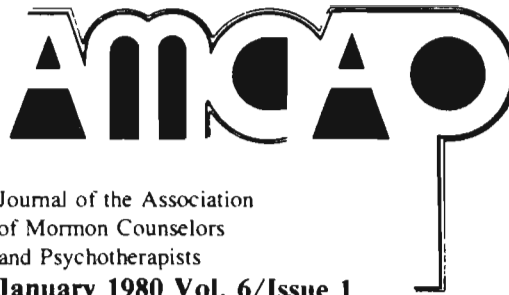




Journal of the Association
of Mormon Counselors
and Psychotherapists
January 1980 Vol. 6/Issue 1

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Journal of the Association
of Mormon Counselors
and Psychotherapists

January 1980 Vol. 6/Issue 1

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Henry L. Isaksen
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Editorial

AMCAP Journal is now a quarterly! We've come a long way in a short time. Volume 1 consisted of a single issue, a report of the first AMCAP Convention held in October 1975. Volume 2 was also a single issue and again was a convention report (October 1976). Volume 3, again just one issue, represented a significant achievement in that it was the first one made up entirely of articles written specifically for this publication.

Volume 4 consisted of two issues. Number 1 was made up mostly of articles based on presentations made at the 1977 convention and Number 2 contained a history of AMCAP and its predecessor, LDSPGA, written by Dr. Vern H. Jensen.

Last year three issues were published constituting Volume 5. Issue 1 was made up entirely of articles based on 1978 convention presentations; Issue 2 had two convention articles and 4 others; and Issue 3 contained only original articles.

During the first four years of its life, the AMCAP Journal logged 272 pages which included 41 articles. Twenty-six of these were based on conference presentations, of which four were by General Authorities and four by other Church officials. Fifteen articles were non-convention related. In addition, there were several other types of material: the history, a listing of scriptures useful in therapy, editorials, president's messages, the By-Laws of the Association and two poems, two issues included illustrations (drawings).

So now we are a quarterly. Since we have two conventions a year plus a workshop preceding each, we should have plenty of material. However, the Governing Board has decided that we will not routinely publish all convention presentations but that each presenter will be invited to submit a transcript or an article based on his/her presentation for the Editorial Board to review and consider for publication. So there will be plenty of room for your letters, articles and poetry as well.

How are we doing? Is the Journal what you, the members, want it to be? If not, what do you want?

It is significant to note that in none of the issues published to date has a letter to the editor been published. That's because we haven't received any — at least the present editor hasn't, and apparently the two previous editors didn't receive any they felt they should publish. As I said before (June, 1979 issue), we appreciate your patience — but we would like to get some kind of feed-back! At this point your editor feels like the policeman who said, "I don't care what you say about me as long as you mention my name." We don't care what you say about the Journal as long as you write! Well, we really do — but what we need most is to hear from you so we will know that it's reaching you and that you're reading it. Please — let us hear from you! Whether or not the Journal succeeds as a quarterly will depend at least in part on you.

Henry L. Isaksen

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Counseling the LDS Single Adult Masturbator: Successful Application of Social Learning Theory: A Case Study

Based on a paper presented at the AMCAP Convention, October 5, 1979.

by Wesley W. Craig, Jr., Ph.D.*

Introduction

This presentation describes a counseling process, utilizing Social Learning Theory, which was applied to a variety of single LDS masturbators while the author was serving as their Bishop. The clinical study in this report describes the application of this model as it focuses on the reduction of sexual fantasy and masturbatory frequency in the client.

The Problem

Within the LDS Church single members are governed by the religious expectation that they will not engage in voluntary sexual masturbatory practices. This expectation is based upon public statements by its leaders to the effect that such activity is a moral sin, and contrary to God's laws.

The position of the LDS Church is quite at odds with the majority of current professional statements on the issue of masturbation. Typical of current professional thinking in the field of sexual counseling is the following statement from a recent professional publication: "...we feel that masturbation is a normal, healthy activity..." (p. 187, LoPiccolo)

The Issue

The issue for the Latter-day Saints is not whether the behavior is a "normal" one, but whether it should be governed through self-discipline. Similar logic applies to the act of coition, which is seen as being "normal" but appropriately reserved to the marital state.

Prevalence of masturbatory activity in the general U.S. population has been reported as being 94% for males and 58% for females according to the data from the Kinsey et. al. report of 1953. More recent data suggest that "up to virtually 100% of males and 85% of women masturbate." (p. 188, LoPiccolo)

Limited data exist on frequency of this behavior in the LDS subpopulation. However, a sense of the magnitude of the problem confronting LDS Bishops is reflected in the statistics gathered by Dr. Wilford E. Smith (Smith, 1977, pp. 65-75) which indicate that nearly half of active LDS males of university age and a quarter of the active LDS girls included in a 1972 study reported having experienced such behavior. While their figures are substantially below those of students of

other religious backgrounds, especially for the active LDS males as compared with non-LDS male students, the incidence suggests that Mormon bishops have a sizeable responsibility in dealing with this phenomena.

Approaching The Problem

Discussions with other Mormon bishops concerning this issue suggests that counseling in this area is quite frustrating because of the frequent recurrence of the problem among many of their ward members. No single approach appears to have been very satisfactory, nor especially promising, in the counseling process. This seems to be true especially for masturbatory situations of long standing.

The following case history deals with an unusually difficult situation, not typical of the average problems. It was the success experienced in this early case that encouraged the author to apply the approach to other persons experiencing similar but less difficult problems, in which equally good results were achieved.

Case History:

George (a pseudonym) was a 26-year old male university student who had previously served on a full-time mission for the LDS Church. He was raised on a western farm, up through the age of 18, and still worked summers for his father on the farm throughout his college education. He had no prior history of moral or emotional problems other than dealing with the issue of masturbation.

He had been masturbating frequently since early adolescence and had been involved in repeated pastoral counseling over a period of ten years with bishops, stake presidents and his mission president. He was highly concerned about his failure to deal effectively with the problem and was seemingly sincere in his efforts to overcome it. He manifested considerable anxiety and guilt over his inability to bring his problem under control. He experienced a low sense of self-worth, because of his repeated failures. His description of his problem revealed an inordinate degree of sexual response to his environment as typified by the following examples.

He would be attending a university activity, such as a forum assembly with chairs situated in an amphitheater-type arrangement. His knee touching the shoulder of a female sitting in front of him would result in ejaculation. A female would reach out to touch him on the shoulder and he would ejaculate. Dancing with a girl in the dance class (not even being held closely) would produce an ejaculation.

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In addition to the above he would engage in sexual fantasies that would lead to ejaculation with or without masturbation. He would also often masturbate without sexual fantasizing. He would often awake in his sleep in a state of sexual excitement and pursue masturbation.

Methodology Used

Fantasy Control:

Rather than focusing on the behavioral act of masturbating, therapy was directed to helping the subject gain personal control over the cognitive processes related to his fantasizing. The hypothesis was that control of cognition would lead to behavioral change. This approach was suggested by such scriptural injunctions as: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," "... whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Elder Boyd Packer's discussion of fantasy control was also germane. (Packer, p. 46, 47.)

The basic assumption in fantasy control is that a person can decide what thoughts he will **pursue** in his mind, and that he can **will** himself to pursue thought A over thought B. This assumes that the person is constantly bombarded by a variety of stimuli from his environment, but that the person can make a choice as to which of the stimuli he will allow to ferment and unfold in his mind. While this process is often carried out in an unconscious fashion, the purpose of therapy is to make this a conscious process in which the individual assumes full responsibility for the direction of his thoughts. It involves the development of a high level of self-discipline.

Substitution:

While the individual cannot fully control the entry of inappropriate stimuli to his mind, he does have a choice as to whether or not he will **pursue** that particular thought. Given the mind's limitation of **focusing** on a single thought at a time, this suggests that the deliberate replacement of an inappropriate thought by a more appropriate one (i.e. substitution) will curtail the elaboration of the prior inappropriate thought.

Sensitization to Thought Processes:

The first step in therapy is to help the subject become aware of and sensitized to the early stage of thought elaboration where the substitution process can be initiated. This is done through a deliberate focusing by the subject upon early fantasy initiation. The mechanics of this include setting up a typical base-line reporting system with the client, in which he keeps track of the number of times that his mind **begins** to develop a sexual fantasy in a given period of time. I had the subject keep a written record of the frequency of these fantasies throughout a two-week period. During the early stage of this process there were often questions and uncertainties in the subject's mind as to "what" constituted a fantasy and as to "whether" a particular thought fit into that category. While this was an uncomfortable task for the subject at the outset, it produced the anticipated outcome in that he became increasingly more sensitive to the early stages of

fantasy elaboration.

Plugging in the Substitute Thought:

After a suitable base-line period (in this case, two weeks) during which time the subject kept a daily record of each fantasizing experience, we then moved to the next step of substitution. In substitution the subject was asked to select several "uplifting, beautiful, pure" thoughts that were particularly meaningful to him and to keep these on hand in his mental arsenal, ready to "plug in" as necessary. He was then instructed that during the next defined period of time (two weeks), he was to **consciously** substitute one of these pre-defined thoughts each time he caught himself **beginning** the elaboration of a fantasy.

This experience of conscious substitution is not a mere mechanistic activity on the part of the subject, it is more akin to a mental war, with its share of battlefield victories and defeats. In the early stages the defeats outnumber the victories as the efforts to make the substitution often fail. It is not unusual for the substitution to be made and then have that followed by the quick return of the inappropriate thought, only to have to re-plug in the substitute thought, again and again. Like a muscle that begins to be used and strengthened, the ability of the subject to successfully exercise his will in determining what thoughts will be pursued in his mind, increases. As time goes by it appears that the re-entry of the inappropriate thought becomes less frequent and less strong. Eventually the subject gains control over his thought process without having a major battle each time. Concomitant with this increase in self-mastery over to fight sexual fantasy is a reduction in frequency of masturbatory activity (See Table I).

Positive Reinforcement & Supportiveness:

Near the outset of the counseling sessions with the subject, it became apparent that he was heavily involved in a process of self-denunciation which involved the various church authorities to whom he had gone for confirmation of his basic sense of worthlessness. He had a strong propensity to want to describe in detail his somewhat bizarre sexual experiences. It would appear that he had been successful in eliciting sufficient reactions of repugnance or concern upon the part of his confessants to validate his low sense of self-worth.

The regular confession-repentance process became subverted by this process of emotional self-flagellation which would predictably be followed by repeated fantasy/masturbatory activity, and the subsequent revalidation of the process by an authority figure (bishop, stake president, mission president). Sensing this rationale, I set up the previously described model, beginning with the two-week period of base-line focus on his fantasy activity.

At the end of this period, and at each succeeding session, I would focus upon positive reinforcement. His efforts to focus upon the sexual, behavioral aspects of the preceding weeks were deliberately shunned, much to his initial consternation. Each succeeding report period followed a similar format — a report of his data collection and positive reinforcement.

TABLE I
FANTASY CONTROL & MASTURBATORY ACTIVITY

CASE: George

Time Period	# of Fantasies	Wins	% Wins	Losses	% Losses	Ties [a]	Active Masturbation Experience
Initial 2 wks.	30	--	--	--	--	--	11
3rd-4th week	24	10	42	10	42	4	10
5th-6th	33	11	33	15	45	7	10
7th-8th	14	7	50	6	43	1	7
9th-10th	22	9	41	8	36	5	5
11th-12th	15	7	47	6	40	2	3
13th-14th	17	12	71	5	29	0	2
15th-16th	5(b)	3	60	1	20	1	0
17th-18th	19	14	74	5	26	0	5
19th-20th	20	10	50	9	45	1	4
21st-22nd	20	10	50	10	50	0	2
23rd-24th	4	4	100	0	0	0	0
25th-26th	5	5	100	0	0	0	0
27th-28th	4	4	100	9	0	0	0
29th-30th	2	2	100	9	0	0	0

Termination of Counseling

Clarifications:

[a]: Ties often included "uncertain" categorical incidents in mind of client.

[b]: During this period the client left the university for Christmas vacation.

Win: Each time the subject is able to stop the elaboration of an inappropriate sexual thought in its early states, through substitution, this is categorized as a "win."

Loss: Where no attempt is made to stop the inappropriate thought process, or where the

substitution effort is made unsuccessfully, and the original thought continues, this is classified as a "loss".

Tie: Unclear in the mind of the subject whether he really succeeded or failed (more typical of early stage of this therapy).

Active Masturbatory Experience: Where either mental fantasy or physical manipulation lead to ejaculation or heavy degree of sexual arousal.

I would deliberately refrain from any negative reflection on the remaining negative masturbatory or fantasy experiences. In the early sessions he would inevitably attempt to shift the focus in that direction. These attempts I would frustrate, and continue positive reinforcement. As the sessions progressed, his efforts to obtain the negative focus became less intense, and then more sporadic.

By the 10th week, when he had nearly halved the frequency of masturbatory activity, I decided to increase the positive reinforcement in a more dramatic way. Because of his masturbatory activity he had not participated in Temple activity for several years. I suggested this as an immediate possibility to him. He was surprised but pleased. Shortly after his attendance at the Temple, I called him to a responsible position in the Ward. By the time he was ready to go home for Christmas vacation (16th week) he had reduced fantasy frequency to a reported low of five for the two-week period, and had been able to eliminate active masturbatory experiences for that period.

His home environment, while on vacation, produced a strong regression in both fantasy and behavioral control. (Reasons for this were vague; I suspect that family relationships and parental judgmentalness were

instrumental.)

The first report period following the vacation was reminiscent of the early counseling sessions with his efforts to focus on self-recrimination and judgmental responses on my part. While disappointed, I resisted the efforts to be drawn into such behavior and proposed that we reinstitute the same program we had going before. I did not rescind his Temple recommendation, nor relieve him of his ward responsibility, but rather encouraged him to continued participation and activity in those areas. Within six weeks (23rd week) he had regained his self-control of the 15th-16th week period and continued that level of performance throughout the succeeding six-week period, at which time counseling was terminated. Shortly thereafter he finished his school and left the area. I have not had contact with him since that time.

Subsequent Applications of the Model

As a consequence of this experience I began to utilize this approach more extensively with subjects having similar problems. The results of these succeeding cases were comparable to the case described above, but generally required a shorter time to accomplish the same results. A more typical response pattern is indicated in Table II.

TABLE II

CASE II: John

Time Period	# of Fantasies	Wins	% Wins	Losses	% Losses	Active Mastubatory Experience
Initial 2 wks.	10	--	--	--	--	7
3rd-4th week	8	1	13	7	87	7
5th-6th	9	2	22	7	78	4
7th-8th	4	1	25	3	75	3
9th-10th	3	2	66	1	34	1
11th-12th	4	4	100	0	0	0
(began discussing possibilities for a missionary call)						
13th-14th	3	3	100	0	0	0

All of the applications of this model were with males. I did not have any female subjects with sufficient recurrence to justify use of the model. However, I anticipate that it would be equally applicable with them.

References:

Joseph LoPiccolo. **Handbook of Sex Therapy**. New York, Plenum Press, 1978.

Boyd K. Packer. **Teach Ye Diligently**. Deseret Book, 1975.

Wilford E. Smith, "By Their Fruits," **Measuring Mormonism**, Vol. 4, Fall, 1977.

The Role of Affection in Courtship and Marriage: Some Reflections

by Richard A. Heaps*

As she sat across from me, she asked why no one had ever given her such an explanation before. I had just finished explaining the reason physical affection can be so out of place during courtship, yet serve such a pleasant purpose and role within marriage.

It seems that before she was married, she and her husband enjoyed a pleasant relationship free of moral problems, but now she was having serious questions about the propriety of enjoying acts of affection with her husband. This had started causing feelings of ambivalence, guilt, anxiety and strain in her marriage. In a way, her lack of awareness surprised me and gave me reason to ponder, so after she left I sat back and reflected on her earlier uncertainties and what I had said to her that had seemed so new and of which she had been so unaware. I recalled my words:

"There is a reason why even the 'smallest' sexual or physical acts are so important within marriage yet so serious when engaged in beforehand. You see, the opportunity to procreate and to have increase is a lasting or eternal opportunity only in the Celestial Kingdom. In other words, the continuation or giving of lives is a celestial blessing. We are given the approved opportunity to approximate that sacred celestial relationship here on the earth only within very rigid conditions established within a legitimate marriage relationship.

"The sexual act, which leads to the giving of life, is sacred, proper and desirable within the bounds of a marriage relationship; however, engaged in by itself without proper physical, emotional and spiritual preparation can be accompanied by physical, emotional or spiritual pain. Therefore, tender embracing, kissing and fondling are an important part of the preparation for the procreative act. Because each of these acts is literally bound to each other in a preparatory physical 'chain,' one may stop this sequence at any point short of the next act only by exerting great will and energy. This is the reason even the 'least' sexual or physical act is so important within marriage yet so serious before marriage...it is intended to lead to 'more'."

"You know," she said to me, "it has always been so confusing that physical affection could be so wrong one moment and so right the next. When I got married I couldn't quite get rid of the feeling of wrongness, but now you seem to be telling me that such affection has actually never been wrong."

"That's correct," I replied. "Such physical intimacy has never suddenly become all right. It has never been

wrong — within marriage. As you know, the setting has always determined the propriety of almost anything we do. Pleasurable, physical affection has always been proper, desirable and even necessary within marriage. You cannot have children without the procreative act, and that act should be prepared for in a tender and considerate manner. This is also why young couples, prior to marriage, need to be so cautious about their physical expressions of affection. Each tender act is intended to lead to more, and will lead to more unless interrupted by determined effort. Such acts are supposed to prepare and physically move a husband and wife forward, toward a culmination of their feelings of love in the procreative act, the mutual creation of life."

After reflecting on this conversation, I recalled another occasion when I was confronted by a young engaged couple who had been having repeated moral problems of a moderately serious nature. After explaining the sequential relationship between various acts of physical affection, they said to me, "We really want to keep our relationship clean, but how do we avoid that natural progression from one act of affection to more serious ones?"

Of course the solution was quite obvious. Don't start! But, they seemed to need more direction and explanation than that simple conclusion offered, so I offered some principles which, if followed, would help them avoid the problem they asked about.

"These principles are very simple, but very practical. The first principle is to avoid being alone together, for long periods of time, in stationary positions. This will help you avoid the environment or circumstances which provides the opportunity for transgression. Stop and think for a moment of the circumstances surrounding each time you have gotten into moral difficulty. Those circumstances have almost always had all three conditions in common."

They interrupted, "But we want to be alone at times to talk about important, personal plans. We can't do that just anywhere."

"Then keep in mind that you do not need to avoid being alone," I reassured. "The principle is to avoid all three conditions at the same time: being alone, for a long time, and in a stationary position. Any one or two of these conditions in combination at the same time will not likely lead to any problem. It is only when the third condition is present along with the other two that you have created the most likely opportunity for transgression."

"The second principle," I said, "is to avoid any behavior which tempts you personally to do more. This will help you avoid the problems associated with the natural 'chain' relationship between various physical acts of affection. If you avoid starting the chain, or if you avoid the temptation, you obviously avoid the later

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transgression. I realize this sounds simplistic, but it will require a significant prior decision and a great deal of commitment on your part."

Hesitatingly, they finally ventured, "We can see the wisdom in your advice, but we have such strong feelings for each other. How can we show our love and affection if we don't kiss and embrace?"

"I realize that as each of you grows in love for the other you want to show your growing love in increasingly stronger ways so that the other person will know you love him or her more now than you did before. Unfortunately, the easiest, most readily accessible way to do this is through more frequent and passionate physical intimacies. This has led to a prevalent untruth in the world that the most desirable expression of affection is a physical or sexual one. This philosophy completely ignores the powerful expressions of affection that can come in other ways such as through our verbal and behavioral communications of warmth, through our respectful acts, and through the countless little things which we can do for each other.

"Once you are married you will find that your physical relationship will be only a very small part of all your interactions. If you begin now to show your inward feelings of love in verbal and in non-sexual ways you will receive two benefits. First, you will enjoy a morally clean relationship during your courtship. Second, you will begin to establish positive habits in the things you do together that will carry over into your marriage and help build even more satisfying and fulfilling ways of behaving toward each other. Then the stronger feelings of mutual respect you will have established will give you a more healthy context for appropriate expressions of physical affection in your marriage."

As I reflected on these two experiences, I wondered what it is that brings about such unawareness among our young people. Then it occurred to me that sometimes we may unintentionally spend so much time cautioning couples about the problems and consequences of immorality that we tend to neglect practical suggestions regarding how to maintain positive, morally clean relationships and also neglect the need to place different kinds of affection in their proper context within courtship and marriage. In summary:

1. We are given the opportunity to approximate the celestial blessing of procreation here on the earth within the context of marriage, and there need be no guilt from enjoying this God-given relationship. The sexual act does not "suddenly" become all right in marriage, but has always been proper, beautiful and even necessary. It is the setting which provides the needed supportive conditions and determines the timeliness and propriety of this act. Marriage is the setting for procreation.

2. The procreative act must be prepared for to avoid physical, emotional or spiritual pain. For this reason even the smallest physical intimacies such as kissing and embracing are bound together in a sequential chain that creates a natural progression culminating in the final sexual act.

3. Since each physical act is intended to lead to the next, this sequence can be stopped only by exerting a great deal of strength and energy. In other words, it is not a matter of weak will that couples are tempted to do more once they have started this physical "chain."

4. To avoid starting this natural "chain" of physical intimacies, couples should avoid any behavior which tempts them to do more.

5. To avoid the environment and circumstances which allow for moral transgression, couples should avoid being alone together, for long periods of time, in stationary positions. That is, they should avoid all three conditions at the same time.

6. As a couple grows in love for each other, it would enhance their courtship and their later marriage to continuously show their growing affection in creative, non-physically-intimate ways.

These principles were helpful to a young woman concerned about the propriety of a physical relationship with her husband, to a young engaged couple concerned about how to keep their relationship morally clean, and to countless others who have heard them. It is hoped they will also be helpful to others who want to establish mutually enhancing relationships.

Pair Diagnosis

Edited transcript of workshop presented at the AMCAP Convention, March 29, 1979.

By Carlfred B. Broderick, Ph.D.*

It is a pleasure to discuss with you this morning some of my experiences with couples — Mormons and non-Mormons. Occasionally someone will say to me, "I'd hate to have your job. You spend all of your time with people who are failures, who can't cope with life—the adulterers, the homosexuals, the neurotics, the hostile, and disenchanted. I would hate to spend my time with that kind of people." I always reply, "No. It isn't like that at all. People who come in for counseling are the greatest people in the world. They are divinely dissatisfied with the way their lives are going and instead of complaining about it they are doing something about it. They are actually working to change. They are the kind of people I enjoy. Frankly I find people who feel they have it made dull and smug."

In fact, as I read the scriptures I find that the Savior took a somewhat similar stance. He was accused of spending all of this time with the dregs of the society—"publicans and sinners." His defense was "the well have no need of a physician." In view of the things he had to say on other occasions about these same pharisees who were cross-examining him, I must suppose that he was being sarcastic when he called them "well." I think he put his finger on the core truth of our profession: never judge people by the problems they bring but rather by their readiness to work.

We may assume that those who come to us are, for the most part, well intended. They have, in most cases, already worked hard to solve their problems but they have not succeeded. They are likely to say things like "I get so discouraged that — well, I'm sorry, but I just feel like giving up." This morning I want to talk about three different things that keep well intended people from succeeding. I'll give examples and some suggestions for how to get unstuck, how to convert the desire and the effort into successful achievement of valued goals.

Communication Problems

When I entered the field about 25 years ago it was already widely recognized by professional and lay people alike that one of the keys to successful relationships lay in the communication between partners. In those days the emphasis was on how much you communicated. Marriage manuals, magazine articles, counselors (not to mention bishops and temple sealers) routinely admonished young couples to communicate with each other and warned of the painful

harvest of failing to communicate. When couples came to see counselors the common complaint of at least one (usually the wife) was that "we just don't communicate." As a corrective, both professionals and well wishing friends, relatives and priesthood leaders were quick to advise "talk to your wife" — "share your feelings with your husband."

In time, workshops were developed with the goal of achieving "clear channel communications." Rules were developed for being a good sender and a good receiver and for setting up a situation without distractions in which feelings and ideas could be exchanged without the least possible loss or distortion.

This was a big step from simply communicating more. Now the focus was on sending and receiving messages accurately. Carl Roger's work on how to listen and reflect was adapted for use between parent and child (as in PET workshops and in Bernard Guerney's Filial Therapy in which parents were taught to be Rogerian therapists to their own children), and between husbands and wives (again Guerney developed workshops to train couples at Penn. State as did Miller and Nunnally in Minnesota). It turned out that most people could master this skill in as few as 6 to 8 weeks. The couple communication workshops became a national phenomenon and couples groups all over the country began learning various versions of this approach.

Some of these groups, however, made the mistake of studying what happened to the couples after the workshops. It turns out (if I may summarize a number of studies) that about 40% were still profitably using the new techniques they learned several months later, about 40% had reverted to old patterns and about 20% had been blown right out of the water by what they learned when they finally pushed through the fog in their communication system. It seems that some marriages only survive through a conspiracy not to communicate too clearly. When the truth is finally stated clearly, unambiguously, unmistakably, and understood without distortion it may be pretty hard to take if the message is "you are fat and ugly and turn me off, but there is somebody else who turns me on" (or whatever). It is not going to help a marriage in such a case to be accurately able to reflect the message back: "Now let me see if I understand how you feel; you feel I am fat and ugly and you don't love me anymore and you are involved with someone else."

In the last 10 years we have come a ways down the pike from that "total truth" model of therapy. We have learned that a group with the mandate to be totally honest at all cost can very often become very destructive. In fact, for this reason I sometimes refer to them as "killer groups."

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Hurt feelings and painful consequences happened a lot during the period when our profession held accuracy at any cost as the highest achievement in communication therapy. Since then we have come to appreciate the need for a little love and support with the truth. The Gospel teaches that, but it was the behaviorists, not the prophets, who began to convince the profession of the validity of that point. It is not enough to be honest. It is not enough to be accurate in your sending and receiving. It is necessary also to have warmth and support in human relationships.

Some of you are aware already of a study done out of Florida State by a couple of LDS behaviorists (the Madson Brothers). If I remember the details correctly, they put observers in 7,000 American homes to evaluate the mix of positive and negative interactions between family members in the 4 to 8 p.m. time period. What ratio of positives to negatives would you guess they found? 50-50? That's what the families themselves estimated in advance of the study — that about 50% of their interactions would be positive, that is warm, kind and supportive — and 50% negative, that is critical, demanding, and punishing. In fact, the finding was that 80% of the interactions were negative. I was shocked, as perhaps you are — shocked at the national average, but smug about my own family's ratio. As I reviewed evenings at our house, I estimated that interaction between me and my wife was over 95% positive. I took it child by child and relationship by relationship and discovered that as I got further down in age, the ratio of negatives increased, but I was not prepared to discover that when I looked at my relationship with my youngest son, Benjamin, I could not recall a single positive incident in the last week. That really bothered me. I knew that he and I didn't get along, but not to be able to think of a single positive! I reflected on how this was really all my wife's fault because she spoiled him and he wouldn't let me do anything for him. I couldn't pour his milk or cut his meat or tie his shoes — Mommy had to do it, and he was very jealous of the two of us. If I would hug her or have her sit on my lap, he would always be right there butting in. I couldn't even correct him. If he was bouncing on the couch, I couldn't just say to him, "Son, quit bouncing on the couch," because if I did, he would go into hysterics and his Mother ended up comforting him. I had to call to my wife in the next room and say, "Honey, would you get this kid to quit bouncing on the couch?" That's not patriarchal — that's humiliating.

Anyway, I was upset about this discovery that things were so bad between us but I got busy with other things and put it out of my mind — until one day several weeks later I was seeing a good sister from Young Special Interest, a divorcee who had a daughter, Sharon, just Benjy's age. She was having terrible problems with her daughter. Nearly every day they got into a fight over something and it just seemed to this lady that her little girl was out to get her. So I told her about the study and suggested she start laying some unconditional positives on Sharon. She said she knew all about that approach (being a school teacher) but Sharon defeated her attempts to use it. Well, I didn't let her off so easily and launched into a sermon on how important this was and all the million and one ways there were to lay positives

(and withhold negatives) in even the most difficult relationships. Then something happened. I have a certain tolerance for hypocrisy but I guess I blew a hypocrisy circuit because I suddenly choked up and couldn't say another wonderful word. Finally, I admitted to her that I had a son that I got along with just like she got along with Sharon and I didn't do any of the things I was outlining for her to do. After a moment's further reflection, I made a proposal to her. "What do you say that we make a pact, you and I? This week let's each go for the national average — 20% positives." She agreed and I went home to lay some positives on Benjy.

First off, I tried telling him a story. In my family I am considered a first class storyteller so I thought I would start with my best shot. He didn't want a story, he wanted to play with Beverly.

I was hurt, but after dinner I tried again. "How about going to the store with Daddy and getting an ice cream cone on the way back?" No, he was going to have Franky, our 12 year old, teach him to play chess after dinner. Well, I will tell you that if it hadn't been for my appointment to see Sharon's mother, that would have been it! But I have some pride so I kept at it and eventually he agreed to accompany me through a drive-through car wash. One thing built on another and by the end of the week he was sitting on my lap, showing me his pictures, telling me all about what happened in school that day and even spontaneously hugging me. I couldn't believe it. For one thing, my wife hadn't changed her behavior at all. If she had been the cause of our poor relationship, how come he had changed so radically in such a short time? The answer was painfully obvious. It was I who had built the barrier. My son responded to my attention as though I had released reservoirs of love and need for a relationship with his father.

Valentine's Day, which came the following week, he gave each of his brothers and sisters a Valentine; his mother got 19 (which surprised no one) and I got 22! I wept. The year before, his mother made him give me one of hers. To this day (4 years later) we are friends.

This principle works even if only one partner uses it. But in that case, it works only if that partner is not feeling the injustice of being the only one working on the relationship. Again, positives work, but if you keep too careful an accounting, they can backfire — so don't count.

In recent years a fourth issue of communication difficulties has come under scrutiny — beyond the amount of communication, beyond the clarity, beyond the ratio of positives to negatives is the issue of the unacknowledged meta-message. To give an example, a couple married after both becoming established in their careers. He was a successful lawyer, she a successful entertainer. As soon as they were married he told her he wanted her to wash all of that heavy make-up off her face and get her hair done in a less extreme style. She told him to go to hell. He said, "But now that we are married you should want to please me, not every Tom, Dick and Harry walking up and down the street. I don't care what you wear on stage, but when you are with me, you should dress and do your face and hair to please me." He couldn't understand why she was so obstinate about it. It almost

destroyed their month-old marriage. The problem, of course, went beyond the issue of her make-up and hair style. It lay in the meta-message: "Now, I am in charge of you and you must do what I say." That was the issue that had to be worked out before they could establish the loving relationship they both thought they had signed on for.

The point of this section on communication is that good people, well intended people, people who love the Lord and keep the commandments can make themselves and each other miserable through unintended problems in their system of communication. They can fail to communicate enough, they can misperceive the messages that are sent, they can unwittingly send a heavily and negatively balanced set of messages and they can fall into patterns of offensive meta-message which get in the way of adhering to the reasonable words they are saying.

Mismatched Scripts

The second boobytrap for well intended couples is a product of the expectations that each of them brings to the marriage. It is natural for everyone to bring expectation to every situation. Each of you came to this meeting with some expectations as to what you would hear and you are either disappointed or satisfied partly as a function of the match between what you thought you paid for and what you are actually getting. It is the same in marriage. In myriad subtle ways we each build up a comprehensive script of what we think marriage will be like. We have ideas on how and when affection will be experienced (and received), how the space and time and energies of the couple will be allocated, what the economic and spiritual priorities will be, where relatives and friends and children fit in and many, many other things. It is inevitable that there will be discrepancies between these scripts. We grow up in different families and often in different communities and circumstances. Most of our expectations are probably not even conscious. They are so taken for granted that we only come to recognize we have them when we are disappointed in them. **In my opinion, there is more marital difficulty over this issue than any other.**

No one is exempt, not even me and my lovely bride of 27 years. Of course, no one could have convinced me that **any** mismatching was possible. We grew up together in the same Sunday School classes and in the same school rooms. We were always friendly. She was my first date. Although both of us dated others through most of high school and part of college, she is the only woman I have ever met that I wanted to marry. Since we were good LDS kids, we weren't permitted to do a whole lot besides talk to each other for most of those years and we talked and talked and talked and talked. I would have thought that we talked about every possible subject that could come up in marriage. I was wrong.

For example, we did not talk about what you do when you get sick. One reason we never discussed it, I suppose, is that it never crossed either of our minds that there was more than one approach to this subject among civilized, sensitive people. I knew (and I supposed everyone did) that the correct procedure is for the sick person to go to bed (that is his part) and then

whoever loves and cares for him comes regularly and pumps him full of fruit juice. You got well, of course, in direct proportion to the volume of juice you put through your system in a given period of time. If pressed as to the scientific rationale for this approach, I would have replied that the fluid flushed the poison out of your system and the Vitamin C had widely demonstrated healing properties. Of course you didn't want to use artificially-sweetened fruit juice as that tended to raise the acid level in the blood. And milk was obviously out of the question in view of the well-established fact that it caused mucus. To take solids of any kind was so absurd that the issue could never arise.

Imagine my feelings when, some months after our marriage, I got sick. Of course I did my part—went to bed — waited, and nothing happened. Nother! She couldn't exactly overlook the fact that I was in bed in the middle of the room moaning and groaning and dehydrating before her very eyes, yet she did nothing. I could not make any sense out of it at all. She did not seem to be angry with me. In fact, she was cheerfully humming as she sewed. Besides, it wasn't like her to be spiteful towards anyone, let alone a sick husband. Still not one drop of anything was forthcoming and finally I said (weakly), "Golly, Honey, I didn't realize we were out of juice." She looked up, smiled and said, "Oh, I don't think we are." Then, after a silence from me, "You want me to get you some juice, is that it?" "Well, I suppose I (coughing still more weakly) could manage it myself." No, no, no — you just stay right there and I'll get you some." Saved at last! Right? Wrong! She brought a little four ounce glass of juice and that was it. Kaput! Fini! You see, in her family, juice was something you had in little four ounce glasses for breakfast every other week to vary the menu. She had no concept of it as the elixir of life, love and health.

The routine repeated itself over the years everytime I got sick, until finally one time she said, "I can't stand it if you are going to get sick again. It's like a bad dream. You moan and groan about juice. I bring you juice and it doesn't do any good. I can't stand it! What is it with you and juice?"

Well, I tried to spell it out but it didn't sound as reasonable when subjected to penetrating, biochemically sophisticated cross-examination as when it remained buried in the vaults of unchallenged self-evident truth. I eventually gave up being sick. It just isn't worth it.

Let me give you one more example. A couple had been in graduate school and they live in one of those places that was formerly an old house, now partitioned into apartments — 2 upstairs and 2 downstairs, with paper-thin walls and squeaky double beds. When they finally got through graduate school, she got a job as assistant professor on a faculty, making four times the salary that they were living on before. The first thing they did with the new income was to get a nice apartment and really nice furniture because now they could afford it. They spent all of their free time together shopping for furniture and really enjoyed it because they had very similar tastes. But one day in the furniture department of a big department store, she came upon a bedroom suite on sale for half price. It was a lovely set with twin beds and she was oohing and

aahing and inspecting the springs and bouncing on the mattress, when she became aware that he was not aahing and bouncing on the mattress. "What's the matter, Honey? Don't you like this set?" And she launched into a sales pitch about how well it would fit with their other furniture, what a good buy it was, etc., he grew increasingly upset and said, "Look, if this is what you want, this is what we'll get and don't worry — I'll sleep on the couch 'til they deliver it." "What are you talking about?" "I really don't feel like discussing it in a public department store. In fact, I feel like ten fools not realizing till now that you felt that way, but don't worry, I won't force myself on you." "What? Oh, for heaven's sakes. I assume you can walk three feet if the spirit moves you. Michael, my parents have always slept in twin beds and they're very happily married." "Saay — I'm glad you mentioned that. My life's ambition has always been to be just like your parents."

And they were off. As she later said, "I couldn't believe it. We ended up having the biggest fight of our marriage right there in the furniture department in front of everyone and anyone."

As you have already figured out, his parents had always slept in a double bed and had made quite a point to their children of this being the centerpiece, the core symbol of a happy marriage. To him, her moving out of his bed was rejection of the most painful, personal and public type. To her it was merely moving up in the world. When she finally understood what it meant to him, she didn't want to move to twin beds. For him it was a core symbol of the health of their love. To her it was a far more pragmatic matter.

This is a common pattern in a marriage. What for one is central to the marital script is of no special significance at all to the other whether the issue is juice or sleeping in a double bed. One man I know used to take off his wedding ring and throw it at his wife when he got really mad at her. To him it was a satisfying but harmless gesture of annoyance. To her it was tantamount to a divorce. She married him with that ring and when he took it off and threw it at her it was as though he was repudiating all of their vows.

Vicious Cycles

The third concern I want to share with you is the concept of vicious cycles. This is another hazard for good Latter-day Saint families. You know, people come to me and say, "President Broderick, we pay an honest tithe, we keep the Word of Wisdom, we attend to all of our church meetings and duties, we keep the whole law of God and yet we have a miserable marriage. How can you explain that?"

I remind them of the scriptures that "there is a law irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated— And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." The laws they mentioned are not the laws of marital success. Those are spelled out in the 121 section of the Doc. & Cov. and in the 12th chapter of Romans and a number of other places. I don't want to go over all of those excellent scriptural sources this morning, but I do want to remind you that failure and success in any

aspect of life is lawful. It is based on principles which, once understood, give us the power to turn failure into success if the will to do so is there.

One such law is the law of the vicious cycle. It is a secular, not a sacred concept, but it can be tested against reality in almost any relationship. A vicious cycle is at work when the harder you try the worse things get. For example, the harder a wife tries to get her husband to hold Family Home Evening, the more he watches Monday Night Football. On the other hand, the more he watches TV the more she nags him, which he hates. The intended consequences of her behavior never occur; instead she gets the exact opposite. He also hopes, by his behavior, to convince her that she can't tell him what to do but he reaps still more telling. This 180 degree discrepancy between intentions and consequences plus the resulting escalation of negatives are the chief identifiers of the vicious cycle pattern of interactions. They are surprisingly difficult to interrupt. For one thing, in addition to pleading their intentions and ignoring the actual consequences of their behavior (because different consequences ought to follow), couples locked in this pattern typically have dark fantasies about the terrible consequences which would be generated by stopping their half of the cycle. Hers is that if she quit pushing they would never have Family Home Evening, never have Priesthood leadership exercised in truth and righteousness. His is that he'll never be in charge of his own life again if he starts letting her run it. No one is protected from this type of problem. In one form or another, it ensnares bishops and stake presidents and regional representatives as frequently as it does prospective elders, or inactive seventies.

Of course, the case of the pushy wife and the resident husband, while common enough, is only one of an infinite variety of vicious cycles that couples can get themselves into. Just as often, for example, it is a pushy husband and a resident wife. Let me give you one example that illustrates how hard it can be to get a couple to give up their cycle even when they both hate it. This particular couple is not LDS but there are cycles like this in many LDS marriages.

The husband was a beefy, assertive insurance salesman, and the wife was petite and prissy. He had come in because he had diagnosed her as "neurotically frigid." My assignment was to fix his wife. He even volunteered that he knew the origin of the problem — her mother had taught her that men were sexual beasts and not to be trusted or encouraged.

She had not come to be fixed. She had come to expose to the world (or at least to the counselor) the animal excesses that she had to put up with. According to her, her husband was constantly obsessed with sex.

Had it always been this way? No, the first years of their marriage were blissful. He was tender and sensitive; she was responsive. So what happened?

Hs: "I have no idea."

Wf: "Oh, I know what happened."

Hs: "What?"

Wf: "It was the evening of August 14, 19..."

Hs: "Can you believe this? She knows the exact date!"

Wf: "I wish I could forget it. Anyway, what he said about my mother was partly true. She did mistrust men (and with good cause) and she did warn me about them. But Ralph was not like other men at first. In our courtship he was respectful of my values and never pushed me. How often I thanked God that I had found a man romantic and gentle and patient. We had an ideal relationship until that night. He had had too much to drink and he came home and wanted to make love, but I was put off by his condition so I said no. I didn't want to. But he persisted. He didn't care how I felt or what I wanted. It was then that I realized that mother was right all along. I had just been taken in by his sales pitch like one of his customers. It wasn't me he wanted — it wasn't ever me, it was it."

Well, the next morning he finally woke up all hung over and remorseful. He came to me in the baby's room where I had slept and begged me to forgive him, saying it was the alcohol, that he did love me and would never do anything to distress me. I was starting to soften and let him hold me — I was even starting to believe that perhaps I had misjudged him when — can you believe this. Doctor — he started to fondle me sexually!"

Hs: "Margaret, I just wanted to see if everything was okay between us."

Wf: "Well, that did it. I knew then that it was all honey — those tears and all the rest. He just wanted one thing from me."

Hs: "Margaret, that's not true! I love you. You're the only one I want to make love to."

CB: "Let me see if I can summarize what has happened in this marriage since that unhappy incident. How long ago?"

Wf: "Seven years."

CB: "For seven years you (the husband) have tried to get her to respond to you the way she used to before all of this happened and the harder you tried the more turned off you (the wife) were and the more turned off she was, the harder you tried."

Both were silent but indicated assent.

Now, how would you counselors help this couple to break out of this destructive cycle? (Audience: "Tell him to cool it.")

That's what I did. In private session I said to him, "My suggestion is that you cool it—just lay off trying to initiate sex for the next few weeks. Let her make the moves."

Hs: "Listen Doc — you don't understand my wife. She's just like the insurance business: it takes 20 calls to make one sale."

Of course, that's the way it does work in insurance. If you get into a slump you just get on the telephone and hustle until you break out and make a sale. Apparently this closely resembled his relationship with his wife also. He would hustle, hustle all month long and eventually (about once a month) she would weaken or feel guilty about not being a "good" wife and give in. Then it would start all over again. I pointed out to him that this wasn't working well and again strongly suggested he cool it. He began to get red in the face.

Hs: "Look, Doc — I think that's a pretty cheap suggestion. Here I am getting sex about once a month and you tell me to cool it."

CB: "How long since you last had sex with your wife?"

Hs: "Two weeks."

CB: "Then you have nothing to lose for two weeks. Try it my way and if at the end of that time nothing is changed, by all means return to your own approach."

Then I had to talk with the woman alone.

CB: "Mrs. X, I have got your husband to agree to abstain from any sexual advances for the next two weeks and to leave that to you. I am hopeful that you will take advantage of this opportunity to change the pattern between you. That is, I would like you to be the one to initiate sex in the next couple of weeks."

Wf: "That's your advice to me, then? Just make love to him and everything will be fine? Well, I should have known that if I came to a male therapist that would be the advice I'd get." (rising to leave)

CB: "Mrs. X, please sit down! (She did.) I have gone to considerable length to convince your husband to abstain for two weeks. If you make no move toward him in that time, I presume he will return to his old ways. If that is what you want, suit yourself."

The first week he kept his end of the bargain and she did nothing. But the second week she surprised all of us by initiating sex three times. In a very short time their relationship blossomed in almost every area. Unhappily the story ended badly since just when things were going well he inadvertently (under the influence of alcohol once again) let it slip that during the former long dry spells he had sometimes succumbed to the temptations to have sex with other women. On learning this she immediately filed for divorce, feeling she had been deceived once again. But if that man had only kept the Word of Wisdom he could, in my opinion, be happily married today. The destructive negative cycle had actually been replaced by a constructive positive cycle that was in the process of building a rewarding relationship before it was aborted.

Actually, come to think of it, the man is happily married today. He has joined the Church and is serving on a high council and with his new wife is raising four of the five children from his first marriage. His ex-wife is bitter and estranged. That may not seem fair since he was the offender and she the original victim, but out of their painful experience he learned the laws of good relationships and she rejected them. Before he remarried, he brought his bride-to-be (also a divorcee) in and had me give them both a thorough relational examination. He didn't want to get into a destructive pattern again. And it has worked for him. The Lord does forgive people and permit them to succeed if they will learn.

Well, I see that my time is up. This has been a delightful experience for me. I love doing marital therapy and I love the Gospel and it is a rare privilege for me to speak to an audience sophisticated in both areas. I wish you the joy of your labors.

Parenthood — An Apprenticeship for Godhood

Based on a present action made at the April, 1979 AMCAP Convention

By L. Alan Westover*

Introduction

In consequence of Joseph Smith's contributions, our perspective of human behavior, and more specifically, family relationships, remains unique. Included among his insights are three key principles which provide the LDS professional community with a unique philosophical frame of reference, a perspective which should be far more productive than the competing philosophies of the world. We will briefly explore these principles and then seek to apply them to the substantive realm of parent-child relationships. We will seek to demonstrate that parenthood is nothing less than an apprenticeship for Godhood.

Intelligence

The first principle we will explore here pertains to the origins of man. Joseph Smith taught the existence of a primal, uncreated element in the universe which, like matter and truth, cannot be created nor destroyed. Further, the element possesses the inherent power to act for itself in whatever environment it is placed. (See D&C 58:27-28; 93:23, 29-32.) This element, which Joseph Smith called intelligence, has the capacity to grow in knowledge, power, glory, and nobility, if it obeys the laws upon which such growth is contingent.

All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement.

The first principles of the gospel are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another and all that knowledge, power, glory and intelligence, which is requisite to save them in the world of spirits. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 354.) (Also see Abraham 3:19-26.)

Orson Pratt further amplified our understanding of the intelligence:

The capacities of all spiritual substances are eternal as the substance to which they belong. There is no substance in the universe which feels and thinks now, but what has eternally possessed that capacity. ("The Seer," I. July, 1853, p. 102.)

As these quotations suggest, God organized some of the numberless primal intelligences into spiritual

beings after His image. These beings thus became the literal children of God possessing the potential of achieving the status of exalted beings.

This Life A "Field Test"

Joseph Smith taught that because the prerogatives of Godhood are infinite and because intelligences vary in their willingness to discipline their lives to the truth, our Father in Heaven chose to "field test" His children to see which of them would choose to continue to progress and which would choose to stop or dam their progress short of eternal life. The test would be simple—He would reveal to each child a measure of the truth and then evaluate their behavioral performance against that standard. (Abraham 3:25-26; D&C 82:3-4, 88:21-24; 93:31-32.) The second key principle taught by Joseph Smith, then, was the purpose of this mortal life. We are to be tested or proven to see if we are "God material." The planet Earth is a proving grounds, much like missile proving grounds; and just as only those missiles which prove reliable are ultimately pressed into service, so it will be with us.

Stewardship

The third principle which Joseph taught in amplified form was the principle of stewardship. As taught in the parable of the talents, the Lord will not make us rulers over many things in eternity until we have been judged faithful stewards over a few talents in this temporary proving ground. The principles of stewardship and accountability are interdependent concepts.

It is wisdom in me; therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship; that every man may give an account unto me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him. For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. (D&C 104:11-13.)

The Lord reminds us that it is His prerogative to assign stewardships over material things because all things are His. (See D&C 104:14.) Because all things are His, He can appropriately say, "Moses, this land is yours and those other guys are going to have to leave." Or, "Malachi, if you and your people do not return one-tenth of my property as you have been instructed, you are cursed robbers."

A second substantive area of stewardship is that of truth. And just as all material things are the Lord's, He is the **similar** possessor of all truth. Therefore, as in material things, He reserves unto Himself the right to disperse truth on His own terms. And, as in temporal things, He promises to give His children additional

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truth only if we behaviorally master the portion we already possess. Second Nephi 28, verse 30 illustrates this principle:

For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that the power or authority to direct the affairs of people also belongs to the Lord: "Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subjects all enemies under his feet." (D&C 58:22.) Because it is the Lord's right to rule and reign, He may assign stewardships in this realm as well. That the Lord exercises His prerogatives in delegating authority or power is taught again in Abraham, chapter 3. You recall, as He stood amongst the multitude of intelligences, to those who were noble and great He said, "These will I make my rulers; for he stood amongst those that were spirits and he saw they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them. Thou wast chosen before thou wast born." (See Jeremiah 1:5.) When the Israelites needed a king, who chose David? It was the Lord. And speaking to the Twelve Apostles, the Lord specified, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you." (John 15:16.) In the home it is the husband and father who has been delegated the authority to preside. (Moses 4:22, Eph. 5:22-23.)

Again, as in the other stewardship realms, the Lord promises one who rules as instructed. (viz. with kindness pure knowledge, virtue, without hypocrisy and unrighteous dominion, etc) the receipt of a fulness of priesthood power.

...then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God: the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever. (D&C 121:34-46.)

In summary, the Lord says, "Look, I am going to assign you a small kingdom (a few talents) where you can do only limited damage; and if you utilize the authority as I direct, then I will make you ruler over many things. If you abuse the stewardship that you are provided, I will take away your talent and give it to another who exercises his agency responsibly. Behold, there are many called (given a stewardship of talents), but few are chosen (made rulers over many things) because few magnify their allotted talents as instructed by their Eternal Father."

Parent-Child Relationships

Perhaps the most precious of all our talents is that of family. The powers of procreation together with the

responsibility of parenthood is the fundamental challenge of Godhood, and this life is the time in which we demonstrate our willingness to parent in the fashion exemplified by our Father in Heaven. It may be that we too often fail to look to this perfect model of effective parenting as we struggle with such sensitive issues as the setting and enforcing of limits in the home. It is here, in the final examination that is this life, that each parent must demonstrate the ability to correctly apply the eternal principles of stewardship and free agency. In this context, the prophetic warnings that no other success can compensate for failure in the home, and that the hearts of the fathers must turn to the children acquire enormous meaning.

Perhaps the most clear and concise illustration we have of our Heavenly Father functioning in the role of parent is the account of His dealings with Adam and Eve. While in the garden, Adam and Eve enjoyed the blessings and limitations of childhood. Like the small child, Adam and Eve did not comprehend the difference between good and evil; they were unashamed of their nakedness, and unable to bear children. Their temporal needs were fully provided by a loving parent. Thus, the relationship of Adam and Eve to the Lord appears clearly to have been that of children to parent. Let us explore now the Lord's approach to setting and enforcing limits in the home:

And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, But of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Moses 3:15-17.)

We first note that the Lord reserved to himself the prerogative of defining the bounds and conditions of His kingdom. The rules of the garden were not arrived at democratically. Further, the Lord wasted no time in communicating to Adam the limits of acceptable behavior. He communicated the limits immediately upon introducing Adam to the garden, before there was any opportunity for naive error. (It is worthy of note that the Lord revealed His law to the patriarch Adam before Eve was placed in the garden.)

The set of acceptable behaviors was first communicated whereby Adam knew what behaviors he could appropriately engage in, after which the restrictive limits were defined. In setting the limits the Lord did several interesting things:

1. He was very specific and clear in defining the prohibited behavior, leaving no room for confusion or misunderstanding ("But of the tree...thou shalt not eat of it.").

2. He was very specific in defining the consequences of the prohibited behavior, which consequences were both bitter and immediate ("...for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.").

3. He carefully explained the reasons why the specific fruit was forbidden. Certainly He must have also clarified the meaning of physical and spiritual death to Adam.

4. He granted Adam freedom to act for himself independently ("Nevertheless, thou mayest chose for thyself, for it is given unto thee...").

Parents might well ask themselves, "Have we as husband and wife, king and queen, determined what the law of our kingdom will be? Have we adopted a single law which is specific and unmistakable and that we both actively support? Have we determined what specific consequences will follow violation of established limits? Are the consequences sufficiently bitter? Are they enforced immediately? Have we clearly communicated these limits to our children, explaining insofar as possible why we have chosen these particular standards? Have we granted our children agency or have we instead chosen to control their behavior, 'that one soul shall not be lost'?"

Like most children, Adam and Eve tested the established limits and partook of the forbidden fruit. It is noteworthy that while their Heavenly Parent was certainly aware of the impending transgression, He did not rush down to remind Adam and Eve of the behavioral consequences nor did He attempt to force them to comply with the established limits. Upon partaking of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness and like most errant children sought to avoid the piercing eyes of their father.

And I, the Lord God, called unto Adam, and said unto him: Where goest thou? And he said: I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I beheld that I was naked, and I hid myself. And I, the Lord God, said unto Adam: Who told thee thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, if so thou shouldst surely die? (Moses 4: 15-17.)

Why did the Lord ask Adam and Eve these questions for which He already knew the answers? Was He not providing them with an opportunity to openly confess their errors and accept responsibility for the consequences which were to follow?

The Lord heard their confessions and immediately imposed the promised consequences. Where was mercy and compassion? We must remember this was Adam and Eve's first mistake. There were extenuating circumstances in that they were bequiled by the serpent. Surely they deserved a second chance. Why didn't the Lord say something like this?

"Well, Adam and Eve, I think you've learned an important lesson today. Your attitude is repentant; this is your first mistake and you were tricked by the serpent. I'll tell you what...this time you don't have to experience physical and spiritual death...but I'm warning you, if you do it again you'll be in big trouble."

The Lord had powerful reasons for responding as He did, reasons most of us have need to ponder:

Therefore I, the Lord God, will send him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken; For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled. (Moses 4:29-30.)

The Lord would not lie to His children nor would He deny them their agency. To have done so would have thwarted the purpose of the plan of salvation and destroyed the credibility He had with His children.

Furthermore, He understood that only by tasting the bitter could Adam and Eve appreciate the sweet and learn by experience to distinguish the good from the evil. Again, each parent should examine his interactions with his children to weed out idle threats, lies, or attempts to "bluff" children into doing what is right. Children are far too perceptive to be fooled by such transparent, clumsy efforts.

Often parents mistakenly believe they are being merciful when they fail to enforce the consequences their children have chosen. To insulate children from the natural consequences of their independent choices is not reflective of a mature parental love, for such a response encourages the child to repeat his irresponsible behavior. The premature application of mercy is devastating in its consequences.

As difficult as was Adam and Eve's transition from childhood into adulthood when they left the garden, perhaps the most bitter of the consequences was spiritual death, the separation from their Father. Imagine the bitterness they must have tasted on this occasion:

And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence. (Moses 5:4.)

Here, the Lord sharply reminded Adam and Eve of the harsh reality of the spiritual death they had chosen, calling to them from the garden they were no longer qualified to enter. But the bitterness they experienced in contrast to the joy they had previously known in the presence of God was the motivating force behind their subsequent obedience to their Father.

And he gave unto them commandments that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. (Moses 5:5.)

Adam did not demand to know why he should offer sacrifices for he had already learned that he was far better off when he obeyed his Father.

And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. (Moses 5:6.)

For the rest of his days, Adam lived a near-perfect life in a direct effort to qualify himself to re-enter the Kingdom of his Father.

Again we might well ask ourselves, "Do we as parents consistently keep our word and follow through with promised consequences? Do we ever mis-time the application of mercy in our dealings? Do we ever fail to enforce the consequences our children have chosen via their behavior? Do we indiscriminately bless our children without requiring that they obey the law upon which the blessing is predicated? Do we teach them to be irresponsible and dependent by insulating them from the lawful negative consequences of their behavior?"

Once Adam and Eve demonstrated their obedience, they were taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ by "holy angels sent forth from the presence of God," (Moses 5:6-8, 58-59; D&C 29:42.), and received the comforting spirit of the Holy Ghost (Moses 5:9.). After the Lord has enforced a penalty, reproving his children with sharpness, He allows us to forsake our errors with a promise that if we do so He will remember them no more. But, it was only after Adam and Eve demonstrated **behaviorally** their determination to obey their Father by keeping His commandments that the blessings of mercy, forgiveness, and redemption were granted. This is the place of mercy. We, too, must learn to show forth an increase of love following reproof, and learn to absolutely forgive our children their mistakes, remembering them no more, once the consequences have been enforced. We must not, however, give in to the temptation to eliminate the bitter consequences nor bestow unearned blessings. Our children will not pay the price of obedience if their responsible behavior is no more productive than their irresponsible behavior.

The Lord did not enforce the bitter penalty in a spirit of vengeance, but in a gentle spirit of love. The ground was cursed, not in a spirit of vindictiveness, but explicitly for Adam's "sake." (Moses 4:23.) The Lord did not feel frustrated and angry as He enforced the choices of His children, because He had clearly communicated the law of His kingdom in advance. He did not permit Adam and Eve's problem to become HIS problem. If we allow our children to be responsible for their own choices as did the Lord, there is no need nor room for us to behave in an emotionally immature or hostile manner when enforcing consequences. Parents, then, should assume responsibility for their own behavior by teaching their children correct principles, allowing their children to govern themselves. Children can only learn by experience to distinguish the good from the evil if parents permit them to experience the lawful consequences of their behavior.

The Lord has commanded parents to teach their child the first principles of the gospel as well as the principles of prayer, honest toil, and observance of the Sabbath (D&C 68:25-31.) that we not suffer them to go hungry or naked, nor to fight and quarrel and transgress the laws of God. We have been instructed to teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness, to love one another and serve one another (Mosiah 4:14-15.). Having magnified our stewardship by teaching the principles, the sins of our children will rest upon their own heads as free agents. "And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation." (D&C 93:32.) Our children, however pure, cannot choose to obey principles they have not been taught. Their agency is limited by our failure to magnify our parental stewardship. And to the degree this is so, their sins are upon our heads (D&C 68:25.).

The Lord's approach to parenting is not permissive nor is it controlling. A determination to follow the example of the Lord in parenting our children is no small commitment, nor is the task unchallenging. Apprentice parents who willingly discipline themselves to emulate the perfect parent, the Master Artisan, do so that one day these words may be spoken to them:

...Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the Lord. (Matthew 25:21.)

That this may be our lot, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: In Support of the Family

(Presented at the Rockford College Institute National Conference on "The Family: America's Hope.")

By Joe J. Christensen

It is a pleasure to be with you under such favorable circumstances. A few days ago I held in my arms for the first time our second grandchild and first grandson. I was tempted to spend some time today telling you all about him but I am restrained by the story told of the conversation between two gentlemen. One asked the other, "Say, have I told you about my grandchildren?" To which his friend replied, "No, and thank you very much!"

So, I'll spare you a lot of detail about his common, ordinary, perfect grandchild. Those of you who have them know what I mean and those who haven't I hope will know some day.

In the Old Testament there are 23,214 verses and the very last two, written by the prophet Malachi, are family oriented:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6.)

To us in our church there is more of specific doctrinal and historical significance to the prophesied return of Elijah than we will discuss at this time, but the turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children and vice versa was apparently of such consequence that if it were not accomplished some very dire circumstances would occur.

Since we live in a time when many forces are acting to turn the hearts of the fathers away from the children, it is a pleasure to speak with you about some of these challenges to the family. This topic is of such significance to our church that it captures a very sizeable portion of our interest, effort and emphasis.

In his concluding remarks in a recent speech, President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of our church and former Secretary of Agriculture of the United States said, "In this, the greatest of all nations, in this land choice above all others, I pay humble tribute to the home. It is America's greatest strength." ("America's Strength—The Family," National Family Night Program, Seattle World's Fair Coliseum, Nov. 23, 1976.)

Since its inception the leaders of our church have taught that nothing can take the place of the home in

rearing and teaching children, and "no other success can compensate for failure in the home." (David O. McKay, in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1964, p. 5.)

Also, that "if we poison the headwaters of humanity — the home — it is exceedingly difficult to depollute downstream." (Neal A. Maxwell, in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1970, p. 97.)

As a church we are very much concerned about current trends that tear at the social fabric of our families and society. It is heartening to know that others sense the danger and are willing to do something constructive. Among them are such as you who are participating in this seminar on **The Family -- America's Hope**. On behalf of many others in my church, I would like to commend Dr. John A. Howard and all who have been influential in establishing the Rockford College Institute. The product of your efforts has proved to be a very responsible and intelligent voice defending those things that matter most to all of us. This is a time in our society when too few have the courage of their convictions coupled with the competence to be heard so effectively. The Rockford College Institute is blessed with this happy confluence of attributes. May your efforts continue to bless all of us in America specifically and the world generally.

The printed program indicates that I have been invited here to represent "The Church of the Latter-day Saints." That announcement contains an important omission. It should read, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." One cannot fully understand our position without recognizing that we believe in Jesus Christ and that his teachings are central to all we do. We accept him as our Savior and as a literal Son of God who made the Atonement available to all of us. This sincere commitment undoubtedly constitutes the greatest single support our religion provides to individuals, marriage and families. All that follows is influenced profoundly by this central focus of our faith.

Reference has also been made that this would be a Mormon commentary. Occasionally, members and non-members alike refer to us as Mormons. This is a nickname and comes into our early history from non-members of the Church referring undoubtedly to our belief in the Book of Mormon which, along with the Bible, we accept as scripture. We feel that it is also a support to the family in that it bears a powerful second witness from the western hemisphere that Jesus is the Christ and that what the Bible proclaims about him is really true.

You may be interested to know that the very first verse in the Book of Mormon is family-oriented. A young prophet writes, "I, Nephi, having been born of

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goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father." (1 Nephi 1:1.)

I will refer to three general areas of support provided by our church to individuals, marriages and families.

They are:

1. Basic theology and philosophy of life.
2. Practical teachings of Church leaders.
3. Specific Church programs and practices designed to strengthen the family.

Consider with me the first area:

1. Basic Theology and Philosophy of Life in Support of the Family.

The first of the three important theses of this conference states that "each person must come to terms with his own being." That is so vital. Over the centuries, the best minds have concluded that every man's question is "Who am I?" or "What is man?"

I would like to share with you how we as Mormons deal with these basic questions in a way that helps one come "to terms with his own being." In order to do so, may I share a little of my half-century of personal experience as one born and reared in a rather typical Mormon family. As individual as my experience may be, I am confident that in terms of philosophy of life there is much more of the similar than the dissimilar in comparison with others of my faith.

I was born to parents who really loved each other. My dad is a man of few words. Almost twelve years ago he wrote his entire "autobiography" on part of one page. About my mother he included this line: "After 44 years of married life I still think she is the greatest woman I have ever known." Someone once said that the most valuable gift a father can give his children is to love their mother. Dad gave us that gift.

When they started their lives together they had very little of this world's means. As they said, "We had everything that money couldn't buy." Their marriage ceremony was performed in one of our church's temples — very sacred places to us — where their marriage was sealed by one having the authority, not for the traditional "until death do ye part," but for "time and all eternity."

About this eternal relationship and temple marriage, President Ezra Taft Benson remarked that:

...the family is the most important organization in time and all eternity...the preservation of family life in time and eternity takes precedence above all other interests...Because of this confidence in the perpetuity of the home and family into the eternities, we build our most elaborate and expensive structures — temples of God — so that man, woman, and their children may be bound together by covenant in an everlasting union which will transcend all the limitations of this mortal sphere. ("America's Strength — The Family," National Family Night Program, Seattle World's Fair Coliseum, Nov. 23, 1976.)

As a Mormon, I grew up feeling that I was part of a family that was meant to be together forever. I know of no more important, distinctive, and satisfying concept of my faith than that. We believe that God intended for the love that exists between husbands and wives and

parents and children to last not only through mortality but throughout the eternities. Families can, and we believe should, be bound together forever. We believe and teach that the power to bind families together has been restored to the earth under the direction of our Lord and Savior as a part of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, whose gospel we sincerely proclaim our religion to be. To us it is not surprising that the Lord Jesus Christ ordained his chosen apostles ("Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and **ordained** you." [John 15:16; emphasis added]) and bestowed on them the power to "bind the earth [that which] shall be bound in heaven" (Matthew 16:19.).

Homer said, "There is nothing mightier or nobler than a man and wife who are of one heart and one mind in a house." And so it was that my parents started out their married life with a common system of values and a conviction that their marriage was literally sealed for the eternities if they were faithful to the promises they had made to each other and if they lived up to the spiritual and moral standards of the Church. They also believed that any children born of their union would be part of this eternal family unit if they were faithful.

As far back as I remember I have been taught that all of us in this world belong to an immense divine family and are actually brothers and sisters, spirit children of our Heavenly Father.

As you see, our whole philosophy of life and its purpose is bound up in the concept of the family and the importance of mothers, fathers, and children.

With beliefs such as these, it doesn't surprise me that divorce seldom occurs in those marriages which take place in one of our temples.

In the Bible, in the first chapter of Genesis, we read these important lines:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. (Genesis 1:27-28.)

We believe that is how it was. Our Father in Heaven is a personal being in whose image we were created.

We existed with him as spirit children before coming into this world of mortality through the process of birth.

One of the first songs our children are taught in our homes, Junior Sunday School, and Primary, has lyrics that respond to the universal questions of "Who am I?" or "What is man?" Listen to these lines and analyze them from a philosophical and theological standpoint:

I am a child of God
And He has sent me here.
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.

Lead me, guide me, walk beside me.
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with Him someday.

("I Am a Child of God," **Sing With Me**, [Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Co., 1970] Words by Naomi: Randall; music by Mildred Pettit.)

A sincere belief in life's purpose and continuity with loved ones beyond the grave eliminates the pervasive, almost universal anxiety one has as he faces the "awesome chasm of death" about which we read. I have never felt in my own life or sensed in the lives of our children any anxieties about self-identity and who we really are or why we are here in this life. A feeling of peace and emotional contentment accompanies such a belief and greatly stabilizes the attitudes and atmosphere within a home.

We all struggle for identity, a feeling of self-worth and meaning in life. These are easier to achieve if one believes as we do that we are much more than just an accident of nature in a Godless universe or, as so many are taught, that we are merely creations of an impersonal, passionless, formless creator who brought us into existence *ex nihilo*, or out of nothing. In contrast, our church teaches that God is a personal, glorified being. We pray to him as our Father in Heaven in the name of his only begotten Son in the flesh, Jesus Christ. They have provided us with a great world and a purposeful existence.

2. Practical Teachings by Church Leaders in Support of the Family.

The leaders of our church, whom we sustain as living prophets, share with us many practical teachings in support of the family. They are very concerned about all political and social trends that threaten the home.

In many political areas we have paid too little attention to the real needs of families and the devastating effects on them of deteriorating social patterns and conditions, massive urbanization, increased mobility, patterns of work, economic conditions, and the moral wasteland of the mass media. For example, we have not even been able to figure out how to protect freedom of the press and yet define and control pornography that threatens to warp our children's minds and morally weaken them. We have often been less than sensitive to the special needs and concerns of family life. Some legislation has been passed and programs adopted that have helped destroy neighborhoods; massive welfare programs have sometimes forced families apart and often have weakened the independent character, industry and productivity of recipients. Our church teaches that all of us have a civic responsibility to examine the effect of all proposed and existing legislation and programs on family life.

In all areas of changing legislation and social patterns that deal with moral or spiritual issues that threaten individuals or families, we feel blessed to have leaders in our church who are willing to take a position in defense of stability and propriety. As a sample, I will briefly consider six such topics:

a. Trends that would force or attract parents away from the home:

As a church we are very concerned about political and social trends that would tend to force or attract mothers particularly out of the home and away from what we feel is their unique opportunity and responsibility. I heartily agree with Urie Bronfenbrenner's observation that every "child should spend a substantial amount of time with somebody who's crazy about him....there has to be at least one person who has

an irrational involvement with that child, someone who thinks that kid is more important than other people's kids, someone who's in love with him and whom he loves in return....'You can't pay a woman to do what a mother will do for free.' " (Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Nobody Home: The Erosion of the American Family," *Psychology Today*, May 1977, p. 43.)

The finest day-care centers or surrogate parents cannot completely compensate for a parent's love and care. If we do not somehow reverse the trend of mothers abandoning their unique, and we believe God-given, role in the home, then we will have taken another monumental step toward the collapse of our society.

b. Homosexuality and a loss of gender identity:

Our church leaders take definite positions against homosexuality and trends that would foster the decay of gender identity. Ours is a church that sustains the Apostle Paul's warning against the decadence of Rome. He wrote:

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly. (Romans 1:26-27.)

The apparent increased acceptance of homosexuality and the loss of gender identity constitute symptoms of a society in deep trouble.

To us it seems such a loss to our society for the natural, desirable, and complementary distinction between the sexes to be eroded. We hope that our sons will mature in genuine masculinity and that our daughters will develop into examples of refined femininity. We desire that each will take pride in the uniqueness of his or her own gender. We do not resonate to the manic urgency displayed by some to purge so-called "sexist phraseology" (or, reference to "male" and "female") from all governmental regulations, guidelines, and settings. Though some of this may be justified, I don't believe we add to the dignity of our traditional English grammar by insisting on the use of "chairperson," or "person-hole cover," or "pregnant persons." Nor do we strengthen the concept of our respective genders by this purging.

We believe that there are appropriate roles for each of the sexes and that an individual's greatest fulfillment will be found when he or she recognizes and wholesomely identifies with the potential and blessing inherent in his or her gender.

c. A health code or "Word of Wisdom":

With basic philosophical and theological beliefs about the nature of man which were discussed earlier, it follows logically that for us the body is sacred and its care becomes a matter of faith. The "Word of Wisdom," or our code of health, which we believe came by revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833, counsels us that alcoholic beverages and tobacco "are not good for man" and that fruits, grains, and vegetables are. We are also counseled to eat meat sparingly (D&C 89.). The Bible indicates that our bodies are the temples of our spirits (1 Corinthians

3:16-17.), and we believe they should be protected and preserved as healthy, clean and free of the effects of harmful stimulants and drugs as possible. These teachings about health constitute a very practical support to success in marriage and the home. Obviously, among those who strictly follow these health standards there is no drunkenness or alcoholism to strain marriages and families; there is an observably lower incidence of virtually all forms of cancer; fewer heart problems; no use of illicit drugs to warp minds and attitudes; and generally healthier bodies to provide for longer, happier lives with loved ones. (The latest data indicate that Mormon men live six years longer than their non-Mormon counterparts.)

As a parent of six children, I assure you that there are a lot fewer anxious hours at home with Mom and Dad waiting, wondering, and worrying while the teenagers are "out on the town" when one is confident that they are abiding by these very practical health standards.

d. The importance of work:

One of the least popular four-letter words of our present society is **WORK**. As long as I can remember, our church leaders have taught that work should be re-enthroned in our society.

On the farm there was no problem finding plenty of it. It was a "5 to 9" rather than "9 to 5" life. In these days, most members of the church live in urban centers. Finding meaningful physical work for growing, restless boys and girls is much more challenging than it used to be. As a father, I find the church helps me substantially by teaching the value of productive work. Let me give you an example. The members of the church in our stake (which is a subdivision of our church roughly comparable to a diocese) joined together and purchased a **welfare farm**. Several times each summer we join with hundreds of others — young and old — in hoeing onions, weeding grapes, harvesting tomatoes or cucumbers, building fences, or whatever. There are all varieties of professions, trades and occupations represented.

The welfare farms and projects of the Church not only provide the basic necessities of life for tens of thousands of the poor and needy whose care otherwise would come from the taxes we pay to government, but also these farms and projects permit a host of city slickers like us to learn from first-hand work experience that vegetables and fruits don't just appear on the grocery store shelf, or that milk simply comes from cartons. I assure you that it is easier to teach one's children the importance of work and independence from government dole when the Church and its leaders provide this kind of supportive instruction and emphasis on the value of work.

e. Chastity:

Next, consider with me the sensitive area of sex, chastity, and moral cleanliness. In our Church there are no debates about whether the premarital sexual relationship is "meaningful," or if the couple is "really in love," or if the adults are "consenting." Discussions of situational ethics in the area of chastity are just not relevant. The teachings of our faith are direct and very understandable. They are consistent with the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14.)

As long as I can remember I have been taught by my

parents and Church leaders that there is a **single** standard of morality for Mormons. Young men are as responsible as young women to practice a code of strict chastity. **No** sexual intercourse is condoned outside the bonds of marriage...none! That commandment is for everybody...and especially for those who have promised themselves to each other in the holy bonds of matrimony. In these modern times when all values are questioned and challenged, one of the fastest ways for us to destroy our marriages, homes and families is to be unfaithful to each other. If it is known that a person is a practicing, unrepentant adulterer or homosexual, he or she cannot continue to retain full fellowship in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Where and when such problems occur, the principle of repentance makes possible one's return.

f. Legalized non-therapeutic abortions:

As a church we oppose legalized, non-therapeutic abortions which these days are available on demand. We consider such actions among the most grievous of sins. As in other areas, we receive some helpful counsel from modern scripture in which we are instructed not to kill, "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6.). We feel that a reverence for life is a vital ingredient in our entire society and is a contributor to family strength, love, human contentment, and happiness. Someday, I fear, we as a nation will deeply regret the action of the Supreme Court to liberalize the abortion laws which focus more on the whims and desires of the mother and her body than on the protection of the life and potential of the unborn child. We have introduced what has come to be called a "humane holocaust" that depreciates the concept of the sanctity of human life. To me it seems incongruous that we live today in a society in which "a whale or porpoise or snail darter or lousewart along with any bird or blade of grass in a national park (is) entitled to greater legal protection than a five-month-old human fetus." (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall: A Look at the 'Me Decade,'" Brigham Young University Forum, Feb. 1979.)

I'm grateful for a faith that takes a stand on this issue and chooses the value of life...both that of the mother and her defenseless unborn child. There is a warmth and strength that comes to individuals and families who sincerely believe that the miracle of the birth of a baby is still a great "blessed event," and not an unwanted intrusion or an unfortunate accident. Individuals who grow up in homes where they know children are loved and wanted face life's challenges much more successfully, and families so oriented experience greater unity.

3. Specific Church Programs and Practices Designed to Strengthen the Family.

In all of the discourses and pronouncements of our Church leaders over the 150 years since the Church's organization, no theme has been emphasized more than the importance of the home and family. That emphasis continues. In the most recent General Conference of the Church this spring, 1979, the two major Salt Lake City newspapers carried headlines describing President Spencer W. Kimball's keynote prophetic address as follows:

"President Kimball opens conference with admoni-

tion to fortify family."

"LDS leader tells alarm at evil menacing family."

In the first place we as parents are given by scriptural injunction the direct responsibility to teach our children. One passage reads as follows:

And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion...that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents (D&C 68:25)

We as parents are frequently reminded by Church leaders that no success outside the home can compensate for failure within it, and that the greatest work we will ever accomplish will be within the walls of our own homes. That takes time, planning and togetherness.

In addition to frequent teachings and emphases, several Church programs have been designed to combat destructive forces and to strengthen the family. Among them are the following:

a. Family Home Evening:

One night a week (Monday) is designated and emphasized as "Family Home Evening," and no other Church meeting or assignment is permitted to interfere. Parents and children are urged to clear calendars of any conflicting work or school activity and to devote themselves to an evening with the family. We sing, pray, teach, play and eat together. The Church has provided colorful, attractive and helpful manuals of instruction that serve as suggested resources and assistance to parents. These manuals are available not only to members but also to interested non-members by the thousands who have received them because we feel so keenly that all families everywhere, regardless of their faith, could be strengthened by such a practice.

b. The lay nature of the Church:

It should also be mentioned that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a lay church. We believe that the practice of providing ecclesiastical leadership from the laity is consistent with the Church of Jesus Christ in apostolic times. All have the privilege of service in some teaching or leadership assignment without concern for financial reward. This concept can help support and strengthen a family. Our three daughters have been challenged and blessed by callings to serve in the Church such as teaching a Sunday School or Primary class, or caring for the needy as assigned by the women's Relief Society organization.

Our sons are assigned as **home teachers** to assist and serve certain families in our neighborhood. It is intended that all families receive the benefit of at least one visit each month by home teachers.

The blessing to a parent of lay Church service opportunities for one's children was made more obvious to me a few years ago while flying between Chicago and Washington, D.C. My seat partner was an able, accomplished woman who was the editor of a magazine. Our conversation turned, as it often does in such settings, to our families. She expressed some

anxiety about her 18 year old son who, as she put it, hadn't "found himself." He had dropped out of college and was, among other things, experimenting with drugs. He didn't know what he wanted to become or what to do with his life. At precisely that time our oldest son, Stephen, was about the same age. He was just out of high school and soon to celebrate his 19th birthday. For years he had been mowing lawns, delivering for a local pharmacy, and doing odd jobs to earn and save money to support himself as a missionary to serve for two years teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to those willing to listen. He anticipated responding when called to serve wherever assigned. (Soon thereafter his call came to serve in Central America.) I was grateful for our Church and the direction and sense of purpose it helped build into the life of our son. That made being a parent and a united family easier. Our second son, Douglas, leaves for Lima, Peru, and his two-year mission next month. I'm convinced that when an individual commits himself to unrenumerated, selfless service he is helped to develop personal characteristics that are much needed for the success of families and our nation.

c. Production of materials designated to strengthen families to be distributed through the mass media:

Not only is the Church interested in strengthening the homes and families of members of the Church, but also we are desirous of doing whatever we can to strengthen homes and families throughout our entire society. We agree wholeheartedly that the hope of America in the future rests in the strength of the home and family. Regardless of religious affiliation, we are all blessed if we can rear our children with others who come from good, stable homes where love abounds and the essential human values which we all hold in common are taught. Consequently, the Church has seen fit to appropriate significant amounts of resources to produce materials to be distributed through the mass media — the printed page, radio and television — encouraging all people everywhere to strengthen their marriages and their families. Here is a sample of two of the brief selections from the "Home Front" series designed for release over radio:

SFX: (Door bell — door opens)

WIFE: Yes?

POLICE: Lady, we picked up this guy hangin' around your house.

FATHER: Officer, this is ridiculous. This is my own house.

POLICE: That right, lady?

WIFE: The brown suit looks familiar.

FATHER: Myra, this is not joke — I —

POLICE: Any of you kids recognize this guy?

FATHER: Tell the nice policeman who I am Georgy.

JEFFREY: I'm Jeffrey.

POLICE: OK, let's go.

FATHER: But wait, I can explain. It's all a mistake. (Fades out)

ANNOUNCER: Ever get the feeling you're not spending enough time with your family? Give them everything — give them your time. A thought from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — the Mormons.

("Arrest," Bonneville Productions, copyrighted.)

CHILD: Mama, where's Daddy?

MAMA: He went to get the babysitter.

CHILD: You went out **last night**, too. You promised you would read to me tonight.

MAMA: I know honey, but ... (Warmly) ... OK, give me the book. Oh, this is a story about the baby Jesus. See? Here he is in the manger.

CHILD: Yea.

MAMA: And do you know who that is holding him in her arms?

CHILD: His babysitter?

ANNOUNCER: Give your children everything — give them your time. A thought from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — The Mormons.

("Baby Sitter," Bonneville Productions, copyrighted.)

Also, we expect that during the course of this next year our Church will expand upon the family series of articles designed to help strengthen the family and published in space purchased in the **Reader's Digest**. Sample titles of last year's series are: "Can You Have A Happier Family Life?" and "Can You and Your Children Agree on How They Should Live?"

4. Conclusion.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you for your attention at this time but even more I'm grateful for the invitation issued months ago that caused me to focus my attention more intensely on this vital subject. I have been provided the luxury of returning frequently to a host of cherished memories. It has been said that memory is one Garden of Eden out of which one need never be cast. Thus in memory I have returned frequently to experiences with my mother, father, brothers, sisters and home. Mom's gone now. She died a little more than three years ago. My, how we miss her! In my mind's eye I see those warm, choice scenes around our garden, barns, farm and home — the fresh, crusty, homemade bread, pies, the cold milk, and even my mother's chapped, work-worn hands on my forehead during sick days. She and Dad were always there and made my growing up years — though very ordinary, I am sure, by worldly standards—seem so special to me. They even made me feel that I was special. I'm sure that a lot of you have similar, individual memories of your home and family. If so, how grateful you must be. If not, I hope you will be able to provide happy memories for your own children.

During the months since receiving the invitation to address this group, I've sifted and sorted from all of this half-century past of personal experience and observation and have attempted to identify those elements of home and family that specifically and strongly are influenced by my Church. Much more could be said if time permitted.

Years ago, just before we as Americans found ourselves thrashing around in the backwash of the sixties when so many young people struggled to come to terms with their own being, Abraham Maslow observed that:

Our prime disease is valuelessness. It is a state variously described as amorality, restlessness,

emptiness, alienation, hopelessness, the lack, in short, of something to believe in and be devoted to. We need a validated, usable system of human values that we can believe in and devote ourselves to because they are true rather than because we are exhorted to believe and have faith. (A.H. Maslow, **New Knowledge in Human Values**, Harpers, New York, 1959, as cited in **Journal of Counseling Psychology**, Vol. VII, No. 1, Spring 1960, p. 3.)

I share with you my conviction that in terms of life generally and family life particularly, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offers this validated, usable system of human values that is true and can provide great strength to marriages and family.

Thank you very much

Dealing with Hostility and Depression in LDS Women

Presented at a meeting of the Southern California Chapter of AMCAP at Long Beach, December 1, 1979

By Evelyn Thatcher, M.S.W.*

I'm here, in part, to expose a dangerous subversive group within the Church that is having a powerful impact on the membership. It frequently is given more weight than local Church leaders, the General Authorities, perhaps even the priesthood. As far as I've been able to ascertain it affects women more than men and almost without exception leads to unhappiness, dissatisfaction and ultimately depression.

This mysterious group is known as "They". I'm not sure who "They" is, but "They" is perfect and "They" can make life pretty difficult for someone not secure in the knowledge of who they are. If you don't believe me, do a little personal research. You'll find that most of your depressed clients will tell you that "They" say you have to have a big family, "They" say you'll be condemned if you hesitate about accepting a Church calling, "They" say if you're not always cheerful you're committing a sin, "They" say be perfect now, and "They" say you're not doing your duty as a Latter-day Saint woman if you don't know fifty-five ways to fix wheat and like the stuff to boot.

In part the concern with "They" represents a conflict with authority that frequently presents itself in one form or another in many of my depressed LDS female clients. These women are in conflict with fathers, husbands, the Church, the community. They see themselves as powerless against overwhelming powers and often, as in the examples mentioned, create even more oppression for themselves by developing unreal expectations and rules for life out of myths and fears.

Sometimes in an effort to protect themselves they align themselves with what appears to be a power bloc, a source of identity, the Ideal Mormon woman. The uniform is frequently the long granny dress. The standards for acceptance in the group include making your own bread from home-ground wheat, quilting, sewing and having children and loving every little moment with each little darling and never, no, never wanting to give a whole lot to Deseret Industries for a day or so. The motto of their group could be, "Just do good, don't think".

I remember an interview I saw a few years ago on a Salt Lake television station not known for its particularly positive attitude toward the Church. A woman's convention was being held at the Salt Palace and there were several hotly contested issues being voted on where the two opposing philosophies came down to Church vs. non-Church. The reporter asked one young woman why she was in attendance at the

convention and she replied that a letter had been read in Relief Society urging the sisters to go. Then the interviewer brought up one particularly inflammatory issue and asked the sister how she had voted on it. She replied, "Oh, I voted against it". "Why", the reporter asked. The young woman looked rather confused and said, after stammering for a moment, "Just because". Again the reporter asked, "But why did you take that particular stand on that particular issue?". Our young sister stuttered and stammered a little more, giggled nervously and then answered, "Just because". I am not implying that all the women in the Church are non-thinking automatons, but there are enough to concern me, and in my estimation, that attitude is prime fodder for depression.

The power bloc I alluded to earlier is a false front that covers a lot of confusion about roles that seem to exist among the membership. A favorite myth in the Church is the one about the humble but strong little wife standing behind the scenes and nobly prodding the priesthood holder up the ladder to perfection and exaltation with his family in tow. There is a double message in that myth. The first says that the man is the leader of the family, i.e. the supposed strength. The second says that the wife is the actual strength. Confusing. It is that confusion that sometimes leads me to semi-facetiously label the Church a pseudo-patriarchal-matriarchy.

Somehow over the years the infamous "They" has moved from the concept, based upon eternal truth, that a man/woman relationship should be a strength/strength relationship to the incorrect and unrighteous idea that it is a strength/weakness one and we're never entirely sure who is the strength and who is the weakness. The result is we argue about it, we backbite, carp and criticize, we get angry and depressed about it.

"They" teaches the women to think, but not too much, to honor the priesthood but not to take it too seriously. I once heard a bishop's wife say to a group of women, "If we leave it up to the men to get us back to Missouri, we'll end up in Texas". Funny, but not funny. "They" teaches, if you want it done right have a woman do it and too often, unfortunately, that philosophy is based upon experience.

Our women are great, they march on through life, raising righteous children, supporting their husbands, working for the growth of the Church, serving their God. Only too often they don't acknowledge who they are and what they are accomplishing because they are haunted by a fear of imperfection, of not measuring up, of not being as good as Sister Smith, or Jones, or Brown. An article in the Spring 1979 Exponent II by Margaret B. Black and Midge W. Nielson, humorously brings that hidden image of the perfect Mormon mother into focus. Let me share some of it with you.

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"Many LDS women unconsciously compete with an idealized image of the already-perfect wife and mother who successfully incorporates all the demands of family, church, and society into her life. Although we have never met such a woman, we persist in believing she's out there somewhere. We can just imagine what she must accomplish in a day...

"Patti gets up very early and says her personal prayers. She zips her slim vigorous body into her warmup suit and tiptoes outside to run her usual five miles (on Saturday she does ten). Returning home all aglow, she showers and dresses for the day in a tailored skirt and freshly starched and ironed blouse. She settles down for quiet meditation and scripture reading, before preparing the family breakfast. The morning's menu calls for whole wheat pancakes, homemade syrup, freshly squeezed orange juice, and powdered milk (the whole family loves it).

"With classical music wafting through the air, Patti awakens her husband and ten children. She spends a quiet moment with each and helps them plan a happy day. The children quickly dress in clothes that were laid out the night before. They cheerfully make their beds, clean their rooms, and do the individual chores assigned to them on the Family Work Wheel Chart. They assemble for breakfast the minute mother calls.

"After family prayer and scripture study, the children all practice their different musical instruments. Father leaves for work on a happy note. All too soon it is time for the children to leave for school. Having brushed (and flossed) their teeth, the children pick up coats, book bags and lunches which were prepared the night before and arrive at school five minutes early.

"With things more quiet, Patti has story time with her pre-schoolers and teaches them a cognitive reading skill. She feeds, bathes and rocks the baby before putting him down for his morning nap. With baby sleeping peacefully and three year old twins absorbed in creative play, Patti tackles the laundry and housework. In less than an hour, everything is in order. Thanks to wise scheduling and children who are trained to work, her house never really gets dirty."

That's not all of the article but it's enough to get the idea. We laugh, but our women run from this ogre of Patti Perfect, are driven by it, a good part of their lives, and it doesn't even exist.

Sooner or later, however, they have to come face to face with themselves and sometimes they don't like or are frightened by what they see. Maybe an emotional crisis occurs and a sister is confronted with the fact that she doesn't have a personal philosophy to fall back on. Perhaps the priesthood leader is suddenly no longer in the home because of death or desertion and she realizes she is terrified of facing the world alone because she feels she simply lacks the skills to do so, or all the children are finally in school and our young mother with a ten to fifteen year old bachelors degree in English, Music or Political Science realizes she hasn't had a really original thought in years.

Then what happens. She gets depressed, often profoundly so, sometimes needing professional assistance, generally needing the love and support of those around her, always needing to reassess the fears that drive her and have finally tripped her up. She

needs to learn who she really is, that she is O.K., that she is lovable, that all she is asked to do is be real and develop her talents to the best of her ability, and to realistically know what her ability is.

How does the depressed overwhelmed Mormon woman present herself? What symptoms do we see? Generally we see the more classical presentation of depressive symptoms: despair, withdrawal, sleep and appetite disturbance, confusion. Another manifestation that I have seen, however, is a more active and openly angry response to the feelings of depression and that is the one I choose to pursue.

This woman is angry and often not particularly thrilled about seeing a "Church" counselor whether through LDS Social Services or in private practice. She expresses dissatisfaction and anger. She frequently has a history of dependence on a parent or parents and her husband. If single, the dependence is generally on a priesthood leader. If married, she questions her love for her husband and is angry at him. She is resentful for her children, of authority in any traditional form, of the Church. She is angry at her Father in Heaven and not sure she likes Him and quite convinced that He doesn't like her. She is angry about the role of women in the Church, at least as "They" interpret the role and without really understanding it herself. She frequently wants to go back to school and get a degree, often in Social Work. She is resentful of and rebellious toward Church philosophies and will complain loudly about anything even vaguely feeling like a rule and will rebel in her mind but comply with her body which increases the anger. In many ways she looks, acts, and feels like a rebellious teenager and her depression basically comes across as a post-dated adolescent rebellion. The perfect Mormon mother image thus becomes the dominant mother for whom she lives. All her efforts are turned to try and satisfy the insatiable needs of this unfulfilled and unfulfilling life-force.

In an attempt to clarify let me present a case study. Although this is an actual case, it also is a composite of many such cases I have seen, in and out of clinical practice. It is interesting to note that I see relatively few women showing this manifestation of depression in actual practice although the numbers are increasing. By far the majority are encountered in safe, non-threatening situations where I am seen as a peer rather than a counselor or authority figure. In formal counseling situations the attempt is made to turn me into a peer in order to make the need for help tolerable. They seem to come out of the woodwork in the foyer at Church or at informal gatherings. The minute I am formally wearing the hat of Practitioner at LDS Social Services, they fade. In order for them to talk to me informally we pretend I don't do what I do and try to ignore the fact that what they're pretending doesn't exist is the reason they're talking to me in the first place.

Back to the case: This young woman, whom we'll call Alice, is in her mid-thirties and is the mother of six children. Her husband has held many responsible positions in the Church including that of bishop. Alice has been seen as a dynamo in the ward and is often seen as that perfect woman "They" talk about. She has held many leadership positions and is generally seen as

a strength. She comes from a family where she was an only child with a domineering mother and an emotionally distant and dependent father. She joined the Church in adolescence and married right out of high school, moving directly from the domination of her parents to the parenting of her husband. She produced a child every other year, fulfilled all her Church callings, kept a well ordered home and did what her husband told her to do. Her husband was secure in his job. They had worked to buy a home and she loved it very much. He was called as a bishop and was spending more and more time away from her and the family while at the same time growing children were making more and more demands on her.

During that period of time her husband began to feel dissatisfied with his chosen profession and started contemplating a radical life a considerable distance from a rural to an urban environment and attending school for a number of years, with its attendant economic problems. The more the husband talked about it the more depressed she became. Add to that the fact he was gone all the time as bishop and she was pregnant with her sixth child. She went to her doctor about her increasing physical symptoms, he diagnosed depression and decided he would provide counseling to help her through it since he had apparently some background in counseling.

As they continued to work together, she felt she was falling in love with the doctor and he reciprocated. They entered into an emotional but not physical affair. She tried standing up to her husband by telling him she would refuse to move and he would have to commute on the weekends. That had no impact and so she told him of her relationship with her doctor and then unloaded her years of frustration and anger at being dependent on him. That had an impact. He was deeply hurt, confused, repentant and wanting to change and began constantly asking her what he could do to make things better. His sudden passivity was more frustrating to her than his years of domination.

He had already made the commitment to go back to school so in an attempt to hold the marriage together, they sold the house and moved the entire family into student housing. Needless to say, the move did not help the situation. She had given up her home, her familiar surroundings, close proximity to her doctor, the one source, in her perception, of unconditional love and acceptance, and she was angry.

The first time I saw her she felt like someone who had just chained herself to the door of the Pentagon, except in her case perhaps it would be more appropriate to say the Church Office Building. She was tense, anxious and angry. She said her husband was an unthinking, unfeeling clod, the Church imposed arbitrary and unjust rules on a population of empty-headed, unconscious robots, and she was resentful toward her children because she felt guilty at the thought of leaving them to go to college and get a degree of her own.

Alice was tired of being a puppet, first to her mother, then her husband and the Church. She was angry at her father for fading away instead of standing with her and defending her against her mother. She could see no way to escape and that fed her depression. For years she had heard talk after talk about the high and noble calling of women in the Church and Kingdom but all being a

woman meant to her was being dominated and repressed. It meant a lifetime of stretching a budget to fit eight people, six of them children she wasn't sure she could relate to and one of them a husband who seemed to need her only to meet his needs and conform to his pattern.

Her adult life to date was a series of meetings where she couldn't hear the speaker because of fussy children, lessons she couldn't concentrate on because of all the other things going on in her head, and a personal philosophy that implied if she was unhappy or not striding bravely forward toward perfection, she was sinning. As she was, living it, her life was one of no personal growth, of isolation, of no rewards.

Her husband's response after the initial shock and guilt to all her anger and frustration was to adopt a cheerful, everything's-OK attitude, and to whistle and hum a lot. He used it to try and block out his pain but it only served to infuriate her.

How do you help someone in this type of situation? Let me share with you a few specific counseling skills that I've found useful.

1. Listen non-judgementally. It is all too easy for professional and non-professional counselors to slide into offering platitudes or aphorisms when confronted with a human being in pain. We want to provide comfort, to alleviate the pain they feel and the resulting discomfort it creates in us. We also have a hard time avoiding becoming defensive when something that is of value to us is attacked. It is of extreme importance that we not let ourselves become trapped into a discussion and defense of doctrine and the Church. When we do that we immediately put ourselves into a position of authority and get added to the individual's growing list of targets for rebellion. Nor does it help to agree with her angry statements regarding the Church; that only puts the counselor in a position of compromise and increases the insecurity the individual is experiencing. Rather, respond to her feelings, not her words. Use statements like, "it sounds like you were hurt and frustrated when the bishop didn't seem to care about how you felt", or "you feel angry when the members constantly talk about Christianity but your visiting teacher knows you're sick in bed with six screaming children and doesn't lift a hand to help." At this point defending the bishop, the Church, or the visiting teacher would put you firmly on their side.

I never say "when you get back in the Church" or "when you get your testimony back ..." Relating to her on that level is implying that she will soon come to her senses and come back into the fold. That minimizes her feelings and turns all her frustrations into a rather childish temper tantrum against a huge, immovable and always right force. The missionary approach is great when teaching the gospel in a missionary setting; in counseling it can be harmful. Even when she brings up gospel topics on her own for discussion, and she will, I never use the missionary "when." never assume that she will fully accept the teachings of the Church. Instead I operate on the assumption that she has a choice to make, that she will be able to make it, and it might not necessarily be in the direction of the Church. This kind of approach tends to leave the LDS counselor with feelings of insecurity related to the fear of taking risks with something as important as the testimony of

the individual they are counseling. It must be understood that rebellion is not being encouraged by not forcing the issue of acceptance of gospel principles. The client must be given the room to form her own opinions. The most active role I take at this point is to simply make sure I am living the teachings of the Church to the best of my ability. I do not flaunt my involvement in the Church, nor do I hide it, it is simply there.

2. Help her separate and deal with the authority figures in her life. Generally they come down to four: parents, husband, Church and Father in Heaven. Sometimes, for a working woman, her boss is included in this group. I begin with her parents and ask her to tell me about them to help us get acquainted with them. As she does so we begin to explore the beginnings of her feelings of powerlessness, not for purposes of condemning her parents but for understanding. As we gain an understanding of the authority patterns in her family of origin, we see that her relationship with her husband finally fits into that same mold. After a little work she can be helped to see that she relates to the Church in the same way. She expects domination and unrealistic demands for performance, never questions, and so is in one more situation where she is over-powered.

I believe that we relate to our Father in Heaven in much the same way we relate to our earthly father. If an individual has had a faulty relationship with her father, then the chances are pretty high that she views her relationship with her Heavenly Father as disappointing and not meeting her expectations. When I suggest that to clients they usually resist the idea at first. After some examination of the character of the two relationships, however, they understand and can separate the two. The same transference is also often made to priesthood leaders.

Not long ago I was counseling with a young woman whose father provided for all her material needs and wants but was emotionally distant and unable to meet those needs. I shared with her my feelings about the similarity in the two relationships. She denied it and began talking about her relationship with her Heavenly Father. As she did so she progressively became more upset and not five minutes after denying the whole idea she exclaimed, "Heavenly Father never lets me have what I want!" She stopped abruptly, thought a moment and said, "You don't have to say a word, I can see the connection". Not everyone works it out that quickly.

3. An extremely important part of the working-through process is to help the individual understand their expectations vs. the realities of life. Everyone carries around with them certain unreal expectations for performance for the key figures in their lives. I call it the Ensign Image. For example, no matter what the parent is really like, we have a rather perfect image of how that person should perform, kind of like Parti Perfect applied to another person. Truman Madsen would probably attribute that expectation to a hidden memory of our relationship with our Father in Heaven in the pre-existence and I tend to agree. Whatever the source, however, in mortality it is basically unreal. Part of growing up is learning to see our parents as fallible. Women whose parents have dominated them have a more difficult time making that transition and so are

caught in an untenable position. They need the parent to be perfect in their response to them but when the parent is imperfect and relates in a hurtful way, the individual is doubly hurt, first, by the injury inflicted by the parent, and second, by their disappointment at the parent's lack of perfection.

In order to free themselves from this Catch-22 situation they must confront their expectations for what they are and give them up for the realities. The process of working it through is very similar to dealing with a death. The Ensign Image perfect parent or husband or whatever needs to be laid to rest so a relationship with the real one can at last be started. The emotions dealt with during this time are similar to those working through a death, anger, disappointment, sadness and finally acceptance.

One tool I have found particularly effective at this point is one I hijacked from the Intensive Journal Process by Progoff as taught by Frances Heussenstamm and that is the Dialogue with Persons. This process brings the individual face to face with the offending party and allows them to safely express their hurt and frustration, their anger, and to renegotiate the relationship. The technique is relatively simple and in most cases is something I have them do as homework. In some situations where it is going to be a particularly painful process, I have them do it with someone they trust nearby or in a setting where they are able to maintain contact with me, either through geographical proximity or by telephone. Briefly the process is as follows:

a. Have the individual spend a few minutes doing deep relaxation exercises.

b. Ask them to identify the individual with whom they wish to dialogue and write down eight to twelve stepping stones of that person's life beginning with "they were born". Stepping stones are milestones in a person's life expressed in a word or phrase such as, "went on a mission", "got married", "became depressed".

Dates and places are not included and they should not be expressed in complete sentences. They are used only to provide perspective.

c. The dialogue is written in the form of a script and begins with: Me - Hi, (person's name, or however you would address them), and they would respond in like manner. It is always difficult to get started at first, just as it would be if the individuals were speaking face to face.

The dialogue gives them an opportunity to express their feelings where that would be impossible or improbable at best in any other way. Once the frustrations and hurt have been expressed they begin to actually enter into a dialogue and the product is increased understanding, release of some of the unreal expectations, and acceptance of the realities and forgiveness. They can read their writing to others but there should be no analytical or editorial comment. The dialogue belongs strictly to the individual.

Once the unreal expectations are given up, the person finds fewer disappointments and more positive experiences in that relationship. Without having to condemn anyone else, they are able to stop condemning themselves.

4. Finally, our depressed, oppressed, angry sister needs to be helped to make her ideas her own. From the time she was born she has been told what to think and do without ever working it through on her own. If someone told her the moon was made of green cheese she accepted it and never bothered to read the account of Neil Armstrong walking on it and coming back with rocks, not cheese, in his pack. Somehow she got the idea that asking questions is the high road to apostasy and never realized that it is not only all right to ask questions, but necessary for survival.

During this phase she will experience some of the rebellion she should have experienced in adolescence, or which she tried and failed. It is important that she be helped to make this a positive, healthy rebellion rather than a destructive one. Talk to her about it, help her know what to watch for. With her permission her husband and bishop can also be helped to understand what is happening. Most of all it is important that she understand this process of rebellion so she can engineer it and enjoy it. If done correctly it doesn't last too long.

It is at this time that I encourage her to take a class or develop a skill not related to homemaking. I also ask her to start getting involved in other people's lives, to get out of her own pain and try to help someone else with theirs in a way she can tolerate.

By and large I have found that I deal with a depressed angry sister much the way I would with a rebelling adolescent, only she feels more accessible to me than a teenager in pain.

We are still left with the conflict about the roles of men and women in the Church and the concerns regarding perfection. Regarding the roles, I don't have the answer for everyone; I do, however, have it for myself. As I've studied and prayed about it and worked and reworked it in my mind, I've come up with an answer that feels very good to me in my life. When women ask me for an answer, I tell them they'll have to find it the way I did in order for it to have any meaning, to belong to them. The one thing I do preach long and loud is that an eternal Celestial man/woman relationship is one based on strengths, not on weaknesses.

And last but not least, what do we do with the monstrous, perfect "They?" We need to put it to rest along with all the unreal expectations, and I, for one, will not mourn its passing at all. When "They" rears its ugly head, confront it with reality, with doctrine and it will melt like ice on a stove. The Saints have a hard enough time living the doctrine without trying to meet the demands of the perfect "They".

Let me give you a piece of reality that can be used. It is taken from the talk given by Sister Barbara Smith at the Women's Fireside on September 15, 1979. She said:

Each woman in today's world has responsibilities akin to those which Ester faced. The circumstances of each life are significantly different, yet each woman faces the challenge of being true to the principles of the gospel if she would improve the quality of her mortal life and make herself worthy of the opportunity of eternal progression. She would begin by understanding who

she is and that she has a magnificent potential as a daughter of God. Her goal then should be lofty. The Scriptures say: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5: 48)

Quickly I caution that this is not an obtainable goal in one step or one year. It takes a lifetime of conscious effort, of striving and learning and living, to become a holy woman."

In closing I'd like to share with you the words of an old hymn that I find enjoyable and meaningful. It's called "Freedom Daughter" and is sung to the melody of "Hope of Israel".

Freedom's daughter, rouse from slumber
See, the curtains are withdrawn
Which so long thy mind hath shrouded:
Lo! thy day begins to dawn.

CHORUS:

Woman, 'rise, thy penance o'er,
Sit thou in the dust no more;
Seize the scepter, hold the van,
Equal with thy brother, man.

Truth and virtue be thy motto,
Temp'rance, libery and peace.
Light shall shine and darkness vanish,
Love shall reign, oppression cease.

CHORUS:

First to fall 'mid Eden's bowers,
Through long suff'ring worthy proved,
With the foremost claim thy pardon,
When earth's curse shall be removed.

CHORUS:

A Trilogy

By Myrle S. Ruesch

I. My View

Hey, wait a minute!
I'm important too.
I think.
I have a point of view
Don't intimidate me.
Don't super-classify.
I'm simple.
I just wait to share
I've studied and had practical
experience too
I have much to give —
LISTEN

III. Thanks

You're kind and compassionate
You listen and then feedback,
I love your tenderness
Your ability to understand
To see two points of view.