a mother loves her child."[46]

The Isaiah passage also gave rise to a Jesus-as-mother motif common in medieval devotional writing from the eleventh century onward, a motif made particularly famous by the late medieval anchorite and visionary Julian of Norwich, who connected the mothering Jesus with wisdom: "Thus in our very mother Jesus our life is grounded in the foreseeing wisdom of himself from without beginning, with the high might of the father and the sovereign goodness of the holy ghost."[47] However, one need not go through Julian or even through the image of Jesus as mother in order to get to the connection between Jesus and wisdom or the connection between wisdom and woman. When Gregory the Great says, "This woman [in the parable of the Lost Groat] and the shepherd

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43. *Filius Matris,* fol. 123v–124r.

44. Matthew 23:37; compare Luke 13:34; 3 Nephi 10:4–6; Doctrine and Covenants 10:65; Doctrine and Covenants 29:2; and Doctrine and Covenants 43:24.

45. Isaiah 49:15; compare 1 Nephi 21:15.

46. MS 4, fol. 71r, Longleat House, summarized and translated in O'Mara and Paul, *Repertorium,* 2549. The sermon adds that the figures of the (male) shepherd and the woman in these two parables further demonstrate that Christ "comes to save both men and women" (fol. 71v, trans. in O'Mara and Paul, *Repertorium,* 2549). Many modern commentators consider this pairing to be one of a number of New Testament "gendered doublets" (van Eck, "Realistic Reading," 6) with a purpose to show the universality of God's love and/or to include women as well as men in the intended audience. See Shafto, *Stories,* 63; Archibald M. Hunter, *Interpreting the Parables* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 60.

47. Julian of Norwich, *A Revelation of Love,* in *The Writings of Julian of Norwich,* ed. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 321, spelling modernized. The original reads, "Thus in oure very moder Jhesu oure life is grounded in the forseeing wisdom of himselfe fro without beginning, with the hye might of the fader and the sovereyne goodnesse of the holy gost."

have a common significance: for they both stand for God and God's wisdom," the Latin word he uses—*sapentia*—is a feminine noun, and such abstract feminine nouns were often personified as female figures in patristic and medieval writings.[48]

Yet another oft-repeated interpretation of this parable instead aligns the woman with another feminine noun—*Ecclesia,* or the Church, which was often personified as the bride of Christ (see Rev. 21:9). Ambrose, speaking of all three parables in Luke 15, says, "Who are these three, the father [of the lost son], the shepherd, the woman? Who if not God the Father, Christ, and the Church?"[49] This tripartite interpretation is picked up in the *Glossa Ordinaria* and in the *Filius Matris* homily, both of which record it alongside the woman-as-Christ reading. The latter says, "And so a shepherd, a woman, & a father are three full good remedies. Christ is the shepherd that brought again the sheep that is to say sinful man to the fold of bliss that it had lost. Holy Church is the woman that seeks the drachma that is to say man's soul by prayer and by preaching & by good example of deeds that betoken the lighting of the lantern and this father is God Almighty that receives each sinful man to grace if he would truly turn himself from sin."[50] The medieval audience did not seem bothered by apparent contradictions in meaning but rather allowed these multiple interpretations to stand side by side, each communicating something of value.

While in the preceding passage the lighting of the lantern is equated to actions taken by the Church, when the woman is seen as Christ and/or God's wisdom, the lamp she holds up is linked to the Incarnation. Augustine explains that the lamp itself is Christ's body, which is "made of clay but shines with the Word."[51] Gregory further compares the "lampstand of [Christ's] body" with the dried-up potsherd of the messianic twenty-second psalm, both representing flesh made of clay and hardened by suffering, and Gregory adds, "Here the light is the divinity made man. . . . God's eternal wisdom, shining for all to see in the miracles he performed on earth, repaired that sin by the light of his

48. Gregory the Great, *Parables,* 127.

49. Saint Ambrose, *Exposito Evangelii Secundum Lucam,* 87, trans. in Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 235.

50. *Filius Matris,* fol. 123r.

51. Trans. in Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 235; compare Mosiah 3:5: "The Lord Omnipotent . . . shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay."

bodily presence, as a lamp on a lampstand."[52] The *Filius Matris* homily says, "But God's son lighted a lantern to seek man that was lost when he took flesh and blood for man's sake and lighted his manhood quite clearly with the great brightness of his godhood."[53] This imagery is not unlike the restored gospel conception of the Light of Christ, which the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* defines as "the spiritual power that emanates from God to fill the immensity of space and enlightens every man, woman, and child."[54] While the Light of Christ exists independently of the Incarnation, both are elements of Christ's mission to redeem a fallen world and reconnect people with God.

Moral Lessons

Parry and Parry note that parables "contain multiple levels of meaning" that can be revealed to "the righteous who study those messages"; these multiple levels, far from being incompatible, often interlock and strengthen the parables' messages.[55] The restored Church's Bible Dictionary adds, "It is important to distinguish between the interpretation of a parable and the application of a parable. The only true interpretation is the meaning a parable conveyed, or was meant to convey, when first spoken. The application of a parable may vary in every age and circumstance."[56] Therefore, while the biblical context of the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin leads clearly to the interpretation that Jesus came to earth to seek those who are lost through sin or ignorance, the parables may be validly applied in a variety of ways—as indeed they have been over the centuries.

The most common moral application given in medieval sermons is that all should repent. The Middle English *Mirror* says, "Consider, you who hear this lesson. Look how they who are in heaven come to Christ. We must forsake our sins and amend us, and come to God that we may make the angels glad, and that we may come to them and rejoice with them. But none may come to them but through repentance. . . . For God's love, we amend our lives. . . . Nor should we wait so long to repent that we

52. Gregory the Great, *Parables,* 127–28.

53. *Filius Matris,* fol. 124r.

54. C. Kent Dunford, "Light of Christ," in *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:835.

55. Parry and Parry, *Understanding the Parables,* xiii.

56. "Parables," *Bible Dictionary,* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2020, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bd/parables?lang=eng.

never come to him."[57] To this central message is often added the importance of having faith and living righteously. The *Filius Matris* homily, for example, explains that as "Christ's meek sheep" we should "hold ourselves innocent in living"; as "Christ's drachmas" we should "hold our full price" through "the foundation of true belief"; and (referring to the parable of the lost son) as "Christ's children" through true penance, "now is the time of turning again, now is the time of penance, and now is the time of amending."[58] The importance of real repentance is also underscored; this homily contrasts the sincere contrition of Mary Magdalene and Zacchaeus with the flawed penance of Esau, Saul, and David, while Gregory the Great notes that the penitent must not only regret past sins but refrain from committing more.[59] As a group, these sermons depict the urgency of repenting and coming to Christ.[60]

Another common application found in these early homilies is that none should judge, though this is usually based on the parables' frame, where Jesus eats with sinners, rather than on the parables themselves: "Those who are motivated by a false sense of justice, usually despise others and have no pity for the weak. Through their presumption in thinking themselves sinless, they sink lower than those whom they disdain. The pharisees were men of this type."[61] Another homily asks, "Why should any complain that the simple, the poor sinners, and the publicans should receive this divine consolation? Truly our gospel will not in any wise that it should be so." And the Middle English *Mirror* poses a similar rhetorical question—"Is it right and fitting to refuse them that Jesus takes to himself?"—and then broadens this thought almost to the point of the modern missionary application: "But man ought to draw the sinful to do good first with love, not to love his deeds but to chastise him, not only to entice him to do good, but to preach to him and to feed him."[62] Here the reference seems to reach beyond Jesus's

57. *Middle English "Mirror,"* 284.

58. *Filius Matris,* fol. 124r.

59. Gregory the Great, *Parables,* 139–40; *Filius Matris,* fol. 123r.

60. One fascinating Middle English sermon for the first Sunday after the Octave of Epiphany, which uses Luke 2:42–52 as its primary text (where Mary and Joseph seek the boy Jesus and find him in the temple), includes an unusual role reversal: "Christ should be sought . . . as energetically as the shepherd for his lost sheep or the woman for her lost coin." MS 392, fol. 165r, Lambeth Palace Library, London, summarized and translated in O'Mara and Paul, *Repertorium,* 1543.

61. Gregory the Great, *Parables,* 123–24.

62. Lefèvre, *Readings from the Gospels,* fol. 132r; *Middle English "Mirror,"* 282.

eating with sinners to his feeding the multitudes in Galilee and beyond acquiescing with Jesus's actions to following them.

As mentioned above, the juxtaposition of the parable of the lost sheep with Jesus's plea to "feed my sheep" in John 21 makes it easy to extend the ministerial applications of the frame to the parable itself. This moral lesson may well have been influenced by Mary B. Wingate's hymn "Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd," which was first published in 1899.[63] Though Wingate herself was Baptist, the hymn was quickly adopted by both the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (now Community of Christ) and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: it appeared in the RLDS collection *Zion's Praises* in 1903 and was added to the second edition of *Songs of Zion,* published by the Missions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in 1912.[64] Its first three verses put Christ in the role of the shepherd, but the focus is changed by Christ's question at the end of the third ("Will you not seek for my lost ones?") and the answer in the fourth verse ("Yes, blessed Master, we will! Make us thy true under-shepherds"). Karen Lynn Davidson writes, "Though it might be assumed that the hymn would conclude with a call to all straying sheep to return to the fold, it is instead a call to the followers of Jesus to seek out those who are lost."[65] The enduring popularity of this hymn within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may well simultaneously reflect and reinforce this particular moral application, so well attested in Church magazines and manuals.[66]

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63. W. J. Kirkpatrick, J. L. Hall, and H. L. Gilmour, eds., *Gospel Praises: For Use in Meetings of Christian Worship* (Philadelphia: Hall Mack, 1899), no. 100, https://hymnary.org/hymn/GPUM1899/100.

64. *Zion's Praises* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1903), no. 88; *Songs of Zion: A Collection of Choice Songs Especially Selected and Arranged for the Home and for All Meetings, Sunday Schools, and Gatherings of Elders and Saints in the Mission Field,* 2nd ed. (Chicago: Missions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1912), no. 243; see "Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd," SingPraises.net, updated December 23, 2020, https://singpraises.net/texts/221/dear-to-the-heart-of-the-shepherd. The hymn appears as number 221 in the hymnbook currently used by the restored Church. *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985). Mary B. (Rich) Wingate's obituary provides her dates (1845–1933) and her denomination. *The Springfield Daily Republican,* May 13, 1933, 4, GenealogyBank Historical Newspaper Obituaries, 1815–2011, *FamilySearch,* https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q5QL-98ZZ.

65. Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns: The Stories and Messages* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 233.

66. "Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd" does not appear in the current Community of Christ hymnal.

Some modern commentators, however, see the ministerial or evangelical moral exclusively in the parable of the lost coin. Henry Calderwood, for example, writes that the message of this parable (but not those of the lost sheep or lost son) is that "the common and constant task of His believing people" is to "seek to save others who were lost."[67] Calderwood distinguishes this parable from the others because the woman, unlike the shepherd or the father, bears responsibility for losing the coin and therefore cannot (in his view) represent Christ. Rather than simply reiterating the parable of the lost sheep, which is about Christ's saving mission, in this reading the parable of the lost coin speaks of the Church's role in continuing his work.[68] And while Halford Edward Luccock, writing in the early twentieth century, applies the evangelical lesson to both parables, he claims that "the Lost Coin adds the idea that we are not only necessary to God's love but also to his purposes." In describing the woman sweeping her house to look for the coin, he further calls attention to contemporary social issues, such as "the payment of wages below a living standard, the traffic in things which debase and debauch men," child labor, exploitative company stores, and other unfair working conditions.[69] Few commentators are as sociologically specific in their readings of the parable's housecleaning, but many agree that this action suggests significant effort and disruption.

In the same conference talk with which this essay begins, President David O. McKay seems likewise to differentiate between the parables in Luke 15, explicitly directing one-third of his remarks to Church leaders and the other two-thirds to the general membership, though with an emphasis on prevention rather than rescue. The one-third relates to the parable of the lost coin and leaders' responsibility to "guard these precious souls"; in applying the other two parables, he tells potential lost sheep and prodigal sons not to wander or to give way to riotous living.[70] It should be acknowledged, however, that both Luccock and President McKay reblur these boundaries elsewhere in their remarks.

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67. Calderwood, *Parables,* 40.

68. Calderwood, *Parables,* 38–42. The medieval interpretation of the lighting of the woman's lamp in the parable of the lost coin as the prayers, preaching, and good example of the Church also implies a moral application that values doing those things, even if the homily doesn't make that tropological move explicit.

69. Halford E. Luccock, *Studies in the Parables of Jesus* (New York and Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1917), 14, 16.

70. McKay, in *One Hundred Fifteenth Annual General Conference,* 122.

G. R. H. Shafto, on the other hand, rejects not only the distinction between these parables but also applications that redirect attention away from the central characters of the woman and the shepherd. He asserts that both parables focus on God's loss (rather than the sheep's or the coin's), *his* search, and *his* joy at the recovery of that which has been lost: "The pictures of anxious search disclose the fact of God's love for us, and that that love is personal. . . . Recovery of the lost brings its own joy; so the owner seeks for it—and does not expect or wait for the lost thing to seek him. The initiative rests with God. That is one explanation of the Incarnation."[71] Similarly, Gregory the Great says, speaking of the shepherd's comments to his friends and neighbors (which Gregory interprets as angels), "It is noteworthy that he does not say: 'Rejoice with the sheep restored,' but, 'Rejoice with me,' because his joy is our life and when we are restored to heaven, the fullness of his joy will be achieved." The Middle English *Mirror* and the *Northern Homily Cycle* (in both its expanded and unexpanded versions) also highlight the joy of both God and heaven at the sinner's repentance.[72] Intriguingly, modern revealed scripture seems to speak more clearly about divine joy than does the Bible (except in these parables), as expressed by the lord of the vineyard in Zenos's allegory of the olive trees and by the resurrected Jesus during his visit to the Lamanites and Nephites and in revelations to Joseph Smith, both in general ("How great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!") and in particular (speaking of Warren A. Cowdery).[73]

Interestingly, each of the three major strains of moral application discussed above aligns with the perspective of different characters in these

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71. Shafto, *Stories,* 66. Some medieval sermons similarly link the thorough search for the coin to Christ's humanity or crucifixion (MS Additional 40672, fol. 57r, British Library; MS G.22, fol. 7v, St. John's College, Cambridge, England; and MS 4, fol. 71v, Longleat House, all summarized in O'Mara and Paul, *Repertorium,* 105, 469, 2549). These sermons also reflect the frequent substitution of *evertit* (turn upside down) for *everrit* (sweep) in early Latin renderings of Luke 15:8 (Wailes, *Medieval Allegories,* 234).

72. Gregory the Great, *Parables,* 125; *Middle English "Mirror,"* 284; *Northern Homily Cycle,* ed. Nevanlinna, 2:287; and *The Northern Homily Cycle* (unexpanded version), MS Gg. v. 31 fol. 96v, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, England. The last of these can be (loosely) translated, "But if this man from sin arises, / And with penance becomes righteous, / Then Jesus finds his sheep, I think, / And for that find is tickled pink, / And calls his saints to gather round / And bids them make their joy resound." In the first two, the angels are double-cast as the friends and neighbors and the ninety-nine sheep.

73. Jacob 5:60; 3 Nephi 17:20; Doctrine and Covenants 18:13; 106:6. The worth-of-souls passage in Doctrine and Covenants 18 parallels these parables in that it progresses from the worth of souls to the Atonement and God's joy in the repentant (vv. 10–13). Only thereafter is the missionary application given (vv. 14–16).

parables, and each, given recent teachings on ministering, eliminating prejudice, and daily repentance, has particular relevance to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[74] The message to seek those who are lost takes the viewpoint of the shepherd and the woman, while the application of accepting all who repent into full fellowship fits the role of the rejoicing friends and neighbors (and opposes the position of the scribes and Pharisees who prompted the parables). Finally, putting oneself in the place of the sheep or the coin emphasizes the need for personal repentance. When combined with the allegory of the Good Shepherd—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27)—it also reflects President Russell M. Nelson's constant call to "hear Him."[75] Moreover, all of these moral lessons rely on the Savior's saving mission, without which there would be no repentance, no ministering, and no joy in heaven (or on earth).

In short, these brief parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin—ten verses total—carry a multiplicity of meanings. Most of these varied applications, from the need to repent to the need to accept and seek out the repentant, are not only justifiable but valuable; however, the truest, most basic interpretation is the one that testifies that Jesus Christ is the Savior. Furthermore, the long tradition of allegorical explication that stretches from patristic and medieval writings into the nineteenth century and beyond does not detract from that basic interpretation but rather enriches it. The Middle English *Filius Matris* sermon provides a pair of clear and simple summaries: "Christ is the shepherd that brought again the sheep: which is to say sinful man to the fold of bliss that it had lost"; "and so the drachma that before was lost was found again when the similitude of our creator was found again in man."[76] Certainly these early interpretations

74. See, for example, Russell M. Nelson, "Ministering," *Ensign* 48, no. 5 (May 2018): 100; Bonnie H. Cordon, "Becoming a Shepherd," *Ensign* 48, no. 11 (November 2018): 75; Stevenson, "Shepherding Souls," 110; Quentin L. Cook, "Hearts Knit in Righteousness and Unity," *Ensign* 50, no. 11 (November 2020): 18–21; Dallin H. Oaks, "Love Your Enemies," *Ensign* 50, no. 11 (November 2020): 28–29; Gerrit W. Gong, "All Nations, Kindreds, and Tongues," *Ensign* 50, no. 11 (November 2020): 38; William K. Jackson, "The Culture of Christ," *Ensign* 50, no. 11 (November 2020): 49; Sharon Eubank, "By Union of Feeling We Obtain Power with God," *Ensign* 50, no. 11 (November 2020): 57; Russell M. Nelson, "Let God Prevail," *Ensign* 50, no. 11 (November 2020): 94; Dale G. Renlund, "Do Justly, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with God," *Ensign* 50, no. 11 (November 2020): 111; and Russell M. Nelson, "We Can Do Better and Be Better," *Ensign* 49, no. 5 (May 2019): 67–69.

75. Russell M. Nelson, "Hear Him," *Ensign* 50, no. 5 (May 2020): 88–92.

76. *Filius Matris,* fols. 123r, 124r.

of the parable of the lost sheep, with its dual images of Christ as loving shepherd and as suffering Savior, and of the parable of the lost coin, with its emphasis on the value of the individual soul, created in God's image, add to our understanding and appreciation of Jesus Christ's mission to save and redeem all of humankind.

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Visualizing Temples through Time

Litian Zhang and Geoffrey M. Draper

The large number of temples dedicated in recent decades has rendered it impossible to draw a linear timeline of all temples on a standard printed page. We propose an interactive timeline that can run on mobile devices. Rather than display the entire timeline at once, our visualization renders a subset of the temples on an interactive spiral and provides controls for the user to navigate forward and backward through time. Below we will present a mobile app prototype of this visualization, called Temples Timeline, and discuss its implementation and reception.

Introduction and Motivation

Since 1836, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has dedicated more than 160 temples. Let us consider the challenge of effectively visualizing the dates of these dedications on a timeline. The most obvious approach would be to print the timeline on a standard sheet of paper (fig. 1); however, there are simply too many data points.

Clearly, we need more room. If we space the names of the temples 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart, the chart grows to approximately 13 feet long (4 meters), which is too large to conveniently print and display. What if, instead, we saved the chart in an electronic format such as a PDF or an image? This would, naturally, be less expensive than printing it and would permit wider distribution. However, even on a large computer screen, the user would have to scroll around a great deal to find a specific temple. Zooming out would reduce the chart to illegibility. The problem would be exacerbated if the user were viewing the timeline on a small device, such as a tablet or smartphone.

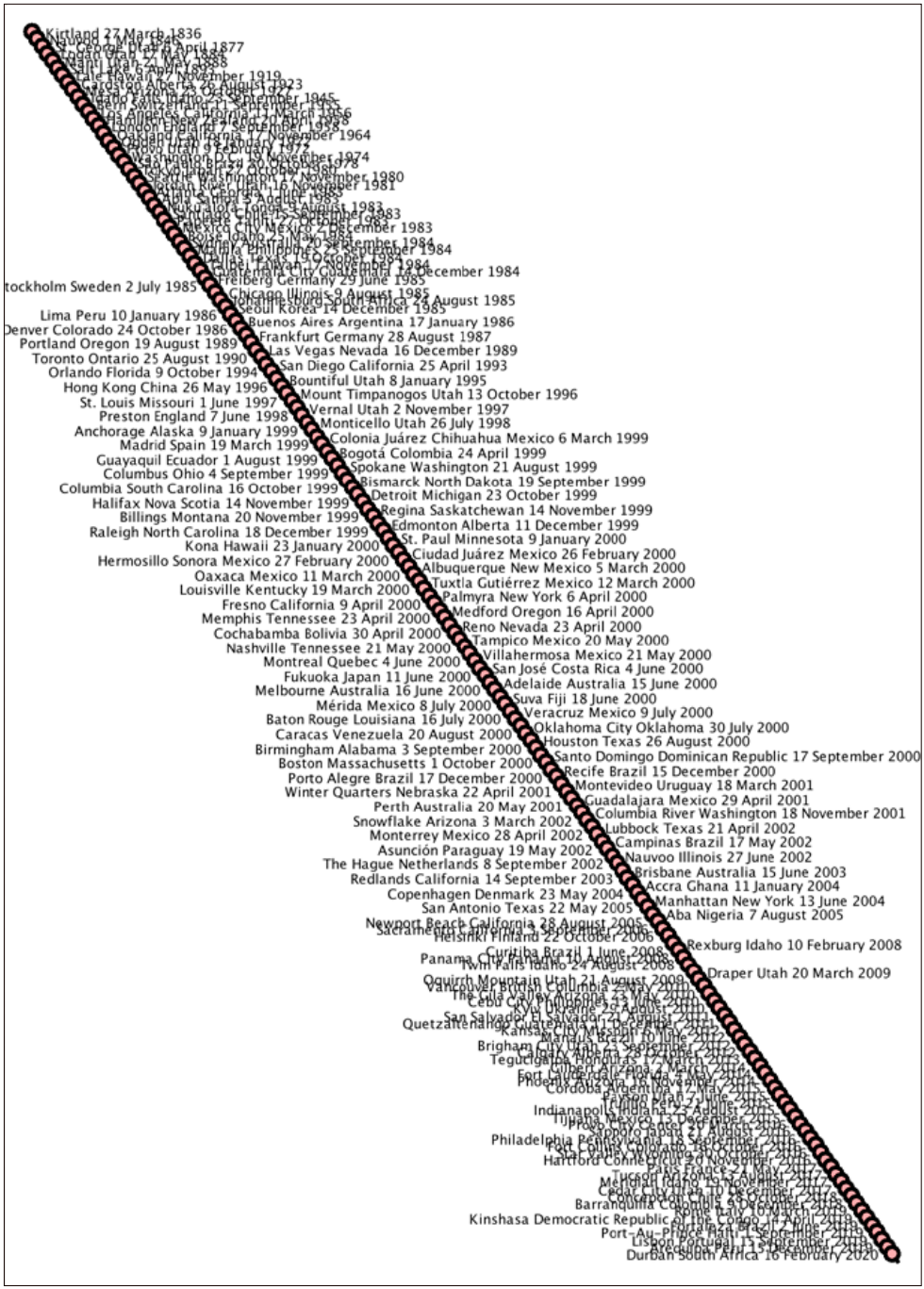

Figure 1. Even if we draw a timeline along the diagonal, there are too many temples to fit on a single page and be readable.

In a previous *BYU Studies Quarterly* article, a computer program for displaying the chronology of apostolic succession in the Church, called Latter-day Apostles, on mobile devices was described. The authors describe the First Presidency and the Twelve mathematically as "*well-ordered sets,*" in other words, a set in which there is a "first" element (the Apostle with the longest tenure), a "second" element (the Apostle with the second-longest tenure), and so on all the way down to the "last" element—the most recently ordained Apostle.[1]

We can describe the set of all current temples the same way. There is a "first" element (Kirtland, Ohio), a "second" element (Nauvoo, Illinois), and so on until the most recently announced temple. The difference is that the set of operating temples is generally always increasing in size, whereas the set of living Apostles is limited to approximately fifteen individuals at a time. Nevertheless, we can adapt some principles from the previously mentioned article to address the problem of visualizing a timeline of temples on a small screen.

Design

The Latter-day Apostles app uses a dual-ring layout, displaying the First Presidency on the inner ring and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on the outer ring. This works well for the relatively fixed number of Apostles at any given time.[2] To visualize a timeline of all the temples, we chose a spiral-based visualization.[3] The use of spirals for interactive data visualization was introduced in 1998 by John Carlis and Joseph Konstan. All circles are positioned along a spiral line, with the diameters increasing gradually from the center to the outer end of the spiral.[4] As the user adjusts the date, the positions of the current on-screen temples are updated accordingly. The most recently dedicated temples will be on the outer rim of the spiral, with older temples in the middle, arranged counterclockwise by age. By reducing the size of the interior temples,

1. Meilan Jin, Iliesa S. K. Delai, and Geoffrey M. Draper, "Visualizing Apostolic Succession," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2016): 115–26, quotation on 119, italics in original.

2. Jin, Delai, and Draper, "Visualizing Apostolic Succession," 120.

3. Geoffrey M. Draper, Yarden Livnat, and Richard F. Riesenfeld, "A Survey of Radial Methods for Information Visualization," *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* 15, no. 5 (September/October 2009): 759–76, especially 767–68, https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/4770098.

4. John V. Carlis and Joseph A. Konstan, "Interactive Visualization of Serial Periodic Data," in *Proceedings of the 11th Annual ACM Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology* (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, November 1998): 29–38, https://doi.org/10.1145/288392.288399.

we increase the total number of temples on the screen. Our assumption is that users will be more likely to interact with icons along the outer periphery of the spiral, so reducing the size of the inner icons is an acceptable compromise (see figs. 2a and 2b).

Prototype

As a proof of concept of our spiral visualization scheme, we have implemented a mobile app called Temples Timeline.[5] It is currently available for free on the Apple App Store, Google Play, and Amazon Appstore. The app is available in both English (fig. 2a) and Mandarin Chinese (fig. 2b).

Figure 2a. *(left)* Using a spiral layout allows us to fit more icons on the screen. The outermost icons are large enough to select, while the inner ones are smaller and provide context. **Figure 2b.** *(right)* Screenshot of the Temples Timeline app in Mandarin (Android version).

5. The app's original working title was Latter-day Temples. Some of the screenshots shown in this paper reflect the old title.

To keep the app running at interactive speeds, we limit the number of temples displayed to about sixty. In other words, the small icons near the center of the spiral do not continue ad infinitum. Once they are too small to see (approximately 1/16-inch diameter), the app no longer renders the image.

Interaction

The screen display is divided into two areas. The largest is the spiral visualization itself. Just below the visualization is a slider, with a knob (called a "thumb") that the user can drag left or right. In order to increase the app's usefulness, we included several options for interacting with the spiral:

- The user can move forward or backward in time by moving the slider thumb, by tapping the left/right arrow buttons, or simply by rotating the spiral itself (see figs. 3, 4, and 5).

Figure 3. By dragging the slider left, the spiral rotates clockwise, bringing older temples to the forefront. By dragging the slider right, the spiral rotates counterclockwise, introducing newer temples into the display.

Figure 4. By tapping the left and right buttons, the user can rotate the spiral one temple at a time.

Figure 5. The user can also rotate the spiral directly by dragging his or her finger in a circular pattern on the screen.

- The user can look up specific temples by name (fig. 6) or by year (figs. 7a and 7b).
- Tapping any temple image in the spiral opens a larger photo of that temple and shows additional information, such as announcement and dedication dates (figs. 8 and 9).

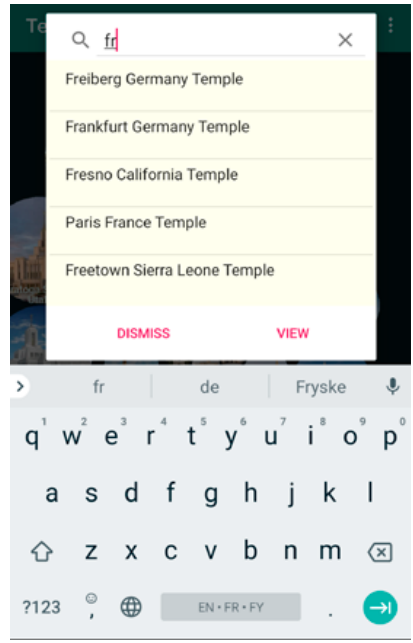

Figure 6. To look up a temple directly, the user can type its name into the search bar. The spiral then rotates to bring the selected temple to the outer arm of the spiral, and highlights its photo.

Future Work

Just as the Latter-day Apostles app's method for visualizing apostolic succession[6] was successfully applied to other domains,[7] we believe the visualization metaphor described in this paper can be readily applied to other forms of data. Possible applications of this visualization could include:

- A history of an organization, such as a business, university, or country.
- A succession of heads of state (for example, kings and presidents) of a country.
- A list of scientific discoveries in a given domain.
- An alternative representation of the periodic table of elements.

6. Jin, Delai, and Draper, "Visualizing Apostolic Succession," 115–26.

7. Iliesa S. K. Delai, Meilan Jin, and Geoffrey M. Draper, "Visualizing Time-Variant Sets on a Handheld Device," in *Proceedings of the 9th International Symposium on Visual Information Communication and Interaction* (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, September 2016): 140–41, https://doi.org/10.1145/2968220.2968231.

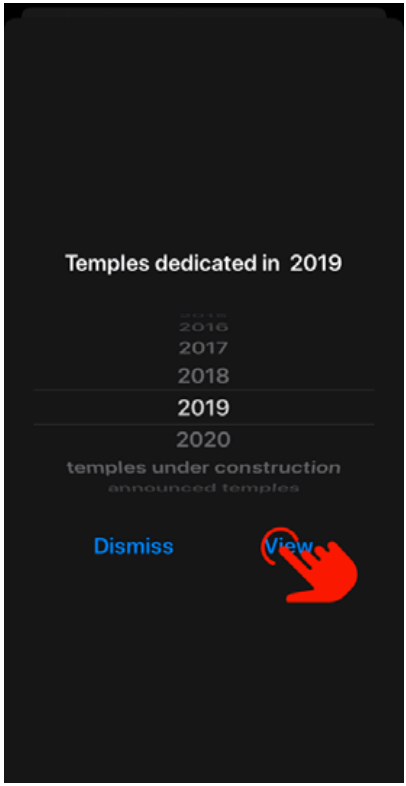

FIGURE 7A. The "year picker" allows the user to highlight temples dedicated in a given year.

FIGURE 7B. Once the year is selected, the temples dedicated during that year are highlighted, and the spiral rotates to bring them into the outermost ring.

Figure 8. Tapping a temple in the spiral brings up a larger photo of that temple along with additional details.

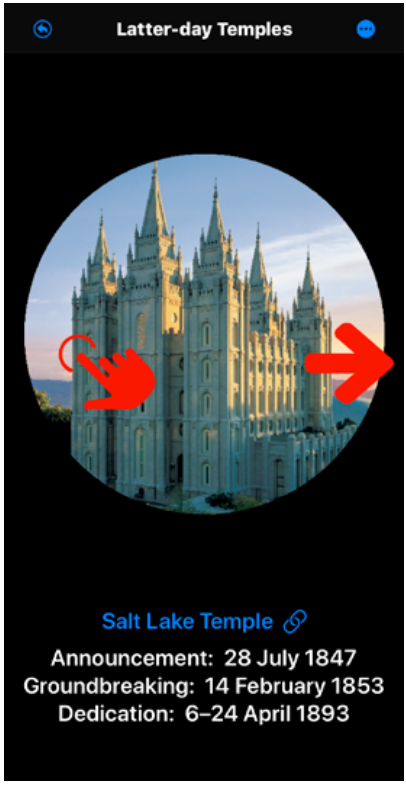

Figure 9. Swiping right or left on the temple photo brings up the previous or next temple, respectively.

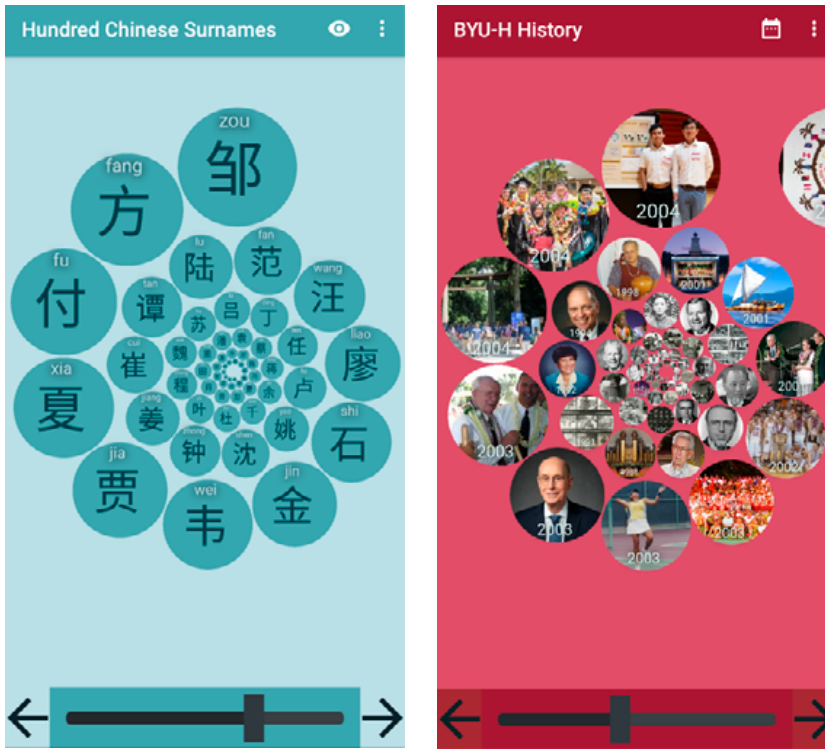

Figure 10a. *(left)* The Hundred Chinese Surnames app (available on Google Play and Amazon Appstore) uses the same visualization style as Temples Timeline, but with an entirely different data set. **Figure 10b.** *(right)* The BYUH History app also uses a spiral layout. (This app is not yet available online.)

As a proof of concept of applying this visualization to alternate data sets, we are developing two additional apps using a similar spiral layout. One focuses on visualizing Chinese surnames and culture,[8] while the other displays the historical milestones of Brigham Young University–Hawaii (figs. 10a and 10b).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented a technique for visualizing well-ordered sets on a handheld device. In contrast to the prior work of Jin, Delai, and

8. Litian Zhang, Tsz Chin Lam, and Geoffrey M. Draper, "Interactive Spiral: A Radial Visualization for Mobile Devices," in *Proceedings of the 14th IEEE Pacific Visualization Symposium* (April 2021), http://vis.tju.edu.cn/pvis2021/pdf/poster/poster-papers/1019-doc.pdf.

Draper, which was limited to approximately fifteen on-screen icons at a time, our technique can accommodate many times this number.

At the time of this writing, the Temples Timeline app has been downloaded over five hundred times. Initial feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive, and some features (in particular, the search-by-name feature shown in figure 6) were a direct result of users' suggestions. It is our hope that the Temples Timeline app will give its users a renewed appreciation for the beauty and sanctity of the temples as well as inspire Latter-day Saint software developers to build more apps that celebrate the unique culture and doctrines of the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

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After Whose Order?

Kingship and Priesthood in the Book of Mormon

Avram R. Shannon

The Book of Mormon represents itself as a strand of Israelite and Judahite religious tradition that flourished somewhere in the New World. Its acceptance by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as scripture means that the Book of Mormon forms part of the essential worldview of the Church. It certainly informs practice and liturgy in the Church, as the adoption of the sacrament prayers from Moroni 3 and 4 as the regular sacrament prayers for the Church indicates.[1] The interpretive road is not one-way, however. Just as the Book of Mormon informs and undergirds much of the teachings of the Church, so also do the Church's current teachings and practices inform how Latter-day Saints read and understand the Book of Mormon.

Because of this, the Book of Mormon is often read against Latter-day Saint ecclesiology and priesthood, such that the Nephite church is understood in connection to Latter-day Saint notions of church. In some cases, there are connections to be made.[2] In other cases, this can potentially cause

1. On this point see Scott H. Faulring, "The Book of Mormon: A Blueprint for Organizing the Church," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 60–69, 7; John W. Welch, "The Book of Mormon as the Keystone of Church Administration," in *A Firm Foundation: Church Organization and Administration,* ed. David J. Whittaker and Arnold K. Garr (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 15–57. For Oliver Cowdery's specific looking toward the Book of Mormon for Church organization and liturgy, see Faulring, "An Examination of the 1829 'Articles of the Church of Christ' in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants," in *Oliver Cowdery: Scribe, Elder, Witness,* ed. John W. Welch and Larry E. Morris (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2006), 155–95.

2. As noted, the modern use of the Nephite sacrament prayer is probably the most obvious place where there is an explicit connection. See also RoseAnn Benson, "The

a misreading of what is going on within the thought-world presented by the Book of Mormon. This is particularly evident in the oft-repeated claim by Latter-day Saints that the Nephites held only the Melchizedek Priesthood and did not hold the Aaronic Priesthood.[3] This does not really match the evidence of the Book of Mormon itself, which does not seem to think in the latter-day terms of Aaronic and Melchizedek orders. There are priesthood orders in the Book of Mormon, but they do not map neatly to modern Latter-day Saint notions of priesthood and church.[4]

This article illustrates the Nephite notions of priesthood and church in order to show that the Book of Mormon conception of priesthood is based on Judahite notions of kingly priesthood and ideas firmly rooted in the biblical law of Moses and the Sinai Covenant.[5] This is the underlying idea behind $Alma_2$'s discussion of Melchizedek in Alma 13. In this article, I first look at "priest" in the biblical record and tradition. I follow this with a discussion of Book of Mormon "priesthood" notions up to $Alma_1$ and $Alma_2$ (including the interaction with Nehor). Finally, I examine the conflict between $Alma_2$ and the Nehorite people of Ammonihah, where $Alma_2$ draws on a narrative expansion of the Melchizedek

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Book of Mormon: A Primer for Priesthood Leadership," *Religious Educator* 4, no. 2 (2003): 57–67; John W. Welch, "From Presence to Practice: Jesus, the Sacrament Prayers, the Priesthood, and Church Discipline in 3 Nephi 18 and Moroni 2–6," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 119–39.

3. See, for example, Paul Hoskisson, "By What Authority Did Lehi, a Non-Levite Priest, Offer Sacrifices?" *Ensign* 24, no. 3 (March 1994): 54; Robert L. Millet, "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, 1992), 61–88; Joseph Fielding McConkie, "Priesthood among the Nephites," in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion,* ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 656.

4. There are similar discussions about the relationship between the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament notions of the priesthood and the church in the New Testament, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The argument in the New Testament has intriguing continuity and discontinuity with the process in the Book of Mormon, especially in the intersection of Psalm 95, Psalm 100, and kingly priesthood. An in-depth discussion of this is outside the scope of the present study, however.

5. The staff at the website Book of Mormon Central have made schematic arguments similar to the argument of this paper, but they are not laid out in detail, nor are they supported in the broader history of Nephite priesthood. See "Why Did Alma Talk about Melchizedek?" Book of Mormon Central, accessed March 4, 2019, https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/why-did-alma-talk-about-melchizedek.

In another KnoWhy, the staff at Book of Mormon Central assumes that the Nephites had the Melchizedek Priesthood as generally understood by modern Latter-day Saints: "What Did the Book of Mormon Teach Early Church Leaders about the Order and Offices of the Priesthood?" Book of Mormon Central, accessed March 4, 2019, https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/what-did-the-book-of-mormon-teach-early-church-leaders-about-the-order-and-offices-of-the.

tradition in Genesis 14 to make his point about his priesthood order and its superiority to the order of Nehor.

Priesthood in the Church and Book of Mormon

The word "priesthood" appears only eight times in the Book of Mormon, with seven of those references appearing in Alma 13.[6] "Priest" appears much more often, with a count of 107, of which 90 appear in Alma and Mosiah. This suggests that the Book of Mormon authors are more concerned with individuals functioning in priestly roles than they are with the priesthood itself as a concept. The preferred term in the Book of Mormon for discussing authority in preaching and governance (concepts modern Latter-day Saints refer to as priesthood) is the "holy order of God."[7] $Alma_2$ nuances this concept by adding the notion that the "order of God" is also the order of the Son of God.[8] Most of the uses of both "holy order" and "priesthood" are centered on $Alma_2$ and the Nephite Reformation,[9] suggesting that ecclesiology was a topic of some concern for this period. This is supported by the reference to the "order of Nehor" in several places, hinting at other similar rival priesthood orders and claims.[10]

The Hebrew Bible uses "priest" many, many more times than the Book of Mormon does. *Kohen,* the standard Hebrew for "priest," appears 750 times, with almost 200 of those appearances in the biblical book of Leviticus.[11] Under the biblical system, "priest" refers to a class of cultic

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6. These are in Alma 13:6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 18. The reference that is not part of Alma's sermon in Alma 13 is in Alma 4:20.

7. See Jacob 6:2; introduction to the book of Alma; Alma 5:54; 6:1; 7:22; 13:1, 6, 11, 18; 49:30; Helaman 8:18; and Ether 12:10. The term *the holy order of God* shows up about thirteen times.

8. See Alma 13:1, 2, 7, 9, 16; Helaman 8:18. See also Doctrine and Covenants 76:57 and 107:1–4 for an example of a similar usage in other scriptures of the Restoration. Note that most of these examples are in Alma's discourse at Ammonihah.

9. I take this phrase from Grant Hardy. He uses it to describe $Alma_2$'s preaching journey after he resigns as chief judge in order to better be able to put in order the Church in the Nephite cities he visits, as seen in Alma 4–15. See Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 115.

10. See John W. Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press and Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2008), 211–18; Rex C. Reeve Jr., "Dealing with Opposition to the Church," 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, 1992), 15–25.

11. It appears a few more times in the King James Version of the Old Testament—785 to the Hebrew Bible's 750. This comes from translating other related words as "priest," such as *komer.*

officers who performed a variety of functions within the religious and ritual world of ancient Israel.[12] They were experts in sacrificial law and, by some biblical accounts, the only ones permitted to officiate at the altar.[13] They performed divinations through the oracular tools of the Urim and Thummim.[14] They taught the law of Moses, including its ethical and ritual components,[15] and served as judges when the law was transgressed.[16] In short, the priests were heavily embedded in the civil and religious systems of ancient Israel. It would be a mistake to relegate the priests in ancient Israel and Judah to a merely "religious role."

The KJV also contains the notion of a "priesthood." This word appears only nine times in the Old Testament, translated from a Hebrew term *kehunnah*.[17] In Exodus 40:15, Jehovah promises that the anointing of Aaron's sons will be an "everlasting priesthood [*kehunnat ʿolam*] throughout their generations." Contextually, this refers to the ritual and social privileges and responsibilities that were exercised by the priests. The book of Joshua, in describing the tribal divisions after the invasion of Canaan, notes that the tribe of Levi (discussed in more depth below) has no land inheritance, because "the priesthood [*kehunnah*] of Jehovah is their inheritance" (Joshua 18:7, author's own translation). This passage makes it clear that these obligations were associated in some ways with the rituals provided by the authority of Jehovah, the God of Israel. It should be noted, however, that the Old Testament and Hebrew Bible, although using "priesthood" to refer to the dignity and responsibilities of a priest, do not use it in the modern sense of the power and authority of God. Its relative rarity in the Bible is also worth observing.

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12. The Hebrew word *kohen* is of uncertain derivation and etymology. See כהן, in F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (1906; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishing, 2008), 463 (hereafter cited as *BDB*); Aelred Cody, *A History of the Old Testament Priesthood* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 26–29; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament,* Study Edition, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 461–62.

13. See Leviticus 3:1–6.

14. See Numbers 27:19–21 and Deuteronomy 33:8–11. How this worked on the ground can be seen in 1 Samuel 23:9–12 when David asks the priest Abiathar to enquire whether he will be betrayed. For further discussion on the oracular role of priests in the Hebrew Bible, see Ann Jeffers, *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 52–57. She discusses the Urim and Thummim on pages 209–15.

15. Leviticus 10:10–11.

16. Deuteronomy 17:8–13.

17. See כהנה, in *BDB,* 464.

Closely associated with the priests, although not identical, are the Levites.[18] According to the narrative world laid out by Genesis, the Levites descended from Levi, Jacob's son. The Levites are not given an inheritance of land during the allotment of the tribes, instead being assigned the tabernacle, or temple, and the cult[19] as their inheritance.[20] The Bible is not consistent on the roles of the Levites, but they are closely associated with priesthood, either as the priestly clan or in subordinate roles.[21]

This last point is key to understanding modern Latter-day Saint readings that claim that the Nephites had only the Melchizedek Priesthood. Within much of the Bible, Levites are framed as the only ones who ought to function as priests.[22] This point of view is well expressed in a narrative in 1 Kings 12. After Jeroboam I rebelled against Rehoboam and became king over Israel, he also set up in Dan and Bethel national shrines to rival the temple in Jerusalem. To the horror of the author of 1 Kings 12:31, Jeroboam "made priests from the whole of the people, including those who were not from the children of Levi."[23]

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18. Mark Leuchter, *The Levites and the Boundaries of Israelite Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Risto Nurmela, *The Levites: Their Emergence as a Second-Class Priesthood* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

19. Although "cult" is often used as a term for a distrusted religion, a usage that Latter-day Saints are very sensitive to, it can also mean the rituals and ceremonies of a temple. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives one of the definitions of "cult" as "a particular form or system of religious worship or veneration, esp. as expressed in ceremony or ritual directed towards a specified figure or object." *Oxford English Dictionary,* online edition, s.v. "cult," https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/45709?rskey=x8gXfU&result=1#eid. This meaning is the sense of the original Latin word *cultus,* and it is the sense in which it is used here.

20. Cody, *Old Testament Priesthood,* 29–38; Nurmela, *Levites,* 1–2.

21. Leuchter, "The Levites in the Hebrew Bible," *Religion Compass* 11 (2017): 1–12; Gary N. Knoppers, "Hierodules, Priests, or Janitors? The Levites in Chronicles and the History of the Israelite Priesthood," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118, no. 1 (1999): 49–72.

22. Raymond Abba, "Priests and Levites in Deuteronomy," *Vetus Testamentum* 27 (1977): 257–67; J. A. Emerton, "Priests and Levites in Deuteronomy," *Vetus Testamentum* 12 (1962): 129–38.

23. Author's own translation. See the discussion in Leuchter, *Levites and Boundaries,* 128–29. It is worth noting that there are figures, such as Samuel, who function as priests but are not specifically called out as being of Levitical descent. Leuchter notes, "It is noteworthy that the Samuel narratives do not explicitly refer to him as a Levite" ("The Levites in the Hebrew Bible"). Leuchter sees the Levitical genealogy which the Chronicler gives to Samuel as an example of tradition that "had long existed by" the Chronicler's day. See Leuchter, "Levites," 3. The nonspecification of Samuel's lineage in 1 Samuel (the phrase "Ephrathite" is ambiguous, referring to a city in Judah or someone from the tribe of Ephraim) means that Samuel is illustrating that the biblical insistence in Levites as priests is not ironclad.

It is at this point that the Book of Mormon narrative intersects the discussion. According to the account of the Book of Mormon, the Lehites were not Levites. Nephi claims that his father found out that he was a descendent of Joseph (1 Ne. 5:14), which is later specified to be specifically through the biblical tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3).

Yet one of the very first things we see Lehi doing in the Book of Mormon is officiating at an altar and offering animal sacrifice (1 Ne. 2:7).[24] As the Book of Mormon progresses, numerous individuals perform functions that the Bible generally reserves for the priesthood. Nephi builds a temple (2 Ne. 5:16) and ordains his brother a priest (2 Ne. 6:2). It is this conundrum that previous commentators have tried to solve by an appeal to Latter-day Saint notions of priesthood.

According to Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–5, the modern Church recognizes two orders of priesthood, the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood.[25] As the logic goes, since the Aaronic Priesthood is associated with the Levites, and the Lehites are not Levites, then the Lehites cannot have had the Aaronic Priesthood. Since they exercise priesthood functions, they must have had another body of priesthood authority, the Melchizedek Priesthood, which can officiate in Aaronic environments.[26]

The problem with this solution is that it does not really accord with the evidence of the Book of Mormon.[27] As noted above, the Book of Mormon never talks about either the Melchizedek or Aaronic Priesthood, and it certainly does not contrast the two. Lehite discourse on priesthood does not seem to mention the Melchizedek and Aaronic divide that informs much of Latter-day Saint discourse on priesthood.

Priests and Kings Up to Alma

The Nephite position on priesthood derives from concerns related to the Judahite monarchy, especially the close association between the king and the priesthood, meaning those functioning as priests. The ancient

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24. On this point, see David Rolph Seely, "Lehi's Altar and Sacrifice in the Wilderness," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001): 62–69, 80. Seely argues that Lehi's sacrifice is not specifically against the centralized cult laid out in Deuteronomy 12.

25. Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), 396.

26. This line of argument is cogently laid out in Millet, "Holy Order."

27. Unsurprisingly, these arguments derive from distinctive elements of Latter-day Saint doctrine and discourse as they have developed in the modern Church of Jesus Christ. There is no inherent problem with this, of course, but the purpose of the present study is to clarify the distinctive Book of Mormon usage.

Israelite and Judahite king was the head of the temple organization and priesthood.[28] In connection with this, biblical scholar Lester L. Grabbe argues that the king "seems to have been the chief religious figure in Israel."[29] Roland de Vaux notes, "The fact remains that the king, sanctified by his anointing and adopted by Yahweh, is a sacred person and seems thereby to be empowered to perform religious functions."[30] For instance, Solomon, David, and numerous other kings officiated at the sacrificial altar.[31] Solomon himself, when he built the temple, offered up the dedicatory prayer.[32] Even the postmonarchic book of Chronicles has David and Hezekiah at the head of the Jerusalem priestly cult, with authority to make changes.[33] Before the Babylonian Exile, the Judahite kings were an integral part of the priesthood and the cult and possessed sacral functions.[34]

Although Nephi is not the same as a Davidic king, and disdained to be identified as a king, he inherits the close association between kingship and priesthood he had experienced living in Jerusalem. Nephi builds a temple and ordains and consecrates his brothers as priests. When ordained a priest, Jacob states, "I, Jacob, having been called of God, and ordained after the manner of his holy order, and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi, unto whom ye look as a king or a protector" (2 Ne. 6:2). Note here that Jacob does not appeal to Nephi's role as a prophet to explain his consecration to the priesthood, but instead notes that the people look to Nephi "as a king or a protector." It is Nephi's

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28. Debora W. Rooke, "Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar,* ed. John Day (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 187–208; Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995), 20–29, 35–40, 181–82. See also Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967).

29. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages,* 181.

30. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 113. See the whole discussion at 113–14.

31. David and Solomon get by without much ire from the biblical authors. Ahaz offers sacrifice on an altar built after a Damascene pattern in 2 Kings 16:10–16. The postmonarchal book of Chronicles, however, has a story where Uzziah is punished with leprosy for exercising priestly privileges (2 Chr. 26:16–21). This likely reflects the Chronicler's perspective on kingship and priesthood in the post-Exilic period. Uzziah and Ahaz are discussed in Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages,* 25.

32. 1 Kings 8.

33. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages,* 40.

34. Leuchter, *Levites and Boundaries,* 104–7.

kingship that provides the ritual authority to build and regulate the temple, including the ordination of priests.[35]

As priests at a shrine that is "after the manner of the temple of Solomon" (2 Ne. 5:16), Jacob and Joseph would have been responsible for the various offerings required under the law of Moses. They would have functioned similarly to those Levitical priests who officiated in the temple in Jerusalem. It is likely not appropriate to call them Levitical priests because of their apparent non-Levitical ancestry, but because they officiated in the temple under the law of Moses, it is appropriate to call them Mosaic priests.[36] They officiate and sacrifice under the law and operate within a Mosaic shrine. Although Jacob does not specify what he means by "holy order," in its everyday application his priesthood functions within biblical parameters—he is a priest in a Mosaic order, officiating in a Mosaic shrine and functioning under the ultimate oversight of the king, who is a "sacred person."

The relationship between kings and priests continues under the various kings who follow Nephi. Benjamin, Mosiah_2, Zeniff, and even Noah all ordain and consecrate priests.[37] Unlike the biblical record, the Book of Mormon makes no narrative claims about priests and their qualifications, including the assumption that kings are to be excluded from the priesthood. Even Noah, the archetypical "bad king" in the Book of Mormon, is not punished for exercising priesthood functions.[38] The

35. Even Nephi's ordaining members of his own family has precedent in Judahite kingship. A list of David's officers in 2 Samuel 8:18 notes, "David's sons were priests." KJV has "chief rulers," but the underlying Hebrew of this verse clearly reads *kohanim,* or priests. See Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages,* 23; and Rooke, "Kingship as Priesthood," 190 n. 10.

36. "Mosaic priest" is a term of convenience. Although there is strong evidence in the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament of a priesthood that claimed both literal and ideological roots from Moses (for example, Moses is identified as a priest along with Aaron in Psalm 99:6), this does not seem to be informing Nephite notions of priesthood. The term *Mosaic* is used in the present study only as a term for priests who functioned under the Mosaic law and covenant but did not have Levitical or Aaronite descent, without claim to a specific model from Moses. In scholarship, the general term for priests descended from Moses is *Mushite priesthood.* The idea of a Mushite priesthood has been argued since Julius Wellhausen in the nineteenth century. See the discussion in Leuchter, "The Fightin' Mushites," *Vetus Testamentum* 62 (2012): 479–500. This is further explored in Leuchter, *Levites and Boundaries,* 59–93.

37. Daniel C. Peterson, "Priesthood in Mosiah," in *The Book of Mormon: Mosiah, Salvation Only through Jesus Christ,* ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1991), 187–210.

38. This is in contradistinction to Uzziah (2 Chr. 26:16–21) or even Saul (1 Sam. 15:10–24), but it is similar to David or Solomon.

ordinary situation in the Book of Mormon, up until $Mosiah_2$, is that Mosaic priests function as sacrificial officers in and around the shrines, appointed by and serving at the behest of the king, who is head of the temple and its cult.[39]

It is King Noah who ends the close association between the kingship and the priesthood.[40] Noah appoints priests, but significantly he does so after "put[ting] down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father" (Mosiah 11:5). Noah's clean sweep points to his desire to have a priesthood that would support him in his chosen lifestyle. According to the Book of Mormon narrative, this leads to condemnation by a prophet.[41] Abinadi's denunciation of Noah and his priests' misunderstanding of the law of Moses is persuasive to $Alma_1$, who after pleading for Abinadi's life is required to flee from the king's anger. This event proves to be decisive in Nephite development of priesthood.

According to Mosiah 18, $Alma_1$ begins to teach Abinadi's words privately (18:1). As people begin to believe his preaching, $Alma_1$ organizes them into a church. This is the first time a "church," as such, has been organized among the Nephites.[42] According to Mosiah 18:18, $Alma_1$, "having authority from God, ordained priests."[43] It is, in many ways, the ordination of these priests that creates the new church, because Alma here creates a body, with priests ordained by him, who are not connected to the king's authority.[44] According to Mormon, the functions of these priests are slightly different as well, because $Alma_1$ ordains these priests "to preach unto them, and to teach them concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 18:18). These are priests who

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39. Peterson, "Priesthood in Mosiah," 194.

40. When dissolving the monarchy, Mosiah cites Noah as one of the primary arguments for moving away from kings. See Mosiah 28:18–21.

41. The unpleasant job of speaking truth to the king was, of course, one of the primary jobs of a prophet in the ancient Israelite conception. See J. Blake Couey, "Amos vii 10–17 and Royal Attitudes toward Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," *Vetus Testamentum* 58 (2008): 300–14.

42. Kerry Hull, "Two Case Studies on the Development of the Concept of Religion: The New Testament and the Book of Mormon," *Religious Educator* 17 (2016): 41–63.

43. As here, Mormon notes in a number of places that Alma received authority from God. This suggests that Mormon was uncomfortable with Alma's authority coming exclusively from his ordination as a priest by Noah.

44. Peterson, "Priesthood in Mosiah," 201. It is worth noting that even in the Church of Jesus Christ today, the Lord recognizes the legal authority of priesthood officers, even if they are marred by personal unrighteousness. If a man in the Church today is ordained to an office by someone who is secretly having an affair, that does not invalidate the ordination.

seem to be intended to function primarily as teachers, rather than as sacrificial officers.[45]

Eventually this church, with its freshly ordained priesthood, has to flee from Noah's concern that $Alma_1$ was "stirring up the people to rebellion against him," a legitimate worry, given $Alma_1$'s assumption of the kingly prerogative of ordaining priests (Mosiah 18:33). After a variety of difficulties, $Alma_1$ and his church end up in Zarahemla.

The Church in Zarahemla

It is in Zarahemla that the real test of $Alma_1$'s priestly order finds expression in the relationship between King $Mosiah_2$ and $Alma_1$. The Church had been established in rebellion to the king and priestly order in the land of Lehi-Nephi. In Zarahemla, "king Mosiah granted unto Alma that he might establish churches throughout all the land of Zarahemla; and gave him power to ordain priests and teachers over every church" (Mosiah 25:19). $Mosiah_2$ is the one who gives $Alma_1$ authority over priestly ordination among the Nephites at Zarahemla. The Book of Mormon narrative shows that $Alma_1$'s church and priesthood do *not* replace the temple and its priesthood.[46] Although it is unusual for us to think about the temple and the church being separate organizations, there is continuity with the Church today, where the temples are outside of the regular hierarchy.[47]

There are two elements in the narrative in the end of Mosiah that point to this idea. According to the Book of Mormon, $Alma_1$ is not sure what to do with people who are members of the new Church but are breaking commandments, because "not any such thing happened before in the church" (Mosiah 26:10). This is unsurprising, of course, since the church set up by $Alma_1$ is new. $Alma_1$ sends these people to $Mosiah_2$, who sends them back, saying, "Behold, I judge them not; therefore I deliver them into thy hands" (Mosiah 26:12). By giving $Alma_1$ this

45. John W. Welch, "The Melchizedek Material in Alma 13:13–19," in *By Study and Also by Faith,* vol. 2, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990), 238–72.

46. Most of our evidence for this point is circumstantial. One argument, which is unfortunately from silence, is the lack of reference to temple notions like sacrifice. In addition, $Alma_2$ travels and preaches—something that would have been difficult to do if he were high priest of a stationary shrine.

47. See the discussion in Barbara Morgan Gardner, *The Priesthood Power of Women: In the Temple, Church, and Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2019), 21–23. Gardner's entire study is a valuable tool for thinking about how priesthood works among God's people.

authority, $Mosiah_2$ essentially ratifies the independence of the church, including its priestly organization.[48]

The other move that $Mosiah_2$ makes comes because of the difficulties that this new religious group faces. According to Mosiah 27:1, people outside the church begin to persecute people in the church, leading Mosiah to consult with his priests. These priests are not part of $Alma_1$'s church but are part of that same priestly order and organization that $Mosiah_2$'s father, Benjamin, appointed at the beginning of Mosiah's reign (Mosiah 6:3).[49] After this consultation, $Mosiah_2$ forbids persecution. This action has profound implications for the Nephite understanding of priesthood.

Allowing the church to exist as a protected organization, with a separate order of priesthood, provides space for other organizations to exist and even to flourish.[50] Alma 1 describes the rise of a man by the name of Nehor. Nehor preaches a message that priests and teachers do not need to work but should be supported by the people. This is against the system in $Alma_1$'s church, which does not have its clergy supported by the people, presumably because of the abuses of the priests of Noah (Mosiah 18:26). It should be noted that the teachings of Nehor more closely reflect the situation of priests under the law of Moses. Under that law, priests are supported by the tithes of the people. Versions of this particular regulation are found in both Deuteronomic-type (Deut. 14:21–29) and Priestly-type (Num. 18:20–24) traditions. Nehor's order, which is—like $Alma_1$'s church—a separate priesthood order from Mosiah's temple priesthood, requires its priests to be supported similar to the requirements under the law of Moses.

However, $Alma_2$ does not accept the legitimacy of Nehor's priesthood order. Nehor gets into an argument with a member of Alma's church, Gideon, and kills him. This allows for the legal prosecution of Nehor, since he killed someone, which is punishable under the law of Moses.[51] $Alma_2$, as chief judge, rejects Nehor's defensive arguments, stating, "Behold, this

48. Peterson, "Priesthood in Mosiah," 203. Peterson seems to think, however, that the church's priesthood became the dominant priesthood among the Nephites. This does not seem to be the case, because Alma's church does not appear to be over the temple and its sacrifices.

49. John W. Welch briefly alludes to this, along with the legal space it creates, in *Legal Cases,* 214–15.

50. Peterson, "Priesthood in Mosiah," 204 n. 10.

51. See Exodus 20:13 and Alma 1:18; see also the discussion in Welch, *Legal Cases,* 226–28.

is the first time that priestcraft has been introduced among this people" (Alma 1:12). From the perspective of $Alma_2$ (who is high priest of the church in addition to being chief judge), the priesthood order claimed by Nehor and his followers is in some way illegitimate. $Alma_2$'s claim that "this is the first time that priestcraft has been introduced among" the Nephites makes sense, because it is only after the founding of $Alma_1$'s church that there is space for an independent religious body. Although Nehor is executed for killing Gideon, his organization continues. After all, the rebel Amlici is "after the order of the man that slew Gideon by the sword" (Alma 2:1).[52]

Alma at Ammonihah

We have seen how Nephite notions of priesthood are fundamentally Mosaic, with power and authority centered on the king. Although the Nephite temple is like the temple of Solomon, with priests performing ordinances according to the law of Moses, there is no reference to the biblical individuals of Aaron or Levi, or the families or priesthood orders named after them, in the Book of Mormon.[53] There is also no reference to the figure of Melchizedek until $Alma_2$ comes to Ammonihah. In many ways, the various threads about kingship and priesthood, and $Alma_2$'s and Nehor's competing priestly claims, come to a head in the city of Ammonihah.

The chief judge and many of those in power in Ammonihah are "after the order and faith of Nehor" (Alma 14:16). Indeed, when they cast $Alma_2$ out initially, they claim that he cannot preach to them because they are not part of his church (Alma 8:11). Alma's position as high priest of the church is not only not persuasive; it serves as a negative argument.

Connected to this is an attack on $Alma_2$'s authority in general. When $Alma_2$ comes back to Ammonihah, the people ask him, "Who is God, that sendeth no more authority than one man among this people, to declare unto them the truth of such great and marvelous things?" (Alma 9:6). This question on $Alma_2$'s authority is the other thread that feeds into his discussion about priesthoods and orders.[54]

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52. Amlici's rebellion probably exacerbated relations between the organizations founded by $Alma_1$ and Nehor.

53. The possible exception to this is $Mosiah_2$'s son Aaron, but even with that there is no specific reference to priesthood or Moses's brother.

54. Thanks to Brian Holdaway for suggesting this to me.

In the latter part of Alma 12, $Alma_2$ cites Psalm 95, which speaks about the children of Israel not being allowed to enter into the land of Canaan, called the "rest" of the Lord in Psalm 95.[55] Because Psalm 95 is centered on the Exodus, $Alma_2$'s admonishment to "cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children" (Alma 13:1) suggests that "these commandments" refers to the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.[56] The priests $Alma_2$ discusses in connection with these commandments would then be those priests who taught and officiated in the law of Moses.[57]

$Alma_2$'s claims that these priests were Mosaic[58] is central to his argument to the people of Ammonihah. According to $Alma_2$, at the same time that God gave the law he "ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son" (Alma 13:1). These priests were the biblical priests and Levites whose duties are spelled out in the law of Moses. $Alma_2$ suggests that the calling to this priesthood was connected to both the foreknowledge of God and their own personal keeping of the commandments (Alma 13:3–4).[59] He ends this by reminding his hearers that this calling was after the order of the Son (Alma 13:9). $Alma_2$ finishes this discussion with an amen, and there is a chapter break here in the first edition of the Book of Mormon. The continuation of Alma 13:10 and what follows represents a different strand of thinking on $Alma_2$'s part.

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55. For a chiastic analysis that suggests that the central idea in Alma 13:1–9 is the notion of rest coming out of Psalm 95, see James T. Duke, "The Literary and Doctrinal Significance of Alma 13:1–9," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 103–18. Biblical scholars identify Psalm 95 as an enthronement Psalm, placing its discussion in the realm of kingship. See Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 68–70. The royal context of this psalm may be behind its connection to kingship and priesthood here in Alma 13.

56. A. Keith Thompson, "Were We Foreordained to the Priesthood, or Was the Standard of Worthiness Foreordained? Alma 13 Reconsidered," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 249–74.

57. It is common to connect this entire passage to Latter-day Saint notions of premortality and foreordination. This is done explicitly in LeGrand L. Baker and Stephen D. Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord? The Psalms in Israel's Temple Worship in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2011), 573–82. However, it is not necessary to read it this way, and there is evidence that it should not be read this way. See the discussion in Kimberly M. Berkey, "Untangling Alma 13:3," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 23 (2014): 187–91. See also Thompson, "Were We Foreordained to the Priesthood," 265–67. Although Thompson pushes against reading Alma 13 as speaking about foreordination, he operates under the assumption that Nephites conceived of their priesthood as the "Melchizedek Priesthood."

58. See note 31.

59. As noted above, God's foreknowledge does not need to imply that the Nephites had the same beliefs about foreordination as modern Latter-day Saints.

In 13:10–12, he reminds his hearers that these former high priests achieved their status through "faith and repentance." For $Alma_2$, entrance to the priesthood order is based on repentance and choosing righteousness. This is, in many ways, the rhetorical point of his teaching about these high priests. In 13:13, he tells his hearers at Ammonihah that he wants them to repent and enter into the rest of the Lord. It is at this point that $Alma_2$ brings Melchizedek into his instruction.

$Alma_2$'s use of Melchizedek is intriguing and builds extensively on the biblical narrative. The only narrative about Melchizedek in the Hebrew Bible is extremely vague. He appears in the narrative only in Genesis 14:17–20, where after Abraham's victory over Chedorlaomor, Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of El-Elyon ("most high God" in KJV), brings bread and wine (14:18). Melchizedek then blesses Abraham, and Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek.[60] Alma 13 expands on this narrative significantly, adding information like the fact that the people Melchizedek ruled over "had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination; yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness" (Alma 13:17).[61]

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60. Melchizedek generated a lot of discussion in ancient Jewish and Christian biblical interpretation, as well as in Latter-day Saint readings of scripture. See J. Reiling, "Melchizedek," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible,* 2nd ed., ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999): 560–62; Moshe Reiss, "The Melchizedek Traditions," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 26 (2012): 259–65; Ioan Chirila, Stelian Pasca-Tusa, and Elena Onetiu, "Reconstruction of Melchizedek's History in Rabbinic and Christian Traditions," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 48 (2017): 3–15; Ann N. Madsen, "Melchizedek at Qumran and Nag Hammadi," in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints,* ed. C. Wilfred Griggs (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1986), 285–95; Welch, "Melchizedek Material," 247–54. For a discussion of the Latter-day Saint reading of the person of Melchizedek, especially in connection with Enoch and Zion, see Frank F. Judd Jr., "Melchizedek: Seeking After the Zion of Enoch," in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament,* ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 2005), 69–82. Judd draws on Alma 13 for his analysis and connects Melchizedek with Latter-day Saint notions of priesthood.

61. The source for $Alma_2$'s larger Melchizedek narrative is not made clear in the text of the Book of Mormon. It certainly contains material that is not found in the Genesis account. The only clue that $Alma_2$ gives is his statement, "Now, there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater; therefore, of him they have more particularly made mention" (Alma 13:19). Again, $Alma_2$ does not specify who "they" are, but his immediately following assertion that "the scriptures are before you" (13:20) suggests that this is coming from a tradition that he sees as scriptural. Joseph Smith's New Translation contains a lengthy addition about Melchizedek, which has some continuity with the account in Alma 13 and some differences. JST Genesis 14:26–30 talks about how Melchizedek performed miracles in his childhood and was an

The narrative expansion and description of Melchizedek's people is not a sideline to $Alma_2$'s point. On the contrary, it is entirely the point he wants to make. $Alma_2$ does not say that the people of Ammonihah should be priests like Melchizedek. Instead, he says, "Humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek" (Alma 13:14). $Alma_2$'s point in this part of the sermon is that his people should be like the *people* in Melchizedek's day.

In fact, unlike the discussion in the latter part of Alma 12 and the first nine verses of chapter 13, the discussion in 13:10–19 does not seem to be primarily about high priests as such. Melchizedek is identified as a high priest, but this identification is placed in the discussion of the repentance of the people of Ammonihah. After talking about the wickedness of the people, $Alma_2$ makes this statement: "But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days" (Alma 13:18). This is another narrative expansion building off Genesis 14. In $Alma_2$'s view, not only is Melchizedek a priest and king, but he is also a successful preacher of repentance.

$Alma_2$'s point that Melchizedek preached repentance to the people, who believed him and repented, so that Melchizedek was able to "establish peace in the land in his days," is key to the rhetorical point that $Alma_2$ is making about the function and role of his priestly order. $Alma_2$ is himself a high priest preaching repentance. In Alma 13:14, he explicitly connects his hearers to the people of Melchizedek, and here he implicitly connects himself to Melchizedek. $Alma_2$ is rhetorically looking for history to repeat itself here, with himself as the Melchizedek figure and the people of Ammonihah as the potentially penitent people of Salem.

There is another side to $Alma_2$ using Melchizedek as his model high priest. I have already shown that $Alma_2$'s conception of priesthood, even in Alma 12 and 13, is fundamentally Mosaic. In addition to Melchizedek's role as a successful preacher of repentance, Melchizedek is significant because he was both a king[62] and a priest, but not a Mosaic priest, making him a key figure for understanding priestly orders in a non-Mosaic light.

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exemplary high priest. See Judd, "Melchizedek," 69–72; and Welch, "Melchizedek Material," 263–64.

62. Indeed, his name in Hebrew means "king of righteousness." See the discussion on Melchizedek in relationship to kingship and priesthood in Rooke, "Kingship as Priesthood," 188–89.

Melchizedek is, therefore, a powerful symbol of kingly priesthood.[63] By connecting himself to Melchizedek, $Alma_2$ is linking into the traditions of kingly priesthood.[64] By means of joining his own priestly work to that of Melchizedek, the priest-king *par excellence,* $Alma_2$ argues that his own priestly order is the legitimate inheritor of the kingly priesthood established by Nephi, and not that of Nehor.

Melchizedek's status as king and non-Mosaic priest are both meaningful to the competing claims of the order of Nehor and Alma's priesthood order. These orders are not Mosaic in the sense of being associated with the shrine and officiating the ritual law of Moses. $Alma_2$'s citation of a Melchizedek tradition and his implicit claim to be like Melchizedek in his preaching of repentance illustrates how he conceives of his priestly mission. According to Alma 1:3, Nehor preaches a universal salvation without the need for redemption. By showing that Melchizedek was a successful preacher of repentance, $Alma_2$ underscores the claims of his own priesthood order, showing that it is the heir of a legitimate non-Mosaic priestly tradition connected to the preaching of repentance.

$Alma_2$'s discussion of the high priesthood and Melchizedek in Alma 13 represents a legitimate response to the inquiries made by the people of Ammonihah about $Alma_2$'s authority and his relationship to the law set up by King Mosiah. $Alma_2$ is suggesting that the church, with its attendant priesthood, inherited some of the authority of the kingship, and that he as high priest is a kingly priest, who could preach repentance among his people just like Melchizedek.

Conclusion

The discussions of the priesthood in the Book of Mormon derive from concepts coming from the broader Judahite religious world. The Nephite priests were fundamentally associated with the rituals and organization of the temple and the law of Moses. Additionally, from Nephi to $Alma_1$ founding a church in rebellion to King Noah, the king was at the head of

63. Psalm 110:5. See the brief discussion in Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend,* 584.

64. There seems to have been some flux around this ideological notion when $Mosiah_2$ dissolved the monarchy in favor of judges. As the first chief judge, $Alma_2$ took over some of the legal functions of the Nephite king. He does not seem to have taken over the priestly functions of the king. This is visible in the Book of Mormon text in the story of Amlici and his attempt to reinstitute a monarchy. The worry of the church was that he would "deprive them of their rights and privileges of the church" (Alma 2:4). This suggests that should Amlici have become king, he would have resumed regulatory power over priesthood matters among the Nephites.

the Nephite priestly organization. When $Alma_1$'s church came to Zarahemla, $Mosiah_2$ gave the church space to grow and thrive, also giving rise to Nehor's competing claims. It is only in the context of these competing claims that $Alma_2$ brought up Melchizedek. Nephite priesthood was centered on kingship and temple, including Mosaic sacrifices.

This provides a reason for why there is no mention in the Book of Mormon of either the Melchizedek or the Aaronic priesthoods. $Alma_2$'s citation of Melchizedek was not to show that the priests among the Nephites were all Melchizedek high priests in the sense the term is used in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, because it is clear from Alma 12 and 13 that $Alma_2$ is thinking of those whom God called when he gave the law of Moses. The priests Alma had in mind were temple priests under the law of Moses. Melchizedek was not a Mosaic priest, but instead of talking about an entirely different priesthood, Alma is using Melchizedek primarily to explain his own preaching mission, not just to teach about priesthood doctrine. Although the Nephites may have functioned in the priestly order that modern Latter-day Saints call the Melchizedek Priesthood, it cannot be shown from the Book of Mormon, which presents priesthood through a lens of ancient temples and kingship.

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In the Garden

Tumbling about in nervous flight
still getting the feel for the lift—
                it flutters
    and keeps to shadow
        its blue eyes melting into dark.

Papilio Machaon, after Asclepius's son,
or swallowtail because of its wings
                like feathers
    all geometry and movement
        the mute beauty of givenness.

Once it crawled on a fennel stalk
gorging on sweet leaves until it
                felt something
    in its own fullness, and outside
        a sputter of wind, a mutter

of movement here in the garden
where once it spun its chrysalis
                like a tomb
    and every part of who it was—
        feet osmeterium spiracles—

and all, disappeared, died, transformed
beyond anything it could have
                imagined
    the imago with its yellow
        wings, black veins, red-blue

eyes that don't see or hear but feel
a prayer, a groaning, a plea—
                quivering
    through its wings, engines of flight
        still slick with emergence.

—John Alba Cutler

This poem tied for third place in the 2021 Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.

The Early Development of Latter-day Saint Women's History

An Interview with Jill Mulvay Derr

Cherry Bushman Silver

This piece is half of an interview conducted by Cherry B. Silver on August 8, 2019, in the BYU Studies offices. The second half of the interview was published in BYU Studies Quarterly *59, no. 3. Many thanks to Laurel Barlow for transcribing the recording.*

Silver: Jill, we are grateful that you entered the field of women's history, but it might never have happened. Will you describe your background and how you made the transition from educator to research historian?

Derr: Thank you, Cherry. I grew up in Salt Lake City and graduated from the University of Utah in English; I then went on to the Harvard Graduate School of Education and took a master's degree of arts in teaching. I taught in the Boston public schools for two years, and while I was living in the Cambridge area, I heard Maureen Ursenbach [Beecher] give a lecture. Leonard J. Arrington had recently become Church Historian, and Maureen had signed on with him as an editor in the new History Division.[1] One of her first assignments was biographical research on Eliza R. Snow. So, the Boston women who had initiated an

1. Leonard J. Arrington was appointed Church Historian in January 1972. Subsequently, what was formerly the Church Historian's Office became the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with Arrington as head of research and writing in the department's History Division. See Gregory A. Prince, "Church Historian: The 'Camelot' Years," in *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 152–91.

institute class to study Latter-day Saint women—Claudia Bushman, Laurel Ulrich, and others—invited Maureen to come and talk to them about what she had discovered about the life of Eliza R. Snow. Claudia made an open invitation to everyone in all the Cambridge wards to attend. I hadn't been affiliated with the Boston women's group—I was single, and most of them were married—but I went to that lecture. It was stunning to me. I had no idea that this person Eliza R. Snow had been such a prominent, accomplished figure. I was blown away. I remember asking Maureen, "How did you find all this out?" She talked about her work in the History Division, and that was essentially that.

I had already decided, after two years of teaching, that I would return to Salt Lake and get a teaching job in Utah. But once I returned, I couldn't find a job in the schools. Then another associate from Cambridge, Kathryn Hansen [Shirts], told me about internships in the newly organized Church Historical Department.[2] They were looking for young scholars, and without a job, I thought I could at least work as an intern during that fall. I went to the east wing of the Church Office Building and had a wonderful conversation with Church Historian Leonard Arrington and his assistants, Davis Bitton and James B. Allen. When they hired me to work with Maureen on Eliza R. Snow, I couldn't have been more thrilled. My initial assignment was to work on Eliza's poetry. I started with her two volumes of poetry, then began going through the *Woman's Exponent,* the *Deseret News,* and the *Juvenile Instructor*—everywhere I might find and collect her poems. I had a little box that held 3″ × 5″ index cards. We were being very scrupulous about supplies, so these were not new cards but old library catalog cards that I turned over. For each poem, I typed the title, its first line, and the place where it had been published. I kept adding sources to the card if I found the same poem in other publications. That was the beginning of the poetry project and my acquaintance with Eliza Snow.

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2. In 1972, the Church Historian's Office was renamed the Church Historical Department. In 2000, it merged with the Family History Department to form the Family and Church History Department. In 2008, the two departments split, with the history side becoming the Church History Department. In this interview, we use the appropriate name for the time period being discussed, even though three different names apply to the same department.

Silver: And how happy for all of us that the research came to fruition, some years later, in the form of a volume of Eliza's collected poetry.[3] You had some other assignments while employed in the Church Historical Department. Tell us about those.

Jill Mulvay Derr. Photo by Melese Spaulding Miller.

Derr: I was, as many of us start out, a checker of footnotes, footnotes for the then-forthcoming book assembled by the Boston women and compiled and edited by Claudia Bushman: *Mormon Sisters,* published in 1976.[4] I checked footnotes for the essays in that book and also added an article of my own. Since I had been teaching school, I did a piece on Latter-day Saint schoolmarms.

Silver: That book has been very useful to many of us.

Derr: When my internship was finished, I was given a full-time position in the History Division in connection with the newly funded James H. Moyle Oral History Program. My work on Eliza continued, but as part of the oral history program I had the opportunity to do many interviews with women leaders. I interviewed Belle Spafford and LaVern Parmley, both of whom had recently been released from their long-term service as General Presidents: Belle Spafford as president of the Relief Society and LaVern Parmley as president of the Primary. That was an eye-opening assignment for me. It plunged me into the *Relief Society Magazine,* which I loved. This was, as you can see, sort of on-the-spot training. I was looking through the *Deseret News,* the *Woman's Exponent,* and other periodicals searching for the

3. Jill Mulvay Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson, eds., *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009).

4. Claudia L. Bushman, ed., *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (1976; Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997).

poetry of Eliza R. Snow, and I was also delving into the *Relief Society Magazine* to look at Belle Spafford's life. She became a member of the Relief Society General Board in 1935 and was released as president in 1974, so my research and interviews provided great exposure across many decades, and I loved it.

This was an exciting time in Latter-day Saint women's history. Leonard Arrington was committed to getting women's stories into Latter-day Saint history, as he had done in his seminal article, "The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women," published in the *Western Humanities Review* in 1955.[5] He not only assigned Maureen this work on Eliza Snow but lent support to various other projects as well. He gave researchers access to the incredible files he had been assembling on individual women for years and years. Maureen was a gifted networker and called together women who might be interested in working on individual Latter-day Saint women. This great team of intelligent women, mostly with little or no academic training in history, drew upon Leonard's files initially to work on the lives of various Latter-day Saint women. Vicki Burgess-Olsen pulled their work together in a very early compilation of biographical essays titled *Sister Saints,* published here at Brigham Young University in 1978.[6]

A second effort that grew out of this time of awakening was the Emma Hale Smith biography. Linda Newell and Val Avery were committed to writing about Emma Smith.[7] The Church hadn't had a serious biography of Emma, and Leonard fully supported the project. Maureen helped facilitate some of that early work and access to the archives. In addition, Maureen and I began meeting every Wednesday for lunch at the Lion House to

5. Leonard J. Arrington, "The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women," *Western Humanities Review* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1955): 145–64. See also Leonard J. Arrington, "The Search for Truth and Meaning in Mormon History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 61–62, where he emphasizes the critical importance of including women in Latter-day Saint history.

6. Vicky Burgess-Olson, ed., *Sister Saints,* Series Studies in Mormon History, vol. 5 (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978). The next year, Carol Cornwall Madsen and David J. Whittaker published an overview of women's history sources and scholarship. "History's Sequel: A Source Essay on Women in Mormon History," *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979): 123–45.

7. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804–1879* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984).

discuss ongoing projects together with women researchers who came regularly to the archives, such as Linda Newell and Lavina Fielding Anderson, who was then with the *Ensign.* That helped us share information and ideas, fueled the Emma biography, and resulted in other good things that happen when people collaborate. That little luncheon group always gathered at a round table, so sometimes there were eight or nine people, all interested in various research and writing projects. For example, Linda Wilcox had an interest in Mother in Heaven and was doing her early work on that topic. Eventually those projects came together under the direction of Maureen and Lavina.

Silver: Did *Sisters in Spirit,* that compilation, grow out of your Wednesday group?[8]

Derr: Exactly. That was one fruit of that discussion group.

Silver: Notable essays.

Derr: Leonard had also asked me to help complete work on *Women's Voices,* a manuscript which Kenneth and Audrey Godfrey had begun around 1974 before leaving for a mission. That was a collection of historical documents—selected personal writings of women—that we arranged chronologically from 1830 to 1900. It was a very simple sampling of diaries and letters and autobiographies, a project that fascinated and further educated me.[9] Originally, the volume was to be part of an official Mormon Heritage series featuring historical documents and published by the Historical Department in collaboration with Deseret Book. The first in the projected series was Dean Jessee's *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons,* published in 1974. As changes came to the History Division around 1980, several official projects were turned over to individual authors, and that was one of them.[10] *Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day*

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8. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

9. Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, eds., *Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982). Paperback editions were released in 1991 and 2000.

10. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974). See Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 165–66, 168, 171.

Saints was still completed in cooperation with Deseret Book, and with Leonard's full support, but not as part of an anticipated documentary series.

Silver: And *Women's Voices* has been useful for many of us by making original diaries and documents easily accessible.

Derr: I wanted to mention two other things. This was a period when one-volume histories were being compiled. We hadn't yet had an overview of Latter-day Saint history compiled by Latter-day Saint scholars. Leonard had earlier been asked by the publisher Knopf to do a one-volume history of Mormonism, and that came to be published by Knopf as *The Mormon Experience.*[11] The volume needed a separate chapter on women, which Maureen and I worked on together. Also, Richard Poll's work entitled *Utah's History* was a single-volume collection about Utah history, with chapters by various authors. I worked on a chapter about Utah women with Ann Vest Lobb.[12] It was an exciting period because we were seeing a new recognition of women's place in history and a desire to include them in various ways.

Silver: Did you have any connections with BYU at that time?

Derr: There are two ways I developed connections with BYU. The first began with my involvement in the 1977 conference convened in Utah as part of the U.S. response to the antidiscrimination objectives of International Women's Year (1975). Utah's IWY conference is most remembered for the heated controversy it stirred between feminists and traditional homemakers.[13] Lesser-known

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11. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints,* 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1979; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

12. Ann Vest Lobb and Jill Mulvay Derr, "Women in Early Utah," in *Utah's History,* ed. Richard D. Poll and others (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989), 337–56.

13. As part of an ongoing and extended effort to eliminate discrimination against women, the United Nations designated 1975 as International Women's Year (IWY), and the beginning of a Decade for Women. A National Plan of Action developed by IWY organizers in the United States was discussed and voted upon in individual state IWY conferences convened in 1977, in preparation for a national conference held in Houston that year. Instead of advancing unified action, the 1977 conferences "provided a battleground for the supporters and opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment." Since the National Plan called for ratification of the ERA, and the First Presidency and Relief Society General President Barbara B. Smith had already stated their opposition to the amendment, the Utah conference became particularly contentious. See Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women*

components of that year were various IWY task forces. Along with Maureen, I was assigned to work on the Task Force on Women in Utah History, which included people from the University of Utah, the state archives, and other repositories, with the intention of getting together registers of women's documents. That committee started to identify what the Utah State Historical Society, as well as the Church Archives and BYU Special Collections, possessed in terms of women's documents. Putting these registers together was a great aid for me as a scholar because, for the first time, women's documents were listed in a visible and accessible way. The collaboration generated by the IWY history task force proved so productive that the group organized the Utah Women's History Association, which held conferences and promoted studies of Utah women until 2005, when its long run was capped by publication of *Women in Utah History,* an important collection of articles addressing such topics as women in religion, politics, the workforce, art, and literature.[14] BYU hosted several early conferences of that organization, in which women began to present papers on their studies of Utah women and Latter-day Saint women.

Silver: As we listened to each other and learned about each other's research, women's history got more and more exciting.

Derr: Yes. A second connection to BYU came through the opportunity to teach an honors seminar there focused on Utah women's history, and that was a new adventure for me—putting together curriculum from the bits and pieces that had been published and actually being able to share those recent findings with students who were excited and interested.

Silver: I know that later on you were able to teach a History of Mormon Women class at BYU, but there were changes in your personal life. You could not stay with historical research full time. What happened?

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of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society, 369–74. An extensive study is Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority and Equal Rights* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005).

14. Patricia Lyn Scott and Linda Thatcher, ed., *Women in Utah History: Paradigm or Paradox?* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005). Listed on the title page as "A Project of the Utah Women's History Association, Cosponsored by the Utah State Historical Society." The book's introduction includes history of both the association and the project.

Derr: Yes, I married my remarkable husband, Brooklyn Derr, in 1977, and I began to reduce my hours at the Church Historical Department and worked part time for quite a while. When I went to half time in 1979, Carol Cornwall Madsen came to the department and took up the other half of my position. She was still at the University of Utah working on her own degree and was employed there, I believe, in the Women's Resource Center. She came to the History Division highly qualified and most willing to take up the other half of that slot. She jumped in and started on the history of the Primary. The beginnings of that work had come out of my association with LaVern Parmley and President Parmley's desire to have a history of the Primary. Carol took that up along with Susan Staker [Oman], and they published a fine book on the history of the Primary.[15] Children made my family life more happily complicated, and I retired for the time being from the Church Historical Department. It so happened that changes in my personal circumstances coincided with the decision to move the History Division to BYU and rename it the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History.[16] I was well aware of the transition but not part of the move, although I reconnected with the Institute later.

Silver: I wanted to talk a little about the publication of another book, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society,* which was published in 1992.[17] I know its beginnings were earlier. To me, it offers an essential look at the founding of the original Relief Society and then at each administration up to 1992. Elaine Jack, then the Relief Society General President, called the publication of this book "a gentle, quiet coup," expressing her amazement that this major work could be finished at all and then that it could be published as it had been written. I understand that the publication required approval from General Authorities, with

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15. Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Staker Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979).

16. Some Church leaders disapproved the academic approach to Latter-day Saint history taken by Arrington and his History Division colleagues. See Gregory A. Prince, "Storm Clouds" and "Disassembly," in *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 276–305, 328–51.

17. Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992).

careful reading from Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder Neal A. Maxwell. What are your reflections on this *Women of Covenant* project?

Derr: It was a great blessing to me personally. I loved doing the research and being engaged with Janath Russell Cannon. Before this project, I did not know Sister Cannon at all. She had recently served as a counselor to President Barbara B. Smith in the Relief Society General Presidency and then served a pioneering mission in Africa with her husband. Months before the History Division moved to BYU from the Church Historical Department, Elder G. Homer Durham had been appointed as the department's executive director. He felt that some good work could and ought to be accomplished by independent scholars. While those engaged at the new Smith Institute at BYU could continue to research and publish, Elder Durham believed other work could be pushed forward outside of that entity. President Barbara Smith discussed with him the need for a new history of the Relief Society. Histories had been published in 1942 and 1966 by the Relief Society General Board, but they did not include the kind of new scholarship then underway in the Church Historical Department and elsewhere. Elder Durham did not endorse the department undertaking such a project, but he encouraged Barbara Smith to work out an arrangement with Deseret Book. Consequently, she invited Janath Cannon and myself to consider working with Deseret Book on a new Relief Society history. We signed up for that early in 1980, after I had left Arrington's History Division. It ended up being a long-term project with several interruptions. Important roles in the project were played by many people, including Eleanor Knowles, who was then a central editor and manager at Deseret Book. She shepherded our work from beginning to end. She used to joke that of all the books on her list, we had been there the longest.

I also have to say that we had the full support of all the Relief Society presidents who administered Relief Society during that period—Barbara Smith, Barbara Winder, and Elaine Jack—all immensely helpful. At the time we began the project, we worked in a small office in the Relief Society Building, and we continued there until the building was remodeled. That was a great opportunity for me. I had access to some of the records in the vault

and felt the spirit of that building and the women who occupied it. Janath and I felt that we didn't really have a model for institutional history, so *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* by James Allen and Glen Leonard served as our handbook.[18] We included a lot of American historical context in our discussion, as they had. We divided the book into two parts. I worked on the first part, which went up through the administration of Emmeline Wells, and Janath worked on the second part, which went up to the current Elaine Jack administration. Of course, Janath had been part of the board and in the presidency for part of that time.

The project was delayed somewhat because Brooke and I and our children, due to Brooke's work, spent time away in France and Switzerland, a total of about three years altogether. My former History Division colleagues, by then part of BYU's Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, were very interested in supporting the project and seeing it come to fruition. Before we went to Switzerland in 1989, I asked Maureen Ursenbach Beecher to come aboard and help finish the manuscript, especially the last of my nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century chapters. She worked with both Janath and me as editor of the entire book; she was invaluable. I still remember those days in Switzerland when I went to Brooke's office, and we faxed copies of chapters to Maureen at the institute. I remember sitting down with Maureen at one point and saying, "I don't know how we are going to present this history with its ups and downs as something comprehensible to our women readers. Why do women stay committed to an institution that from time to time disappoints them keenly?" We talked about how faith was an essential principle for women and that their covenants were an anchoring principle, and that's how we came up with the title *Women of Covenant.*

Silver: A most appropriate title.

Derr: You asked about a review of the book manuscript. This was not a publication that had to be officially cleared from the beginning, but at the request of institute director Ronald K. Esplin, it was reviewed by the institute's advisors, Elder Oaks and Elder Maxwell, and also by the Relief Society General Presidency. Although

18. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976).

women's input was not part of the decision-making process that affected them at many points in Latter-day Saint history, Elder Maxwell and Elder Oaks wanted the Relief Society presidency to be part of it this time. There was a lot of new and surprising information for many people: the Nauvoo Relief Society minutes themselves, the temple-centeredness of women's experience, women's healing, and the wide variety of projects women engaged in as well as the disappointments they endured along the way.

Silver: I was on the general board of the Relief Society at that time and was asked to consider a couple of those points of concern. It seemed to me the balance was just right, never denying the history but also looking at it in the context of the modern-day reader who needed to understand what the background was. I can see links going forward to *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society* in the way you explained matters to those readers.[19]

Derr: Thank you. I will say that for many feminists the book fell short because it did not delve more deeply into theological issues, particularly the question of women and priesthood. Other scholars and other works coming out at the same time took on some of those controversial questions—most notably Maxine Hanks in her edited collection, *Women and Authority.*[20] Women's authority to heal the sick and the nature and extent of women's ecclesiastical authority were touchy issues. Janath and Maureen and I did not want to ignore them, nor did we want to drift toward the kind of theological speculation in which some scholars were engaging. Zealous pursuit of some of those questions led to painful excommunications, which I think frightened many would-be participants in Latter-day Saint women's history.[21] While it

19. Jill Mulvay Derr and others, *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2016).

20. Maxine Hanks, ed., *Women and Authority* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992).

21. During September 1993, "in the span of one month, [D. Michael] Quinn and [Maxine] Hanks along with four other writers and scholars were excommunicated (or disfellowshipped, a lesser sanction, in one case). . . . The most common factor was scholarship that challenged orthodox narratives—whether about the meaning of Isaiah, details of Heavenly Mother doctrine, or Latter-day Saint history. The disciplinary actions were widely perceived as orchestrated by the leadership as a powerful warning about the limits of intellectual inquiry that would be tolerated." Terryl L. Givens, *Stretching the Heavens: The Life of Eugene England and the Crisis of Modern Mormonism*

was a great period, it was also a period laden with cautions for people who were writing. The preface to *Women of Covenant* makes clear that in spite of the review process and the foreword by Elaine Jack, the book presents the authors' "own interpretations and is not an official history."[22]

Silver: Probably the move from the Church Historical Department to Brigham Young University and the forming of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History looked like a loss to some of those leaders and scholars. On the other hand, beautiful things have come out of that era. Let's talk a little bit about the Smith Institute and what projects concerning nineteenth-century women were fostered there.

Derr: As I mentioned previously, I wasn't part of the initial group that moved down to BYU, but Carol Madsen and Maureen Beecher were, and they were a strong presence for Latter-day Saint women's history during that period. Maureen continued to work on Eliza Snow, both the biography and the poetry, and she also was very interested in the Nauvoo Relief Society minutes. Veteran transcriber Edyth Jenkins Romney at the Church Historical Department had made a transcript of those minutes that Maureen probed and used in many presentations and shared circumspectly. Maureen highlighted the importance of those minutes and had a great interest in publishing them, although that seems not to have been possible at the time.[23]

Silver: It wasn't possible, because even the general board had to use that transcript when they commemorated the sesquicentennial of the Relief Society. There was nothing published or officially available for them to study.

Derr: Exactly, exactly. I think some of the tensions around women's history helped fuel the new, less controversial direction that Maureen headed. She became excited about the possibility of publishing the personal writings of Latter-day Saint women. She connected with John Alley at Utah State University Press to produce a new series entitled Life Writings of Frontier Women.

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 245. This superb intellectual history provides fair and comprehensible context for this and other controversies.

22. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant,* xiii.

23. The minutes, introduced and annotated, were finally published in 2016. Jill Mulvay Derr and others, *First Fifty Years of Relief Society.*

Many important volumes came out of that connection, not only Maureen's work on Eliza Snow's autobiography and journals but also solid documentary editing by various scholars on the personal writings of Patty Sessions, Mary Haskin Parker Richards, Caroline Barnes Crosby, and others.[24]

Silver: I see that as an off-shoot of the earlier volume, *Women's Voices,* that you did with the Godfreys. The whole series is well edited with fine introductions.

Derr: Yes, you are right. That came about in part because of new excitement about documenting women's lives and the formulation of new guidelines and principles for editing documents. Maureen was very eager to have documents reproduced carefully and with appropriate references, using the best current style for documentary editing. Carol Madsen brought her master's and PhD work on Emmeline B. Wells to the Smith Institute in hopes of doing a larger biography of Wells and working on Wells's extensive

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24. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow,* Life Writings of Frontier Women, vol. 5 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000). Utah State University Press began publishing The Life Writing series in 1996 under the general editorship of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher. She explained in the foreword to the first volume, "The life experiences of frontier women inform a new history that over the past two decades has begun to appear. . . . In order that scholars in all the disciplines might use these texts with confidence, the transcriber-editors of each manuscript have observed the most rigid standards of documentary editing. . . . In addition, each volume editor has provided commentary, documentation, maps, and photographs to help the reader or researcher to understand the circumstances surrounding the writer's narrative." Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "Foreword," in *Winter Quarters: The 1846–1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards,* ed. Maurine Carr Ward, Life Writings of Frontier Women, vol. 1 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), xi–xii. Volume 2 appeared in 1997, the diaries of Patty Bartlett Sessions, edited by Donna Toland Smart; volume 3 in 1998, Louisa Barnes Pratt, edited by S. George Ellsworth; volume 4 in 1999, Effie Marquess Carmack, edited by Noel A. Carmack and Karen Lynn Davidson; volume 5 in 2000, Eliza Roxcy Snow, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher; volume 6 in 2003, Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, edited by Charles M. Hatch and Todd M. Compton; volume 7 in 2005, Caroline Barnes Crosby, edited by Edward Leo Lyman, Susan Ward Payne, and S. George Ellsworth; volume 8 in 2006, Patience Loader Rozsa Archer, edited by Sandra Ailey Petree; volume 9 in 2007, Mary Lois Walker Morris, edited by Melissa Lambert Milewski; volume 10 in 2008, Fanny Stenhouse, edited by Linda Wilcox DeSimone; volume 11 in 2009, Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff, edited by Lu Ann Taylor Snyder and Phillip A. Snyder; volume 12 in 2011, Margaret E. P. Gordon, edited by Claudia L. Bushman; and volume 13 in 2012, Mabel Finlayson Allred, edited by Martha Bradley-Evans.

diaries.[25] She also moved in a documentary direction. Carol's book *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* drew from women's personal writings to focus in on women's experiences in Nauvoo.[26] It's a wonderful book, and her introductions are, as always, spot on. Then she took on the larger work of documenting the westward trek, the Mormon Trail, through personal writings. Her book *Journey to Zion* brilliantly used both men's and women's documents.[27] This set an important precedent in integrating men's and women's experiences.

The book was an important contribution to the 1997 anniversary of the trek. Carol also contributed greatly to BYU Women's Conferences, and, significantly, she taught a course in American women's history. That was a pioneering effort at BYU and exposed many students to a broader history of American women's lives and, as part of that discussion, Latter-day Saint women's lives and how they fit into that larger context.

Silver: It is always useful to see our people or our particular interests in that larger context.

Derr: Absolutely! I reconnected with the Smith Institute in about 1986, bringing with me the Relief Society history project. I was still connected with Maureen on Eliza R. Snow's poetry and other aspects of Eliza's life.

I worked at the Smith Institute part time for . . . I guess about fifteen years. In addition to research and writing, I had the opportunity to teach classes in religious education. Then Carol Madsen, Ronald Esplin, Richard Jensen, and I put together a syllabus for a course in Latter-day Saint history and culture that featured recent scholarship on various topics, including women, and we introduced that course at BYU through the honors program. We had many fine students in that class over the years, including Matthew Grow, for example, who is currently managing director of the Church History Department. During those years, the 1990s, we made an attempt to reach out to other scholars of

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25. Madsen completed an award-winning biography. Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Emmeline B. Wells: An Intimate History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2017).

26. Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994).

27. Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997).

religion through presentations at academic organizations such as the American Academy of Religion and the American Society for Church History. This was a moment in time when there was a growing interest in religious studies and the history of religion around the country, and many universities were setting up new departments, not to train people for the ministry but to study religion or the history of religion as academic fields.

One of the first of those scholars was Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp. Upon the recommendation of well-known historian Jan Shipps, I invited Laurie to present the Tanner Lecture for the 1999 meeting of the Mormon History Association. The Tanner Lecture provided an opportunity for scholars unacquainted with Mormon history to explore it within the context of their own academic field. Laurie not only presented the lecture in 1999 but that same spring taught a course on Mormonism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and her continuing work in Mormon studies now spans two decades. To be sure, courses in Mormon history or Mormon studies have multiplied in many colleges and universities as part of this expanding interest in religious studies and the history of religion. This was also the time when the Smith Institute began to collaborate more closely with BYU Studies, Religious Education at BYU, and also the newly formed Family and Church History Department. Some excellent conferences came out of that collaboration, and a number of resulting publications were jointly produced by the Smith Institute and BYU Studies. As I mentioned, there was a fear, a caution, a concern at this time about Latter-day Saint women's history going off in directions that Church leaders felt might be counterproductive, including too speculative an exploration of theology, such as what Joseph Smith had intended for women in terms of priesthood authority and priesthood power.[28] As associate director and then director of Smith Institute, I was able to attend many meetings where BYU entities and the Family and Church History Department counseled together and coordinated efforts. Because Richard E. Turley Jr., managing director of the new department, was at those meetings, this became a great opportunity to push forward what

28. Historical context for the concerns is insightfully discussed in Lisa Olsen Tait, "What Is Women's Relationship to Priesthood?" *BYU Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (2021): 241–72.

had been Maureen's agenda on the Nauvoo Relief Society minutes. Maureen had retired by this time, but it seemed like an apt setting to discuss how these minutes might possibly be published. At that time, we decided that a broader context might help readers, a context that not only included the American women's history context of the 1840s but showed how those minutes were used over time and how Relief Society developed out of the institution that Joseph Smith had founded. That possibility was so hopeful, and it seeded the attempt to publish the minutes and other documents related to Relief Society history that eventually blossomed into *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History.*[29]

When I saw that that project could take off (and especially after I had been given some new assignments at Smith Institute), with great foresight, I asked Carol Madsen to collaborate with me. She was an indispensable—if not the prominent—partner in that work. As the project moved forward in those early years, we also had the assistance of Jenny Reeder, Sheree Bench, and yourself.

Silver: I must admit, I did a little happy dance when *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society* was finally published. I was so excited to see 1842 to 1892 recognized and explored. Those were powerful years. At one point, you were asked to direct the Smith Institute. Explain the opportunities and some of the responsibilities that came with that appointment.

Derr: It was an honor to be invited to be director. Leonard Arrington had been director of the institute until 1986, and then Ronald K. Esplin took up the post for the next sixteen years through 2002. Both played major roles in shaping the institute. By comparison, I was there really very shortly, for about two and a half years from 2003 to 2005. I worked closely with David Magleby, who was then dean of the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, and often with Alan Wilkins, academic vice president, because there were many questions concerning BYU's role in presenting cutting-edge scholarship in Mormon history to the university and to the public. Research that was being done on the Mountain Meadows Massacre and on women was viewed as potentially controversial and divisive. After the earlier difficulty over

29. Derr and others, *First Fifty Years of Relief Society.*

Mark Hofmann's forgeries, I think there were concerns about how much BYU wanted to publicize new historical research and include the public in discussing it. There was the need to balance what Smith Institute scholars could present within a seminar or conference and what we could present in a public lecture. Working those things out wasn't simple or without disappointment.

But certainly the biggest development for the Smith Institute was the appearance of the Joseph Smith Papers project. Larry H. and Gail Miller's funding of the project officially began, I think, in 2001. With this additional funding, the project quickly developed far beyond Dean Jessee's original work.[30] He had been working for years on the papers of Joseph Smith; the question was how to move that important work forward and expand it. So one by one, additional members were added to that working group. They were funded by Larry H. Miller and were part of the Smith Institute staff but not part of its faculty. That group continued to grow over the years with Ron Esplin at its head.

At the same time, Richard Bushman came to the Institute and, in cooperation with private donors, began to sponsor a summer seminar. Richard's influence was important and very much felt. Of course, because of his ongoing work on a biography of Joseph Smith, he had an interest in the development of the Joseph Smith Papers and became an important contributor to that project, but his work with summer fellows—these younger, promising graduate students—in developing the Archive of Restoration Culture and in researching aspects of other religions related to Joseph Smith's time period became singularly important. It continued for several years and became a formative experience for young scholars such as Matt Grow, Reid Neilson, Jed Woodworth, Kathleen Flake, and others. The seminar was one of the Institute's most significant and lasting contributions to Latter-day Saint scholarship.

Silver: You can also see the tradition of Leonard Arrington through all this, his interest in bringing people together, helping them develop their own pursuits, yet working collaboratively. It's a fine model, and it has expanded through the years.

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30. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Volume 1, Autobiographical and Historical Writings,* and *Volume 2, Journal 1832–1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989; 1992).

Derr: Leonard and Richard both have been great mentors.

Silver: I came into the Smith Institute about that time, in 2001 or 2002, when the women's projects were unfolding. You were at the center of that expansion. We were able to organize research groups. Claudia Bushman ran a summer seminar for young women scholars in 2003. Then Carol Madsen and I chaired a conference on Latter-day Saint women in the twentieth century that was held in 2004, the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Eliza R. Snow. Let's talk about the exciting things that happened at that time.

Derr: So much of the work of the Smith Institute then centered on the Joseph Smith Papers. As I mentioned, other scholars, Ron Walker particularly, were working on the Mountain Meadows Massacre with the Family and Church History Department. When I joined the Institute as director, I didn't want women's history to be lost. I believe you were working on the Emmeline Wells diaries at that time . . .

Silver: Yes.

Derr: And the Relief Society documents book was going forward with Jenny Reeder. We wanted to figure out how women's history could be established more firmly at BYU, so we called together a group of formidable consultants, including Claudia Bushman, Laurel Ulrich, Aileen Clyde, Chieko Okazaki, some BYU faculty, you [Cherry Silver], and others, and tried to decide what we could do. We came up with the idea of an initiative. Our original team was centered in the Institute, including myself, Carol Madsen, you, Sheree Bench, Jenny Reeder, and Connie Lamb of the Harold B. Lee Library, and we called ourselves the Women's History Initiative Team, the WHITs—we thought ourselves so clever, didn't we? Our name later became MWHIT, the Mormon Women's History Initiative Team. We wanted to support things already underway, such as the Summer Seminar for Sisters sponsored by Claudia Bushman,[31] the 2004 Conference on Mormon Women in the Twentieth Century, and some smaller seminars.

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31. Claudia L. Bushman, ed., *Summer Fellows' Papers 2003: Latter-day Saint Women in the Twentieth Century* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2004).

We particularly wanted to launch a variety of events in 2004, in celebration, as you said, of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Eliza Snow. That year we sponsored four women's history lectures at the BYU Harold B. Lee Library, kicked off by my lecture, "Remembering Eliza R. Snow," delivered on her birthday, January 21, complete with birthday cake. Each of the four lectures by me, Carol Madsen, Sherilyn Bennion, and Claudia Bushman featured complementary exhibits in the library's Special Collections. Jenny Reeder put those together beautifully. It was an exciting year. It gave us a lot of visibility. We also had plans to launch a course in the BYU History Department on Latter-day Saint women's history, and that also came to fruition and has continued over the years. It is still being taught annually under the auspices of Global Women's Studies.[32] Then there was continuing support for other ongoing projects such as the Relief Society documents book that became *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society,* the Emmeline Wells biography and diaries, and the Eliza Snow poetry and biography. There was a lot going on during those two or three years.

Silver: It was a very satisfying time. We were looking forward, asking, Why shouldn't many researchers and historians be involved? What topics are of current importance? What methodologies ought we to be using? That quest has continued to develop and to influence results over the years.

Derr: Yes, I think the conferences we organized picked up where the old Utah Women's History Association had fallen off. The 2004 conference you and Carol co-chaired, and then compiled and published the proceedings of, brought in a wide circle of women. Dave Hall working on Amy Brown Lyman, thoughts about—

Silver: Women missionaries.

Derr: Women missionaries, exactly: a subject much broader than Relief Society, a look at the global experiences of Latter-day Saint women. Focusing on that subject gave us a chance to push out and get a greater contingent of women interested in Latter-day Saint women's history.[33]

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32. As of 2021, GWS 332 was offered each winter semester.

33. Carol Cornwall Madsen and Cherry B. Silver, eds., *New Scholarship on Latter-day Saint Women in the Twentieth Century: Selections from the Women's History Initiative Seminars, 2003–2004* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, 2005).

Silver: Then, in 2005, the dean discontinued the Smith Institute. At that time, the Joseph Smith Papers were well underwritten. What happened to your studies on Eliza R. Snow and the Relief Society documents?

Derr: Initially, those studies had to be placed on the back burner. Smith Institute faculty were given the choice of whether to remain at BYU as faculty members in their various departments, teaching as well as researching, or to be transferred with the Joseph Smith Papers project or the Mountain Meadows project back to the Family and Church History Department in Salt Lake City. The department had been exploring that possibility for some time. Leaders there, including Rick Turley and Steven L. Olsen, envisioned a department with a renewed emphasis on research and a larger contingent of scholars. There was the push from BYU to substantially change or disband the Institute and the pull from the Family and Church History Department to bring people up there, so yes, that resulted in a dramatic change in 2005. I made the choice to go to Salt Lake City, and my projects essentially went with me. Clearly, however, I wasn't going to have much time to work on my personal projects, since I accepted an administrative post there. One of my great sorrows was that the Mormon Women's History Initiative was not transferrable. The Family and Church History Department did not agree to take that on, but as you well know, the initiative fell into the capable hands of you and Sheree Bench. You should comment on that.

Silver: Richard Bushman came to us and said, "It was a great idea. If you want it to continue, you two had better do something about it." So we simply transformed the Mormon Women's History Initiative Team from an Institution-backed organization to an independent group of scholars, mostly women, interested in Latter-day Saint women's history. That has been a fruitful decision. Now we have board members from all across the country, and we have increased interest both in individual projects and in working together. I am no longer associated with MWHIT, but I applaud all that they are doing. As for the Emmeline Wells diaries, you encouraged us to continue on campus, and we did. The BYU library's Special Collections under Brad Westwood housed us in the library for a year, and then we were happily adopted by the Woman's Research Institute where Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill

gave us office space and some financial support while we continued our research.[34]

Derr: MWHIT has grown beyond anyone's wildest expectations. It is important in promoting Latter-day Saint history and essential in promoting Latter-day Saint women's history.

Silver: Fortunately, we have kept our minutes, so we know something about its progress.

Derr: That is because of Cherry, the great keeper of minutes and willing documentarian and historian. Wonderful!

Silver: From 2005 on, there were interesting times at the Family and Church History Department. What happened to you personally in the department until your retirement?

Derr: I went there in an administrative role at the request of the department's associate managing director, Steve Olsen. I joined his team and became what was strangely titled director of Church history research and development. That included an array of everything connected with scholarship and publication: the Church History Museum, the historic sites, and publications, including the Joseph Smith Papers. These were all in my portfolio; individually each of them had a division director, a section director—historic sites especially remained under Jenny Lund's direction, and the Joseph Smith Papers under Ron Esplin's.

All of this was supervised by the director's council and the executives of the department, including the amazing Church Historian, Elder Marlin K. Jensen, and Assistant Church Historian, Richard E. Turley, Jr. These were visionary leaders, and Steve Olsen pushed hard for significant changes in the department, especially a commitment to getting Church history on the web and to the worldwide Church. We have seen the fruition of his efforts and his associates' efforts and that of their successors in recent years, not only with the new Church History Library, but also with the assignment of representatives of Church history in various areas of the world, with the two volumes of

34. Since August 2017, the Emmeline B. Wells diary project has been supported by the Church History Department. The extensive diary with introductions and annotations is being published online by the Church Historian's Press one chronological section at a time. "The Diaries of Emmeline B. Wells," The Church Historian's Press, https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/emmeline-b-wells?lang=eng.

Saints already out, with the many completed volumes of the Joseph Smith Papers, and with the remarkable Church History Library website with its digitized documents and videos.

Those years, 2005 through 2008, were the beginning of that transformation, and I was happy to be part of that. It was change and more change and redirection for everyone, a lot of circling back and moving forward that was confusing, challenging, and sometimes frustrating. It was both exciting and consuming to be part of it.

Silver: Through those years, you still felt a passion for Eliza R. Snow and for documents connected with women's history. Did your personal research languish or prosper? What happened?

Derr: After 2008, those interests came back to the front burner for me. I had been promised by department leaders that they would give me time for the projects I brought from BYU, and that time opened up for me almost magically. In the meantime, Carol Madsen had been continuing her work on the Relief Society documents with help from Jenny Reeder and others, so I was able to reconnect with that project. Karen Lynn Davidson had been collaborating with me on the Eliza poetry at the recommendation of Richard Bushman. Karen and I also had help from Jenny Reeder, and we were able to finish that volume and publish it in 2009. I do have to salute Heather Seferovich, who was working for *BYU Studies* at the time, and also Linda Hunter Adams for their help. Both did significant work on that book, making it possible to publish a well-designed book in a timely fashion.[35]

Silver: It is a handsome volume, and I commend the way your excellent introductions explain the history of the Church through Eliza's poetry. Wonderful insights.

Derr: Thank you. I'm glad it worked that way. As for the early Relief Society papers, large parts of the work on the Relief Society documents had been completed, including the Nauvoo minutes, records from the 1850s, and some from of the 1860s. Carol Madsen had finished a lot of work on the 1880s and 1890s, enough so that we felt we had a manuscript we could ask someone to take a look at. We gave it to Assistant Church Historian Rick Turley. He had been a longtime director of the Church Historical

35. Derr and Davidson, *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*.

Department and scholarly contributor to Church history and had recently been working with the Joseph Smith Papers. After he read our manuscript, he said, "This really needs some work; this really needs some work."

Silver: Not the most reassuring response.

Derr: By that time, the Church Historian's Press had been established, and we had hopes of publishing this book through that press, which Rick directed at the time. He said, "I don't think that is possible without a lot of work," but he was willing to give us department support. We were able to hire some interns, and the project really took off after Matt Grow was named director of publications for the department. Matt is brilliant, capable, and efficient and had a tremendous commitment to this project. He took a hand in it personally, drafting some introductions, looking at footnotes, and helping revise other weaknesses. The progress was stunning. With the project in such capable hands and moving forward, I was able to say late in 2010 that I would retire at the end of 2011, because my husband, Brooke, and I planned to serve a mission.

With that kind of lead time, the department was able to bring on someone who would be, in many ways, my successor. We hired Kate Holbrook, a remarkable scholar in her own right and a superb networker who significantly expanded the department's work in women's history. Kate and I held overlapping positions for six months, a significant time for passing the baton and a thoroughly enjoyable collaboration. Kate became totally immersed in the Relief Society documents project. She had not done a lot of work on the Relief Society, so this was great training for her. I remember her laughing and saying one day, "They just videotaped me making some comments, and I got the founding date of Relief Society wrong!" But not for long; Kate got a real grasp of women's history and made such a contribution. The project was well underway when Brooke and I left for our mission at the beginning of 2012. I was able to keep in close touch to review new introductions to documents and chapters and yet have this great force at the Church History Department refining the manuscript to make it so much stronger and more scholarly, in line with the standards of the Joseph Smith Papers. After we returned from our mission in 2013, I was able to assist with the final edits, and the book was published by the Church

Historian's Press in 2016 under the title *The First Fifty Years: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History.*

Silver: Then, after you and your husband returned from your mission, you four editors had time to present your work and explain the project to a large readership in interviews and podcasts. I was very happy to see that volume. I took it to my ward while we were celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the Relief Society in March and showed it around as a great treasure. Most of the sisters looked at it and said, "That's a very large book."

Derr: Yes, it's 767 pages. And I really cannot say enough about the individuals the Church History Department has employed to make such projects possible. Another great satisfaction for me before I retired was that the Nauvoo Relief Society minutes, with a transcription, were actually published as part of the online Joseph Smith Papers. Even before the print volume came out, those critically important minutes became available online for everyone to read and study, and that was a great day of celebration for me. As you said, we had been working with an old transcript of the minutes for what, thirty years?

Silver: Jill, before you retired, you must have had some concerns about what would happen to your work and your interests in women's history. Explain the shift within the Church History Department after your departure.

Derr: Yes, as I mentioned, I planned my retirement about a year in advance, and during that year, especially the first six months before Kate Holbrook came aboard, I worked with two colleagues in the Church History Department—Cathy Chamberlain and Marilyn Foster—to try to formulate a plan for continuing women's history. Cathy was a consultant to the Church History Department who had been hired several years earlier when concerns arose about how to market the Joseph Smith Papers and how to make Church history more accessible to Church members. She was brilliant at that. She had a particular interest in the Nauvoo Relief Society minutes and helped push for their publication. Marilyn Foster was the director of communications in the Church History Department.

I talked with them about my concerns for keeping women's history alive in the department once I left, given that support for projects in women's history had rested largely on my shoulders.

Both of them said that it was not possible for one person to be the sole advocate for women's history. If the study of women's history depended on one person, it was likely to die out at some point without greater institutional support. Both women recommended that we work with Church History Department leaders to make women's history an integral part of the department, and that was what happened. Marilyn Foster, being on the director's council, was able to push for women's history to be a priority beginning in 2012, the year after I retired. It was one of three or four department priorities that year. This new priority was realized through a series of Church History Library lectures, and, most importantly, it helped shape the structure of Kate Holbrook's appointment. She would not just be over a couple of women's history projects but manage women's history generally.[36]

That approach bore great fruit because not only did Kate come aboard to direct women's history, but Jenny Reeder and Lisa Olsen Tait were also hired as full-time employees. Brittany Chapman Nash in the Church History Library remained a significant contributor. These women have expanded the visibility and accessibility of women's history. They have worked with the Relief Society Presidency, for example, on their concerns about women's history, published a significant collection of women's discourses, and begun work on a new history of the Young Women's organization.[37] This team has a strong presence in the department. The new commitment to women's history informed the way the *Saints* volumes developed to feature both men's and women's stories in an engaging narrative of Church history. The two women I mentioned earlier, Cathy Chamberlain and Marilyn Foster, along with this new team of women historians, have to be given credit for helping to shape a new day in women's history at the Church History Department.

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36. The new support for women's history facilitated a 2012 conference on Mormon Women and the Problem of Historical Agency, with proceedings published in *Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perpectives,* ed. Kate Holbrook and Matthew Bowman (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016).

37. Jennifer Reeder and Kate Holbrook, eds., *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2017). This volume and *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society* have been made accessible online, along with *The Discourses of Eliza R. Snow* and *The Diaries of Emmeline B. Wells* at https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/publications.

Silver: In concluding our conversation, I invite you to reflect more generally on the writing of Latter-day Saint women's history during your career. What have been the trends in examining the lives and contributions of women in the nineteenth century? What approaches have been fruitful in these studies?

Derr: Initially, when Maureen Beecher, Carol Madsen, and I worked as a team at the History Division under Leonard Arrington, we focused on the "women worthies," the most famous women and their lives, in order to begin to include a few of the women who were missing from history at that time. We looked to the women who had had a significant public presence, to women who made a difference in politics or economics. At that time, the world generally defined achievement in these fields as success. Things have changed over the years, and social history has taken on greater significance. One important shift was the turn toward exploring the personal writings of women. Another has been the new attention paid to the collective work of women, beginning to unpack their institutional minutes, or looking at women's discourse as it appears in those minutes or particularly in their *Exponent* articles or their poetry. Susanna Morrill did beautiful work by looking at the poetry of Latter-day Saint women as it appeared in the *Exponent* as their means of expressing theology.[38]

Our horizons have expanded over the years.[39] We're more interested in lesser-known women and their writings and experiences. As we have moved forward, different approaches have greatly expanded the field. Studies such as Jenny Reeder's work on Eliza Snow's gold watch reflect increased interest in material culture.[40] Work on quilts is also material culture, as is the study of the ways that women express themselves in their cooking. Kate Holbrook has started to look at food as a way of revealing women's lives and even their religious experiences or

38. Susanna Morrill, *White Roses on the Floor of Heaven: Mormon Women's Popular Theology, 1880–1920* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

39. Todd Compton provides a significant historiographical overview in "New Mormon Women's History," in *Excavating Mormon Pasts: The New Historiography of the Last Half Century,* ed. Newell G. Bringhurst and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2004), 273–302.

40. Jennifer Reeder, "Eliza R. Snow and the Prophet's Gold Watch: Time Keeper as Relic," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 119–41.

expressions.[41] Of course, we see now lots of fresh approaches and new topics. Taunalyn Rutherford's wonderful work on women in India and other innovative work on women in Europe and in Asia have shown us the experiences of Latter-day Saint women from other parts of the globe.[42] These projects will tell us something about what our faith means to women as it is expressed through a different culture.

Theological inquiry, once so suspect, is now being embraced more readily, especially since scholars can compare the Latter-day Saint experience with that of women in other faiths: with the experiences of Jewish women or Muslim women or evangelical women. In the world generally, all of these topics are being addressed, so all of a sudden Latter-day Saint scholars or scholars studying Latter-day Saint women have the possibility of comparing them with women in other religions. Scholars such as Catherine Brekus bring this broader perspective to looking at Latter-day Saint women.[43] Gender studies have become increasingly important, and closer readings of women's documents continue to provide new insights. Laurel Ulrich's recent book, *A House Full of Females,* draws from women's diaries along with men's to offer an intriguing integrated history of the lived realities of plural marriage.[44] I think it is exciting that minute books for the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary are being digitized, because now so many more women will be able to explore the history they reveal.

Silver: I was surprised when one young female scholar was told by a dissertation advisor, "You have a pretty good topic, but where are you going to find material about women, enough to be able to write a major study?" No problem now in finding sources. We

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41. Kate Holbrook, "Good to Eat: Culinary Priorities among Mormons and the Nation of Islam," *Anthology on Religion, Food, and Eating in North America,* ed. Ben Zeller and others (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

42. For example, see Taunalyn Rutherford, "Shifting Focus to Global Mormonism: The LDS Church in India," in *The Worldwide Church: Mormonism as a Global Religion,* ed. Michael A. Goodman and Mauro Properzi (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2016). 71–94.

43. Catherine A. Brekus, "Mormon Women and the Problem of Historical Agency," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 58–87.

44. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835–1870* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017).

have only to open our eyes and harvest what is there. This has been a fascinating discussion. Do you have any final comments?

Derr: My final comment would be to echo something Carol Cornwall Madsen said years ago in her memorable address to the Mormon History Association. She talked about lots of different approaches to Latter-day Saint women's history and about the women who were hidden and have now become visible. She said that uncovering these women has helped her to discover herself.[45] For any Latter-day Saint woman who studies the history of Latter-day Saint women, that emerging self-discovery is probably the greatest blessing. In many ways, I feel that my life has unfolded as it has because of these dear and wonderful women of the past. I will be eternally grateful.

Silver: Thank you so much. You have helped us see that Latter-day Saint women's history is not only a work of paying tribute but of finding joy and companionship in the present and through the past. Heartfelt thanks for your decades of work with women's history and the views you have set forth today.

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Jill Mulvay Derr has studied the history of Latter-day Saint women for more than four decades. She worked in the History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints under the direction of two Church Historians: Leonard J. Arrington and Marlin K. Jensen. In the course of research and teaching at Brigham Young University, she became Associate Professor of Church History and later Managing Director of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History.

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45. Carol Cornwall Madsen, "'Feme Covert': Journey of a Metaphor," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 61.

Marrying Principles of Religious Freedom with Equitable Teaching Practices for Latter-day Saint Public Educators

Derek R. Riddle

A couple of years ago, a colleague recommended I read a young adult novel titled *How It Went Down* authored by Kekla Magoon.[1] This fictional novel tells the tragic story of Tariq Johnson, a sixteen-year-old fatally shot by a police officer. The story, written from a multicharacter perspective, creates an intentional effect through which the reader may find it challenging to discover the truth about the book's pivotal event because of the varied perspectives and accounts of its many characters. As a former secondary-school English teacher who taught in settings where conversations regarding police brutality and racial profiling were prevalent, I was intrigued by the potential this novel could have in an English classroom. Therefore, I began to preview the book. However, after reading in the first few pages the accounts of two of the characters, Noodle and Samuel, I put the book down and struggled to pick it back up. Why? The use of profanity in the book caused me to seriously reflect on whether I should continue reading further.

To be clear, the book is excellent. In fact, Kekla Magoon was awarded the Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book in 2015 for this novel, so my choice to no longer read the novel was not meant to negatively signify the quality of the book. For me, it was more of a moral dilemma between my religious beliefs and the types of literature I should or should not immerse myself in. As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I have found that such decisions always

1. Kekla Magoon, *How It Went Down* (New York: Square Fish, 2014).

present a dilemma for me. The following statements are made in the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet:

- Choose wisely when using media, because whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Select only media that uplifts you.
- Do not attend, view, or participate in anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in anything that presents immorality or violence as acceptable.[2]

In considering those guidelines, my dilemma occurred when I wondered whether I should read literature with obscene language.

Ironically, there was some literature that I did not censor in either my personal or classroom reading. For example, I did not bat an eye when reading *Speak,*[3] the story of an adolescent female protagonist who had been raped the summer prior to her freshmen year of high school, or *The Beast,*[4] which focused on topics of drug use and sex. I eagerly shared with my students books like *Just Mercy*[5] that directly and poignantly discussed issues of inequity in society, as well as short films like *In a Heartbeat,*[6] a story with a protagonist struggling to express his affections for his crush, who happens to be another boy. I felt these pieces of literature and film would greatly help my students see themselves and others through what Rudine Sims Bishop coined the "mirrors and windows"[7] of the characters in the materials I shared with them. I also believed that this subject matter could, as Deborah Appleman stated, "make a better world for [my] students and . . . help them make a better world for themselves."[8] The ideal of helping my students aligned with my faith, but I could not seem to justify personally reading or sharing literature in my classroom that included gratuitous profanity, even though I was comfortable sharing other content that could be perceived as contrary to the principles in *For the Strength of Youth.*

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2. "Entertainment and Media," in *For the Strength of Youth* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011), 11.

3. Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1999).

4. Walter Dean Myers, *The Beast* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2003).

5. Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2014).

6. *In a Heartbeat,* directed by Beth David and Esteban Bravo (Sarasota, Fla.: Ringling College of Art and Design, 2017), 4:05, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2REkk9SCRno.

7. Rudine Sims Bishop, "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors," *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom* 6, no. 3 (1990).

8. Deborah Appleman, foreword to Ashley S. Boyd, *Social Justice Literacies in the English Classroom: Teaching Practice in Action* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2017), ix.

My dilemma in choosing what literature to read and share became more complicated when seeking to renew my temple recommend. In that interview, I was asked, "Do you support or promote any teachings, practices, or doctrine contrary to those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?"[9] This question created another paradox for me: Were some of my personal and classroom selections of literature showing support for or promotion of groups or teachings that contradicted those practiced and taught by my church? Naturally, I desired to demonstrate my devotion to my Heavenly Father; however, in that devotion, I was also concerned whether censoring some pieces of literature would be disadvantageous to my students' social and emotional growth and consequentially exhibit a lack of love, tolerance, and acceptance for the diverse student population in my classes. As I shared these concerns with my ecclesiastical leader, he reassured me that my intentions were pure. I was not actively and intentionally seeking to "support or promote any teachings, practices, or doctrine contrary to those of the Church." I was not reading or sharing literature with the intent to diminish or discredit the teachings of the Church. However, I found myself grappling, in preparation for that interview and somewhat since, with how, in practice, I could keep the two great commandments—to love God and to love my neighbor (that is, my students)—when selecting literature in my classroom, a public space constitutionally separated from the influence and practice of my religious beliefs. It was one thing to censor literature personally, but should this be done professionally? Would the action to professionally censor be what Jesus would do?

The debate on censorship of literature in schools is not a new one. However, the conversation around censorship among teachers with faith and how their selection of literature impacts them adds nuance to the conversation. I recently conducted a study exploring the perceptions of teachers who self-identify as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I wanted to better understand their views toward teaching literature. Within my data, I found others facing similar dilemmas to what I faced when teaching literature with various themes, topics, and content. This led me to seek revelation from my own academic research and further study of the scriptures and Church leaders on how to teach literature that could meet the diverse needs of students while respecting the religious beliefs of a teacher with faith. The purpose of this essay is to offer insights for members of the Church on how we may still

9. See Russell M. Nelson, "Closing Remarks," *Ensign* 49, no. 11 (November 2019): 121.

practice our faith while fostering equity and acceptance in our choices of literature for our classrooms and curricular purposes. I do not purport to have *the* answer or even *an* answer to this inquiry. When it comes to practicing one's religious beliefs, this can and should be deeply personal. Therefore, I chose to write this piece in a self-reflective narrative style in hopes to inspire others to critically analyze my journey and seek further understanding on how to approach this dilemma for themselves.

My Journey toward Truth and Understanding

As teachers, we naturally want to do well by our students. However, we are also worried about laws and policies and how they can affect our jobs, especially the retention of our jobs. Thus, juggling choices to teach literature with controversial content, doing what is in the best interest of students, and adhering to public and school policy can become complicated. This complexity is compounded among teachers of faith, like myself, who govern ourselves not just by the laws of the land but also by laws set forth by God. This can create further complexity in the decision-making process when we have to juggle student interest, public or school policy, and God's commandments in our curricular decisions. In my personal and professional quest for clarity, I first wanted to understand the laws regarding the censorship of literature in the classroom. What do these laws say I can and cannot do? Second, as a teacher of faith, I wanted to better understand my Heavenly Father's will toward censoring and sharing literature. How could I share literature in a way that would respect the agency and needs of my students without violating the commandments of God? In the next few sections, I will first describe what I learned regarding censorship of literature. I will then share what I understood from scriptures and teachings of Church leaders. Finally, I will show how I applied what I learned to my practice as an educator. I hope my journey provides guidance and insight for others facing their own dilemma.

Principles of Censorship

Writers as far back as Plato advocated banishing literature they deemed unfit for young minds.[10] Ken Donelson, an emeritus professor at Arizona State University, explained there are various reasons teachers chose to censor literature. For example, he found teachers sometimes explicitly

10. Ken Donelson, "Giving Comfort to the Enemy: How Teachers and Librarians Aid the Censor," *The High School Journal* 66, no. 3 (1983): 155–61.

censored literature based on moral grounds in that they felt some literature could negatively shape the morality of young readers. Other times, teachers cited concern about community response (for example, the state or district requirements or the perceptions of parents) as their rationale for not choosing certain literature to bring into their classrooms. In addition to Donelson's classifications, current scholars discuss another form of censorship that is less visible—namely, preemptive censorship. This form of censorship occurs when teachers censor a book or other forms of literature before their students or communities know about it in order to prevent controversy and challenges from parents or the community.[11]

I discovered that the laws on censorship require that books not be removed from a school setting based solely on the notion that someone does not like the ideas presented in those books.[12] This is not to say that books cannot ever be removed. These laws also empower school boards and other education stakeholders to remove books if they find them unsuitable for education or if the text is pervasively vulgar.[13] Essentially, educators and education systems are not to take away a student's right to read or have access to reading material deemed suitable for education.

Critics argue that there are negative consequences to censorship, including restricting ideas and information[14] and violating a student's right to read.[15] The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) argued, "The decision about what to use in the classroom should be based on professional judgments and standards, not individual preferences. Efforts to suppress a disfavored view or controversial ideas are educationally unsound and constitutionally suspect."[16] Many school

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11. Sue C. Kimmel and Danielle E. Hartsfield, "It Was . . . the Word 'Scrotum' on the First Page: Educators' Perspectives of Controversial Literature," *Journal of Teacher Education* 70, no. 4 (2019): 335–46; Susan Fanetti, "A Case for Cultivating Controversy: Teaching Challenged Books in K–12 Classrooms," *The ALAN Review* 40, no. 1 (2012): 6–17.

12. Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853 (1982).

13. Claire Mullally, "Banned Books," Freedom Forum Institute, last modified November 29, 2017, https://www.freedomforuminstitute.org/first-amendment-center/topics/freedom-of-speech-2/libraries-first amendment-overview/banned-books/.

14. Fanetti, "Teaching Challenged Books," 6–17.

15. "The Student's Right to Read," Position Statements, National Council of Teachers of English, October, 25, 2018, http://www2.ncte.org/statement/righttoreadguideline/.

16. "The First Amendment in Schools: Censorship," National Coalition Against Censorship, accessed October 10, 2019, https://ncac.org/resource/the-first-amendment-in-schools-censorship.

districts and educational policies now advocate for and evaluate teachers on their efforts to teach *all* students and to meet their varying needs. Critics argue that censorship may limit a teacher's ability to meet the varying needs of their students.[17] For example, the School Library Journal conducted a study and found teachers typically censor books with sexually explicit content; lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and transgender (LGBT) themes; offensive language; drugs; and violence.[18] The assumption then is that censoring LBGT literature (as an example) might limit a teacher's ability to meet the needs of students who identify as LGBT. Thus, critics of censorship would argue that teachers who censor in this way foster "their own sense of comfort and safety rather than their students' needs."[19] Instead, critics want to ensure "young people have access to a wide range of ideas and worldviews, however controversial they may be."[20] In the end, they believe that teachers who intentionally or unintentionally censor literature may cause negative effects on student learning and growth and impede the work of fostering equity in education.

I was surprised to find in the aforementioned literature such a strong advocacy for teachers to limit the impact censorship could have on students without considering the impact that *not* censoring could have on teachers, especially those teachers who base their censorship choices on religious beliefs. While Donelson would classify these teachers as "moral censors," I empathize more with these teachers than he might have. In describing his opinion of moral censors, Donelson stated, "Moral censors frighten me. They are so sure of the worth of their morality and so positive that their morality must be inflicted on their students."[21] While I agree that censoring in a way that imposes a teacher's beliefs on his or her students is wrong, I am not convinced that all teachers who censor on moral grounds do so to save their students from moral peril. As my anecdote at the beginning of this essay

17. Nancy Roser, "Heavy (and Heavy-Handed) Issues Surrounding Book Selection," in *The Texts in Elementary Classrooms,* ed. James V. Hoffman and Diane L. Schallert (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004), 195–212.

18. School Library Journal, *Controversial Books Survey: Data and Findings* (New York: School Library Journal, 2016), https://s3.amazonaws.com/WebVault/SLJ/SLJ_ControversialBooksSurveyReport_2016.pdf.

19. "Student's Right to Read."

20. Kimmel and Hartsfield, "Educators' Perspectives of Controversial Literature," 345.

21. Donelson, "Giving Comfort to the Enemy," 157.

highlighted, some teachers censor because of their inner commitment to their faith, not necessarily to impose their morality on their students. I wondered then how a teacher's religious beliefs and the exercise thereof played a role in censorship.

Principles of Religious Freedom in Schools

In a general sense, religious freedom has been defined as one's ability to exercise agency in matters of faith.[22] In the case of whether to censor literature in a middle or high school English class, the challenge in exercising religious freedom is in balancing an educator's ability to freely worship in matters of faith with the students' right to read or have a suitable education. In considering these competing needs, I understood allowing students the right to read the literature of their choice. I even understood that not providing them this choice may be inequitable. What I did not understand was how to allow students this agency and access to literature without violating the agency of the teacher. I wondered, What then are the laws and other guiding principles of exercising religious freedom in a public-school setting?

While teachers have the right to freely exercise their religious beliefs in many spaces, there are definite limitations to the exercise of that freedom in a public-school setting. Because of the establishment clause and the legal guidelines of separating church and state, many school districts and educational policies limit teachers' religious expression. This precedent has been set in the various court cases addressing this topic. Many court cases side with the school establishment clause defense when it comes to matters of religious expression in schools. This includes teachers not being able to teach scripture, wear clothing endorsing religious beliefs, or engage in any other proselytizing action during the instructional day.[23] Decisions from these various court cases have established the following two guidelines when considering the exercise of religion in public-school settings:

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22. "Religious Freedom," Gospel Topics Essays, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed October 10, 2019, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/religious-feedom?lang=eng.

23. See Breen v. Runkel, 614 F.Supp. 355 (1985); Fink v. Board of Education, 65 Pa.Commw. 320 (1982); Marchi v. Board of Cooperative Educational Services, 528 U.S. 869 (1999); Downing v. West Haven Board of Education, 162 F.Supp. 2d 19 (2001); Helland v. South Bend Community School Corp., 93 F.3d 327 (1996); Roberts v. Madigan, 702 F.Supp. 1505 (1989).

- "A school can direct a teacher to 'refrain from expressions of religious viewpoints in the classroom and like settings.'"[24]
- "The employee must accept that he [or she] does not retain the full extent of free exercise rights that he [or she] would enjoy as [a] private citizen. . . . A school risks violation of the Establishment Clause if any of its teachers' activities gives the impression that the school endorses religion."[25]

These guidelines delineate the *explicit* exercise of religious belief of public educators, but they do not clarify the more *implicit* exercise of religious freedom as found in preemptive censorship. There is, however, one case that provides some insight into implicit acts of religious exercise in classroom settings.

In the case of *Roberts v. Madigan,* school officials asked Kenneth Roberts, a fifth-grade teacher, to remove two religious books from his classroom library and to discontinue his silent reading of the Bible during his class silent reading time. Roberts along with others sued his school because they felt it violated the establishment clause by exhibiting hostility toward religion. In the end, the courts denied Roberts's appeal. The court's rationale for this decision was that "the students are, in a real sense, a captive audience vulnerable to even silent forms of religious indoctrination."[26] This case led me to seriously consider whether a teacher's actions to preemptively censor certain literature (regardless of whether the choice was grounded in moral or personal reasons) could be classified as a silent form of religious indoctrination.

As members of the Church, we are taught to be "subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (A of F 1:12). We want to comply with the law; however, I often see scriptural examples that advocate disregard of the law if we feel it does not allow us to exercise our religion. While I believed it was important to adhere to the laws of the land, I desired to know how God felt I should proceed in this matter. I turned then to the teachings in scripture and of latter-day Church leaders.

24. *Helland,* 93 F.3d 327.
25. *Marchi,* 528 U.S. 869.
26. *Roberts,* 702 F.Supp. 1505.

Doctrinal Discussion

President Boyd K. Packer taught, "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior."[27] I felt that understanding the doctrine could guide me to the best course of action to take. Throughout this experience, I have been guided by three fundamental doctrines and principles: respecting the agency of others, examining the intent of my heart, and following the two great commandments to love God and to love my neighbor.

Respecting the Agency of Others

Joseph Smith wrote that members of the Church "claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and *allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may*" (A of F 1:11, emphasis added). One of our beliefs as members of the Church is to respect the agency of others. It is the final phrase "and allow all men the same privilege" that was key for me to consider. As members of the Church, we would never compel anyone to believe, think, or behave the way we do, nor do we have the authority to do so. However, as teaching professionals, who do have authority over curricular decisions in our classrooms, we need to be careful that our choices in literature selection do not violate agency by not "allowing" our students access to literature that may foster personal growth. The scriptures are replete with examples of this principle to respect the agency of others. For example, in the Book of Mormon, Alma the Younger learned that his desire to speak with the voice of an angel to more fully persuade people to repent was not the will of God, for God "granteth unto men according to their desire" (Alma 29:4). Moreover, the father in the parable of the prodigal son allowed his younger son to choose how he wanted to live his life (Luke 15). Both scriptural examples highlight people in positions of authority who, when presented with the opportunity to use that authority in respect to others' agency, exemplified that it is not the will of God to compel others to use their agency to make the choices we think they should make. Larry Gelwix, former coach of the Highland Rugby Team and mission president of the California Fresno Mission from 2011 to 2014, taught that "we cannot

27. Boyd K. Packer, "Little Children," *Ensign* 16, no. 11 (November 1986): 17.

do the Lord's work in the devil's way."[28] When it comes to censorship, it may be wise to consider our intentions and whether our choices in literature selection are unintentionally inducing our students to think, act, and believe as we do.

Examining the Intent of My Heart

Our intentions regarding our choices in literature selection and censorship are also important when pondering how Heavenly Father views those choices. I was worried Heavenly Father would not approve of certain choices I made regarding the books I read and chose to share with my students. To reiterate, I was not so concerned with protecting my students from books I thought were not good for them as much as I was concerned about how Heavenly Father viewed my choice to read and share those books. Thus, the choice to not censor concerned my own agency, not the imposition of my agency on others. However, the scriptures teach that Heavenly Father "looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7) and "knows all the thoughts and intent of the heart" (Alma 18:32). As I reflect on the desire I had to share literature with LGBT themes or references to drugs, sex, violence, and other perceived taboo topics, I discovered my real intent in sharing those texts was to bless the lives of my students through carefully sharing topics that can positively enhance their worldview and hopefully build their character. Another of our Articles of Faith teaches us to do "good to all men" (1:13). This then became my guidepost on making decisions about the literature I selected to read and share.

Following the Two Great Commandments to Love God and to Love My Neighbor

Jesus frequently taught, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:37–39). As I have mentioned, I struggled to find congruence in how I could show my love and obedience to my Heavenly Father and his commandments while also keeping the second

28. Larry Gelwix, "Focus on the Final Score," an interview conducted and included on the DVD of the film *Forever Strong,* directed by Ryan Little (Salt Lake City: Go Films and Picture Rock Entertainment, 2008).

commandment to love my neighbor when it came to literature selection. A few principles and teachings helped me here. First, Paul, in the New Testament, taught that "if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with *all* men" (Rom. 12:18, emphasis added). This was a guidepost for me to evaluate my choices to censor. I would ask myself if this choice to preemptively censor could cause unnecessary contention and do more harm than good. This is especially true in my text selection for readings to be used with my whole class. Dallin H. Oaks taught that we should be tolerant of others' viewpoints and that "our obligation to tolerance means that none of the behaviors—or others we consider deviations from the truth—*should ever cause us to react with hateful communications or unkind actions.*"[29] For me, I felt choosing to not share literature that reflected my students and their experiences could be perceived as an unkind action. President Oaks taught more recently two defining principles:

> We must never persecute those who do not share our beliefs and commitments. Regretfully, some persons facing these issues continue to feel marginalized and rejected by some members and leaders in our families, wards, and stakes. We must all strive to be kinder and more civil. . . .
>
> Meanwhile, we must try to keep both of the great commandments. To do so, we walk a fine line between law and love—keeping the commandments and walking the covenant path, while loving our neighbors along the way. This walk requires us to seek divine inspiration on what to support and what to oppose and how to love and listen respectfully and teach in the process.[30]

In seeking to apply Elder Oaks's teachings, I realized censoring literature on conflicting moral grounds could be considered a form of persecution if, for example, I chose to avoid LGBT-themed literature based on my views of morality or avoided a book with a social justice–related theme because of its language. I also needed to continue to seek the Lord's will regarding my choices of literature. The next section will describe how I have to this point applied my understanding of the aforementioned scholarship, laws, and doctrines to my practice as an educator.

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29. Dallin H. Oaks, "Truth and Tolerance," Brigham Young University devotional, Provo, Utah, September 11, 2011, https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/dallin-h-oaks/truth-and-tolerance/, emphasis added.

30. Dallin H. Oaks, "*Two* Great Commandments," *Ensign* 49, no. 11 (November 2019): 75.

Personal Applications

Below, I provide some of the concrete scenarios highlighting how I applied all that I learned to my practice specifically in teaching young adult literature that includes profanity, sex, and LGBT themes. My hope is that these examples will facilitate further pondering and increase awareness among Latter-day Saint educators of how they might deal with these decisions.

Profanity

I think that much of the law and the discussion of gospel principles would support the idea that gratuitous profanity should not be suitable for education. However, the NCAC helped me in making decisions on which literature containing profanity I might select and use: "Profanity appears in many worthwhile books, films and other materials . . . for emphasis or to convey emotion. . . . Works containing profanity often contain realistic portrayals of how an individual might respond in a situation."[31] My selection of literature containing profanity is always evaluated on this Article of Faith: "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (1:13). For example, I have been required to teach *Of Mice and Men*[32] to my eleventh graders. Not to start a philosophical debate on whether this book has merit or not, but my philosophy of literature would steer me away from this text for various reasons other than profanity. Nonetheless, I was required to teach it to align with my grade-level team and school curriculum. When I chose to do a read-aloud for this book, I would intentionally not read the racial slurs and profanity found in this book.[33]

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31. "First Amendment in Schools."

32. John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (New York: Covici Friede, 1937).

33. I did this to highlight my own discomfort with using those terms. I transparently told my students that I do not curse. They would ask me my reasoning, and I would simply respond, "It is just not the person I want to portray. I like to use different words to express my feelings and emotions." This would also lead to rich discussions about the purpose of language in regard to audience and task. I also expressed that I did not feel comfortable reading racial slurs as a white teacher who was teaching at the time in a school where half of my students were Black. I never had student issues with my choice to omit profanity and racial slurs. All of my students respected my beliefs. Some chose to continue to read those words out loud (minus the racial slurs, which all of my students chose not to read out loud); whereas, others omitted the profanity when reading aloud as well. I felt it created a safer space for all.

This allowed me to exercise my agency and demonstrate love toward my Heavenly Father by keeping his commandments. I also simultaneously respected the agency of my students. I did not hinder the book from being read, nor did I tell my students to not read those words when they participated in the read-aloud.

I also have taken the opportunity to teach my students to be critical of controversial language. We would have open discussions about why the author chose certain words and the effect they intended to have on the reader. By providing these learning experiences, I helped students learn concepts regarding the power of language and how to be intentional about their language choices within and among certain audiences. In this way, I felt I was empowering my students to use their agency to become more intentional with their use of language and teaching them that by so doing they can show a greater love toward their neighbor. For instance, I have many colleagues not of my faith who graciously and intentionally respect my beliefs and strive to use nonprofane language in my presence. However, I am likewise similarly gracious and loving when my colleagues use profanity intentionally or unintentionally in my presence to express their emotions. In this way, I am respecting their agency as well. These examples and conversations I have with my students about code-switching (a practice of alternating between one or more languages in a conversation) and knowing one's audience become invaluable lessons in the power of language that can be had in no other way.

Finally, I continue to study which texts I elect to read and consume that contain profanity. For instance, my wife and I recently encountered the story of *The Hate U Give*.[34] This fictional portrayal, similar to the circumstances of the racially charged incidents that occurred with Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, is told with the use of strong profanity. However, the profanity serves a purpose to highlight the aforementioned NCAC point. Now, I want to be clear that I am not trying to lower my standard, but the profanity used in this story highlights the intent of language and can serve to teach great principles. This is unlike literature and other forms of media that use profanity in vulgar ways. After both reading and viewing the film adaptation of *The Hate U Give,* I felt greater compassion, love, and sympathy for my brothers and sisters in the African American community, and this text inspired me with a new

34. Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give* (New York: Balzer and Bray, 2017).

perspective on how I can better relate, support, and serve those affected by racial discrimination, which new perspective I believe to be "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy" (A of F 1:13).

Sex

References to sex and profanity typically become censored because of a belief that the more students are exposed to such material, the more likely they will be to engage in such behavior. However, my experiences and my understanding of human psychology tend to persuade me that the more we shield our students from conversations about sexuality, the more curious they become, and that curiosity may serve as a catalyst for inappropriate sexual relations. For years, prophets have taught that sex can be a beautiful and sacred way to express love but that it should be done "within the bounds [the Lord] has set."[35] How can our youth understand those bounds unless they are taught? That is not to suggest we turn our English classrooms and curriculum into sex-education spaces. However, I do believe great literature can teach this concept. Books that highlight sex can strengthen concepts taught in sex education classes.

However, again I am cautious about how a piece of literature presents sexual topics and the maturity of my student audience (that is, their agency). For instance, I preemptively censored the book *Flowers for Algernon*[36] as a summer read with an incoming freshman honors English class. At the time, I felt the vivid description of female breasts was unwarranted for a group of freshmen I had not yet met, nor whose parents I had met. Had I taught that book in my class with them, might we have had a healthy conversation about the sexual references in the book? Possibly—it would have been done with respect to the students' agency and their level of comfort with the topic. With more implicit sexual references, such as when a piece of literature implies a sexual act has occurred, I evaluate teaching it to the whole class based on the context of the book, the sexual reference, and whether it offers educational value while also considering the agency of my students. With literature that discusses acts of rape, I feel more inclined to share it because of its educational value (for example, raising the issue of rape culture and how to diminish it), but I also consider how it is described and the agency of my students.

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35. Richard G. Scott, "Making the Right Choices," *Ensign* 24, no. 11 (November 1994): 38.
36. Daniel Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon* (New York: Harcourt Brace: 1966).

LGBT Themes

In my research, this is a topic with which many teachers of faith are struggling. For example, one teacher in a recent study I conducted expressed a philosophy of teaching LGBT-themed literature in this way:

> I attended the ALAN [Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE] conference for a couple years, and there was a lot of emphasis on using LGBTQ+ literature in secondary classrooms. I would be lying if I didn't say that this concerns me. I understand how LGBTQ+ individuals have been and are marginalized in society, and I would never want any student to feel uncomfortable in my classroom. I have had a couple students over the years that were open about their homosexual orientation; I have a student this year who shared gender identity questions she was having. I have these students, and I care about them. I accept them and treat them no differently. I am concerned, however, that at the point I start using LGBTQ+ literature as a point of study, that I would be normalizing those lifestyles.[37]

What I appreciated in this sentiment was its focus on what this essay has intended to highlight: How can teachers treat all students equitably without feeling like they are teaching concepts contrary to their faith? The sentiment from this teacher highlights the fact that I am not the only one struggling with this dilemma of selecting literature that aligns both with my faith and beliefs and with my responsibility to help students deal with difficult issues they will confront in everyday life. I have one example from my practice that I believe can marry these two competing beliefs.

In my English class, I used a short film titled *In a Heartbeat* to teach literary analysis. This short film depicts a young man who has a crush on another young man. As I taught this lesson, I had two educational aims: (1) to help my students be able to analyze the text to see an author's purpose and (2) to help my students to develop greater empathy for people who identify as LGBT. Using a think-aloud as a teaching strategy and holding a class discussion, I was able to help my students see that the author intended this story to be geared to all audiences. We argued that the creator of this short film used literary devices to tell the story in such a way that a broad audience could relate to it regardless of their sexual orientation, for who has not experienced having a crush? It was later when the boys in the film were mocked and treated unkindly by members of

37. Data from an unpublished study exploring religious perspectives of young adult literature.

their student body that the text led to a discussion about how we treat others with different viewpoints. At the end of this class, hearts were touched, and I believe prior viewpoints may have been reconsidered. What I found interesting in this experience was that I did get backlash from my principal, who suggested that such literature should be censored. However, my educational aim and the intent of my heart was not to promote the practice of same-sex attraction and homosexuality but rather to teach literary analysis and the disposition of compassion toward others whose thoughts and actions differ from our own. Nowhere in that lesson was I teaching anything contrary to my faith. Instead, I was teaching my students to become more Christlike in the way they treat others, regardless of whether or not they share similar beliefs. This is what I believe Jesus would have done.

Conclusion

Speaking to those who are servants, Paul taught, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh . . . ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, *doing the will of God from the heart*" (Eph. 6:5–6; emphasis added). I have come to learn that we, as public educators, can serve God and others as public servants when our *hearts* are set on loving God and his children. This experience of studying censorship in the classroom "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118) has taught me much about how to be a better educator to all of my students and has strengthened my ability to follow and be a disciple of Jesus Christ. My hope is that my experiences can lead other teachers of faith to teach in ways that align with their faith and are respectful and equitable toward others who are not.

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Birth of Discernment

Julia Hathaway

> *"Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul. We may preserve it in the midst of the bitterest pain, if our will remains firm and submissive. Peace in this life springs from acquiescence even in disagreeable things, not in an exemption from suffering."*
>
> —François Fénelon[1]

Do you need me to come to the appointment?" my husband asked as we got ready for the day.

"No. I think I'll be fine." I paused and thought again. "But if the same thing happens as last time, I'll be mad at you for *not* coming."

Two hours later, a tear rolling silently down my cheek, I was not angry at my husband. The pain superseded the anger. I stared at the ultrasound monitor. The doctor didn't need to tell me what I saw—my second blighted ovum in six months. An empty sac. No sign of a fetus. Just a dark, liquid-filled blob on the screen. To a mother's trained eye, the emptiness was visible. To a mother's trained heart, the emptiness was heavy.

This loss would end differently than the first. Rather than waking up postsurgery, confused and surrounded by beeping machines and nurses, I was completely alone. With my husband away on a business trip and my two-year-old cooperatively taking a nap, I birthed the sac. Whereas with my first loss, loved ones surrounded me with gifts, meals, flowers, and empathetic words, this time I lay in bed and mourned in loneliness.

1. François Fénelon, *Fenelon's Finest,* vol. 1, French Enlightenment Series (Jasper, Fla.: Revelation Insight, 2009), 62.

Tears of sorrow flowed, but also a deep appreciation for my Savior—whose resurrection I planned to celebrate in just a couple of days—filled my heart. As I endured my own Gethsemane, I felt a nearness to the One who had also suffered alone.

Grief, however, wouldn't fully hit me until two years later. This time, there was a sign of life. This time, I was angry. This time, I questioned the existence of God and my ability to sense his presence. The bleeding told me what I already knew, and the doctor tenderly confirmed it over the phone. I had miscarried again.

Grief. How does one describe that feeling? I know it is different for everyone. For me, it's a winter's day in Rexburg, Idaho! Cold and never-ending. The sun is shining bright and beautiful; I can see it, but I can't feel it. I know if I just go stand in that sunshine I will feel warmth, but it's much too easy shivering in cold, dark bitterness. My chest hurts. Tears flow freely. Moving forward is heavy, but it must be done because I still have six children who need me to be *their* mother. *That* is grief.

In order to understand my complete emptiness, I reflect back several years before this third miscarriage. Sitting on our living room couch, uncomfortably expecting my sixth child and pondering the unknown gender, I thought, *If this is a girl, I might be done having children.* As I stood, another thought, another voice, entered my mind: *You will have a boy with blue eyes, and then you'll have a little girl.* The words pierced through my heart.

"Yeah, right," I scoffed. *And yet . . . ?* I doubted but wanted to believe. Tucking the words away, I carried on with my day. The pregnancy continued as any other, until a few months later when he came.

It was dark, and I was shivering. I checked the clock: 1:00 a.m. glared at me. *I must have the chills.* Assuming it was just a bug or something, I decided to not alert my sleeping husband. Then the pains started strong and close, one after another, after another. They were too close to time. Suddenly I began to shake uncontrollably. Fear took over. *Something isn't right!*

"J," I whispered, still hesitant to wake him, still hoping I was only imagining the worst. "J," I spoke a little louder and pushed on him. "J, the baby's coming."

Upon hearing my words, my husband scrambled out of bed, startled and dazed (it was the wee hours of the morning after all). I awkwardly slid out of bed and tried to walk. Instantly, a flood of liquid poured down my legs. *My water has never broken on its own before.* Experience told me that if my water really had broken the baby's arrival could be minutes away. I struggled to keep the panic at bay and kept my fears to

myself, not wanting to worry my husband, who frantically managed his own part in the preparations. The babysitter arrived, and with bags in hand, we headed to the hospital.

I attempted to keep from trembling as the nurses did their usual triage check-up, but my body refused to cooperate. *Hurry up. Something is wrong with me!* Yes, I was in labor. No, my water hadn't broken. It dawned on me that it must have been another type of liquid spilled all over the floor at home. I'd have to remind J to clean it up when all of this was over.

As the nurses prepared me for delivery, I continued to convulse. Practically unaware of what was happening around me, the first miracle of the morning occurred. I attended a women's clinic where the doctors shared rotations, so you never knew which doctor would be on call during delivery. As I lay there, worrying and praying, Dr. Sizemore, the one doctor in whom I had full trust, walked into the room. Instantly, peace enveloped me. *Everything is going to be okay.*

In an instant, but with the calmest bedside manner, the doctor was at my side. "She's too hot. What's her temperature?"

A nurse checked. "One hundred two."

Immediately, Dr. Sizemore started giving orders. I needed medicine. Delirious with fever, all I could do was pray, pleading for my baby to be okay. All too quickly—yet not quickly enough—a few strong pushes and it was over. My baby was born. No sound. As the doctor stitched me up, my focus stayed on the nurses helping my baby take his first breath. They called in reinforcement from the NICU, a request I had made earlier but had been denied. *You should have listened to a mother's instinct!*

Aloud I pled, "Come on, Baby. Breathe!" The doctor eyed me, his gaze intense as if watching to keep my worry from becoming hysteria. Deep inside I trusted my boy would be okay, but hope gave way to anxiety. I could not take my eyes off the commotion across the room.

Finally, a cry pierced the air, a cherished sound. I leaned back on my pillow, a sigh escaping my lips. My baby was going to live!

Suddenly, a new fear gripped me. *Was* I? Bloodwork. So much bloodwork. Tests began for everything from lymphoma to HIV. I still have a small bruise on the arm they used as a pin cushion. The results: Strep A in the bloodstream, I had gone septic. Then more bloodwork to determine the cause of my weakened immune system. Antibiotics, testing, and observation for the baby and me were required. My newborn was whisked away from me, taken to the NICU while I remained in my own room, hoping for some answers.

Noisy machines, nurse interruptions, and voices out in the hallway made nights in the hospital practically unbearable. I vividly remember one night in particular. Overcome with exhaustion, I cried out, asking for reprieve, "Heavenly Father, please let me sleep."

A voice entered my mind. *You're asking for the wrong thing.*

I decided to engage the voice and responded, "What should I be asking?"

You need to pray that you can endure with less sleep.

Miraculously, despite more sleepless nights and multiple roadblocks, I did endure. After seven long and arduous days, my baby and I were allowed to go home—me attached to an IV, my little boy strong.

We named him David Ezra. Ezra means "helper." To this day, David's blue eyes remind me that he saved my life the day he was born.

Because of such a tumultuous experience, my husband shied away from the idea of having any more children. I, on the other hand, clung to the impression I'd received months before. I had my little boy with blue eyes. That could only mean one thing. As time passed, however, doubts crept in. *Had that really happened? Maybe I had just imagined the whole thing, attaching emotion to the story in my mind to make it real.* I searched my journals, hunting for proof. Nothing. Not even a hint of the words I swear I'd heard that day. But I couldn't give up. We had to try.

Giving my body time to heal, physically and emotionally, we waited some time before attempting another pregnancy. That's when the miscarriages began. One. Two. Three in succession. My heart broke, piece by piece, with each disappointment. With each devastating loss, doubts challenged what I knew in my heart to be true. Was there really a little girl in heaven waiting to join our family? And if it wasn't real, what did that mean about my ability to receive inspiration from God? I was at a loss—for words and hope. Thus began the painful journey of distancing myself from God.

The months and years following my third miscarriage left me full of questions, doubt, depression, anger, and pain. Clouded confusion became my constant state of mind. My husband, never fully understanding (or believing?) the impression I'd received, struggled to know how to comfort me, and so he left me to wander. Until the day he received his own answer.

With great conviction, J revealed, "I had an experience today. I now know you had that impression, and I'm willing to try again, if that's what you want."

Trepidatious, to say the least, I listened as tears stung my eyes. Finally, my husband believed! Yet, where was *my* belief? The pain was too raw.

I could not handle another heartache. I wrestled within myself, not knowing how to respond. I still desperately wanted another baby. I also didn't want to discredit my husband's feelings. So I agreed to try again. We prayed, and cried, and fastened to each other in hopes that our prayers would be answered.

Five months after petitioning the heavens, an ultrasound technician welcomed us into the room. Apprehension gripped my insides. I hated this room, so dark and foreboding, tainted by the memories that haunted me. I took a deep breath and stepped inside.

We'd gotten past the first hurdle; the baby was thriving! This appointment would be the next telling sign: boy or girl? *Was my impression real?* My body tense with anticipation, I lay down on the paper-covered examination table. I flinched as the technician squeezed cold jelly onto my protruding stomach. She pressed the wand down on my belly and spread the goop around. Instantly, the beautiful image of our baby appeared on the screen. My heart swelled with gratitude as we examined the beating heart, the hands, the feet!

"Do you want to know the gender?"

"Yes!" J took my hand.

Without hesitation, the technician confidently announced, "It's a boy!"

"It's a boy!" I exclaimed, eyes wide. It wasn't a question. Relief surprised me. I couldn't believe it, but I did. Years of pent-up tension evaporated, and I laughed. "J, it's a boy!"

"What does this mean?" My husband asked as we drove out of the hospital parking lot. We both knew the depth of that question.

"I'm never doing this again!" It was all I could think to say. I didn't want to dwell on the meaning. I only knew another pregnancy was definitely not an option. In all honesty, I couldn't wait to share the news with our kids! Having been thoroughly convinced (by their mother) that we were having a girl, giddiness overtook me as I imagined their reaction to the blue balloons being delivered to their classrooms. For that one special moment, I pushed away the questions swirling around in my mind, saving them for another day. I wanted to soak in the joy and excitement for as long as I could.

It didn't take long for those questions to resurface. The next morning, I cried. I cried not because I didn't want another little boy but because the ending of this journey would not bring a little girl. I cried because I wanted answers and knew they would probably never come. I cried for the loss of the little girl I had dreamed about for six years. I cried because suddenly all I had wondered, worried, and wrestled with didn't matter.

It was also in these tears that I knew God was making something of me I didn't fully understand and wanted desperately to accept.

Suffocating in my grief and needing to get out, I bundled up to shovel the freshly fallen snow on our driveway. The tears didn't stop, but clarity came as I worked in the cold, crisp air. My ability to discern was not in the coming to pass of every impression; it came in my ability to act, despite the result. I looked up at the overcast sky. Darkness lifted. Light peeked through the clouds.

Two years later a tiny voice declares, "Mommy, I wake up!" This is the greeting I receive nearly every morning from my brown-eyed little boy. His whole being radiates a light that warms our hearts. It turns out I made a deal with my oldest son that if we had a boy, he could name the baby (that's how confident I was we were having a girl!). Donovan means "dark warrior," appropriate for the fight he had in coming to mortality. At least, I thought it was a name to signify his journey; but sitting in yet another frigid Rexburg winter, I can't help but wonder if the name symbolizes my own. After all, birth through a dark canal almost always ends in light.

This essay by Julia Hathaway received second place in the 2021 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.

Biblical *hesed* and Nephite Covenant Culture

Noel B. Reynolds

The devastating late-nineteenth-century attack on traditional assumptions concerning the preexilic dating of the Pentateuch may have provoked the eventual explosion of twentieth-century scholarly investigation of the covenant culture of the Old Testament. Covenantal texts related to Abraham, Moses, David, and others had long been assumed to be foundational for the religion of ancient Israel, however limited modern understanding of that covenant culture might have been. But the new scholarly paradigm that dated those texts to 621 BC or later gave rise to a wave of skeptical scholarship about the whole tradition of divine covenants as the basis for ancient Israelite religion. The covenant tradition was being recast as a late invention built into texts as a way of rationalizing seventh- and sixth-century political and religious realities. And without a historical basis for the covenants of Abraham and his descendants, Israel would have no claim to a special status among the nations, and its God would have no claims to superiority over the gods of other cultures. To say that believing Jews and Christians felt threatened would be a huge understatement.

In other papers, I have summarized key dimensions of the Jewish and Christian traditions and the long-term decline of their concern for covenant, the resurgence of biblical scholarship focused on covenant over the last century, the unique interpretations of Israelite and Christian covenants, and the central role these covenants with God play in the Book of Mormon.[1] While most of the scholarly attention to these

1. See Noel B. Reynolds, "The Decline of Covenant in Early Christian Thought," in *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy*,

issues has focused on historical facts and the literary forms related to biblical covenants, a much smaller literature has now emerged that examines the moral structure of Israelite covenant society as depicted in the Old Testament. But it was not until the end of the twentieth century that these two lines of inquiry were fully united in the work of Harvard's renowned Semitist, the late Frank Moore Cross.[2]

Most earlier studies on biblical covenant had not sufficiently recognized how essential an understanding of the moral structure of covenant society is to an understanding of the nature of covenant itself. By defining the covenant as a device for structuring and managing kinship associations, Cross demonstrated the inextricable link between the biblical covenant and the moral code that made it work in the daily life of Israelites. The complex Hebrew term that refers to the set of moral expectations that applied to the Israelites' covenant relationships with their god and with one another is *hesed*.[3] Cross saw *hesed* as a secular moral code common to ancient desert tribes that had been enriched and adapted to Israelite religion in the Abrahamic tradition.

Biblical *hesed* and the Covenant Tradition

As will be explained below, Cross's approach dovetailed smoothly with the small but developing series of *hesed* studies being produced by biblical scholars. As a one-word summary of the actual character of Israel's God, Yahweh, and the prescribed moral character of his covenant people, *hesed* has emerged as a focal point for studies of biblical religion. The

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ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2005), 295–324; "Understanding the Abrahamic Covenant through the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2018): 39–74; and "Covenant Language in Biblical Religions and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly* (forthcoming).

2. See Frank Moore Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel," in *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3–21.

3. The Hebrew words used in this article have been transliterated, or Romanized, meaning they have been converted from the original Hebrew letters into the Roman (Latin) letters used in the English alphabet. Scholars have devised, over the years, various systems of transliteration of the Biblical Hebrew script in order to preserve distinctive characteristics of ancient Hebrew pronunciation. The level of precision used when transliterating often depends on the purposes of the given article, what is needed for argumentation, and the intended audience. This article will use a more basic phonetic system of transliteration so that the converted Hebrew words will be accessible to the widest audience possible. The transliteration *hesed* is based on the Hebrew original חֶסֶד (goodness, loving-kindness, mercy), which can also be transliterated as *chesed, checed,* or *khesed.*

primary challenge in these studies has been that *hesed* has proven to be impossible to translate adequately into English. Hebrew scholars have offered a variety of translation options, including *mercy, goodness, kindness, loving-kindness, grace, love, covenant love, faithfulness, strength,* and *loyalty*—while acknowledging that none of these would be an adequate synonym for all contexts.[4] While the King James translation favors *mercy,* it uses another fourteen English words as translations for *hesed* in various contexts. One translation expert examined all the occurrences of *hesed* in Genesis and concluded that its wide range of possible meanings made it necessary to focus carefully on the context before deciding whether the primary element of the Hebrew word "be that of mercy, faithful love, obligation under some contract or agreement, devotion, responsibility to help, tender love, sympathy, or whatever else it may be."[5] English and most other modern languages have never been part of the kind of kinship association grounded in a covenantal ethos that prevailed in the world of Abraham and the twelve tribes of Israel that claimed him as their father. The problematic result is that modern Jews and Christians who depend on Bible translations may be severely handicapped in their efforts to understand the foundational concepts of their own religions.

In his 2009 Sperry Symposium lecture, Brigham Young University religion professor Dan Belnap mounted what appears to be the first and only focused effort to explore the meanings of Old Testament *hesed* for a Latter-day Saint audience.[6] Unfortunately, the LDS writings of the subsequent decade do not give evidence of much impact from Belnap's essay. While Belnap confined his study quite reasonably to the Old Testament, the rather obvious question it poses for members and students of The

4. This translation problem is not unique to English or even modern languages. A. E. Goodman's study of early Psalters found that both the Aramaic Targum and the Syriac Peshitta Psalters provide "evidence of the apparent impossibility of finding any one Aramaic term which can adequately represent the different shades of meaning expressed by the Hebrew *hesed*." See A. E. Goodman, "*Hesed* and *Toda* in the Linguistic Tradition of the Psalter," in *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas,* ed. Peter R. Ackroyd and Barnabas Lindars (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 105–15, quotation on page 111. Throughout this paper, as in this instance, I have replaced Hebrew words in titles and quotations with transliterations.

5. Heber F. Peacock, "Translating 'Mercy,' 'Steadfast Love,' in the Book of Genesis," *The Bible Translator* 31, no. 2 (April 1980): 207.

6. Dan Belnap, "'How Excellent Is Thy Lovingkindness': The Gospel Principle of *Hesed,*" in *The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament,* ed. D. Kelly Ogden and others (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 170–86. Belnap's essay provides an excellent introduction of the Old Testament concept of *hesed* and its relevance for LDS belief and practice.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is this: To what extent do the teachings and culture of the Book of Mormon feature the same *hesed*-based concepts that characterized the preexilic Israelite culture that produced Lehi and Nephi and the civilization that sprang from them?

In this essay, I will first draw on Belnap and a host of other scholars of the Hebrew Bible to describe their most persuasive and relevant insights and contemporary conclusions about biblical *hesed*. I will then undertake a systematic exploration of Nephite language and teachings in the English Book of Mormon to determine whether or not they reflect that same *hesed* culture. My conclusion will be that the Book of Mormon text, even though available only in an English translation, clearly exhibits a commitment to the same distinctive concepts and ethos of the *hesed* culture of the Old Testament. I will go even further and say that these concepts and structures are even more obvious and clearly stated in the Nephite record than they are in the Old Testament.

Nelson Glueck

Scholarly investigations of *hesed* almost always build on the classic 1927 study by Nelson Glueck.[7] In his University of Jena doctoral dissertation, Glueck identified God's *hesed* with Yahweh's covenantal relationship with his followers in terms of loyalty, mutual aid, or reciprocal love. However, these terms are not just relative to the participants in the covenant but are understood to represent an ethical and religious relationship of reciprocity based in justice and righteousness, as well as faithfulness and loyalty.[8] God's *hesed* is gracious in that it derives from his oath, promise, or covenant and can be manifest in his strength and power on behalf of his faithful as he brings them aid and salvation.[9]

Almost a century later, it is easy to see that Glueck's training in archaeology disposed him to be more open to social science insights in his work

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7. American archaeologist Nelson Glueck first published his dissertation in German in 1927. As it eventually gained classic status among Bible scholars, Hebrew Union College sponsored an English translation by Alfred Gottschalk and an introductory essay, "Recent Studies in *Hesed*," by Gerald A. Larue under the editorial direction of Elias L. Epstein for its 1967 publication titled *Hesed in the Bible,* 1–32. I have used the only version currently available: Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* ed. Elias L. Epstein, trans. Alfred Gottschalk (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2011).

8. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld settled on *loyalty* as the best all-around translation for *hesed* in her second monograph on that topic, *Faithfulness in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

9. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 102.

than the Old Testament theologians who took up the study of *hesed* in subsequent decades have been. He avoided the fixation on etymologies, cognate languages, and Christian theology that often characterized the work of the theologians and focused instead on issues of usage and word groups in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near Eastern cultural context in a way that is similar to the newer methodologies developed by linguists in the last half of the twentieth century. His work also displayed a keen awareness of relevant studies of the background cultures that may have influenced tribal Israel in ancient times. He cites the classic nineteenth-century studies of Middle Eastern desert cultures and even introduces his explanation of the role of reciprocity in biblical *hesed* by quoting W. R. Smith: "In primitive society, where every stranger is an enemy, the whole conception of the duties of humanity is framed within the narrow circle of the family or the tribe; relations of love are either identical with those of kinship or are conceived as resting on a covenant."[10]

Glueck restated this same idea from the perspective of his study of biblical *hesed,* which "is not some kind of arbitrary assistance, but rather that which the members of a covenant are obligated to practice reciprocally. This meaning of *hesed* as the faithful, mutual assistance among people who are bound together by a covenantal relationship mirrors, perhaps, the original meaning of the word. Groups were formed so that through reciprocal assistance common dangers could be combated and overall security established. This distinct kind of aid, as well as the whole relationship in accord with the rights and obligations of the community, was called *hesed*."[11]

After decades in which Bible scholars fought through successive iterations of covenant theory in biblical studies, Frank Cross used the kinship studies of twentieth-century anthropologists to bring the study of biblical covenant and *hesed* full circle. In 1998, he portrayed ancient covenant as a device for bringing strangers into the tribe with all the rights and duties of natural-born members of kinship associations and concluded that *hesed* is a kinship term.[12]

The key insight for both Glueck and Cross was that the system of rights and duties obligating people to protect and care for one another in a kinship association could be extended to nonkin through covenants.

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10. W. Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel and Their Place in History* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1882), 161.

11. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 82.

12. See Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3–6.

Covenants developed anciently in such groups as an essential tool for extending full membership to nonkin through marriage, adoption, alliance, friendship, or even servitude. What made Israel unique was not that they had their own tribal deity, but that Yahweh became their god and father by means of his covenant with Abraham. And because of that covenantal foundation in their relationship, they shared in the full set of reciprocal expectations. No longer was *hesed* limited to the set of expectations obtaining between the members of a secular kinship association. For Israel, *hesed* defined the expectations of conduct for each Israelite vis-à-vis every other Israelite but also toward Yahweh. It also defined expectations of God's treatment of Israel both as a people and as individuals. And what could compel God to take on such onerous responsibilities and to be patient with an often-wayward people as he tried to bring them back into a fully faithful and loving relationship? Only his own inherent *goodness* could explain such gracious behavior.[13]

Glueck's study engages every occurrence of *hesed* in the Hebrew Bible, as well as the then-existing scholarly commentaries on those occurrences. The study begins with a careful look at the secular meanings of *hesed* as applied to human conduct in the Bible. He found six categories of relationships where the reciprocal obligations of *hesed* were in play: (1) between relatives and related tribes, (2) between hosts and guests, (3) between allies and their relatives, (4) between friends, (5) between rulers and subjects, and (6) between those in relationships where *hesed* was merited by individuals or groups that had chosen to render aid when it was needed but was not obligatory.

His exploration of the numerous secular examples of *hesed* led him to conclude generally that "*hesed* is conduct corresponding to a mutual relationship of rights and duties" or "to a mutually obligatory relationship."[14] He further concluded that "component parts" of the general concept of *hesed* include "principally: reciprocity, mutual assistance, sincerity, friendliness, brotherliness, duty, loyalty and love." Importantly, he also noted that "in the older sources, the common usage of *hesed* never means an arbitrary demonstration of grace, kindness, favor or love." Rather, the word was only used in a context framed by preexisting obligations and expectations of reciprocity. Because the purpose

13. This precovenant *goodness of God* as it appears in the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon is explored in Noel B. Reynolds, "The 'Goodness of God' and His Children as a Fundamental Theological Concept in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 46 (2021): 131–56.

14. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 54, 55.

of a covenant was to create the reciprocal system of rights and duties contained in a relationship of *hesed* where it had not existed previously, Glueck concluded that "*hesed* constitutes the essence of a covenant."[15]

The Ethical Version

Turning to the religious meanings of *hesed* and human conduct, Glueck first points out a sense in which the prophets, following Hosea in particular, tended to universalize *hesed* without focusing on Israel's historical covenants with the Lord.

In Hosea, *hesed* is a lofty concept, highly refined in the heart of the prophet. It is no longer conduct corresponding to a reciprocal relationship within a narrow circle, but the proper conduct of all people toward one another. On the one hand, humankind is regarded as one large family, and on the other, as children of one Heavenly Father. The word *hesed* signifies humans' readiness for mutual aid, stemming from a pure love of humanity; it is the realization of "the generally valid divine commandment of humaneness." *Hesed* does not reside in the punctilious offering of sacrifices or in external religiosity, but in ethical and religious behavior and the devoted fulfillment of the divinely ordained ethical commandments. In this respect, *hesed* as humane conduct is not different from the *hesed* of humans toward God. True religious motivation is discernible from ethical deeds.[16]

Micah seems to promote this same ethical or universal approach when he says, "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8, RSV). Drawing on the writings of several of these minor prophets and Job, Glueck goes on to argue that "*hesed,* which formerly existed only between those who stood in a fundamentally close relationship toward one another, undergoes considerable expansion in meaning. Every man becomes every other man's brother, *hesed* becomes the mutual or reciprocal relationship of all men toward each other and toward God."[17]

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15. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 55.

16. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 57, citing J. Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten* (Berlin, 1898). The quoted phrase is borrowed from J. Wellhausen. Glueck's translator did not include reference to an original page number for the phrase he borrowed from Wellhausen.

17. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 61; compare Job 6:14; Psalms 109:12, 16; Proverbs 3:3–4; 16:1; Jeremiah 31:33; Zechariah 7:9.

In other similar passages, the idea that *hesed* included conduct toward God was only implicit. The "fulfillment of ethical and religious obligations" would lead to blessings. Showing *hesed* "to the sick, the poor, and the helpless, who may never be able to reciprocate in kind," would affect one's destiny. A man's "righteous conduct would somehow be reciprocated, since this is God's ordained plan for the world."[18]

"Blessing and salvation are the portion of one who practices *hesed*. *Hesed* entails a subtle kind of reward. Whoever views all men as members of his own family, and keeps the welfare of the whole human family before him, creates his own way leading to the kingdom of God (this is not expressed openly but is implied) and will achieve communion with God."[19]

These and other passages in the wisdom literature strongly imply that "those who fulfill the obligations of human society and of God's covenantal community shall enjoy their prerogatives and rights. However, those who do wickedly forfeit their rights in human society and will be excluded from God's covenantal community as well. Whoever wishes to experience *hesed* and *emeth* must first practice *hesed* and *emeth*."[20]

The same standards of human conduct determined who would be known as a just or righteous man.

> The *hasid* is the faithful servant of the Lord who gains communion with Him because he has proved himself worthy, through ethical and religious conduct. He relies on God. He practices justice, shows loyalty and love, and orders his daily life according to the divinely ordained ethical commandments. . . . The relationship between God and people was one of mutual rights and duties with *hesed* as the norm of conduct. It was a covenant-alliance based on *hesed* and existing because of *hesed* exactly as in the case of a secular alliance. The relationship could be maintained only as long as *hesed* was mutually practiced.[21]

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18. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 63–64; compare Proverbs 19:17. Eichrodt soon advanced a somewhat different perspective on these "ethical" passages in the prophets' writings by emphasizing that they derived from the intensely personal experiences the prophets had with Yahweh and arguing that "any attempt to deduce from this a morality essentially different from that of ancient Israel is doomed to failure," while recognizing that in their writings "the moral ideal of the individual was gradually transformed." See Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament,* trans. J. A. Baker, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961): 1:359–65. This publication made the fifth edition of his two-volume 1933 work available to the English-speaking world generally. These quotations are from 1:361.

19. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 64; compare Proverbs 19:22.

20. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 65; compare Psalm 141:5; Proverbs 14:22; 27:6.

21. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 66, 68.

It will be important to note here the obvious time dimension involved for those who will be the righteous ones, receive communion with God, and be prepared to enter into his kingdom. In the Book of Mormon, the constantly repeated requirement of those who have repented and covenanted to take the name of Christ upon them and to keep his commandments is that they must endure faithfully to the end of their mortal lives if they would receive eternal life.[22] So with ancient Israel. As Glueck observes, *hesed* was understood to be "a task whose completion must always remain a distant goal. The obligations of the members of the alliance never ended; their mutual rights were valid for all times."[23]

Moving finally to consideration of God's obligation toward his people, Glueck concluded that "God's *hesed* can only be understood as Yahweh's covenantal relationship toward his followers." Accordingly, "only those who stand in an ethical and religious relationship to Him may receive and expect His *hesed.*" His covenant people could expect his "loyalty, justice and righteousness" to be displayed in his actions toward them. Glueck also noted that "in His *hesed* God manifests His strength and power in behalf of His faithful and brings them aid and salvation." All these conclusions rest on the historical grounding of God's covenant, promise, or oath by which he has taken on these obligations. God's actions toward his covenant people can be seen as exercises of mercy, but they differ from ordinary mercy in that because of his covenant he is obligated to provide aid to them in their need. So, while God's *hesed* is not the same as his grace, it is based on his gracious act in electing to establish this covenantal relationship with Israel.[24]

Rhetorical Side Notes

Like other students of the Hebrew Bible generally, Glueck recognizes the frequent linkage of *hesed* and *ʾemeth* (truth)[25] or *ʾemunah* (faithfulness)[26] as a hendiadys.[27] This rhetorical form occurs frequently in the Old

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22. This central Book of Mormon teaching is documented and explained in Noel B. Reynolds, "The Fifth Principle of the Gospel," *Religious Educator* 15, no. 3 (2014): 117–27.

23. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 68.

24. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 102.

25. The transliteration *ʾemeth* is based on the Hebrew original אֱמֶת (firmness, faithfulness, truth), which can also be transliterated as *ʾĕmet, ʾemet,* or *emeth.*

26. The transliteration *ʾemunah* is based on the Hebrew original אֱמוּנָה (firmness, steadfastness, faithfulness), which can also be transliterated as *ʾĕmūnāh* or *emunah.*

27. See, for example, Lester J. Kuyper, "Grace and Truth: An Old Testament Description of God, and Its Use in the Johannine Gospel," *Reformed Review* 16, no. 1 (1962):

Testament when two nouns in the same grammatical form are conjoined. The rhetorical effect is to see the conjunction of the two nouns as having its own combined meaning rather than seeing their separate meanings as additive. Glueck interprets *'emeth* as serving an adjectival function that emphasizes that God's *hesed* is trustworthy, that it is fully dependable, and that it lasts forever. This interpretation is not controversial in the literature.

But Glueck describes an additional complexity of *hesed* which may signal an additional rhetorical function that goes unrecognized. Merismus is also a common Old Testament rhetorical figure in which a part can stand for a whole, or commonly where mention of one or more elements of a known list can evoke the memory of the full list in the mind of auditors or readers. Glueck endorses the interpretation of Psalm 40:10 by Franz Delitzsch to show that the hendiadys *hesed* and *'emeth* also includes *righteousness, faithfulness, mercy,* and *salvation*: "Your *righteousness* I have sealed in my heart. I have spoken of your *faithfulness* and *salvation*; your *hesed* and *'emeth* I have not concealed from the great assembly. Similarly may you O Yahweh not seal off your *rahamim* [mercy] from me, may your *hesed* and *'emeth* protect me."[28]

Quoting Delitzsch, *hesed* and *'emeth* "are the alpha and omega of the qualities through which God manifests himself and which lead to salvation."[29] But once we see this, the door has been opened to let in all the other divine qualities entailed by *hesed* as identified by Glueck throughout his treatise. It is not a short list, as he points out in different contexts that divine *hesed* contains within it truth, mercy, righteousness, power, loyalty, justice, goodness, honesty, kindness, love of humankind, and other attributes. And so we can see at least the possibility that the frequent appearances of *hesed* and *'emeth* or *'emunah* as a hendiadys might equally well be read as merisms calling to mind the entire complex of moral qualities associated with God and his righteous people in covenant Israel.

4, where he explains that "the second term intends to confirm and enrich the concept of the first."

28. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 100, emphasis added.

29. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 100. An English translation was published in 1888 by T. & T. Clark (Edinburgh) and is now available as a photographic reprint as Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (Bibliolife). See Delitzsch's discussion of this passage on pages 40–41. For a detailed explanation of this aspect of biblical merismus, see Noel B. Reynolds, "Biblical Merismus in Book of Mormon Gospel References," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 26 (2017), 106–34.

Hesed Is a Kinship Term

A major development for the study of *hesed* appeared in a 1998 essay by Frank Moore Cross in which he explained why studies of biblical *hesed* and covenant must begin with the social character of ancient Israel as a kinship association.[30] While twentieth-century anthropologists understood kinship associations and the ways in which that distinctive form of social organization shapes meaning and life experience for the kinship-association members, few other academic disciplines appreciated how significant these anthropological insights might be for their studies.

The social organization of West Semitic tribal groups was grounded in kinship. Kinship relations defined the rights, obligations, duties, status, and privileges of tribal members, and kinship terminology provided the only language for expressing legal, political, and religious institutions.[31] Cross explains how the benefits of belonging to a kinship group were based on the obligations that the members of the family or tribe owed to each other. Mutual protection was widely recognized as a primary obligation.[32] More important to the present study was the obligation to seek the welfare of one's kin—even to love one's kinsman as oneself, as one's own soul.[33]

Also of particular interest was the duty of redemption.[34] One principal Hebrew verb *ga'al,*[35] "to redeem," is frequently translated "to act as a kinsman." The *go'el* is a "kinsman redeemer" who acts on his duty to avenge a kinsman's murder, "to deliver or redeem property sold by a poor kinsman, to redeem the kinsman sold into debt slavery, [or] to marry the widow of a brother or near kinsman to secure his line."[36] The classic

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30. See Cross, "Kinship and Covenant." See also Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

31. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 3.

32. The nineteenth-century collection of detailed information on tribal and kinship beliefs and practices of the Arabian tribes and clans has been invaluable for the studies developed by twentieth-century historians, anthropologists, and Bible scholars. Probably chief among these has been W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia,* new ed., ed. Stanley A. Cook (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903).

33. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 4; compare 1 Samuel 18:1–3.

34. See the discussion in Daniel L. Belnap, "The Abinadi Narrative, Redemption, and the Struggle for Nephite Identity," in *Abinadi: He Came among Them in Disguise,* ed. Shon D. Hopkin (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2018), 27–66, esp. 42–43 and 62–63 nn. 28–30.

35. The transliteration *ga'al* is based on the Hebrew original גָּאַל (to redeem, act as kinsman), which can also be transliterated as *gâ'al* or *gaal.*

36. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 5. Jennifer Clark Lane has shown how the kinsman redeemer role was established and effectuated between Yahweh and Abraham. See

kinsman redeemer is Boaz, who accepts the responsibility to step in to help Naomi and Ruth in their extremity. With many other synonyms available, Isaiah chose *ga'al/go'el* exclusively as the word he used twenty-three times for *redeem/redeemer.*

The Moral Culture of the Israelite Covenant Society (*hesed*)

Cross finds the work of anthropologists on small kinship groups to be both informative and fully consistent with the language of love (*'ahăbāh*)[37] and loyalty (*hesed*) that the early Hebrews used to hold the intimate relationships of family and kindred together. He draws from anthropologist Meyer Fortes, who concluded generally that kinship relationships assume a basic friendliness and the kind of "altruism exhibited in the ethic of generosity."[38] As Fortes goes on to explain, "kinsfolk must ideally share" because they "have irresistible claims on one another's support and consideration," and they "must, ideally, do so without putting a price on what they give. Reciprocal giving between kinsfolk is supposed to be done freely and not in submission to coercive sanctions or in response to contractual obligations."[39] Reflecting on Johannes Pedersen's analysis of the pact between Jonathan and David made because each loved the other "as he loved himself" and could expect "unfailing kindness [*hesed*] like that of the Lord as long as I live," (1 Sam. 20:17, 14, NIV), Fortes explains that "artificially created ties of kinship" such as this "*pact* of amity implies an artificial relationship. It connotes a relationship deliberately created by the mutual agreement of the parties, not one imposed by the chance of birth," and describes the institution of "blood-brotherhood."[40]

"The Redemption of Abraham," in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2005), 171. The transliteration *go'el* is based on the Hebrew original גֹּאֵל (redeemer, kinsman, avenger), which can also be transliterated as *gōʾēl* or *goel.*

37. The transliteration *'ahabah* is based on the Hebrew original אַהֲבָה (love), which can also be transliterated as *'ahăḇāh, 'ahavah, ahabah,* or *ahavah.*

38. Meyer Fortes, *Kinship and the Social Order: The Legacy of Lewis Henry Morgan* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 237.

39. Fortes, *Kinship and the Social Order,* 238.

40. Fortes, *Kinship and the Social Order,* 241. The early application of these ideas to biblical institutions and ideas was laid out in classic form by Johannes Pedersen, whose 1920 German treatise was published in English as *Israel, Its Life and Culture,* volumes 1 and 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1926). An updated edition was released in 1959, followed by the English translations of volumes 3 and 4 in 1963. While the discovery and analysis of a much richer array of kinship systems in later decades precipitated a crisis of

Cross applied these basic anthropological findings to the ancient Hebrews and their distinctive moral system of *hesed,* which provided a prelegal, moral structure for their society. As he explains, the Hebrew term *hesed,* as used in the context of early Israel as "a society structured by kinship bonds, covers precisely this semantic field." Further, "with the breakdown of kinship structures in society, and in social metaphors in theological language, the extended meaning of *hesed* became increasingly prominent. But its rootage in kinship obligations is primary. Strictly speaking, *hesed* is a kinship term."[41]

With the salient exception of Glueck, biblical studies of *hesed* before Cross were not usually attuned to the kinship origins of this concept and focused almost exclusively on the biblical text for their insights—resulting in the common claim that the language of *hesed* was covenant terminology. Cross and others reversed that with their discovery that covenant language in the Hebrew Bible was derivative of the earlier and more fundamental kinship language and that the meanings of *hesed* should be reconsidered in that context.[42] *Hesed* had a secular meaning in ancient tribal cultures before it was adopted by Israelite religion.

In this paper, I will focus on the teachings about God and man presented by a selection of prominent Nephite prophets to show how the vocabulary and concepts they introduce fit well with the language and assumptions of Old Testament *hesed* as preliminary evidence for the compatibility of Israelite and Nephite covenant culture. While the words for *covenant* occur frequently in both the Hebrew Bible and the English Book of Mormon (*berit* = 287 and *covenant* = 154 times respectively), an examination of the moral culture of covenant in each text will go a long way toward ensuring that the covenant concepts in each are comparable.

Some Cautions and Caveats

There are several reasons why this kind of wide-ranging study must be characterized as exploratory, making no claim to be conclusive or definitive. Most importantly, when we apply the findings of Hebrew Bible scholars to interpretations of the Book of Mormon, we have only the English text, which we understand to be, in certain ways, an Early

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confidence among anthropologists as to the nature of kinship itself, the characteristics of the kinship system of ancient Israel as described by Pedersen, Fortes, Cross, and others have not been questioned.

41. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 5–6.

42. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 11–12.

Modern English rendition of Mormon's one-volume abridgment of a vast repository of ancient Nephite records which may have been written variously in Hebrew or in other languages that were probably influenced by ancient Hebrew origins.[43] Perhaps a wiser person reviewing these intimidating caveats would stop right there. But I am persuaded that the combined findings of linguists, archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and Bible scholars may have opened an exciting and promising new window through which we may be able to gain a significantly enhanced understanding of the Old Testament covenant culture and its potential connections to the teachings of the Nephite prophets.[44] Only time will tell whether this window is large or small, clear or distorted.

Both linguists and historians understand that human languages and cultures exhibit constant change over time. This poses significant challenges for a study like the present one, which attempts to draw some general comparisons and conclusions about certain cultural concepts and linguistic formulations that have persisted in one form or another across huge stretches of both time and space. While scholarly studies of the language and practices of ancient Israel cited in this study are mostly developmental in nature (diachronic), recognizing evolution and change over time, I have employed a characterization of these deemed to be as accurate as possible for educated Israelites living in Jerusalem during the last half of the seventh century BC. I then use this characterization in a static (synchronic) comparison with the text of the Book of Mormon without attempting to identify important developments in those same concepts and formulations across a millennium of Nephite discourse.[45] The textual examples featured in these comparisons are

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43. All quotations from the Book of Mormon, including punctuation and spelling, are taken from the Yale critical edition: Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009). With the collaboration of Stanford Carmack, Skousen has determined that the "words, phrases, expressions, grammatical forms, and syntactic patterns" of the original Book of Mormon "are archaic English" and conform well with Early Modern English (approximately 1450–1720). See Royal Skousen, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon: Part Three, The Nature of the Original Language,* The Critical Text of the Book of Mormon, 4 vols. (Provo, Utah: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies and BYU Studies, 2018), 3:3.

44. See Reynolds, "Covenant Language in Biblical Religions."

45. The distinction academic studies draw between diachronic and synchronic methodologies derives from the great French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Roy Harris (Chicago: Open Court, 1983), 80–81. For a detailed discussion of how this distinction has played out in biblical studies, see Paul R. Noble, "Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches to Biblical Interpretation," *Literature and Theology* 7, no. 2 (June 1993): 130–48.

drawn from the founding period of Nephite civilization (Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob), the middle period (King Benjamin, $Alma_1$, and $Alma_2$), and from the very last writers (Mormon and Moroni). I have found the religious language, concepts, and ethos evident in these three periods sufficiently isomorphic to justify their employment in this exploratory study without probing diachronic issues. But I would also welcome further studies that may be able to identify significant developments across the Nephite dispensation.

Comparisons of Scholars' Findings about *hesed* with the Book of Mormon Text

Calling *hesed* a "gospel principle," Dan Belnap locates its continuing importance in "its emphasis on acts of deliverance in the Old Testament narratives and its insight on what it means to be like God in our own personal journeys toward salvation."[46] In all these examples, *hesed* is translated as *kindness, loving-kindness, mercy,* or *goodness.* While Belnap acknowledges the frequent association of *hesed* with covenantal contexts, he does not see that as essential.[47] In what follows, I will extend the discussion to a focus on the Book of Mormon. I will also employ the broader list of *hesed* synonyms that has accumulated in recent Bible scholarship as well as the insights about "kinship by covenant" or "kinship-in-law" that derive from Cross, Hahn, and others as will be described below.

Many of the refinements and extensions of Glueck's conclusions about *hesed* that developed in subsequent studies are relevant for a study of this topic from the perspective of the Book of Mormon.[48] Some of these emphasized the idea that for humankind, *hesed* represents reciprocal kindness. But the divine *hesed* of Yahweh is likewise conditional in that his covenant responsibilities are expected only as Israel obeys and loves him. Norman Snaith added the important qualification that *hesed*

46. Belnap, "Gospel Principle of Hesed," 170. Belnap's study focuses appropriately on the Old Testament but does include a few references to Restoration scripture.

47. For a powerful exposition of the view that Israelite marriage was understood as a covenant, see RoseAnn Benson, "The Marriage of Adam and Eve: Ritual and Literary Elements," in *By Our Rites of Worship: Latter-day Saint Views on Ritual in Scripture and Practice,* ed. Daniel L. Belnap (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 107–31. Benson draws heavily on Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994).

48. The principal contributions published during the first forty years after Glueck have been helpfully reviewed and summarized in Larue, "Recent Studies in *Hesed*."

"denotes attitudes of *loyalty* and *faithfulness* which should be observed by both parties in a covenant." Snaith argued persuasively that *faithfulness* was a more accurate one-word translation of *hesed* than *kindness* and suggested *sure-love* or *covenant love* as even better terms to use.[49]

Divine Power

While Glueck and a few others have noted that God's strength and power is essential to his *hesed* as he blesses the faithful and punishes the wicked,[50] the scholarly literature lends very little focused attention to that aspect of divine *hesed.*[51] Old Testament theologian Edmond Jacob was convinced by Glueck's connecting of divine *hesed* with covenant in Hebrew culture and went on to observe "that *hesed* has no equivalent in modern languages and that etymological studies give little aid beyond the indication that the primitive significance of the term was 'strength.'"[52] In a 1981 study, C. F. Whitley examined a number of problematic passages for which Glueck's findings seemed inadequate and recommended *strength* as the primary meaning for each with specific variations in certain cases "to include such notions as fortitude, confidence, pledge, resolution and health."[53]

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49. Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1944), 95, emphasis added.

50. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 92–98. "In His *hesed* God manifests His strength and power in behalf of His faithful and brings them aid and salvation." Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 102.

51. One contributor to this literature is Sidney Hills, whose unpublished 1957 papers have been reported subsequently by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld in her *The Meaning of* Hesed *in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 10–11, where she reports Hills's listing one of the seven features of divine *hesed*: that it "possesses certain marvelous characteristics: all-pervading initiative, *irresistible power,* never-failing constancy" (emphasis added).

52. As cited and summarized in translation by Larue, "Recent Studies in *Hesed,*" 28. For the English version and the full source, see Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament,* trans. Arthur. W. Heathcote and Philip. J. Allcock (New York: Harpers and Row, 1958), 103. J. C. Margot speaking from the perspective of modern linguistics strongly objected to the emphasis on a covenant connection by Glueck and Jacob, but this was all before Cross's work, which would seem to answer Margot's concerns and reaffirm Glueck's earlier approach. See Jean-Claude Margot, "And His Love Is Eternal (Psalm 136)," *Bible Translator* 25, no. 2 (1974): 212–17.

53. C. F. Whitley, "The Semantic Range of Ḥesed," *Biblica* 62, no. 4 (1981), 526. Whitley (520) also offered strong endorsement for the older suggestion of Felix Perles "that *hesed* means 'strength,'" citing Felix Perles, *Analekten zur Textkritik des Alten Testaments* (München: Theodor Ackermann, 1895), 76–77.

Regarding several of these, Glueck is resisting some scholars' suggestion that *strength* is synonymous with *hesed* and is suggesting instead that it should be seen as one part or manifestation of *hesed.* For example, he demonstrates that the proposal that *strength* be used as the translation for *hesed* is "justified only insofar as the meaning 'strength' is contained in the overall concept of *hesed.*"[54]

In comparison, the Book of Mormon texts repeatedly cite God's power as creator of the world and humankind and as triumphant over the power of Satan through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is his power that guarantees his plan of salvation and his ability to bless and reward the righteous in this life and at the Final Judgment. As Lehi explains, "Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty. Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy *power* and *goodness* and *mercy* is over all the inhabitants of the earth" (1 Ne. 1:14, emphasis added). The same theme is echoed and emphasized throughout the entire book.[55]

Nephi appropriately rounds off the first section of his book by summarizing this principle: "But the Lord *knoweth all things* from the beginning. Wherefore he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men. For behold, he hath all *power* unto the fulfilling of all his words" (1 Ne. 9:6, emphasis added).[56] Alma echoes this teaching when he teaches the people in Gideon that "now the Spirit knoweth all things" (Alma 7:13) and speaks of the great things that the Lord does for his people by the *power* of the Holy Ghost. Lehi equates the power of God with the Spirit of the Lord (2 Ne. 1:27), and the Book of Mormon mentions twenty-nine times the important things that were done "by the *power* of the Holy Ghost."[57]

Knowledge

Similarly, Glueck and a few other scholars have noticed the significance of human's knowledge of God in relation to his *hesed.*[58] But the Book of Mormon emphasizes that God's knowledge is essential for his "works among the children of men" and that human knowledge of him is the means by which they can access God's love and covenant relationship.

54. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 97.

55. See Reynolds, "'Goodness of God.'"

56. See also, for example, 1 Nephi 1:20; 3:20.

57. Noel B. Reynolds, "Language of the Spirit in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter* 33 (2019): 209–14.

58. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible,* 56–57, 86–89.

This principle is clearly laid out in Benjamin's address when he says to his people,

> I say unto you that if ye have come to a *knowledge* of the *goodness* of God and his matchless *power* and his *wisdom* and his *patience* and his *long-suffering* towards the children of men, and also the atonement which hath been prepared from the foundation of the world, that thereby salvation might come to him that should put his trust in the Lord and should be diligent in *keeping his commandments* and *continue in the faith,* even unto the end of his life—I mean the life of the mortal body—I say that this is the man that receiveth salvation through the atonement which was prepared from the foundation of the world. (Mosiah 4:6–7, emphasis added)

The response of the people to Benjamin makes clear that this knowledge of God provides them with the essential understanding and motivation that leads them to engage in the covenant with the Lord: "And it is the *faith* which we have had on the things which our king hath spoken unto us and hath brought us to *this great knowledge,* whereby we do rejoice with such exceeding great joy. And we are willing to enter into a *covenant* with our God to do his will and to be *obedient to his commandments* in all things that he shall command us all the remainder of our days" (Mosiah 5:4–5, emphasis added).

The Character of the Nephites' Covenant Deity

One of the simplest and most direct ways of unraveling the complexities of biblical *hesed* as applied to Yahweh is to review the struggle of Hebrew Bible translators to find suitable English synonyms. Following Glueck, scholarly work on this problem peaked in the mid-twentieth century as exemplified in writings of Nathan Snaith, Lester Kuyper, and T. F. Torrance.[59] Contrary to the widespread popular understanding of Yahweh of the Old Testament as a stern, demanding, impatient, and punishing deity, this principal term describing his character and conduct toward his covenant people has been translated into English as loving-kindness, mercy, loyalty, faithfulness, truth, righteousness, goodness, and grace.

While it is not difficult to find Book of Mormon descriptions of the Lord as one who loves, nurtures, redeems, and defends his people—exhibiting the same *hesed* that today's scholars find characterizing Yahweh in the Old Testament—it also becomes immediately obvious that

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59. See, for example, Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*; Kuyper, "Grace and Truth," and T. F. Torrance, "Covenant or Contract?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23 (1970): 51–76.

the Nephites' early reception of the Christian gospel infuses a powerful extra dimension into their characterizations of the Lord and their understanding of what he does for his people. The Book of Mormon prophets explicitly recognized a divinely prepared "plan of salvation" or plan of redemption for all humankind—made known unto them by "the great God" in his *mercy* (Alma 24:14), a plan "which was prepared from the foundation of the world" (Alma 22:13).[60]

While the plan was universal in its application to all his creations, the special covenant given to Abraham established Israel as "his people," through whom the world could observe how God deals truly, lovingly, and faithfully with his covenant people through all their cycles of obedience and waywardness. Most importantly—as their Divine Kinsman, he not only redeems his people in this mortal realm from Egyptian and Lamanite slavery, but he also redeems them eternally from death and hell through his Atonement.

The Book of Mormon is even more emphatic and persistent than the Old Testament in reminding Lehi's descendants of their covenant relationship with the Lord.[61] While we do not have the original language of the text, it is striking that the English translation of the Book of Mormon features the same family of terms that contemporary Bible translators have used in their attempts to capture the complex meanings of *hesed* as it applies to Yahweh. It is important to note first that this Hebrew term is used in the Old Testament only to describe relationships and conduct within a covenant context where there is a preexisting tie (kinship or covenant) between the characters of a story and is not used for general examples of kindness, loyalty, or mercy between people not so related.[62]

God's love is portrayed as reciprocal in one sense, but literary readings have demonstrated that it also includes a deeper commitment, going beyond covenant, in which God's love explains his willingness to forgive covenant breakers. His mercy and his love for his people and his righteousness are fully in place prior to the establishment of the covenant and make the covenant strong and reliable over time for all human participants. Nevertheless, it is always clear that God's people will not receive the blessings of the covenant when they violate their covenantal responsibilities.

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60. See Noel B. Reynolds, "The Plan of Salvation and the Book of Mormon," *Religious Educator* 21, no. 1 (2020): 31–53.

61. For a detailed study of the three streams of covenant discourse in the Book of Mormon, see Reynolds, "Understanding the Abrahamic Covenant."

62. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 5–6. See the discussion in Larue, "Recent Studies in *Hesed*," 1–3.

The assumed background of all specific applications of the term includes a recognition of the fact that God is humankind's creator, that he is *all-powerful* and passionately committed to help fallen people become *righteous* like him, that there will be both successes and failures in the process, and that God will be *faithful forever* in his promise to help those who choose this path to return to him. God's *goodness* is apparent first in the creation of the world and humankind, second in the preparation of this plan of salvation, and third in his willingness to forgive those who repent.[63] He is *faithful* and *true* in that his promises are reliable, in spite of all opposition. He is *loving, kind,* and *loyal* in that he understands human weakness and provides people with the strength and knowledge to succeed when they seek it, and always forgives their failings when they repent. His overwhelming *goodness* and *grace* are evident in his creation of the earth and humans upon it; in his provision of the Atonement through his divine Son, Jesus Christ; and in his plan of salvation that makes it possible for people to be forgiven of their sins. And again, it is his covenants with people that establish this mutual relationship and inform this process. In all of this, it is the *condescension* of the powerful and perfect God reaching out to bless imperfect people in their need that is evident.

Once this package of descriptors has been identified in the Old Testament, it can be recognized repeatedly in the Nephite teachings about God and his relationships with that covenant people. In the sixty-two passages I have found that exhibit some conscious focus on the character of God and of his conduct toward his covenant people, it is these same qualities of biblical *hesed* that recur again and again—and against the same assumed covenant background. In the next section of this paper, I will show how the first generation of Nephite prophets established a Christianized version of this same Hebrew covenant discourse as a model that would be followed by their successors.

Divine *hesed* in the Teachings of Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob

Lehi

Opening the Book of Mormon, one does not have to wait long for the Israelite conception of covenant *hesed* to make its appearance. The very first chapter of Nephi's writings establishes the basic Nephite concept of God. Nephi begins the record in the first sentence explaining that he will write this record because he has "had a great knowledge of *the*

63. See Reynolds, "'Goodness of God.'"

goodness . . . of God" (1 Ne. 1:1, emphasis added). Responding to a dramatic vision of God in his heaven and the prophecies of his coming punishment of wicked Israel, Lehi exclaims, "Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty. Thy throne is high in the heavens, and *thy power and goodness and mercy* is over all the inhabitants of the earth. And *because thou art merciful,* thou wilt not suffer *those who come unto thee* that they shall perish" (1 Ne. 1:14, emphasis added).

Lehi's statement is a straightforward summary of the Israelite concept of the covenant relationship between the Lord and his people. Nephi adapts it a few verses later to provide a thesis for his first book: "But behold, I Nephi will shew unto you that the *tender mercies* of the Lord is over all them whom he hath chosen because of their *faith* to make them mighty, even unto the *power of deliverance*" (1 Ne. 1:20, emphasis added).

The linkage of *goodness* and *mercy* in praises describing God turns out to be typical of Old Testament hymns of praise as has been demonstrated by A. R. Millard. The Hebrew term for *mercy* in these passages is *hesed,* which Glueck has shown to be covenantal language. As Millard points out, these hymns of praise are based in "the thought that God has been performing His part of the Covenant-promises."[64] Millard provides several examples of this, including some that refer explicitly to the covenant relationship between Israel and the Lord: "The Lord is good and upright. . . . All the paths of the Lord are mercy and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies" (Ps. 25:8, 10).[65] Further support for the idea that *goodness* is a covenant term can be found in short research reports by McCarthy and Fox.[66]

As explained above, Glueck saw in the minor prophets and the wisdom literature a universalized notion of the *hesed* and even the *goodness* of God that comprehended all time and all peoples. But finally, as he argued convincingly, God's *hesed* was understood by the Israelites to be strictly linked to his covenants with them. In another paper, I argue that the Nephites saw *the goodness of God* functioning before the creation

64. A. R. Millard, "For He Is Good," *Tyndale Bulletin* 17 (1966): 116. Millard has argued that repeated Old Testament references to God's goodness should be seen as covenant language and as references to his *hesed*.

65. Millard's translation, "For He Is Good," 116. See also 1 Chronicles 16:34; 2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Psalms 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 135:3; 136:1, 4.

66. See Dennis J. McCarthy, "Covenant 'Good' and an Egyptian Text," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research,* no. 245 (Winter 1982): 63–64; and Michael Fox, "*Tob* as Covenant Terminology," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research,* no. 209 (February 1973): 41–2.

and resulting in the creation of the world and the plan of salvation for humankind. But the Nephites also would invoke *the goodness of God* to explain his covenantal actions in fulfilling his *hesed* to his people in need. So they saw his *goodness* being operative both before and after his covenants with Israel historically.[67]

Nephi

Drawing on his lifelong experience as a prophet and leader of the Nephite people, Nephi introduced the account of his own first vision with an even more explicit statement of this context than can be found in the Bible—emphasizing God's constancy or truth over time: "For *he is the same* yesterday and today and forever. And *the way is prepared* for *all men* from the foundation of the world if it so be that they *repent* and *come unto him.* For he that diligently seeketh shall find, and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded to them by the power of the Holy Ghost as well in this time as in times of old and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore *the course of the Lord is one eternal round*" (1 Ne. 10:18–19, emphasis added). Nephi then immediately reminded his readers of the coming judgment and the high standard against which they will be judged: "No unclean thing can dwell with God" (1 Ne. 10:21). He clearly saw the covenant relationship as the key to men's relationship to God: "And also my soul delighteth in the *covenants* of the Lord which he hath made to our fathers. Yea, my soul delighteth in his *grace* and his *justice* and *power* and *mercy,* in the great and eternal plan of *deliverance* from death" (2 Ne. 11:5, emphasis added).[68]

And further, "he doeth not any thing save it be for the benefit of the world, for *he loveth the world,* even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him; wherefore he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation" (2 Ne. 26:24, emphasis added).

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67. See Reynolds, "'Goodness of God.'"

68. It may be significant that this statement is located precisely at the structural center of Nephi's second book, which is organized chiastically and focuses on his teachings about God's deliverance of his followers into eternal life, in contrast to the first book, which focuses on how God delivers his people from dangers in this life. See Noel B. Reynolds, "Chiastic Structuring of Large Texts: Second Nephi as a Case Study," in *To Seek the Law of the Lord: Essays in Honor of John W. Welch,* ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, Utah: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 333–49. For a revised and updated version, see Noel B. Reynolds, "Chiastic Structuring of Large Texts: 2 Nephi as a Case Study," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 59, supplemental issue (2020): 177–92.

Nephi clearly understood the power of covenants to transcend the limits of blood relationships in the establishment of both rights and duties. By offering the gospel covenant to all his creations, the Lord opened the path to salvation to all of his children. With this universalistic and Christianized understanding of God's covenants, Nephi warned future Israelites, "As many of the Gentiles as will repent are *the covenant people of the Lord*; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off. For *the Lord covenanteth* with none save it be with them that *repent and believe* in his Son, which is the Holy One of Israel" (2 Ne. 30:2, emphasis added).

Jacob

By inserting the teachings of his younger brother Jacob into his own writings, Nephi expanded his own account of the character and attributes of God and provided a vocabulary that would be repeated and refined throughout the course of the Nephite record. Jacob's account of the plan of salvation features most of the descriptive terms used by English translators of the Old Testament for *hesed.* In a long series of exclamations, Jacob emphasizes "the *wisdom* of God, his *mercy* and *grace*" (2 Ne. 9:8, emphasis added). "O how great the *goodness* of our God, who prepareth a way . . . the way of *deliverance* of our God" (2 Ne. 9:10–11, emphasis added). Jacob then points to the high standards of the final judgment, exclaiming, "O how great the plan of our God," according to which all men must "be judged according to the holy judgment of God," at which occasion "they which are *righteous* shall be *righteous* still and they which are filthy shall be filthy still" (2 Ne. 9:13, 15–16, emphasis added).

Continuing the same rhetorical praising pattern, Jacob extols "the *greatness* and the *justice* of our God," and that because he executes all his words "the *righteous,* the saints of the Holy One of Israel, . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world" (2 Ne. 9:17–18, emphasis added). He goes on to praise the great *mercy* of God, who delivers his Saints, and the *holiness* of God, who knows all things (2 Ne. 9:19–20). Further, "the *greatness* of the Holy One of Israel" is demonstrated by his firm linkage to the *truth.* But just as his "words of *truth* are hard against all uncleanness, . . . the *righteous* fear it not, for they love the *truth* and are not shaken[, for] . . . his paths are *righteousness*" (2 Ne. 9:40–41, emphasis added).

Turning from the Lord's high expectations, Jacob then goes on to recognize the divine willingness to work with men in their imperfect state as he exclaims again, "How great the *covenants of the Lord*! And how great his *condescensions* unto the children of men! And because of his

greatness and his *grace* and *mercy,* he hath promised unto us that our seed . . . shall become a *righteous* branch unto the house of Israel" (2 Ne. 9:53, emphasis added).

Jacob explains the unique way in which God is using the insider and outsider logic of covenant societies universalistically: "Wherefore he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish. . . . For they which are not for me are against me, saith our God. For I *will fulfill my promises* which I have made unto the children of men" (2 Ne. 10:16–17, emphasis added).

He then concludes this foundational sermon with the reminder that "ye are free to act for yourselves, to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life," with the additional caveat "that it is only in and through the *grace* of God that ye are saved" (2 Ne. 10:23–24, emphasis added).

Much later, in his own brief extension of Nephi's record, Jacob returns forcibly to these same things, rehearsing the same covenantal vocabulary.

> Nevertheless the Lord God sheweth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his *grace* and his great *condescensions* unto the children of men that we have *power* to do these things. . . . For behold, by the *power* of his word man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created by the *power* of his word. . . . Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in *wisdom* and in *justice* and in great *mercy* over all his works. (Jacob 4:7, 9–10, emphasis added)

Reflections of Biblical *hesed* in Nephite Preaching

The covenant culture of the Hebrew Bible portrays the people of God at their best when they exemplify the same virtues of *hesed* that always characterize Yahweh in his treatment of them. Unlike the heroes of ancient Greek literature or of modern American and European literature, outstanding Hebrews were noted for their *kindness* and *loyalty,* their *merciful* treatment of the poor and the weak, and their *faithfulness* to their fellows and to God.[69] There are several key reports of Nephite prophets teaching the people how to conduct themselves that present us with the opportunity to compare their expectations with those of biblical *hesed.*

69. For a detailed exploration of the ways in which *faith* and *faithfulness* in the Book of Mormon usually convey the concept of covenant loyalty, see Noel B. Reynolds, "The Nephite Prophets' Understanding of *Faith* and *Faithfulness,*" *Religious Educator* 21, no. 2 (2020): 73–97.

While Lehi and Nephi tended to reduce those expectations to the simple instruction that their people should "observe the statutes and the judgments of the Lord" (2 Ne. 1:16),[70] more detailed descriptions are provided in the preaching of later prophets. Three of these prophets seem to address the need for a Christian version of *hesed*—King Benjamin, Alma the Elder, and Alma the Younger.

These all come onto the stage during the period of cultural change and assimilation resulting from the merger of the Nephites and Mulekites and then from the return of the Nephite group that had lived for two to three generations among the Lamanites back in the city of Nephi. All three explicitly invoke the context of their shared covenants with the Lord as background for the articulation of a set of expectations for appropriate conduct. Alma the Elder set the pattern when he formed the first church that became the model for the larger Nephite society. The results seem to follow the same model and point toward a Christian version of classical Israelite *hesed*. There is really nothing in the Old Testament that compares with these open and direct teachings from the Nephite prophets. In each case, the prophet reviews the contributions of the Lord, his continuing obligations, and his expectations for his covenant people if they will receive the salvation he has prepared and offered to them.

While this same analysis can be applied to the sermons and teachings of Alma's son Alma[71] and King Benjamin,[72] as well as other Nephite prophets, considerations of space dictate that this essay first lay out the pattern set by Alma the Elder and then pass over these other prophets and proceed to the final two Book of Mormon writers, Mormon and Moroni. These two faced much more difficult times in their lives because the descendants of Lehi had dwindled into total wickedness and internecine war that was moving inevitably toward the annihilation of the Nephites and the complete loss of their religion among the remaining Lamanites. Yet the covenantal *hesed* of the Lord continued to shine through for them and the tiny group of Christians that survived until the end.

Alma the Elder

Mosiah 18 tells the dramatic story of Alma, the repentant former priest of King Noah—and now follower of the martyred prophet Abinadi—preaching the gospel to his people in secrecy and assembling with them

70. See also 2 Nephi 1:20.
71. See especially Alma 5–7.
72. See Mosiah 2–5.

at the Waters of Mormon to be baptized and to form themselves into a church. Alma's followers had progressed to the point that he invited them to enter into a covenant with the Lord to "serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon [them]" (Mosiah 18:10). But as it turns out, this was not just a bilateral covenant between the individuals and the Lord as baptism can easily be interpreted to be. Rather, Alma also saw the covenant entailing a range of commitments to the other members of the covenant community.

As ye are desirous
    to come into the fold of God and
    to be called his people and
are willing
    to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light,
        yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn,
        yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort,
and to stand as witnesses of God
    at all times
    and in all things
    and all places that ye may be in, even until death,
that ye may
    be redeemed of God and
    be numbered with those of the first resurrection,
that ye may have eternal life. (Mosiah 18:8–9, emphasis added)[73]

This compact covenant invitation articulates all three levels of obligation that characterized the ancient covenant tradition of Israel. Each person accepts the obligation to obey the Lord and his commandments. They also each accept responsibility to stand as witnesses of God at all times to encourage the faith of others while also supporting their fellow community members in their burdens, their mourning, and their needs for comfort. Finally, Alma also clearly articulated the Lord's obligations back to his people, promising that he would pour out his Spirit upon them in this life and grant them "eternal life through the redemption of Christ" in the life to come (Mosiah 18:13).

Alma clearly saw Christ taking the role of a kinsman redeemer. While there is obviously no *quid pro quo* contract concept here, we do see the divinely sanctioned covenant structuring a community that expects

73. Jennifer Clark Lane uses this same passage to show how the Nephites' covenant with Jehovah created an adoptive relationship through which the Lord became their redeemer. Lane, "Redemption of Abraham," 173.

each to help others as their means and abilities would allow, including the redemption of captives—in this case, the redemption of fallen people from the captivity of the devil, as clearly articulated, earlier by Jacob and later by his own son Alma—the only one who did have power to accomplish this.[74] In every respect, Alma's description of the moral implications of the covenant reflects the classical Old Testament notion of *hesed* that was expected of Israelites under the covenant of Abraham, but with an additional focus on the dynamic introduced by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Mormon and Moroni

The last two prophetic writers contributing to the text of the Book of Mormon lived in times of great wickedness when they could only share their full gospel understanding with each other and with a tiny core of faithful believers. Yet even though their brief writings were overshadowed by their struggles with the evils of their times, their understanding and endorsement of the traditional elements of *hesed* are readily observed.

As Mormon reminded the faithful, "that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually. Wherefore every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good and to love God and to serve him is inspired of God" (Moro. 7:13). Mormon firmly endorses Nephi's ancient insight about God's constancy and explains both contemporary and prophesied future declines in the occurrence of miracles on human faithlessness. "For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being, but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity" (Moro. 8:18; compare with 1 Ne. 10:18; 3 Ne. 24:6). "And the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because that they dwindle in unbelief and depart from the right way and know not the God in whom they should trust" (Morm. 9:20).

Further, Mormon clearly sees "the covenants of the Father" as the mechanism that structures this relationship between the Lord and his people:

> And the office of their [the angels'] ministry is to call men unto repentance and to fulfill and *to do the work of the covenants of the Father* which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.
>
> And by so doing the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place

74. See 2 Nephi 9:25–28; 10:24–25; Alma 5:20, 25, 39–41.

> in their hearts according to the power thereof. And *after this manner bringeth to pass the Father the covenants* which he hath made unto the children of men. (Moro. 7:31–32, emphasis added)

Finally, Mormon twice expresses his prayers for the future preservation of his son as appeals to the "infinite *goodness and grace*" of "God the Father" to keep Moroni "through *the endurance of faith on his name to the end*" (Moro. 8:3, emphasis added). The same appeal to the ethos of *hesed* characterizes Mormon's final prayer in behalf of his son:

> My son, *be faithful* in Christ. And may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up. And may his sufferings and death and the shewing his body unto our fathers and *his mercy and long-suffering* and the hope of his glory and of eternal life rest in your mind forever.
>
> And may *the grace of God* the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the right hand of *his power* until all things shall become subject unto him, be and abide with you forever. Amen. (Moro. 9:25–26, emphasis added)

Moroni also emphasized the sustaining grace of God in his closing teachings and admonitions. He quotes words of the Lord spoken to him: "And *my grace is sufficient for all men* that humble themselves before me. For if they *humble themselves* before me and *have faith in me,* then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27, emphasis added). Having faith in Christ does not just mean having a strong belief. In the covenant context of the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon, *faith in Christ* implies *faithfulness to Christ*—to the covenant requirements of obedience to his commandments—through which a loving God can enable his people to become like him.[75]

As Mormon taught that last generation of Nephite faithful, "And thus by faith they did lay hold upon every good thing; and . . . men also were saved by faith in his name, and by faith they became the sons of God" (Moro. 7:25–26). Mormon went on to teach them that God would bless the faithful with charity, "which is the greatest of all. For all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever. And whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them. . . . Wherefore, . . . pray unto the Father . . . that ye may be filled with this

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75. This understanding of *faith* as *faithfulness* to the covenant is developed at length in Reynolds, "*Faith* and *Faithfulness.*"

love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (Moro. 7:46–48).

Similarly, Moroni repeatedly referred to the love the Lord has for the children of men as charity and taught that people must gain that same love through their faithful living of Christ's commandments: "Wherefore except men shall have *charity,* they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father" (Ether 12:34, compare Moro. 10:19–21). Moroni's final appeal to his future readers focuses once again on the covenant basis of God's relationship to his people and his design to perfect them through his love, grace, and power through the Atonement of Christ:

> And awake and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem! Yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion, and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.
>
> Yea, come unto Christ and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness. And if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ. And if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in no wise deny the power of God.
>
> And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father, unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot. (Moro. 10:31–33)

Conclusions

This paper explores the possible presence of Old Testament *hesed* in the Book of Mormon, first by summarizing the most recent findings of Bible scholars regarding biblical *hesed* and then by sampling the writings of the Nephite prophets to assess the likelihood that they shared the same Old Testament concept. It recognizes the importance of approaching this question through an analysis of the standard expectations for individual conduct both of God and of his people in the moral culture of covenant societies that is termed *hesed* in the Old Testament. It is impressive that the family of terms that Bible translators have proposed as English equivalents for Hebrew *hesed* also predominate in the language of the

Nephites in their descriptions of God's character and relationship with his people—as well as God's expectations of their conduct toward him and toward one another. The Lord is the loving father and the merciful king of his covenant people. They are his sons and daughters by covenant. And if they continue faithful, he will deliver them from death and hell, and they will be seated eternally in heaven, pure and spotless, with the ancient covenant fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

This paper follows the insights of Nelson Glueck, Frank Moore Cross, and others that the language of *hesed* in the Hebrew Bible is borrowed from the prelegal cultures of desert tribes in the ancient Near East that incorporated their own deities into their kinship-based social structures. The Israelites had adapted that language to the religion of Yahweh and his covenant with Abraham and subsequently with the people of Israel. While this paper does not deal with the additional adaptations scholars find in the Mosaic covenant, the Davidic covenant, or in the New Testament, it does explore the text of the Book of Mormon, which explains its own preexilic origins, and finds that it strongly reflects the cultural values of ancient Israelite *hesed*—while further adapting the Israelite language of covenant to the revelation of Jesus Christ and his gospel as given to the earliest Nephite prophets and preached by their successors over the next thousand years.

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Sixty Years of *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

The Narrative and the Numbers

Brad Wilcox, Timothy G. Morrison, Kyle C. Lyons, and Jake M. Robins

Publishing for scholarly audiences has a long history. Some propose that the first learned society on record was founded in Toulouse, France, in 1323. The Royal Society of London was established in 1660 and published Europe's first scholarly journal five years later. In 1848, the American Association for the Advancement of Science published the journal *Science,* and since that time, the number of academic journals has proliferated. According to Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit, over thirty thousand academic journals are in circulation today;[1] Ben Mudrak mentions the appearance of many free open-access journals on the internet since 2006.[2] Professional journals provide means for expanding the world's knowledge base as scholars communicate ideas and research with one another. Latter-day Saints have made contributions to such journals since the University of Deseret was started in Utah by Brigham Young in 1850. However, professional journals have traditionally been reluctant to publish Latter-day Saint perspectives on topics of interest to a Church audience. Until *BYU Studies* began, there was no publication that invited Latter-day Saint authors to explore correlations between their secular studies and their religious convictions.

Clinton F. Larson, a professor of English at Brigham Young University, was the first to propose the possibility of a literary magazine at BYU

1. Phillip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit, "Too Much Academic Research Is Being Published," University World News, September 7, 2018, https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20180905095203579#.

2. See Ben Mudrak, "Scholarly Publishing: A Brief History," AJE Scholar, accessed November 6, 2020, https://www.aje.com/arc/scholarly-publishing-brief-history/.

that offered publication opportunities for writers in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He hoped it would encourage people to write meaningful literature as well as scholarly and scientific selections for a Church audience. He wanted to name the magazine *The Wasatch Review,* but the university president at the time, Ernest L. Wilkinson, wanted the title to include the name of its sponsoring university and named it *Brigham Young University Studies,*[3] abbreviated to *BYU Studies* until volume 51 was published in 2012, when it became *BYU Studies Quarterly.*[4] Larson was also its first editor, serving from 1959 to 1967.

Early on, BYU faculty members liked the idea of having their own academic journal, but some feared that such a journal would not be possible at BYU since it would be a "noncorrelated" publication sponsored by a "highly correlated" church.[5] Some worried about censorship. Looking back, Charles D. Tate, the journal's second editor (serving from 1968 to 1983), assured that the journal was never censored. But editors felt a keen responsibility to be wise in selecting articles "to build the right thing in *BYU Studies,* [and] not just tear down the wrong thing."[6] Since BYU is a Church-sponsored university, editors recognized that the journal would be seen by some as an official endorsement of ideas that may or may not conflict with those held by other Latter-day Saints. Thus, the editors chose to include a disclaimer that contributors are expressing their own views and not those of the editors, the university, or the Church. Still, the disclaimer has not stopped complaints when the journal has touched on controversial issues, such as evolution and war.[7] Even after independent academic journals were established and aimed at a Latter-day Saint audience, editors of *BYU Studies Quarterly* have been mindful of the responsibility of carrying the university's name. They have tried to keep a good balance between substantive content and sensitive presentation. This effort has been appreciated by the majority of readers. Edward A. Geary, who served as the third editor (from 1984 to 1991), confirmed that

3. See Clinton F. Larson, "The Founding Vision of *BYU Studies,* 1959–1967," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 1 (1999): 9.

4. *BYU Studies* is often confused with other entities on the BYU campus. *Quarterly* was added not just because there are four issues a year but also to be quickly recognized as a journal.

5. Edward A. Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon, 1983–1991," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 1 (1999): 16.

6. Charles D. Tate Jr., "*BYU Studies* from 1967 to 1983," *BYU Studies,* 38, no. 1 (1999): 11.

7. See Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon," 14–17.

university leaders always gave editors "a rather free hand" and trusted their judgment as they fulfilled their stewardships.[8]

On its current website, *BYU Studies Quarterly* is said to offer "scholarship informed by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ."[9] Wikipedia describes *BYU Studies Quarterly* as "an academic journal covering a broad array of topics related to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is published by the church-owned Brigham Young University. The journal is abstracted and indexed in the ATLA [American Theological Library Association] Religion Database."[10]

Geary explained that although the journal carries the name of the university, it "is by no means a cross-sectional representation of the scholarship being done at Brigham Young University."[11] Similarly, John W. Welch (editor from 1991 to 2018) wrote, "Despite its name, *BYU Studies* is not a journal about BYU, nor is it written primarily to a BYU audience."[12]

As the journal recently completed sixty years of publication, we determined it was a good time to see what has come of Clinton F. Larson's idea to provide a publication outlet for Latter-day Saint writers. The primary purpose of the research compiled in this article was to document authorship trends, topic categories, subjects, and keyword descriptors in the articles published throughout the decades. Additionally, we wanted to see which articles appear to have been the most impactful, based on the total number of downloads. A secondary purpose was to create an electronic database of the contents of *BYU Studies Quarterly* that may be used by others for future research.

Researchers in a variety of disciplines have recognized the importance of examining trends and issues through content analyses of professional journals.[13] Nevertheless, this type of analysis has not been done

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8. Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon," 16.

9. "BYU's Premier Academic Journal," BYU Studies, accessed June 8, 2020, https://byustudies.byu.edu/.

10. "BYU Studies Quarterly," Wikipedia, updated January 2, 2021, accessed June 8, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BYU_Studies_Quarterly.

11. Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon," 15.

12. John W. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 4 (1991): 22.

13. See Pamela J. Duntson and others, "National Reading Conference Reflections: An Analysis of 20 Years of Research," in *47th Yearbook of the National Reading Conference,* ed. Timothy Shanahan and others (Chicago: National Reading Conference, 1999), 441–50; Barbara Guzzetti, Patricia L. Anders, and Susan Neuman, "Thirty Years of JRB/JLR: A Retrospective of Reading/Literacy Research," *Journal of Literacy Research* 31, no. 1 (1999): 67–92; Yu-Chen Hsu and others, "Research Trends in Technology-Based Learning from 2000 to 2009: A Content Analysis of Publications in Selected Journals," *Journal*

before with *BYU Studies Quarterly.* The importance of this work has been underscored by R. Scott Baldwin and others, who believed that systematic analysis of historical trends reveals influences in any given field that would otherwise remain unknown.[14]

Methods

To analyze topics, trends, and authorship, we included only peer-reviewed items, such as articles and essays. For pieces to be accepted for publication in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* a peer-review process has been conducted by the editors, who have solicited reviews by editorial review board members. In some cases, reviews have been conducted by judges, since some essays and short stories were contest winners. Some articles are printed speeches given at various campus events, such as graduation ceremonies and devotionals. We still included such pieces as "peer-reviewed" pieces because they were selected methodically from among many possible talks. We excluded book reviews and notices, poetry, indexes, bibliographies, columns/notices, commentaries, artwork, and photographs. We also excluded introductions to themed issues and other explanatory material written by editors or staff. In all, 1,852 entries were excluded, and 1,594 entries were included.

In order to measure import, we obtained a list of the articles most frequently downloaded. We then asked the current editor, Steven C. Harper (2019–present), to offer his opinion as to which of these listed articles have had the greatest impact and why. We also asked him which articles not appearing on the list have been influential. We realize that his choices are subjective and that others may have selected other articles. Still, his informed opinion did give us a way to limit the possibilities and highlight some of the journal's outstanding contributions through the years.

To create the database, we examined sixty-one years of manuscripts of *BYU Studies Quarterly,* covering the period from 1959 through 2019,

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of Educational Technology and Society 15, no. 2 (April 2012): 354–70; Ruth E. Knudson and others, "A Decade of Literacy Research in Three Education Journals," *Reading Instruction* 39, no. 3 (2002): 119–23; Timothy G. Morrison and others, "50 Years of *Literacy Research and Instruction*: 1961–2011," *Literacy Research and Instruction* 50, no. 4 (2011): 313–26; Chin-Chung Tsai and Meichun Lydia Wen, "Research and Trends in Science Education from 1998–2002: A Content Analysis of Publication in Selected Journals," *International Journal of Science Education* 27, no. 1 (2011): 3–14.

14. See R. Scott Baldwin and others, "Forty Years of NRC Publications: 1952–1991," *Journal of Reading Behavior* 24, no. 4 (1992): 505–32.

totaling 3,446 entries. Some may ask if the journal started in 1959, why the 2019 volume is numbered as 58 rather than 61. The answer is that the journal published its first issue in 1959[15] and continued annual publication through October 1962 with volume 5, issue 1. Later issues of that volume were not published until 1964, and no issues were published in 1963. Similarly, four issues were published in volume 37, ending in October 1997, and volume 38 began issue 1 in 1999. No issues were published in 1998. As we have investigated the reasons for some of the gaps, various editors have said they just fell behind on the production schedule. This is something that is understandable considering the small but dedicated staff that has kept the journal running for so many years.

For all items in the database, we entered the following information taken directly from the labels on the table of contents within each issue: title, journal section/genre (for example, article, poem, book review), volume and issue, page numbers, authors, and abstract. For each peer-reviewed item, we also entered the following information based on our examination: category/topic (such as church history, art and architecture, or literature), subject (such as theology, conflict, or persecution), and keywords (such as responsibility, knowledge, literary criticism, or success). We made these designations subjectively based on titles, abstracts, and headings. In some cases, when the content of an article was not clear, we referred to the body of the text itself. For each item, we recorded one broad category label, one subject label different from the category, and between two and six unique keyword descriptors to elaborate on the subject. We worked in pairs and examined each entry together to ensure agreement. Differences in opinion were resolved through discussion, so further inter-rater reliability was not required.

To manage the abundance of data, we began by examining the topics alphabetically by year, combining those that were semantically similar. For example, Nauvoo Period, Persecution, and Settlements were grouped

15. The inaugural year of *BYU Studies* only had one issue instead of the usual four. An explanation for this comes from the late Church Historian, Leonard J. Arrington. According to him, an article he wrote for the first issue drew criticism from a Church leader, which caused the editor of the journal to not publish another issue for more than a year. And after this, again according to Arrington, the journal took a more cautious approach and shied away from interpretive, cutting-edge historical articles, which eventually led to the establishment of the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Dialogue*. See Gregory A. Prince, *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 136–37.

under the category of *Church History and Culture.* Music, World History, and Poetry fit within the category of *Humanities.* All topics (n = 1,594) fit within eight categories: *Church History and Culture, Humanities, People, Scripture, Religious Teachings, Education, Science,* and *Family.*

We followed the same procedure with subjects. Church-Related Theatre, Media Portrayals of the Church, and Daily Life of Church Members were grouped under the subject *Church Culture.* Joseph Smith's Personal World, Joseph Smith's Trials and Legal Involvement, Joseph Smith's Martyrdom, and Joseph Smith Compared to Milton fit under the subject *Joseph Smith.*

Keywords were also grouped into larger descriptors. For example, Book of Mormon Geography, Chiasmus, Copyrights, and the Allegory of the Olive Trees were all grouped under the descriptor *Book of Mormon.* Brigham Young's Home Life, Revelations, and Multiple Wives were grouped together under the descriptor *Brigham Young.*

For each article, the category, subject, and keyword terms did not duplicate each other. For example, if *Priesthood* was the category and *Joseph Smith* was the subject, the keywords did not include either of those terms. Instead, keywords could be *Oliver Cowdery, John the Baptist,* and *Restoration.* For another article, *Joseph Smith* could be the category; *New York Period,* the subject; and *Priesthood,* one of the keywords. This explains why words like *Church History and Culture, Brigham Young University, Faith, Family,* etc. surfaced as categories, subjects, and keywords.

Results

The following section presents the results for our review of authorship and journal content. We also discuss the most downloaded and impactful articles.

Authorship

A total of 988 authors contributed peer-reviewed publications to *BYU Studies Quarterly* within the parameter years of our study. Of this number, the twenty-nine most frequently published authors accounted for 23 percent of all articles. Table 1 shows the most prolific authors in *BYU Studies Quarterly* from 1959 to 2019. Ronald W. Walker was the most-published author, with 36 articles, in the years 1974–2004. James B. Allen was second, with 26 articles, most of which were published in the 1970s and 1990s. Richard N. Holzapfel was third and published the first of his

23 articles in 1991, with the majority coming after the year 2000. John W. Welch, fourth on the list, published a total of 21 articles across all five decades, beginning in 1969.

The first issue of *BYU Studies* included six articles, three poetry selections, and four book reviews. Only three of the six article authors continued to publish in this journal. Leonard J. Arrington, who wrote "An Economic Interpretation of the 'Word of Wisdom,'" went on to publish fourteen additional articles. Truman G. Madsen wrote "The Contribution of Existentialism," and later he contributed seven additional articles. Conan E. Mathews, who wrote "What Is Humanistic about Modern Art?", went on to contribute one additional article.

In *BYU Studies Quarterly,* two interesting trends regarding authorship became apparent (see table 2). First, there was an increase in articles written by multiple authors. Over a sixty-year period, 288 (18.1 percent) of the 1,594 peer-reviewed articles had more than one author. Between the years 1959 and 1989, a total of 737 peer-reviewed articles were published. Only 47 (6.4 percent) had multiple authors. From 1990 to 2019, a total of 141 out of 857 peer-reviewed pieces (16.5 percent) were written by multiple authors.

Table 1. Most Prolific Authors (n = 29) in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Author Names	Total Articles
Ronald W. Walker	36
James B. Allen	26
Richard N. Holzapfel	23
John W. Welch	21
Dean C. Jessee	16
Leonard J. Arrington	15
Hugh W. Nibley	13
Jessie L. Embry	13
David L. Paulsen	12
Davis Bitton	12
Doris R. Dant	12
Fred E. Woods	12
Richard G. Oman	12
Kahlile Mehr	11
Stanley B. Kimball	11
Eugene England	10
Gideon O. Burton	10
Richard L. Anderson	10
Susan Easton Black	10
William G. Hartley	10
Lyndon W. Cook	9
Noel B. Reynolds	9
Richard L. Bushman	9
Ronald K. Esplin	8
Truman G. Madsen	8
Kenneth W. Godfrey	8
Larry C. Porter	8
Maureen Ursenbach Beecher	8
Robert J. Matthews	8

This trend toward multiple authors in *BYU Studies Quarterly* is consistent with journals in other professional fields, but not as pronounced. For example, in the journal

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of Multiple Authors and Female Authors in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Years	Total Articles	Multiple Authors		Female Authors	
		f	%	*f*	%
1959–1989	737	47	6.4	55	7.5
1990–2019	857	141	16.5	205	23.9
Total	1,594	288	18.1	260	16.3

Literacy Research and Instruction, the frequency of multiple authorship in the 1960s was 13.8 percent, and by the year 2000, it had jumped to 67.3 percent.[16]

One possible reason for the pattern of increased coauthorship may be in response to administrators' consistent pressure on university faculty members to publish—a pressure felt throughout academia, including at BYU. It may also be that researchers themselves have come to value collaborating with peers in cooperative efforts and learning communities.

Another trend was apparent with regard to female authorship. Over the timespan of this journal, there have been a total of 260 (16.3 percent) peer-reviewed articles by female authors. In the first thirty years, only 55 (7.5 percent) female authors published in *BYU Studies,* whereas in the second thirty years, that number jumped to 205 (23.9 percent).

This increase in female authorship is consistent with other professional journals as well, but it is difficult to make specific comparisons because the number of potential female authors varies in any given field. One thing is clear across all disciplines: since World War II, opportunities for women in professional careers have increased.

Journal Content

Alongside analyzing authorship trends, we examined the content of *BYU Studies Quarterly.* For each of the 1,594 peer-reviewed articles and essays, we assigned a category, a subject, and two or more keywords to describe the content of the piece.

Categories. All of the categories were arranged into eight distinct groups (see table 3). By far, *Church History and Culture* was the largest category in the journal, accounting for 504 (31.6 percent) of the total entries.

16. See Morrison and others, "50 Years of *Literacy Research and Instruction,*" 316.

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of Eight Categories in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Categories	1959–1969		1970–1979		1980–1989		30-Yr. Totals		1990–1999		2000–2009		2010–2019		30-Yr. Totals		60-Yr. Totals	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Church History and Culture	21	1.3	127	8.0	79	5.0	227	14.2	86	5.4	113	7.1	78	4.9	277	17.4	504	31.6
Humanities	101	6.3	63	4.0	54	3.4	218	13.7	58	3.6	78	4.9	42	2.6	178	11.2	396	24.8
People	13	0.8	58	0.6	44	2.8	115	7.2	31	1.9	53	3.3	25	1.6	109	6.8	224	14.1
Scripture	16	1.0	24	0.6	21	1.3	61	3.8	43	2.7	24	1.5	53	3.3	120	7.5	181	11.4
Religious Teachings	11	0.7	27	0.7	21	1.3	59	3.7	25	1.6	30	1.9	47	2.9	102	6.4	161	10.1
Education	15	0.9	14	0.9	5	0.3	34	2.1	14	0.9	5	0.3	21	1.3	40	2.5	74	4.6
Science	6	0.4	8	0.5	8	0.5	22	1.4	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.3	10	0.6	32	2.0
Family	0	0.0	1	.06	0	0.0	1	0.06	7	0.4	7	0.4	7	0.4	21	1.3	22	1.4
Total	183	11.4	322	22.3	232	14.6	737	46.2	269	16.8	310	19.4	278	17.3	857	0.06	1594	10.0

Table 4. Frequencies and Percentages of Topics (n = 15) Included in the Church History and Culture Category of *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Topics	1959–1969		1970–1979		1980–1989		1990–1999		2000–2009		2010–2019		Totals	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Documents	4	.02	52	.16	23	.10	28	.11	42	.13	22	.08	171	.11
Church History	3	.02	29	.09	12	.05	17	.06	37	.12	17	.06	115	.07
Int'l Church History and Culture	4	.02	14	.04	21	.09	15	.06	27	.09	16	.06	97	.06
Utah History	1	.005	7	.02	5	.02	15	.06	4	.01	14	.05	46	.03
Nauvoo Period	1	.005	8	.02	3	.01	3	.01	2	.01	5	.02	22	.01
Pioneer Period	4	.02	4	.01	10	.04	1	.004	0	.00	3	.01	22	.01
Kirtland Period	0	.00	11	.03	3	.01	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	14	.009
New York Period	1	.005	2	.01	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	4	.003
Photographs	2	.01	0	.00	1	.004	2	.01	0	.00	0	.00	5	.003
Outsider Impressions	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	2	.01	0	.00	0	.00	2	.001
Persecution	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	2	.01	0	.00	0	.00	2	.001
Missouri Period	1	.005	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Nauvoo Restoration	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Perceptions of the World	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	1	.0006
Settlements	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Totals	21	.013	127	.080	79	.050	86	.054	113	.071	78	.049	504	.316

Humanities (n = 396; 24.8 percent) was the second largest category. Together, these two categories account for 56.4 percent of all peer-reviewed articles. Tables 4 and 5 show the topics included in these two categories. As for other categories, People (n = 224; 14.1 percent), Scripture (n = 181; 11.4 percent), and Religious Teachings (n = 161; 10.1 percent) account for 35.6 percent of all articles (see tables 6, 7, and 8, respectively).

As shown in table 3, only two categories remained relatively stable across all the decades, *People* and *Education.* Four categories increased, and two decreased through the years. *Church History and Culture* showed a slight increase from the first thirty years (14.2 percent) to the second thirty years (17.4 percent). Increases in three additional categories were more pronounced: *Scripture* (3.8 to 7.5 percent), *Religious Teachings* (3.7 to 6.4 percent), and *Family* (.06 to 1.3 percent). The categories that decreased were *Humanities* (13.7 to 11.2 percent) and *Science* (1.4 to .06 percent).

It is interesting to note that *BYU Studies Quarterly,* which was originally envisioned to be a type of literary magazine, has shifted focus from humanities to Church history and culture, scripture, and religious teachings—even the category of *People* includes many religious figures—while *Science* as a category has decreased. The increased focus on religion was probably inevitable considering the Church audience, BYU's sponsorship, and the fact that the College of Religious Instruction, later named Religious Education, started in 1959, the same year the journal began. That said, it was surprising that the categories of *Education* (4.6 percent) and *Family* (1.4 percent) had so few articles overall. *Education* had four topics, including Brigham Young University and Educational Psychology. The category of *Family* comprised eleven topics, including Family History, Motherhood, Fatherhood, Marriage, and Family Problems.

Subjects. Along with a category, each article was assigned a subject (see table 9). The top 30 subjects (and their associated categories) accounted for 38 percent of the articles. The only category that did not surface on this list was *Science. Religious Teachings* had seven subjects, and *Humanities* had six. These were followed by *Church History and Culture* (n = 5), *People* (n = 5), *Scripture* (n = 4), *Education* (n = 2), and *Family* (n = 1).

The two top subjects were *Church Culture* (n = 78) and *Joseph Smith* (n = 64), followed by *Nauvoo* (n = 41), *Pioneers* (n = 35), *Doctrine* (n = 28), and *Missionary Work* (n = 27). It might be surprising to some that the subjects *God* (n = 13) and *Christ* (n = 11) were lower on the list, but not when they remember *BYU Studies Quarterly* is a scholarly journal, not a

Table 5. Frequencies and Percentages of Topics (n = 28) Included in the Humanities Category of *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Topics	1959–1969		1970–1979		1980–1989		1990–1999		2000–2009		2010–2019		Totals	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Art and Architecture	7	.04	3	.01	5	.02	28	.11	15	.05	7	.02	65	.04
Political Science and Law	25	.14	15	.05	13	.06	3	.01	3	.01	6	.02	65	.04
Literature	29	.16	8	.02	7	.03	4	.02	2	.01	3	.01	53	.03
Philosophy and Truth	11	.06	5	.02	4	.02	3	.01	10	.03	9	.03	42	.03
Sociology and Behavior	4	.02	10	.03	8	.03	10	.04	6	.02	7	.02	45	.03
Drama and Dancing	5	.03	7	.02	0	.00	2	.01	2	.01	0	.00	16	.01
Literature, Film, and Media	0	.00	2	.01	1	.004	0	.00	16	.05	0	.00	19	.01
Music	5	.03	0	.00	3	.01	2	.01	4	.01	3	.01	17	.01
World History	6	.03	1	.003	0	.00	2	.01	2	.01	2	.01	13	.008
Drama, Dancing, and Music	1	.005	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	11	.04	0	.00	12	.008
Articles about Poetry	4	.02	1	.003	4	.02	0	.00	0	.00	2	.01	11	.007
The U.S. and Asia	0	.00	7	.02	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	7	.004
Psychology	1	.005	1	.003	2	.01	0	.00	1	.003	1	.003	6	.004
Archaeology	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	3	.01	1	.003	1	.003	5	.001
War and Peace	2	.01	0	.00	3	.01	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	5	.001
Anthropology	1	.005	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	2	.001
Personal Reflections	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	2	.01	0	.00	2	.001
Business	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Continental Divide	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	1	.0006
Economics	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Freedom	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Immigration	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Irony	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	1	.0006
Perceptions of America	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Personal Memories	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Restoring a Home	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
U.S. History	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Writing Biographies	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Totals	101	.063	63	.040	54	.034	58	.036	78	.049	42	.026	396	.248

Table 6. Frequencies and Percentages of Topics (n = 7) Included in the People Category of *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Topics	1959–1969		1970–1979		1980–1989		1990–1999		2000–2009		2010–2019		Totals	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Biography	8	.04	45	.14	32	.14	19	.07	34	.11	12	.04	150	.09
Joseph Smith	3	.02	8	.02	8	.03	4	.02	19	.06	7	.02	49	.03
Women	0	.00	1	.003	2	.01	6	.02	0	.00	3	.01	12	.008
Brigham Young	2	.01	3	.01	2	.01	2	.01	0	.00	1	.003	10	.006
Historians	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Lives of the Prophets	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Memories	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Totals	13	.008	58	.036	44	.028	31	.019	53	.033	25	.016	224	.141

Table 7. Frequencies and Percentages of Topics (n = 7) Included in the Scripture Category of *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Topics	1959–1969		1970–1979		1980–1989		1990–1999		2000–2009		2010–2019		Totals	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Book of Mormon	3	.02	15	.05	15	.07	15	.06	4	.01	31	.11	83	.05
New Testament	1	.005	0	.00	2	.01	26	.10	8	.03	3	.01	40	.03
Bible	3	.02	4	.01	0	.00	0	.00	6	.02	8	.03	21	.01
Pearl of Great Price	9	.05	4	.01	1	.004	0	.00	1	.003	4	.02	19	.01
Old Testament	0	.00	1	.003	2	.01	2	.01	1	.003	4	.02	10	.006
Doctrine and Covenants	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	4	.01	2	.01	7	.004
Scriptures in General	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Totals	16	.010	24	.036	21	.013	43	.027	24	.015	53	.033	181	.114

Table 8. Frequencies and Percentages of Topics (n = 15) Included in the Religious Teachings Category of *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Topics	1959–1969		1970–1979		1980–1989		1990–1999		2000–2009		2010–2019		Totals	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Church Teachings and Doctrine	9	.05	14	.04	8	.03	5	.02	17	.06	16	.06	69	.04
Church Administration	1	.005	4	.001	5	.02	1	.004	1	.03	4	.02	16	.01
God and Jesus Christ	0	.00	1	.003	3	.01	3	.01	3	.01	5	.02	15	.009
Christian Theology	1	.005	1	.003	2	.01	6	.02	2	.01	0	.00	12	.007
Early Christianity	0	.00	5	.02	1	.004	2	.01	0	.00	0	.00	8	.005
Revelation	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	2	.01	2	.01	5	.003
Consecration	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	4	.02	4	.003
Temple	0	.00	1	.003	1	.004	1	.004	1	.003	1	.003	5	.003
Traits	0	.00	0	.0	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	3	.01	4	.003
Missionary Work	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	2	.001
Suffering	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	2	.01	2	.001
Character Traits	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Choice and Accountability	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Christmas	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	1	.0006
Endurance	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	1	.0006
Equality	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Faith	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Farewells	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Fear	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Friendship	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
God's Plan	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Grace	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Improvement	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Interfaith Relations	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Meaning of Life	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Peace	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Priesthood	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.004	0	.00	0	.00	1	.0006
Self-Discovery	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	0	.00	1	.0006
Traumatic Experience	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
World Religions	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	1	.003	1	.0006
Totals	11	.007	27	.017	21	.013	25	.016	30	.019	47	.030	161	.101

devotional magazine. Besides Joseph Smith, only three other Latter-day Saint Church prophets were in the top rankings: Brigham Young (n = 24), Heber J. Grant (n = 11), and Spencer W. Kimball (n = 11). The only person listed by name who was not a President of the Church was J. Reuben Clark (n = 11). The number of times these people were specifically named may be due to their inclusion in themed issues of the journal. This may also explain why the subjects *Masada* (n = 18), *Communism* (n = 11), and the *Joseph Smith Translation* (n = 10) were prominent.

Subjects not shown on this table were varied. In fact, just over half of all subjects were listed only once. For example, *BYU football, Charles Darwin, existentialism, feminism, Hugh Nibley, imagination, London, North Korea, Provo Tabernacle, quilts, rural life, unity, the Wentworth Letter, whistling and whittling brigade, Zelph,* and *Zion* were listed one time each.

Keywords. In addition to categories and subjects, each article received two or more keywords describing details about the subject. A total of 4,596 keywords were used to describe 1,594 articles. Of those keywords, 2,310 were unique. The top 22 keywords and their associated categories accounted for 83 percent of all articles (see table 10). The top three, *Church Teachings and Culture* (n = 260; 16.3 percent), *Joseph Smith* (n = 153; 9.6 percent), and *Church History* (n = 102; 6.4 percent), accounted for 32.3 percent of the total articles.

The two categories that did not surface in the list of the top 22 keywords were *Science* and *Family.* All other categories were represented. The category with the most prevalent keywords was *Religious Teachings* (n = 7). This was followed by *Humanities* (n = 4), *People* (n = 4), *Church History and Culture* (n = 3), and *Scripture* (n = 3). The category in this list with the fewest keywords was *Education* (n = 1).

Although the keyword *God* does not appear in the table, it did appear in the analysis 20 times. *Jesus Christ* is also frequently listed in the table (n = 40). The prominence of keywords such as *Missionary Work* (n = 68), *Political Science* (n = 58), *Prophets* (n = 50), and *Faith* (n = 47) were expected considering the purpose and audience of the journal.

Many keywords were not shown in table 10; 517 were used only twice, and 1,483 were used only once. Examples of keywords listed twice include *altars, bank failure, broken romances, BYU dating trends, Columbus, dress and grooming, evolution, folk art, grace, holographs, Karl Marx, Korihor, New Deal, parables, pets, Shaker visions, United Nations,* and *wealth.* Examples of those listed only once were *Abish, Alzheimer's, black holes, brain trauma, childhood, condition of slaves, Cub Scouts, Hawthorne,*

Table 9. Frequencies and Percentages of Subjects (n = 30) and Their Associated Categories in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Subjects	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Church Culture	Church History and Culture	78	.05
Joseph Smith	People	64	.04
Nauvoo	Church History and Culture	41	.03
Pioneers	Church History and Culture	35	.02
Doctrine	Religious Teachings	28	.02
Missionary Work	Religious Teachings	27	.02
Brigham Young	People	24	.02
Kirtland	Church History and Culture	23	.01
BYU	Education	22	.01
Art	Humanities	19	.01
Masada	Scripture	18	.01
Book of Mormon	Scripture	17	.01
Photographs	Church History and Culture	17	.01
LDS Cinema	Humanities	15	.01
Personal Reflection	Humanities	14	.01
Family History	Family	13	.01
God	Religious Teachings	13	.01
Polygamy	Religious Teachings	12	.01
World Religions	Religious Teachings	12	.01
Christ	Religious Teachings	11	.01
Communism	Humanities	11	.01
Heber J. Grant	People	11	.01
J. Reuben Clark	People	11	.01
Music	Humanities	11	.01
Spencer W. Kimball	People	11	.01
Temples	Religious Teachings	11	.01
Bible	Scripture	10	.01
Education	Education	10	.01
Joseph Smith Translation	Scripture	10	.01
Literature	Humanities	10	.01
Totals		**609**	**.38**

Table 10. Frequencies and Percentages of Keywords (n = 22) and Their Associated Categories in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* 1959–2019

Keywords	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Church Teachings and Culture	Religious Teachings	260	.163
Joseph Smith	People	153	.096
Church History	Church History and Culture	102	.064
Missionary work	Religious Teachings	68	.043
Pioneers	People	65	.041
Political Science/ Politics	Humanities	58	.036
Prophets	People	50	.031
Faith	Religious Teachings	47	.029
Religion/Religiosity	Religious Teachings	46	.029
Book of Mormon	Scripture	45	.028
Temples	Religious Teachings	42	.026
Nauvoo	Church History and Culture	41	.026
Art	Humanities	40	.025
Jesus Christ	Religious Teachings	40	.025
New Testament	Scripture	39	.023
Brigham Young	People	37	.023
BYU	Education	34	.021
History	Humanities	32	.020
International Church	Church History and Culture	31	.019
Bible	Scripture	30	.019
Literature	Humanities	30	.019
Revelation	Religious Teachings	30	.019
Totals		**1,320**	**.83**

interfaith interactions, lithographs, math, Osmonds, plastic-resin grapes, Plato, relaxation, Spanish Flu, Twentieth Century Fox, Van Buren, Vikings, way stations, and *Zarahemla.*

Article Impact

BYU Studies Quarterly has an online presence that includes links to all volumes and issues that readers can access and read.[17] Although this site has listed popular articles in the past in an effort to generate interest, it does not currently have a complete listing of the most downloaded material on the website. *BYU Studies* staff provided such a list. From that information we have compiled a list of the twenty most downloaded articles. Table 11 lists only articles and essays that were included in our analysis of the content.

One trend we noticed was that the majority of the most impactful articles were published in the past decade. This could be because those using the website are seeking the most recent scholarship. To ensure a broader perspective, we spoke to current editor, Steven C. Harper, about his judgment on the impact of articles on the list as well as of those not included.

According to Harper, the most impactful articles have been those that have provided new perspectives on doctrine and topics that are central to the Latter-day Saint faith. Harper identified three articles on the list that have been especially impactful: David L. Paulsen and Martin Pulido's article on Mother in Heaven,[18] Edward L. Kimball's article on the 1978 revelation on priesthood,[19] and Welch's analysis of the parable of the Good Samaritan.[20] In addition, Harper added two articles that do not appear on the list: "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" by Welch, published in 1969,[21] and "'The Great World of the Spirits of the Dead': Death, the Great War, and the 1918 Influenza Pandemic as Context for

17. BYU Studies, https://byustudies.byu.edu/.

18. David L. Paulsen and Martin Pulido, "'A Mother There': A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven," *BYU Studies* 50, no. 1 (2011): 70–98.

19. Edward L. Kimball, "Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood," *BYU Studies* 47, no. 2 (2008): 5–78.

20. John W. Welch, "The Good Samaritan: A Type and Shadow of the Plan of Salvation," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999): 50–115.

21. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 1 (1969): 69–84.

Table 11. Most Downloaded Articles and Essays in *BYU Studies Quarterly*, 1959–2019

Rank Order	Title	Author(s)	Year
1	"A Mother There": A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven	David L. Paulsen and Martin Pulido	2011
2	In the Thirty and Fourth Year: A Geologist's View of the Great Destruction in 3 Nephi	Bart J. Kowallis	1997
3	Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood	Edward L. Kimball	2008
4	"Hard" Evidence of Ancient American Horses	Daniel Johnson	2015
5	The Mormons and the Donner Party	Eugene E. Campbell	1971
6	Edwin Rushton as the Source of the White Horse Prophecy	Don L. Penrod	2010
7	A Study in Seven: Hebrew Numerology in the Book of Mormon	Corbin Volluz	2014
8	The Book of Jonah: Foreshadowings of Jesus as the Christ	David Randall Scott	2014
9	Who Is Leaving the Church? Demographic Predictors of Ex–Latter-day Saint Status in the Pew Religious Landscape Survey	Stephen Cranney	2019
10	The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text	Stan Larson	1978
11	The Good Samaritan: A Type and Shadow of the Plan of Salvation	John W. Welch	1999
12	Is Not This Real?	Joseph M. Spencer	2019
13	The Necessity of Political Parties and the Importance of Compromise	David B. Magleby	2015
14	Agency and Same-Sex Attraction	Ben Schilaty	2019
15	Into Arabia: Lehi and Sariah's Escape from Jerusalem, Perspectives Suggested by New Fieldwork	Warren P. Aston	2019
16	Dating the Birth of Christ	Jeffrey R. Chadwick	2010
17	Physical Light and the Light of Christ	David A. Grandy	2014
18	Burning the Couch: Some Stories of Grace	Robbie Taggart	2019
19	Minerva Teichert's Manti Temple Murals	Doris R. Dant	1999
20	The Symbolism of the Beehive in Latter-day Saint Tradition	Val Brinkerhoff	2013

Doctrine and Covenants 138" by George S. Tate, published in 2007.[22] The following is a brief explanation of each of these articles.

Mother in Heaven. Leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ have taught about our Mother in Heaven since the 1840s.[23] Although obscure, the doctrine has resonated with members because it explains our premortal origins and divine potential. Influential Latter-day Saints have explored many aspects of Mother in Heaven. Even though some say the topic should be avoided out of reverence, the authors of this article demonstrate that Church leaders have not relegated this deity to a confined role.

Harper considers Paulsen and Pulido's article to be one of the most significant articles ever published in *BYU Studies Quarterly* because it shed new light on previously undocumented teachings, including the possible roles of our heavenly parents as cocreators of worlds and coframers of the plan of salvation.

1978 Revelation on Priesthood. In this article, Edward L. Kimball, a son of President Spencer W. Kimball, discussed the former policy of restricting Church members of African descent from receiving priesthood ordination. He documented the traditional justifications for this policy as well as its origin and what led his father to seek revelation. Impactful events included Black people's interest in joining the Church in Africa, Brazil, and elsewhere; the Civil Rights movement in the United States; and Church members' changing perceptions of the priesthood policy. Most important, Kimball shared the spiritual experiences that led to President Kimball's landmark revelation allowing all worthy male Church members to receive priesthood ordination. The author also shared how the revelation was spiritually confirmed to other leaders and how members reacted when the change was announced.

Harper identified this article as one of the most impactful articles because of its historical importance. He also highlighted the doctrinal significance of this revelation. Further, the close personal connection between the author and the prophet provided an insider view that other authors would not have had.

The Good Samaritan. One of Christ's best-known parables is that of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35). In fact, the term *good Samaritan* has become synonymous with people, both Christian and non-Christian,

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22. George S. Tate, "'The Great World of the Spirits of the Dead': Death, the Great War, and the 1918 Influenza Pandemic as Context for Doctrine and Covenants 138," *BYU Studies* 46, no. 1 (2007): 4–40.

23. David L. Paulsen and Martin Pulido, "'Mother There.'"

who help others. As important as the parable's ethical content is, Welch revealed that Jesus's story may contain more meaning if it is viewed as an allegory of the Fall and redemption of humankind. In Latter-day Saint terms, this parable may be seen as a type and shadow of the plan of salvation.

Harper included this article as one of the most significant because it was one of the first instances of an author identifying elements of the plan of salvation in the Bible. Previously, many mainstream Christians had claimed that the Latter-day Saint understanding of the plan of salvation could not be justified by Bible teachings, but this article challenged that assumption.

Chiasmus. Since 1830, critics of the Book of Mormon have insisted that it does not read like a Hebrew text. However, they provided no specific examples to support their claim. Welch believed that the book did have Hebrew roots; he began searching the text and discovered many examples of a distinctive ancient Hebraic literary form called *chiasmus.*

Harper pointed to this article as a turning point in Book of Mormon research. Previous scholars, like Hugh Nibley, had linked the Book of Mormon with the ancient world, but Welch found internal textual evidence of antiquity. Since this article was published in 1969, many scholars have followed Welch's lead and presented additional evidences of Hebrew influence.

Doctrine and Covenants 138. Joseph F. Smith lived from 1838 to 1918 and served as the sixth President of the Church. From boyhood, he endured the sorrow of the deaths of many loved ones, including his parents. He also was aware of the devastation of World War I because he had sons who served in that conflict. In October 1918, President Smith received a vision that enlarged Latter-day Saints' understanding of how Christ organized the preaching of the gospel in the spirit world. This vision affirms that repentance is still possible after death and that those who accept the gospel and vicarious ordinances can be become heirs of salvation.

Harper valued Tate's article, published in 2007, because of the context it provided for the vision that is now canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 138. He noted that many Church members were aware of this doctrine but were unaware of the context of the revelation. By looking at President Smith's background, including the loss of several of his own children, Tate not only showed the prophet's humanity but also clarified that revelation often comes in response to much study and prayer. Readers learned that President Smith had been asking questions and making inquiries based on his own personal experience for years.

Discussion

Even though the categories seem limited, the subjects and keywords within them show great variety. The same is true of the authors and impactful articles we have examined. Amid this variety, *BYU Studies Quarterly* has remained remarkably consistent in its publication of articles and essays about Church history and related documents and photographs. That said, some articles linked directly to what was occurring in the world and the Church across the decades. Historical context can provide a meaningful lens through which to view the results of this study.

Historical Context

We will review briefly what was happening in the United States, in the Church, and at Brigham Young University as *BYU Studies Quarterly* was being published. We will then connect this context with the journal's contents. This information is not comprehensive but is intended to be an overview.

1960s. In this decade, the Berlin Wall was erected. John F. Kennedy was elected president and then assassinated, as were Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Landmark civil rights legislation was passed. By the end of the decade, the United States was firmly entrenched in the Vietnam War. Israel's Six-Day War and the first human walking on the moon gained worldwide attention.

In the Church, David O. McKay was Church president and addressed members in stake centers via telephone wire transmission, the latest technology at the time. He emphasized missionary work by declaring that every member was a missionary. He also oversaw the first uniform system for teaching nonmembers and lowered the age for missionary service for young men to nineteen. The last pioneers who had crossed the plains before the railroad was built passed away. This decade marked the first appearance of the *Christus* statue in the visitors' center on Temple Square as well as the first translation of the Book of Mormon into Mandarin. George Romney, a prominent Latter-day Saint, brought recognition to the Church through his 1968 run for the nomination for U.S. president. At BYU, Ernest L. Wilkinson served as president during the entire decade, and the school experienced great growth as World War II veterans sought higher education under the G.I. Bill.

In *BYU Studies,* concerns about war and communism were apparent with articles about war-making powers and the postwar appeal of communism. After the Six-Day War in 1967, an article entitled "Israel in

Conflict" appeared.[24] As the decade went on, multiple articles were published about frustration regarding Vietnam, the struggle for peace, and whether government in America was master or servant.[25] Although the environment on the BYU campus was relatively calm compared to other universities across the country, articles appeared in the journal about the campus and student protests that were happening nationally.

Despite passage of civil rights legislation beginning in 1964, nothing surfaced on this topic in the journal.

No mention of Romney's run appeared until 1971. Similarly, nothing was published about space travel or the first Mandarin-language edition of the Book of Mormon until 1970, but several articles were published about East Asia, including conflicts between China and Japan and China and the Soviet Union. This attention on the Far East continued for many years. Similarly, although there was no mention of space travel in the 1960s, the topic did surface in the journal in the 1970s. In fact, few articles dealt with current events in the Church. Instead, many dealt with humanities, arts, and literature and how different books and plays related to Church doctrine. Articles about Church history focused on New York, Missouri, and the city of Nauvoo, which was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1965. Few articles focused on scriptures, but some of those that did shaped the future of Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price studies. For example, Welch's article on chiasmus[26] and James Clark's article about Joseph Smith and Egyptian papyri were influential.[27]

1970s. The Vietnam War finally ended during this decade, and Richard Nixon resigned the United States presidency. Eighteen-year-olds received the right to vote, and the Title IX legislation calling for greater gender equity passed in Congress. The first personal computers appeared, but few educators or families could afford them. Population growth became a concern, leading to a cry for legislation limiting family size. An energy crisis led to increased fuel prices.

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24. Daniel H. Ludlow, "Israel in Conflict," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 2 (1969): 119–43.

25. Ray C. Hillam, "The Postwar Appeal of Communism in Malay, Vietnam and the Philippines," *BYU Studies* 6, nos. 3–4 (1965): 153–62; Charles H. Mâlik, "The Struggle for Peace," *BYU Studies* 8, no. 4 (1968): 396–406; John T. Bernhard, "Government in America—Master or Servant?" *BYU Studies* 8, no. 3 (1968): 294–302.

26. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon."

27. James R. Clark, "Joseph Smith and the Lebolo Egyptian Papyri," *BYU Studies* 8, no. 2 (1968): 195–203.

In the Church, Joseph Fielding Smith (1970–72), Harold B. Lee (1972–73), and Spencer W. Kimball (1973–85) served as Church presidents. The *Ensign* replaced the *Improvement Era,* and Church leadership standardized the dates for general conference as the first Sunday and preceding Saturday in April and October. Foreign-language-speaking missionaries reported directly to facilities called Language Training Missions (LTMs) instead of to the Mission Home in Salt Lake City. Later in the 1970s, the new Missionary Training Center (MTC) in Provo was opened. The First Quorum of the Seventy was established in 1975, a new program for the youth was begun, and the Latter-day Saint King James Version of the Bible was published. The priesthood revelation in 1978 extended priesthood and temple opportunities. At BYU in 1971, Dallin H. Oaks replaced Ernest L. Wilkinson and served throughout the decade. President Oaks oversaw the celebration of Brigham Young University's centennial and the first tours of its performing groups to Russia and China. The Religious Studies Center was established, and although not initially connected to BYU, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) began.

Authors of articles in *BYU Studies* focused less on Vietnam and gave greater attention to the Cold War, writing on Soviet Russia and other communist countries. One article addressed the impact of students on elections since the lowering of the voting age,[28] and only one article mentioned computers—an analysis of Isaiah.[29] Another article referenced the effects of family size, examining academic achievement.[30] Connected to Title IX, an increase in articles that dealt with working women, feminism, and prominent women in Church history was the biggest trend in this decade.

The Church's new youth program was created in response to the struggles of youth in the 1960s. In *BYU Studies,* only one article during the 1970s discussed teenagers, focusing more on their strengths than their weaknesses.[31] Fewer articles were published about the humanities, and many more were about Church history, including events in Kirtland,

28. Wayne Ault and J. Keith Melville, "Student Impact on the 1970 Utah Nominating Conventions," *BYU Studies* 12, no. 2 (1972): 163–70.

29. L. Lamar Adams and Alvin C. Rencher, "A Computer Analysis of the Isaiah Authorship Problem," *BYU Studies* 15, no. 1 (1974): 95–102.

30. Phillip R. Kunz, Evan T. Peterson, and Gail W. Peterson, "Does Family Size Affect Academic Achievement?" *BYU Studies* 18, no. 4 (1978): 529–35.

31. Blain R. Porter, "American Teen-Agers of the 1960s: Our Despair or Hope?" *BYU Studies* 16, no. 1 (1975): 48–64.

which had previously been overlooked. The journal continued to publish articles about the Book of Mormon, focusing more on the first edition and original manuscript than the doctrine. Multiple articles appeared about priesthood organization, but only one was directly related to the 1978 revelation: "Brigham Young and Priesthood Denial to the Blacks: An Alternate View."[32] The next articles specifically about the revelation, including Edward Kimball's work, would not be published until thirty years later.[33]

1980s. This decade began with Ronald Reagan assuming the presidency and ended with George H. W. Bush in that office. The 1980s brought the first electronic video games, the launch of the first space shuttle in 1981, and the explosion of the *Challenger* in 1986. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev cultivated friendlier relations with noncommunist countries and worked with President Reagan to decrease tension between their two countries. In 1989, the Berlin Wall came down, signifying the end of the Cold War.

In the Church, Ezra Taft Benson succeeded Spencer W. Kimball as President in 1985, and he emphasized the Book of Mormon and the dangers of pride. Computers simplified organizational procedures, such as the processing of tithing and donations. General Church funds rather than local building donations paid for chapels, and stake and ward budget assessments were eliminated. The Church grew exponentially during these years, from approximately four and half million members[34] to nearly eight million.[35] This growth made the Church the fifth largest denomination in the United States. The consolidated meeting schedule (three-hour block) began. The Latter-day Saint edition of the scriptures was published in 1981, and a new hymnal in 1985. The subtitle *Another Testament of Jesus Christ* was added to every copy of the Book of Mormon in 1982. Utah Senator Jake Garn and astronaut Don Lind were the first two Church members to travel to space. At BYU, Jeffery R. Holland became president in 1980 and served until the end of the decade in 1989. He oversaw the first Women's Conference in 1984, attended the dedication of the BYU Jerusalem Center in 1989, and led the university as it reached other milestones, including a college football national championship.

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32. Ronald K. Esplin, "Brigham Young and Priesthood Denial to the Blacks: An Alternate View," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 394–402.

33. Kimball, "Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood"; Marcus H. Martins, "Thirty Years after the 'Long-Promised Day': Reflections and Expectations," *BYU Studies* 47, no. 2 (2008): 79–85.

34. Francis M. Gibbons, "Statistical Report 1980," *Ensign* 10, no. 5 (May 1981): 19.

35. F. Michael Watson, "Statistical Report 1990," *Ensign* 20, no. 5 (May 1991): 7.

In *BYU Studies,* articles about nuclear threats and war surfaced in the journal during this decade, including one about the proposed MX-missile system in 1982.[36] These were intermixed with articles about conflicting American and Russian perceptions about freedom. Articles about the U.S. Constitution and government may have reflected President Benson's passion for the United States. This may also explain why the BYU Motion Picture Studio produced the award-winning film "A More Perfect Union" in 1989.

An increasing number of articles explored Latter-day Saint scriptures and the expanding reach of the Church internationally. Despite the dramatic changes in Church financing, only one article appeared on this topic: a historical piece dealing with financial matters in the 1850s.[37] Articles about Church history continued, including "New Documents and Mormon Beginnings,"[38] which focused on what would later be shown to be forgeries by Mark Hofmann. Articles about the Book of Mormon included information about wordprint studies that would figure more prominently in Book of Mormon studies in subsequent decades. Although the BYU Jerusalem Center was dedicated during the late 1980s, the first major article about it appeared in 1995: "Reflections on Howard W. Hunter in Jerusalem: An Interview with Teddy Kollek."[39]

1990s. In this decade, the U.S. war in the Persian Gulf and the Rwandan genocide represented unrest abroad. Unrest in the United States was evidenced by the Oklahoma City bombing, an act of domestic terrorism in which a bomber blew up a federal building, and the Columbine High School shootings, in which two students massacred peers and teachers in Colorado. Additionally, President Bill Clinton was elected as U.S. president and faced an impeachment process.

In the Church, Ezra Taft Benson presided until 1994 and was succeeded by Howard W. Hunter, who served until 1995, and Gordon B. Hinckley, who finished the decade. The Church digitized membership records, began publishing Church news on the internet, and introduced a new software

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36. Steven A. Hildreth, "The First Presidency Statement on MX in Perspective," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 2 (1982): 215–25.

37. D. Gene Pace, "Changing Patterns of Mormon Financial Administration: Traveling Bishops, Regional Bishops, and Bishop's Agents, 1851–88," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 2 (1983): 183–92.

38. Dean C. Jessee, "New Documents and Mormon Beginnings," *BYU Studies* 24, no. 4 (1984): 397–428.

39. Mark Scott, "Reflections on Howard W. Hunter in Jerusalem: An Interview with Teddy Kollek," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994–1995): 7–15.

package called FamilySearch. Adult members began studying teachings of past Church presidents in Relief Society and priesthood meetings, and the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve announced "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." Missions opened in Russia and across eastern Europe, and the equalization of missionary contributions made it possible for families to contribute equal amounts to missionary service regardless of the cost of living in various missions across the globe. For the first time since 1850, Saints outside the United States outnumbered those within. Small temples were announced, and the first was dedicated in Monticello, Utah, in 1998. Mike Wallace of CBS News's *60 Minutes* and CNN's Larry King both interviewed President Hinckley. *Time* published a cover article featuring Church growth and material wealth. At the end of the decade, plans were announced to rebuild the Nauvoo Temple and build the Conference Center in Salt Lake City. At BYU, Rex E. Lee was president until 1995 and was succeeded by Merrill J. Bateman. Along with a lot of remodeling and construction on campus, BYU followed a national trend by increasing its offerings of independent study courses.

Family, which did not surface as a category in the 1980s, appeared with several related categories in the 1990s. However, the first article specifically about "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" was published in 2005.[40] Similarly, attention to women and women's issues jumped dramatically. There were many more articles published about Russia and countries that had previously been behind the Iron Curtain, obvious responses to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Although no articles addressed the presence of President Hinckley and the Church in the popular press, there was an increase in the number of articles dealing with anti-Church literature and the debate about whether Latter-day Saints are Christians. Perhaps connected to the use of computers in family history, there was a themed issue on automatizing the records. Many Book of Mormon articles focused on the original manuscripts and archaeology, but some articles also started to appear that dealt with doctrine taught in the Book of Mormon. A large increase in articles on the theology and world of the New Testament, including Masada, were published. Another notable increase was in articles regarding Nauvoo, including Nauvoo restoration, which was gathering momentum during the 1980s and 1990s.

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40. Richard G. Wilkins, "The Principles of the Proclamation: Ten Years of Hope," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005): 4–37.

2000s. The turn of the century began with the Y2K scare, a concern about how computers would react to a year beyond the 1900s. There was also the contested election between George W. Bush and Al Gore. Americans and others worldwide were shocked by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The attacks and subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan also attracted the attention of the entire world. Change in Russian leadership was noteworthy, with Vladimir Putin assuming the presidency. This change restricted how freely missionaries could proselyte in that country.

In the Church, Thomas S. Monson succeeded Gordon B. Hinckley as president in 2008 and then was named the most influential octogenarian in America,[41] and both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were listed as among the hundred most significant Americans in history.[42] Church leaders issued "The Living Christ: A Testimony of the Apostles" declaration. General conference was held for the first time in the newly constructed Conference Center in 2000, and that year also marked the publication of the one-hundred-millionth copy of the Book of Mormon. Both positive and negative media attention paid to the Church increased in part because of the broadcast of a PBS documentary about the bicentennial of Joseph Smith's birth and the 2002 Winter Olympics being held in Salt Lake City. The Church's role in the passing of the 2008 California Proposition 8 against legalizing gay marriage also played a role. The Church also began publication of the Joseph Smith Papers, a monumental project intended to make available all documents related to the Prophet.

Church-sponsored humanitarian efforts helped alleviate suffering around the world, and the Perpetual Education Fund was initiated. For the first time ever, non-English-speaking members outnumbered English speakers. The first edition of the Bible to be published by the Church in a language other than English—Spanish—was published. The one-millionth missionary was called, and the language skills of many returned missionaries were helpful when the Winter Olympic Games came to Salt Lake City. Harry Reid from Nevada became Senate majority leader and the highest-ranking Latter-day Saint government official

41. Scott Taylor, "President Monson Named Top Octogenarian," *Deseret News,* October 22, 2009, accessed June 22, 2020, https://www.deseret.com/2009/10/22/20377160/president-monson-named-top-octogenarian.

42. T. A. Frail, "Meet the 100 Most Significant Americans of All Time," *Smithsonian Magazine,* November 17, 2014, accessed June 22, 2020, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonianmag/meet-100-most-significant-americans-all-time-180953341/.

in U.S. history. At BYU, Merrill J. Bateman was succeeded in 2003 by Cecil O. Samuelson, who presided over many significant developments, such as the inclusion of BYUtv in the Dish Network satellite system, expanding viewership by millions.

In *BYU Studies,* an increasing number of articles were published about literature, film, and media, specifically cinema produced by and for Latter-day Saints, such as *God's Army* and *The Testaments: Of One Fold and One Shepherd,* both premiering in 2000. A large increase in focus on the international Church and culture appeared with articles and essays about Mongolia, Russia, China, Japan, Taiwan, Mexico, and Central America. However, an article about the Church's first Spanish-language translation of the Bible would not appear in the journal until 2015.[43] Articles about Joseph Smith also increased, likely due to the bicentennial of his birth in 2005. Late in 2001, an entire themed issue was devoted to Islam, with additional articles appearing throughout the decade. Following the 2001 terrorist attacks, these articles notably emphasized the positive aspects of Islamic faith and culture and highlighted shared beliefs with Latter-day Saints. The journal published historic photos of the Salt Lake Tabernacle and an article about the new Conference Center.[44]

2010s. President Barack Obama succeeded George W. Bush in 2008 and was president until 2016, when Donald Trump was elected. Like Clinton, Trump also experienced impeachment proceedings. Many movements defined the decade, including Black Lives Matter, an organization that protested incidents in which Blacks were unjustly targeted, and Me Too, a response on social media to the prevalence of sexual abuse. Mass shootings multiplied throughout the decade, and the COVID-19 pandemic began.

In the Church, President Monson attended the groundbreaking of the Rome Italy Temple in 2010, and Russell M. Nelson, who became Church President in 2018, presided at its dedication in 2019. In 2010, the Provo Tabernacle burned, and in 2016, the rebuilt structure became the Church's one-hundred-fiftieth operating temple. In 2011, the Church released videos based on the King James Version of the Bible, and in 2012, the ages for missionaries were lowered to eighteen years for young men and nineteen

43. Joshua M. Sears, "Santa Biblia: The Latter-day Saint Bible in Spanish," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2015): 42–75.

44. Paul H. Peterson, "Accommodating the Saints at General Conference," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 2 (2002): 4–39.

years for young women. The following year, the number of missionaries surged to 82,000, and the Church's high school in Mexico City turned into a missionary training center.

In 2012, Latter-day Saint Mitt Romney became the Republican Party nominee for U.S. president, initiating what the national press called the "Mormon Moment." Church leaders began using social media platforms and streamed "Face-to-Face" discussions to address troubling social and Church history issues with greater transparency. In 2015, Church leaders began emphasizing Sabbath day observance, and officers of general women's organizations joined key leading councils of the Church. The year 2018 brought consolidated Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, ministering, new meeting schedules, and a renewed emphasis on using the full name of the Church. The following year, 2019, saw the end of the Church's hundred-year relationship with the Boy Scouts of America and the beginning of a new children and youth program. Women were invited to serve as official witnesses of ordinances. At BYU, Kevin J. Worthen replaced Cecil O. Samuelson as the university president in 2014. His focus on mentored-student learning improved instruction across campus.

BYU Studies published many more articles related to the Book of Mormon than ever, from the timing of the translation process to the wording in the original text to a history of Nahom. Much of the increase had to do with discussions of doctrine within the Book of Mormon as well. There was also a large increase in articles written about Brigham Young University and some of the challenges facing a religious school in a secular world. With *BYU Studies Quarterly* available online, articles enjoyed a broader reach than in the past. An article appeared in the journal in 2013 about the history of the Church-sponsored school in Mexico.[45] This decade also saw the first article about same-sex attraction, an essay by Ben Schilaty.[46]

Editors' Perspectives

In 1999, editor John W. Welch described the journal as a "channel" to "provide readers around the world with more information and more well-articulated conclusions and insights, while addressing significant subjects and pressing issues relevant to the work of God on this

45. Barbara E. Morgan, "Benemérito de las Américas: The Beginning of a Unique Church School in Mexico," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2013): 89–116.

46. Ben Schilaty, "Agency and Same-Sex Attraction," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2019): 81–85.

earth." He continued, "*BYU Studies* can and should offer the world the best scholarly perspectives on topics of academic interest to Latter-day Saints."[47] Based on the findings of this content analysis, his view of the purpose of the journal has been maintained.

According to former editor Charles Tate, the spring 1969 issue of *BYU Studies* on the origins of the Church in New York was a "landmark issue."[48] In 1967, the Evangelical Theological Society had published an essay entitled "New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival" that was republished in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* in 1969.[49] The author, Wesley P. Walters, had spent years researching what was happening in Palmyra at the time Joseph Smith purported to have had his First Vision. Walters could not disprove Joseph Smith's vision, but he cast doubt on Joseph Smith's narration of the experience by claiming there was no sizeable religious revival in Joseph Smith's vicinity until 1824.[50]

In response to that article, Truman G. Madsen organized a group of Latter-day Saint historians and scholars and secured funding for them to travel to New York and other locations to research the issue in greater depth. The group's findings were published in the spring 1969 issue of *BYU Studies* and "put Walters in his historical place."[51] They provided evidence that Joseph Smith could have indeed been influenced by Methodist minister George Lane around the time of Smith's First Vision. They also established that there was much more religious excitement in upstate New York than Walters had acknowledged.

Tate said that another significant contribution made by *BYU Studies* was an article by Dean Jessee that included documentary editions of Joseph Smith's 1832, 1835, and 1838/39 vision accounts[52] and the publication of Robert J. Matthews's work on Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible.[53] Matthews's research was key to including references from Joseph

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47. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 21.

48. Tate, "*BYU Studies* from 1967 to 1983," 12.

49. Wesley P. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 59–81.

50. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival," 61.

51. Steven C. Harper, *First Vision: Memory and Mormon Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 220–21.

52. See Harper, *First Vision,* 221.

53. Robert J. Matthews, "The 'New Translation' of the Bible, 1830–1833: Doctrinal Development during the Kirtland Era," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 400–422; Robert J. Matthews, "The Bernhisel Manuscript Copy of Joseph Smith's Inspired Version of the Bible," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 253–74.

Smith's work in the 1979 Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible.[54]

Of course, the journal had its share of critics along the way. Some ridiculed the fact that the *BYU Studies* was an unspecialized journal. They believed the broad scope of the journal made it impossible to be taken seriously. Former editor Edward Geary wrote that some of his colleagues claimed, "No genuine scholar would besmirch his or her reputation by appearing in the pages of *BYU Studies*."[55] The journal also had its failures, such as the "fiasco" of a "thick issue devoted to Mark Hofmann's 'discoveries' that appeared just as those discoveries were being unmasked as a fraud."[56]

Nevertheless, support continued for the journal as a trustworthy source of information for Latter-day Saint readers who want to read deep and thorough treatments of issues that touch on their faith. Geary wrote, "I believe scholarly journals in general are very important. They are among the few remaining bastions against the trivialization of thought in the two-column article and the twenty-second sound bite that dominate the popular media."[57]

In 1999, John W. Welch wrote, "One of the most valuable contributions of *BYU Studies* has been its publication and analysis of hundreds of historical documents and bibliographies," including "valuable letters, diaries, sermons, memoranda, and journals. In many cases this is the only place where these primary historical documents have been printed."[58] With approximately 39 articles about photographs and 169 about documents, Welch's observation is accurate, but at what cost? Welch worried that "several areas and disciplines are well represented, while others are conspicuously absent," including the arts and the international Church.[59] In the twenty years since making that comment, articles about the arts, though still present, have decreased, while the focus on the international Church has increased. There has also been increased attention on world religions.

Welch also recognized that a significant collection of articles about the Book of Mormon had been published.[60] He worried, however, that

54. See Tate, "*BYU Studies* from 1967 to 1983," 12.
55. Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon," 15.
56. Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon," 15.
57. Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon," 15.
58. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 23.
59. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 21–22.
60. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 22.

the articles in the journal on the Book of Mormon focused more on literary and historical topics rather than on doctrine.[61] However, in the years that followed, the number of articles about both the Book of Mormon and its doctrines increased dramatically. Welch also expressed concerns about the relatively few studies of the Bible.[62] This changed a great deal as evidenced with the categories *Bible, Old Testament,* and *New Testament* rising dramatically in subsequent years.

Welch wrote, "*BYU Studies* began as a literary publication," and the tradition of publishing poetry and essays along with articles has been perpetuated through the years.[63] Indeed, this focus has continued, although poetry was not included in this analysis. Welch acknowledged "a fascinating collection" of articles "in the areas of Church doctrine, religion, and theology" but called for Latter-day Saint scholars to "research and analyze contemporary social concerns, popular trends, and academic orientations in relation to gospel perspectives." He pointed to the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* published in 1992, as a rich source of topics "of great interest to Latter-day Saints" that was still waiting to be "approached rigorously, thoroughly, and explicitly in a scholarly publication."[64]

Has the call been heeded? Although connections to social concerns are present, they are not as strong as they could be, as demonstrated in the historical overview given above. Perhaps, in a time of great political polarization, there is hesitancy to publish timely articles on social issues that have political overtones. Publications on relevant social issues may also be slow in coming due to academics not seeing the journal as a high-tiered publication. The concerns Geary mentioned in 1999 about scholars not wanting to harm their reputations by appearing in *BYU Studies* are still valid twenty years later. When asked why they do not submit articles about relationships between their academic fields and the gospel, professionals we talked to said that it was not lack of interest but that the journal "doesn't count" toward rank advancement—even at BYU where the journal is housed.[65] This is unfortunate. The obvious exception is Religious

61. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 22.

62. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 22.

63. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 23. For several years, *BYU Studies* published short stories, though the last time one was included in the journal was in volume 35, number 1 (1995).

64. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 23–24.

65. Personal communications, June 23, 2020; current BYU Studies editor in chief Steven C. Harper is exploring ways of having this changed.

Education, where professional outlets are so limited that *BYU Studies Quarterly* is valued.

Another challenge for *BYU Studies Quarterly,* besides not being seen as a viable publishing outlet by many BYU faculty, is being little known by them. *BYU Studies Quarterly* is commonly conflated with BYU Independent Study. Current editor Steven C. Harper explained, "We have a sizeable, loyal, informed readership, but it is aging, and we are struggling to find the best ways to share the content of *BYU Studies* with a larger audience of educated but nonspecialist readers."[66]

Harper believes scholars should look to *BYU Studies Quarterly* as a place to publish scholarship that has been published in specialized venues but could be repurposed for the *BYU Studies Quarterly* audience, who are intensely interested in scholarship that intersects in some way or other with the restored gospel. For example, geneticist Ugo Perego and his colleagues recently published an article in *Forensic Science International: Genetics*[67] and then published a summary report of it in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* showing that, rumors to the contrary, Joseph Smith was not the father of Josephine Lyon.[68]

Harper stressed, "People should know that amazing articles on Joseph Smith's First Vision, Heavenly Mother, priesthood restoration, Book of Mormon translation, Book of Mormon content, book of Abraham, and more are in *BYU Studies.* Every one of these is available free online at our website—byustudies.byu.edu—and scholarsarchive.byu.edu. Many controversial issues of Church history and doctrine have been addressed in *BYU Studies.* When I'm asked if the First Vision accounts were suppressed, I point to the Spring 1969 issue in which they were published before I was even born."[69]

When asked about his hopes for the journal, Harper said, "We need more submissions by and about women."[70] The journal has definitely been moving in this direction. In 2020, volume 59 issue 3 was almost entirely by and about women. Overseen by associate editor Susan

66. Personal communications, June 24, 2020.

67. 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* 42 (2019): 1–7.

68. Ugo A. Perego, "Using Science to Answer Questions from Latter-day Saint History: The Case of Josephine Lyon's Paternity," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2019): 143–50.

69. Personal communications, June 24, 2020.

70. Personal communications, June 24, 2020.

Elizabeth Howe, it featured articles, interviews, art, and poetry about issues involving women generally and about suffrage specifically. It featured the work of Pulitzer Prize–winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and is a collaboration with Better Days 2020, an organization celebrating Utah and national suffrage anniversaries in the year 2020.

In 1999, John W. Welch wrote, "More than ever before, . . . I believe that Brigham Young University has a vital mission to fulfill and that *BYU Studies* is an important vehicle to disseminate studious works to help accomplish that mission."[71] After our study and analysis of sixty years of this journal, we feel the same.

Prior to the publication of *BYU Studies,* there was no journal that was a home for Latter-day Saint scholars, despite the fact that academic journals had been in place for centuries. BYU changed all that when Clinton Larson envisioned a publication sponsored by the university. Could he have ever predicted what has happened since? In the same way, we may not be able to conceive of what the future holds, but this journal assures that there will be a place for Latter-day Saint scholarship to be published and disseminated.

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71. Welch, "*BYU Studies*: Into the 1990s," 27.

Everything You Make with Your Hands

Todo lo que haces con tus manos tiene valor she said, and we knew
what she meant. That Christmas card of glitter glue
and crayon. That yarn potholder born from a tiny loom
like a lute. Even the Pinewood Derby car, blue
with a white stripe down the middle, wobbling
its way into seventeenth place. We knew the making of it
was the point, what gave it worth.
And we thought we knew all the things her hands
had made—tortillas, enchiladas, empanadas for Easter,
tamales for Christmas Eve, a Thanksgiving turkey
roasted in mole, and three dozen buñuelos to share
with my fifth-grade class. For my mom and tía Isa
she sewed dresses to match their Christmas dolls, and Isa,
knowing what they were worth, played only with my mom's,
cutting its hair and dragging it through the dirt
until it was ragged, while the colors on hers remained bright.
Though that one is gone now. Gone, too, the bedspread she quilted
for me when I was small, a yellow ducky in a forest green border
that faded to sickly olive as I clutched it to myself for a decade,
feeling each even stitch for comfort until it disintegrated
in a slow blizzard of batting and fabric. I shiver to remember.
As for the rest—the aprons and folklórico dresses and baby
blankets with crocheted edges—it's only a matter of time.
Only a matter of time for us. Already we have passed
the anniversary of the day when the last great-grandchild
who remembers being cradled in her trembling hands will pass
away. And then the day after, when we rise up, unabashed,
quickened by the knowledge that she meant us,
that cradling too is creation, that we were the first
and final work of her dark, refining hands.

—John Alba Cutler

This poem tied for third place in the 2021 Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.

Joseph Smith's Translation: The Words and Worlds of Early Mormonism
By Samuel Morris Brown
New York: Oxford University Press, 2020

Reviewed by Kent P. Jackson

Samuel Morris Brown's *Joseph Smith's Translation: The Words and Worlds of Early Mormonism* announces a sweeping objective: to place all of Joseph Smith's prophetic projects under a single heading: *translation*. The thesis of the book is that "translation as a source of scriptural texts" is mirrored in "translation as a process by which humans became assimilable to the divine presence" (ix). "Translation was about more than words and sentences. Translation was also concerned with the transformation of human beings and the worlds they were capable of inhabiting. These twin senses of translation run together in early Latter-day Saint thought" (4).

This book is a collection of essays, some of which revisit previously published material (ix). Refreshingly, Brown notes changes in his previous thinking, a welcome acknowledgment in an exploratory work of this kind (for example, 34–35). The chapters cover Joseph Smith's new scriptural texts, such as the Book of Mormon and the book of Abraham, as well as more esoteric topics such as the quest for "Pure Language" and the "Nature of Time." My general feeling of the book is that it often concludes more than the evidence allows, and it is more a book of philosophical musings than a book of history. The translation thesis is intriguing, however, and the parallels between "translation" and "translation" are thought-provoking. After the book's introduction, the thesis is rarely mentioned again until the final chapter, where it makes perfect sense woven nicely into the discussion of the temple.

Brown writes of the Prophet's "goals and aspirations" in his revelatory projects, and he uses words like "he [Joseph Smith] feared," "he worried that," he "was haunted by," and he "sought to make sense of," all without citing sources (7). These phrases suggest conscious objectives on the Prophet's part, yet the evidence seems to show his surprise at the

revelations when he received them. It may well be that after the fact we can see a grand design, but I'm not convinced that Joseph Smith was aware of it until late in his career.

In the chapter "The Quest for Pure Language," Brown cites some contemporary non–Latter-day Saint statements about a desire for the language of Eden to enable communication on a more heavenly level. He then suggests that statements like those reflect the ideas of Joseph Smith, but this kind of environmental reasoning doesn't always work. He quotes the Prophet wishing he could communicate in better ways, but the Prophet's words seem only to reflect the frustration he felt when he was not able to express himself adequately. Brown adds a mystical element to all this that does not seem warranted by the evidence, suggesting that the ability to communicate in Edenic words somehow equates with transcendent power. He invokes the document "A Sample of Pure Language" from March 1832 as evidence of a desire to know something about divine language, and that is certainly what it appears to be. But the document itself is enigmatic, and half of the "pure language" in it is English ("Son," "sons," "angels").[1] The major contributions of the "Sample of Pure Language" seem to be that it tells us that God's name is Awmen (later rendered "Ahman"; see D&C 90:17), and it implies that God, Jesus, humans, and angels are of the same category of beings. Beyond that, it is hard to tell what the document suggests. Brown believes that Joseph Smith was on a lifelong quest to find pure language and sees events surrounding the coming forth of the book of Abraham to be part of that process. I find more compelling the idea that what the Prophet was seeking was not mystical power through language but simply truth—new information through new revelation.

The chapter "The Nature of Time" suggests that Joseph Smith's revelations cross time boundaries. I suspect that they do that but only in the most down-to-earth way: they provide information about the past. I did not find Brown's idea compelling that the revelations flatten time, collapse time, or fuse time periods together. Instead, they make simple and concrete historical statements: Adam, Eve, Abraham, and Moses all had the same gospel of Jesus Christ that we have today. Joseph Smith learned these things when new texts were revealed to him, starting with the Book of Mormon, which is the first Latter-day Saint text that presents Christianity before Christ. New texts revealed new historical realities.

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1. "Sample of Pure Language, between circa 4 and circa 20 March 1832," 144, Joseph Smith Papers, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/sample-of-pure-language-between-circa-4-and-circa-20-march-1832/1.

Brown emphasizes that all Joseph Smith's translations—the Book of Mormon, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and the book of Abraham—"are biblical in nature." This is certainly true, but I think the author overreaches when he states that all of them were "concerned with recovering the primordial Bible" (123). It would be more accurate to say that they restored "primordial truth," but "primordial Bible" suggests original text, and that is not what the evidence suggests. The Book of Mormon sees itself as a book that simultaneously confirms the Bible and teaches in plainness truths that the Bible lacks. One of the first claims of the Restoration is that it proves that the Bible is "true" (D&C 20:11). As Brown points out, the Book of Mormon "wasn't intended to be an independent scripture, but instead to be integrated warp and woof with the Bible" (124). Indeed, the Book of Mormon takes for granted a Christian readership and can't be understood fully independently of the Bible, but I think that Brown overdoes it when he says that the book's intent is to dismantle the Bible (161) or kill it in order to save it (127, 142). His discussion of how the Book of Mormon "transforms" the Bible is more on target, in which he argues that the transformation is in the minds of readers who see from the Book of Mormon how revelation works and how scripture is to be understood (148–49).

In the chapter on the New Translation of the Bible, Brown too eagerly credits Sidney Rigdon with influencing Joseph Smith's Bible revision, calling it "Smith's and Rigdon's project" and "the Smith-Rigdon project" (171, 173). The majority of the New Translation's most unique content (now in the book of Moses) came before Rigdon became the Prophet's scribe, and after the Prophet removed Rigdon from his scribal duties in the summer of 1832, the translation work continued for another year with a different scribe. Brown's idea that the JST was "self-consciously a direct competitor" to Alexander Campbell's New Testament translation (171) is puzzling, because very few people saw the JST in Joseph Smith's lifetime, and Campbell's translation remained primarily, though not exclusively, a denominational publication. Brown shows how both translations were revisions of existing texts—the KJV in Joseph Smith's case and a handful of different translations, including the Greek text itself, in Campbell's case. Yet the two translations differ profoundly in that Campbell sought to find the best English words to express the meaning of the existing New Testament text, while Joseph Smith's revisions often change existing meanings beyond recognition. Campbell was a careful and conscientious translator, while Joseph Smith considered the existing text to be an invitation to revelation and believed himself authorized to revise

both the Bible's wordings and its meanings. Brown describes this as "moving past the English text" (173), but it was actually much more than that because the New Translation was moving past even the Hebrew and Greek texts as well. As for what the Prophet was doing in the New Translation, Brown correctly asserts that he was "ranging all over the map" to produce his revised text (185).

The author demonstrates well how Joseph Smith's translations, revelations, and sermons reflect repeatedly on the Bible, and his description of how the Prophet's revelations and sermons are interlaced with scriptural texts is one of the highlights of the book (183–91).

The survey of the documents associated with the book of Abraham focuses more on their content than on the continuing debates about their origin. Brown's discussion shows a great deal of research and thought in his effort to integrate all the documents together and understand them. Collectively he calls them "the Egyptian Bible" (for example, 227). Some readers may be concerned that his explorations seem to place the associated Egyptian papers on an equal footing with the canonized text, but this kind of integration is one of the characteristics of Brown's book. I don't find his conclusions convincing, but they are a legitimate attempt and are likely as good as the conclusions drawn by others. For most readers, including myself, the Egyptian documents remain a mystery.

The chapter on the temple may be the best in the book, and it is there that the "translation" thesis comes together nicely. "In the temple liturgy he completed in Nauvoo, Smith brought to an idiosyncratic fruition his twin projects of metaphysical translation: the transformation of texts and humans." The revised Genesis and the book of Abraham provided the narrative that "deposited them directly into the scriptural scenes," in which they "became direct participants in cosmic history, welding their own links to their ancestors the same way scripture did." Through this process, "they were themselves transformed" (269).

This book is not for everyone. It is not an easy read, and it is more a work of ponderings than a source of information. Brown's language is dense, and his choice of terminology is sometimes hard to explain. His application of the title "New Translation" to include Joseph Smith's Bible-oriented revelations and sermons is not helpful, because the Prophet and his contemporaries used the title only with respect to the written Bible revision on a specific set of manuscripts. Brown seems to use the title "Visions of Moses" for the whole of what we now call the book of Moses (33, 179), even though the text connects nothing after chapter 4 with Moses, and "Visions of Moses" is a long-standing traditional title

for Moses 1 and not for anything else. Sometimes errors distract from his arguments. The Bethesda Pool is not "near the Sea of Galilee" (43). The Prophet and Rigdon did not change "'Gospel' to 'Testimony' in the titles for the Gospels, presumably in deference to Campbell" (174–75). Only the apostolic Gospels—Matthew and John—are called testimonies in the JST, and the first use of the word *testimony* for a Gospel is in the hand of John Whitmer, not in Rigdon's.[2] Much of the material was far too theoretical for my tastes.[3] These matters may seem trivial, but they and others like them show an occasional lack of care for precision in the author's pursuit of the big picture.[4]

But small details are not what this book is about. It is about thinking very big about Joseph Smith and his translations. In doing so, it seems sometimes to be a quest for exotic explanations, and thus because my own instinct is to prefer the simplest explanations possible, much of the book didn't resonate with me. But its approach is thought-provoking and creative, and parts of it can break new ground in understanding the work of Joseph Smith.

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2. Scribe Sidney Rigdon did not write a title for Matthew (New Testament Manuscript 1, p. 1). Scribe John Whitmer wrote "The testimony of St Mathew" (New Testament Manuscript 2, folio 1, p. 1). At the beginning of Mark, Whitmer wrote "The Gospel ~~of~~ <according to> St Mark" (New Testament Manuscript 2, folio 2, p. 8). Rigdon labeled Luke as "Luke" (New Testament Manuscript 2, folio 2, p. 45), but he labeled John "The testimoney of John" (New Testament Manuscript 2, folio 4, p. 105).

3. I found the chapters on language, time, and "selves" to be particularly speculative.

4. Brown uses the term "Old Testament Judaism" (62), but Judaism is a post–Old Testament phenomenon. He also follows antiquated nineteenth-century usage in calling ancient Israelites "Hebrews" (74), and he calls the Lehites "ancient American Jews" (63), which, even though it mirrors the translation of Nephi's words, miscommunicates. The Book of Mormon was a duodecimo, not an octavo, and once its pages were opened, it actually didn't look like other Bibles of the time (132–33).

Prophetic Authority: Democratic Hierarchy and the Mormon Priesthood
By Michael Hubbard MacKay

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020

Reviewed by Roger Terry

Considering how central the concept of authority is in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is somewhat surprising that so few scholarly examinations of this topic have been attempted, which makes this book by Michael Hubbard MacKay a welcome and overdue contribution to the short list of publications on authority in the Church. And for the most part, MacKay does not disappoint. Although much of what he presents is not new and the writing can at times be challenging to digest, his exploration of the topic is both surprisingly thorough and notably insightful.

The traditional account of the genesis of authority in the Church of Jesus Christ has John the Baptist restoring the Aaronic Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in May 1829 and then Peter, James, and John sometime later reestablishing the Melchizedek Priesthood. But anyone who has delved into the historical documents, as MacKay has done, will be aware that this account is neither without complications nor entirely satisfying. Part of the complexity surrounding the origin and development of authority in the Church arises from the fact that there are no contemporaneous accounts; all reports of these events are both retrospective and anachronistic in certain ways. And MacKay places these founding events in the context of several other episodes that serve to complicate the picture. As is often the case with history, what actually happened turns out to be much thornier than the uncomplicated story that has come down through institutional channels.

MacKay begins his analysis with a chapter on the earliest form of authority claimed by Joseph Smith: the charismatic authority he established through translating of the Book of Mormon and receiving revelation, often in answer to requests from friends, family members, and early followers. This prophetic authority had as yet no institutional

framework to give it support and staying power, but it did establish one important difference between Joseph Smith and the traditional religions of his day: the long-closed canon of Christian scripture was fully open to Joseph and his followers.

Chapter 2 deals with the next stage in Joseph's ongoing expansion of authority. As he and Oliver Cowdery were producing the translation of the Book of Mormon, they became aware that, first, they needed to be baptized and, second, they needed authority from heaven to perform this sacred ritual. While Joseph and Oliver "believed that they needed special authority to perform baptisms," they "apparently understood that the power to baptize was distinct from [Joseph's] authority to speak for God or the gift to translate" (30). In 1830, Joseph and Oliver began saying they received authority from an angel the previous year. The records do not identify the angel as John the Baptist until 1835. The text we now know as Doctrine and Covenants 13, which contains John the Baptist's words to Joseph and Oliver, was recorded a decade after the event and contains language that doesn't seem to fit in the context of 1829. For instance, in both the Book of Mormon and Joseph's early writings, there is no apparent indication that authority to baptize and the notion of priesthood as authority are connected. This connection came later. Indeed, insofar as the record reveals, the very concept of an Aaronic (or a Melchizedek) Priesthood came significantly later than 1829.

In the next chapter, MacKay turns to the idea of apostolic authority and traces its beginnings to June 1829, when "a single revelatory commandment" instructed Joseph to call twelve "disciples" (40), a term used in the Book of Mormon to describe twelve men chosen by Jesus to form a group parallel to the twelve apostles he had selected in Palestine. The documentary trail here is not clear. It is apparent that Joseph used the term *apostle* to "designate both a missionary, like Paul or Barnabas, and one of Jesus's chosen twelve apostles, like Peter" (40). Early Mormon priesthood licenses and other documents indicate that missionaries as well as those who ordained them were sometimes referred to as apostles, but this term obviously did not have the same meaning that it would acquire in 1835 when Joseph and the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon selected and ordained a formal quorum of twelve Apostles.

In chapter 4, MacKay discusses the authority to establish a church and the structural authority that flowed from this new organization. The founding of the Church was a significant step in what social historian and economist Max Weber termed the routinization of charisma, the creating of a channel through which fragile charismatic authority can survive

and transform itself into enduring institutional authority. In this chapter, MacKay also introduces the somewhat ill-defined experience Joseph and Oliver had in "the chamber of old Father Whitmer," a topic MacKay explored in detail in a recent *BYU Studies Quarterly* article.[1] This experience involved instructions that fulfilled promises given by "the Angel [John the Baptist]," as described in Joseph's 1839 account of John's visit, including receipt of authority to give the Holy Ghost and to establish the Church (56–57). The experience in the chamber also possibly supports a concept that is illustrated in the Book of Mormon—namely, that authority can be given by word of mouth or through prayer, not always by laying on of hands. "In the Book of Mormon," writes MacKay, "Christ bestowed the authority to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost through a vocal authorization. The concept of receiving authority from the voice of God, though certainly not the predominant method as the church developed, appears to have been accepted by early members" (62).

The experience in Father Whitmer's chamber also complicates the story of Peter, James, and John coming to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood, because in Joseph's 1839 history, he leaves out the Peter, James, and John narrative while including the experience in the chamber of Father Whitmer that is seemingly tied directly to the receipt of the Melchizedek Priesthood. MacKay explains further, "Because the apostles were mentioned [by John the Baptist], most historians have assumed that Peter, James, and John would give [Joseph and Oliver] that priesthood and the power to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost. But John never identifies Peter, James, and John as the messengers that would give Smith the priesthood" (138 n. 2). While MacKay focuses on Joseph's 1839 account of the experience in Father Whitmer's chamber and ties it to receipt of the Melchizedek Priesthood, he neglects to mention relevant text added in perhaps 1835 to the August 1830 revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 27, a verse that supports the traditional narrative: "And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles" (v. 12). In short, sorting out the evidence regarding the receipt of the Melchizedek Priesthood is a difficult task because of the incomplete and ambiguous documentary record, but MacKay does give us reason to consider another option than the traditional account.

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1. See Michael Hubbard MacKay, "Event or Process? How 'the Chamber of Old Father Whitmer' Helps Us Understand Priesthood Restoration," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2021): 73–101.

At the end of chapter 4, MacKay discusses the founding of the Church on April 6, 1830, in Fayette, New York, where Joseph was ordained not just "first elder" but also the prophet of the Church (65). This point opens the door to a topic MacKay explores in the later chapters: how Joseph was able to share authority with an expanding circle of others while maintaining his sole position at the pinnacle of that authority. All authority in the Church always flowed through Joseph Smith, at least until he was murdered, and then, because he had not spelled out clearly who would take his place in the event of his death, there were multiple competing claims to succeed him.

Significantly, it is not until chapter 5 that MacKay addresses the topic that a twenty-first-century Latter-day Saint might assume to be the central pillar of authority in the Church: priesthood. In today's Church, priesthood and authority are virtually synonymous, but priesthood was hardly a pressing concept at the founding of the Church; it is not mentioned at all in Doctrine and Covenants 20 and is virtually absent in the Book of Mormon, appearing in only a handful of verses, all in the book of Alma and all referring specifically to the office of high priest, the person who was the religious leader of the entire Nephite people or of various regional Nephite churches. One deficiency in MacKay's book is that you have to read between the lines to arrive at a basic fact about priesthood in the Church: namely, that the meaning of the word changed significantly over the first few years of Joseph Smith's prophetic activity. In the beginning, at least as evidenced by early Church documents, *priesthood* to Joseph and his followers meant exactly what it does to this day in every other Christian denomination. Most dictionaries, for example, carry two definitions for *priesthood:* (1) the office or condition of being a priest (similar to how *parenthood* is the condition of being a parent) and (2) the collective body of priests (similar to how *neighborhood* is a collective body of neighbors). To find the current Latter-day Saint definition of priesthood, you have to search in a larger dictionary, such as the unabridged volume we have in our editorial office, which gives this third definition: "the authority to speak and administer in the name of the Deity given in the Mormon Church by ordination."[2] Priesthood as a form of authority, as something one can hold, is unique to the Latter-day Saints. But this concept sprouted and grew over time, and this creates problems for modern Church members who read early LDS

2. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1993), s.v. "priesthood."

documents and assume that the current definition in the Church was operative then also.

This definitional development is one reason why the accounts of John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John restoring the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods appear to be anachronistic and why Joseph Smith did not invoke any sort of priesthood authority in organizing the Church. The term *priesthood* does not appear in the earliest Church documents until June 1831, more than a year after the Church was organized, and then *priesthood* meant simply that someone was a priest, and *high priesthood* meant that someone was a high priest. Significantly, this is also how the term is used in the Book of Mormon. MacKay traces some of the development of the terminology—how the high priesthood eventually came to be known as the Melchizedek Priesthood and how the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods came to variously absorb the offices of deacon, teacher, elder, and seventy. Some of the early minutes of meetings, for instance, record how elders were ordained to the high priesthood (76). What this indicates is that elder was not an office in the high priesthood at the time. The high priesthood was simply the fact of being a high priest.

Soon after Joseph Smith began ordaining men to the high priesthood, he received a revelation calling him and others to travel to Missouri to establish Zion. "During the trip, newly converted preacher Ezra Booth and the recently called bishop, Edward Partridge, challenged Smith's authority by questioning his decisions about land purchases" (77). After his return to Kirtland, Joseph received a revelation commanding him to establish an office called "the President . . . of the High Priesthood" (D&C 107:91), which eventually became the President of the Church, who, with two counselors, formed the First Presidency. Before this time, Joseph was the first elder in the Church and an ordained prophet, but this new position gave him additional recognizable institutional authority.

In chapter 6, MacKay explains that Joseph Smith received a revelation in October 1831 declaring his authority to establish the kingdom of God on earth (D&C 65:2). This imperative tied the expanding concept of priesthood to the New Testament idea of "keys of the kingdom of heaven," which Jesus's chief apostle, Peter, possessed (see Matt. 16:19). MacKay traces the history of how the narrative of Peter, James, and John visiting Joseph and Oliver first appeared in the documentary history and how this visitation grew in prominence as the concept of priesthood evolved and became entwined with the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. As the Church grew and authority needed to be

extended to other leaders in the expanding kingdom, "a dialogue was formed around the concept of keys of the kingdom. Smith had to maintain the unique power of *sola propheta* while simultaneously distributing authority. . . . The authority had to be divided but not diminished. Once quorums receive the keys of the priesthood from the president of the high priesthood, the narrative of Peter, James, and John became very relevant" (92–93).

The first extant reference to the Peter, James, and John visit came on December 4, 1834, from Oliver Cowdery, but in 1835 this narrative became central to the calling of twelve Apostles. Even though this account grew in importance over time, two revelations to Joseph Smith about priesthood (D&C 27, received in 1835, and D&C 128, received in 1842) neglected to mention that Peter, James, and John restored either the high priesthood or the Melchizedek Priesthood. "These revelations," explains MacKay, "are important because the single nonrevelatory account from Smith that describes how the Melchizedek priesthood was restored, found in his 1839 history, states that it occurred in the chamber of Father Whitmer." Further, "the majority of the accounts that explicitly claim that Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek priesthood are found in sources created after Joseph Smith's death" (95).[3] These accounts became all the more important as the Twelve Apostles staked their claim to succeed Joseph in leading the Saints and consolidated their power. MacKay adds an interesting side note here about the development of the temple endowment under Brigham Young's direction: "In early December 1845, more than a year after Smith's death, it appears that they added a ritual to the endowment that included actors who played Peter, James, and John as the intercessors between temple-goers and God. . . . Once the rituals were expanded to members of the church outside Smith's chosen circle, the endowment emphasized the central role of Peter, James, and John as the apostles who restored the keys of the kingdom" (98–99).

The final chapter in the book adds more detail about the development of temple rituals and discusses the appearance of Elijah to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple a week after its 1836 dedication. The keys restored by Elijah became crucially important in Joseph Smith's

3. It is interesting to note that, despite MacKay's seeming ambivalence in this book, in his *BYU Studies Quarterly* article on this topic, he claims to favor Larry Porter's argument that the Peter, James, and John visit occurred in late May or early June 1929. MacKay, "Event or Process?" 80.

unfolding temple theology, a program aimed at ensuring salvation among his followers. The Elijah appearance raises significant questions, however, about priesthood and keys. Why, for instance, did not Peter, James, and John restore the sealing keys when they restored the Melchizedek Priesthood? Latter-day Saint teachings and the New Testament account in Matthew 16 indicate that Peter did indeed possess the authority to seal on earth and in heaven (v. 19). Or, as MacKay implies, did the visit of Peter, James, and John serve some purpose other than restoring the Melchizedek Priesthood? Also, what are we to make of the fact that in Joseph's later years, as he introduced new temple rituals, Elijah seemed to eclipse Peter, James, and John in prominence?

The unfolding of authority in the Church and, in particular, the development of priesthood, in both theory and practice, create a complex and sometimes confusing historical tapestry. MacKay's book on prophetic authority tackles this challenge head-on and attempts to marshal a dizzying array of documentary evidence in a short 127-page analysis. It is not an easy read, but the author provides substantial connective tissue to tie together several potentially confusing elements of the early Restoration.

One specific quibble I have with MacKay's analysis is his frequent mention of what he calls the "democratic hierarchy" of the Church, a term he also embeds in the subtitle of the book. Although the Church is in theory both a theocracy and a democracy, in practice the democratic impulse has been in retreat since the early years, and even then it was not as prominent as we might assume. Indeed, one important theme in MacKay's book is how Joseph Smith shared authority while retaining his position as the sole conduit through which that authority flowed.

MacKay sometimes equates Joseph's widespread distribution of priesthood authority with democracy. For example, he stated, "Smith's exertion of power became the delivery of authority to others, who then, in turn, exerted their power by delivering authority to others democratically, all the while forming an even stronger hierarchy" (102). But this is not democracy any more than the granting of authority in a top-down corporation produces a democracy. Democracy (literally "people rule") is a form of government in which power resides in the people. There are generally two forms of democracy: *direct,* in which the people deliberate and decide legislation by direct vote, and *representative,* in which the people select representatives who deliberate and decide legislation on behalf of the people. The priesthood hierarchy that Joseph Smith created was, in practice, neither a direct nor a representative democracy. It was

an ordinary hierarchy in which all power ultimately and increasingly resided in the person of Joseph Smith, even though certain actions were voted upon by the Saints.

This quibble aside, MacKay has given us a well-researched and thought-provoking examination of authority both preceding and following the 1830 organization of the Church. For those who are interested in the history of how this authority originated and developed through Joseph Smith's instrumentality, MacKay's brief book is a valuable resource.

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The Ancient Order of Things: Essays on the Mormon Temple, edited by Christian Larsen (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2019)

The Ancient Order of Things: Essays on the Mormon Temple presents a variety of academic discussions on different aspects of temples. In the introduction, the collection's editor, Christian Larsen, explains that the essays focus on historical perspectives of significant and "unique facets" (x) of temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The essays cover themes such as histories of ordinances, the role of temples beyond mainstream LDS tradition, and the position of temples within wider cultural contexts.

Devery S. Anderson's "The Anointed Quorum, 1842–45," traces the beginnings of the temple rites and rituals to early prayer meetings of anointed men and women in Nauvoo, examining the Anointed Quorum's changing members, practices, and primarily spiritual purposes. In the essay "'Not to Be Ritten': The Mormon Temple Rite as Oral Canon," Kathleen Flake shows how the uniquely oral nature of the core temple canon augments the ritual's ability within the growing Church to maintain a cultural and theological cohesion while allowing for adaptability to changing times. Ryan G. Tobler's essay on "Mormon Sacramentalism, Mortality, and Baptism for the Dead" gives a detailed account of the history of proxy baptism, noting the power of its answers to prevalent questions of death and the role of the Saints in the work of saving others.

In "'The Upper Room': The Nature and Development of Latter-day Saint Temple Work, 1846–55," Richard E. Bennet gives long-due attention to the temple work done during the exodus from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley, detailing how the Saints kept alive the traditions of baptisms for the dead, endowments, and marriage and adoption sealings outside of formal temples during this transitionary decade. Taking a different look at baptism for the dead, Tonya S. Reiter, in "Black Saviors on Mount Zion," focuses on the early history of Black members' roles in the ordinance despite their not being allowed to participate in other temple rites, using specific examples from the lives of Jane Manning James and others. In the essay "Come, Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord," Brian H. Stuy recreates the Salt Lake Temple dedication experience of April 6–23, 1893, and corresponding priesthood leadership meetings of April 19–20, 1893, through the journal accounts of various participants, presenting the occasions as a spiritual epoch for both individuals and the Church.

Examining "A Contest for 'Sacred Space,'" R. Jean Addams presents a thorough history of the cultural, doctrinal, and legal dealings between two different "Expressions of the Restoration," the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Community of Christ) over the holdings of the original temple lot in Independence, Missouri. Craft Mackay and Lachlan Mackay detail the Kirtland Temple's "Time of Transition," the forty-two years between the LDS exodus to Nauvoo in 1838 and the RLDS Church's securing of the title in 1880, years that were marked by different Mormon and other groups using the temple for various purposes. Continuing the theme of temples in other Restoration denominations, Melvin C. Johnson, in "'So We Build a Good Little Temple to Worship In': Mormonism on the Pedernales—Texas, 1847–51," examines the Lyman Wight colony's building of "the first functional, active Mormon temple west of the Mississippi" (216), describing the religious rites done

both inside and outside of the log edifice as compared to ordinances in the Utah LDS traditions of the time.

Tracing the evolution of one specific aspect of LDS temple ceremony, John-Charles Duffy's "'To Cover Your Nakedness': The Body, Sacred Secrecy, and Institutional Power in the Initiatory" looks at the history of the decline of nudity in the initiatory in light of LDS doctrines of the body and sacredness.

With different essays in the collection seeming to be aimed at different audiences—from those with personal and academic experience with LDS temples to those unfamiliar with basic LDS customs—there is plenty to learn for all types of readers who understand the scope of the book not as an introduction to temples but as deep dives into more niche topics. The essays range in scope from objective histories to subjective analyses, and readers can pick and choose readings that best suit their interests and scholarship. As a whole, this volume underscores the essential doctrinal and cultural roles of temples to the LDS tradition in past, present, and future days.

—Brooke James

Why I Stay 2: The Challenges of Discipleship for Contemporary Latter-day Saints, edited by Robert A. Rees (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2021).

This sequel to the original *Why I Stay* (2011) is a similar attempt to reach out to Latter-day Saints who, for any of a variety of reasons, are struggling with questions of faith and to offer them reasons to stay in the Church. The essays in this volume come from twenty contributors who are, as editor Robert Rees describes them in his introduction, "Latter-day Saints whose discipleship is magnified from the edge of the inside of Mormonism, 'with fear and trembling' (Philip. 2:12), but also with even more love and faith" (x). Rees also says that these writers "are neither blindly nor blithely committed to the church, but are so with eyes and hearts wide open, aware of the issues that cause others to leave" (xi).

I found the essays in this second volume to be somewhat uneven in their appeal and in their relevance to my own particular situation, and this is likely intentional. Some of the essays did not speak to me at all, while others struck a sensitive chord in my heart. That is because my experiences with the Church, its members, and its theology are very much my own, and I recognize that the essays that did not appeal to me might touch someone whose experiences are far different from my own.

The essayists in this volume are Philip L. Barlow, Susan Hinckley, Kimberly Applewhite Teitter, Eric Samuelsen, Camilla Miner Smith, Charles Shirō Inouye, Russell M. Frandsen, Jennifer Finlayson-Fife, Carol Lynn Pearson, Mitch Mayne, Emma Lou Thayne, Ronda Roberts-Callister, Dan Wotherspoon, Kathleen Cattani, Curt Bench, Jody England Hansen, Alan D. Eastman, Gloria Pak, H. Parker Blount, and editor Robert A. Rees.

One of the reasons Rees decided to publish a sequel is that "the landscape of Mormonism has changed dramatically since the first volume of *Why I Stay* was published in 2011, and that changed landscape introduces both urgency and complexity to the question of why people stay or don't stay in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (vii). I found the result useful and insightful. In my own case, the essays by Philip Barlow, Eric Samuelsen, Kathleen Cattani, and Curt Bench echoed my own thoughts and feelings. But each essay offers valuable insights that will appeal to Church members who deal with different questions

and issues than I do. All in all, I would recommend this book to anyone who is struggling with the question of why they should stay in the Church.

—Roger Terry

Real vs. Rumor: How to Dispel Latter-Day Myths, by Keith A. Erekson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2021)

In *Real vs. Rumor,* Keith Erekson equips readers with the analytical tools to examine a wide variety of topics relating to Church history. His purpose is to help readers distinguish, as indicated in the title of the book, what is real and what is rumor and to dispel old, new, and forthcoming myths that persist in Sunday School lessons and sacrament meeting talks. He does so in an engaging way that will appeal to a broad audience, from teenagers and recently returned missionaries to anyone who has ever given a talk or lesson—or will ever.

Erekson, who has a PhD in history, was the director of the Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City from 2014 to 2021. He is currently the director of Historical Outreach and Partnerships for the LDS Church.

The book is divided into three parts with chapters providing further details about each part. The first part is "The Myths within Us." As the author puts it, "We think we know everything, we don't ask for evidence, we assume, we fail to see the interpretations made by others, we limit our options, and we get distracted by insignificant details" (3). The second part, "How to Investigate," draws on what was learned in part one "to investigate three meanings of the English word *history*" (4; emphasis original). Part three "extends the investigative skills and habits [from parts one and two] into personal efforts to dispel the rumors and myths around us." As Erekson puts it, "We are responsible to learn all that we can, quote responsibly, help others who struggle, and understand God's dealings" (4). The ebook version contains a bonus chapter, "Investigate the Rumors in Your Family Tree," prior to the epilogue.

Throughout the book, the reader will find informative vignettes and examples to help illustrate the dilemmas and issues Latter-day Saints often confront in dealing with matters of Church history. Erekson also uses shaded call-out text boxes with ideas on how to apply the lessons the reader is being taught. They contain quotations from Church leaders, suggested resources for the reader to investigate, and summaries of key concepts found within the chapter.

In one such box, under the heading "Will Learning Church History Harm Your Testimony?" Erekson shares a personal example. He relates that people sometimes ask him if studying Church history has harmed or hurt his testimony of the Restoration. He responds by saying, "This is a puzzling question to me because I did not receive a testimony *from* Church history. I gained my testimony the way that everyone must gain a testimony—by receiving a message in my mind and heart that I recognized as heavenly communication. . . . If Church history does not give testimony, then it should not be able to take testimony away" (216–17, emphasis in original).

Real vs. Rumor is a fun and engaging read. The tools Erekson shares will help readers become better informed and more careful about what they share with others.

—Matthew B. Christensen

INSTRUCTION TO AUTHORS

BYU Studies publishes scholarship that is informed by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Submissions are invited from all scholars who seek truth "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118), discern the harmony between revelation and research, value both academic and spiritual inquiry, and recognize that knowledge without charity is nothing (1 Cor. 13:2).

BYU Studies Quarterly features learned perspectives relevant to Latter-day Saints. Contributions from all disciplines are invited. Personal essays, short studies, poetry, art, and significant historical documents are welcomed.

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- The submission contributes new knowledge or insight.
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COVER

Restoration (2020)

Gloria Seipert Sebring

WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 16½" × 24"

This symbolically rich watercolor is bathed in living analogous colors of blue, green, and yellow. The spheres represent worlds without end and give it an ethereal feeling of eternal realms that interconnect people through time and space.

Starting in the lower left corner, we see decomposing organic matter representing the old. Within it are seeds, plants, berries, flowers, and moss. This is potential, or future life. The forget-me-not flowers represent eternal love, the knowing and remembering of covenants, and life eternal.

Growing, reaching upward from the left corner is a forest, the Sacred Grove, the location of the beginning of the Restoration, a reminder of the First Vision.

The roots growing out to the right represent humankind being gathered from the four corners of the earth through missionary work to the tree of life. Here families are reaching and striving for the light and life within the tree. Moroni leads the way with his trumpet. Abraham is off to the left watching his posterity and pointing the way. The keys are restored and ever present. The sealing power of the temple is represented as the ultimate goal.