

Journal of the Association
of Mormon Counselors
and Psychotherapists

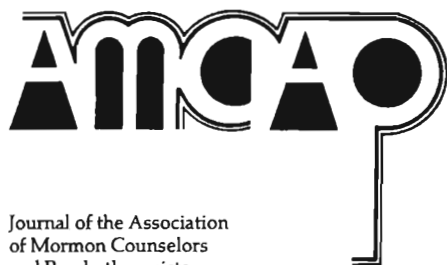
January 1984 Vol. 10, Issue 1

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The purpose of this Association shall be:

- a) To promote fellowship, foster communication, enhance personal and professional development, and promote a forum for counselors and psychotherapists whose common bond is membership in and adherence to the principles and standards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, both in their personal lives and professional practice.
- b) To encourage and support members' efforts actively to promote within their other professional organizations and the society at large, the adoption and maintenance of moral standards and practices that are consistent with gospel principles.

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(as amended Sept. 30, 1981)*



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January 1984 Vol. 10, Issue 1

Editor **Burton C. Kelly**
Brigham Young University

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Burton C. Kelly, Editor
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EDITORIAL

Starting with an intriguing account from Brother Craig of therapy with an individual possessed with an evil spirit, then a psychological examination of the Prophet Joseph Smith's sanity (originally written as a paper for a graduate abnormal psych. class to a sarcastic non-LDS professor), on to helping the doubter, then to a challenging re-conceptualization of family dynamics and concluding with provocative thoughts on building better relationships with teen-agers by respecting and helping them to magnify their agency, we trust you will find this issue both personally and professionally informative and stimulating. Please also note the excellent challenge of Brother Finch for greater Gospel and professional competence in his letter to the editor. A personal thanks to each of our contributors.

Since our next AMCAP Conference will deal largely with (1) the roles of women in general and within the profession and (2) sexual abuse, if we receive sufficient articles on these two areas, we will have two special issues devoted to them. Please tap your experience and creativity wells and submit an article(s) or bring to our attention articles already written or colleagues that have stimulating ideas to present on these topics.

We desire and welcome your suggestions as to how to make the Journal better meet your needs and desires. Let us hear from you.

BCK

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Probably as intended, the April 1984 AMCAP conference focus on dissociative states and demonic possession raised many more questions than it resolved. From Carlfred Broderick's summary of the various discussion groups and my own experience in one of the groups, two points became apparent. I'd like to briefly comment on each of them:

1. There seemed to be a general ignorance about hypnosis, and ego states (particularly Watkins' theoretical continuum on dissociation). This greatly limited the possibility of scholarly discussion on the issues. Perhaps future AMCAP conferences might provide training in these areas. As a professional organization supporting LDS principles, knowledge in these areas would be most beneficial, enhancing our knowledge and skill level, while preparing us for a more knowledge-based discussion of these issues at a later date.

2. There seemed to be a general approach to the questions about demonic influence and possession that placed all of the blame on the victim. This somehow seemed necessary in order to maintain certain views about free agency. I think this approach is lacking and problematic—at least it is inadequate in explaining accounts

of demonic influence in LDS church history. A more productive approach, I believe, and one that is definitely more accurate and charitable, would be to view these attacks much as we view rape or other violent physical assault—on a case by case basis. Any attempt to construct a lawful system of government for these or any spiritual beings by “proof-texting” scriptures or statements of Church leaders will be inadequate, for these beings also have free agency and the potential that muggers and rapists do. The key that is evident in the scriptures and the authoritative statements is *discernment*. There is no judgement by God against the victims, no blaming them for bringing it upon themselves.

As righteous members of the Church we can seek the gift of discernment and be prepared to work with appropriate Church leaders, and provide appropriate clinical intervention when indicated.

In conclusion, I propose a more rigorous gospel and clinical understanding. Both are gifts worth seeking by study and by faith, which will enhance our effectiveness in our work upon the earth.

Paul Alan Finch

CONFRONTATION AND REJECTION OF AN EVIL SPIRIT IN A THERAPY SESSION

*Wesley W. Craig, Jr., M.S.W., Ph.D.

Presented at the AMCAP Convention
6 April 1984

Introduction

This article describes a professional case in which both the therapist and the client experienced the phenomenon of an "evil spirit" during a regular therapy session. Both the account of the therapist's perceptions and also of the client's are included. A commentary follows by the therapist.

Description of the Client

Paula (a pseudonym) is a 35-year-old, overweight, never-married female. She is a professional nurse and holds a responsible supervisory position in a major hospital. She is an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon).

The client is intelligent, responsible (in her personal life, employment, and Church-related activities), has an outgoing, pleasant personality, and is a youth leader in her ecclesiastical unit. As a client she has been conscientious and hard working. She has seen herself as being responsible for her own happiness and well-being and refuses to lay blame on others for her circumstances. At the outset she gave indications of being a "pleaser" in her social and business relationships to the extent that others would take advantage of her willing nature.

With regard to her spiritual status (which is relevant to this case), she has had a close pastoral relationship with her bishop. Several years ago she presented a full confession to her bishop for past sins. Since that time she has been free of any confessable sins and has exerted every effort to maintain a virtuous and highly moral Christian life. She has a deep faith in God, in Jesus Christ, and in the doctrines as set forth by the Church. She served a two-year, full-time mission for the Church.

She entered into therapy with several presenting problems. Major for her was the fact that she wanted to marry and have children. However, she had experienced, since adolescence, a strong aversion to physical contact with males. The other problem had to do with her being overweight and compulsive in her eating habits. She often experienced anxiety and feelings of guilt.

Therapeutic Approaches

Over a period of four months, the therapist utilized a variety of approaches, which included a cognitive-behavioral approach directed at increasing the assertiveness of the client. This resulted in significant behavioral changes in which the client began to deal

assertively and more effectively with fellow professionals and family members. A program of aerobic exercise consisting of regular walking was instituted. The client was inconsistent in following this regimen but made progress. She gradually worked up to about 50 minutes per day; but when discouraged, she would be irregular in pursuing it. In-depth therapy utilizing Gestalt and Transactional Analysis models was implemented. These seemed to have little impact on the compulsive eating or in the affective area relating to heterosexual relationships.

At the conclusion of the above work, the therapist proposed to the client that they change the approach and explore with a hypnotic model. The therapist had in mind the possibility that the internal resistance of the client might be related to multiple ego-state phenomenon as explicated by Watkins and Watkins (1979).

Four, two-hour sessions uncovered five distinct ego-states within Paula's personality. The most powerful at the outset was the *Defiant One* who had its beginning at the time Paula was 18 months old. Under hypnosis this ego-state revealed detailed data to which Paula was consciously oblivious. At that time and until she was about two years old, she had been sexually abused by her pediatrician while being examined in his office. (The doctor would not allow the mother or even his receptionist into his examination room when with the patient. The mother was apparently unaware of anything unusual happening.) This happened about six times. *Defiant's* function, upon her (all five ego-states were female) emergence in the personality, was to protect Paula from abuse by males. It was *Defiant* who was responsible for the anxiety regarding proximity to males and who would generate the emotions relating to it.

Another ego-state, the *Guilty One*, held Paula responsible for the abuse by the doctor, ("You should not have allowed it to happen; you should have fallen off the table," etc.), as well as for subsequent behaviors in Paula's life.

Without entering into detail regarding the procedures used, the therapist was able to assist the client in bringing about some change in the ego-states and their relationships to each other through the procedures described by the Watkins. The *Defiant One* began to moderate her position and began to experience a change in her nature and ability to exert control over Paula's emotions.

The *Guilty One*, however, proved to be more stubborn in terms of relinquishing any control of Paula for her supposed or early wrongs. All efforts to educate the *Guilty One* regarding the reality of the pediatrician's power, or the repentance process which Paula had experienced regarding later experiences in life, were all rebuffed by the *Guilty One*. Finally, the therapist confronted the *Guilty One* on its illogical, unfair, and 'unrighteous dominion' over Paula. With this confrontation the *Guilty One* experienced a

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diminution of its power and energy during the session (as experienced by the client—as if it were “deflated.”) However, by the next session, though somewhat more subdued, the *Guilty One* reasserted its intent to continue with its harassment and control of Paula.

What now follows are the case notes which the therapist wrote on 18 November 1983, describing the 15 November session.

At the outset of this session (before hypnosis), Paula described the preceding week since the last session. She mentioned fewer feelings of guilt during the week. However, she still did not maintain consistent control over her food intake. Her exercising went well—walking about 50 minutes to an hour each day. She mentioned continued irregularity of her menstrual cycle—overdue about five weeks and concern about “pain in her pelvic area.” Closer questioning on the latter disclosed that she had experienced this pain before as a teenager (when her menstrual cycle was so irregular).

As we initiated the process of hypnosis, I had in mind the previous session in which I had detected a degree of malevolent control in the *Guilty One*. The essence was that the G.O. was aware that she had continued to torment Paula about past guilty acts over which Paula had either repented fully, or which had happened early in Paula’s childhood; some of which she experienced as a victim. The G.O. recognized that Paula no longer had any legitimate behavior which could provide fuel for the G.O.’s activity and power. Nevertheless, the G.O. continued to operate as if there were such material. Confronted with this situation, and confronted with the unfairness, the inappropriateness, the “unrighteous dominion,” and the obstruction of principled behavior over Paula, the G.O. in the last session had experienced a deflation of her energy and power.

Under hypnosis I called forth the G.O. to see what she was experiencing and where she was with regard to the previous week. I found her more subdued but still intent on pursuing her objective of punishing Paula for behaviors which no longer merited punishment—according to Paula’s values and behavior. During the process of my interaction with the G.O., I sensed a subtle change in her in which she stated in a helpless-like tone (so uncharacteristic of her), that she was unable to stop her punishment of Paula (the pelvic pain, disturbed menstrual cycle, sleeplessness, compulsive eating, energy loss). This uncharacteristic response suggested to me a lack of energy or self-control in the G.O. and brought with it the suspicion that there might be another ego-state exercising control over the G.O..

I dismissed the G.O. and asked if there was someone there who was exercising control over the G.O. There was a long pause—possibly of 15 to 30 seconds. At the moment that I was about to move in a different direction, (concluding that no other ego-state was there, or at least willing to be acknowledged), another voice, different from the G.O., broke the silence. This voice (Paula told me after hypnosis that it was a male—the only male entity that had appeared in the therapy) told me that he had been watching everything that I was doing with and to the other ego-states, and that he was aware of and opposed to the changes that had been taking place in these ego-states as a consequence of the therapy. He further stated that I would not change him. This one’s demeanor was powerful and disdainful of me and what I had been doing. I asked by what name he should be called. He refused to give me a name at first—later in the process he told me I could call him the *Loser*.

I recapitulated with the *Loser* the unfairness and inappropriateness of G.O.’s continued misuse of guilt in punishing Paula. I then made several attempts to bring about a change in the *Loser*. In the process he informed me that he hated Paula and all of her ego-states and that his purpose was to make sure that Paula lost

(in a totalistic sense). The next disclosure by the *Loser* was that, “I am not a part of her (Paula).” The nature of this disclosure jolted me. I realized then that I was not dealing with simply another ego-state within Paula’s personality, but with an alien, foreign entity. I confronted the *Loser* on this basis to see if there was any possibility of bringing about change in the *Loser* to help him become an ally of Paula. The response was emphatic and clear: absolutely not. Meanwhile the suspicion that I was dealing with an evil spirit grew in my mind. (Parenthetically, I must acknowledge that up to this time, in the entire course of Paula’s therapy, I had given no consideration to the possibility of evil spirits or external control of Paula. While, because of my belief in God and His power, I also recognize the existence of Lucifer and his power, I had never before directly confronted an “evil spirit.”) I asked the *Loser* if he was Lucifer. He responded, “No, but I am close to him!” With this information, I confronted the *Loser*, telling him that he was to terminate his control over Paula. His response, in a sneering, disdainful voice, was to the effect that, “How do you think you are going to accomplish that?”

At this moment (and not until then) I realized that this evil spirit (for such was its reality to me) must be dealt with on the basis of spiritual power. Extending my arm and pointing my finger to ward him, I commanded, “IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST AND BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD WHICH I HOLD, I COMMAND YOU TO GO!”

I felt something akin to an electrical charge coursing through my shoulders, up my neck, and down my arms and hands. Paula’s arms and hands shook. Her entire body stiffened and trembled.

Paula’s trembling soon ceased. Not knowing whether the *Loser* was still there or not, I still pointed my finger at Paula. After a long silence, the next words were, “Wes, this is Paula.” She then conversed with me (still in hypnosis), asking in a subdued and somewhat fearful voice as to what was the meaning of the things which had just happened. I do not recall what I responded to her. However, I then proceeded to start her back out of the hypnotic state, giving her suggestions as to the importance of this event in freeing her from the restrictions which the *Loser* had been imposing upon her.

After coming out of hypnosis, we talked briefly about the experience. She told me at this time that the *Loser* had been a man, that she had felt overwhelmed by darkness when he was present, and that even before I commanded him to go, he had realized what I was going to do and by what power I would do it. She said that he and the darkness left instantaneously upon my uttering the command for him to leave. She also mentioned that he had said something (which had not been made known to me) that he would move on to another person.

After the session, Paula also told me of an earlier experience, prior to her mission, in which she had an experience which was like someone else entering her body (not sexually) and which caused her to be flung from the bed on which she had been lying.

From the Diary of Paula—Written 17 November

Last Tuesday, November 15, during a session with Wes it became very apparent that there was someone (or something) very evil within me. During our sessions Wes uses hypnosis to sort of “zero in” on the problem. He was talking with one of my ego-states whose name is Guilty. She has had an especially difficult time accepting the truth and allowing me to progress in several areas of my life (weight loss being only one). She told Wes she was responsible for my menstrual irregularities as a youth. I wasn’t overly shocked to hear that. But then she started all that again, and I didn’t seem to have much control over it. Last Tuesday Wes asked her why she continued to do things like that. She told him she knew she shouldn’t, but that she really couldn’t seem to stop. Wes asked if there was someone else who was responsible for that, and she said, “Well, who could make me do those kinds of things?”

Wes then asked her to go back and asked to speak to whomever was there who was responsible. At that point I became very aware of an evil force within me. Never have I felt such total commitment towards evil. I don't remember word-for-word what was said, but I will write what I recall. He told Wes that he would not allow Wes to manipulate him and change him like he (Wes) had done to the others. At first he refused to speak—but it was as if he could not keep silent—like Wes was stronger than he was. Wes asked him his name. He refused to answer. All I can think of was total blackness. Then he told Wes to call him "the loser." He told Wes he hated "all of them" meaning all of my ego-states and me. He told Wes to stop telling me that I was a winner, and I would stop believing it. When he said that, he knew it was a lie, but didn't care. Never have I felt those powerful evil emotions before—total blackness, total hatred, total commitment to destruction, total evil. Then he told Wes that he was not a part of me. At that point Wes asked him if his name was Lucifer. He said, "No, but I am very close to him." Wes told him that he could not destroy me. He said something like, "Says who?" and Wes said, "I do." Then there was silence, and he thought, "Well who are you to say that?" But before he could say it Wes said, "and you know by what power I speak." He said, "Yes." He couldn't lie about that. He knew Wes was speaking of the Priesthood although the word was not said at that time. Then Wes asked him if he would change (he asked him earlier also), and he said, "No." Wes then said, "Can you change?" He said, "I choose not to change." And then Wes said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, I command you to depart from her." When Wes said those words I doubled up my fist so tight I cut into my palm with my nails. He especially agonized over the name of Christ—and by the time the statement was complete he was gone. One thing I forgot to write was the last thing the spirit said before he left my body. Wes said he would not allow him to stay within me and destroy me. He (the Loser) said, "It doesn't matter," and thought, "I'll just go to someone else."

When this evil spirit left me, I saw a glimpse of him—I feel I saw him with my spiritual eyes. He was a man. He had dark skin (not black) and short dark hair.

I sat there for a few seconds feeling this new sense of freedom I had never felt before. Then I told Wes I knew when he came into my life. It was before my mission. I was not living like I should and was trying to decide if I should go on my mission. One morning I was lying on my back in bed, semi-awake, and I felt something lay on top of my body, beginning at my feet and on up my body. When the feeling got to my head my whole body jumped literally up off of the bed. It was very frightening to me at the time, and I got out of bed and wrote about the experience in a diary I had. I felt it was an evil spirit, but I also felt I had rejected it from entering my body. Now I feel I didn't have the spiritual strength required to reject it, because of the commandments that I was not keeping and the low level of spirituality that I had attained.

I have been amazed at my own reaction to all of this. I have felt a new sense of freedom I have never known before. I have felt very much at peace. The inner turmoil is gone. The need to destroy the "winner" in me is gone. It also is amazing to me to realize what I have not felt. I have not felt guilty. I have not felt fearful. I have not felt ashamed. I have not felt "crazy" or out of control. I have not felt self-incrimination.

I also know that this evil spirit was one of the third of the hosts of heaven who was cast out with Satan. I don't know *how* I know that; I just *do*. He has never had a physical body of his own.

EXCERPT FROM POST EVIL-SPIRIT SESSION—25 November 1983 (from an audio recording):

Therapist: What have you been experiencing since last time (session)?

Client: I have sensed a sense of freedom that I have never sensed before. I don't have any inward battles about doing things that are bad for me, like overeating. I just haven't had all of the (inward) battles that I've had before. I have felt very much at peace, and I haven't felt threatened. It's been wonderful.

Therapist: That's great! Anything else? How about your exercising?

Client: I get an "A" plus! I've been walking in the snow! At least an hour a day, sometimes longer.

Therapist: How about diet control?

Client: I'm doing really good.

Therapist: How about urges to eat or compulsiveness you felt before?

Client: I've felt none of that . . . I'm just eating what I know is healthy for me. And if Iweenisfeen (ego-state) wants ice cream every couple of weeks or so, then, I'm going to do that, and I'm not going to feel guilty about it.

Yesterday (Thanksgiving Day) I just ate normal. I've never had a Thanksgiving like that before. I didn't eat before meals, and I didn't eat between meals. I just ate Thanksgiving dinner (early afternoon) and then had a very light supper. It's great! And I didn't even feel guilty! It's just different than I've ever felt before.

I've decided not to weigh. A number on a scale shouldn't tell me whether I'm happy or not, or whether I feel like I'm successful or not.

Therapist: (Chuckle) You're going to make it tough on your therapist to know how you're doing on your weight.

Client: (Laugh) Tough! I'm doing fine.

Therapist: How about your period? (Five weeks overdue as of last session.)

Client: It started!

Therapist: When?

Client: Tuesday was our last session. Wednesday I cramped terribly. Thursday everything was

fine (period started). See, you cured me. My gynecologist is going to be shocked.

Therapist: Was there much pain associated with the period?

Client: Just normal. But, I didn't bleed as heavily as I usually do.

Therapist: Have you seen your bishop since our last session?

Client: Yes. It was hard for me to explain it (the evil spirit) to him. But, he totally accepted it without question. He said he felt good about the rejection of the evil spirit. Then, I asked him for a blessing. I was concerned that it (the evil spirit) would happen again, or that I wouldn't be aware of it. He gave me a beautiful blessing, that I would have spiritual discernment to detect when evil was about me.

Therapist: Did you write down your experience of the last session?

Client: Yes, I started several days later, but didn't get it finished for a week. I also wrote it in my personal journal. (She gave me her copy.)

Commentary

As a professional therapist, I am concerned that the reader of this article might draw the conclusion that Multiple Ego-State Therapy is considered synonymously with the casting out of evil spirits. There is no indication in the literature available on Multiple Ego-State Therapy that any other therapists applying this modality have experienced the demonic outcome described in this article. There are ego-states, as described by the Watkins, which title themselves as "Lucifer," "The Evil One," etc. These, however, have never presented themselves as being other than ego-states, *within* the personality—not as totally separate from the personality as was stated by the Loser in this case. So far as I am aware, this is the first time that such an outcome has been experienced, following this modality. I might add that other cases in which I have utilized this form of therapy have not had the demonic outcome as described herein.

From this experience one of my conclusions is that when certain eternal principles (free agency, volition) are being violated in a client, that violation, when pursued by the therapist, can lead to the possibility of discovering the external control of the client by malignant, supernatural forces, where present.

A religious issue at question because of this case deals with the power of the adversary over repentant (i.e., "saved") persons.¹ From this experience with the client, I doubt that anyone is exempt from the possibility of demonic influence. If it could happen to Paula, then it might happen to anyone. This is at odds with a least one

Christian psychiatrist. Basil Jackson (1976, p. 261) has stated, "I have great difficulty in believing that such an individual, in whom the Holy Spirit is resident, can be demonized in the New Testament sense of the term."

Another caution which I would like to express deals with the potential danger of prematurely assuming that particular emotional illnesses are demon-related. I endorse the statement by Collins: (1976, p. 248)

Indeed, I agree with those who believe that exorcism should be used as a last resort and only when demon possession seems apparent. Because of the potentially harmful effects of suggesting demonic involvement, the counselor should attempt exorcism only after every conceivable medical, psychological, and spiritual counseling technique has failed.

Another issue particularly germane for L.D.S. therapists deals with the issue of ecclesiastical versus professional therapeutic domains. My inclination has been to keep these quite separate. At an earlier stage in the therapy, Paula asked me if I would give her a blessing. I demurred, suggesting that it would be more appropriate for her to seek it from her ecclesiastical leader, her bishop, which she did. Also, I found it advantageous to maintain contact between her bishop and myself. Prior to the demonic incident, with Paula's concurrence, I talked with him regarding the nature of the therapy that we were pursuing. Following the demonic incident we got in touch again and shared our perceptions of what had occurred and the implications for Paula (who was present at the time). I felt he was supportive throughout.

On the other hand, in my capacity as a spiritual leader in my own ecclesiastical stewardship, I sense a new appreciation for the power that I have to bless those persons who may be afflicted by demonic spirits. There is less reluctance on my part to include such statements in blessings as, "If there be a foreign power at work within you, then I . . . (whatever the Spirit dictates)" for those people who manifest unresolved internal spiritual struggles.

There is a personally challenging issue with which Christian therapists will have a struggle: The power of God is real, but am I an acceptable instrument through which that power can be effective in such a situation? That thought occurred to me even as I spoke the words to cast out the Loser. I am grateful, as is Paula, that despite my imperfections, God used me.

Finally, I am aware even as I write this that C. S. Lewis, concern applies:

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased with both errors. (Lewis, p. 9).

I earnestly hope that, as Christian, Mormon therapists, we can walk the fine line.

Concluded on page 23

The Case Against the Alleged Psychotic Joe Smith or One Hallucinating Jose, Imaginary or Real? by David R. Larsen*

The Prophet Joel in the Bible declared that there would come a time when young men would see visions. Paul noted that in the latter days men would receive "strong delusion(s)." It appears that in those times, as today, there were many people who strongly believed that they had received visions from God; a few others had proclaimed themselves to be gods. People exhibiting these symptoms of withdrawal from reality, characterized in part by delusions, hallucinations and other disorganization of thought processes, we label as "psychotic."

One of the most renowned visionary cases of the last 200 years has been that of Joseph Smith, Jr., 1805-1844. He precipitated a movement which has taken his name and peculiar history to the four corners of the earth. However, a cursory examination of his story tends to reveal psychotic behavior, typified by apparent symptoms of paranoid type schizophrenia. His life was marked by turmoil, confusion and by a lack of decision-making ability which caused considerable anxiety, as reflected in the following quote:

My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. (JS-H 1:4)

This state of disorientation finally led to visions wherein he claimed to have both seen and heard God and angels telling of a special mission for him to perform, complete with don'ts, warnings and admonitions to strictly observe. Later he said a special power was given him by three biblical apostles, which enabled him to perform his special calling. He showed what may be called symptoms of "delusion of reference," (he said that he was told his name would be "both good and evil spoken of among all people,") and delusions of persecution, influence and grandeur as in the following excerpt:

... how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. (JS-H 1:23)

In telling his own story, Joe Smith seems to have made a pretty good case for himself, that is, for his being committed as one hallucinating Jose. They say, "the truth or falsity of a story lies mainly in the details." So now that we have had a cursory review, let's examine some of the details.

Joseph Smith, Jr. claimed to be a prophet of God. Many people, however, may claim to be prophets of God these days, some with purported visions or delusions to support their claims, but what are the differences between a person who is psychotic and a true prophet of God? Are there any

differences, and which did Joe Smith have more of the symptoms of?

With regards to excitement, turmoil and confusion, the psychotic's is typically said to be caused by a mental filter failure in perception. Because of his mental/perception problem information enters his consciousness in fragments or great floods characterized by disorganization of thought and emotion with impaired reasoning ability. This is what creates his turmoil, confusion and intense anxiety.

The prophets also from time to time did get excited and anxious, but it was usually in response to the turmoil and confusion which existed in their sick societies outside, rather than as a result of their own faulty perception or thinking processes.

In comparison then, which was Joe Smith's mental excitement and confusion most similar to? Was it of internal or external origin? Well, there does seem to have been a great deal of religious excitement and controversy in his area at the time, and this external disharmony does seem to be the "great and incessant cry and tumult" to which he was referring. But would a true prophet have been indecisive and confused? No, but then he didn't claim to be a prophet at that time either. Nevertheless, let's still not rule out all internal mental factors.

How about Jose's hallucinations? Anyone would have to admit they were a bit unusual. Of course, true prophets had visions, too. In the book of Numbers 12:6 God is recorded as saying "... If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." That is good Biblical support for a lot of psychotic reports. But how, if in any way, were the visions of prophets different from those of any run of the ward Jose hallucinator?

The hallucinations of the psychotic are typically bizarre, illogical and incomprehensible, as are their delusions. They are also generally quite threatening, or in response to imagined threats directed at the individual. The visions of a true prophet on the other hand are usually founded on or in accord with previous revelations to earlier prophets, and are based on facts of existing conditions or prophecies of the future which come to pass (their percentage of fulfillment is much higher than the 52% accepted for most modern seers). What they hear or see is very clear, specific and most generally concerned with other people rather than personal threats. Their recounts or warnings, again, are usually clear, concise, coherent and detailed, marked by internal integrity and in response to real problems.

In analyzing some of the recorded visions of Joseph Smith, Jr., we find them to be bizarre indeed. He said he saw bright lights, glorious beings, not just one but two Gods. Later he saw many other angels. He was said to have had in his possession a book of gold and ancient spectacles. He also saw other heavenly places and events in the future,

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which he later reported and prophesied about. They seem to be bizarre enough, but how illogical and incomprehensible were they? Which pattern do they fit?

Bright lights are occasionally seen by psychotics, but also accompanied biblical visions (Ezek. 1:28; Acts 9:3). I lack sufficient data on psychotics to compare the frequency of glorious beings in white having been seen, but in cases when hallucinations have involved communication with God, there has usually been just one God involved, as most Christians and Jews are monotheistic. Such was usually the case in biblical accounts of visions of God.

But Joe Smith, atypical of either group, says he saw "two personages in the form of men," with one referring to the other as his son, and it was the son not the Father who addressed Joseph. Although this story seems impossible to many theologians, and is likely unduplicated in mental case history, yet its details are not without parallel and support in biblical record. (See: Matthew 17:2,5; John 8:17-18; Acts 7:55-56; 1 Tim. 2:5).

Though unusual, the theophany story of Joseph Smith seems to be coherent, and in at least some accord with previous revelations to true prophets in the Bible. Yet, his story is not completely comprehensible as he noted that the persons who addressed him were of such a brightness and glory as to defy all description. Nevertheless, this narration, as well as later ones involving angels, apostles and prophets of old, appear coherent and in accord with previous Biblical revelations.

Although Smith's visions seem somewhat in accord with previous prophetic visions, that still doesn't make him a prophet devoid of delusions. Were the true biblical prophets devoid of delusions? Many definitely appeared to the people of their day not to have been.

Noah said God had spoken to him. He further was warned of an impending disaster which would wipe out the rest of the human race unless they followed his divine plan to save them—it does sound a bit psychotic. They thought he was crazy, until the presumed delusion turned out to be a deluge.

Then, of course, Moses may have seemed to think himself pretty important, too, challenging the Pharaoh of Egypt, but then he did put on an impressive show of power, before walking off with the entire labor force of Egypt.

Many of the prophets seemed to feel they were persecuted, but then many were. However, these symptoms along with alienation usually came later in their lives, having been precipitated by visions and revelations; but in the clinical psychotic the pattern is usually reversed with withdrawal coming first and hallucinations later. The overall picture is really quite opposite.

Finally, let's look again at Joe Smith's seeming delusions. He had definite feelings of being talked about and persecuted, even plotted against. However, the fact that he was mobbed, beaten, tarred and feathered, had a tooth chipped in a battle to force poison down him, spent over one year in jails awaiting trials, without convictions, was chased out of Missouri after other of his followers had been massacred under Governor Boggs' "Extermination Order," and was often under warrant for arrest, perhaps had something to do with his feelings of being persecuted. Then, too, the fact that he was ultimately mobbed and

murdered while in jail awaiting trial, also gives some support for his feelings of apprehension.

But, what evidence is there that he didn't bring this bizarre persecution on himself, by his crazy or obnoxious behavior? Perhaps the fact that in 52 court trials by law, he was never convicted and sentenced for a single crime, gives some cause for wonderment. We might even wonder as to the motives and even the mental health of his prosecutors. It seems more likely that they, rather than he, were suffering from some type of delusions. (2 Thess. 2:11-12)

What other factors then, caused this bitter persecution against him? One was the fact that he irritated other ministers by "draw(ing) away many of the best and brightest people of the churches," as Mrs. Palmer a non-LDS neighbor later stated. Another non-LDS neighbor, Thomas H. Taylor, pointed out a second cause for persecution against the "Mormons" and Joe Smith in particular:

The only trouble was they (Mormons) were ahead of the people; and the people, as in every such case, turned out to abuse them... Smith was always ready to exchange views with the best men they had... Someway he knew more than they did, and it made them mad.

A third, and principle reason for their being driven out of Missouri, was because Smith and the "Mormons" were anti-slavery and the Missourians who were pro-slavery feared the growing "Mormon" population might sway the vote. So for these reasons and others, the plotting and persecution did indeed become more real than imaginary, though it must have seemed a nightmare for the Saints.

Well again we've barely skimmed the surface of Joseph Smith's personality, but in reviewing the symptoms of psychotic disorders we find, instead of characteristic withdrawal from reality and interpersonal relationships, a very gregarious Joseph, leading his loyal friends by the thousands, headlong through the vicissitudes of life. It seems that the more revelations he received the more sociable he became. He was a family man, had at least two wives, but was never divorced. He was always concerned with the conditions of his fellowmen and held several public offices, but although he was physically very strong and forceful he led his people not by fear, but by love, example and superior understanding.

How was Joseph's earlier life? One of his early neighbors, Orlando Saunders said, "they were the best family in the neighborhood." Incidentally, all of Joseph's family believed and followed him.

How was Joseph's emotional appropriateness? He appeared to be appropriately joyful as well as sad at times, as we all are; but if he was excessive in affect it would have been most obvious in his sense of humor.

Did he show any mental disorganization or lack of insight? I guess most all of us show a bit of that once in a while, but his revelations, rather than adding to the problems, gave him inner guidelines and amazing insight. The Saints, now 150 years later, still have the same basic organization and teachings as in Joseph's day, yet they are perhaps in some ways the most progressive denomination

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Helping Those with Religious Questions and Doubts*

D. Jeff Burton, M.A.**

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To some it is given to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful. (Doctrine and Covenants 46:13-14.)

Mormonism is known, among other things, for its emphasis on personal conviction and strong testimony. Members often expect to receive a manifestation or confirmation that the essentials of the gospel are true. Partly because of this expectation, Latter-day Saints with unresolved religious questions and uncertainties may experience agonizing introspection, emotional difficulties, and even self-imposed alienation.

One aspect of the problem is that while some Latter-day Saints are patient in their seeking for understanding and willing to search for additional insights into unresolved questions of faith, others are troubled by their unanswered questions. They seek a complete fulfillment and understanding and when this ideal is not achieved such seekers often experience feelings of unworthiness or guilt. Perhaps some of their religious colleagues even question their tendency to question, further suggesting that because they are not unruffled in matters of doctrine, there must be something wrong with their faith.

Although many Mormons live comfortably close to an unruffled ideal, others have not achieved such serenity. For example, some seekers repress their natural urge to question in order to maintain an unruffled image, and may settle for the appearance of belief in place of actual conviction. Over a period of time, such self-deception can create emotional conflict and be attended by feelings of guilt and hypocrisy. Bishops, priesthood leaders, Relief Society presidents and friends may hear statements such as:

—I'm living a lie.

—What's wrong with me? I can't live up to the expectations of others.

—I feel so guilty. The Lord must hate me.

Latter-day Saints struggling for conviction are often caught in an endless circle of attempts and failures to achieve their imagined perfection of the unruffled state. These defeats can help contribute to feelings of frustration, discouragement, unworthiness, or low self-esteem:

—I've prayed and fasted but I still have questions. Why don't I get the same answers as others?

—I just can't accept a calling (go to the temple, etc.) while I have these nagging doubts.

—I don't deserve blessings because I have uncertainties and questions inside.

Furthermore, members desiring to discuss their questions and doubts often find communicating about religious issues difficult or impossible. With no exchange of ideas, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual growth may suffer. Failure to engage fellow members in meaningful discussion can result in alienation from the religious community, either through emotional withdrawal or loss of Church activity:

—If I can't have the same assurance as others, I don't want to participate.

—I can't talk to anybody about this.

—If it weren't for the kids (my parents, my wife, my husband), I'd just quit it all.

Persons with unresolved doubts may experience marital conflicts, denial of reality, weakened ability to deal with feelings and emotions, and reduced motivation to learn:

—My wife keeps saying, "Why can't you just believe? Why do you have to question everything?" She thinks I'm not trying, that I'm somehow unworthy of the blessings of a sure knowledge. Why can't she just understand that I do have questions?

—I'm a basket case. I can't get on with anything.

Interestingly, the struggle of a doubter reveals a degree of faith. Without some faith in the restoration, there would be no reason to seek or to be dissatisfied with not understanding it all. People do not seek to understand that in which they have no faith. It is the recognition or hope for truth which helps guide individuals who are ruffled about religious matters.

Religious doubt may arise at any age, but it is more typically seen during the years of intellectual maturation. Counselors should be particularly sensitive to this problem among young adults, and especially among college students:

—I didn't have any problems 'till I started college.

—I've read this book, and it brought up some questions I'm having trouble with.

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Perspectives on Counseling Those with Doubts

Many of the problems associated with religious questions and doubt grow out of misconceptions concerning the relationship of knowledge to faith and belief and the roles these play in our lives. By sharing the following ten perspectives on the nature of religious conviction and commitment, counselors can help struggling members to see their circumstances in a more positive light and pave the way to personal growth and emotional satisfaction.

1. Mormonism and society see different meanings in the terms faith and belief.

Mormons often see the terms belief and faith as synonymous, both being the natural result of learning truth. The scriptures often equate the two words. However, in our present day society, particularly in the sciences, the terms belief and faith have come to have distinct, mutually exclusive meanings.

In the contemporary sense, belief is a mental state that tells us something is true based on experience, information, evidence, or authority. For example, if we flip a coin fifty times and tabulate the results of heads versus tails, we are likely to believe from the evidence that each comes up about equally. Of course, no one person's interpretation of the evidence will prove satisfactory to everyone. A mother looks at a newborn baby and has sufficient evidence to believe in the existence of God. But a biochemist looking at the same child may marvel at the power of evolution.

The term faith, on the other hand, refers to a feeling, a trust in "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Belief is learned; faith is evidence yet to be learned. Belief is what we really think; faith is what we are willing to accept in the absence of evidence.

The acceptance embodied in faith implies an active personal commitment. Thus, under these definitions, it is possible to question aspects of our religion, yet live the gospel by faith.

In counseling others, accept the possibility that you both may be operating under different definitions as you discuss belief and faith. Define your terms to assure clear communication.

2. Doubting is not necessarily a rejection of God.

Again, it is important to recognize the multiple meanings of the word doubt. In its modern, constructive sense, it means to be unsettled in belief or opinion; to be uncertain or undecided. It implies a lack of information or evidence upon which to base a belief. Doubt, according to this usage, is an inevitable consequence of a maturing, inquiring mind, and should be managed, not denied.

In contrast, the more traditional meaning of doubt includes the notion of distrust. In a religious context, doubt is associated with a rejection of God and a thankless denial of his goodness. Is there any wonder the word doubt has such a strong negative connotation?

Sincere questioners can be encouraged to be willing to disclose their commitment to learn at the same time they

reveal their questions. They can also avoid being hurt or offending others by choosing their words carefully and defining any likely-to-be misunderstood expressions.

3. "It is not permitted to know everything."—Horace.

We in the church often use the words, "I know" to describe our testimonies (e.g., "I know the Church is true.") This use of the word *know* usually means strong belief or faith (e.g., "I intensely believe the Church is true," or, "My faith is strong that the Church is true.")

To know, in its modern, technological sense, is to have a clear understanding, to be relatively sure. Knowledge is familiarity with or awareness of facts and evidence. But in mortality nothing can be known with perfection, only in degrees of confidence. While science and statistics have developed elaborate methods for testing, verifying, and strengthening the evidence upon which beliefs and knowledge are based, not even scientific tests produce perfect knowledge. Furthermore, scientists themselves use faith when they rely on their own methods or unproven assumptions, or when confidence limits exist, however small.

Questioners can be shown that since no one can claim perfect knowledge, it is only reasonable to expect a degree of uncertainty in this mortal life. Discuss the different uses of the words knowledge and to know.

4. Most Mormons wonder about religious things.

Wondering is a common and natural reaction to all but the most commonplace information. What Mormon, for example, hasn't had one or more of the following thoughts cross his mind at some time?

- Why would God command . . .
 - Adam and Even not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil?
 - Nephi to kill Laban?
 - Joseph Smith to practice polygamy?
- Did Joseph Smith truly . . .
 - translate gold plates and papyri?
 - follow the Lord's will?
 - find the Garden of Eden?
- Is my bishop (father, husband, stake president, leader) really inspired in this call (decision, release, judgment)?

A popular approach to dealing with such wondering is to blame Satan, or the weakness of the questioner.

But if wondering is natural, if seeking more light and knowledge is a legitimate gospel activity, and if one so seeking is obedient to gospel principles, then guilt and repression of questioners are unnecessary, and only serve to cause pain and to divert attention away from dealing responsibly with real religious issues.

5. Everyone is a believer to some degree; our uncertainties vary in strength.

Latter-day Saints who are uncertain about particular tenets of the religion should not be hasty in applying negative labels to themselves. Such negative self-labelling undermines self-esteem. A little belief is like a seed: nourishment and care may produce a tall, strong Tree of Knowledge. But that takes faith, time, and work.

Point out that varying strengths of belief in different facets of the gospel are not uncommon, and are not the same as unbelief; indeed, it is highly unlikely that any two people will share exactly the same convictions on all issues. Help the person with questions or doubts to see himself as an integral part of a diverse Church, rather than as an outsider.

6. When properly approached, questioning is a vital part of the learning process.

Having questions implies a desire to expand the information upon which beliefs are based. Mormonism celebrates intelligence as "the glory of God" (D & C 93:36), and proclaims that man is saved no faster than he gains knowledge. Obviously, such commitment to learning cannot be served by suppressing inquiries about the kingdoms of heaven and earth.

On the other hand, a philosophy of sincere inquiry does not license questions asked in a spirit of challenge or accusation. Suppose a Church member has trouble understanding why the Lord would command Nephi to kill Laban. How does he seek information and express his true feelings without sounding distrustful, negative, or dissenting? Such threatening overtones can frequently be avoided by prefacing questions with honest statements of feelings:

"I'm troubled by . . ."

"It bothers me greatly, but I am skeptical of . . ."

"My heart tells me . . ."

"I feel anguish when I think about . . ."

"Please don't misunderstand me; inasmuch as I am a committed, faithful member of the Church, I have a question I'd like your opinion on . . ."

"This is a question that has caused me a lot of turmoil. I want to talk to you because I respect you. I wonder if you could tell me what you think about (know about) . . .?"

"I wonder if you've ever had the same question that's been running through my mind: . . ."

"I haven't enough information yet to have a perfect knowledge of the issue, but here's what I believe . . . (here's the evidence upon which I base my belief . . .)"

Counsel that the pursuit of truth is rarely harmed by sincere questions made in the spirit of humble curiosity. Review with the person non-threatening ways of asking questions. Encourage the person to be honest about his feelings.

7. The blessings of the gospel come through faithfulness and obedience; particular beliefs may vary within certain bounds.

Some Mormons assume that there is only one way to believe in Church doctrines. Quite to the contrary, a great deal of freedom exists on matters of belief in religious matters. Joseph Smith, as reported in the History of the Church 5:215, said, "the most prominent difference in sentiment between the Latter-day Saints and sectarians was that the latter were all circumscribed by some peculiar creed, which deprived its members the privilege of believing anything not contained therein, whereas the Latter-day Saints have no creed, but are ready to believe all true principles that exist."

Similarly, President Joseph F. Smith testified before the Congress of the United States that Latter-day Saints "are given the largest possible latitude of their convictions, and if a man rejects a message that I may give to him but is still moral and believes in the main principles of the gospel and desires to continue in his membership in the Church, he is permitted to remain." In the same setting, he observed that

... members of the Mormon church are not all united on every principle. Every man is entitled to his own opinion and his own views and his own conceptions of right and wrong so long as they do not come in conflict with the standard principles of the Church. If a man assumes to deny God and to become an infidel we withdraw fellowship from him. But so long as a man believes in God and has a little faith in the Church organization, we nurture and aid that person to continue faithfully as a member of the Church though he may not believe all that is revealed. (The Reed Smoot Hearings, pp 97-98).

The priority of faithfulness over particular beliefs is further demonstrated in the temple recommend interview, which probes a person's behavior, obedience, attitude, faithfulness, and commitment.

It is possible to show that questions and uncertainties concerning religion need not keep a person from participating in all facets of the gospel, and need not prevent him from full enjoyment of gospel blessings. Through faithfully living the gospel, one may gain a witness that the gospel is true.

8. Not all information is correct; no source of information is complete.

No single earthly source of information can exhaust the facts concerning any gospel issue. Furthermore, some sources are wrong and others are written to deceive. Still others are well-intentioned but misleading. Historical studies, for example, are subject to many limitations because they involve not only the acquisition of sometimes

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Another View of Family Conflict and Family Wholeness**

C. Terry Warner and Terrance D. Olson*

A family life educator's suggested solutions of family problems will spring from his beliefs about the sources of human conflict. This paper sketches a theory of conflict that is rooted in the individual's betrayal of his/her own fundamental values. Hypocrisy and self-deception ensue, and individuals insidiously provoke each other to do the very things for which they blame one another. This means that people can desist from the attitudes that throw them into conflict and live harmoniously. But because of their self-deception, seeing how to do this is not easy. Ultimately, the solution lies in moral responsibility. Implications for family life educators are explored.

Whatever we do in teaching people to live together productively and lovingly in families will depend upon our beliefs about why things go wrong in family situations. A family life educator's practice is tied to his or her theory, even though that theory may not have been explicitly formulated. Does he/she think that people whose families are in conflict can be victims of one another and the situation, or do they collaborate in the problems from which they suffer, even when they seem to be victims? This is the root question because its answer determines whether such people can in fact do anything to eliminate the problems, and, therefore, determines what educators should teach about how a healthy family life can be achieved. We think the next decade will witness revolutions in traditional thinking about this issue, and these revolutions will dictate new practices in all the so-called helping services, including education.

A basis for this hope is a new theory of human behavior that appears in a forthcoming book and includes a new way of accounting for conflict. According to the theory, participants in conflict situations systematically deceive themselves about the sources of their difficulties. The book explains how, in our era, we have tended to import these self-deceptions into our theories about human conduct; our prevailing conceptions of humanity tend to partake of our self-deceptions. To these culturally dominant conceptions of humanity there is an alternative that is shown to be conceptually more powerful than any of them and that unifies in a single point of view the manifold observations of social behavior that have led many to regard human beings as hopelessly complex.¹

This presentation does not set forth the alternative theory of which we speak, for doing so would require a careful dismantling of some of our fundamental presuppositions about people. Instead, we will provide a simple sketch of the outlook on human conflict that the new theory suggests. Our purpose will have been achieved

if the reader acquires a sense of how this outlook differs from the ways in which we usually perceive people.

Because its theoretical underpinnings are not included here, the sketch may appear deceptively simple; its implications may not be readily apparent to everyone. However, the theory from which the sketch is drawn accounts for much of what Freud called the "psychopathology of everyday life," including the difficult problems of modern family life, and it sets forth the conditions that must be satisfied in order for families to be healthy and whole.

There are two axes along which the theory intersects the theme of this issue. One concerns what we teach about the nature of family life and the other concerns how we teach it. We have chosen to concentrate on the first of these axes and to defer to another context a discussion of new directions in learning that are implied by our theory.

Values and Conflict

First, conflict among people is related to their values; we can act either in accordance with, or contrary to, those values. In particular situations we can feel morally summoned to do a particular thing, or constrained not to do something; it is in such situations that our values make contact with our conduct. These feelings to do or to desist may be called "moral imperatives."

Such felt moral imperatives do not necessarily express what others expect of us, or even the general morality of our community, but embody values that are personal and perhaps unique to us. We are not saying that there are universal moral imperatives, but only that people do, from time to time, feel morally constrained to do or not to do particular things. Examples: a father feels that it is right to spend time, this evening, helping his daughter with her mathematics assignment. An uncle senses that he is called upon by his conscience to apologize to a nephew whom he has treated demeaningly. A teacher understands that she is obligated to do the best she can to help her students learn and grow. There is nothing inherently immoral about refusing to help one's daughter or failing to apologize or even teaching moderately but not superbly well, but for these individuals, in these particular situations, the actions we've described would constitute actively going against their own commitments; for them, the actions would be immoral. We call this strictly personal immorality "self-betrayal," in order to convey the idea implicit in it of being untrue to oneself.

Not surprisingly, this inauthenticity shows up in whatever one does in carrying out one's self-betrayal. One will conduct oneself hypocritically—will live in a lie—in an effort to make the personal wrong that is being done seem

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right. This inauthenticity can take such forms as depression, low self-esteem, bitterness, irritability, jealousy, and many other maladaptive attitudes. We have chosen to illustrate it initially with a very ordinary instance of family selfishness:

- Sara: Daddy, I can't figure this math problem out.
Howard: (her father, watching Monday night football, and feeling that he should help Sara) Sure you can. You've just got to struggle with it.
Sara: But I've tried, and I'm getting nowhere. If you could ... (Sara begins to cry, her head on her book.)
Howard: You're trying to take the easy way. They wouldn't give you the problem if they hadn't taught you all you have to know to solve it. (His voice rising) Why do you wait until I'm right in the middle of watching my game? In fact, you should be in bed, young lady. Why do you leave your homework 'til the last minute, anyway?
Sara: I didn't think it would take me very long. . .
Howard: Well, ask your sister upstairs. She had the same math last year. She's going to know it better than I am.
Sara: But I've just got one question.
Howard: (his anger blossoming) Sara, I'm tired of you trying to get me to do your work for you. Now I've told you what you need to do to get that done and you're just avoiding doing it.
Sara: (pouting) When Danny asks for help you help him. . .
Howard: Oh boy . . . Look, if you would do what you are supposed to do, I would be glad to help you. There is a difference between helping Danny after he's struggled with something and helping you when the only struggle you've had is to ask me to do your work for you.
Sara: But Danny's smart. He doesn't have to struggle. . .

Howard feels that he ought to help Sara, but is refusing to do so. His encouragement of her to struggle with the problem until she can figure it out might in other circumstances be good advice, but in this case he is giving it as part of an effort to mask and justify his own moral failure—to make it seem right. He also accuses her of procrastinating, complains that she is intruding unfairly on his time, and gets angry and impatient over her inconsiderateness of his own needs and desires.

Howard is not pretending; he is not acting a lie. He is, as we sometimes say, *living a lie*. The very way he sees Sara, as inconsiderate and intrusive, is part of the lie, and so is the anger he feels about her inconsiderateness. In this particular case the value he is placing on watching the football game, which makes her request of him insensitive and unreasonable, is part of the lie. These are all interconnected aspects of the lie he is living—the self-deception he is in. The way he sees and feels about the situation is part of his effort to justify himself in not doing what he himself feels is right.³

From Howard's point of view, Sara's inconsiderateness and procrastination is the problem; or else the pressure he felt at work, or else his strong desire to watch the game.

Now in our tradition of human behavior studies, as in our daily life, we tend to take Howard at his word. In his view, circumstances, either in his own make-up or in the environment, are responsible for his conduct; he has become angry *because* Sara has been pestering him, or *because* he wanted to watch the game, or *because* of his hard day. As observers, our assumption is that we understand Howard when we can explain, by reference to factors outside his control, why he acted as he did and that those factors make his irritability and impatience understandable. In the last analysis—so this traditional doctrine would have us believe—Howard is not an *agent* so much as a *patient*. He does not act but is acted upon. He is not responsible for his behavior toward his daughter, for there are extenuating circumstances which excuse him for his conduct.

Against this standard view of the situation, we are suggesting that the way Howard sees and feels about Sara is part of his endeavor to justify himself. He is actively insisting that he is Sara's victim. For if in this altercation with her he is seen as a patient rather than as an agent—if his perceptions and feelings are seen as caused by her or the circumstances rather than produced by him—then he cannot be held responsible. He is exonerated. Thus, his upset feelings are part of the lie he lives; they are evidence that something outside himself—his work, Sara's inconsiderateness, etc.—is responsible for the trouble that he is, in fact, stirring up. "See how inconsiderate you are," is the message he is conveying to her, "to produce this much anger in me?"

Does this mean, then, that Howard "really knows" what he's doing?—that he's just playing a part?—that he doesn't actually feel angry? No, he is not merely pretending; he is not harboring a secret knowledge that he is living a lie. His emotions are aroused and could be measured by a galvanic skin indicator. But there is nevertheless a sense in which his emotion is not genuine; for, contrary to what *he* thinks, nothing external is making him angry. Howard's anger is genuine in that it is felt, but inauthentic in that it is not caused by anything that is happening to him. He becomes angry as a non-verbal means of proving that circumstances are making him angry.

Of course we wonder about Howard's authenticity when we hear his sudden pleasantness on the telephone with Fred (especially since Fred's call comes as Howard's team gets the ball, first and goal, on the opponent's eight yard line). If we have just entered the room we will not guess that a moment earlier he was angry. But we do not need to observe how chameleon-like Howard is in order to see that he is inauthentic. He is giving off clues constantly. We can see this by comparing him to another father, whom we may call "Howard II," who simply helps his daughter when he feels he should. Howard II will have no occasion to carry on defensively, to blame Sara II, or to value the televised game inordinately. He will simply help. The same is true of yet another Howard, Howard III, who when asked by Sara III for help, feels, for her sake, he should not help. So he says simply, "You need to work that out for yourself." Again, no defensiveness, no accusation, no inordinate lust for television. Proving themselves justified is not an issue for these other fathers, because their justification is not put in question by what they are doing. The telltale clues that

Howard gives off are his protestations and accusations—his stylizing of himself as being wronged. This would be true even if Sara were lazy and inconsiderate, as he says, and even if the game were the greatest superbowl contest of all time. Self-justification of the sort we are studying is a sign that, by the individual's own values, something is not right.

Another point about Howard's self-deception needs to be understood. The features of conduct that we have described *do not occur in sequence*; they are not mental steps he goes through in order to blame someone for what he himself is doing. He does not first feel he ought to help Sara, then betray himself, then cast about for a lie to live as a cover for this self-betrayal, and then work up an emotion to show that he is Sara's victim. Rather, his self-betrayal is the living of such a lie, the working up of such an emotion. It takes neither planning nor particular intelligence to do it; Archie Bunker, for example, is as adept as anyone you could meet.

So one can't "catch oneself" in the process of producing the sort of encompassing, behavioral lie we are describing. To betray oneself is already to be living it. Self-betrayal, in this sense, is a resistant perceptual style freely chosen by the individual.

There is more to say about the trouble that Howard creates and his method of creating it to make himself seem innocent. By seeing Sara as inconsiderate and by feeling inconvenienced, irritated and, finally, angry about her inconsiderateness, he makes himself out to be her victim. By this means he makes it clear that he bears no responsibility for the trouble he is helping create. But of course if he is her victim then she is his victimizer. Howard is accusing his daughter—letting the family think she is insensitive, lazy, and disorganized—as part of exonerating himself in his own failure to act responsibly.

What about Sara's feelings in the scene we have presented? How would you feel if you were Sara—fairly dealt with or put down? Would you want to take responsibility to do your homework? Whether or not Sara started out acting responsibly and unself-consciously in seeking her father's help, she did not do so once he attacked her. She began to sob softly. She made excuses. She followed the very pattern of her father's self-betrayal: she was defensive and accusing. From her point of view her father and the circumstances were responsible for the trouble. She is not the agent that he accuses her of being. She is a patient.

This brings us to a surprising and important principle: the responsibility-evading, accusing attitude of the self-betrayer—Howard in this case—tends to *provoke in those he accuses the very behavior of which he accuses them*. If they accept the provocation, as Sara did, then the self-betrayer has his proof that they are to blame and that he is innocent. Clearly Howard can say that he is not simply imagining that Sara is irresponsible. Her behavior even now proves that she is—she whimpers, she makes excuses, she tries to say that he is being unfair.¹

The variations upon this theme are many. For example, the style of self-betrayal that we have described for both Howard and Sara we call "childish." But Howard might act self-righteously instead of childishly. In such a case he might ceremoniously switch off the television—his team still has first and goal on the opponent's eight—and, with a

feeling of self-sacrifice and moral nobility, work out the problems with Sara. He would condescendingly answer her questions. His explanations would be attended by a strained patience. Inwardly, he would be congratulating himself on his self-control. In 15 minutes the homework would be done, and Howard would have a sense of having risen above the selfish level on which most fathers operate and, in spite of his daughter's irritating irresponsibility, done his duty. But he would have given Sara everything except himself. His would have been a refusal to help her in the guise of "doing all he could."

Moreover, Sara would not have felt helped. The attitude of her father would have put her down, just as, in the actual case, his anger did. She would not have responded well—would not have tried hard to solve the problem for herself. In the future she would probably be less inclined to ask for help when she needed it. And this would have given Howard more justification for feeling that his daughter was irresponsible and that he was, without losing his temper or even uttering a harsh word, rising above adversity.

So whether Howard is childish or self-righteous, he provokes Sara to do what he blames her for, and thus validates in his mind his self-justification. In both of these cases she is reciprocally provoking him by the way she evades her responsibility and accuses him in her heart. Whatever their styles of self-betrayal, they are both provoking the other and by this means extorting validation for the lie being lived.

We can represent this situation in the following diagram:



Figure 1. Collusion

Collusion

We call this kind of destructive cooperation *collusion*. When people collude—when each provokes or entices the other to do the very thing he says he hates—each is making himself out to be the other's victim. Each is constantly ready to take offense at what the other does. Without their collusive self-betrayal, there would be no occasion for enmity between them.

Let it appear that the simple model we have been developing is simplistic, let us consider a more involved and convoluted instance. The marriage of Robert and Marcia was on the verge of ending. Marcia was at the end of her tether because Robert was insensitive, thoughtless, and unwilling to "communicate." She was obsessed with the idea that he was philandering, or at least flirting; she was sure that he wanted to abandon her in favor of someone less dowdy and more exciting. She blamed him for her claustrophobic feelings in the confined world populated only by herself and her children.

For a long time neither family nor friends had observed evidence of what she accused Robert of; on the contrary, he seemed to them to love her genuinely. In fact, she herself never cited evidence of his supposed infidelity; she simply "knew" that it was so: "A woman knows," she often said. When he protested his innocence, she accused him of compounding his unfaithfulness with dishonesty. When friends or family defended him, she accused them of collaboration. She sobbed on her pillow at night until she thought her heart would break. Her contention was that she grieved more than other women who were similarly situated because of her idealism about marriage and because she had "given my heart totally to my husband." She told her troubles to anyone that would listen, asking them how she could possibly have the marriage she had longed for—how she could possibly cherish, honor, and be intimate with a man who was as self-interested and callous as Robert.

In fact, despite her endless protestations, Marcia never lovingly gave Robert her heart. Many times she felt that she ought to; "giving oneself" in marriage was an obsession with her. But she did not. The moral imperative that she felt, or placed upon herself, did not come to her in the form of a general requirement to love Robert: instead it was specific to situations. Sometimes she would feel that she ought to prepare a favorite dish for him; other times to touch him, to look into his eyes, to make him a gift, or to thank him for something he had done. On these occasions when she felt a particular action morally required of her, she violated her moral sensibility and did not act as she felt. The result was that she saw him through accusing eyes. From her point of view, even the expressions on his face were irritating. It wasn't simply in her manner that she insisted that Robert was preventing her from loving him, it was in the very way she saw him that she carried out this insistence.

No one will be surprised to learn that this continuous hostile behavior of Marcia's provoked Robert's retaliation. Feeling wounded and unfairly dealt with, he viewed coming home as a trial by fire, and stayed away as often as he could. The more he stayed away, the more Marcia had her proof that he didn't love her and the more reason she had to complain, to withhold her favors, and to feel depressed. For his part, the more Marcia attacked him, the more reason Robert had to feel abused, and the more justified he felt in not wanting to come home. So Robert and Marcia helped each other create the forces that separated them from each other.

To each of them it looked like the other was at fault, and an outside observer might well have said that they were incompatible. But our view is that each engaged in a series of free acts of self-betrayal that not only took the other's behavior as an excuse but actually provoked the other to that behavior.

What we have been exploring here is a way of understanding human conflict that differs from traditional explanations. We are suggesting that, at least in many cases, human beings are not the victims of provocations; situations do not overcome them. Their provoked responses—whether of impatience, resentment, anger, irritation, self-pity, or fear—are not effects of causes that lie beyond their control but are instead means of justifying

themselves. "See how irresponsibly you have been acting," Howard seems to say, "in order to irritate me to this extent!" Their responses to one another are not passive, but purposeful. In an enormous variety of ways people make themselves unhappy in order to justify themselves in the compromises they are making of their own values.

The Self-Betrayer is Self-Deceived

In considering this possibility that we conspire with others to produce the unhappiness that afflicts us, we encounter a peculiar problem. The problem is that this conspiratorial behavior does not look like what it is. From an observer's point of view it appears that either Howard is sincerely put out by the unreasonable request of an irresponsible daughter or else that he is producing his irritated behavior "on purpose." If he is producing it on purpose, he is merely pretending—play-acting, if you will—and is not really unhappy at all. If he is sincere, then the explanation we are giving of his behavior is far off the mark. Thus, it appears that our explanation can't be right; Howard's irritation is either intentional, and he's not *really* irritated, or else he's really irritated and not acting intentionally. Howard can't be actually making himself miserable.

This conclusion is not valid. In the new personality theory from which this article is drawn, it is shown that the conclusion is fallacious because it is based on Howard's own self-deceiving way of seeing the situation. Howard and Marcia blame others as being causes of their feelings. They are, therefore, deceiving themselves as to the fact that they themselves are producing these feelings as means of accusing Sara and Robert. They are, therefore, not simply pretending to be irritated; being deceived, they are in earnest about it. Their irritability or suffering is something *they actually feel*, in spite of the fact that it is a falsification (neither Sara nor Robert is really causing it).

But if we were to ask Howard if he is being completely honest in his interaction with Sara, the only way as a self-deceiver he could interpret our question would be: "Do you sincerely feel put out, or are you merely pretending?" Since it is obvious to him that he is not pretending, he thinks our question is ridiculous; he wonders why we mistrust him.

"Howard, we think you are blaming Sara so you can cover up your unwillingness to help her as you should."

"You think I'm just pretending to be upset so I can watch the game? Is that what you think?"

"No, you're really upset all right."

"That's right! So I can't be just pretending, can I?"

"Well, no."

"So quit accusing me of being dishonest. Look, I'm so aggravated I haven't even enjoyed the game."

Even if no such confrontation takes place, Howard may succeed in deceiving us as well as himself by his performance. This he does if we accept his self-deceiving viewpoint, which is that either he is sincere, really feels put out, is Sara's victim and is not responsible, or else is only pretending to feel this way, is cynically manipulating and misusing Sara, and is, therefore, responsible.

From Howard's point of view, if he is not being honest it can only mean that he isn't really upset. He cannot be both upset and responsible. So if, like Howard, we let the issue become, "Is he sincere in his feelings or not?" then we also

will be assuming that he cannot be deceiving himself in these feelings—that he cannot really make himself miserable! We will be rejecting out of hand the kind of theory being discussed in this paper—not because of any evidence we have, but because we are colluding in, and taken in by, the self-deceptions of self-deceivers.

We cannot stress this point too strongly, for it follows that if Howard *can* deceive himself, he *can* make himself miserable, and he *can* provoke Sara to act irresponsibly so that he will have proof that it is she, and not he, who is responsible for his misery. Similar comments can be made about Marcia. People *can* turn their families into battlegrounds and simultaneously insist, in earnest, that it is not their fault—indeed, that they are doing everything in their power in spite of the offensive behavior of the others involved.

In our era it has been unfavorable to speak this way. Holding people responsible for their misery seems a callous attitude. Often the most miserable among us come from pathological homes—surely they are not responsible.

But we suggest that it is not the theory we are presenting but the currently accepted ones that tend to be callous. If people are not responsible for their emotional problems, then it is not in their power to correct them. But if they are responsible—if their unhappiness is the product of the morbid collaboration we are calling “collusion”—then they *can* change. They can cease to betray themselves. They can come out of self-deception. Correcting family problems is, in general, not something they *do*—it requires no special expertise—but something they *undo*: they stop living a lie.

Howard (entering Sara's room): May I talk with you a minute? (Sara does not answer, but leaves her head buried in her hands.)

Howard: Sara, I'm I, er... Well, I shouldn't... Gee, I don't know how to...

Sara: It's okay, Daddy. I forgive you.

When Howard gives up his self-betrayal his anger dissipates. The feelings he then has for his daughter are non-accusing. He feels love. And even though his confession of the truth is inexperienced in the extreme, it is genuine, and she senses how he cares. (This is equally true of Marcia. Her fears and self-pity will vanish as she begins to do precisely as she feels she should.)

That is the conventional situation. But there is another, equally appropriate possibility.

Sara: Daddy, can I talk with you?

Howard: Have you got that homework done?

Sara: Daddy, I've been having bad feelings toward you.

Oh, Daddy, I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

Howard (melting): Sara, you shouldn't be asking for forgiveness. I should.

Sara's unhappiness was her own responsibility; she made herself a victim and, by this ploy, accused her father of being a monster, unfeeling, and unfair. The only way out for her too, is to cease to live this lie. And we can say the same of Robert.

Of course, one colluder cannot, by giving up his self-deception, guarantee that others in the collusion will follow suit. But he does, by withdrawing his accusing attitude, give them the best possible encouragement to do so. This is not all; we believe that what people feel when they cease betraying themselves is love and authentic concern for

others. It is this newly released set of feelings that can touch the hearts of former colluders and prompt them to respond in kind.

After observing hundreds of cases, we have become convinced that although the solutions to the self-deceiver's personal problems are complicated and difficult from his own perspective, they are actually as simple as telling oneself, and living by, the truth—which is that he himself has been collaborating in the conflict situations that trouble him. It's the best—the only—way to invite the other family members to reciprocate. We have witnessed this in cases of infidelity, depression, alcoholism, teenage rebellion, intensely recriminatory divorce proceedings, and many others. The offendedness of each party, the psychic pain, the feelings of being trapped, the inconsolable feelings, even the self-deceiving tactics by which the principals both retaliate and make it appear that the course of events is beyond their control—all these tactics can be given up—summarily.

Self-Betrayal and Family Life Education

Suppose that all we have been saying is true. How would an educator get someone to see that it is so? What strategies might he teach by which families could abandon their tactical devices of hostility, fear, impatience, and self-pity and leave self-deception behind? How, in short, would he recommend that people release the love for one another that is in them? Recall that it didn't work when Howard was confronted with the truth; his self-deception meant that he also deceived himself about the suggestion that he might be self-deceived.

In responding to this question, we want to draw on an implication that our view has for the conduct of family counselors and therapists as well as educators. Indeed, we think that it obliterates the distinction between them. For if it is correct and people come to understand family conflict in terms of it, that very understanding requires a letting go of their former views so they no longer betray themselves; one cannot freely acknowledge the truth and simultaneously live a lie. By this means they put themselves in a position to see what needs to be done to heal the family relationships and to have the caring attitude necessary to do it without collusion.

Let us imagine that we have just finished a lecture on marital harmony. A student, Tammy, comes up seeking further understanding. We sense that the question she asks is not as hypothetical as she wants it to appear; there is urgency in her voice. She asks about her friend, Marcia, whom we have already met, and she describes Marcia's situation.

What will we say to Tammy? We have already learned that if Tammy suspects Marcia of provoking the problem in any way—if she tries to see the husband's side of it, suggesting that Marcia's definition of the situation is not completely accurate—Marcia can only understand Tammy as saying that she's insincere. Tammy may have wanted to explore the possibility that Marcia might be trapped in a tragic self-deception, but she can only be heard as accusing her of crassly manipulating both Robert and Tammy! In her very way of seeing Robert and hearing criticism, Marcia will pervert the truth into something that is patently false.

Marcia might react in any number of ways, all of which will be furtherances of the lie she is living.

"Are you suggesting that our troubles are *my* fault? I thought you were my friend and would help me cope with the terrible situation, but instead you take his side!"

Or: "You think I *enjoy* being hurt, like some kind of martyr? You're as insensitive as Robert is. I want to be happy, just like other people."

Or: "Look, I've tried everything I know how to do. I start conversations, cook things Robert likes, get the children to bed early so we can have time together. But he leaves to go out with his friends or watches television."

Or even (objectively): "I know you're right. It must be my fault. I think another woman could have made him happy. I'm just not the kind of woman who appeals to men."

If the attitude that we lead Tammy to have toward Marcia provokes Marcia to respond in any of these ways, Tammy will have "climbed into Marcia's world" with her, allowing her to define the situation for Tammy, and will be colluding with Marcia in her lie.

Tammy's advice is very useful to Marcia, because, by seeing Tammy as either agreeing with her or as rejecting her, she has evidence that *she can't help what's going on*. Marcia's offense-taking is useful to Tammy also, for she then has proof that Marcia even mistreats those who are trying to "help" her. Tammy will be colluding with her in the way Sara colluded with Howard: she will be validating Marcia's lie.

We see already that *teaching is not therapeutically neutral*. Attitudes, even of friends, either calm or fuel self-deceptions and either quell or exacerbate family conflict. Family life education is a weightier matter than some sorts of instruction. This becomes more obvious when we realize that Tammy might be Marcia herself. She comes with a disguised plea for help against her husband. If we have the wrong kind of theory, we will collude with her; we will provoke her to pursue even more aggressively than before her evasion of responsibility.

We are no better off if we teach Tammy to regard Marcia's husband as a problem to be dealt with and to think that Marcia needs to learn assertiveness, strategies for coping, or counter-manipulative tactics. If Marcia is provoking or at least utilizing her husband's insensitivity in order to justify her own failure to give herself to the marriage, then by thinking that Marcia must learn *any* techniques for dealing with him, Tammy will again "climb into her world" as surely as if she opposed her, and reinforce her lie that the problem is *how to deal with him*. Or, if Marcia is Tammy, we, the teachers, will be the ones to reinforce the lie.

The pitfall for family life professionals of all kinds, including teachers, is the danger of participating either theoretically or personally in the collusive mix of the families they talk about or counsel. When we suppose that people can be victimized by one another—when we accept their contentions that their anger, hostility, offendedness, depression, indifference, self-pity or bitterness can be caused by the other parties involved—we collude. We validate their attempt to shift responsibility to others or to circumstances beyond their control. We give them the message: "Either these people are indeed victims, or else they are phonies, deliberately causing all of this trouble. So

I'm going to suggest either that they be indulged, because their problems aren't their fault, or condemned for being cynical manipulators." If this is our position, we will not be able to see the real solution to the problem, for the problem involves them in being neither victims nor phonies. Whatever we suggest will only lead them to deal with counterfeit symptoms and may make matters worse.

Fortunately, we are often guided in our professional roles more by our deep human responsiveness to people than by our theories. As a result, good things frequently happen: some of the individuals we teach discover that the key is simply for people to be honest with themselves, to forgive and forget, to reach out in love toward others. We are more effective than we would be if we always relied on current theories of conflict, but not nearly as effective as we could be if we understood that it is as people rather than as experts and manipulators of lives that we help others.

For several years we and several colleagues have been developing and informally testing an approach to teach people the principles we have discussed in this paper, believing that for a person simply to understand them is for him to clear away some of the evasion and cover-up by which he avoids the truth. We use case studies. We have the students write cases on their own. Almost always they identify with the cases they hear and write and in so doing are already telling themselves the truth about past self-betrays. We have designed learning exercises in which they imaginatively enter a world that is free of offendedness and blame. The imaginative exercises can be as good as actual experience when students see others realistically—with compassion and without accusation. Those who do this are truthful about circumstances that have troubled them. In this, they are true to their own values; we have not imposed values upon them.

The learning experience we have described is not painful; the truth is painful only for those whose private recollections are counterfeit "confessions." For others the experience is liberating. Moreover, the relief and freedom that is enjoyed is the achievement of those who have it; while no one else could have charted the path that would lead them there, they themselves follow it unerringly. Once people have this experience, they own the secret; they are independent of us; they can continue their self-liberation into as many facets of their lives as they will.

In describing all of this so facetiously, we do not mean to give the impression that just because this process is simple, it is also easy. It isn't. The process is meticulously designed to avoid collusion between teachers and students—to keep from assisting them in any evasion of responsibility they might attempt in the guise of "getting an intellectual understanding." For this reason, it is more demanding than any other teaching we have tried.

Implications for the Future

We think that besides our own approach, others will be developed, based upon the sort of understanding of family problems that we have sketched in this paper. Whatever form they take, we suspect they will all imply that the distinctions between educator, counselor and therapist will

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BEYOND TEACHING CORRECT PRINCIPLES

(Some Thoughts on Mormon Youth and the Development of Free Agency)

Grant Owen, BS*

Abstract

It is alleged that families that have not made adequate preparation for coping with the developing agency of their teenage children seek to contain that growth. As in other religious families under similar stress, LDS parents may attempt to enhance their power and credibility by aligning their authority with that of the church. The natural movement of the adolescent away from parental control may thus be complicated and result in the unnecessary disruption of church ties as well as familial bonds by the confused and frustrated youth. Measures intended to foster parental confidence and adolescent competence are discussed.

Recently a colleague was describing his experiences with behaviour modification in a juvenile detention centre in California. To illustrate a point, he related the case of a girl who was "acting out" in her locked room after lights out. She was screaming and banging on the walls and door with seemingly indefatigable energy, as was her evening ritual. After some time, when it seemed that she could go on all night, my colleague intervened. Talking to the girl through the door, he informed her that he and some of the other staff members on duty had taken bets among themselves on how long she could carry on her disturbing behaviour. One of the staff, she was told, had bet five dollars that she would only last another five minutes. Another was said to have bet that she would last at least another twenty minutes and my colleague told her he was sure she could carry on for another hour or even more! "She just couldn't win!", he explained to me to drive him the point. "No matter whether she stopped her tantrum immediately or continued all night, she was going to lose." Predictably, her behaviour subsided. She was thoroughly defeated.

Developing Agency

The development of free agency, a fundamental purpose of our mortal sojourn, involves a gradual progression from external control by parents and other authority figures, such as local church leaders, to internal control founded upon responsible decision-making in the light of personal revelation. As a consequence of this process the families of many teenage children experience turbulence in intra-family relationships. Parents and church leaders may facilitate or constrain this development depending upon the quality of the preparation they give the child, and their readiness to allow the child to make its own decisions as it is able.

Sadly, from time to time we find that some LDS parents (like many others) try to control their children with the same cold-blooded methods as described in the anecdote above. Frightened by the growing independence of their teenagers and reluctant to face the prospect of no longer controlling them, they attempt to increase control, often

regardless of the cost to the relationship or to the self-esteem of the child. Ignoring in their anxiety such constraints on the exercise of power as are outlined in D&C 121, they trespass into the realms of "unrighteous dominion." As in the illustration above, the issue of control becomes paramount and eclipses concerns about the welfare of the youth. Although my colleague's intervention silenced the young girl's inappropriate behaviour it was at the expense of her self-esteem and emotional well-being. In a troubled family setting, where controls are merely more subtle, parents may discover that their usual methods of exercising control no longer impress their growing teenager, and equally desperate measures may be called for. One such measure, for example, is to enlist the aid of the church. This may be done by putting their demands in terms that suggest they are also the wishes of the church. It is a powerful technique because after all, it is one thing to disagree with your parents' taste in music, but if your preferences are labeled "evil" instead of just "unpleasant" then listening to it becomes an act of rebellion against God, rather than merely reflecting a difference of opinion between His children. (This is not to discredit the caring parent who warns against or even forbids some types of irreverent music. The distinction is in the motive and methods used). The challenge of the concerned parent or leader is to begin preparation for adult responsibility from an early age so that the youth is adequately experienced and equipped to successfully face life's decisions alone when the time comes. Paraphrasing the Prophet Joseph Smith, our job is to teach them correct principles and then let them govern themselves.

The Necessity of Real Choice

One of the purposes of our mortal probation is to enable us to obtain, and then learn to correctly exercise, the agency which God gave to Adam in Eden. It follows then that in order for a young man or woman to optimally develop and use the agency they have been given, as God does, there must be significant, meaningful choices upon which they can "cut their teeth." Such choices are many and varied. Choices regarding education, sport, family relations and Church participation, for example, all play important parts

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in the life of LDS teenagers. A meaningful choice implies among other things, control of the outcomes and responsibility for the consequences. If, as often happens, parents protect their young children from the natural or logical consequences of their decisions they may find they have produced teenagers who lack the ability to accurately assess the probable outcomes of their decisions. Allowing children to discover the natural consequences of their actions will encourage them to exercise the skills of sound decision-making (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1972, pp. 70-78).

The many choices we encounter in daily life vary in terms of their consequences. Some choices, while meeting the above criteria of control and responsibility, may have serious consequences but do not involve any inherent dangers. Examples include whether to take statistics or biology, to play basketball or to swim or whether to date this young woman or that one (or both). Some choices do not involve moral danger but have an element of physical risk. This type of choice is encountered in competitive sports and especially outdoors when the young person's skill is pitted against nature. It is widely acknowledged that such situations play a very significant role in the maturation process. The Scouting Movement is a testimony to that belief. Here again the extent to which the young person can expect to experience the full consequences of his or her decision and the importance of the consequences are measures of the value of the challenge to that young person. We may contrive situations that appear challenging but unless real consequences flow from the decisions, the experience of making them will be a hollow one; like merely playing at being adults.

A third category includes choices which provide among the alternatives an element of moral or spiritual danger. The choice regarding missionary service, the Word of Wisdom, chastity, honesty and so forth fall into this category. It is natural and necessary that the major proportion of teaching in the church, and hopefully in the home, is aimed at this group of choices. However, because of the importance of these choices some parents are afraid to allow their children to face them. They often seem to be under the illusion that they can postpone indefinitely the need for the child to make the decision, or perhaps even make it for them. Virginia Satir has observed that:

The parents of a nurturing family realise that problems will come along, simply because life offers them, but they will be alert to creative solutions for each new problem as it appears. Troubled families, on the other hand, put all their energies into the hopeless attempt to keep problems from happening; when they do happen—and, of course, they always do—these people have no resources left for solving them. (1972, p. 17)

It is unfortunate that we do see such troubled parents and leaders trying to stop problems from happening among young Latter-day Saints. They either try to eliminate the choice, by making it for the young person and attempting to enforce their choice with coercion, or as mentioned, they try to so bias the alternatives that in order to select the undesirable option the youth must, in effect, reject his parents or leaders as well as the alternative they prefer. Young people frequently find that an enormous cost is artificially attached to any deviation from the social norms

of their community. They discover that by means of a mysterious inflationary process, temporary indulgence in a new and outlandish hairstyle or dance may also be interpreted as a rejection of their parents, the Church and democracy.

As a youth visiting the Temple for the first time in 1972 to be sealed to my parents, I attended a Sunday School class where just such an issue was being discussed. A young priest in the ward, apparently active and committed to the Gospel, had bought a motorcycle—the first one in the community. I came into the picture at the point where his Sunday School teacher had decided to use the lesson period to help the class to see the adult point of view. This was necessary because many parents were strongly objecting to his parents permitting him to have it and were predicting dire consequences in terms of moral deterioration. While parents may have real concerns about such matters, young people will recognise false attempts to make them appear to be moral issues. This reflects a lack of confidence on the part of the parents in the justice of their cause and may promote a confrontive rather than conciliatory atmosphere. In contrast to the experience above, I recall with warm affection a visit to my mission field by one of the Council of Seventy. In passing he mentioned permitting his teenage sons to have longer hair when it was the fashion. He admitted that other parents in the ward disapproved of this, but he permitted it because he knew that they were faithful in the things that counted. He was confident that this concession to peer group standards did not foreshadow abandonment of all standards. Presumably he had taught his children correct principles, and being thus prepared (D&C 38:30), was not afraid to gradually permit them to govern themselves.

The Drive for Agency

All attempts to coerce our youth are pitted against the primeval need seated deep within them to exercise their agency. It seems to be the case that the drive toward God-like self-determination will prevail even if, paradoxically, in the exercise of agency we choose to break a commandment. Like Adam and Eve, our youth sometimes find themselves confronted with what appear to be two equally important yet mutually exclusive choices; to experience fully their agency as independent, mature adults and yet simultaneously to give total obedience to an omniscient Father. The answer lies in the sequence. One must precede the other. Hopefully, parental preparation will proceed both.

Next to life, agency is the most important gift of God to man, and consequently is the next greatest gift, after life itself, that we can give to the Father (see Packer, 1971). Recalling that the Saviour's sacrifice of his life had to be a free-will offering in order to have atoning impact, it becomes evident that if our youth are to offer to God their agency (through priesthood service and sacred covenants) it must be a worthy gift, mature and developed, and the giving must reflect that. It cannot be coerced. To give the

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Endnotes

1. For an excellent summary of the LDS view on a personal Devil and struggle with evil spirits, see LaMar E. Garrard, "A Study of the Problem of a Personal Devil and its Relationship to Latter-day Saint Beliefs," a Master's Thesis, Division of Religion, Brigham Young University, May 1955.

We've noted that Joseph Smith was quite dissimilar to the clinical model psychotic, but what evidence exists that he was a true, honest to God, prophet? First, we might examine his prophecies. Although some are yet to be fulfilled, many have already come to pass. For example, in 1832 he made a prophecy on wars wherein he foretold the coming of the Civil War, and even where it would begin. He spoke of the world wars, and the more recent black "rebellion," as well as future wars, present earthquakes, future famine and plagues. He, of course, also foretold the expansion of the church, it's setting in the Rockies and even foresaw and mapped out Salt Lake City, with its extra wide streets. He also foresaw his own death. To his friends it was just another day in court, hopefully to be vindicated once and for all, but Joseph said, after hugging his children and kissing his wife good-bye for the last time, "I go like a lamb to the slaughter. . . I shall not return alive."

In Exodus 34:29-30 it says that on occasion after speaking with the LORD, Moses' face "shone." This was also reported by entire congregations to have happened on occasion to Joseph, a pretty tough trick to duplicate.

As with the Bible, many of Joseph's writings and teachings recorded as scripture have since been backed up by recent discoveries. The Book of Mormon, an ancient American History book translated from the gold plates, has since been supported by a variety of findings in archeology, biology, history, geology and psychology.

While many biblical apostles and prophets often had to stand alone in their experiences, such was not always the case. Rather, the law was that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses shall all things be established." (Deut. 19:15; II Cor. 13:1) Joseph was not the only one in his day to see the LORD; at least 12 other special witnesses shared in the experience. At least one other person also saw, felt and heard ancient apostles and prophets. The most prominent of these special witnesses was Oliver Cowdery, a local school teacher who later left the church, or the church left him, but he never denied his previous testimony and later returned to the church. His last words confirmed what he had seen and heard. The gold plates were seen and felt by eleven others, and the Angel Moroni showed them to three of the most prominent and reputable men in the area, with the voice of the LORD declaring their contents. None of these men ever denied it, even though it caused them considerable hardship. Now perhaps Moroni was having nihilistic delusions, but no one could ever locate him again to check him out.

Prophets also have special power to perform miracles and healings. Joseph displayed much of the same, healing many, even raising men from their death beds. That he made it to 38 and accomplished what he did in that time with only 3 years of formal schooling, is in itself a miracle explicable only by the assessment that he was indeed a true prophet called by God.

Of course, one may continue to believe that Joseph Smith, Jr. was indeed psychotic despite the lack of foundation in reality; but, then if they maintained this belief despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, wouldn't they be manifesting some symptoms of delusions themselves?

on earth, at least the fastest growing in America. The church continues to attract "many of the best and brightest people," or produce them. One insight very pertinent to psychology, may help reveal the cause. While most religions, and later social scientists, were teaching the innate depravity of man, Joseph Smith was teaching the more liberating doctrine of the initial innocence of man, the clean slate theory and the divine potential in man. Most psychologists don't yet teach much about the divine potential in man, but few still maintain the innate depravity line.

Did Joseph live a painfully limited life, as do most psychotics? It's more likely that Joseph lived a fuller life in his short 38 years than most men live in 80, past prophets included. Three examples might suffice. Before he died he had translated, or recorded, over 800 pages of new scripture, two-thirds as much as the entire Bible combined. Millions of copies of these scriptures have been sold, and still provide, with the Bible, the basic doctrine for millions of Mormons. Secondly, he organized a church based on the revelations he received, which by the time he died already had the fastest rate of growth of any religious movement in either America or Europe. Finally, following the Missouri persecution he directed the purchase of an area of swamp land on the banks of the Mississippi, and in 5 years engineered the development of Nauvoo, reported by outsiders as being the largest and most advanced city on the Western frontier.

scarce factual information, but also the dubious process of correctly interpreting that information.

Caution the person against jumping to conclusions based on inevitably inadequate information. Re-emphasize the need for faith during the information gathering and knowledge development phase.

9. Personal responses to questions and doubts can be controlled by the individual.

We need not be ashamed of or concerned about authentic emotions. We need not avoid feelings of sadness when a friend dies; we do not try to avoid feelings of joy when we are blessed; and we need not avoid feeling unsettled.

When we do not understand something important, we can keep seeking understanding, or we can give up. Our reactions to our feelings are as important as the feelings themselves, and we can manage our behavior. Control and positive management of difficult emotions are always helped by understanding the emotion—its origin, its reason for being, and its potential solutions.

It is possible that a person's troubled response to doubt and questioning is related in part to the way he was reared. Suppose, for example, as a young boy he innocently asked, "Did Joseph really see God?" If his parent or teacher responded with horror, "Of course he did! How could you ask such a thing?" the child may have concluded that questions are unimportant or bad. As he grew to adulthood, he may have come to see skepticism and curiosity as defects in his character. Personal doubts may have been seen as inappropriate temptations rather than challenges to be explored and investigated. Thus, leaders, teachers, and parents may have unwittingly planted the seeds of trouble years ago.

A person may also be influenced by local responses to perceived skepticism. The local community may encourage guilt as a response to one's doubt and inculcate the notion that questioning is a sign of sin, slothfulness, or error. Such negative reactions represent the fears and weakness of individuals and are not part of the gospel.

Help the person to understand himself and his local environment, and urge him to accept these conditions with patience and love while learning new ways to manage questions and doubts. After all, compassion for the uncompassionate is central to the Savior's mission.

10. Religion has a spiritual component that is essential to the learning process of spiritual truths.

As the Doctrine and Covenants tells us, some are given to know, and others are given to believe on their words. We have no way of discerning in advance who will know and who will live by faith; nor do we know why the Lord has established such a system. We don't even know which of the two is more blessed, but we do know that to those given to continue faithfully in the absence of knowledge, there is a promise of eternal life.

There is a spiritual dimension to religion, sometimes called the supernatural or metaphysical, which cannot be explained by contemporary empirical methods. And we believe that a person's spirit and mind can be taught truths which cannot be learned otherwise. But this requires obedience, faith, and a sincere heart.

So explore with the "sincere doubter" the possibility of giving the spiritual side of life a better chance to succeed. Explore the possibility that the person's attitude, or personal sin, may be blocking spiritual learning.

In Summary

As in all counseling, Church leaders, parents, and friends need to show concern, compassion and understanding for the pain and difficulty the religious doubter may be experiencing. In addition, there are a number of practical suggestions (or, challenges) the counselor can offer the person:

- Look within, analyze feelings, and determine true beliefs; don't be afraid of what is found.
- Work to be worthy of building faith through obedience, prayer, study, and good works.
- Establish personal study programs to expand the information and evidence upon which beliefs and knowledge are built.
- Give spiritual methods a chance.
- Seek help when needed and admit fallibility.
- Talk about questions in tactful, nonthreatening ways. Be willing to listen to the insights of others. Don't forget to express positive beliefs and levels of faith, too.

Finally, counselors should leave their charges with hope. James Francis Cooke said it best: "The most welcomed people of the world are never those who look back upon the bitter frustrations of yesterday, but those who cast their eyes forward with faith, hope, courage, and happy curiosity."

For further reading:

Faith. (Salt Lake City Deseret Book:) 1983.

Fowler, James. *Stages of Faith.* (New York: Harper and Row) 1981.

tend to fade. They should all teach rather than counsel, guide, manipulate, so that students will more likely act self-reliantly rather than feel provoked to either capitulate or resist.

There will be no room in this broadly conceived educative function of professionals for taking responsibility away from the individuals in the family. By what they teach and the attitude with which they teach, the professional should help individuals take responsibility. If family members refuse to take responsibility, the professional will have done all that could have been done.

For example, there should be little need for the professional to hear histories of family troubles, for it is usually counterproductive. Family members tend to repeat their accusing perception of conflict, helplessness, and suffering, and to ask the professional to reinforce it, either by agreeing or disagreeing with them. In rehearsing his "story," a person can be "honest" in conveying his real feelings, but be as self-deceiving in continuing to have these feelings as he was in having them in the first place.

Diagnosis of specific emotional patterns and prescriptions should be eliminated inasmuch as these procedures set the professional up as a "doctor of the soul": if the "doctor" professes to know what is wrong, his pronouncements will tend to be self-deceivingly heard by his "patient" and thereby validate the self-deception. The "patient" is then assisted in evading his responsibility for the problems that beset him. All of this implies that the family life professional can only be effective when his own life is an honest one. Otherwise, he will inevitably use the teaching situation for his own self-justifying purposes. He may, like Howard, see his students as irritants and himself as doing all he can in spite of the difficulty of teaching such people. No expertise will protect him from the effects of this kind of self-deception. If he relies on techniques, he will be manipulative, and his attitude will be that techniques are responsible if good things happen (rather than the honesty of the individuals involved), and he will encourage his students or clients to rely on such techniques themselves, rather than simply tell themselves the truth. People might resist his gem-like utterances or become his devoted disciples, but either way, they will be assisted in their flight from being the independent, whole human beings they are capable of being. Ultimately, the best family life educators will be the persons who teach students what it means to be independent of them.

To our schematic vision of families, their problems, and their hope for wholeness, some might say, "Perhaps so. But then again, perhaps not. What we have read is not an empirical treatment. It might be a fairy tale—a behavioral science fiction." There is an error in this objection. We cannot blithely gather data about the etiology of family problems without incurring the risk that these data are drawn from the self-deceptive worlds of families in collusion. Examples: "Marcia and her husband do not communicate. Her husband either won't or can't. This isolates and wounds Marcia. She withdraws, pouts, and falls into depression." But the truth may be that it is Marcia who helps prevent communication by taking offense in a

manner which Robert, also betraying himself, sees as making it impossible to stay home: "She just wants to harangue. I'm getting out of here." Our data may actually be skillful collaborations in the "non-communication" of Marcia and Robert. (For an observer who is not self-deceived, it is clear that Marcia and her husband are sending messages which are being received very well indeed.) Where the possibility exists of the counselor or researcher participating in the self-deceptions of families, then neither diagnosing nor data-gathering can be a straightforward thing.

This means that in the end we cannot abdicate our own humanity in our study of and assistance to families. An authentic, open, caring relationship with them is a precondition of both understanding and helping them. There can be no dispassionate science of family life nor a detached, quasi-medical treatment of its miseries. Here is one region in which the effective professional is first and last a human being, in every respect one with the people he serves, and in which effective service is only partly a matter of art and even less a matter of science, but predominantly a matter of love.

We do have to pay attention to our experiences; social data are not irrelevant. But they are unreliable unless we make our observations with the totality of ourselves, in community with the families we serve. The idea that we can stand apart from this community, scanning it as if it were a cadaver, responding to it with only the "objective" portions of ourselves and suppressing our full range of human, compassionate responses, and obligations—this is a repudiation of our own humanity, which is our only instrument for understanding and helping others. This repudiation may be the most destructive self-deception of all.

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Endnotes

This theory is set forward in a forthcoming book, by C. Terry Warner, that deals with self-deception, compulsivity, interpersonal conflict, authenticity, freedom, and individual and social cohesiveness. The present article is also based in part upon materials used in the alternative to therapy and counseling that we shall mention later.

¹So Howard's irritability is not something Sara is provoking; it is not an ingrained love of football; and it is not a residue of day-long pressures at the office. (Indeed the compelling attraction in the game lasts only so long as he needs it, in helping him justify his now leaving it, and his having felt the office pressures all day may well have been the very sort of self-exonerating behavior he is exhibiting with Sara.) The irritability is instead Howard's way of betraying himself and getting away with it—of defaulting upon his responsibility by making Sara seem responsible for the trouble he is creating.

²A substantial part of Howard's self-justification in his self-betrayal consists in provoking the daughter he blames to betray herself. Her misbehavior serves well to exonerate him. Self-betrayers are trouble-makers who can't see that they are. This, then, is the surprising principle concerning human conflict: by his accusing attitude, the self-betrayer provokes those he accuses to do the very kind of thing he accuses them of; he collaborates in producing the problems that make him miserable; he lends his energies to create the very troubles from which he suffers.

gift of our agency we must first fully possess it, having paid whatever price is required to effect the purchase. This would appear to be an on-going process of living laws by which we earn some free-agency, consecrating that agency, then living higher laws thereby freeing ourselves from the bonds of ignorance and sin and so increasing our agency, which we then freely consecrate. It is a cycle of growth which becomes accessible to us only when we have the psychological sophistication and spiritual maturity to be able to make the decisions involved. Too often as parents and leaders we try to control the agency of our youth falsely believing we can ensure their destiny in this way. What frequently happens is that in their drive for a fullness of agency our children subconsciously recognise their parents (or an advisor or teacher) as the greatest threat to their continued development and may tear away from them by disobeying and discarding indiscriminately their parents' values. Chidester (1981) suggests that extreme rejection of parental values may often be symptomatic of such a power struggle.

Exercising Faith as Well as Judgement

Somewhere between the extremes of Laissez-Faire and totalitarianism there is a model that parents may follow that will enable them to strike an appropriate balance between parental control and self-determination for our youth. Several programs available to our youth such as Aaronic Priesthood, Young Women's and Scouting give them an opportunity to make important decisions affecting their own welfare and that of others. The structure of these programs ensures that the responsibility is graduated according to the age, experience and ability of the youth. However, there has been recent criticism that the education of our teenagers, especially in regard to activities where there is an element of danger, lacks the challenge and risk that is so important to their development (Mortlock, 1981, Note 1). In our attempts to anticipate and avoid danger to our youth we must be careful that we do not remove the very elements that make the programs valuable. Speaking specifically in defence of educative wilderness programs, Mortlock (1981) extols the virtues of placing young people in stress situations in the outdoors and complains that many contemporary adventure activities are "sterile and spineless." In the church we quite willingly place our young people in the wilderness (actual or metaphorical) in the hope that they will stretch their souls there, but all too often the way has been so painstakingly prepared that very little real challenge remains. The "shadow" of "shadow leadership" becomes an incapacitating darkness as doubting Thomases hover nearby to ensure that no-one stubs their (actual or metaphorical) toe. In such circumstances, failure cannot be private and success is hollow because it is the success of someone else. Under claustrophobic leadership or parenting the youth often feels cheated of the opportunity to freely choose a good act. We are here to prove ourselves; the loss of the opportunity to choose must effect our motivation to try.

Safety precautions and preparation are essential for success in any venture, but we must remember that it is the task, not the accomplishment which provides the growth for our youth. The merit badge is meaningless in itself; it is the earning of it that is of value (see Johnson, 1984). We would do well to more often apply to our youth the principle Elder Boyd K. Packer advocated for newlyweds when he said that though there will undoubtedly be rough patches on the matrimonial road ahead, he would not smooth the way, even if he could, for it is out of the struggles that courage and love come (Packer, 1963). In preparing the experience of mortality for us, it is significant that provision was made for us to be temporarily divested of most of the pre-mortal experience and knowledge that would have carried us through this probationary period without any risk at all. Instead, we were left to struggle with what remained. God did not say, "Let us give them a good experience." He said, "...we will prove them herewith,..." (Abr. 3:25). Recently Elder Carlos Asay alluded to this problem of programs and principles being emphasized to the detriment of the task they are designed to accomplish. He asked, "Is it possible in our drive to perform or fulfill a church expectation we collide with purpose? Can we not become so obsessed with form that we forget family?" (Asay, 1983).

In ministering to the needs of young Latter-day Saints we should recall that Satan's proposal for mortality contained a prohibition not on good behaviour, but on choice. He did not advocate anarchy, but rather a stifling, choiceless conformity. It behooves us then, as those who lead, counsel and raise youth, not to subscribe to a Satanic philosophy under the guise of good intentions by attempting to reduce their choices. The laudable goal of saving all mankind does not excuse the employment of any and all means to do so. Remember that Satan's justification for his draconian plan was also that no-one would be lost, like buried talents (see Matthew 25:14-30). Life will prove far less worrying and infinitely more rewarding if we who are involved with youth direct our energies to teaching correct principles and then exercise our faith and permit our young people to exercise their full potential and govern themselves as their Father intended.

Endnotes

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