

Curse of Cain?

Racism in the Mormon Church



By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

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2004

(Digital version 2013)

Utah Lighthouse Ministry
www.utlm.org



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Book of Mormon

“... wherefore, as they were white and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them (2 Nephi 5:21).”

Book of Moses (Pearl of Great Price)

“... there was a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people ... Moses 7:8).”

“And ... they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam save it was the seed of Cain, for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them (Moses 7:22).”

Book of Abraham (Pearl of Great Price)

“... from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land (Abraham 1:24).”

“Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, ... Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, ... but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

“Now, Pharaoh being of the lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, ... (Abraham 1:26-27).”

Twenty-six years ago, in June of 1978, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced the end of its priesthood restrictions regarding African blacks. Since the LDS Church has a lay priesthood, the ban had kept blacks from any leadership positions. One of the foundations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the claim that priesthood is essential to act in God's behalf. In the LDS manual *Gospel Principles* we read:

We must have [LDS] priesthood authority to act in the name of God when performing the sacred ordinances of the gospel, such as baptism, confirmation, administration of the sacrament, and temple marriage. If a man does not have the priesthood, even though he may be sincere, the Lord will not recognize ordinances he performs. (*Gospel Principles*, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1995 edition, p. 81)

In addition to this, Mormonism teaches that a person must be married in the temple in order to achieve the highest level of heaven, or eternal life. In *Gospel Principles* we read:

Those who inherit the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, who become gods, must also have been married for eternity in the temple. (p. 297)

However, the priesthood ban on blacks meant that they could not have a temple marriage, thus keeping them from achieving the highest form of eternal life, known as exaltation or godhood. This ban was only enforced on blacks of African ancestry. Such groups as Maori and Fiji Islanders were allowed to hold the LDS priesthood.

While the ban has been lifted the church has yet to clarify its theological view on race or why the ban was ever instituted.

Mormonism began in upstate New York, where whites predominated and blacks were free. Joseph Smith seems to have accepted the common view of his community that dark skinned people were inferior to whites, while rejecting slavery. Although the LDS Church allowed people of various races to join, there was an underlying belief in the superiority of the white race. Indians and blacks were seen as “cursed” by God with a dark skin, but given the hope that in the hereafter they could become white. At first blacks could be baptized and ordained in the LDS Church. But as the Mormons moved from New York to Ohio, Missouri and Illinois and finally to the Utah territory, they developed stronger negative teachings on race and restricted priesthood ordination for blacks.

Brigham Young University professor Eugene England observed:

. . . Mormon publications equivocated and became racist when the Church came under threat of violence for being “abolitionist” in Missouri in the early 1830’s. Many Mormon converts from the South kept their slaves and indeed took them West with them (where Utah became the only western territory that allowed slavery). At least by 1852, Blacks were specifically denied the priesthood and temple blessing. (“Becoming a World Religion: Blacks, the Poor—All of Us,” by Eugene England, *Sunstone*, June 1998, pp. 54-55)

This policy did not change until 1978 when President Spencer W. Kimball announced God had revealed to him that priesthood could now be extended to all men, regardless of race.

This study outlines the development of racial teachings in the LDS Church from its founding in 1830 to the present.

Racism in the Book of Mormon

In the early 1800s many people viewed Native Americans as a remnant of the lost ten tribes of Israel. Sociologist Armand Mauss explains:

While early Mormons differed somewhat from other Americans in their conceptions and policies toward Indians, they also shared in the general political ambivalence and selective romanticism of most other Americans. In the early nineteenth century, as Joseph Smith was reaching maturity and starting his ministry, theories and rumors about the so-called Indians abounded, . . . According best with the popular millenarianism of the period were those theories that defined the Indians as constituting one or more of the lost ten tribes. (*All Abraham’s Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage*, by Armand L. Mauss, University of Illinois Press, 2003, p. 48)

This attitude is reflected in Joseph Smith’s first literary work, the *Book of Mormon*. Joseph Smith claimed that in 1827, on a hill in upstate New York, a heavenly being delivered into his hands a long hidden record of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. Over the next three years Smith worked

on his translation of the record, assisted by various scribes and then returned the ancient plates to the messenger (see *History of the Church*, vol. 1, by Joseph Smith, Deseret Book, 1978, pp. 18-19).

After convincing a neighbor to help finance the printing, Smith published his work in 1830, titled the *Book of Mormon*.

This record tells the story of a group of Israelites who fled Jerusalem about 600 B.C. and came to America. They soon divided into two groups, the righteous Nephites, who were “white,” and the wicked Lamanites, who were cursed with “a skin of blackness.” Part of the rationale for God making the wicked “dark” was to insure that they were less “enticing” to the righteous “white” people:

And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a **dark** and **loathsome**, and a **filthy** people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations. (*Book of Mormon*, 1 Nephi 12:23)

And he had caused the **cursing** to come upon them, yea, even a sore **cursing** . . . wherefore, as they were **white**, and exceedingly **fair** and delightsome, **that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness** to come upon them. (*Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 5:21)

Behold the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the **cursing** which hath come upon their **skins** . . . (*Book of Mormon*, Jacob 3:5)

O my brethren, I fear that unless ye shall repent of your sins that **their skins** will be **whiter** than yours, when ye shall be brought before the throne of God. (*Book of Mormon*, Jacob 3:8)

And the **skins** of the Lamanites were **dark**, according to the **mark** which was set upon their fathers, which was a **curse** upon them **because of their transgression** and their rebellion against their brethren, . . . who were just and holy men . . . and the **Lord God** set a mark upon them, yea, upon Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitish women.

And this was done that **their seed** might be **distinguished** from the seed of their brethren, that

thereby the Lord God might preserve his people, **that they might not mix** and believe in incorrect traditions . . . (*Book of Mormon*, Alma 3:6)

Towards the end of the *Book of Mormon* one of the righteous leaders, Mormon, declares that in the last days the gospel will again be taken to the Lamanites

that the seed of this people may more fully believe his gospel, which shall go forth unto them from the Gentiles; for this people shall be scattered, and shall become **a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome people**, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites, and this because of their unbelief and idolatry. (*Book of Mormon*, Mormon 5:15)

The Lamanites purportedly destroyed all of the Nephites in battle approximately A.D. 400, thus leaving only the dark skinned people in the land.

While the *Book of Mormon* states that God “denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free” (2 Nephi 26:33), it still embraces a racist concept that dark skin is a curse from God.

Who are the Lamanites?

The Introduction to the current *Book of Mormon* maintains that the Lamanites “are the principal ancestors of the American Indians.”

Although the LDS Church uses the term “Lamanite” sparingly these days, thirty years ago any native of North and South America, Polynesia, Hawaii, or Tonga was considered a descendent of the *Book of Mormon* people.

In the July 1971 *Ensign*, the official magazine for the LDS Church, is an article by Apostle Spencer W. Kimball, who later became president of the church. In this article titled “Of Royal Blood,” Kimball declared:

With pride I tell those who come to my office that a **Lamanite** is a descendant of one **Lehi who left Jerusalem** six hundred years before Christ . . . and landed in America. And Lehi and his family became **the ancestors of all the Indian and Mestizo tribes in North and South and Central America and in the islands of the sea**, . . . Now the Lamanites number about sixty million; they are

in all the states of America from Tierra del Fuego all the way up to Point Barrows, and they are in nearly all the islands of the sea from Hawaii south to southern New Zealand. (*Ensign*, July 1971, p. 7)

An early LDS magazine, the *Juvenile Instructor*, seemed uncertain about the natives of New Zealand being descended from the *Book of Mormon* people, but still considered them under a curse:

We are asked if the natives of New Zealand and of the Samoan, Society and Sandwich Islands are descendants of the Nephites or of the Lamanites. If of the former, how can their **dark color** be accounted for? . . . if they are descendants of Nephi, how came they to be **dark as the Lamanites**?

It is plain from the history which the Lord has given us in the Book of Mormon that this **dark skin** has been brought upon them by **transgression**. Whether this transgression occurred before they left this continent or afterwards, is not clear. (*Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 30, 1868, p. 129)

Dark and Loathsome?

Joseph Smith seems to have accepted the prevalent view of his day that darker skinned people were not as favored by God as white skinned people.

According to the *Book of Mormon*, the Lord promised that in the last days, when the Lamanites (Native Americans) converted to the gospel they would become a “white and delightsome” people:

And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and their **scales of darkness** shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a **white** and a **delightsome** people. (2 Nephi 30:6) [The word “white” was changed to “pure” in 1981.]

Preaching in 1854, Brigham Young looked forward to the day when the Lamanites would be made white:

Here are the **Lamanites** . . . Their **wickedness** was not so great as those [Jews] who slew the Son of God. Jesus revealed himself to them after he was slain, preached to them the Gospel. But in the fourth generation the Priesthood was driven from their midst, . . . Is their **curse** as great

as that of those in Palestine? No, it is light, in comparison. They began to thirst for each other's blood, and massacred each other, from generation to generation, until they sunk into **wickedness**, and evil principles the most degrading, and have become **loathsome and vile**. Still the **curse** will be removed from them before it will be removed from the children of Judah; and **they will become "a white and delightful people."** (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855, p. 143)

Five years later, at October Conference in 1859, Brigham Young again taught that the *Book of Mormon* prophecy of the Lamanites becoming "white" would eventually be fulfilled:

You may inquire of the intelligent of the world whether they can tell why the **aborigines of this country** are **dark**, loathsome, ignorant, and sunken into the depths of degradation; and they cannot tell. I can tell you in a few words: They are the **seed of Joseph**, and belong to the household of God; and he will afflict them in this world, and save every one of them hereafter, even though they previously go into hell. When the Lord has a people, he makes covenants with them and gives unto them promises: then, if they transgress his law, change his ordinances, and break the covenants he has made with them, he will put a **mark upon them**, as in the case of the **Lamanites** and other portions of the house of Israel; but by-and-by they will become **a white and delightful people**. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 336)

Writing in 1909 B. H. Roberts, famous LDS Church leader and author, stated that the fulfillment of the *Book of Mormon* prophecy that the Native Americans would become "white and delightful" would be a witness to the world of the truthfulness of the *Book of Mormon*:

I may say it is the universal opinion that the native American race is doomed to extinction; and, in fact, that it is now on the high way to that finality. Against such general opinion, however, the Book of Mormon utters the surprising declaration not only that the American race shall not become extinct, but that fallen as its fortunes are, and **degraded as it is, yet shall it become, and that before many generations pass away, "a white and delightful people!"** Than this declaration I can think of nothing more **boldly prophetic**, nor of

any **inspired** utterance which so squarely sets itself against all that is accepted as the probabilities in the case. But with **complete confidence** we await the time of the **fulfillment of God's decree**; of its signal triumph over the opinions of men. (*New Witnesses for God*, by B. H. Roberts, vol. 3, Deseret News, 1909, p. 291)

Evidently many of the current LDS leaders no longer share the views of Brigham Young and B. H. Roberts and are trying to dissolve the doctrine that the Native Americans will turn white after conversion. In 1981 a very important change was made in 2 Nephi 30:6. It now promises the Lamanites that they will become "a **pure** and delightful people."

This change is not the result of correcting a printing error, as the manuscript of the *Book of Mormon* reads "white" and the first two printed editions use "white" not "pure." The verse was changed to "pure" in the 1840 edition, but returned to "white" in editions after that date.

There is another passage in the *Book of Mormon* which demonstrates the term "white" is related to a change in skin color: "And their **curse** was taken from them, and their **skin** became **white** like unto the Nephites" (3 Nephi 2:15).

Prior to 1981 LDS prophets and apostles repeatedly stated that the skin of Native Americans would one day become "white." Spencer W. Kimball, who became the twelfth president of the LDS Church, believed that those who converted to Mormonism were actually becoming lighter. In the LDS General Conference, October 1960, Kimball made these comments:

"I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people . . . they are fast becoming a **white and delightful people**. . . . For years they have been growing delightful, and they are **now becoming white** and delightful, as they were promised . . . The children in the home placement program in Utah are often **lighter** than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation.

"At one meeting a father and mother and their sixteen-year-old daughter were present, the little member girl—sixteen—sitting between the **dark father and mother**, and it was evident **she was several shades lighter** than her parents—on the same reservation, in the same hogan, subject to the same sun and wind and weather. . . . These young

members of the Church **are changing to whiteness** and to delightsomeness. (*Improvement Era*, December 1960, pp. 922-23)

Unfortunately, many Native American members were subjected to various condescending statements by well-meaning white Mormons. For example, Eduardo Pagan wrote the following letter to the editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*:

Being blessed with the mark of Laman, I have wrestled firsthand with the racist assumptions of the Latter-day Saints I grew up with. As a child I listened in sacrament meeting to fervent prayers on behalf of my people, then heard on Mondays these same members discourage their children from becoming close friends with me (“doors may be closed to them”). On the walls of my Sunday school class, I saw pictures of a white-looking Jesus holding blond children. My seminary teachers taught that the more righteous my ancestors were, **the whiter they became, and that someday I too would become “white and delightful.”** During my teenage years girlfriends told me that their parents were strongly encouraging them to date more “acceptable” boys. (Letter to the editor, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 23, no. 1, Spring 1990, p. 6)

Helen Candland Stark, in the same issue of *Dialogue*, commented:

After my husband retired, we moved to a small Utah town where many families were participating in the Indian Placement Program. One of the ward “pillars” and his foster son were evening sacrament meeting participants. It may have been for a priesthood advancement ceremony.

At any rate, the boy spoke first, adequately but quietly. Then his foster father rose to commend him. He concluded his remarks with these words: “If he continues to make progress, he may someday be **white and delightful.**”

Did any one in the congregation flinch? Is “red” not beautiful? (Letter to the editor, *Dialogue*, Spring 1990, pp. 7-8)

Up until the time of the new edition of the *Book of Mormon* in 1981, LDS teachings about the American Indian indicated a belief in a literal change in skin color in the last days.

Lamanites and DNA

The origin of Native Americans has been a matter of discussion since the days of Columbus. Mormonism has traditionally maintained that they descended from a group of Israelites who migrated from Jerusalem to the New World at approximately 600 B.C. While many people in Joseph Smith’s day speculated that the American Indians descended from the lost ten tribes of Israel, later scientists rejected that theory. The traditional scientific view has been that Native Americans descended from Asiatic people who crossed the Bering Strait thousands of years ago. Dan Egan, writing for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, observed:

Generations of Mormons grew up with the notion that American Indians are descended from a lost tribe from the House of Israel, offspring of a Book of Mormon figure named Lehi, who left Jerusalem and sailed to the Americas around 600 B.C.

For faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lehi’s story is neither fable nor parable. It is truth. Historical fact. . . .

The problem is mainstream science has failed to back that story. Instead, archaeologists, linguists and genetic experts outside Mormon culture say all the evidence points to Asia as the place from which American Indians originated. . . . (“BYU Gene Data May Shed Light on Origin of Book of Mormon’s Lamanites,” by Dan Egan, *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 30, 2000, p. B1)

Over the last twenty years there has been great interest in DNA research, and especially in Mitochondrial DNA. Nancy Shute, writing for *U.S. News & World Report*, commented:

Mitochondrial DNA has proved a marvelous tool for tracing human history. Mothers pass it down to offspring almost intact—unlike nuclear DNA, the genetic material commonly used in criminal investigations. (“Haven’t Got a Clue? Maybe DNA Will Do,” *U.S. News & World Report*, July 24, 2000)

The problem for Mormonism is that Mitochondrial DNA supports the view that the principal ancestors of Native Americans were Asiatic people.

Mormon defenders have maintained that only a small percent of American Indians would be

descendants of the Lamanites, which would explain why they don't show up in the DNA samples that have been taken. However, the Introduction to their own *Book of Mormon* claims that "the Lamanites . . . are the **principal** ancestors of the American Indians," not an insignificant group.

Even President of the LDS Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, endorsed the claim that the American Indians are mainly descended from the Lamanites. Dan Egan reported:

. . . Mormons believe American Indians have a special place in their church. It is a constant theme for their missionary efforts in South American and the Pacific Islands, and Mormon President **Gordon B. Hinckley** even uses the story of Lehi to inspire converts at temple dedications abroad.

"It has been a very interesting thing to see the **descendants of Father Lehi** in the congregations that have gathered in the temple," Hinckley said at an August 1999 temple dedication in **Ecuador**. "So very many of these people have **the blood of Lehi in their veins**, and it is just an intriguing thing to see their tremendous response and their tremendous interest."

But most scientists outside LDS culture argue that if a band of Israelites did come to America 2,600 years ago, they left neither a linguistic nor an archaeological trace.

"I don't think there is one iota of evidence that suggests a lost tribe from Israel made it all the way to the New World. It is a great story, slain by ugly fact," says Michael Crawford, a University of Kansas professor of biological anthropology and author of *Origins of Native Americans*, published by Cambridge University Press. . . .

Author Crawford said all the evidence gathered so far so powerfully demonstrates the Asian-American Indian connection that it is as close to a "truth" as science can get. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 30, 2000, p. B1)

LDS scientist Thomas W. Murphy, chair of the Department of Anthropology at Edmonds Community College in Washington, wrote:

Now that quantitative scientific methods can indeed test for an Israelite genetic presence in ancient America, we learn instead that virtually all Native Americans can trace their lineages to the

Asian migrations between 7,000 and 50,000 years ago. While molecular anthropologists have the technological capability to identify descendants of ancient Hebrews, no traces of such DNA markers have appeared in Central America or elsewhere among Native Americans. . . .

From a scientific perspective, the Book of Mormon's origin is best situated in early nineteenth-century America, . . . The Book of Mormon emerged from an antebellum perspective, out of a frontier American people's struggle with their god, and not from an authentic American Indian perspective. As Mormons, we have a moral and ethical obligation to discontinue this view of Native American origins and publicly disavow the offensive teaching that a dark skin is a physical trait of God's malediction. ("Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics," by Thomas W. Murphy, in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, Signature Books, 2002, p. 68)

Writing in *Anthropology News*, Thomas Murphy and Simon Southerton, another LDS scientist who became disillusioned after studying DNA, observed:

Genetic research into Native American and Polynesian origins is sending shock waves through Mormon communities around the world. The Book of Mormon, claimed as scripture by 11 million members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), purports to tell of three migrations from the ancient middle East to the Americas. The title page claims that the descendants of the migrants from Jerusalem "are the principal ancestors of the American Indians." Mormon folklore, likewise, postulates a Middle Eastern heritage for Polynesians.

Southerton has completed a book-length manuscript on the subject. [*Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church*, by Simon Southerton, Signature Books, 2004.] Simon Southerton, a plant geneticist, . . . resigned his position as bishop and withdrew his church membership. In Mar 2000, he published the story of his disillusionment on the Internet. [www.exmormon.org/why1ft125.htm] He "failed to find anything that supported migration of Jewish people before Columbus" and found "no reliable scientific evidence supporting migrations from the Middle East to the New World."

. . . Investigation of mitochondrial DNA of more than 5,500 living Native Americans reveals that 99.4% can be traced back to Asia primarily via maternal lineages known as A, B, C, D and X. Only 0.6% came from Africa or Europe, most likely after 1492. Lineages A through D are only found in Asia. While the X lineage also is found in Europe and the Middle East, Asian and American lineages have distinctive markers that indicate an ancient separation long before the events described in the Book of Mormon. Similar results from nearly 1,000 paternal lineages substantiate a Northeast Asian origin of American Indians. Likewise, approximately 99% of the Polynesians surveyed to date can trace their maternal lineages back to Southeast Asia. The other 1% almost certainly came from Europe in the recent past. . . .

Folk biological claims of an Israelite ancestry, a curse with a dark skin, and a whitening of dark-skinned Native American and Polynesian Mormons fail to stand up to scrutiny among scientifically literate Latter-day Saints. (“Genetic Research a ‘Galileo Event’ for Mormons,” by Thomas W. Murphy and Simon Southerton, *Anthropology News*, February 2003, p. 20)

The lack of DNA evidence that Israelites came to America and grew to a major population prior to the arrival of the Europeans certainly raises serious questions about the historicity of the *Book of Mormon*.

Israelites and Gentiles

The first page of the *Book of Mormon* explains that it is a record of God’s dealings with the “remnant of the house of Israel” in America and that the record was preserved to “come forth in due time by way of the Gentile” (non-Israelites). Armand Mauss observed:

Here **Gentiles** apparently included the white LDS custodians of the Book of Mormon . . . Later in the nineteenth century, such passages were **reinterpreted** to mean that white Mormons, though part of a Gentile nation, were actually **Ephraimites**. As indicated in [2 Nephi 3:6-13] . . . the Book of Mormon contained a passage seeming to identify its translator, the prophet Joseph Smith, as a descendant of the biblical patriarch Joseph, but an awareness that Mormons more generally could be literal Israelites seems to have developed only gradually. The original understanding seems to have been that

all whites or Euroamericans were Gentiles, but those who joined the LDS Church were *repentant* Gentiles who could then be “grafted” into the house of Israel and become fully “Abraham’s seed” . . .

Later on, Latter-day Saints came to understand themselves as *literal remnants of Israel* (especially of Ephraim) . . . (*All Abraham’s Children*, p. 50)

Further discussion of the Mormon concept of being literal descendants of Israel can be found in the section on Patriarchal Blessings.

Book of Moses

Soon after publishing the *Book of Mormon* in 1830, Joseph Smith began working on a revision of the Bible. The Book of Moses (printed in the *Pearl of Great Price*) was part of this revision and reflected the community concept that blacks descended from Cain:

. . . Behold the people of Canaan, which are numerous . . . shall divide themselves in the land, and the land shall be barren and unfruitful, and none other people shall dwell there but the people of Canaan; For behold, the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever; and there was **a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan**, that they were despised among all people . . .

And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent; . . . And Enoch also beheld the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam; and they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam save it was the seed of Cain, for **the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them**. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Moses 7:8, 22)

Even though the Mormons at that time accepted the common idea that blacks were from the cursed lineage of Cain, they did not view this as restricting their church participation. A small number of blacks were baptized and at least two were ordained to the priesthood.

Trouble in Missouri

When Mormons started settling in Missouri in the early 1830s their open attitude toward Native Americans and blacks became a concern of their neighbors.

The Mormons felt called to evangelize the American Indians, believing them to be descendents of the *Book of Mormon* people. As part of the restoring of Israel in the last days, Joseph Smith sent a few Mormons on a mission “into the wilderness among the Lamanites” in October of 1830 (see *Doctrine and Covenants* 32:2). However, their efforts were viewed with suspicion by their Missouri neighbors. Armand Mauss commented:

In assessing the significance of Mormon relationships with the Indians during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, one must concede the part that these relationships played in inciting the hostility of other Americans against the Mormons, especially in Missouri. . . . Prophecies in the unique Mormon scriptures, as well as some Mormon commentary on those prophecies, seemed to justify such suspicions. When the Book of Mormon has Christ promising that the “remnant of Jacob” (i.e., Indians) shall go among the unrepentant Gentiles “as a young lion among the flocks of sheep” (3 Nephi 21:12-13), it would make the Gentiles wonder. Nor would they likely be reassured by public proclamations warning the unrepentant Gentiles that God is about to sweep them off the land because of the “cries of the red men, whom ye and your fathers have dispossessed and driven from their lands” . . . As part of an emerging separate ethnic identity, the Mormons began to define their destined homeland as extending from Wisconsin down to Texas and from Missouri across to the Rockies and even beyond, with the Indians as partners in building Zion throughout that entire region. (*All Abraham’s Children*, p. 55)

LDS Historian David Whittaker observed:

The first Mormon preaching among native Americans occurred when Joseph Smith sent several missionaries to the western border of Missouri in the winter of 1830-31 . . . In a revelation given in Missouri on 17 July 1831 Joseph Smith told these first missionaries to the Indians: “For it is my will that in time, ye should take unto you **wives** of the **Lamanites and Nephites** that their posterity may **become white**, delightsome and just, for even now their females are more virtuous than the gentiles.” William W. Phelps included the

“substance” (two pages) of the revelation in a 12 August 1861 letter to Brigham Young, now in the Church Historical Department. Several things are apparent: (1) While the Book of Mormon strongly teaches that God removes the curse of the dark skin, this document implies that **intermarriage can**; (2) Some scholars think that this revelation was the initial impetus for **plural marriage**, as some of the missionaries had wives in Ohio; and (3) This document seems to have begun the Mormon practice of marrying native Americans. . . .

This first Indian mission ended in failure, produced the first non-Mormon charges that Mormons and Indians were in league to destroy other whites on the frontier, and sparked Protestant missionary efforts to prevent Mormon proselyting In spite of their denials, Mormons were being charged as late as 1838 with converting Indians in Missouri to use them against the local whites. (“Mormons and Native Americans: A Historical and Bibliographical Introduction,” by David J. Whittaker, *Dialogue*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 35-36) [The complete text of the 1831 revelation can be read in H. Michael Marquardt’s book, *The Joseph Smith Revelations Text and Commentary*, pp. 374-376. The revelation is also posted on our web site: <http://utlm.org/onlineresources/indianpolygamyrevelation.htm>.]

LDS conversions among the North American Indians has been minimal, thus causing some to question the *Book of Mormon* promise that the Indians would be converted in the last days. However, many LDS have shifted their hope to Latin America. Speaking at the October 1921 LDS Conference, Andrew Jenson asserted:

The remnants of the house of Israel, now known as the **North American Indians**, have so far **disappointed** us to a certain extent. We have had missionaries among the Indians since the beginning of 1831, and some of the very best and most faithful elders in the Church have devoted the principal part of their lives endeavoring to learn the various languages or dialects spoken by the several tribes of Indians in the United States. But after all their efforts in that regard they have only been able to reach a **few people**, and their labors have resulted in bringing **a still smaller number of Lamanites to a knowledge of the truth**, and

of those who have been baptized quite a few have not been faithful to their covenants, but have returned to their old habits and uncivilized ways and thus rendered the Church very little assistance. On this account we have been inclined to attach but very little importance to our Indian missions, or even to the mission established many years ago in our sister republic on the south, the Mexican mission. For compared with some of the missions among white people in our own country, and in foreign lands, the fruits or results have not been satisfactory. **In view of these facts, some of us have been led to query: How shall the predictions of the Book of Mormon regarding the Lamanites be fulfilled? And will they ever become a white and delightsome people and assist the so-called Gentiles** (who shall be converted, to build up Zion and establish truth and righteousness upon the earth? Those of us, however, who have accepted the Book of Mormon as an inspired record will not concede for a moment that the words of the Lord will fail; hence, we naturally extend our vision and researches to other tribes of Indians, besides these once powerful tribes within the boundaries of the United States.

We, therefore cast a glance southward into old Mexico and through the great countries beyond—down through **Central America and South America**, where there are **millions and millions of Lamanites, direct descendants of Father Lehi**. (*LDS Conference Report*, October 1921, p. 120)

Today, the main effort of the LDS Church to reach Native Americans is in Mexico and South America. There are currently almost as many Mormons in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Pacific Islands as there are in the United States. Below are the LDS membership numbers as of December 31, 2003 from the official LDS website, www.lds.org.

Membership Distribution (31 December 2003)

United States - 5,503,192
 Mexico - 980,053
 Caribbean - 133,969
 South America - 2,818,103
 Central America - 513,067
 South Pacific - 389,073

Other membership areas are given as:

Canada - 166,442
 Europe - 433,667
 Asia - 844,091
 Africa - 203,597

Besides the anxiety regarding the Mormon efforts to evangelize the Native Americans, the Missourians were concerned about the Mormons' attitude towards blacks. Many worried that Smith's church, founded in New York, was anti-slavery. Researcher Lester E. Bush Jr. observed:

At this time the Mormons were mostly emigrants from northern and eastern states, and were not slaveholders. In less than a year a rumor was afoot that they were "tampering" with the slaves. ("Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 1, Spring, 1973, p. 12)

In July of 1833, the Mormons published an article in the *Evening and Morning Star* entitled "Free People of Color." It stated:

To prevent any misunderstanding . . . regarding Free people of color, who may think of coming to the western boundaries of Missouri, as members of the church, we quote the following clauses from the Laws of Missouri.

The article then quoted two sections from the law which outlined that a "free negro or mulatto" must have a "certificate of citizenship," and anyone aiding such persons to migrate to Missouri were obligated to ensure the blacks had proper identification and papers. The Mormon article continued:

Slaves are real estate in this and other states, and wisdom would dictate great care among the branches of the church of Christ, on this subject. So long as we have no special rule in the church, as to people of color, let prudence guide; and while they, as well as we, are in the hands of a merciful God, we say: Shun every appearance of evil. (*Evening and Morning Star*, Independence, Missouri, July 1833, p. 109)

On page 111 of the same issue it stated:

Our brethren will find an extract of the law of this state, relative to free people of color, on another

page of this paper. Great care should be taken on this point. The saints must shun every appearance of evil. As to slaves we have nothing to say. In connection with the wonderful events of this age, much is doing towards abolishing slavery, and colonizing the blacks, in Africa. (*Evening and Morning Star*, July 1833, p. 111)

These statements upset their slave-holding neighbors, as some people felt the Mormons were encouraging free blacks to move to the area. In an effort to calm the fears of the Missourians, the Mormons put out a special one page extra of their newspaper dealing with blacks:

Having learned with regret, that an article entitled FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR, in the last number of the Star, has been misunderstood, we feel in duty bound to state, in this Extra, that our intention was not only to stop free people of color from emigrating to this state, but to prevent them from being admitted as members of the Church. . . . To be short, we are opposed to have free people of color admitted into the state; and we say, that none will be admitted into the church, for we are determined to obey the laws and constitutions of our country, . . . (*Evening and Morning Star*, Extra, July 16, 1833; see photo on next page)

Abolitionists

In April 1836, Joseph Smith wrote an article for the church's publication, *Messenger and Advocate*, which was later reprinted in the *History of the Church*. In this article he made it clear that he favored the practice of slavery and was very opposed to abolitionists. The Mormon prophet stated:

Dear Sir:—This place [Kirtland] having recently been visited by a gentleman who advocated the principles or doctrines of those who are called **Abolitionists**, and his presence having created an interest in that subject, if you deem the following reflections of any service, or think they will have a tendency to **correct** the opinions of the Southern public, relative to the views and sentiments I entertain, as an individual, and which I am able to say from personal knowledge are the sentiments of others, you are at liberty to give them publicity in the columns of the Advocate . . . I fear that the sound might go out that “an Abolitionist” had held forth

several times to this community . . . I am happy to say that no violence, or breach of the public peace, was attempted; so far from this, all except a very few, attended to their own vocations, and left the gentleman to hold forth his own arguments to nearly naked walls. I am aware that many, who profess to preach the Gospel, complain against their brethren of the same faith, who reside in the South, and are ready to withdraw the hand of fellowship, because they will not renounce the principle of **slavery**, and raise their voice against every thing of the kind. This must be a tender point, and one which should call forth the candid reflections of all men, and more especially before they advance in an opposition calculated to lay waste the fair states of the South, and let loose upon the world a community of people, who might, peradventure, overrun our country, and violate the most sacred principles of human society, chastity and virtue.

No one will pretend to say that the people of the free states are as capable of knowing the evils of slavery, as those who hold slaves . . . And besides, are not those who hold slaves, persons of ability, discernment and candor? . . . **I do not believe that the people of the North have any more right to say that the South shall not hold slaves, than the South to say the North shall . . .**

How any community can ever be excited with the chatter of such persons, boys and others, who are too indolent to obtain their living by honest industry, and are incapable of pursuing any occupation of a professional nature, is unaccountable to me; when I see persons in the free states, signing documents **against slavery**, it is no less, in my mind, than an army of influence, and a **declaration of hostilities**, against the people of the South. What course could sooner divide our union?

After having expressed myself so freely upon the subject, I do not doubt, but those who have been forward in raising their voices against the South will cry out against me as being uncharitable, unfeeling, unkind, and wholly unacquainted with the Gospel of Christ. . . . the first mention we have of slavery is found in the Holy Bible, pronounced by a man who was perfect in his generation, and walked with God. And so far from that prediction being averse to the mind of God, it remains as a lasting monument of the decree of Jehovah, to the shame and confusion of all who have cried out against the South in consequence of their holding the sons of Ham in servitude . . . I can say, the curse is not yet

The Evening and the Morning Star Extra.----- JULY 16, 1833.

Having learned, with regret, that an article entitled **FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR**, in the last number of the Star, has been misunderstood, we feel in duty bound to state, in this Extra, that our intention was not only to stop free people of color from emigrating to this state, but to prevent them from being admitted as members of the church. In the first column of the 111th page of the same paper, may be found this paragraph: "Our brethren will find an extract of the law of this state, relative to free people of color, on another page of this paper. Great care should be taken on this point. The saints must shun every appearance of evil. As to slaves we have nothing to say. In connexion with the wonderful events of this age, much is doing towards abolishing slavery, and colonizing the blacks in Africa."

We often lament the situation of our sister states in the south, and we fear, lest, as has been the case, the blacks should rise and spill innocent blood: for they are ignorant, and a little may lead them to disturb the peace of society. To be short, we are opposed to have free people of color admitted into the state; and we say, that none will be admitted into the church, for we are determined to obey the laws and constitutions of our country, that we may have that protection which the sons of liberty inherit from the legacy of Washington, through the favorable auspices of a Jefferson, and Jackson.

taken off from the sons of Canaan, neither will be until it is affected by as great a power as caused it to come; and the people who interfere the least with the purposes of God in this matter, will come under the least condemnation before Him; and those who are determined to pursue a course, which shows an opposition, and a feverish restlessness against the decrees of the Lord, will learn, when perhaps it is too late for their own good, that God can do His own work, without the aid of those who are not dictated by His counsel. (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, vol. 2, pp. 436-438)

In 1838, Joseph Smith answered some questions that were frequently asked regarding the church. Question number thirteen was concerning slavery:

Thirteenth—“Are the Mormons abolitionists?”
No, unless delivering the people from priestcraft, and the priests from the power of Satan, should be considered abolition. But **we do not believe in setting the negroes free**. (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, p. 29)

Toward the end of his life Joseph Smith seemed to change his mind somewhat concerning slavery. Under the date of January 2, 1843, Joseph Smith wrote: “Had I anything to do with the negro, I would **confine them by strict law to their own species**, and put them on a national equalization” (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 217-218).

Book of Abraham

In 1835 Joseph Smith purchased a collection of mummies and papyri from Michael Chandler, who was traveling through Ohio. He started working on a translation of one of the rolls of Egyptian papyri but did not publish his manuscript until 1842. This work was titled *The Book of Abraham*, now part of the *Pearl of Great Price*, and was published in the church-owned *Times and Seasons*. This new work, canonized in 1880, reflected Smith’s growing racist attitude towards blacks and priesthood:

Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of **Ham**, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.

From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the **Canaanites** was preserved in the land.

The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of **Ham**, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that **which is forbidden**;

When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, **from Ham**, sprang that race which **preserved the curse in the land**.

Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of **Ham**, and it was after the manner of the government of **Ham**, which was patriarchal.

Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but **cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood**.

Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he **could not have the right of Priesthood**, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through **Ham**, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham, 1:21-27)

When a reporter asked LDS President David O. McKay in 1961 about the basis for the policy of restricting blacks from priesthood, “he replied that it rested solely on the Book of Abraham. ‘That is the only reason,’ he said. ‘It is founded on that.’” (“David O. McKay and Blacks,” by Gregory A. Prince, *Dialogue*, Spring 2002, p. 146).

LDS author Stephen Taggart observed:

With the publication of *The Book of Abraham* all of the elements for the Church’s policy of denying the priesthood to Negroes were present. The curse of Canaan motif borrowed from Southern fundamentalism was being supported with the Church by a foundation of proslavery statements and attitudes which had emerged during the years of crisis in Missouri. . . . (*Mormonism’s Negro Policy: Social and Historical Origins*, by Stephen G. Taggart, University of Utah Press, 1970, pp. 62-63)

Book of Abraham from Papyrus?

The heading on the Book of Abraham states that it is “translated from the papyrus, by Joseph Smith.” He specifically claimed that the Book of Abraham is “A translation of some ancient Records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt” (see the introduction to the Book of Abraham). When the Mormons moved west this collection stayed behind with Joseph’s widow, Emma, and were thought to have been destroyed in the Great Chicago fire in 1871.

Interestingly, in 1967 the original papyrus from which Joseph Smith claimed to “translate” the Book of Abraham was rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. These artifacts were presented to the LDS Church. Photos of the eleven papyrus fragments, including the original of Facsimile No. 1, were printed in the February 1968 issue of the *Improvement Era*, an official LDS magazine. The papyri are also mentioned in the LDS publication, *The Pearl of Great Price: Student Manual, Religion 327*, pp. 28-29. On the next page is a photo of part of the Egyptian papyri owned by Joseph Smith.

Egyptologists found that the papyrus was in reality a copy of the Egyptian Book of Breathings, a pagan text that had absolutely nothing to do with Abraham or his religion. Robert K. Ritner, Associate Professor of Egyptology at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, commented:

In 1967, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York made a gift to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of **eleven papyrus fragments once owned by Joseph Smith** and employed as the basis for “The Book of Abraham.” . . . Egyptologists John A. Wilson and Richard A. Parker identified fragments within this collection as sections of a late mortuary text known as a “**Book of Breathings**,” copied for a Theban priest named Hor. . . . Like the “Book of the Dead,” the sole purpose of the later texts is to ensure the blessed afterlife of the deceased individual. . . . The text is a formal document or “permit” created by **Isis** [an Egyptian deity] and copied by **Thoth** [another Egyptian deity] to assure that the deified Hor regains the ability to breathe and function after death, with full mobility, access to offerings and all other privileges of the immortal

gods. **The implications, basic symbolism and intent of the text are certain.** (“The ‘Breathing Permit of Hor’ Thirty-four Years Later,” *Dialogue*, vol. 33, no. 4, Winter 2000, pp. 97-99, 115)

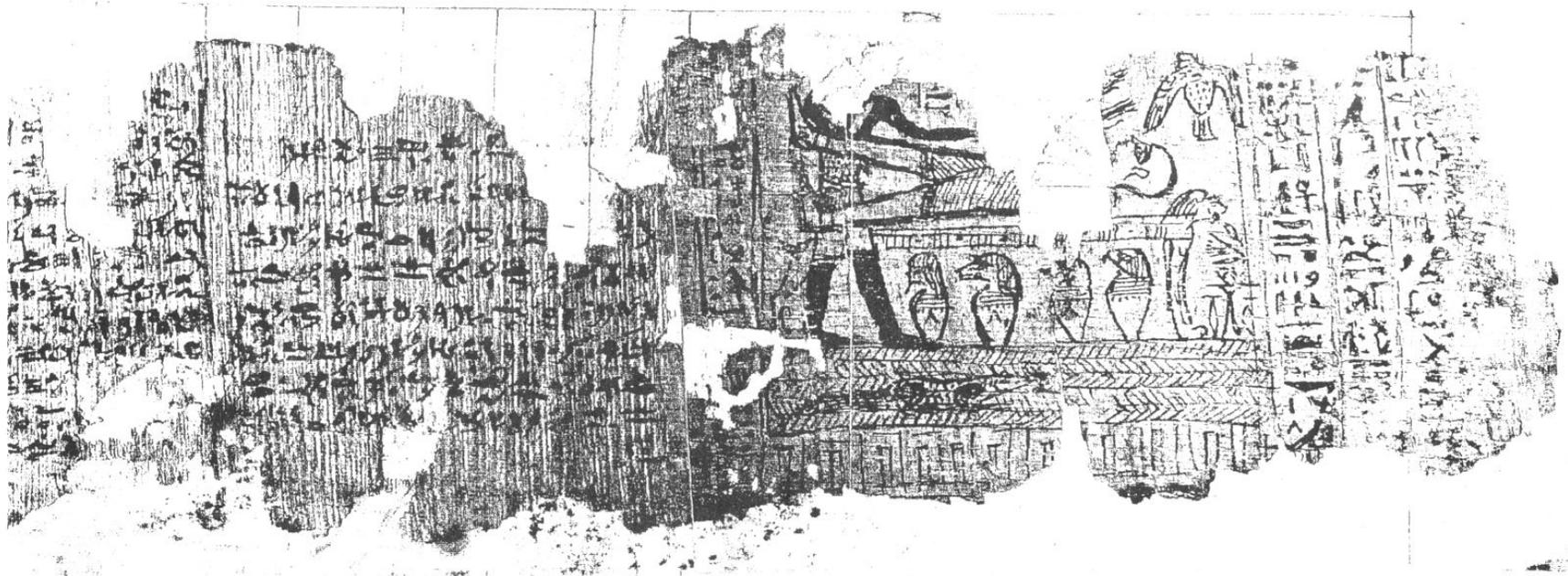
Since the Book of Abraham is obviously not a translation of the papyrus, why does the LDS Church keep it and its racist teachings as part of their canon of scripture? (For a larger treatment of the Book of Abraham problems see our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Realty?* pages 249-369; and *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus*, by Charles Larson.)

Doctrine of Pre-Existence

To better understand the Mormon attitude concerning blacks, a person must first be aware of the doctrine of pre-existence or pre-mortal life. Joseph Smith taught that man is the same species as God and his direct offspring, born as a spirit child in an earlier existence, then raised to maturity prior to being sent to earth as an infant. Preaching at the funeral of an early Mormon, Joseph Smith stated:

First, God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, is **a man like unto one of yourselves**, that is the great secret . . . I am going to tell you **how God came to be God**. We have imagined that God was God from all eternity . . . **God himself; the Father of us all dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did** . . . I have another subject to dwell upon . . . the soul, the mind of man, the immortal spirit. All men say God **created** it in the beginning. The very idea **lessens man in my estimation**; I do not believe the doctrine . . . **The mind of man is as immortal as God himself**. I know that my testimony is true, hence when I talk to these mourners; what have they lost, they are only separated from their bodies for a short season; their spirits existed co-equal with God . . . **God never did have power to create the spirit of man at all**. (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, pp. 613-615; also in *History of the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 302-312)

The LDS Church teaches that God was once a mortal on some other world. He and his wife were faithful on that earth, died, were resurrected and eventually advanced to godhood. Their spirit children, who were literally born to them in that state, were later sent to an earth to obtain a mortal body and possibly advance as their heavenly parents did before them.



**Joseph Smith copied this drawing to create Facsimile No. 1
in the Book of Abraham, *Pearl of Great Price*.**

Photo from the book, *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus*.

In a 1925 LDS First Presidency statement we read:

The **doctrine of pre-existence** pours wonderful flood of light upon the otherwise mysterious problem of man's origin. It shows that **man**, as a spirit, **was begotten and born of heavenly parents** [God and His Wife], and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, proclaims man to be the **direct and lineal offspring of Deity**. By his Almighty power God organized the earth, and all that it contains, from spirit and element, which exist co-eternally with himself.

Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with **divine attributes**, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so that undeveloped offspring of **celestial parentage** is capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of **evolving into a God**. ("The Origin of Man," LDS First Presidency, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 4, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992, Appendix 4)

Joseph Smith's doctrine of man's pre-mortal existence brought about the idea that some of God's children were more noble than others in that prior life and thus earned the right to be born on earth into a Mormon family.

Preaching in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in 1852, Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

I have already told you that the spirits of men and women, all had a previous existence, thousands of years ago, in the heavens, in the presence of God; and I have already told you that among them are many spirits that are **more noble, more intelligent** than others, that were called the great and mighty ones, reserved until the dispensation of the fulness of times, to come forth upon the face of the earth, through a **noble parentage** . . . Do you believe, says one, that they are reserved until the last dispensation, for such a noble purpose? Yes; and among the Saints is the most likely place for these spirits to take their tabernacles, through a just and **righteous parentage**. . . . This is the reason

why the Lord is sending them here, brethren and sisters; they are appointed to come and take their bodies here, . . . The Lord has not kept them in store for five or six thousand years past, and kept them waiting for their bodies all this time to send them among the **Hottentots**, the **African negroes**, the idolatrous Hindoos, or any other of the fallen nations that dwell upon the face of this earth. They are not kept in reserve in order to come forth to receive such a **degraded parentage** upon the earth; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pp. 62-63)

The Book of Abraham explains that those who were "noble" in the pre-existence (man's first estate) were to be the "rulers" on earth (man's second estate) (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham 3:22-23). This led to an interpretation that each person's birth on earth is a direct result of his/her worthiness in a prior life in heaven. Thus those less valiant were born black, and sent through the lineage of Cain, while the righteous were born white. And those most worthy were born into Mormon families. Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency of the LDS Church under Brigham Young, preached:

I tell you there is not a purer set of women on God's earth than there is here; and they shall live and bear the souls of men, and **bear tabernacles for those righteous spirits that are kept back for the last time**, for the winding up scenery. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 133)

The second Article of Faith of the LDS Church reads as follows: "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (*Pearl of Great Price*). To avoid the idea that Cain's descendants were punished for his transgression, the Mormon leaders have taught that those born black were "indifferent in their support of the righteous cause" in the pre-existence.

In 1845 LDS Apostle Orson Hyde explained that those spirits who were unworthy were sent through the cursed lineage:

At the time the devil was cast out of heaven, there were some spirits that did not know who had authority, whether God or the devil. They consequently did not take a very active part on either side, but rather thought the devil had been

abused, . . . These spirits were not considered bad enough to be cast down to hell, and never have bodies; neither were they considered **worthy** of an honourable body on this earth: . . . But those spirits in heaven that rather **lent an influence to the devil**, thinking he had a little the best right to govern, but did not take a very active part any way were required to come into the world and take bodies in the **accursed lineage of Canaan**; and hence the **Negro or African race**. (“Speech of Elder Orson Hyde, delivered before the High Priests’ Quorum, in Nauvoo,” April 27, 1845, printed by John Taylor, p. 30)

In 1885 B. H. Roberts, famous LDS author and member of the Council of Seventy, explained the Mormon doctrine of the war in heaven between God’s spirit children:

The contest was a severe one, and during its progress all degrees of integrity were manifest. Those who stood with Christ and the plan He favored for the salvation of man, formed one extreme, while those who stood with Lucifer and for the plan of salvation devised by him, which was destructive of man’s agency, formed the other extreme; between these two extremes every shade of faith, fulness and indifference was exhibited. Only those, however, who wickedly rebelled against God were adjudged to deserve banishment from heaven, and become the devil and his angels. Others there were, who may not have rebelled against God, and yet were **so indifferent** in their support of the righteous cause of our Redeemer, that **they forfeited certain privileges** and powers granted to those who were more valiant for God and correct principles. We have, I think, a demonstration of this in the **seed of Ham**. . . . I believe **that race** is the one through which it is ordained **those spirits that were not valiant** in the great rebellion in heaven should come; who through **their indifference or lack of integrity to righteousness**, rendered themselves **unworthy of the Priesthood** and its powers, and **hence it is withheld from them to this day**. (*The Contributor*, vol. 6, pp. 296-297)

Gaylon L. Caldwell, LDS researcher and author, made the following observation:

This doctrine is not without logical difficulties, however. Considering the Latter-day Saint dictum that “man is punished for his own sins” the curse

on Cain is understandable and consistent with Mormon philosophy, since the Mormon scripture insists that he sinned knowingly and willfully. But how is one to account for the penalty on all his alleged descendants? An arbitrary God who would permit millions of people to be deprived of the priesthood, and hence its concomitant blessings, by accident of birth simply does not fit into the Mormon theology. As would be expected, this problem has led to the formulation of several theses. One of the most popular was framed by B. H. Roberts from a suggestion by Orson Hyde, early Apostle. Roberts suggested that since all spirits before living in the flesh had an opportunity to prove their fidelity to God and His laws during the “war in heaven” some of them might have been neutral, or proved less valiant than others, and thus lost the right of priesthood during their earthly sojourn. (“Moral and Religious Aspects of the Negro in Utah,” by Gaylon L. Caldwell, *Western Humanities Review*, Winter 1959, p. 105)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the LDS Church, explained the church’s position on race:

There is a reason why one man is **born black** and with **other disadvantages**, while another is **born white** with great advantages. The reason is that we once had an estate **before** we came here, and were obedient, more or less, to the laws that were given us there. (*Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, compiled by Bruce R. McConkie, vol. 1, Bookcraft, 1954, p. 61)

This teaching was clearly stated in a letter written by the LDS First Presidency on July 17, 1947:

Your position seems to lose sight of the **revelations** of the Lord touching the **pre-existence of our spirits, the rebellion in heaven**, and the doctrine that our **birth** into this life and the advantages under which we may be born, have a relationship in the life **heretofore**.

From the days of the Prophet Joseph even until now, it has been the **doctrine of the Church**, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the **Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel**. (as quoted in *Mormonism and the Negro*, by John J. Stewart and William E. Berrett, Horizon Publishers, 1978, p. 47)

Apostle Mark E. Petersen, speaking at the Convention of Teachers of Religion at Brigham Young University in 1954, declared:

We cannot escape the conclusion that because of **performance in our pre-existence** some of us are born as Chinese, some as Japanese, some as Indians, some as Negroes, some Americans, some as Latter-day Saints. **These are rewards and punishments** . . . Is it not reasonable to believe that less worthy spirits would come through less favored lineage? . . .

Let us consider the great mercy of God for a moment. The Chinese, born in China with a dark skin, and with all the handicaps of that race seems to have little opportunity. But think of the mercy of God to Chinese people who are willing to accept the gospel. In spite of whatever they might have done in the **pre-existence** to justify being born over there as Chinamen, if they now, in this life, accept the gospel and live it the rest of their lives they can have the Priesthood, go to the temple and receive endowments and sealings, and that means they can have exaltation. . . .

Think of the **Negro, cursed** as to the Priesthood. . . . This negro, who, in the **pre-existence** lived the type of life which justified the Lord in sending him to the earth in the **lineage of Cain with a black skin**. . . . In spite of all he did in the pre-existent life, the Lord is willing, if the Negro accepts the gospel . . . he can and will enter the celestial kingdom. He will go there **as a servant**, but he will get celestial glory. ("Race Problems—As they Affect the Church," address by Apostle Mark E. Petersen at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 27, 1954; see Appendix B for entire speech)

LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie discussed the curse on Cain:

Though he was a **rebel** and an associate of Lucifer in **pre-existence**, and though he was a liar from the beginning whose name was Perdition, **Cain managed to attain the privilege of mortal birth**. Under Adam's tutelage, he began in this life to serve God. . . . Then he came out in open rebellion, fought God, worshiped Lucifer, and slew Abel. . . .

As a result of his rebellion, **Cain was cursed with a dark skin**; he became the father of the **Negroes**, and **those spirits who are not worthy to receive the priesthood are born through his lineage**. He became the first mortal to be cursed as a son of perdition. As a result of his mortal birth he is assured of a tangible body of flesh and bones in eternity, a fact which will enable him to rule over Satan. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, Bookcraft, 1958 edition, p. 102; in the 1966 and 1979 editions, p. 109)

Alvin R. Dyer, assistant to the twelve apostles and later ordained an apostle, spoke on racial issues to the Norwegian Mission gathering in Oslo, Norway, on March 18, 1961. In this talk he said:

We have talked a lot about missionary work and heard the testimonies of those who have spoken. I want to talk to you a little bit now about something that is not missionary work, and **what I say is not to be given to your investigators** by any matter of means. . . . Why is it that you are white and not colored: Have you ever asked yourself that question? Who had anything to do with your being born into the Church and not born a Chinese or a Hindu, or a Negro? Is God such an unjust person that He would make you white and free and make a Negro cursed under the cursing of Cain that he could not hold the Priesthood of God? . . . Those who have been **cursed** in the **pre-existence** were born through this **lineage of Ham**. . . . Why is a Negro a Negro? . . . The reason that spirits are **born into Negro bodies** is because those **spirits** rejected the Priesthood of God in the **pre-existence**. This is the reason why you have Negroes upon the earth.

You will observe that when Cain was influenced by the power of Lucifer to follow him and to fall down and worship him in the beginning, it was then that . . . Cain rejected the counsel of God. He rejected again the Priesthood as his forebearers had done in the **pre-existence**. Therefore, the **curse of the pre-existence** was made institute **through the loins of Cain**. Consequently, you have the beginning of the race of men and women into which would be born those in the **pre-existence** who had rejected the Priesthood of God. . . . **Ham reinstated the curse of the pre-existence when he rejected the Priesthood of**

Noah, and in consequence of that he preserved the curse on the earth. Therefore, the Negroes to be born thereafter, or **those who were to become Negroes, were to be born through the loins of Ham.**

All of this is according to a well worked-out plan, that these millions and billions of spirits awaiting birth in the **pre-existence** would be born through a channel or race of people. Consequently, **the cursed were to be born through Ham.** (“For What Purpose,” talk by Alvin R. Dyer, Oslo, Norway, March 18, 1961, typed copy in our files. Part of this talk is quoted in *The Church and the Negro*, by John L. Lund, 1967, p. 97)

In a letter dated April 10, 1963, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

According to the doctrine of the church, the Negro, because of **some condition of unfaithfulness in the spirit-or pre-existence**, was not valiant and hence was not denied the mortal probation, but was denied the blessings of the priesthood. (Letter to Joseph H. Henderson; see Appendix C)

Patriarchal Blessings

The LDS concept of race is also present in their Patriarchal Blessings, usually given to members during their teen years. The Patriarch, a man specially appointed to this office, lays his hands on the person’s head and says a special prayer, stating from which line of the twelve tribes of Israel the person descends, as well as giving certain guidelines for life. The person is often promised a full life, happy marriage with children and numerous “callings” (church appointed service), all blessings predicated on faithfulness to the LDS Church.

The lineage for a white member is usually identified as the line of “Ephraim.” American Indians are usually identified as from “Manasseh.” Those born in the favored line of Ephraim are considered to have earned this right in their prior existence in heaven. An example of this type of teaching is found in one of the author’s (Sandra’s) Patriarchal Blessing, given February 10, 1955. It states:

You have **royal blood in your veins** for you are **a descendant** of Father Abraham. You come

from the house of Joseph the favorite son of Jacob who was sold into Egypt and **from the loins of Ephraim. . . . You were valiant in your first estate [pre-mortal life]** and the Lord has **rewarded** you for it. You struggled valiantly that we might have our free agency and the Lord held you in reserve to come forth at this late time to the home of goodly parents. . .

The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, under EPHRAIM, states:

For Latter-day Saints, **identification of a person’s lineage in latter-day Covenant Israel** is made under the hands of inspired Patriarchs through patriarchal blessings that **declare lineage**. Elder John A. Widtsoe, an Apostle, declared, “In giving a blessing the patriarch may declare **our lineage**—that is, that we are of **Israel**, therefore of the family of Abraham, and of a specific tribe of Jacob. In the great majority of cases, **Latter-day Saints are of the tribe of Ephraim**, the tribe to which has been committed the leadership of the Latter-day work. Whether this lineage is of blood or adoption it does not matter . . .

The patriarchal blessings of most Latter-day Saints indicate that they are literal, blood descendants of Abraham and of Israel. Those who are not literal descendants are adopted into the family of Abraham when they receive baptism and confirmation (see Law of Adoption). They are then entitled to all the rights and privileges of heirs (TPJS [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*], pp. 149-50). This doctrine of adoption was understood by ancient prophets and apostles . . . (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 2, p. 461)

One of the curious aspects of these blessings is that some people in the same family have been declared to be from different blood lines. Writing in 1960, Joseph Fielding Smith, tenth president of the LDS Church, explained how this could happen:

Question: “I wish to receive an answer to the following question: Is it possible for all the members of a family, including father and mother, to be of the tribe of Ephraim and one son in that family to be of the tribe of Manasseh?”

Answer: It is very possible that a patriarch in giving blessings to a family may declare that **one or more may be of a different lineage from the**

others through the inspiration which he receives. We have in our archives, blessings showing this difference to exist in families. Without giving this question careful thought one might conclude that the patriarch had spoken without inspiration, but such would be an incorrect conclusion.

The fact is that we, each and all, have descended through a **mixed lineage**. . . . Therefore, through the scattering of Israel among the nations, **the blood of Israel was mixed with the Gentile nations**, fulfilling the promise made to Abraham. Most of the members of the Church, although they are designated as descendants of Abraham, through Israel, also have in their veins **Gentile blood**. This is to say, no one is a direct descendant through Ephraim through each generation, or through Manasseh or any other one of the sons of Jacob, without having acquired **the blood of some other tribe in Israel** in that descent. . . .

The Book of Mormon states that **Joseph Smith the Prophet was a descendant of Joseph**, son of Jacob. By revelation we learn also that he is of the tribe of **Ephraim**, but it is evident that he also had **some Gentile blood** in him, for it is written in the Book of Mormon, that it came forth, “by way of the Gentile,” and it came by Joseph Smith. It is reasonable, therefore, to understand that we one and all have come through a **mixed relationship, and that the blood of Ephraim and also of Manasseh could be in the veins of many of us**, likewise the blood of others of the twelve tribes of Israel, and that none of us had come through the ages with clear exclusive descent from father to son through any one of the tribes. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, vol. 3, Deseret Book, 1960, pp. 61-64)

LDS author Irene Bates discussed the issues of race, lineage and patriarchal blessings in an article for *Dialogue*:

Following the death of Joseph Smith the policy of the church was to exclude blacks from ordination to the priesthood and from Latter-day Saint temples. Although some black members of the church were given patriarchal blessings, **declarations of lineage were omitted** as a matter of policy. But guidelines were not consistent, and the question remained the subject of debate. In a 24 September 1972 interview, President Harold B. Lee said “skin color is not what keeps the Negro from

the priesthood. It [is] strictly a matter of **lineage** and involves only African Negroes. In comparison, he noted, dark or black islanders, such as Fijians, Tongans, Samoans, or Maoris, are all permitted full rights to the priesthood.”

That color did have a negative connotation, however, can be seen in several early blessings referring to native Americans. The Saints were told they should preach the gospel to the Lamanites (Mormon terminology for American Indians) to enable them to “become a white and delightful people.” . . . The expression “white and delightful” is included in all but the latest, 1981, edition of the Book of Mormon, where the phrase now reads, “a pure and delightful people” (2 Ne. 30:6). On 8 June 1978, however, priesthood and temple blessings were extended to “every worthy man in the Church . . . without regard for race or color” (D&C OD 2). . . . It would be interesting to survey patriarchal blessings given to black members of the church both before and after the 1978 declaration.

Although declaration of lineage is still one of the salient features of all patriarchal blessings, more sophisticated knowledge may demand some adjustment of the earlier claims of pure blood relationship. (“Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma,” by Irene M. Bates, *Dialogue*, vol. 26, no. 3, Fall 1993, pp. 7-8)

As recently as 1998 Apostle Richard Scott taught that one’s race is based on past performance. Speaking at the LDS Conference he said:

Your Heavenly Father **assigned** you to be born into a **specific lineage** from which you received your **inheritance of race**, culture, and traditions. That lineage can provide a rich heritage and great reasons to rejoice. (“Removing Barriers to Happiness,” *Ensign*, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, May, 1998, p. 86)

Changing the Blood

One of the more bizarre doctrines that Joseph Smith taught was that a Gentile must literally have his blood changed so that he is actually of the seed of Abraham:

. . . as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the **literal** seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; . . .

while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a **Gentile**, is to **purge out the old blood**, and make him **actually** of the seed of Abraham. (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, p. 380)

Brigham Young, the second President of the LDS Church, approved of Smith's teaching:

Again, if a pure Gentile firmly believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and yields obedience to it, in such a case I will give you the words of the Prophet Joseph—"When the Lord pours out the Holy Ghost upon that individual he will have spasms, and you would think that he was going into fits."

Joseph said that the Gentile blood was actually cleansed out of their veins, and the blood of Jacob made to circulate in them; and the revolution and change in the system were so great that it caused the beholder to think they were going into fits. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, p. 269)

According to this doctrine we would expect that a Jew would have the proper blood, but Brigham Young taught that even a Jew must have his blood changed:

If a Jew comes into this Church, and honestly professes to be a Saint, a follower of Christ, and if the blood of Judah is in his veins, he will apostatize. He may have been born and bred a Jew, . . . and have openly professed to be a Jew all his days; but I will tell you a secret—there is not a particle of the blood of Judaism in him, if he has become a true Christian, a Saint of God; for if there is, he will most assuredly leave the Church of Christ, or that blood will be purged out of his veins. We have men among us who were Jews, . . . here is brother Neibaur; do I believe there is one particle of the blood of Judah in his veins? No, not so much as could be seen on the point of the finest cambric needle, through a microscope with a magnifying power of two millions. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, p. 142)

Armand Mauss observed:

With the passage of time, especially in recent decades, authoritative Mormon discourse has placed less emphasis on the salience of **literal lineage** and more emphasis on the potentially universal inclusiveness of God's ancient covenant with Abraham. As this change of emphasis continues,

the logical paradox is on the way to resolution. After all, if embracing the gospel of Christ is all that really matters for full participation in the Abrahamic covenant, why should one's **genetic** lineage be given any salience whatsoever? Yet the earlier focus on the importance of **literal Israelite** has remained influential in the thinking of many Mormons, even into the twenty-first century, seemingly as a residue of the racialist interpretations of history once so common in America as well as in Europe. (*All Abraham's Children*, p. 3)

Mauss further commented:

During the life and ministry of Joseph Smith, Mormonism shared several millennial expectations with its Protestant American environment. These included the gathering of both the Jews and the "lost tribes" of Israel, with a special vanguard role for the tribe of Ephraim in that gathering. . . . Like many other Americans, they also identified the American Indians as descendants of the lost tribes. With the exodus to Utah in the middle of the nineteenth century, Mormon conceptions about lineage evolved into a fuller racialist explanation of history generally and of the Saints' own destiny in particular. This racialist framework synthesized three elements: (1) an emerging and expanded understanding about premortal life; (2) British Israelism; and (3) Anglo-Saxon triumphalism. Anglo-Saxon triumphalism and, to a lesser extent, British Israelism had gained widespread popularity among intellectual elites in America, as well as in parts of Europe.

By the early decades of the twentieth century, a racialist historical narrative had developed in which some lineages were favored over others by deity or destiny or both. The Mormon version of this narrative provided a rank-ordering of lineages that maintained the preeminent position of Mormons as mainly Anglo-Saxon descendants of Ephraim, charged with the responsibility of building and ruling the eventual kingdom of God on earth. (*All Abraham's Children*, pp. 35-36)

Seed of Cain

After the Mormons moved west, Brigham Young grew very adamant in his disapproval of blacks. Curiously, he never connected the curse of Cain with failed performance in the pre-existence. Instead he

declared that “The spirits that live in these tabernacles were as pure as the heavens, when they entered them” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, p. 105). However, this position put him at odds with the second Article of Faith which maintained that men are “punished for their own sins.” His statement would mean that blacks today are carrying the burden of Cain’s sin, not their own.

He repeatedly stated that Cain’s posterity would not receive the priesthood until all the rest of Adam’s posterity had been offered the priesthood. In 1854 Brigham Young taught:

When **all the other children of Adam** have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and **have received their resurrection from the dead**, then it will be time enough to **remove the curse from Cain and his posterity**. He deprived his brother of the privilege of pursuing his journey through life, and of extending his kingdom by multiplying upon the earth; and because he did this, **he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God**. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, p. 143; photo on page 26)

Preaching in 1859, at the October Conference of the LDS Church, Brigham Young declared:

Cain slew his brother . . . and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the **flat nose and black skin**. . . . How long is that race to endure the **dreadful curse** that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and **they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises** and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the **last ones** of the residue of Adam’s children are brought up to that favourable position, the children of Cain **cannot** receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. They were the first that were cursed, and they will be the **last** from whom the curse will be removed. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, pp. 290-291; photo on page 27)

On another occasion, Young maintained:

The Lamanites or Indians are just as much the children of our Father and God as we are. So also

are the Africans. But we are also the children of adoption through obedience to the Gospel of his Son. Why are so many of the inhabitants of the earth **cursed** with a s[k]in of **blackness**? It comes in consequence of their **fathers** rejecting the power of the Holy Priesthood, and the law of God. They will go down to death. And **when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the Holy Priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain**, and they will then come up and possess the priesthood, and receive all the blessings which we now are entitled to. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 272; photo on page 28)

There is evidence that as early as 1836 Mormons were associating a black skin with the curse on Cain. A. O. Smoot told of the time a black man appeared to LDS Apostle David Patten, claiming to be Cain:

President Joseph F. Smith, Salt Lake City:

Dear Brother: In relation to the subject of **the visit of Cain to Brother David W. Patten in the State of Tennessee**, . . . It was in the evening, just twilight, when Brother Patten rode up to my father’s house, . . . My mother having first noticed his changed appearance said: “Brother Patten, are you sick?” He replied that he was not, but had just met with a very remarkable personage **who had represented himself as being Cain**, who murdered his brother, Abel. He went on to tell the circumstances as near as I can recall in the following language:

As I was riding along the road on my mule I suddenly noticed a very strange personage walking beside me. He walked along beside me for about two miles. His head was about even with my shoulders as I sat in my saddle. He wore no clothing, but was covered with hair. **His skin was very dark** . . .

Your friend and Brother, A. O. Smoot (*Life of David W. Patten: the First Apostolic Martyr*, by Lycurgus A. Wilson, Deseret News, 1900, pp. 57-59)

The LDS magazine *Juvenile Instructor* ran a series of articles on race from September to November in 1868. In the October issue we read:

We will first inquire into the results of the approbation or displeasure of God upon a people,

Speech by Brigham Young delivered on December 3, 1854.
Journal of Discourses, vol. 2, pages 142-143

in authority have been cast into one mould, and there they are stereotyped in cast iron. You may break their iron bands, and set them at liberty, and but few of them will receive the Gospel.

Why is this? Because their fathers heard the Gospel, and most of them rejected it; and the curse of the Almighty is upon them, and upon their posterity until they have wrought out their salvation by suffering; for the last shall be first, and the first shall be last. A nation which has had the privilege of receiving the everlasting covenant, and has rejected it, will be saved in the kingdom of God, but it will be among the very last which will receive the Gospel. Perhaps you will marvel at this. It is no marvel to me, because I perceive natural principles and sound reason for all these providences of the Almighty. All His providences to His people upon the face of the whole earth, are perfectly philosophical. Then recollect, there is a chance for all who are honest in heart. What shall we do with those who are dishonest? Let them remain with the good until the time comes to cast them away, and gather out the good.

We might say much on this point, showing you why things are as they are concerning the inhabitants of the earth receiving or rejecting the Gospel. Do you suppose they believe in Jesus Christ at Jerusalem? Can you make a Christian of a Jew? I tell you, nay. If a Jew comes into this Church, and honestly professes to be a Saint, a follower of Christ, and if the blood of Judah is in his veins, he will apostatize. He may have been born and bred a Jew, have the face of a Jew, speak the language of the Jews, and have attended to all the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, and have openly professed to be a Jew all his days; but I will tell you a secret—there is not a particle of the blood

of Judaism in him, if he has become a true Christian, a Saint of God; for if there is, he will most assuredly leave the Church of Christ, or that blood will be purged out of his veins. We have men among us who were Jews, and became converted from Judaism. For instance, here is brother Neibaur; do I believe there is one particle of the blood of Judah in his veins? No, not so much as could be seen on the point of the finest cambric needle, through a microscope with a magnifying power of two millions. This is a secret that you will perhaps find out, in a coming day, to your satisfaction. The Lord knew how to preach to the Jews, and told them what the truth was. You may as well undertake to command the most degraded of these Indian tribes, and give them arms and accoutrements, and try to put them through the regular military exercise, as to preach to the Jews to make them believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jerusalem is not to be redeemed by the soft still voice of the preacher of the Gospel of peace. Why? Because they were once, the blessed of the Lord, the chosen of the Lord, the promised seed. They were the people from among whom should spring the Messiah; and salvation could be found only through that tribe. The Messiah came through them, and they killed him; and they will be the last of all the seed of Abraham to have the privilege of receiving the New and Everlasting Covenant. You may hand out to them gold, you may feed and clothe them, but it is impossible to convert the Jews, until the Lord God Almighty does it.

We have this illustrated in the account of Cain and Abel. Cain conversed with his God every day, and knew all about the plan of creating this earth, for his father told him. But, for the want of humility, and through jealousy, and an anxiety to

possess the kingdom, and to have the whole of it under his own control, and not allow any body else the right to say one word, what did he do? He killed his brother. The Lord put a mark on him; and there are some of his children in this room. When all the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity. He deprived his brother of the privilege of pursuing his journey through life, and of extending his kingdom by multiplying upon the earth; and because he did this, he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God.

Here are the Lamanites, another example. Their wickedness was not so great as those who slew the Son of God. Jesus revealed himself to them after he was slain, preached to them the Gospel. But in the fourth generation the Priesthood was driven from their midst, and after that, the laws, ordinances, and power of the Gospel ceased to be with them. Is their curse as great as that of those in Palestine? No, it is light, in comparison. They began to thirst for each other's blood, and massacred each other, from generation to generation, until they sunk into wickedness, and evil principles the most degrading, and have become loathsome and vile. Still, the curse will be removed from them before it will be removed from the children of Judah; and they will become "a white and delightful people."

Brother Ballantyne, and many of our brethren in distant lands write, "O, how we would rejoice to have the privilege of visiting our mountain home!" I would rather undertake to convert five thousand Lamanites, than

to convert one of those poor miserable creatures whose fathers killed the Savior, and who say, "Amen to the deed," to this day. Yea, I would rather undertake to convert the devil himself, if it were possible.

Then I say to the Elders in those regions, be not astonished if you have to see hard times. And if I had a voice that would reach the ears of all those Elders, I would say, LEAVE THEM, AND COME HOME, THE LORD DOES NOT REQUIRE YOU TO STAY THERE, FOR THEY MUST SUFFER AND BE DAMNED.

Now, sisters, write to your husbands who are in regions where the Gospel has been preached anciently, to come home; and I say to all the Elders who are in lands where the Gospel has been preached previous to our day, come away from that people, and leave them to live and die in their sins and ignorance. For the sins of their fathers are a sweet morsel to them, and they take pleasure in their wickedness; therefore, *let them alone*, and come home, and preach to the Lamanites.

There are many in this city who can bear witness to an incident I will now relate. Last spring, when we visited Walker, the Indian chief, he was dull and sulky, and lay in his tent, and would not come out to meet me. I went into his tent, and the first thing he said was, "Brother Brigham, lay your hands upon me, for my spirit has gone away from me, and I want it to come back again." He was full of anger, for his people had been fighting, and he did not know whether to turn on to the side of peace or of war.

We laid hands upon him, and he felt better. At his request, we sung some "Mormon" hymns, and, as we left his tent, he was full of the good Spirit, and would not injure this people, no, not one particle. He was full of kindness, and love to God, and to all His works. He travelled with us

Speech by Brigham Young delivered on October 9, 1859.
Journal of Discourses, vol. 7, pages 290-291

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birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation, as much so as Pharaoh was fore-ordained to be a wicked man, or as was Jesus to be the Saviour of the world because he was the oldest son in the family.

Abraham was ordained to be the father of the faithful,—that is, he was ordained to come forth at a certain period; and when he had proved himself faithful to his God, and would resist the worship of idols, and trample them under his feet in the presence of their king, and set up the worship of the true God, he obtained the appellation of "father of the faithful." "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." He knew, millions of years before this world was framed, that Pharaoh would be a wicked man. He saw—he understood; his work was before him, and he could see it from the beginning to the end. And so scrutinizing, penetrating, and expanded are his visions and knowledge, that not even a hair of our head can fall to the ground unnoticed by him. He foreknew what Joseph, who was sold into Egypt, would do. Joseph was foreordained to be the temporal saviour of his father's house, and the seed of Joseph are ordained to be the spiritual and temporal saviours of all the house of Israel in the latter days. Joseph's seed has mixed itself with all the seed of man upon the face of the whole earth. The great majority of those who are now before me are the descendants of that Joseph who was sold. Joseph Smith, junior, was foreordained to come through the loins of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and so on down through the Prophets and Apostles; and thus he came forth in the last days to be a minister of salvation, and to hold the keys of the last dispensation of the fulness of times.

The whole object of the creation of

this world is to exalt the intelligencies that are placed upon it, that they may live, endure, and increase for ever and ever. We are not here to quarrel and contend about the things of this world, but we are here to subdue and beautify it. Let every man and woman worship their God with all their heart. Let them pay their devotions and sacrifices to him, the Supreme, and the Author of their existence. Do all the good you can to your fellow-creatures. You are flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. God has created of one blood all the nations and kingdoms of men that dwell upon all the face of the earth: black, white, copper-coloured, or whatever their colour, customs, or religion, they have all sprung from the same origin; the blood of all is from the same element. Adam and Eve are the parents of all pertaining to the flesh, and I would not say that they are not also the parents of our spirits.

You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncivil, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind. The first man that committed the odious crime of killing one of his brethren will be cursed the longest of any one of the children of Adam. Cain slew his brother. Cain might have been killed, and that would have put a termination to that line of human beings. This was not to be, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race—that they should be the "servant of servants;" and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree. How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them,

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and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the last ones of the residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favourable position, the children of Cain cannot receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. They were the first that were cursed, and they will be the last from whom the curse will be removed. When the residue of the family of Adam come up and receive their blessings, then

the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will receive blessings in like proportion.

I have but just commenced my remarks, and have presented you a few texts; and it is now time to adjourn. The exertion required to speak to you somewhat at length seems to injure me. I will therefore stop.

I bless you all, inasmuch as you have desired and striven to do right, to revere the name of Deity, and to exalt the character of his Son on the earth. I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ! Amen.

DEVOTEDNESS TO "MORMONISM"—RESPONSIBILITY.

Remarks by President D. H. WELLS, made in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, October 16, 1859.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

Brethren and Sisters,—I arise before you this afternoon without having any particular subject on my mind upon which to speak, hoping and believing that the Lord will help me, that I may say what I shall say to your edification and comfort.

"Mormonism" presents themes sufficient for our consideration at all times and upon all occasions. We never need be at a loss for a subject, for there is no part of it that we can contemplate that is not fitting and suitable to almost any occasion that may arise.

I feel that the principles of the holy Gospel are all-absorbing. In them are concentrated all my hopes of happiness—my life, my business, all my

interests, both temporal and spiritual, in time and eternity, and I trust will ever be. There is nothing else that I esteem worthy to engage my attention in comparison, and I have no hopes outside my interest in this kingdom, neither do I wish to have.

When I embraced "Mormonism," I let go everything else; and since then I have had no wish or desire but to attend to those things required at my hands. I take peculiar pleasure and delight in doing anything that is for the advancement of this kingdom.

I feel an ardent anxiety to see Israel rise triumphant over every opposing object that may lie in their onward course. With me it is "Hosanna!" and "Glory to God!" when

Speech by Brigham Young delivered on August 19, 1866.

Journal of Discourses, vol. 11, page 272

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REDEMPTION OF CAIN.

best light they have ; and they contain all who have lived upon the earth from the beginning to this time, and they are capacious enough to receive all who will live to the end of time. John Wesley, and other great ecclesiastical reformers, could not attain to the same glory, by their own acts, while in the flesh that they would have done had the fullness of the Holy Priesthood been upon the earth in their day, and they had possessed all the glory and power and keys of it, and lived faithful to its requirements all their days. They cannot be crowned as Gods, even the Sons of God. Will they be saved? They will. In a kingdom? in a good kingdom? A kingdom full of glory, full of light and joy, more than ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. While they lived it never entered into their hearts to conceive of the glory they do or will enjoy. If they have committed wrongs, and repented of them, the blood of the Savior will cleanse them from all sin, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is a sin unto death. The Apostle John writes, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death. I do not say that ye shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin unto death."

I have endeavored to give you a few items relating to the celestial kingdom of God and to the other kingdoms which the Lord has prepared for his children. The Lamanites or Indians are just as much the children of our Father and God as

we are. So also are the Africans. But we are also the children of adoption through obedience to the Gospel of his Son. Why are so many of the inhabitants of the earth cursed with a sin of blackness? It comes in consequence of their fathers rejecting the power of the Holy Priesthood, and the law of God. They will go down to death. And when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the Holy Priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will then come up and possess the priesthood, and receive all the blessings which we now are entitled to. The volition of the creature is free; this is a law of their existence, and the Lord cannot violate his own law; were he to do that, he would cease to be God. He has placed life and death before his children, and it is for them to choose. If they choose life, they receive the blessings of life; if they chose death, they must abide the penalty. This is a law which has always existed from all eternity, and will continue to exist throughout all the eternities to come. Every intelligent being must have the power of choice, and God brings forth the results of the acts of his creatures to promote his kingdom and subserve his purposes in the salvation and exaltation of his children. If the Lord could have his own way, he would have all the human family to enter into his church and kingdom, receive the Holy Priesthood and come into the celestial kingdom of our Father and God, by the power of their own choice.

May the Lord bless you. Amen.

starting with the belief that **a black skin is a mark of the curse of Heaven** placed upon some portions of mankind. . . . We understand that when God made man in his own image and pronounced him very good, that he made him **white**. We have no record of any of God's favored servants being of a black race. . . .

When God **curled Cain** for murdering his brother Abel, He **set a mark** upon him that all meeting him might know him. . . . After the flood this **curse** fell upon the seed of Shem, through the sin of their father, and his descendants bear it to this day. . . .

We are told in the Book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price, that Egypt was discovered by a woman, who was **a daughter of Ham**, the son of Noah. . . .

The **pure Negro**, as represented by the people of Guinea and its neighboring countries, is generally regarded as the unmixed **descendant of Ham**. . . . Their skin is quite black, their hair woolly and black, **their intelligence stunted**, and they appear never to have arisen from the most savage state of barbarism. (*Juvenile Instructor*, October 15, 1868, p. 157; photo on next page)

The November 15, 1868, *Juvenile Instructor* looked forward to the day

when all men capable of receiving the priesthood, enlightened by the spirit of God and guided by its whisperings, will lose their extravagances of character and appearance, and become **"a white and delightful people"** physically as well as morally. (*Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 3, no. 22, November 15, 1868, p. 173)

Preaching in 1882, LDS President John Taylor equated the descendants of Cain with representatives of the devil:

Why is it, in fact, that we should have a **devil**? Why did not the Lord kill him long ago? . . . He needed the devil and great many of those who do his bidding just to keep . . . our dependence upon God, . . . When he destroyed the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, he suffered **a descendant of Cain** to come through the flood in order that he [the devil] might be properly represented upon the earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 23, October 29, 1882, p. 336)

A Black Devil?

Early Mormons believed the devil to be black in appearance. In 1980 *Sunstone* had an article entitled "The Curse Of Cain And Other Stories: Blacks In Mormon Folklore." In it we read:

Legends are important, anthropologists tell us, not just because they reflect a society's dominant concerns and values, but also because they serve as a charter, or warrant, or justification for belief and as a historical precedent for action. From them we learn what we should believe and how we should behave.

For example, many Mormons believe that **a black skin** is the result of a **curse** placed on Cain and his descendants. **Black** is thus associated with **evil**, an association strengthened by our legends. One of the stories current among nineteenth-century Mormons was that when people **apostatized** from the Church **their skin color darkened**. Inversely, today some tales tell us that when blacks join the Church their skin lightens. The many stories circulating in the Church about experiences with **evil spirits** or the **devil** further strengthen the association of **black** with **evil**. These stories speak of a dark power, a dark form, a dark cloud or mist, or an overpowering blackness. Frequently the evil spirit of the devil is clothed in black, and in some stories **he is black himself**. President John Taylor once said that the black race was preserved through the flood "because it was necessary that the devil should have a representation upon the earth as well as God" . . .

Some stories tell not of the devil, but of Cain, who also appears as **a black man**. As early as 1835, Apostle David Patten claimed to have encountered Cain while on a mission in Tennessee. Today Cain stories still circulate. ("The Curse Of Cain And Other Stories: Blacks In Mormon Folklore," by William A. Wilson and Richard C. Poulsen, *Sunstone*, November 1980, p. 9)

The concept of the devil being black was reinforced in the early LDS temple ritual which has since been removed. In discussing changes in the temple ceremony, LDS scholar Keith E. Norman observed:

For the Juvenile Instructor.

Man and his Varieties,

THE NEGRO RACE.

AMONGST the many causes that have contributed to change the appearance of the human family and make mankind appear to be of different races, we must consider the blessing or curse of God the greatest of all. Then add to this, difference of climate, variety of food, entirely opposite modes of life, either civilized or savage, stationary or wandering, combined with the results of the varied religions existing among men, and we shall be able to understand why there is so great a diversity in the human family.



We will first inquire into the results of the approbation or displeasure of God upon a people, starting with the belief that a black skin is a mark of the curse of Heaven placed upon some portions of mankind. Some, however, will argue that a black skin is not a curse, nor a white skin a blessing. In fact, some have been so foolish as to believe and say that a black skin is a blessing, and that the negro is the finest type of a perfect man that exists on the earth; but to us such teachings are foolishness. We understand that when God made man in his own image and pronounced him very good, that he made him white. We have no record of any of God's favored servants being of a black race. All His prophets and apostles belonged to the most handsome race on the face of the earth—Israel, who still, as represented in the scattered tribe of Judah, bear the impress of their former beauty. In this race was born His Son Jesus, who, we are told was very lovely, and "in the express image of his Father's person," and every angel who ever brought a message of God's mercy to man was beautiful to look upon, clad in the purest white and with a countenance bright as the noonday sun.

When God cursed Cain for murdering his brother Abel, He set a mark upon him that all meeting him might know him. No mark could be so plain to his fellow-men as a black skin.

This was the mark God placed upon him, and which his children bore. After the flood this curse fell upon the seed of Ham, through the sin of their father, and his descendants bear it to this day. The Bible tells us but little of the races that sprung from Ham, but from that little, and from the traditions of various tribes, we are led to believe that from him came the Canaanites, the Philistines, the Egyptians and most of the earliest inhabitants of Africa.

We are told in the Book of Abraham in the *Pearl of Great Price*, that Egypt was discovered by a woman, who was a daughter of Ham, the son of Noah. This was probably the first portion of Africa inhabited by men after the flood, it being the nearest to the land (Asia Minor) where the ark rested and the children of Noah first settled. From Egypt the families of men gradually spread out to the southward, up the river Nile and along the borders of the Red Sea, and westward by the shores of the Mediterranean.

The pure Negro, as represented by the people of Guinea and its neighboring countries, is generally regarded as the unmixed descendant of Ham. Our engraving of a Negro is of this type. Their skin is quite black, their hair woolly and black, their intelligence stunted, and they appear never to have arisen from the most savage state of barbarism. But it must not be supposed that all the inhabitants of Africa are of this unmixed black class, for it is not so; some of the mountain tribes of that continent approach to nearly white. Hence, we sometimes hear travelers speak of white Kafirs, white Arabs, &c. There are also quite a number of African tribes who vary in color from olive to dark brown and reddish black. They are also as varied in their size, height and build as they are in color. We will tell you some little of two of these African races known as the Abyssinians and Kafirs.

Abyssinia lies on the east coast of Africa, immediately south of Nubia, and near the mouth of the Red Sea, opposite the southern portion of Arabia. The people who inhabit this country are of various races, from tribes nearly resembling Negroes, to others who are very much like Bedouin Arabs. Some of these latter people claim to be descended from the Hebrews. We do not put much trust in this story, though King Solomon doubtless traded with them, as he established a port to carry on commerce with Africa at the northern extremity of the Red Sea. It is certainly possible that some of the Jewish traders settled in Abyssinia, and forgetful of the law of Moses, married some of the dark-skinned daughters of the land, who have the reputation of being very beautiful and finely made. In later days, after the captivity in Babylon, some of the returned Israelites may have wandered into Africa, as it is almost certain they did soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the scattering of the Jews. It is however, much more probable that the greater portion of those people are the offspring of a mixed race of Arabs and of a darker people, kindred to the Negro. Traces of Arab customs, traditions, and words are prevalent all over Africa except in its extreme South-western borders. The Arabs were great wanderers and traders; Abyssinia and Nubia lie opposite their native land or the other side of the Red sea, which was by no means difficult to cross. Many of them doubtless settled on the African shore, and not being restrained by the Mosaic law of marriage, freely mixed with the people and permanently established themselves in the country. When Mohammed came, and his followers compelled adherence to their faith at the edge of the sword, Africa became the field of many of their semi-warlike, semi-religious missions. This overrunning of the country by these foreigners no doubt produced a great change in the appearance of the people, and a number of races rose up from Arab fathers and Negro mothers whose children now form a great portion of the inhabitants of the Barbary States, Nubia,

Furthermore, modifying the endowment is nothing new. It has been changed numerous times in the past. First standardized under Brigham Young's direction, it took the better part of a day to perform an endowment in pioneer times. Even before the most recent update, I can think of a number of changes implemented just since I have been attending the temple: the congregation no longer sings a hymn, the **reference to the devil having a black skin has been dropped**, he no longer specified the amount of his salary offer to the minister, members are no longer required to wear the old style ceremonial garments in the temple, and the covenant concerning chastity has been modified to specifically rule out homosexual acts. ("A Kinder, Gentler Mormonism: Moving Beyond The Violence Of Our Past," by Keith E. Norman, *Sunstone*, August 1990, p. 10)

Apostates Become Black?

Not only was the devil believed to be black, but those who apostatized from the LDS Church also became black. Brigham Young stated:

I feel to bless this people, and they are a God-blessed people. Look at them, and see the difference from their condition a few years ago! Brethren who have been on missions, can you see any difference in this people from the time you went away until your return? [Voices: "Yes."] You can see men and women who are sixty or seventy years of age looking young and handsome; but let them **apostatize**, and they will become gray-haired, wrinkled, and **black, just like the Devil**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Brigham Young, October 7, 1857, vol. 5, p. 332)

Apostle George Q. Cannon told of an experience of a man turning black after the brethren had tried to cast the evil spirits out of one sister:

Still she seemed to be surrounded by some evil influence. This puzzled us, for we knew the spirit was cast out, but we learned the cause afterwards. Just then it was revealed to us that if we went to sleep the devil would enter one of the brethren.

My nephew, Melvin Brown, neglected the warning, and composed himself to sleep in an arm chair, while we were still watching with the sister. Directly he did so the devil entered into him, and he became black in the face, and nearly suffocated.

(*Gems for the Young Folks*, compiled by George Q. Cannon, p. 72, fourth book of the Faith-Promoting Series, Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881)

Preaching in 1874, Orson Pratt declared that Mormons who oppose polygamy would become black:

Now I want to prophecy a little. . . . I want to prophecy that all men and women who oppose the revelation which God has given in relation to polygamy will find themselves in darkness; . . .

Now, if you want to get into darkness, brethren and sisters, begin to oppose this revelation. Sisters, you begin to say before your husbands, or husbands you begin to say before your wives, "I do not believe in the principle of polygamy, and I intend to instruct my children against it." Oppose it in this way, and teach your children to do the same, and if you do not become as **dark as midnight** there is no truth in Mormonism. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 17, p. 225)

In the *Juvenile Instructor*, an early LDS magazine, we read:

The mark set upon Cain was without doubt such a mark as was placed upon the descendants of the rebellious sons of Lehi . . . We are expressly informed that "the Lord did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them." They were to be made loathsome to the people of God, unless they repented of their iniquities. Not only did this curse fall upon them, but all they who intermarried with them, or mingled with them, were cursed with the same blackness and loathsomeness; . . .

From this it is very clear that the mark which was set upon the descendants of Cain was a skin of blackness, and there can be no doubt that this was the mark that Cain himself received; in fact, it has been noticed in our day that **men who have lost the spirit of the Lord**, and from whom his blessings have been withdrawn **have turned dark** to such an extent as to excite the comments of all who have known them. (*Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 26, p. 635)

Through the Flood

Mormonism has traditionally taught that the black race was carried through the flood by the

descendants of Ham and Egyptus, a black woman. The Book of Abraham states:

Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of **Ham**, and was a partaker of the blood of the **Canaanites** by birth.

From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the **Canaanites** was preserved in the land.

The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of **Ham**, and the daughter of Egyptus, . . . who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, **from Ham**, sprang that race which **preserved the curse in the land**. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham, 1:21-24)

In 1880 Apostle Erastus Snow preached:

. . . through this blessing of Noah upon Shem, the Priesthood continued through his seed; while **the offspring of Ham inherited a curse**, and it was because, as a revelation teaches, some of the **blood of Cain** became mingled with that of **Ham's family**, and hence they inherited that **curse**. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 21, p. 370)

John Taylor, third president of the LDS Church, believed that the cursed lineage was preserved through the flood by Ham's descendants. Preaching on Sunday, August 28, 1881, he stated:

And after the flood we are told that the **curse** that had been pronounced upon **Cain** was continued through **Ham's wife**, as he had married a wife of **that seed**. And why did it pass through the flood? Because it was necessary that the **devil should have a representation upon the earth** as well as God; and that man should be a free agent to act for himself, and that all men might have the opportunity of receiving or rejecting the truth, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 22, p. 304)

While a number of changes have been made in Apostle Bruce R. McConkie's book, *Mormon Doctrine*, since its first printing, the 1979 edition still teaches that the cursed black race was preserved through the flood by Egyptus. Under the heading EGYPTUS we read:

See CAIN, HAM, NEGROES. Two women of note, a mother and her daughter, both carried the

name **Egyptus**. The mother, **a descendant of Cain**, was the **wife of Ham**; the daughter was the mother of Pharaoh, the first ruler of Egypt. Abraham says that in the Chaldean tongue Egyptus "signifies that which is **forbidden**," meaning apparently that Ham married outside the approved lineage (Abra. 1:20-27; Gen. 6:2). (*Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R. McConkie, Bookcraft, 1979 edition, p. 214)

Under the heading of HAM, McConkie states:

See CAIN, EGYPTUS, NEGROES, PRE-EXISTENCE, PRIESTHOOD. Through **Ham** (a name meaning **black**) "the blood of the Canaanites was preserved" through the flood, he having married **Egyptus, a descendant of Cain**. (Abra. 1:20-27.) **Ham was cursed**, apparently for marrying into the **forbidden lineage**, and the effects of the **curse** passed to his son, Canaan. (Gen. 9:25.) **Ham's descendants include the Negroes**, who originally were barred from holding the priesthood but have been able to do so since June, 1978. (*Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R. McConkie, Bookcraft, 1979 edition, p. 343)

One of the curious aspects of the LDS teachings is that they claim to be literal descendents of Ephraim (see section on Patriarchal Blessings). Since Ephraim descended from an Egyptian, this would mean that they have at least a "drop" of black blood in them. This would supposedly have barred them from the priesthood (see Book of Abraham 1:21-24). Hugh Nibley reinforced the teaching that Mormons descend from Ham through Asenath, mother of Ephraim:

Alma 10:2: "I am Amulek, . . . a descendant of Aminadi, . . . and Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi." He was proud of his genealogy. And here we have an extremely important genealogical note. **Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh**, who was **half Egyptian**. His mother was **Asenath**, who was of the **blood of Ham**, a pure Egyptian. She had to be—her father was a high priest of Heliopolis. [Lehi] was a descendant of Manasseh whose twin brother was **Ephraim**. We claim that **we are descended from him**. He was also a son of Asenath, the **Egyptian woman**. . . . ("Teachings of the Book of Mormon" — Semester 1: Transcripts of [29])

Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University, 1988-1990. Introduction and 1 Nephi 1 Mosiah 5. By Hugh Nibley, FARMS, 1993)

According to this, no Mormon could have held the priesthood prior to 1978, including Joseph Smith.

“Death on the Spot”

Mormons were counseled very strongly not to intermarry with blacks as it would mean their children would be barred from the priesthood. The early leaders taught that anyone with black ancestry, no matter how remote, was barred from ordination, the temple and exaltation/godhood.

When Brigham Young, who was both governor of the territory and president of the church, gave an address before the legislative assembly of the Territory of Utah on January 6, 1852, he emphatically warned his people against intermarriage. He even went so far as to suggest that any white member who marries a black should be put to death:

The Lord said I will not kill Cane But I will put a **mark** upon him and it is seen in the [face?] of every **Negro** on the Earth And it is the decree of God that that mark shall remain upon the **seed of Cane & the Curse** untill all the seed of Abel should be re[deem?]ed and Cane will not receive the priesthood ~~untitl~~ or salvation untill all the seed of Abel are Redeemed. **Any man having one drop of the seed of Cain in him Cannot hold the priesthood & if no other Prophet ever spake it Before I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ. . . .**

Let me consent to day to mingle my seed with the seed of Cane. It would Bring the same curse upon me . . . And if any man **mingles his seed** with the seed of Cane the ownly way he could get rid of it or have salvation would be to Come forward & **have his head Cut off & spill his Blood upon the ground. It would also take the life of his Children. . . .**

Their is not one of the seed of old Cane that is permitted to rule & reign over the seed of Abel And you nor I cannot Help it. . . . I am opposed to the present system of slavery. The Negro Should serve the seed of Abram but it should be done right. Dont abuse the Negro & treat him Cruel.

It has been argued here that many of the Jews were Black. **Whenever the seed of Judah mingled with the seed of Cane they lost their priesthood & all Blessings.**

As an Ensample let the Presidency, Twelve Seventies High Priest Bishops & all the Authorities say now we will all go & **minge with the seed of Cane** and they may have all the privileges they want. We lift our hands to heaven in support of this. **That moment we loose the priesthood & all Blessings & we would not be redeemed untill Cane was.** I will never admit of it for a moment.

. . . I will not admit of the Devil ruling at all. I will not Consent for the seed of Cane to vote for me or my Brethren. . . . Any is a Citizens Black white or red and if the Jews Come here with a part of the Canaanite Blood in them they are Citizens & shall have their rights but not to rule for me or my Brother. Those persons from the Islands & foreign Countries know nothing about Governing the people. The Canaanite cannot have wisdom to do things as the white man has. We must guard against all Evil. I am not going to let this people damn themselves as long as I can help it. (Address by Brigham Young, as recorded in *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, vol. 4, typescript, edited by Scott G. Kenney, Signature Books, 1983, p. 97; see Appendix A for typescript of entire speech)

Lester E. Bush Jr. an LDS historian, made these observations about Young's address to the legislature:

Though Brigham Young reaffirmed his stand on priesthood denial to the Negro on many occasions, by far the most striking of the known statements of his position was included in an address to the Territorial legislature, January 6, 1852, recorded in Wilford Woodruff's journal of that date. In this gubernatorial address, Young appears to both confirm himself as the instigator of the priesthood policy, and to bear testimony to its inspired origin . . . (“Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview,” by Lester E. Bush Jr., *Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 1, Spring 1973, p. 26)

Brigham Young, preaching in 1863, taught that anyone having intercourse with a black should be put to death:

The rank, rabid abolitionists, whom I call black-hearted Republicans, have set the whole national fabric on fire. . . . I am no abolitionist, neither am I a pro-slavery man; . . . The Southerners make the negroes, and the Northerners worship them; . . .

Shall I tell you the **law of God** in regard to the African race? If the **white man** who belongs to the chosen seed **mixes his blood with the seed of Cain**, the penalty, under the law of God, is **death on the spot. This will always be so.** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, p. 110; see photo on next page)

In a council meeting of the LDS Apostles, August 22, 1895, Apostle George Q. Cannon, who served as first counselor to President John Taylor, stated:

That the **seed of Cain** could not receive the priesthood nor act in any offices of the priesthood until the seed of Abel should come forward and take precedence over Cain's offspring; and that **any white man who mingled his seed with that of Cain should be killed**, and thus prevent any of the seed of Cain coming in possession of the priesthood. ("Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," by Lester E. Bush Jr., *Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 33)

On December 15, 1897, this idea was also discussed in a council meeting of the LDS Apostles:

President Cannon said he had understood President Taylor to say that a man who had the priesthood who would marry a woman of the **accursed seed** that if the law of the Lord were administered upon him, **he would be killed, and his offspring**, for the reason that the Lord had determined that the seed of Cain should not receive the priesthood in the flesh; and this was the penalty put upon Cain, because if he had received the priesthood the seed of the murderer would get ahead of the seed of Abel who was murdered. ("Excerpts From The Weekly Council Meetings Of The Quorum Of the Twelve Apostles, Dealing With The Rights of Negroes In the Church, 1849-1940," George Albert Smith Papers, University of Utah Library)

The Mormon leaders were still extremely concerned about intermarriage in 1954. Apostle Mark E. Petersen warned:

Now what is our policy in regard to intermarriage? As to the Negro, of course, there is only

one possible answer. We must not inter-marry with the Negro. Why? If I were to marry a Negro woman and have children by her, my children would **all be cursed as to the priesthood**. Do I want my children **cursed** as to the priesthood? If there is **one drop of Negro blood in my children**, as I have read to you, they receive **the curse**. There isn't any argument, therefore, as to the inter-marriage with the Negro, is there? There are 50 million Negroes in the United States. If they were to achieve complete absorption with the **white** race, think what that would do. With 50 million Negroes inter-married with us, **where would the priesthood be?** Who could hold it, in all America? **Think what that would do to the work of the Church!** ("Race Problems—As they Affect the Church," August 27, 1954; see Appendix B)

Writing in 1967, John L. Lund, LDS author and teacher, gave the following explanation of Brigham Young's admonition against intermarriage:

Brigham Young made a very strong statement on this matter when he said, ". . . Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the CHOSEN SEED mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so." . . .

The reason that one would lose his blessings by marrying a Negro is due to the restriction placed upon them. [quoting Brigham Young] "No person having the least particle of Negro blood can hold the Priesthood." It does not matter if they are **one-sixth Negro or one-one hundred and sixth, the curse of no Priesthood** is still the same. If an individual who is entitled to the Priesthood marries a Negro, the Lord has decreed that only spirits who are not eligible for the Priesthood will come to that marriage as children. **To intermarry with a Negro is to forfeit a "Nation of Priesthood holders."** (*The Church and the Negro*, by John L. Lund, 1967, pp. 54-55)

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie also taught that Mormons are not to intermarry with blacks. He likened it to a caste system:

Certainly the caste systems in communist countries and in India, for instance, are man made and are not based on true principles.

Speech by Brigham Young delivered on March 8, 1863.

Journal of Discourses, vol. 10, pages 110-111

were destroyed by the Indians. That ~~unfortunate affair has been laid to the~~ charge of the whites. A certain judge that was then in this Territory wanted the whole army to accompany him to Iron county to try the whites for the murder of that company of emigrants. I told Governor Cumming that if he would take an unprejudiced judge into the district where that horrid affair occurred, I would pledge myself that every man in the regions round about should be forthcoming when called for, to be condemned or acquitted as an impartial, unprejudiced judge and jury should decide; and I pledged him that the court should be protected from any violence or hindrance in the prosecution of the laws; and if any were guilty of the blood of those who suffered in the Mountain Meadow massacre, let them suffer the penalty of the law; but to this day they have not touched the matter, for fear the Mormons would be acquitted from the charge of having any hand in it, and our enemies would thus be deprived of a favorite topic to talk about, when urging hostility against us. "The Mountain Meadow massacre! Only think of the Mountain Meadow massacre!" is their cry from one end of the land to the other.

"Come, let us make war on the Mormons, for they burnt government property." And what was the government doing there with their property? They were coming to destroy the Mormons, in violation of every right principle of law and justice. A little of their property was destroyed, and they were left to gnaw, not a file, but dead cattle's bones. I was informed that one man brought five blood hounds to hunt the Mormons in the mountains, and that the poor devil had to kill them and eat them before spring to save himself from starving to death, and that he was fool enough to acknowledge it

afterwards in this city. This is the kind of outside pressure we have to meet with. Who wanted the army of 1857 here? Who sent for them? Liars, thieves, murderers, gamblers, whoremasters, and speculators in the rights and blood of the Mormon people cried to government, and government opened its ears, long and broad, saying, "I hear you, my children, lie on, my faithful sons Brochus, Drummond and Co.," and so they did lie on until the parent sent an army to use up the Mormons. Now I say, for the consolation of all my brethren and sisters, they cannot do it; and that is worse to them than all the rest; they cannot do it.

The rank, rabid abolitionists, whom I call black-hearted Republicans, have set the whole national fabric on fire. Do you know this, Democrats? They have kindled the fire that is raging now from the north to the south, and from the south to the north. I am no abolitionist, neither am I a pro-slavery man; I hate some of their principles and especially some of their conduct, as I do the gates of hell. The Southerners make the negroes, and the Northerners worship them; this is all the difference between slaveholders and abolitionists. I would like the President of the United States and all the world to hear this.

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so. The nations of the earth have transgressed every law that God has given, they have changed the ordinances and broken every covenant made with the fathers, and they are like a hungry man that dreameth that he eateth, and he awaketh and behold he is empty.

The following saying of the prophet is fulfilled: "Now also many nations

are gathered against thee, that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel; for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thrash O daughter of Zion, &c." God rules in the armies of Heaven and does his pleasure upon the earth, and no man can help it. Who can stay the hand of Jehovah, or turn aside the providences of the Almighty? I say to all men and all women, submit to God, to his ordinances and to His rule; serve Him, and cease your quarrelling, and stay the shedding of each other's blood.

If the Government of the United States, in Congress assembled, had the right to pass an anti-polygamy bill, they had also the right to pass a law that slaves should not be abused as they have been; they had also a right to make a law that negroes should be used like human beings, and not worse than dumb brutes. For their abuse of that race, the whites will be cursed, unless they repent.

I am neither an abolitionist nor a pro-slavery man. If I could have been influenced by private injury to choose one side in preference to the other, I should certainly be against the pro-slavery side of the question, for it was pro-slavery men that pointed the bayonet at me and my brethren in Missouri, and said, "Damn you we will kill you." I have not much love for them, only in the Gospel. I would cause them to repent, if I could, and make them good men and a good community. I have no fellowship for their avarice, blindness, and ungodly actions. To be great, is to be good before the Heavens and before all good men. I will not fellowship the wicked in their sins, so help me God.

Joseph Smith, in forty-seven persecutions was never proven guilty of

one violation of the laws of his country. They accused him of treason, because he would not fellowship their wickedness. Suppose the land should be cleansed from its filthiness and the law of God should predominate, if a man or woman should be found who had corrupted themselves and thereby become diseased, that man or woman would be placed by themselves, as the lepers were anciently, never more to commune with the human family. Purify your flesh and blood, your spirits, your habitations and your country, and then you will be pure before God. This change has got to be before this earth will be taken back into a celestial atmosphere.

Find fault with me because I have wives! They would corrupt every wife I have, if they had the power; and then they cry to the government, "You had better do something with the Mormons; they are deceitful and disloyal!" I am disloyal to their sins and filthiness. Cleanse your hearts and the whole person, and make yourselves as pure as the angels, and then I will fellowship you.

I say to every man and woman in this community, suffer not your affections to wander after that which is unholy; do not lust after gold, nor the things of this world. Sanctify yourselves before your God and before one another, until you are pure outside and in and all around you, and see that you faithfully perform every duty.

Now, as we are accused of secession, my counsel to this congregation is to secede, what from? From the Constitution of the United States? No. From the institutions of our country? No. Well then, what from? From sin and the practice thereof. That is my counsel to this congregation and to the whole world.

May God bless everybody that wishes well to his kingdom on the earth. Amen.

However, in a broad general sense, caste systems have their root and origin in the gospel itself, and when they operate according to the divine decree, the resultant restrictions and *segregation* are right and proper and have the approval of the Lord. To illustrate; **Cain, Ham, and the whole negro race** have been **cursed with a black skin**, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as **a caste apart**, a people with whom the other descendants of Adam should not intermarry. . . . In effect the **Lamanites** belonged to one caste and the Nephites to another, and **a mark was put upon the Lamanites** to keep the Nephites from **intermixing with and marrying them**. . . . The justice of such a system is evident when life is considered in its true eternal perspective. It is only by a knowledge of **pre-existence** that it can be known why some persons are born in **one race or caste** and some in another. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, 1979 edition, p. 114)

The LDS stand against interracial marriage changed after the priesthood was given to blacks in 1978.

Segregated Blood

Lester Bush, an LDS historian, quoted an early statement of the LDS First Presidency regarding the problem of “negro blood”:

By 1907 the First Presidency and Quorum had . . . ruled that “no one known to have in his veins negro blood, (it matters not how remote a degree) can either have the priesthood in any degree or the blessings of the Temple of God; no matter how otherwise worthy he may be.” (“Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,” *Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 38)

Given the statements of past LDS leaders against having “one drop” of black blood in their veins, it is no surprise that Mormons extended this to segregating the blood supply in their hospitals. While this practice was common in the past, the U.S. military ended its policy of segregating blood on the basis of race in 1949. The American Red Cross continued to segregate blood until the 1960s. The hospitals under LDS control segregated blood on the basis of race until the 1970s. Writing in 1978, reporters David Briscoe and George Buck explained:

For all too many Mormons, the figurative role that “blood” plays in Mormon doctrine in denoting ancestry, has been all too literal. Less than two weeks after the Priesthood announcement, Consolidated Blood Services for the intermountain region announced its first agreement ever to handle blood bank services for a group of hospitals with previous LDS connections, including LDS Hospital, Primary Children’s and Cottonwood Hospitals in Salt Lake City; McKay-Dee Hospital in Ogden and Utah Valley Hospital in Provo. At one time in the past, hospitals administered by the LDS Church kept separate the blood donated by blacks and whites. Although this has not been the case for several years, some patients who have expressed concern about receiving blood from black donors have been reassured it would not happen—as if the policy were still in effect.

The irrational fear among some Mormons surrounding the concept of blood was expected to extend to inter-racial marriage for many of the same people. The extension of the Priesthood to black males effectively shattered the barriers that have kept black-white marriages to a minimum in the LDS Church (“Black Friday,” by David Briscoe and George Buck, *Utah Holiday*, July 1978, pp. 39-40).

Early Black Converts

Black Pete

Possibly the first black to join the LDS Church was “Black Pete.” Lester Bush commented:

There once was a time, albeit brief, when a “Negro problem” did not exist for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During those early months in New York and Ohio no mention was even made of Church attitudes towards blacks. The gospel was for “all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples,” and no exceptions were made. A Negro, “Black Pete,” was among the first converts in Ohio, and his story was prominently reported in the local press. W. W. Phelps opened a mission to Missouri in July 1831 and preached to “all the families of the earth,” specifically mentioning Negroes among his first audience. The following year another black, Elijah Abel, was baptized in Maryland. (“Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview,” *Neither White Nor Black*, Signature Books, 1984, p. 54)

Speaking in 1864, Apostle George A. Smith gave the following reminiscence about Pete:

There was at this time in Kirtland, a society that had undertaken to have a community of property; . . . These persons had been baptized, but had not yet been instructed in relation to their duties. A false spirit entered into them, developing their singular, extravagant and wild ideas. They had a meeting at the farm, and among them was a negro known generally as Black Pete, who became a revelator. Others also manifested wonderful developments; they could see angels, and letters would come down from heaven, they said, and they would be put through wonderful unnatural distortions. Finally on one occasion, Black Pete got sight of one of those revelations carried by a black angel, he started after it, and ran off a steep wash bank twenty-five feet high, passed through a tree top into the Chagrin river beneath. He came out with a few scratches, and his ardor somewhat cooled.

Joseph Smith came to Kirtland, and taught that people in relation to their error. (Sermon by Apostle George A. Smith, in the Ogden LDS Tabernacle, November 15, 1864, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, pp. 3-4)

Newell Bringhurst gives this information on Pete:

Abel had not been the only black Mormon to create controversy within the Church during the 1830s. "Black Pete," through his activities in Kirtland as a self-styled "revelator," attracted notoriety both within and outside Mormonism. Unfortunately, little is known about his background. According to one account Pete migrated to Ohio from Pennsylvania where he had been born to slave parents. After his arrival in Ohio, Pete joined the Mormon movement in late 1830 or early 1831. This "man of colour" was described in two other accounts as "a chief man, who [was] sometimes seized with strange vagaries and odd conceits." On at least one occasion Pete fancied he could "fly" and took it into his head to try his wings; he accordingly chose the elevated bank of Lake Erie as a starting-place, and, spreading his pinions, he lit on a treetop some fifty feet below, sustaining no other damage than the demolition of his faith in wings without feathers.

There is some confusion over Pete's other activities among the Saints. According to one reminiscence Pete "wanted to marry a white woman" but Joseph Smith could not get any "revelations" for him to do so. According to another, however, Pete was active at a time when Joseph Smith and other church authorities were not around. Whatever the case, the Mormon Prophet brought forth in February 1831 a revelation condemning false revelators such as Black Pete. Smith was told that only certain individuals "appointed unto you" were authorized "to receive revelations." Thereafter, several of the self appointed revelators, possibly including Pete, were "tried for [their] fellowship" and "cut off" from the Church.

Despite the controversy caused by the Mormon activities of both Black Pete and Elijah Abel, Latter-day Saint leaders did not establish a subordinate ecclesiastical place for black people within Mormonism during the 1830s. The number of free blacks casting their lot with the Saints was very small. ("Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism," *Dialogue*, vol. 12, no. 2, Summer 1979, p. 25)

Elijah Abel

Ironically, right at the time Joseph Smith was developing his racial doctrines he allowed the ordination of a black named Elijah Abel. Although there was at least one other black ordained to the priesthood during Joseph Smith's life, Elijah Abel was the only one mentioned by LDS historian Andrew Jenson:

Abel, Elijah, the only colored man who is known to have been **ordained to the priesthood** . . . was ordained an elder March 3, 1836, and a seventy April 4, 1841, an exception having been made in his case with regard to the general rule of the church in relation to colored people. (*L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, 1901-1936, p. 577)

Even though Elijah Abel was allowed to retain his priesthood and go on a mission after the Mormons came to Utah, he was not allowed to participate in the temple endowments. Armand Mauss commented:

Slavery itself was to come to an end in another decade. . . . The restrictive policy on priesthood, however, lingered on. It was periodically reconsidered after Brigham Young's death in 1877,

usually in response to a petition from a black member or sympathizer. The first of these reconsiderations occurred as early as 1879, when Young's successor, John Taylor, responded to a petition from **Elijah Abel** (the sole surviving black member to have received the priesthood) that he be admitted to the sacred temple rites of the church. Taylor's consultations turned up a claim by two prominent local church leaders that in the mid-1830s they had heard Joseph Smith declare that Negroes could not be given the priesthood and that Abel was supposed to have been stripped of it before Smith died.

Taylor himself, though a contemporary of these witnesses and a close associate of Smith, could recall no such instruction. . . .

After that, each hearing and reconsideration by the church leadership simply brought another confirmation of the policy, so that by about 1920 there was an accumulation of precedents from previous leaders, as well as a rapidly receding institutional memory about the historical origins of the policy. (*All Abraham's Children*, pp. 215-216)

Abel's requests for temple ordinances were repeatedly denied. He died in 1884 and was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. In 2002 a new headstone was placed on Elijah Abel's grave. The *Salt Lake Tribune* announced:

. . . two organizations have created a new headstone [for Elijah Abel] that proclaims Abel to be the first black man to hold the LDS Church priesthood and gives details about his life. . . . (*Salt Lake Tribune*, September 28, 2002, p. C1)

Bill Curtis, a retired history teacher from Missouri, had contacted the Abel family, the Genesis Group (an organization of black LDS), and others about raising funds for the new headstone. When it was finally ready, Apostle M. Russell Ballard was asked to "dedicate the new headstone." The article continues:

Abel was born a slave in Maryland in 1808. At 23, he fled to Canada and obtained free papers. A year later, he moved to Ohio and met Joseph Smith . . . Abel joined in 1832, and Smith ordained him into the priesthood four years later. . . .

His carpentry skills led him to become an undertaker. He also worked on the Underground

Railroad that spirited slaves north to freedom in the years before the Civil War.

Abel and his family joined the Mormon odyssey to Salt Lake City in 1852, among fewer than 100 black pioneers, and he helped construct the Salt Lake Temple.

That same year, however, new church leader Young prohibited blacks from joining the faith's all-male lay priesthood, a rule that would stand until Church President Spencer Kimball's 1978 revelation. . . . The reason Young and other church leaders cited (and continued to cite for 126 years) was the Bible-based belief that blacks were descendants of the wicked Cain. . . .

According to [Armand] Mauss, Young did not remove Abel from the priesthood, . . . Young also sent Abel on several missions in his later years. When Abel petitioned Young's successor, John Taylor, for his temple endowment, it was denied.

Yet Abel's faith in the church continued until his death in 1884, and Mauss says this is one of the greatest lessons church members now, black and white, can learn from his life.

"Abel is a wonderful symbol for black and white Latter-day Saints as someone who remains faithful in the church in the face of a great many obstacles to his membership and a great many slights and humiliations," Mauss says. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, September 28, 2002, pp. C1 & C8)

Abel's Descendants

While Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith was aware that Elijah Abel had been ordained to the LDS priesthood he affirmed that it was invalid. In a letter dated April 10, 1963 he wrote:

According to the doctrine of the church, the Negro, because of some condition of unfaithfulness in the spirit—or pre-existence, was not valiant and hence was not denied the mortal probation, but was denied the blessing of the Priesthood. In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints he has the privilege of baptism, confirmation and membership along with everyone else, as far as this life is concerned.

. . . It is true that elders of the church laid hands on a Negro and blessed him "apparently" with the Priesthood, **but they could not give that which the Lord had denied.** It is true that Elijah Abel was so "ordained." This was however before the

matter had been submitted to the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . It was afterwards that the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that the Negro was not to be ordained. In the Book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price is a statement to the effect that the seed of Canaan were denied the Priesthood. . . . Now if the Lord declared to the Prophet Joseph Smith that for some reason the Negro was not to receive the Priesthood, then that is the end of the question. . . .

Now I am not responsible for this restriction. According to the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham, the descendants of Cain were denied in the beginning. This is set forth in these records. (Letter from Joseph Fielding Smith to Joseph H. Henderson, April 10, 1963; see Appendix C)

Three years later Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

The descendants of Cain were barred from the blessings of the Priesthood. They may be baptized for the remission of their sins, but **they cannot hold the Priesthood by divine decree, as pointed out in the Book of Abraham.** (Letter from Joseph Fielding Smith to Morris L. Reynolds, May 9, 1966; see Appendix C)

However, Elijah Abel's son and grandson were also ordained. Elijah's son, Enoch Abel (also spelled Able and Ables), was ordained an Elder on November 10, 1900, by John Q. Adams in the Logan 5th Ward, Utah. Enoch's son, Elijah, was ordained a Priest on July 5, 1934, by J. C. Hogenson and ordained an Elder September 29, 1935, by Reuben S. Hill in the Logan 10th Ward, Utah. On the next page is a photocopy of the membership record for Elijah Ables, grandson of the original Elijah Abel.

Another grandson of Elijah Abel was Eugene Burns. In the *Salt Lake Tribune* report of his funeral we read:

Eugene Burns, colored, died last week at his home, . . . of a severe attack of typhoid fever of short duration . . . He was 24 years of age and was to have been married on the day on which his funeral occurred.

Funeral services over the remains of the dead man were held . . . Sunday afternoon. At the request of the family Rev. D. A. Brown, pastor of the First Baptist church, conducted the services. Following

his remarks of condolence and sympathy to the bereaved friends who had gathered, Patriarch Miner, president of one of the quorums of the seventies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, made a few remarks. In the course of the dissertation he stated in substance that all that ever existed of the dead man lay in the casket before the altar.

Soul Was Doomed.

He further said that an Ethiopian could not reach the **state of exaltation** necessary to entrance into Heaven. **His soul was doomed before his birth.** The patriarch's remarks caused awe and consternation among the hearers and precipitated an ecclesiastical scrimmage. . . .

Burns was a grandson of Abel, the body servant of Joseph the Prophet. Abel was a Negro, and, according to the remarks of Patriarch Miner, is the only one of his race who ever succeeded in gaining entrance within the pearly gates. The reason he was so successful in accomplishing that feat, according to the patriarch, was his loyalty and service to Joseph the prophet, and his belief that the Mormon religion is the only one that ever happened. . . .

"This is hardly the place to bring forth matters of truth," said the venerable patriarch as he ascended the pulpit after Mr. Brown had concluded his remarks, "but the truth ought always to be told. . . .

"I repeat, the truth must be told," continued the aged man in continuing the strange panegyric. He quivered and shook in the throes of intense excitement. "I am president of a quorum of seventies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I am here to bear testimony not to the man who is dead, but to his grandfather, Abel. . . . For his services to the prophet and his faith in our religion he was raised to the order of the Melchisedek Priesthood. He was the only colored man who ever lived that belonged to that order. . . . It is not to be wondered at, too, when you consider the teachings of our church in relation to the colored people. . . . The third and last class of spirits is the class that fell. **Because of their fall they are compelled to reside in bondage.** They are given carnate bodies, but can never lift the yoke of bondage. That class of spirits includes the Negroes. . . .

"For the colored race, however, there is an exalted state in the next world into which they

No. 81	{Cancellation}	Name in Full Elijah Ables	Sex Male		
Father's Name Levi W. Ables	Mother's Maiden Name Mary J. J. J. J.		Received from Daniel Malad		
Born at Logan, Utah	DAY MONTH YEAR	21 Dec 1892	DAY	MONTH	YEAR
Blessed by	Mission to		1	May	1925
Baptized by Fred Gilgen Jr.	DAY MONTH YEAR	30 June 1917	Married to		
Confirmed by Lorenzo Eggert	DAY MONTH YEAR	30 June 1917	Temple or Civil		
Priesthood when received	Ordained By		Removed to		
Ordained Priest	By J. C. Hoganson	5 July 1934	Excommunicated for		
Ordained elder	By Ransom L. Hill	29 Sept 1935	Died of		
Ordained	By		Canceled [see instructions]		
Ordained	By				

Elijah Ables' membership record of the Logan Tenth Ward for the years 1927-1943 shows that he was ordained a priest July 5, 1934 and an elder Sept. 29, 1935. Photograph obtained from microfilm serial number 6360, part 22, in the LDS Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

may go. Provision has been made in the teachings of the Prophet Joseph so that the negro may step up into that preliminary state of exaltation, and when he gets there a chance is given him to accept redemption, according to the teachings of Joseph Smith.”

Mr. Brown Objects.

Mr. Brown immediately arose and declared that no such teachings existed in the Bible. In refutation of the assertions of the patriarch he read several selections from the Bible, citing instances where men with black skins had been saved. He attempted to calm the feelings that had been aroused by the remarks of the patriarch. . . . Burn’s family are Mormons, though the young man is said to have never affiliated himself with the church. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 1, 1903, p. 8)

Walker Lewis

Another early black convert to Mormonism was Walker Lewis. He was ordained an elder by William Smith. Newell G. Bringham wrote:

In addition to Abel, other Mormon blacks found themselves in conspicuous situations during these years. One such member was **Walker Lewis**, a barber in Lowell, Massachusetts. Little is known of Lewis’ background other than that **he was apparently ordained an Elder by William Smith, the younger brother of the Mormon prophet**. As with Abel, Lewis’ role or place within Mormonism was not initially questioned by church officials. **Various Mormon apostles visiting Lowell as late as 1844-45 seemed to accept Lewis’ priesthood status**. One of these visitors, Apostle Wilford Woodruff, merely observed in November 1844 that “a coloured Brother who was an Elder”—presumably Lewis—manifested his support for the established church leadership during this time of great internal division. By 1847, however, Lewis’ status within the Church was challenged by William L. Appleby who was in charge of Mormon missionary activity in the eastern states. During a visit to Lowell in 1847, Appleby encountered Lewis, and in a terse letter to Brigham Young expressed surprise at finding a black ordained to the priesthood. Appleby asked the Mormon leader if it was “the order of God or tolerated, to ordain negroes to the priesthood . . . if it is, I desire to know it as I have yet got to learn

it.” Unfortunately by the time Appleby’s letter arrived at Winter Quarters, Young was on his way to the Great Basin with the first group of Mormon settlers, and thus was unable to reply in writing to Appleby’s question.

However, by 1849, Brigham Young was willing to assert that all Mormon blacks were ineligible for priesthood ordination. Young’s 1849 statement—one of the earliest known declarations of black priesthood denial—came in response to a question posed by Apostle Lorenzo Snow concerning the “chance of redemption . . . for the African.” Young replied:

[T]he curse remained upon them because Cain cut off the lives [sic] of Abel to prevent him and his posterity getting ascendancy over Cain and his generations, and to get the lead himself, his own offering not being accepted of God, while Abel’s was. But the Lord cursed Cain’s seed with blackness and prohibited them the priesthood, that Abel and his progeny might yet come forward, and have their dominion, place, and blessings in their proper relationship with Cain and his race in the world to come.

(“Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism,” by Newell G. Bringham, *Dialogue*, vol. 12, no. 2, Summer 1979, p. 26)

Jane Manning James

Jane Manning, along with her family, converted to Mormonism in the 1840s. According to Jessie L. Embry, instructor of history at Brigham Young University, Jane

grew up in Connecticut during the 1820’s, earning her living as a domestic. When Mormon missionaries came to the area, she listened and along with other family members joined the church. In 1843 eight members of the Manning family started toward Nauvoo . . . The Mannings set out on foot and, . . . finally arrived in Nauvoo where Joseph Smith welcomed them into his home. Before the Latter-day Saints left Nauvoo, Jane Manning married another black Mormon, Isaac James. . . . In 1869 Isaac left the family, selling his property to Jane. He returned to Salt Lake City approximately twenty-one years later just before he passed away. . . .

Jane Manning James was a member of the female Relief Society and donated to the St. George, Manti, and Logan temple funds. She repeatedly

petitioned the First Presidency to be endowed and to have her children sealed to her. During the time that Isaac was gone, **Jane asked to be sealed to Walker Lewis who, like Elijah Abel, had been ordained during Joseph Smith's lifetime.**

After Isaac died, Jane asked that they be given the ordination of **adoption** so they would be together in the next life. She explained in correspondence to church leaders that Emma Smith had offered to have her sealed to the Smith family as a child. She reconsidered that decision and asked to be sealed to the Smiths. Permission for all of these requests was denied.

Instead the First Presidency "decided she might be **adopted into the family of Joseph Smith as a servant**, which was done, a **special ceremony** having been prepared for the purpose." The minutes of the Council of Twelve Apostles continued, "But Aunt Jane was not satisfied with this, and as a mark of dissatisfaction she applied again after this for sealing blessings, but of course in vain." (*Black Saints in a White Church*, by Jessie L. Embry, Signature Books, 1994, pp. 40-41)

Wilford Woodruff, fourth president of the LDS Church, recorded the following in his journal for October 16, 1894:

I had several meetings with H. B. Clawson Concerning some of our Affairs in Calafornia. We had Meeting with several individuals among the rest **Black Jane wanted to know if I would not let her have her Endowments in the Temple.** This I Could not do as it was **against the Law of God.** As Cain killed Abel **All the seed of Cain would have to wait for Redemption untill all the seed that Abel would have had that may Come through other men Can be redeemed.** (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1833-1898, vol. 9, typescript, edited by Scott G. Kenney, Signature Books, 1985, p. 322)

William McCary

It is not clear when William McCary (there are various spellings of his name) first joined with the Mormons, but by 1846 he was well known. LDS historian Newell Bringhurst wrote:

Brigham Young's decision to deny blacks the priesthood was undoubtedly prompted by several factors. Among the most important may well have

been the controversy generated in 1846-47 by the flamboyant activities of William McCary, a half-breed Indian-black man referred to variously as the "Indian," "Lamanite," or "Nigger Prophet." The descriptions of McCary are vague and often conflicting, making it difficult to determine his exact activities and relationship to the Latter-day Saint movement. McCary's origin and occupation are not known. The earliest known account, written in October 1846, claims that Apostle Orson Hyde while at a camp near Council Bluffs, Iowa, "baptised and ordained . . . a Lamanite Prophet to use as a tool to destroy the churches he cannot rule."

By late October 1846, McCary shifted his base of operation east to Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Commercial described the exploits of "a big, burley, half Indian, half Negro, formerly a Mormon" who built up a religious following of some sixty members "solemnly enjoined to secrecy" concerning their rites due to their apparent practice of plural marriage. McCary "proclaimed himself Jesus Christ" . . . and performed "miracles with a golden rod." The blessing that he conferred upon his followers reflected at least some knowledge of Latter-day Saint ritual. . . .

It is not clear whether McCary had any contact with Elijah Abel or any of the other Cincinnati Saints . . . Whatever the case, McCary's Cincinnati-based movement was short-lived. . . .

McCary returned west to Winter Quarters, Nebraska, joining the main body of Saints under the leadership of Brigham Young in their temporary encampment. Young and others initially welcomed McCary into the Mormon camp where he was recognized as an accomplished musician, . . . By late March 1847, however, McCary had fallen from Mormon favor. What he did to offend Brigham Young is not clear but at a "meeting of the twelve and others" summoned to consider this matter [William] McCary made a rambling statement, claiming to be Adam, the ancient of days, and exhibiting himself in Indian costume; . . .

Following this March 1847 meeting, Church leaders expelled McCary from the Mormon camp at Winter Quarters. Subsequently, Apostle Orson Hyde preached a sermon "against his doctrine."

This was not the end of McCary's Mormon involvement, . . . McCary remained active in the area around Winter Quarters and proceeded to set up his own rival Mormon group drawing followers away from Brigham Young. According to a July

1847 account, the “negro prophet” exerted his influence by working “with a rod, like those of old.” . . .

While the whirlwind generated by McCary’s activities upset Brigham Young and other church leaders, the decision to deny blacks the priesthood was probably prompted as much, if not more, by the exposure of the Latter-day Saints to a large number of blacks—both slave and free—following the Mormon migration to the Great Basin. This region’s black population of 100 to 120 individuals, who arrived during the years 1847-49, stood in sharp contrast to the twenty or so blacks that had lived in Nauvoo during the Mormon sojourn there. The sudden appearance of these Great Basin blacks—a significant proportion of whom were slaves—helped to encourage Brigham Young and other church leaders to clearly define both their secular and ecclesiastical status, and that of black people generally. (“Elijlah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism,” by Newell Bringhurst, *Dialogue*, vol. 12, no. 2, Summer 1979, pp. 27-28)

Apostle Parley P. Pratt evidently had McCary in mind when he addressed the pioneer group in the Spring of 1847. LDS historian Ronald K. Esplin wrote:

On 25 April 1847, ten days after Brigham Young and other pioneers left the Missouri River for the Great Basin, Apostle Parley P. Pratt addressed the Saints at Winter Quarters. . . . in counseling the Saints about the necessity of moving West as early as possible, Elder Pratt offhandedly referred to priesthood denial to the Blacks. The faithful will go west, he emphasized, and if others “want to follow [James] Strang go it,” or even “want to follow this Black man who has got the blood of Ham in him which lineage was cursed as regards the Priesthood,” well, that was all right, too. (“Brigham Young and Priesthood Denial to the Blacks: An Alternate View,” by Ronald K. Esplin, *Brigham Young University Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, Spring 1979, p. 395)

Samuel D. Chambers

Samuel Chambers is another important early black convert to Mormonism. While he did not come to Utah until 1870 he and his family still played an important role in establishing blacks in the LDS community. Newell Bringhurst commented:

Samuel was born May 21, 1831, in Pickens County, Alabama. In 1844, as a thirteen-year-old slave in eastern Mississippi, he listened to the preaching of Preston Thomas and accepted baptism from that Mississippian, himself a new convert. But, unlike other converts in the area who relocated to Nauvoo or other Mormon centers, Samuel stayed behind. He was property, a slave, not free to migrate. For a quarter of a century he had no further contact with the Church and no hope of ever joining the body of the Saints. Unable to read or write, and lacking parents or peers or missionaries to encourage him in his youthful faith, he retained his testimony through the Holy Spirit.

During that quarter century Samuel married, fathered a son, lost his wife, then married Amanda Leggroan in 1858. When the Civil War brought freedom in its wake, Samuel as freedman worked four years to earn items needed to make a long overland trek to Utah. With son Peter and wife Amanda and the young family of Amanda’s brother, Edward (Ned) Leggroan, Samuel undramatically arrived in Salt Lake City in 1870.

Unlike so many thousands of converts and emigrants, the Chambers group had gathered to Zion on their own without missionary encouragement or Perpetual Emigration Fund assistance.

The Chambers settled in the Eighth Ward where they tithed and donated, received patriarchal blessings, accepted rebaptism during the mini-reformation of 1875 and attended meetings. Samuel “was appointed as assistant Deacon,” noted the ward records on May 1, 1873, but he received no priesthood. Amanda became a Relief Society “deaconess.” Deacons, whose main work then was to care for the meetinghouses, included adults as well as youths. Samuel represented his ward at monthly stake deacons quorum meetings. . . .

Soon the Chambers moved to southeast Salt Lake City. Over the years their small fruit business prospered. Late in life they owned over thirty acres of good farmland and a brick home which still stands. In Wilford Ward they were well known and well liked. Samuel met with the high priests quorum for a while. The couple became known for their firm testimonies, their strict loyalty to Church leaders, their keeping of the Sabbath and generous church donations.

As promised in his patriarchal blessing, Samuel lived to an old age. To his death at age ninety-eight in Salt Lake City in 1929, he was strong in the faith.

(Born one year after the Church was restored, he died one year before its hundredth birthday.) (“Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism,” by Newell G. Bringhurst, *Dialogue*, vol. 12, no. 2, Summer 1979, pp. 13-14)

While Chambers never received the priesthood, he was given the office of “assistant Deacon,” which seemed to be a way to get around the priesthood restriction. Lester Bush commented:

There are a few odd cases such as the Black man who was allowed to act in the office of a deacon. Samuel Chambers, a prominent member of a Salt Lake City ward, was made an acting deacon and was permitted to do almost everything the deacons were authorized to do. As I recall, he was made an acting deacon after Brigham Young’s death. His wife was made an acting deaconess. (“Mixed Messages On The Negro Doctrine: An Interview With Lester Bush,” *Sunstone*, vol. 4, no. 3, May 1979, p. 2)

Slaves in Utah Territory

Although most Mormons did not own slaves, the practice was allowed in the Utah Territory. Both Native Americans and blacks were bought and sold. George D. Smith observed:

For many years a slave trade in Indian children, especially from the poor Shoshonean tribes, had flourished along the Spanish Trail. Since Mormons regarded Indians as “Lamanites” of the Book of Mormon who were cursed with dark skin but were destined to be redeemed, they were sympathetic to their cause. Brigham Young advised the Saints to “buy up the Lamanite children as fast as they could, and educate them and teach them the gospel, so that not many generations would pass ere they would become a white and delightsome people.” **On March 7, 1852, the legislative assembly of the Utah territory had passed an act legalizing Indian slavery.** Ironically, as a result of this act, Mormons themselves indentured Indian children. (*An Intimate Chronicle; The Journals of William Clayton*, edited by George D. Smith, Signature Books, 1995, Introduction, p. xlvii)

Armand Mauss explained the LDS reason for making slavery legal:

Some policies were guided less by diplomatic or pragmatic considerations than by the Mormon understanding of their divinely bestowed responsibilities for the spiritual welfare of the Indians as Lamanites. One of the great ironies resulting from this understanding was **the territorial legislature’s 1852 act permitting slavery** in the Utah Territory. This act was partly designed to permit **Mormon converts from the Old South** to bring with them their black slaves, few though these were. An even stronger motivation for the act, however, was to permit Mormon families to buy Indian children who had already been enslaved by a long-standing slave trade between various Indian tribes and with Mexican slavers. (*All Abraham’s Children*, p. 60)

The 1852 Utah Legislative Act regarding slavery read, in part:

AN ACT IN RELATION TO SERVICE.

Sec. 1. *Be it enacted by the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah*, That any person or persons coming to this Territory and bringing with them servants justly bound to them, arising from special contract or otherwise, said person or persons shall be entitled to such service or labor by the laws of this Territory provided, That he shall file in the office of the Probate Court, written and satisfactory evidence that such service or labor is due. . . .

Sec. 4. That if any master or mistress shall have sexual or carnal intercourse with his or her servant or servants of the African race, he or she shall forfeit all claim to said servant or servants to the commonwealth; and if any white person shall be guilty of sexual intercourse with any of the African race, they shall be subject, on conviction thereof to a fine of not exceeding one thousand dollars, nor less than five hundred, to the use of the Territory, and imprisonment, not exceeding three years. . . .

Sec. 7. That servants may be transferred from one master or mistress to another by the consent and approbation of the Probate Court, who shall keep a record of the same in his office. (*Acts, Resolutions, and Memorials, passed by the First Annual, and Special Sessions, of the Legislative Assembly, of the Territory of Utah, Begun and Held at Great Salt Lake City, on the 22nd Day*

of *September, A.D., 1851* . . . pp. 80-81, published by Authority of the Legislative Assembly, 1852)

In 1851 the following appeared in the LDS Church's publication, *Millennial Star*:

We feel it to be our duty to define our position in relation to **Slavery**. There are several men in the Valley of the Salt Lake from the Southern States, who have their **slaves with them**. ("Slavery Among the Saints," *Millennial Star*, Liverpool, England, February 15, 1851, p. 63)

In 1859 Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, interviewed Brigham Young on the subject of slavery:

H.G. — What is the position of your Church with respect to Slavery?

B.Y. — We consider it of Divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants.

H.G. — Are there any **slaves** now held in this Territory?

B.Y. — **There are.**

H.G. — Do your Territorial laws uphold Slavery?

B.Y. — Those laws are printed — you can read them for yourself. If slaves are brought here by those who owned them in the States, we do not favor their escape from the service of those owners.

H.G. — Am I to infer that Utah, if admitted as a member of the Federal Union, will be a Slave State?

B.Y. — No; she will be a Free State. Slavery here would prove useless and unprofitable. I regard it generally as a curse to the masters. I myself hire many laborers and pay them fair wages; I could not afford to own them. I can do better than subject myself to an obligation to feed and clothe their families, to provide and care for them, in sickness and health. Utah is not adapted to Slave Labor. (Brigham Young Interview by Horace Greeley, Salt Lake City, Utah, July 13, 1859, reprinted in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Aug. 15, 1993)

Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in November of 1860 but before his inauguration in March 1861, seven southern states had withdrawn and established the "Confederate States of America." The Civil War commenced

in 1861 with the firing on Fort Sumter, South Carolina, by the Confederate States. On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation, announcing the end of slavery. This would become effective on January 1, 1863. Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not actually end slavery in America, it was the forerunner to the passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution on December 18, 1865.

During the height of the Civil War Brigham Young was teaching that slavery was a "divine Institution" and that the Civil War would not free the slaves. Preaching in October of 1863, nine months after the official signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, Young declared:

Ham will continue to be the servant of servants, as the Lord decreed, until the curse is removed. **Will the present struggle free the slave? No;** but they are now wasting away the black race by thousands ? Treat the slaves kindly and let them live, for **Ham must be the servant of servants until the curse is removed.** Can you destroy the decrees of the Almighty? **You cannot.** Yet our Christian brethren think that they are going to overthrow the sentence of the Almighty upon the seed of **Ham. They cannot do that,** though they may kill them by thousands and tens of thousands. (*Millennial Star*, vol. 25, p. 787; also published in the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, p. 250)

Jack Beller, writing in 1929, discussed Utah slavery in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*:

According to the U.S. census of 1850, Utah was the only western state or territory having slaves.

The U.S. census for 1860 gives the number of colored persons in the Territory of Utah as 59, 30 free colored and 29 slaves. Of the slaves, Davis County had 10 and Salt Lake County 19. ("Negro Slaves in Utah," by Jack Beller, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1929, pp. 124-126)

A slave traveling with his owner to California would have been able to gain his freedom. However, if the owner stayed in Utah the slave would still be bound to him. James B. Christensen commented on the situation in his thesis:

It is logical to assume that the slaves desired their freedom in Utah as much as they did in California, but after 1850, Utah was open to slavery, and they could legally be held as slaves, while California was free territory.

During the period from 1850 until the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln, Negro slave trading was carried on to a small extent in the territory. ("A Social Survey of the Negro Population of Salt Lake City, Utah," by James B. Christensen, Master's thesis at the University of Utah, 1966, pp. 8-9)

Green Flake

In the book *Utah in the 1990s* we read:

Three blacks accompanied the Mormon pioneers into the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847, . . . Coleman estimates that by the mid-1970s there were 150 descendants of the three blacks who entered the Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young. Nevertheless, the size of the black population in Utah has always been small. . . . By 1990 the black population in Utah had grown to 9,225 but constituted only 0.7 percent of the total population. (*Utah in the 1990s: A Demographic Perspective*, edited by Tim B. Heaton, Thomas A. Hirschl, Bruce A. Chadwick, Signature Books, 1996, p. 71)

The three blacks who were part of the first Mormon pioneers were Green Flake, Hark Lay and Oscar Crosby. They are commemorated on a monument in downtown Salt Lake City. Mark Angus wrote:

This statue by Springville, Utah, sculptor Cyrus Dallin features Brigham Young, early western explorer Peter Ogden, Shoshone chief Washakie, and a generic settler. The statue, commissioned by LDS church president Wilford Woodruff, was first displayed at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and then stood on Temple Square until 1897. The names of those who accompanied Young into the valley in 1847 are listed on the north side of the monument. They include 140 free men, three women, two children, and three black slaves (here referred to as "colored servants"). One of them, Green Flake, drove Young's carriage into the valley and was later given to Young as tithing. Folklore to the contrary, Young was among the last of the vanguard party to see the valley. Because of a fever, he was left behind, and by the time he saw the

valley, others were already planting potatoes. (*Salt Lake City Underfoot: Self-Guided Tours of Historic Neighborhoods*, by Mark Angus, Signature Books, 1996, p. 11)

Green's owner, James M. Flake, was a wealthy plantation owner from North Carolina. Kate Carter wrote:

In the winter of 1843-44 the Gospel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was brought to the Flakes by missionaries, and they were baptized. To avoid persecution, the Flakes joined the Saints in Nauvoo. Three of the Flake Negroes remained with the family, while Mr. Flake gave the others their freedom.

During the winter when Brigham Young commenced preparing for the first of the pioneers to cross the plains, James M. Flake sent **his Negro Green** with mules and carriage to help the company to their destination. Green was instructed to send the outfit back by some of the brethren who would be returning, and remain himself, in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake to build a house for the family to use upon their arrival. (*The Negro Pioneer*, by Kate B. Carter, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, May, 1965, pp. 500-501)

Richard Van Wagoner and Steven Walker give the following information on Green Flake's life in Utah:

Human Tithing:

1850 When Green's owner was killed in an accident in California, Mrs. Flake moved to San Bernardino with Charles C. Rich and Amasa M. Lyman. Before leaving Salt Lake, **she gave her "Negro slave Green Flake to the Church as tithing.** He then worked two years for President Young and Heber C. Kimball, and then got his liberty."

Settler:

1851 A free man, Green moved his family to the Union area of Salt Lake County, where he farmed and mined ore from the Cottonwood Canyons. He was an active member of the Union Ward. . . .

1885 Upon the death of his wife, he moved to Gray's Lake, Idaho, . . . He returned to Salt Lake in 1897 to attend the Utah Pioneer Jubilee on July 24, where he received a certificate honoring him as a surviving member of the Brigham Young pioneer company.

Death:

1903 October 20: Died in Idaho Falls, Idaho, at the age of seventy-five. Buried in the Union, Utah, Pioneer Cemetery. (*A Book of Mormons*, by Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, Signature Books, 1982, pp. 87-88)

Hark Lay

The second black in the 1847 pioneer group was Hark Lay. Kate Carter writes:

Hark Lay was born about 1825 in Monroe County, Mississippi. . . . he was born in slavery in the William Lay household. He did his work well while crossing the plains and helped the pioneers in every way he could after they reached the Valley. At that time he was about twenty-three years of age and entered the Valley in Orson Pratt's vanguard on July 22, 1847. . . .

The Los Angeles County census indicates that Hark Lay went to California and was a resident there in 1852. (*The Negro Pioneer*, p. 504)

Oscar Crosby

Oscar Crosby was the third black in the first pioneer company. Kate Carter writes:

Oscar Crosby was born about 1815 in Virginia. He was a servant in the home of William Crosby, a wealthy plantation owner and member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Mississippi. He was most trustworthy, and when the personnel of the first company was chosen, William Crosby received permission for his colored servant, Oscar, to secure a piece of ground, plant crops and make ready for the family who planned to arrive in 1848. . . . Oscar accompanied Mr. Crosby to San Bernardino Valley, California, to help establish a Latter-day Saint colony. As California was a free state, he, with other Negroes, was liberated. He died in Los Angeles in 1870. (*The Negro Pioneer*, p. 504)

Kate Carter gives further information on how Oscar and Hark ended up in the first group of pioneers. She quoted the following from the diary of John Brown, an early Mormon pioneer:

On the 22nd [1846] we reached home (Mississippi) and were instructed by President Young to leave our families and take those families that were ready and go west with them through

Missouri and fall in with the companies from Nauvoo, in the Indian country. We started out some fourteen families. I left home on the 8th of April. William Crosby, D. M. Thomas, William Lay, James Harmon, Geo. W. Bankhead and myself formed a mess. We had one wagon, calculating to return in the fall. We crossed the Mississippi River at the Iron Banks and traveled up through the state of Missouri to Independence, where we arrived on the 26th of May, a distance from home of 640 miles. . . .

After a few days' rest we began making preparations to move our families early in the spring, to Council Bluffs, and thus be ready to go westward with the Church. (*The Negro Pioneer*, p. 503)

However, word arrived from the brethren that they were to

remain another year with our families but to fit out and send all the men we could spare to go west with the pioneers.

We held meetings to consider the matter, at which we concluded to send some **four colored servants** as pioneers, one of us going along to take charge of them William Crosby (**Oscar**), John H. Bankhead, (**not known**) William Lay, (**Hark**) and I each furnished a servant, (**Henry**) and John Powell arranged for his brother David to go along. It fell to my lot to go and take charge of the company.

In order for us to reach Council Bluffs in time, it was necessary to make this journey of a thousand miles during the winter months. All arrangements being made, we left Mississippi on January 10, 1847. . . . We were well fitted out with two good wagons and supplies, but as we traveled northward the weather became extremely cold. At St. Louis, where we were joined by Joseph Stratton and his family, we purchased more teams and wagons. . . . But the mud was so heavy that we had to lay over several days. Finally it turned cold, giving us the severest kind of weather, which was **extremely hard on the Negroes**. My servant, whose name was Henry, caught cold and took the winter fever, which caused **his death**. I buried him in Andrew County, Missouri, . . . we reached the Bluffs a few days before President Brigham Young and the pioneers started for the West. While we were waiting here, John Bankhead's **colored man also died** with the winter fever. This journey from Mississippi was the hardest and severest trip I had

ever undertaken. I left one wagon and its load here with Brother Crimson, to bring along with the families that were to follow, and took the other two wagons and **the two colored men, Oscar Crosby and Hark Lay**, who had survived the journey, and joined the Pioneer Camp. (*The Negro Pioneer*, pp. 503-504)

Betsy Crosby

Betsy Crosby originally lived on a plantation in Mississippi owned by John and Elizabeth Crosby. After Mr. Crosby's death Elizabeth married John Brown. Her granddaughter related:

John Brown spent "six months teaching, preaching, and courting" before he baptized his future wife Elizabeth Crosby. ("Seizing Sacred Space: Women's Engagement in Early Mormonism," by Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Dialogue*, vol. 27, no. 2, p. 66)

Elizabeth and her family moved to Utah in 1848. She also brought Betsy and two other black servants with her. Kate Carter gave this information:

Betsy Crosby Brown Flewellen was the colored servant of Elizabeth Crosby Brown. In 1848, when she was a little girl, she was brought from the Crosby Plantation, in Monroe County, Mississippi, to Utah, by Mrs. Elizabeth Crosby Brown. She was a servant in the Brown home from 1848 until the slaves were freed during the war between the states. (*The Negro Pioneer*, p. 528)

In 1857 John Brown "consecrated and deeded" Betsy Crosby, an "African Servant Girl" valued at \$1,000, to the LDS Church (see *The Negro Pioneer*, p. 528).

Dan

Another Utah slave was Dan. Historian Dennis L. Lythgoe relates that Dan was a slave of Williams Washington Camp, a Mormon convert from Tennessee, who brought several slaves to Utah (see "Negro slavery in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Winter 1971, vol. 39, no. 1). At one point Dan tried to escape but his owner, Mr. Camp, captured Dan and brought him back. This led to a charge that Camp had kidnapped Dan. Evidently Camp was able to establish that he owned Dan and

he was acquitted. Hosea Stout, an early Mormon pioneer, recorded in his diary for 1856 some of the details of Dan's escape and capture:

Wednesday 18 June 1856. Law Suit before probate on an examination People vs William Camp et al. For kidnapping a Negro Dan. The case commenced Monday evening and lasted yesterday & today till noon

It appears that Camp was the owner of Dan who had ran away and C. had went with three others to bring him back. The court acquitted them Carrington atty Genl for the people & Mr T.S. Williams & self for defts." (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861*, vol. 2, edited by Juanita Brooks, University of Utah Press, 1964, p. 597)

Evidently T. S. Williams, the attorney for the defense, acquired Dan from Mr. Camp in 1858. On September 8, 1859, Williams sold Dan to William Hooper, another slave holder, for \$800. A record of the transaction was found in 1939. The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

Patrick J. Sullivan, employee of a Salt Lake Abstract firm, while searching the records for real estate information, came across the copy of a **bill of sale for a Negro boy named "Dan"** in a book containing transactions for the year 1859.

The slave was sold by Thomas S. Williams of "Great Salt Lake City" to William H. Hooper, same address, for \$800. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 31, 1939)

The bill of sale states:

the said negro boy is twenty six years of age was born the property and slave of Williams Camp . . . in Tennessee . . . and by the said Williams Camp was sold to me in the year 1858.

And I do for myself my heirs executors, and administrators covenant and agree to and with the said Wm H. Hooper to warrant and defend the sale of the said negro boy, hereby sold unto the said Wm H. Hooper, . . .

On the next page is a photo of the bill of sale, taken from *The Negro Pioneer*, by Kate Carter, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, May, 1965, page 538.

Bill of Sale for the slave "Dan" from *The Negro Pioneer*,
by Kate Carter, page 538.

Transcript of Bill of Sale

140

Territory of Utah
County of Great Salt Lake } I Franklin B. Woolley, recorder
in and for the county of Great Salt Lake and Territory of Utah, duly qualified
by law to take acknowledgements, certify that Seth M Blair, known
ally known to me appeared this seventeenth day of August A. D. 1859
and acknowledged that he of his own choice executed the
foregoing transfer and mortgage for the use and purposes therein
set forth.

Recorded Aug 22nd 1859. Franklin B. Woolley

Territory of Utah
County of Great Salt Lake

I Franklin B. Woolley recorder in and for the county of Great Salt Lake and
Territory of Utah, duly qualified by law to take acknowledgements, certify that
Seth M Blair, known ally known to me appeared this seventeenth day of August
A. D. 1859 and acknowledged that he of his own choice executed the foregoing
transfer and mortgage for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

Franklin B. Woolley
Recorded Aug 22nd 1859

Know all men by these presents. That I, Thomas S. Williams of Great Salt Lake City, in the Territory of Utah, for and in con-
-sideration of the sum of eight hundred dollars, to me in hand paid
at and before the enrolling and delivery of these presents by Wm
H Hooper of the city and territory aforesaid the receipt whereof is
hereby acknowledged, have bargained and sold and by these
presents do grant bargain and sell and convey unto the said
Wm H Hooper, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns,
one negro boy "Dan"; the said negro boy is twenty six years of age
was born the property and slave of Williams Camp on the 15th day
of October A. D. 1833 in the town of Dresden Weekley County
State of Tennessee; and by the said Williams Camp was sold to
me in the year 1858, a bill of sale having been executed to me by
the said Williams Camp for the said negro boy "Dan", To have
and to hold the said negro boy "Dan" unto the said Wm H Hooper
his executors, administrators and assigns forever

Know all men by these presents. That I, Thomas S. Williams of Great Salt Lake
City in the Territory of Utah, for and in consideration of the sum of eight hundred
dollars, to me in hand paid at and before the enrolling and delivery of these
presents by Wm H Hooper of the city and territory aforesaid the receipt whereof
is hereby acknowledged, have bargained and sold and by these presents, do
grant bargain and sell and convey unto the said Wm H Hooper, his heirs,
executors, administrators and assigns, and negro boy "Dan"; the said negro boy
is twenty-six years of age, was born the property and slave of Williams Camp on
the 15th day of October A. D. 1833 in the town of Dresden Weekley County, State
of Tennessee; and by the said Williams Camp was sold to me in the year 1858, a
bill of sale having been executed to me by the said Williams Camp for the said
negro boy "Dan", To have and to hold the said negro boy "Dan" unto the said
Wm. H Hooper his executors, administrators and assigns forever.

And I do for myself my heirs executors, and administrators
covenant and agree to and with the said Wm H Hooper to
warrant and defend the sale of the said negro boy, hereby sold
unto the said Wm H Hooper, his executors administrators and
assigns, against all and every person and persons whomsoever

And I do for myself my heirs executors, and administrators covenant and agree to
and with the said Wm H Hooper to warrant and defend the sale of the said negro
boy, hereby sold unto the said Wm H Hooper, his executors administrators and
assigns, against all and every person and persons whomsoever.

Witness my hand and seal of office this 17th day of August 1859.
A. R. Jackman
Charles Evans
Great Salt Lake City
Sept - 4th 1859

T. S. Williams
Recorded September 8th 1859
F. B. Woolley, Recorder

Attest—
A. R. Jackman
Charles Evans
Great Salt Lake City
Sept 7th 1859

T. S. Williams
Recorded September 8th 1859
F. B. Woolley, Recorder

Williams apparently owned other slaves as well. Hosea Stout wrote the following in his diary:

Thursday, 21 April 1859.

Suit before Jeter Clinton Esqr

“The people &c vs. **Tom Coulbourn negro slave** belonging to J. H. Johnson on examination for shooting Shep negro slave belonging to W. H. Hooper. **The negroes had got into a row about two wenches belonging to T. S. Williams** and love and jealousy was the main cause of the fuss. Like their masters under such circumstances would probably would do they went to shooting each other. Shep is badly wounded and his life is precarious. Dist Attorney Wilson prosecuted and Blair and myself defended. Tom was held to bail for \$1000 to appear at the next Dist Court. (*On The Mormon Frontier*, vol. 2, p. 695)

Venus

Venus, freed slave of early Mormon pioneer Elizabeth Redd, was originally given to Elizabeth as a wedding present. She came with the Redd's to Utah Territory in 1850. She was a midwife and lived in Spanish Fork where she faithfully attended the LDS Church. However, she was never allowed to attend the temple. Kate Carter relates:

Some of the Spanish Fork people remember Venus as being tall, very polite and quiet and always immaculate in her dress. She had a great desire to go to the temple, and when she found that the temple was closed to Negroes, she scratched her arm until it bled and said: “See, my blood is as white as anyone's” (*The Negro Pioneer*, p. 523).

Twentieth Century Attitudes

While Elijah Abel, along with at least one other black, had been ordained to the priesthood during Joseph Smith's life, Brigham Young took a different stand. He instituted a very strict rule that no blacks were to be ordained or given temple ordinances. Elijah Abel outlived Brigham Young and the validity of his ordination was repeatedly discussed by the brethren (see *All Abraham's Children*, p. 216). The rationalization for restricting blacks developed over a period of years. Scholar Armand Mauss observed:

. . . by 1908, as president of the church, [Joseph F.] Smith was now claiming that Abel's ordination (and presumably that of any other black) had been “declared null and void by the Prophet himself” . . . Also, during the generation after Brigham Young, three other important internal developments occurred that seemed to point to a divinely condoned racial restriction.

The first development was the formal canonization of the *Pearl of Great Price*, . . . in 1880. . . The second development, partly related to the first, was a fuller unfolding of the doctrine relating to premortal existence, . . . The third development was the gradual adaptation, . . . of historical theories glorifying the Anglo-Saxon heritage above others and claiming literal Israelite origins for the peoples of Great Britain and northwestern Europe. . . .

By the early twentieth century, these new doctrinal developments were available to provide confirmation, retroactive though it might have been, for the accumulated precedents that had denied black church members access to priesthood and temple rites after 1852. With the installment of Heber J. Grant as church president in 1918, no Mormon leader was still living who could remember when teachings and policies toward blacks had been otherwise. . . Finally, in an important 1931 book, *The Way to Perfection*, the scholarly young apostle Joseph Fielding Smith . . . synthesized and codified the entire framework of Mormon racialist teaching that has accumulated . . . Integrating uniquely Mormon ideas of premortal decisions about lineage with imported British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon triumphalism, [Joseph Fielding] Smith in effect postulated a divine rank-ordering of lineages with the descendants of ancient Ephraim (son of Joseph) at the top (including the Mormons); the “seed of Cain” (Africans) at the bottom; and various other lineages in between. (*All Abraham's Children*, pp. 216-217)

Writing in 1935 Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, who later became the 10th president of the LDS Church, explained the curse on Cain:

Not only was Cain called upon to suffer [for killing Abel], but because of his wickedness he became the father of an **inferior race**. A curse was placed upon him and that curse has been continued through **his lineage** and must do so while time endures. Millions of souls have come into this

world **cursed with a black skin** and have been **denied the privilege of Priesthood** and the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel. These are **the descendants of Cain**. Moreover, they have been made to feel their inferiority and have been separated from the rest of mankind from the beginning. Enoch saw the people of Canaan, descendants of Cain, and he says, “and there was a **blackness** came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were **despised** among all people.” . . . In the spirit of sympathy, mercy and faith, we will also hope that blessings may eventually be given to our negro brethren, for they are our brethren—children of God—notwithstanding **their black covering emblematical of eternal darkness**. (*The Way to Perfection*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, Genealogical Society of Utah, 1935, pp. 101-102)

LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, son-in-law of President Joseph Fielding Smith, wrote:

Those who were **less valiant in pre-existence** and who thereby had certain spiritual **restrictions** imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the **Negroes**. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a **black skin**. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, Bookcraft, 1958 edition, pp. 476-477; in second edition, 1966, p. 527; removed from 1979 edition)

In 1949 the LDS Church First Presidency issued an official statement on priesthood denial to blacks:

The attitude of the church with reference to the Negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of **direct commandment from the Lord** on which is founded the **doctrine of the Church** from the days of its organization, to the effect that **Negroes** may become members of the Church but that they **are not entitled to the priesthood** at the present time. (as quoted in *Black Saints in a White Church*, p. 24)

In 1964 LDS Patriarch Eldred G. Smith stated:

I had a young lady who was blonde, a[n]d **no sign or indications visibly of the Negro line at all**, but yet she was deprived of going to the Temple . . . We have these conditions by the thousands in

the United States today and are getting more of them. **If they have any blood of the Negro at all in their line, in their veins at all, they are not entitled to the blessings of the Priesthood** . . . No limit as to how far back so far as I know (“What is a Patriarchal Blessing?” speech at LDS Institute of Religion, Salt Lake City, January 17, 1964, p. 8)

In 1966 Wallace Turner, a reporter for the *New York Times*, wrote the following:

The most serious problem facing the LDS church today is the Negro question. The church has successfully become everyman’s church—except it cannot be the African Negro’s church. A man can have skin black as a moonless night—and he can be a full-fledged member of the Mormon priesthood. But he can have blue eyes, white skin and blond curly hair and have an African Negro in his ancestry and find himself rejected by the Mormons as an applicant for priesthood. A Negro can join the church. But he may not move a step further. For the African and his children’s children the doctrine of eternal progression has little meaning. The doctrine of marriage for time and eternity is for others, not for them. The mortal existence offers lesser opportunity for the improvement of their souls than for other races.

The Negro is barred from the priesthood purely on racial grounds. As we untangle the theology, we must always remember that every devout male Mormon—except the Negro—is expected to become a member of the Aaronic priesthood as a boy of twelve years and a member of the Melchizedek priesthood at eighteen or twenty years . . . The Mormons consider that male membership in the priesthood is a requisite for higher place in the Celestial Paradise. But Negroes are barred from this advancement. Priesthood membership is a requisite for an office in management of the church’s temporal affairs. So Negroes are barred from office. As we will understand in the unraveling of the theology, the Mormon discrimination against the Negro is the ultimate that can be had on racial grounds . . . **The Negro Mormon can hold no office whatsoever in a church which offers some office to every one of its male members at some time in his life**. A gray-haired Negro Mormon who may have spent his adult life in the

careful practice of all the complicated and demanding rules set down by the LDS church stands disenfranchised before the altar where a youth whose beard is just beginning to fuzz may preside. A twelve-year-old may become a member of the Aaronic priesthood, more than this Negro man has been able to achieve through a lifetime of devotion. To hold any church office, a Mormon must be a member of the priesthood.

There is an even deeper disability for Negro Mormons. **They are barred from the Temple.** This has great significance. It means they cannot have a Temple wedding. Nor can they have their Temple endowments. Nor can they have their children and their wives “sealed” to them for eternity . . . Mormonism is a total way of life. A devout Mormon never really leaves his religious shell as he goes about his life in the secular world. So he never really leaves the feeling that black skin makes a man inferior. This means that **the LDS church actually is one of the most influential organs of racial bigotry in the United States.** All the imposing list of wonderful and truly praiseworthy things about this tremendous and impressive institution helps to conceal this ugly corner of its theology. When one hears the Tabernacle Choir, one forgets that no Negro could ever hope to achieve a place in that group. When one listens to the gentle voice and kindly expressions of David O. McKay, one forgets that no Negro can ever hope to become president of the LDS church. Yet throughout the religious institution which produced the Tabernacle Choir and David O. McKay there exists a current of powerful strength that for generations has carried racial bigotry wherever the missionaries carried the Restored Gospel of Joseph Smith.

True, this is all done in a cloak of Christian piety and concern for the brotherhood of man. Seldom is there any surface cruelty. (*The Mormon Establishment*, by Wallace Turner, Houghton Mifflin, 1966, pp. 218-219, 243-245)

Although Wallace Turner’s observations were made more than a decade before the church granted the priesthood to blacks, such public criticism undoubtedly had a significant impact on church leaders. Besides publishing a book, Turner also wrote numerous articles for the *New York Times* about the LDS Church and its racial teachings.

Blacks not Proselytized

While there was no restriction on blacks joining the LDS Church, there was no direct effort to evangelize them. Apostle Bruce McConkie, writing in 1958, declared:

Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. **The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them . . .**

Negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned . . . (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce McConkie, Bookcraft, 1958 edition, p. 477; changed in later editions)

William E. Berrett, Vice Administrator of the Brigham Young University, explained: “. . . no direct efforts have been made to proselyte among them” (*Mormonism and the Negro*, by John J. Stewart, supplement by William E. Berrett, Horizon, 1978, part 2, p. 65).

However, the Bible offers salvation and baptism to all mankind, regardless of race. Jesus told his disciples to go “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Jesus also said “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19).

In the book of Acts, Philip was commanded to preach the gospel to an Ethiopian (a black) who was then baptized (Acts 8:26-39).

In the *National Observer* for June 17, 1963, the following appeared:

It’s hardly a surprise then that the Mormon Church has only a few hundred Negroes on its rolls. And, though Mormon missions seek new members in most parts of the world, its voice is strangely silent in the Negro nations of Africa.

During this time LDS missionaries were instructed to avoid contacting blacks and known black areas. Dr. Glen Davidson reported in *The Christian Century*:

Mormon missionaries are directed not to proselytize Negroes and to keep out of “areas of transition.” Not even Joseph Fielding Smith’s

invitation to “darkies” is tolerated in the mission program. The membership ranks are being filled with those whose religious commitment is to the maintenance of a racist society and who find Mormon theology a sanctimonious front for their convictions. (*The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, p. 1183)

In 1967 N. Eldon Tanner, a member of the First Presidency of the LDS Church, was very emphatic that blacks could not receive the priesthood:

“The church has no intention of changing its doctrine on the Negro,” N. Eldon Tanner, counselor to the First Presidency told SEATTLE during his recent visit here. “Throughout the history of the original Christian church, the Negro never held the priesthood. There’s really nothing we can do to change this. It’s a law of God.” (*Seattle Magazine*, December 1967, p. 60)

A growing number of members were questioning the LDS doctrine and practice relating to blacks. Grant Syphers sent the following letter to *Dialogue*:

In all humility I must say that God has not inspired me to feel good about **the Church’s practices regarding Negroes**. In fact, I have come to feel very strongly that the practices are **not right** and that they are a powerful hindrance to the accepting of the gospel by the Negro people.

As a result of my belief, when my wife and I went to San Francisco Ward’s bishop to renew our temple recommends, he told us that **anyone who could not accept the Church’s stand on Negroes as divine doctrine was not supporting the General Authorities and could not go to the temple**. Later, in an interview with the stake president we were told the same thing: if you express doubts about the divinity of this “doctrine” you cannot go to the temple. (*Dialogue*, vol. 2, no. 4, Winter 1967, p. 6)

Jim Todd wrote the following in the University of Utah paper, the *Daily Utah Chronicle*:

The tragedy of this denial of the LDS priesthood is not that it is unfair to the handful of Negroes actually in the LDS Church. **The odious part**

of this doctrine is that it serves to rationalize all other forms of temporal discrimination. Therefore, this denial indirectly affects all Negroes who come in contact with members of the LDS Church. . . .

People who have been taught since childhood that Negroes are “cursed by God” and therefore cannot hold the priesthood, probably find it perfectly natural to conclude that Negroes must be inferior—why else would God curse them?—and could not possibly make desirable neighbors, business associates, or sons-in-law.

The indirect cost of this doctrine in human misery and wasted potential can only be guessed at. (*Daily Utah Chronicle*, University of Utah, November 22, 1966)

Summary of LDS Teaching on Blacks

Prior to 1978 the LDS teaching concerning blacks could be summarized as follows: In the “pre-existence” certain spirits “lent an influence to the devil” and displayed a “lack of integrity to righteousness.” Because of their “unfaithfulness in the spirit world,” they were “cursed under the cursing of Cain” and cannot “hold the Priesthood of God.” Cain became “the father of an inferior race.” The unfaithful spirit children were assigned to be born through “the accursed lineage of Canaan” and “through the loins of Ham.” Those cursed are “marked” with a “flat nose” and a “black covering” which is “emblematical of eternal darkness.” They are a “vile” and “inferior” race and “their intelligence stunted.” In fact, they are a “representation” of the “devil” upon the earth. They are “not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned,” and they are “not entitled to the full blessings of the gospel.” They are “denied the priesthood,” and they cannot be married in the temple. If a white person marries a black, it requires “death on the spot.” But, “in spite” of all they “did in the pre-existence,” they can be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. After all the rest of God’s children have had an opportunity to receive the priesthood “then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity.”

Mission to Nigeria

On January 11, 1963, the President of the Mormon Church surprised the world by announcing that the Church was going to send a mission to Nigeria. Wallace Turner reported in the *New York Times*:

The Mormons are vigorous proselyters, maintaining missions all over the world, except in the Negro nations in Africa. They have a mission among the whites in the Union of South Africa.

Earlier this year a plan was announced to send a mission to Nigeria, but the mission has not left Salt Lake City. (*New York Times*, Western Edition, June 7, 1963)

The mission was not allowed to proceed due to the fact that the Nigerian government viewed the Mormons as racists and refused to grant visas to LDS missionaries. This developed from a number of articles in the *Nigerian Outlook* attacking the Mormon position on blacks.

A Nigerian student, who was attending college at San Luis Obispo, California, attended a Mormon meeting and encountered their racial teachings. He later wrote an article for the *Nigerian Outlook* condemning the Mormon Church:

The student invited me to their prayer meeting the following Sunday . . . I was intrigued and went out of curiosity. I did not want to sit with the congregation. The white boy sat with me behind the large curtains that span the width of the very large hall. . . .

When their prayers broke up I was introduced to the leader of the Church in the city. . . . But the evening got ruined when my curiosity again started wandering away. . . . An innocent question popped out: "Why have you no mission anywhere in Africa except in South Africa?" Mr. Roy said: . . . "It is our article of faith that the Negro was **cursed** by God and this makes him **unworthy** to hold the office of a priest or elder in our Church."

UNGODLY RACE SUPERIORITY

I can't tell you here now how long we talked. But it was over three hours. In the end he lent me one of the most important books of their religion—*Mormonism and the Negro* [by John J. Stewart]. I did not eat or sleep until I finished reading the book. The following day I returned the book to him.

When he asked me what I thought of the book I told him it was fatuous.

Their God is not our God. I do not believe in a God whose adherents preach the superiority of one race over the other. And this is what the Mormons preach.

The BIG Question is: why should the Mormons leave proselytizing among the Negroes in America and decided to go to Nigeria? The statement by one of the Mormon leaders about a "cautious and guarded approach" to proselyting actively among Negroes, in Nigeria should make Nigerians "cautious and guarded" too. Nigeria has the largest Negro population in the world (seconded by U.S.A.).

The Mormons could by trickery establish a church in Nigeria and use this as massive propaganda for propagating and spreading **their religion of race hate and race superiority and discrimination** in America.

Some may say that they want to change their policy. I do not think this would be a correct assumption. Why, let them start in America where Mr. Smith started his religion with his wife and relations-in-laws barely 100 years ago. Let them first of all make themselves acceptable to the Negroes here in the States before venturing to distant Nigeria. (Article by Ambrose Chukwu, *Nigerian Outlook*, Enugu, Nigeria, March 5, 1963; see photo of entire article on pages 56 and 57)

Since there were already thousands of Nigerians interested in joining the LDS Church, the ban on missionaries created a leadership vacuum. An article in *Time Magazine* discussed the issue:

Pending a new revelation, possible at any time, Mormons are committed to a certain degree of built-in segregation: Negroes cannot be admitted to the church's priesthood. For this reason, Mormon missionaries have never tried very hard to make converts in black Africa. Yet Mormons also believe that Negroes may be admitted to the priesthood in heaven. This apparently is good enough for 7,000 Ibibio, Ibo and Efik tribesmen in eastern Nigeria, who have gone ahead to organize their own branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

. . . Fascinated by the dramatic life of the Mormon prophet, Anie Dick Obot of Uyo decided to form a branch of the church in Nigeria, and wrote for more information to Mormon headquarters in

Salt Lake City. Mormon leaders sent back books explaining their laws and doctrines, and in 1959 dispatched to Africa Elder Lamar Williams, who was much impressed by the Nigerian's zeal and orthodoxy. Since then, the Nigerian Saints, governed by Obot and a council of 75 elders, have established branches in six cities.

Church chiefs are somewhat at a loss on how to deal with their new African converts, especially since the Nigerian government will not give resident visas to any missionaries from the U.S. . . . One problem now is that in the absence of supervision from Utah the Nigerian Mormons practice polygamy—forbidden in the U.S. church since 1890—and the converts already seem to have established their own black hierarchy, priests and all. (*Time*, June 18, 1965, p. 56)

Writing for *The Christian Century*, Dr. Glen W. Davidson observed:

Most of the Mormon hierarchy did not regret their inability to send missionaries into “black Africa” nearly as much as they regretted the unfavorable publicity. (*The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, p. 1184)

Civil Rights

During the 1960s and early 1970s there were demonstrations and extensive articles denouncing the LDS teaching on blacks.

In the Western Edition of the *New York Times* for June 7, 1963, Wallace Turner stated that the LDS Church leaders were seriously considering the consequences of making a change:

SALT LAKE CITY, June 3—The top leadership of the Mormon church is seriously considering the abandonment of its historic policy of discrimination against Negroes. . . .

Because the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a lay priesthood to which almost every adult male member belongs, the effect has been to limit Negroes to second-class membership. . . .

One of the highest officers of the church said today that the possibility of removing this religious disability against Negroes has been under serious consideration.

“We are in the midst of a **survey** looking toward the possibility of admitting Negroes,” said Hugh B. Brown, one of the two counselors serving President David O. McKay in the First Presidency of the Mormon Church.

“Believing as we do in divine revelation through the President of the church, we all await his decision,” Mr. Brown said. (*New York Times*, June 7, 1963)

In 1963 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People threatened to picket the LDS Church. On October 5, 1963, the *Deseret News* reported:

Albert B. Fritz, NAACP branch president, said at a civil rights meeting Friday night that his organization promised not to picket the 133rd Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church on Temple Square.

He added, however, that the NAACP will picket Temple Square, next Saturday if the Church does not present an “acceptable” statement on civil rights before that day. (*Deseret News*, October 5, 1963)

The next day, October 6, 1963, Hugh B. Brown stated in the LDS Church Conference:

We believe that all men are the children of the same God and that it is a moral evil for any person or group of persons to deny any human being the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportunity, and to every privilege of citizenship. (as quoted in *Dialogue*, Summer, 1968, p. 4)

However, two months later, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson declared that the civil rights movement was part of a “Communist” conspiracy. The *Deseret News* reported:

LOGAN, UTAH—Former agriculture secretary Ezra Taft Benson charged Friday night that the civil right's movement in the South had been **“fomented almost entirely by the Communists.”**

Elder Benson, a member of the Council of the Twelve of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said in a speech at a public meeting here that the whole civil rights movement was “phony.” . . .

“The pending ‘civil rights’ legislation is, I am convinced, about 10 per cent civil rights and 90 per

'Nigerian Outlook'

Published Daily In Enugu

Editor: GAB IDIGO

No. 2 Park Way, Enugu

Phone No. 3241, Enugu

No. 787, Tuesday, March 5, 1963.

EVIL SAINTS

ELSEWHERE on this page we publish an article by a Nigerian in the United States on a new but dangerous religious organisation known as Latter Day Saints. The formation of a religious body in far away America should not have been the concern of any Nigerian but for the fact that this sect, otherwise known as Mormons, believe as a cardinal of their faith that the Negro race is not equal to any other race in the eyes of God, as a result of which Negroes who are foolish enough to choose Mormonism as their religion can never be ordained priests.

Our correspondent has gone into great pains to expose this organisation because he fears it may come to Nigeria thoroughly disguised. We commend his article to the careful reading not only of all Nigerians but of all Governments of the Federation. These so-called Latter Day Saints must be recognised for what they are — godless Herrenvolkism — and must not be allowed into the country.

Only the other day President Kennedy appealed to the United States Congress to approve legislation designed to "emancipate" the Negro in America. His action was widely acclaimed by Nigerian newspapers. Since the United States Government preaches the equality of all races, Mr Kennedy must ban this anti-Negro organisation that preaches heretic doctrines.

We must congratulate our correspondent for having the courage of warning us in good time and we would like to assure him that he has our full support in his campaign against this evil body.

Mid-West Appeal

CHIEF Osadebay's appeal to the people of Ibusa in Western Nigeria to welcome strangers if they desire progress should be heeded by every community in Nigeria. The unity of this country can only be achieved through the interflow of people of all tribes. In other words a Nigerian should be able to feel comfortable in any part of this country where he chooses to live and study or earn his living.

There is abundant evidence that communities which are hostile or unfriendly to strangers invariably suffer from lack of progress because no stranger who feels unwanted will willingly contribute to the well-being of a town that is showing him the way out even before he enters.

Chief Osadebay's appeal for Nigerians to eschew tribalism cannot be repeated too often because therein lies the unity, strength and prosperity of Nigeria.

THEY'RE IMPORTING UNGODLINESSBy
AMBROSE CHUKWU

I was very much surprised at an article which appeared in Newsweek of January 21, 1963, under The Periscope — which is a column devoted to review of world problems. The article which I enclose for you is a statement by the Mormon Church, also called Latter-day Saints, to the effect that they plan to "proselytise actively among Negroes in Nigeria."

SALT LAKE CITY — The Negro seems slated for new status in the Mormon Church. Presently, while Negroes can join the Latter-Day Saints, they cannot be elevated to higher ranks such as priest (though other non-white races are). Now for the first time, in what one Mormon leader calls "a guarded and cautious approach," the church plans a mission to proselytise actively among Negroes in Nigeria.

I do not think that many people know about this religion in Nigeria; but if you read one of their books "Mormonism and the Negro," you will realize that such a collection of madmen have no right to go under the name Christians. The Mormons believe that the Negro is a race of outcasts who are undergoing some punishment in this world for what they did in a previous existence. They are "fallen angels."

RELIGIOUS APARTHEID

They did not prove themselves worthy in a pre-mortal existence hence they were branded black to distinguish them. They also believe and this is contained in their articles of faith that until the whites have been satisfied with the best things of this world to come, there would be no room for any negro in their church.

Said one of their prophets: "Why are so many inhabitants of the earth cursed with a skin of blackness? It comes in consequence of their fathers rejecting the power of the Holy Priesthood and law of God. They will go down to death, and when all the rest of the children (meaning the white and non-negroed races) have received their blessings then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain."

To prove this no negro is thought or considered worthy to be elevated to the higher ranks such as priesthood or elder (though non-white races, even American Indians are) no matter what your intellectual accomplishments might be. As a Negro — be you whatever you may — you are only considered fit to sweep the congregation hall.

In San Luis Obispo where I am attending college they have a very beautiful building. They use it as a Church and a place of meeting. The beautiful de-

sign of the house and architectural style — I am not an architecture major — was attractive to me. It was my first week in the city and the first time I heard of the existence of the Church.

I went inside and inquired what the beautiful building was used for. I was shown around the building by a student of our college. The interior does not give one the impression of a house of prayer — but this is beside the point. It was cozily furnished like a big conference hall.

The student invited me to their prayer meeting the following Sunday at 4 p.m. I was intrigued and went out of curiosity. I did not want to sit with the congregation. The white boy sat with me behind the large curtains that span the width of the very large hall. When they brought their bread and water I did not accept.

When their prayers broke up I was introduced to the leader of the Church in the city. We had a very long and friendly chat. But the evening got ruined when my curiosity again started wandering away. There was a large map of the world on the wall and on this map was shown the areas of Mormon activities. An innocent question popped out: "Why have you no missions anywhere in Africa except in South Africa?" Mr Roy said: "Ambrose, my reply, I am afraid would wound your feelings."

This, of course, made me more curious. I insisted for an answer. He gave it. "It is our article of faith that the Negro was cursed by God and this makes him unworthy to hold the office of a priest or elder in our Church."

UNGODLY RACE SUPERIORITY

I can't tell you here now how long we talked. But it was over three hours. In the end he lent me one of the most important books of their religion — Mormonism and the Negro. I did not eat or sleep until I finished reading the book. The following day I returned the book to him. When he asked me what I thought of the book I told him it was fatuous.

Their God is not our God. I do not believe in a God whose adherents preach the superiority of one race over the other. And this is what the Mormons preach.

The BIG Question is: why should the Mormons leave proselytising among the Negroes in America and decided to go to Nigeria? The statement by one of the Mormon leaders about a "cautious and guarded approach" to proselytise actively among

Extracts From The Book MORMONISM AND THE NEGRO [John J. Stewart]**CHAPTER II**

Briefly the LDS policy on Negroes is this: negroes and other people with negroid blood can become members of the church and through righteous works receive patriarchal blessings, enter the temple to perform baptisms for the dead, become heirs to celestial kingdom and otherwise partake of many blessings afforded worthy members of the church, but they cannot be ordained to the Priesthood nor are they eligible for marriage in an LDS temple; Negroes and non-Negroes should not intermarry."

CHAPTER VI

"I now propose to show three important truths:

That the LDS doctrine of not allowing the Negro to bear the Priesthood is entirely consistent with both of the two great attributes of God himself, the attributes of justice and mercy.

That in this matter of the Negroes not holding the Priesthood we can gain a much clearer insight into those basic gospel principles of FREE AGENCY, FORE-ORDINATION and ETERNAL PROGRESS.

That a belief in the correctness of this doctrine is consistent with other beliefs and practices in daily life which we seldom if ever question.

We believe that we are fore-ordained to the privilege of membership in this church and Priesthood, privileged to be born under the favourable circumstances that we have been, at such an opportune time and place. . . .

CHAPTER VII

Now, if through fore-ordination, as a result of their performance in the spirit life certain individuals were privileged to be born under the most favourable circumstances, then it must necessarily follow that others would be born under less favourable circumstances.

Is it just or unjust on the part of God, our Creator, to enable people to be born under those circumstances and with those opportunities consistent with their conduct in the spirit world?

The thing that would be unjust and illogical, and chaotic would be God's rewarding men the same regardless of their integrity or lack of it. Carry this foolish notion to the ultimate and you would place Christ and Satan on a par.

CHAPTER IX

For that matter, if the critic on the apologist is going to begin indignation about Negroes not being allowed to bear the Priesthood, why should he not feel even more indignant about women not having the Priesthood conferred upon them?

CHAPTER X

In Scripture we read of quite a number of instances of God's placing a curse or mark upon a certain person or people because of their misconduct and disobedience to His laws. The curse usually involves not only that particular person or generation of people, but their posterity as well. One example is the Jews, cursed to become "a hiss and a byword"; another is the Lammanites, whose skin was turned dark, and that of their children after them.

Negroes, in Nigeria, should make Nigerians "cautious and guarded too. Nigeria has the largest Negro population in the world (seconded by U. S. A.)

The Mormons could by trickery establish a church in Nigeria and use this as massive propaganda for propagating and spreading their religion of race hate and race superiority and discrimination in America.

Some may say that they want to change their policy. I do not think this would be a correct assumption. Why, let them start in America where Mr Smith started his religion with his wife and relations-in-laws barely 100 years ago. Let them first of all make themselves acceptable to the Negroes here in the States before venturing to distant Nigeria.

The Mormons preach love and equality of the white race only. The Negro is free to be a Mormon but still it is their belief and an article of faith that not until everybody who is not black (Negro) has been saved—they believe that heaven has been preordained for everyone but a Negro—there would not be any room for any Negro in heaven.

What then do you think would be the position of the blacks in this world if the Mormons get to control everything. An irreparable damage would be done to Nigeria's good name if she even as much as allows the Mormons to acquire an acre of ground on which to establish.

HEIGHT OF IMPUDENCE

This is not religious intolerance. People are not against the Mormons as individuals, but hate what they stand for.

Here are some extracts from the Book "Mormonism and the Negro"; and from these the reading public could form a very good idea of what the people preach. I think it is the height of impudence for the Mormons even to dream of proselytising in Nigeria, let alone to express it. They are belittling the intelligence of Nigerians, just as they do in everything pertaining to the Negro. Nigeria is a Godly country. Mormonism is godlessness and I do not think it is wrong for any country to check the growth of godlessness in her society.

There may not be anything wrong for any individual to hold the views the Mormons hold; but there is everything wrong when a group of individuals join themselves together to preach a gospel of race hate and race superiority; and are determined to carry this doctrine into the very portals of the people it is discrediting.

What do we do? Receive them with open arms and now to be their servants forever and ever Amen? Grant them freedom and passage to tell us in our own homes that even the most eminent and saintly "Negro is by the virtue of the colour of his skin, inferior even to the least admirable white person. Not because of the virtues he may or may not possess but because — through no fault of his own—there is a dark pigment in his skin."

cent a further extension of socialistic federal controls.” Elder Benson said, **“It is part of the pattern for the Communist take-over of America.”** (*Deseret News*, December 14, 1963)

In a 1966 thesis for the University of Utah, David L. Brewer made this comment:

As events in the modern world have brought greater awareness of the disprivilege often associated with non-Caucasian status, the Utah situation has become significant for two reasons: (1) Before 1964, the year this study began, Utah was the only “Northern” state without civil rights legislation. (2) The Mormon church, which prevails in Utah, does not accord religious equality to Negroes. (“Utah Elites and Utah Racial Norms,” Ph.D. thesis by David Leslie Brewer, University of Utah, August 1966, p. 160)

Writing in 1963, D. H. Oliver, a black attorney in Utah, stated:

By reason of their numerical strength the Mormons elect most of the public officials, through the entire state, and here is where conflict begins. In most instances these elected public officials, conscious of the spirit concealed behind the walls of the Temple, adhere strictly to the doctrines of their church in the performance of their public duty and thereby refuse to employ or appoint any Negroes in any position of authority or trust.

. . . it is claimed that the failure of the 35th session of the Utah Legislature to pass any Civil Rights legislation was due to hidden and behind the scenes opposition from the Mormon Church. . . . Any church has a right to believe what it will but it has no right to impose those beliefs on others against their will, and when those beliefs are detrimental to the welfare of others to the extent of infringing on their right to earn a decent living, such a church has no right to use the machinery of the state to enforce those beliefs. (*A Negro On Mormonism*, by David H. Oliver, 1963, pp. 30-31)

LDS scholar Jessie L. Embry wrote:

In 1963 the First Presidency tried with limited success to separate priesthood exclusion from the Civil Rights movement. In an official statement, they said: “During recent months, both in Salt Lake City and across the nation, considerable interest

has been expressed in the position of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the matter of civil rights. We would like it to be known that there is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed.” Church observers generally agree that this statement was made because the NAACP had threatened to picket Temple Square. The statement, a concession that prevented such action, continued by affirming equal opportunities in housing, education, and employment while still maintaining the right of the church to deny priesthood.

Just a few weeks after this statement was issued, Joseph Fielding Smith, the son of Joseph F. Smith and later church president, told *Look* magazine, **“Darkies’** are wonderful people and they have their place in our church.” The next year he stated that “the Lord” established priesthood denial.

In 1965 the NAACP, noting that the church-owned *Deseret News* had not endorsed a state civil rights bill, threatened to picket the church’s administration building. The newspaper responded by confirming the 1963 church statement, and the state legislature passed the public accommodations and fair employment acts. Yet not all church leaders supported civil rights. Ezra Taft Benson, then an apostle and later church president, claimed that the movement was “fomented almost entirely by the **communists.**”

As the Civil Rights movement made gains nationwide, Mormonism’s exclusionary policy came under repeated attack. . . .

Coupled with national pressure came growing dissent from within the church. Lowry Nelson, a Mormon sociologist, wrote to the church’s leadership in 1947 protesting the exclusionary policy. In 1952 he announced his public opposition in *Nation*. Sterling McMurrin, a philosophy professor at the University of Utah, also corresponded with LDS church leaders and spoke against the Mormon view of blacks during the 1960s. (*Black Saints in a White Church*, pp. 24-26)

Tensions continued to mount and in the spring of 1965 the NAACP led a march “from the federal office building [in Salt Lake City] to the steps of the [LDS] church administration building” (*The Christian Century*, Sept. 29, 1965, pp. 1185-1186).

The *Deseret News* reported:

About 250 persons demonstrated in front of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offices Sunday, asking for a statement on civil rights . . . (*Deseret News*, March 8, 1965, p. B11)

At the April 1965 LDS General Conference, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson declared:

What are we doing to fight it? Before I left for Europe I warned how the **Communists** were using the **civil rights movement** to promote revolution and eventual takeover of this country. When are we going to wake up? What do you know about the dangerous civil rights agitation in Mississippi? Do you fear the destruction of all vestiges of state government?

Now, brethren, the Lord never promised there would not be traitors in the Church. We have the ignorant, the sleepy and the deceived who provide temptations and avenues of apostacy for the unwary and the unfaithful, but we have a prophet at our head and he has spoken. Now what are we going to do about it?

Do Homework

Brethren, if we had done our homework and were faithful we could step forward at this time and help save this country. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 7, 1965, p. A-5)

However, when this speech was printed in the official LDS magazine, *The Improvement Era*, this portion was edited to leave out the part about the Communists. It was changed to read:

What are you doing to fight it?

Brethren, if we had done our homework and were faithful, we could step forward at this time and help save this country. (*Improvement Era*, June 1965, p. 539)

Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born in 1929 and was ordained a Baptist minister in 1948. He received his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University on June 5, 1955, and later that year he led the boycott on the Montgomery bus system:

Mrs. Rosa Parks, a 42 year old seamstress, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery bus and was arrested. Dr. King

became involved in the incident. As a means of protest the Montgomery Improvement Association was organized, December 4, 1955. Dr. King was elected president. On December 5, 1955, the famous boycott was started. This was the catalytic event which started Dr. King on the road to become America's crusader and most famous civil rights leader. (Long Island University web site, <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/mlking.htm>)

In 1963 he led a march on Washington, D.C. and gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In 1964 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The next four years were crowded with speeches, marches and attempts on his life. The day after his April 3, 1968, speech, "I've Been to the Mountain Top," in Memphis, Tennessee, he was shot while standing on the balcony of his hotel.

Shortly after his murder several people began lobbying to get a nationally recognized holiday named in his honor. After many years of debate, on November 2, 1983, the U.S. government finally passed into law the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, to be celebrated on the third Monday of January each year. The first national celebration was on January 20, 1986. While the state of Utah established such a holiday in 1986, the name was changed to "Human Rights Day." Part of the resistance to name the holiday after Dr. King was the prominent Utah view that Dr. King was unworthy of such an honor. Apostle Ezra Taft Benson had implied that Dr. King was a communist and stated that the civil rights movement was part of a communist conspiracy. D. Michael Quinn wrote:

In response to U.S. president Lyndon Johnson's designation of 7 April as a national day of mourning for Reverend King, Apostle Benson immediately prepared a statement for distribution which complained that "the Communists will use Mr. King's death for as much yardage as possible." Benson's hand-out continued that "Martin Luther King had been affiliated with at least the following officially recognized Communist fronts," and listed three organizations. Benson was simply repeating the Birch view of King. . . . in his talk to BYU's devotional in May 1968 Benson accused the U.S.

Supreme Court of treason. He added that “a prerequisite for appointment to high government office today is one’s past affiliations with communist fronts or one’s ability to follow the communist line.” Benson’s address to BYU students also quoted three times from the Birch Society’s official magazine, including references to “black Marxists” and “the Communists and their Black Power fanatics.” (“Ezra Taft Benson and Mormon Political Conflicts,” by D. Michael Quinn, *Dialogue*, vol. 26, no. 2, p. 64)

It wasn’t until 2000 that Utah Governor Mike Leavitt signed into law a bill adopting the regular holiday name of “Martin Luther King Day” (see “Utah Designates Dr. King’s Birthday a Holiday; Last State To Adopt The Day,” *Jet*, April 24, 2000).

While some Utah schools close on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Utah State Legislature continues to open its session on this day each year. Writing for the Utah State University paper, *The Statesman*, Denise Albiston observed:

The Utah Legislature does not observe Human Rights Day, a day in Utah that is meant to replace Martin Luther King Jr. Day, said Ross Peterson, director of the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies.

“For [the Utah Legislature] not to recognize this day just seems ignorant of other races and cultures,” said Doug Beazer, secretary of the Black Student Union at Utah State University. “It seems like they’re so involved in a white, predominantly religious society and don’t care about America as a whole, just the one small group. . . .”

Many state and public offices will be observing Human Rights Day, however, the Legislature begins sessions on this day each year and public school classes are usually also in attendance.

The conflict in Utah not only stems from this day being nationally recognized as Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Utah’s desire to change it to Human Rights Day, but also because the Legislature doesn’t truly observe the day, said Gabe Carter, president of the Black Student Union. . . .

When using the phrase “human rights,” it seems like Utah is trying to incorporate more people into the holiday, but failing to recognize that Martin Luther King Jr. was the fundamental character of the ’60s is unfortunate, Beazer said. . . .

Various states reacted to the national declaration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in a variety of ways and Utah was one that decided to observe Human Rights Day instead, Peterson said. . . .

“It speaks poorly of the Utah Legislature not to recognize this holiday in any form. . . .” Carter said. . . .

Peterson said, “It ought to be King’s day, it ought to be observed, and the Utah Legislature should come into session on Tuesday. Without King, it doesn’t tell the whole story.” (“Some Say Utah Lacks Recognition of Human Rights Day,” by Denise Albiston, *The Statesman*, Utah State University, January 16, 2004)

Is King a Mormon?

We are not aware of any particular interest on the part of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to join the LDS Church. However, on at least four different occasions his name has been submitted to the LDS Church for temple ordinances. In both 1991 and 1992 someone was baptized and performed an endowment ceremony in his behalf. His name was again submitted for baptism in 1993 and 2004. Evidently the LDS temple records are not well enough organized for them to know that the work had already been done.

King is not the only prominent black to be offered post-mortal membership in the LDS Church. In both 1991 and 1993 someone was baptized in behalf of famous black activist Malcolm X, a Muslim convert from a Baptist home. His full name was Malcolm Little, born in 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. His temple endowment was performed on January 25, 1992.

Two early black activists that have had temple baptism and endowment ordinances performed for them are David Walker and Frederick Douglass.

David Walker was born in 1785 and died in 1830 “under mysterious circumstances.” He had urged slaves to “resort to violence when necessary to win their freedom” (see www.africanwithin.com). His baptism and endowment were performed in 1991.

Frederick Douglass, born in 1817 and died in 1895, was “a leader in the abolitionist movement and the first black citizen to hold high rank (as U.S. minister and consul general to Haiti) in the U.S. government” (see www.americaslibrary.gov). His records show that

as early as 1906 someone had performed his baptism. Proxy baptism was again performed in 1988, 1991, three times in 1992, three times in 1993, and three times in 1994. His endowments have been done for him about a dozen times and he has been sealed/married to two different women (see Appendix D).

Since blacks could always be baptized in the LDS Church the question arose in South Africa in the early 1900s as to whether or not blacks could do baptisms in the temple for their dead relatives. Evidently leaders in South Africa were told that theoretically black converts could do baptism for the dead but local leaders were to be careful not to encourage emigration to the United States to accomplish this. It appears the leaders were worried about an influx of blacks to Utah since there were no temples in Africa. Newell Bringhurst wrote:

In 1852, the Latter-day Saints finally launched some proselytizing efforts in Africa—in Capetown, South Africa. But in contrast to other Christian denominations, the Mormons preached only to the white European immigrants, not the native blacks.

. . . For at least two reasons, missionary activity in South Africa came to a temporary halt in 1865—a suspension which lasted until 1903. This action was part of the Church’s worldwide scaling-down of missionary efforts during the vigorous campaign waged in the United States against the Mormons and their peculiar institution of polygamy.

. . . the Boer War of 1899-1902, delayed the return of Mormon missionaries to South Africa until 1903. When Mormon missionaries finally returned, they continued to focus their efforts on South Africa’s white population. Nonetheless, during the early 1900s, a significant number of black Africans were unexpectedly attracted to the Church. Local leaders were concerned: in 1903 H. L. Steed, president of the mission, wrote to Utah seeking advice on how to handle this unexpected situation which “he had not encouraged.” Steed was told to “preach the gospel” to those blacks who expressed interest. But the intermingling of blacks and whites should be avoided and black members “should be encouraged to form branches composed of their own class of people.”

Two years later, the “great many blacks [that] had become members of the Church in South Africa” also posed problems for B.A. Hendricks,

the new president of the mission there. Hendricks asked Church leaders in Utah **if black members could enter Mormon temples to be baptized and confirmed on behalf of their dead ancestors**. This question was important because of the Church’s ban on black priesthood ordination—a prohibition in effect since the late 1840s. In response, Church President Joseph F. Smith wrote [in 1910] that black Africans *could* enter Mormon temples in order to perform the ordinances of baptism and confirmation for their deceased relatives. At the same time, Smith told Hendricks *not* “to encourage the Negro saints of South Africa to emigrate to Zion in order . . . to do temple work in behalf of their dead.” Like his predecessors, he reaffirmed the prevailing Mormon practice, that South African missionaries confine their efforts to “the white class of people” and avoid black Africans. (“Mormonism In Black Africa: Changing Attitudes and Practices 1830-1981,” by Newell Bringhurst, *Sunstone*, May 1981, p.17)

Lester Bush commented on the situation in South Africa:

What of Negroes being baptized for the dead? President [Joseph F.] Smith could see “no reason why a negro should not be permitted to have access to the baptismal font in the temple to be baptized for his dead, inasmuch as negroes are entitled to become members of the Church by baptism.” Consequently, the First Presidency informed the mission president that **while it was not the current practice**, they did not “hesitate to say that Negroes may be baptized and confirmed” for the dead. (“Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview,” by Lester E. Bush Jr., *Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 1, Spring 1973, p. 39)

We have been unable to determine to what extent, if any, blacks were allowed to go to the temple to do baptism for the dead in the early part of the Twentieth Century. One would think that if any blacks in Utah had been allowed to do this it would have been mentioned in the various interviews of black Mormons in Kate Carter’s 1965 pamphlet, *The Negro Pioneer*. But no such mention was made.

At least by 1954 blacks were not allowed in the temple to do proxy baptism. They evidently could submit the names of relatives for baptism but the actual

ordinances were performed by white members. Speaking at a teachers convention at BYU in 1954, Apostle Mark E. Petersen discussed the experience of the Hopes, a black family in Cincinnati:

Brother Hope asked me if it would be possible for him to have baptisms for the dead done in the temple on behalf of members of his family who had passed on. I went to President [Joseph Fielding] Smith and he said, "Yes, you get their records and we will take them over to the temple and have the baptisms done for them." I did, and we performed vicarious baptisms for these Negroes. Only the baptisms and confirmations—nothing else, but we did that much. ("Race Problems—As They Affect the Church," by Mark E. Petersen, August 27, 1954; see Appendix B)

Armand Mauss points out that by the 1970s blacks were participating in baptisms for the dead:

After more than a century of having been nearly "invisible," Mormon blacks began to receive attention and promotional coverage in Church publications and social circles [in the 1970's]. The [*Deseret*] *Church News* had ignored almost entirely things black (or Negro) until 1969. The Index to the *Church News* for the period 1961-70 shows only one listing on the topic from July 1962 to January 1969, but several a year thereafter. Black singers began to appear with increasing frequency in the Tabernacle Choir, and one of these, a recently converted contralto, was also appointed to the BYU faculty. Feature articles about Mormon blacks began to appear in Church magazines. **Blacks began to participate more conspicuously and perhaps more frequently in some of the lesser temple rituals (e.g., baptisms for the dead).** (*Neither White Nor Black*, p. 163)

After 1978 blacks had full access to the temple and immediately started submitting the names of various dead relatives for temple ordinances.

BYU Boycotted

From the late 1960s through the early 1970s students at various colleges protested against the LDS position on race. As more and more people questioned segregation, the LDS Church began

to stand out as a very racist institution. In 1967 an article in the *Los Angeles Times* addressed this matter:

The deeply Mormon attitude apparently discriminating against Negroes because of their race is becoming a burning issue in that church—and beyond the church . . .

The increasing heat of racial pressures in the country has brought it into focus as **one of the few uncracked fortresses of discrimination.** (*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 27, 1967)

On April 14, 1968, the *Arizona Daily Star* reported that there was a boycott by eight blacks at the LDS Church's Brigham Young University:

The University of Texas-El Paso athletes stayed away from Saturday's competition at the church-operated BYU . . . They said there was a belief on the campus "that the blacks are inferior and that we are disciples of the devil" . . .

President Hugh B. Brown, a member of the First Presidency of the Church, said the athletes are unclear on the church's doctrine denying Negroes membership in the Mormon Priesthood.

"At the present time we do not give Negroes the priesthood. Priesthood, in our view, is leadership. There is not enough leadership among Negroes to warrant establishing him as a member of leadership," President Brown said. (*Arizona Daily Star*, April 14, 1968)

Apostle Hugh B. Brown's excuse, that blacks aren't given the priesthood because there "is not enough leadership," is shown to be inadequate since white teenagers could receive the Aaronic Priesthood. Major priesthood leadership in the higher Melchizedek Priesthood does not come until one is at least in his twenties. Were white teenagers better equipped for priesthood than an adult black who had been a member for his whole life? Surely there were some mature blacks that could have been given at least the same entry-level position as white teenagers. Granted, it takes time to train new converts in the protocol of Mormonism, but blacks who had been members for years were denied priesthood.

The year 1969 brought even more serious trouble for BYU. Steve Rudman reported on a protest at Arizona State University:

That evening 250 Arizona State University students, most of them black, marched militantly under torchlight, wearing black armbands and carrying placards protesting the allegedly racist policies at BYU. The group's leader, John Mask . . . led the demonstrators in an evening-long chant, "down with BYU" and "Get Rid of the Racists." . . .

"The thing is" Mask said adamantly as he wiped the sweat from his face, "we know BYU is a racist school and we know the Mormons who run it are racist."

"BYU and the Mormons believe we are second-class citizens," echoed Dave Edhomes, another black demonstrator. "It says so in their scripture." . . .

Some of the Cougars were angry, some were mixed up; but most were hurt that they had been the objects of a racial protest. They had no idea at the time but the incident under Arizona's midnight sun on the evening of Oct. 4 was **only the beginning of a full-scale racial upheaval** and a bitter autumn of discontent . . . the BYU team bus rolled toward Laramie on a chilling Friday afternoon, Oct. 17 . . . at that moment in Laramie a crisis of intense magnitude was developing. **Fourteen black football players**, six of whom were starters, had been dismissed from the team by [Wyoming] Coach Lloyd Eaton.

Sympathizing with a Black Students Alliance protest of BYU, the players wished to wear black armbands in their game with the Cougars. Eaton had informed his players any open demonstration would not be tolerated.

Early Friday morning, wearing armbands, the players entered Memorial Fieldhouse to discuss the matter with Eaton. **When he saw the blacks he threw them off the team** . . .

Two hours before game time the BSA began its boycott. An original estimate of 50 to 60 students began to protest, but as kickoff time neared the number swelled despite cold weather and a blanket of snow on the ground . . .

"We know BYU and the Mormons demean a person on the basis of skin color. We can join their church but we can't advance because we are black. Now is that discrimination, or not?" Black asked . . .

The effect of this second protest was obvious in the Cougars' performance against the depleted Cowboys. Wyoming wiped out BYU, 40-7.

Embarrassed and frustrated, the Cougars dressed hurriedly and left Laramie, angry, dejected and stunned. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 30, 1969)

On October 29, 1969, the following appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*:

PHOENIX, ARIZ. (AP)—Several Western Athletic conference athletic directors Tuesday warned of a **possible break-up of the conference** because of racial policies at Brigham Young University, the Arizona Republic reported.

"There is a distinct possibility that this could break up the WAC." Sports Editor Verne Boatner said he was told by a "prominent" athletic director . . . A telephone survey of seven of the eight ADs indicated BYU will be on the spot at the meeting, Boatner said . . .

One AD reportedly said he'd "just as soon see" BYU withdraw from the conference.

In November Steve Rudman reported concerning the serious problems BYU was facing:

. . . tension festered around the Western Athletic Conference to the point that WAC Commissioner Wiles Hallow was forced to admit: "I think this thing is growing to crisis proportions." . . .

But while the winds of discord swirled through the league, the BYU campus remained unaffected . . .

Most students are unconcerned. They look at it as a matter that the church will have to decide. "You have to understand we are taught **unquestioning obedience**," said Jim Briedl, a BYU junior . . .

Two days before facing BYU, San Jose State, with the backing of Coach Joe McMullen, unanimously voted to wear arm bands in the game with the Cougars . . .

Spartan defensive end Tony Jackson drafted the team statement. It was endorsed by San Jose's acting president, Hobert W. Burns.

Jackson, a black player, was baptized in the LDS Church when he was nine years old. He left the church, he said, when he **discovered Mormon scripture teaches that black skin is a mark of the sin of Cain**.

"I know about the church," Jackson said. "Negroes cannot hold the priesthood because they **have black skin**." . . .

Some irate BYU students decided black armbands were nonsense and voted to wear red armbands because San Jose does not actively recruit Indians . . .

But BYU's dean of students, J. Elliott Cameron, had a different opinion: "I think these BYU kids are real naïve. They don't realize what this means elsewhere." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 30, 1969)

On November 13, 1969, the Mormon Church found itself faced with a very embarrassing problem:

STANFORD, CALIF. (UPI)— Stanford University announced Wednesday it will schedule no new athletic or other competitions with Brigham Young University because of alleged racial discrimination by the Mormon Church . . .

President Kenneth Pitzer said Stanford . . . will not schedule any further meetings, including debates and other non-athletic competition.

"It is the policy of Stanford University not to schedule events with institutions which practice discrimination on a basis of race or national origin, or which are affiliated with or sponsored by institutions which do so," he said.

"Top officials of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which sponsors BYU, have told Stanford University officials that the church currently has policies stating that no Negro of African lineage may have the right of priesthood." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 13, 1969)

Obert C. Tanner, professor of philosophy at the University of Utah, called Stanford's action "easily the sharpest criticism of the Mormon religion in this century" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, January 7, 1970).

On November 14, 1969, the *Tribune* reported that William Wyman, special assistant to President Kenneth Pitzer, stated that

if Brigham Young wants to play Stanford teams in the future the Mormon Church will have to "reinterpret God's word and establish doctrines compatible with Stanford's policy." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 14, 1969)

Ernest L. Wilkinson, President of BYU, was very disturbed with Stanford's action. In a speech delivered at BYU, Dr. Wilkinson stated:

During the past year or two, Brigham Young University has received national attention because of protests and boycotts involving our athletic teams . . . President Kenneth Pitzer . . . publicly announced to the nation that Stanford would no longer schedule competition with BYU . . . students from every state in the nation and 56 foreign countries have selected BYU as the university of their choice.

"Their color ranges from black to brown to yellow to white. Every race and so-called minority group is represented . . . **True, there are not many black students** on our campus. Just how many there are I do not know . . .

"Their decisions may have been based on their belief that their social life would be curtailed . . . **as far as we know there is not a single negro family residing in the entire county in which BYU is located** and this we are told by Negroes is an important factor in the decision black students make in not coming to BYU." (*Daily Universe*, Brigham Young University, December 15, 1969)

Many people felt that Dr. Wilkinson had misrepresented the situation at BYU. The following appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on January 7, 1970:

In an open letter to the presidents of Stanford and Brigham Young universities, Obert C. Tanner, professor of philosophy at the University of Utah, criticized both university administrations . . .

In a comment directed toward the Brigham Young University president, he said "You should not say there is no discrimination at BYU. There is, and especially so, since it would **attempt to identify God with this discrimination.**"

First Presidency Statement

In the midst of all the demonstrations against the LDS Church, some leaders felt the church needed to change its policy on blacks. According to D. Michael Quinn, Apostle Hugh B. Brown tried to get the priesthood ban lifted in 1969:

First Counselor Hugh B. Brown had been on record for six years as favoring an end to this ban. In 1969 he wrote of the denial of priesthood to those of black African ancestry:

Personally I doubt if we can maintain or sustain ourselves in the position which we seem to have adopted but which has no justification as far as the scriptures are concerned so far as I know. I think we are going to have to change our decision on that. The President says that it can come only by revelation. If that be true then it will come in due course. I think it is one of the most serious problems confronting us because of course it affects the millions of colored people. . . .

In November 1969 Brown privately lobbied Stanford University to delay their decision to boycott BYU. The night before Stanford's announcement, Brown told the university's vice-president that he expected the church to drop this restriction. (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, D. Michael Quinn, Signature Books, 1997, p. 14)

Quinn goes on to relate how Apostle Brown "was able to get a proposal allowing full priesthood for Blacks approved by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles." One of the apostles who signed this proposal was Spencer W. Kimball (who would officially change the ban in 1978). However, Apostle Harold B. Lee, who was absent from the 1969 meeting, quickly pressured "the Quorum of Twelve to rescind its vote. Then he pressured the first counselor to sign a statement which reaffirmed the priesthood restriction on blacks" (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, p. 14).

On December 15, 1969, the First Presidency issued the following statement regarding race. This was printed in the *Improvement Era*, February 1970:

Letter of First Presidency Clarifies Church's Position on the Negro

December 15, 1969

Dear Brethren:

In view of confusion that has arisen, it was decided at a meeting of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve to restate the position of the Church with regard to the Negro both in society and in the Church.

. . . we believe the Negro, as well as those of other races, should have his full constitutional

privileges as a member of society, and we hope that members of the Church everywhere will do their part as citizens to see that these rights are held inviolate. Each citizen must have equal opportunities and protection under the law with reference to civil rights.

However, matters of faith, conscience, and theology are not within the purview of the civil law. . . .

From the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith and all succeeding Presidents of the Church have taught that Negroes, while spirit children of a common Father, and the progeny of our earthly parents Adam and Eve, were not yet to receive the priesthood, for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which he has not made fully known to man.

Our living prophet, President David O. McKay, has said, "The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but **goes back into the beginning with God.** . . .

"Revelation assures us that this plan **antedates** man's mortal existence, extending back to man's **preexistent state.**"

President McKay has also said, "Sometime in God's eternal plan, the Negro will be given the right to hold the priesthood." (*Improvement Era*, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 1970, p. 70-71)

As President McKay was incapacitated due to ill health (he died the next month), the statement was only signed by his two counselors, Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner.

Quinn discussed the aftermath to this 1969 statement:

Brown did not accept gracefully the defeat of his effort to reverse the church's ban against African Americans. Less than a week after he had reluctantly signed Lee's statement, Brown told a San Francisco newspaper reporter that the church's priesthood ban against blacks "will change in the not too distant future." Known for "his fiery temper," Lee privately exploded on 27 December, saying that Brown had been "talking too much." . . . (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, p. 15)

Problems Increase

Unfortunately for the BYU athletes, the situation became worse. On January 6, 1970, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

The president of the Tucson branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has requested permission to hold a protest rally at the University of Arizona before the Arizona-Brigham Young University basketball game Thursday.

Three days later the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

. . . Brigham Young University . . . lost to Arizona, 90-77, in a game marred by racial protest . . . With 1:40 to play in the first half, nine Negroes, some of them wearing black wristbands, walked out on the basketball floor while the game was in progress.

As the Negroes filed onto the court, play stopped and BYU Coach Stan Watts pulled his team from the floor. The blacks were on the court for only a few minutes, however, when police and security officers ushered them away . . .

Other student demonstrators broke a window and screamed, "Stop the Game" but that was the extent of the protest. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, January 9, 1970)

Coach Stan Watts was deeply disturbed by the trouble his team encountered. Hack Miller reported:

Anyone who thinks that BYU players, being protested against, have no feelings in the fuss are a bit tilted in their thinking, Watts contends.

"At Tucson we had heard all day long about protests. We had security people with us. We were told we would be taken to a side entrance so we would not be molested." . . .

"One wonders, as we walked into the place, if the building would burn down, or be dynamited."

Of course there is concern—on both sides. (*Deseret News*, January 10, 1970)

Just five days later the church's *Deseret News* carried these statements:

TUCSON, ARIZ. (UPI) – Some 3,000 University of Arizona students participated Wednesday in a two-hour rally, demanding that the school sever relations with fellow Western Athletic Conference

member Brigham Young University.

Speakers at the rally, in front of the university administration building, called for the resignation of President Richard Harvill and demanded that charges be dropped against nine persons arrested at the Arizona-Brigham Young basketball game here a week ago. (*Deseret News*, January, 15, 1970)

Much to the LDS Church's embarrassment, *Sports Illustrated* wrote an article about the protests:

Ending a 10-game ordeal on the road, the Cougars last week limped home to Provo, Utah with a 4-10 record, one of the worst starts in Stan Watt's lengthy coaching career. That was depressing enough of course, but the boys from "The Y" . . . were bedeviled by a special problem: a gathering wave of protest against a recently reaffirmed doctrine of the Mormon Church that Negroes be denied admission to priesthood. As much as the Cougars would like to ignore them, the protests have **grown in intensity to the point where they have almost transcended all else.**

"You try not to think about it," said one of the Cougars, "but it does affect your play. Sometimes there are calls—'Look out, we're going to get you'—and other threats. And there's always tension in the stands."

"The thing that worries me and the boys" said Watts . . . "is how far will it go?" Then leaning over and lowering his voice, he added, "One of these days, you know, somebody might pull a gun or some thing." . . . This season's protests have included the wearing of black wristbands by some San Jose State players, the booing of the Y's dancing Cougarettes during the Quaker City Tournament in Philadelphia and the throwing of eggs on the floor at Arizona State. By far the most serious trouble, however, came on January 8, when the Cougars went to Tucson . . . Vandals poured lighter fluid on the gym floor and set it afire . . . All five Arizona starters—three of them black—wore black wristbands . . . the Arizona coach Bruce Larson, is a bishop in the Mormon Church, so, in effect, the Wildcat players and fans were protesting against their own coach . . . (*Sports Illustrated*, January 26, 1970, pp. 38-39)

On February 1, 1970, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported on the demonstration at the BYU/Washington gymnastics meet:

SEATTLE (AP) – A garbage-throwing demonstration by about 20 blacks, protesting what one of them said was “racism” practiced by Brigham Young University, delayed the start of the gymnastics meet between Washington and BYU here Saturday afternoon.

The blacks walked onto a mat just before the first event and broke eggs and poured oil, catsup and salad dressing onto the mat, officials said . . . After tipping over chalk trays, throwing chairs onto the mat and throwing a pail of water into Hughs’ face, the demonstrators departed. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 1, 1970)

The *Salt Lake Tribune* for February 4, 1970, carried this article:

LARAMIE, WYO. – The Black Student Alliance of the University of Wyoming said Tuesday it will stage a nonviolent rally Saturday to protest the racial policies of the Mormon Church and Brigham Young University . . .

A spokesman for the BSA said: “This rally is necessary in view of the reaffirmation of the racist policies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

On February 6, 1970, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that at Fort Collins, Colorado, the BYU team met with a violent demonstration:

FORT COLLINS, COLO. – The **most violent demonstration yet** against Brigham Young University by black students protesting the Provo school’s allegedly racist policies took place here Thursday night before, during and after the Cougars’ 94-71 WAC basketball loss to a hot-shooting Colorado State University . . .

The protest of BYU by the blacks was expected to be peaceful, but it quickly turned into something much more as black students scuffled with Colorado State University police before the game began and after it was over.

The real violence, however, erupted at halftime when approximately 100-150 black students shuffled out of the stands and walked on the court.

The violence occurred as campus police tried to remove the blacks from the floor.

During the scuffle, a photographer from the *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver was struck on the head with a metal object and was taken to a

Fort Collins hospital . . .

Fighting erupted in one corner of the court and shortly before the two teams were scheduled to come back on the floor to resume the game, **an object described as a Molotov Cocktail, huge and flaming, was tossed on the court.** It was quickly brushed off the floor by an alert attendant.

The game was delayed approximately 30 minutes, but it did not signal the end of the trouble.

Police broke up several fights after the game, some in the stands, and some outside the gymnasium . . .

Fans kept the players on their toes by tossing eggs onto the court at various times during the game. This required official time-outs, during which attendants were out to clean up the mess.

The Cougars, primary objects of the protest, had no better of a time on the basketball floor against the Rams, as they missed almost everything they threw at the hoop. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 6, 1970)

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported another demonstration against BYU in California:

SAN LUIS OBISPO (UPI) – Fifty to 75 demonstrators marched outside a wrestling match between Brigham Young University and Cal Poly Saturday night in protest of the alleged racial policies of the Mormon Church.

The group, which carried signs reading, “Stop Mormon Racism,” was sponsored by the Black Students Union and the Students for New Action Politics. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February, 16, 1970)

Blacks at BYU

In trying to justify the lack of black athletes at BYU, President Ernest L. Wilkinson made this statement: “. . . we welcome black athletes at BYU provided they satisfy our entrance requirements and are willing to abide by our standards” (*Daily Universe*, Brigham Young University, December 15, 1969).

Tom Hudspeth, head football coach at BYU, was more forthcoming about the matter. He acknowledged that in the past blacks were discouraged from coming to BYU. He noted that one of the “rules” at BYU was that there would be no “inter-racial dating.” The following appeared in the *Daily Herald*, published at Provo, Utah:

Springville—The protests and demonstrations which are being launched against BYU are just an easy entrance into other problems Negroes feel they have, Tom Hudspeth, head football coach, told the Springville Chamber of Commerce recently at an early morning breakfast meeting.

“. . . We will **not** change our policies,” he declared . . .

Coach Hudspeth pointed out that he has a young Negro man on the campus now, and they feel this is the time to bring him into the athletic program. “In the past we felt **we should discourage the Negroes** because we felt they would not be happy in the social situation here. We have certain rules and regulations which **we won’t change**. They must meet academic standards. **We will not allow inter-racial dating**. We are only 35 minutes from Salt Lake City where there is a Negro community, and we are setting up appointments and introductions there.

“If this doesn’t work out, we won’t have to hang our heads; it wasn’t meant to be” he declared . . .

“We felt we could work out something to relieve a little of the pressure. This is the only way we have changed our policy,” he said . . .

Coach Hudspeth indicated that “a lot of people are mad at me right now because they feel we are giving in. . . . When we played Arizona State, they had to pay an extra \$5800 for control. You can’t take this out of a tight athletic budget and survive. We are trying to show the other universities that we want to cooperate with them.” (*Daily Herald*, February 16, 1970)

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that another demonstration against BYU took place when the team went to play a game at New Mexico. Eggs and bags of liquid were tossed onto the floor. According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*

the liquid was said to have been kerosene by those clearing the hardwoods. It must have been something fairly strong—it took the sealcoat off the boards and left ugly marks 30 feet long and 10 or 12 feet wide. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, March 1, 1970)

The next week students protested at a BYU/University of Washington game:

SEATTLE (UPI) – Student protesters ran riot over the University of Washington campus for more than an hour Friday but the crowd that had swelled to 2,500 broke up when word went out that police were on their way.

The students were protesting the refusal of the university to sever relations with Brigham Young University immediately. They claimed BYU is a “racist” school. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, March 7, 1970)

On March 9, 1970, the *Deseret News* contained an article about the situation in Washington:

SEATTLE (UPI) – The University of Washington announced late Sunday night athletic relations with Brigham Young University would be dropped when present contracts run out in 1972 . . .

When informed of this action, President Ernest L. Wilkinson of BYU said the University of Washington had apparently broken its promise to take no action without conferring with BYU.

The next day the *Deseret News* printed another article about the matter:

The Black Students Union pressed the administration of the University of Washington for more concessions today, demanding that athletic ties with Brigham Young University be severed immediately . . .

“If there is good reason to end the contract in 1972 there is good reason to end it now,” a Black student Union spokesman said.

Some 3,000 students, led by the BSU, paraded peacefully on the school’s campus in Seattle Monday over the issue of alleged racism at BYU.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson, BYU president, said he was “surprised and shocked” at the step taken by the leaders of the University of Washington.

And Dr. John Hogness, executive vice president of the latter school, said the step was taken to protect the lives and safety of persons on the university campus.

The demonstrations “pose an extremely hazardous and explosive situation,” Dr. Hogness said. (*Deseret News*, March 10, 1970)

Finally, BYU realized it had to make some concessions. In the book, *Brigham Young*

University: A House of Faith, Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis observed:

UTEP president Joseph Ray wrote to BYU president Ernest Wilkinson, “Without any suggestion at all of trying to run your business, I think your institution will be a thorn in the side of the [Western Athletic] conference until such time as you recruit **at least a token Negro athlete**. Until you do, all explanations that the charges [of racism] are not true will not carry the ring of conviction.” . . .

Student senates at the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, University of New Mexico, Colorado State University, University of Wyoming, and other universities and colleges voiced their support of black students protesting policies and recommended severing athletic ties with the Mormon school. Students at the University of Hawaii, in a general student election, and the University of Washington’s faculty senate took the same position. Administrations of at least five colleges and universities accepted such recommendations and refused to schedule further games with BYU. Among these schools were Stanford University, California State University at Hayward, and the University of Washington . . . The immediate response from BYU officials to the protests was to dismiss them as part of a communist-inspired ploy to undermine the stability of the United States. “These people aren’t after us. They’re after America,” said Coach Watts . . . The BYU Alumnus provided details of the school’s trouble in an article entitled, “Militants, Reds, Attack Y, Church.” The article promised alumni that BYU would continue to “hold the line on principles despite the propaganda.” President Wilkinson saw in the demonstrations a sign of an imminent apocalypse . . .

Because of pressure from the WAC presidents’ council, as well as from demonstrators nearly everywhere BYU competed, **school administrators revised their policy on black recruitment and began actively seeking key black athletes**. The school’s **first black football player**, Bennie Smith, enrolled in **1972**, followed two years later by the school’s first black basketball player, Gary Batiste. Smith later expressed disappointment in the promise of athletic recruiters that there was little racial prejudice on campus. “After you get here,

it’s a whole different story,” Smith claimed. Batiste was suspended from the team before completing his first semester. **It was five years before a second black player, Keith Rice was recruited for the basketball squad** . . . Edward Minor of the Florida A & M instructional science department, who had been engaged in 1960 to teach classes at BYU during a summer session, had been reassigned when Wilkinson discovered that Minor was black. Wilkinson feared “that students and others [might] take license from [Minor’s engagement as a guest lecturer] and assume that there [was] nothing improper about mingling with other races.” (*Brigham Young University: A House of Faith*, by Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, Signature Books, 1985, pp. 299-302)

Stanford’s policy of not scheduling games with BYU stayed in place until after the 1978 revelation which allowed blacks to hold the priesthood. Bergera and Priddis commented:

At the time of the [1978 priesthood] announcement, only four American blacks and a handful of Africans were enrolled at BYU. During the three years following the announcement, the number of blacks rose to eighteen American and twenty-two foreign blacks . . . As a direct result of the priesthood revision, Stanford University decided in 1979 to remove its ban against athletic competition with BYU. (*Brigham Young University: House of Faith*, p. 303)

Vigilante Groups

The tense situation with regard to civil rights and BYU’s problems during the 1960s caused a great deal of fear among the people in Utah. On January 10, 1970, the church’s *Deseret News* reported:

Salt Lake Police are fully informed and capable of dealing with any organized, violent disruption of civil authority by extremist groups, should such action occur.

That was the thrust of the report given city officials and civic leaders at a meeting called Friday . . . to discuss public reactions to copies of a tape recording being circulated locally . . .

The tape was made at a national conference of radical and revolutionary organizations in Oakland, Calif., in July. About 4,000 advocates of

Black Power, Brown Power, New Left and various other left-wing viewpoints attended . . .

Partially in response to inflammatory material on the tape, “as many as 50” groups in the Salt Lake area have sprung up with the purpose of mobilizing to protect property and preparing to defend against local revolutionary activities, Patrick said.

These groups are often lacking in essential leadership, tend toward vigilante action and, at best, offer a “patchy” response to the type of mobilization that would be needed in an emergency, Patrick said.

“When the citizens of this area become alarmed and if that alarm gets out of hand, mass confusion and hysteria could result,” Patrick said . . .

Commissioner Barker said after the meeting that if any citizens wish to be useful in aiding police in preventing disturbance it would have to be done under “proper direction in a civil defense posture.” (*Deseret News*, January 10, 1970)

On February 22, 1970, these statements appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*:

Chief Deputy Andrus said that communications have been intercepted which indicate that at least two militant minority groups are planning violence in the Salt Lake Area . . .

Every precaution to detect a possible outbreak of violence before it starts is being taken by both the city police and sheriffs office, Chief Deputy Andrus said.

“When the trouble comes, we will be ready to call in the U.S. Army to back us up,” he said.

Policemen had been guarding the LDS Church office building, and it had been suggested that a reserve force of 1,000 men be added to the police force. Kenneth Wood, however, in a letter to the editor of the *Deseret News*, voiced his concerns:

Being a Salt Lake businessman and reserve police officer, I read with alarm your *Deseret News* editorial backing the public safety commissioner’s plan to have a one-thousand-man reserve force in Salt Lake City . . . Mr. Barker would have an organized mob instead of a one-thousand-man auxiliary force. (*Deseret News*, February 26, 1970)

On February 22, 1970, the *Salt Lake Tribune* carried the following:

FILLMORE, Millard County—Included in an emergency training program of the Millard County Jeep Posse is a **riot control program** calling for use of **three-foot long riot sticks**.

And because these sticks are not regularly available, students in the Millard High School shop class are doing their part in protec[t]ion of the town by constructing 22 sticks on lathes during class hours . . .

Insofar as riots are concerned Sheriff Steward has little fear of outside forces coming into the area . . . But Kenneth Hare of Fillmore, commander of the jeep posse, said of the riot training: “**What would you do if you were down here and a bunch of those Black Panthers came down here to take over the town?**”

The posse is just getting ready for something that may never happen, Mr. Hare said.

The following day the *Salt Lake Tribune* contained an editorial relating to the fear that was beginning to grip the people:

A movement to organize **church groups** and even entire parts of the city into “**vigilante strike-forces**” has been reported in Salt Lake City. Just what or whom this bungalow brigade is planning to “strike” isn’t clear, one of the main reasons the idea of such a people’s posse is so dangerous.

Once organized, the extra-legal legionaries might be worked into such a state of fear-fueled emotion that they would respond to bully boy missions most would have rejected as individuals. No matter what kind of patriotic sounding name is tacked on a group of citizen enforcers, it is still a common mob that flows as passion directs without reason and without jurisdiction.

Persons attempting to expand the vigilante-type movement in the Salt Lake area apparently are using scare tactics in an effort to create a threat that is long on fear but short on fact. We prefer to rely on the intelligence gathering facilities of legal government agencies for news of any overt attempts to foment trouble and take over the valley or the country. To our knowledge there is no such plan afoot and, if there were, lawfully established police could handle it better than a gang of neighborhood night riders.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 23, 1970)

On March 3, 1970, the *Tribune* warned of the dangers of vigilante groups:

FARMINGTON — Use of scare tactics, emotionalism and doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [sic] as a means of forming neighborhoods into “**vigilante strike-forces**” was labeled dangerous and inadvisable by Davis County officials Monday.

The action following a briefing by Salt Lake County Civil Defense officials on the activities of a group known as Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NET).

Davis County Sheriff Kenneth Hammon denounced formation of any neighborhood security forces, saying “no vigilante groups of any type are needed in Davis County to assist law enforcement officers . . .

NET groups, apparently forming statewide within the last few weeks, have been claiming association with Civil Defense and law enforcement agencies and the LDS Church, said Walter J. Michelsen, Salt Lake County Civil Defense director.

Alvin Britton, Salt Lake County Civil Defense information officer, said 90 percent of the NET programs are well intentioned, but the advocating of turning neighborhoods into armed fortresses with security forces is inadvisable . . .

Mr. Britton said NET leaders have claimed local government is no longer reliable for protection and for citizens to protect themselves by whatever means necessary.

“Though weapons are never advocated,” Mr. Britton said, “The group ends up with that as an end product.” . . .

Many organizers of NET, Mr. Michelsen said, are from out of state. They are using Mormon theology, he said, and the influence of being converts to the LDS Church to fulfill a prophecy to press their ideas.

Mr. Michelsen said he has been advised the leaders are determined to continue with their work at all cost.

Commissioner Smoot said NET organizers are very capable and “not to sell them short, for the end product is very dangerous.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, March 3, 1970)

The same day the *Salt Lake Tribune* published this information concerning Neighborhood

Emergency Teams, the LDS Church leaders decided to issue a statement concerning this matter. Fortunately, the church leaders chose to dissociate themselves from this organization. The *Deseret News* reported:

The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today stated that the Church has no connection with the Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NET), nor does it approve of its members being active in such **vigilante groups**. (*Deseret News*, March 3, 1970)

Even though Mormon leaders stated that they did not approve of NET, there can be no doubt that this group originated among the Mormon people. A woman from Davis County, Utah, made this statement in a letter to us: “Our Davis County is filled with NET or JBS – We don’t like it! Hope you realize the NET groups here are Mormons.”

On March 10, 1970, a question arose regarding armed guards at LDS buildings:

Bishop Brown commented briefly in answer to questions regarding the Church’s position on vigilante groups and reports of armed guards on Church property . . .

He said the Church does have and always has had **armed guards** to protect Church properties, some of which are invaluable and irreplaceable. He affirmed that two guards are stationed at the Church Office Building . . . (*Deseret News*, March 10, 1970)

Public Safety Commissioner James L. Barker felt that there was not sufficient protection. On March 9, 1970, the *Deseret News* published an article about the matter:

Handicapped over lack of funds for more police protection, Salt Lake City is embarking immediately upon a four-pronged community police support program.

Announced today by Public Safety Commissioner James L. Barker, Jr., the program could provide from **200 to 400** trained volunteers to patrol city streets and neighborhoods besides the regular police patrolmen . . .

“We are reviving the three-year-old police auxiliary plan and will quadruple our present police reserve corps,” Barker said. Also, public safety will

provide another volunteer civilian corps of trainees for security of city property and other public installations when needed . . .

“The reserves are highly trained, public spirited civilians and we plan to have about 200 in their ranks by the middle of spring,” Barker said. He disclosed plans for a second 35-man training class of reserves to be sought immediately . . . He said he wanted the public to understand clearly that the city’s volunteer groups would be given the same training as police and would be under close supervision of the police department.

Fortunately, the Salt Lake City police never had to deal with a major racial clash.

The Mormon Choir

In November of 1969 a minister in Denver, Colorado, called for a boycott of Mormon goods, including records of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir:

The Rev. Roy Flourney . . . called for reform of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) in what he alleged is a practice of racism against blacks. . . .

The Church of the Black Cross, . . . is calling for:
 —Boycott of Mormon goods, such as record albums of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.
 —Discouraging tourist travel to Utah, home state of the church. (*Denver Post*, Nov. 15, 1969)

Interestingly, on January 25, 1970, the *New York Times* reported: “Recently the Mormon Tabernacle Choir took in two Negro women as second sopranos, and reportedly, is about to welcome a Negro tenor.” Then on February 21, 1970, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that, “Black faces are among the sea of white ones in the 375-voice Mormon Tabernacle Choir.” The two new black members of the choir were identified as Wynetta Martin and Marilyn Yuille.

It should be noted that Mrs. Martin waited two or three years to get into the choir, whereas Miss Yuille was singing in the choir only two days after her audition. This whole matter seemed especially strange when one considers the fact that Miss Yuille was put in the choir less than three weeks after the *Denver Post* (November 15, 1969) announced that the Church of the Black Cross was calling for a boycott of “record albums of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.”

Genesis Group

During the early 1970s black Mormons were trying a back-door approach to get better support and recognition. Writing in 1981, Armand Mauss explained:

Of special significance was the creation of the **Genesis Group** late in 1971, an enterprise still very much alive a decade later. This group was organized as a supplement, not a substitute, for the regular church activities of Mormon blacks in their respective Salt Lake area wards. . . . With a potential membership of perhaps 200, its participation levels have ranged between about twenty-five and fifty, consisting disproportionately of women, of middle-aged and older people, and of high school-educated skilled and semi-skilled workers. About half are partners in racially mixed marriages, and the most active members are (with a few important exceptions) blacks converted to Mormonism in adult life, rather than life-long members from the old black families of Utah.

The Genesis Group was organized mainly on the initiative of the small band of faithful black Mormons who became its leaders. Three of them approached the Quorum of Twelve with a proposal for an independent black branch, to be led by a few blacks ordained to the priesthood on a trial basis—a proposal, in effect, for a racially segregated branch. . . . While the presiding brethren were not yet willing to go as far as an independent branch, they were very willing to sponsor the kind of group that eventually resulted from these negotiations, irregular though the Genesis Group surely was.

A special committee of three apostles was appointed to organize the new group and oversee it, though eventually it was placed directly under [local] stake jurisdiction. . . . While leaders of the group were not ordained to the priesthood, they had the distinct impression—whether on adequate grounds or not—that their organization was a step in the direction of eventual priesthood ordination, and they believed, furthermore, that such an expectation was shared by leading members of the Twelve. (“The Fading of the Pharaohs’ Curse: The Decline and Fall of the Priesthood Ban Against Blacks in the Mormon Church,” by Armand L. Mauss, *Dialogue*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 23-24. For more information on the Genesis Group, see

“Separate but Equal? Black Branches, Genesis Groups, or Integrated Wards?,” *Dialogue*, Spring 1990.)

Boy Scouts

The LDS Church has been affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America since 1913, when it became the official LDS boys youth group (*Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac*, p. 321). The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

Around the world, and in Utah, Scout troops are sponsored by virtually all religions from Buddhism to Nazarene. But the LDS Church has a historically close relationship with the organization. Not only is Scouting an integral part of the church’s young men’s program, LDS adult leaders don’t volunteer — they are “called” to their positions.

The LDS Church is the largest sponsor of Boy Scouts, followed closely by the Catholic and Methodist churches, . . . (*Salt Lake Tribune*, Utah section, February 6, 2004)

In 1974, the Mormon doctrine of discrimination against blacks brought the Boy Scouts into a serious confrontation with the NAACP. Nationally, the Boy Scouts did not discriminate because of religion or race, but Mormon-sponsored troops did have a policy of discrimination. On July 18, 1974, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

A 12-year-old Boy Scout has been denied a senior patrol leadership in his troop because **he is black**, Don L. Cope, black ombudsman for the state, said Wednesday . . .

The ombudsman said Mormon “troop policy is that in order for a scout to become a patrol leader, he must be a **deacon’s quorum president in the LDS Church. Since the boy cannot hold the priesthood, he cannot become a patrol leader.**”

The Mormon leaders apparently realized that they could never prevail in this matter and a compromise was worked out:

Shortly before Boy Scout officials were to appear in Federal Court Friday morning on charges of discrimination, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a policy change which

will allow black youths to be senior patrol leaders, a position formerly reserved for white LDS youths in troops sponsored by the church . . .

An LDS Church spokesman said Friday under the “guidelines set forth in the statement, a young man other than president of the deacons quorum could (now) become the senior patrol leader if he is better qualified.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, July 18, 1974)

Armand Mauss commented:

A scheduled tour of the Tabernacle Choir to New England in 1974 had to be cancelled because of protests from black clergymen in the region. In the same year, the Church inadvertently ran afoul of the Boy Scouts of America through a new [LDS] organizational arrangement that had the effect of integrating its scout troops more closely with the Aaronic Priesthood groups. The Church and the BSA had earlier agreed on this change, but neither had anticipated **the barring of black youths** from positions of scout leadership in Mormon troops. (Actually, **all non-Mormons in those troops were also barred.**) The Church was soon confronted by an NAACP suit over the matter, and corrective action was very fast in coming. (*Dialogue*, Autumn 1981, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 20)

Protest by Douglas Wallace

In 1976 the LDS Church found itself repeatedly embarrassed by one of its own members who became alienated over the priesthood ban and decided to take matters into his own hands. On April 3, 1976, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

PORTLAND, Ore. — A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints **ordained a black** into the priesthood Friday, saying he did so in an attempt to force a revision in Mormon doctrine about the Negro race.

Douglas A. Wallace . . . first baptized Larry Lester in the swimming pool of a motel in northeast Portland. He then ordained Lester to the office of priest in the Aaronic Priesthood of the LDS Church . . .

The rites were preceded by a news conference at which Wallace said he has been bothered by the Mormon Church’s bias against blacks, and he feels the time has come to challenge it. He said often all

that is required to change a policy is for someone to break out of tradition . . .

Wallace said he hopes there are no recriminations against him for his action, such as excommunication.

On April 13, 1976 the *Salt Lake Tribune* revealed that, "Wallace was excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Sunday for ordaining a black man into the church's priesthood."

After a confrontation with church personnel at an April conference session, Mr. Wallace was ejected from the Tabernacle. Later he was served with "a court order barring him from attending conference" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, October 4, 1976).

Although we did not agree with some of Mr. Wallace's ideas on religion, we did not consider him to be dangerous and we were rather surprised to notice the close surveillance the police kept him under when he walked along the public sidewalk outside of Temple Square.

Officer Olson Shot

The Mormon leaders' fear of Mr. Wallace led to a tragic incident in which a policeman was accidentally shot and permanently paralyzed. This occurred about the time of the church's conference held in April, 1977. On April 5, 1977, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

Mormon dissident Douglas A. Wallace charged Monday that a Salt Lake City police officer, shot early Sunday was keeping surveillance on him in a nearby residence.

Acting Police Chief Edgar A. Bryan Jr. denied it.

He said his men were not keeping surveillance on Mr. Wallace, an excommunicated member of the Church . . . but he would not say what the stakeout's purpose was.

Officer David W. Olson remained in critical condition Monday . . . where personnel said he suffered a severed spinal cord from a single shot in the neck. The policeman was shot accidentally by his partner . . . Wallace was staying at the home of a friend, Dr. John W. Fitzgerald . . .

He was in Salt Lake City to try to make an appearance at the LDS World Conference last weekend. Attorneys for the church, however, obtained a temporary restraining order . . . which prevented the dissident from visiting Temple Square.

"I have not committed any crime, and I don't intend to commit any crime. I have been raised in the Mormon faith and I am a man of peace . . . This is not Russia; this is not Nazi Germany; there is no reason why I should be under surveillance of the police" Mr. Wallace said.

On April 6, 1977, the *Salt Lake Tribune* related:

Ex-Mormon Douglas Wallace . . . Tuesday afternoon said he will subpoena various high ranking police and sheriff's deputies to establish the fact . . .

Mr. Wallace said also, "It is clear from the evidence that we have uncovered that I was under surveillance. The police department's denial of that simply compounds the wrong. Is this going to be Salt Lake's sequel to the Watergate scandal?"

With Mr. Wallace and his attorney pressing them hard, the police were finally forced to admit the truth about the matter:

Salt Lake City police officers admitted Thursday that the accidental wounding of an undercover officer occurred during surveillance of Mormon dissident Douglas A. Wallace . . .

"Reports released Thursday by both the county sheriff's office and the county attorney show that six officers were on stakeout around the John W. Fitzgerald home . . . where Mr. Wallace was staying.

Those who know Mr. Wallace find it strange that there were so many policemen on the surveillance crew watching him at 4:20 a.m. A subsequent story in the newspaper reported that the "lawmen . . . had been on duty for 16 straight hours, Chief Willoughby said" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 15, 1977).

At any rate, Wallace claimed the LDS Church was behind the whole affair:

Ex-Mormon Douglas Wallace Friday renewed his assertion that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was behind April police surveillance of Mr. Wallace that led to the accidental shooting of a Salt lake City police officer. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, September 17, 1977)

Finally, David Olson, the disabled police officer, took exception to a press release issued by the church. In a letter to the editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 18, 1978, Mr. Olson made a sarcastic attack on the president of the LDS Church:

I would also like to thank Spencer W. Kimball for his press release concerning the police involvement combined with the LDS church's efforts to restrict Douglas A. Wallace from the temple grounds, specifically the Tabernacle, on April 3, 1977.

His denial of these actions is wrong. Any man who can take such actions and still call himself a prophet deserves more than I to be confined to this wheelchair.

Officer Olson apparently could not face the thought of being paralyzed for the rest of his life, and on March 25, 1980, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that he "committed suicide early Sunday morning, according to Murray Police."

Douglas Wallace, who was himself a lawyer, filed lawsuits amounting to millions of dollars against the LDS Church, and although he was not able to prevail in the courts, the publicity surrounding the suits caused the church considerable embarrassment.

Byron Marchant

Byron Marchant was another Mormon who put a great deal of pressure on the LDS Church. Mr. Marchant took a very strong stand against racism in the church. The *Dallas Morning News* for October 20, 1977, reported:

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) – The man who cast the first vote in Mormon history against a leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been excommunicated and fired as chapel janitor. Byron Marchant, 35, of Salt Lake, is the second opponent of the church policy withholding the priesthood from blacks to be excommunicated in the last two years.

When Mr. Marchant tried to distribute literature at Temple Square at the April 1978 LDS Conference he was arrested:

Byron Marchant, excommunicated member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was arrested . . . at Temple Square on charges of trespassing . . . Marchant was requested to leave the church grounds after he offered literature to people waiting in line . . . Mr. Gibbs said police officers were contacted and Mr. Marchant was

placed under arrest at approximately 1:45 p.m. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 3, 1978)

Mr. Marchant published a sheet in which he called for a demonstration against the church's policy:

Next October Conference (1978) I will join all interested in a march on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. In the event the Mormon Church decides to ordain worthy Afro-Americans to the priesthood this demonstration will be a sort of celebration. A demonstration of support. In the meantime, every person and/or group concerned about Utah Racism is encouraged to speak out and attend the October protest.

Mr. Marchant's threat of a demonstration at the next conference must have caused some concern among General Authorities of the LDS Church. The leaders of the church were obviously worried that a demonstration could turn violent. In addition, it would undoubtedly attract the news media and provide further embarrassment to the church. The issue regarding blacks and the LDS Church was so explosive that the slightest incident could have touched off a riot in which people might be injured or even killed.

An article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* observed:

The last three years have also seen repeated attempts by church dissidents to subpoena Mormon leaders into court proceedings, with the central issue often related to the church's belief about blacks. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 10, 1978)

Problems in Brazil

Besides all the problems the LDS Church was having with dissidents, it was also facing an impossible situation in Brazil.

According to an article in *Ensign*, missionary work in Brazil had started originally in 1927 as an outreach to Germans who had settled there. The article stated:

Work continued solely among the German immigrants and in the German language until 1938, when the first elders were assigned to learn Portuguese." And by 1975 there were "more than 45,000 members" in the country. ("The Church in Brazil," *Ensign*, February 1975, p. 24)

However, due to intermarriage with the large number of blacks that had been brought to the country, many people had mixed racial lineage.

Gary Lobb, a Mormon living in Brazil in 1963, wrote the following in a letter to the editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*:

My studies currently in Brazil, a country where **mass miscegenation** among European Caucasians, Bantu and Sudanese Africans, and indigenous American Indians has been a reality now for almost three hundred years, have led me to conclude that most Brazilians who are not second or third generation descendants of German, Italian, Polish, or Japanese immigrants, are probably descendants of **Negroes**. This is especially true among the lower and lower-middle classes which make up a large portion of L.D.S. Church membership in this land. . . .

We must therefore ask, "Just who is a Negro?" We, as a Church, have decided that the Melanesian Fiji Islanders are not while the Papuans of neighboring New Guinea are. In some of the branches of the Church which my wife and I have attended here in Brazil, there appear to be priesthood bearers who possess the essential characteristics of the Negroid races. I am reminded that someone of authority decided that these people are not. (*Dialogue*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1963, p. 8)

The hypocrisy of the situation in South America was pointed out in 1966 by Wallace Turner:

A different thing is going on in South America where Mormon missionaries are pushing ahead full throttle. There the former careful selection to keep out 'white Negroes' has been allowed to slide a little . . .

"There is no question but that in Brazil they have been ordaining priests who are part Negro," said one careful observer. (*The Mormon Establishment*, p. 26)

Even the LDS Church owned *Deseret News* admitted that

A major problem the church has faced with its policy regarding blacks was in Brazil, where the church is building a temple. Many people there are mixed [mixed?] racially, and it is often impossible to determine whether church members have black ancestry. (*Deseret News*, June 10, 1978)

Mormon leaders had been aware of this problem for many years. Writing in 1973, Lester E. Bush Jr. discussed the problem of mixed ancestry among the people of Brazil:

The decision to deny the priesthood to anyone with Negro ancestry ("no matter how remote"), had resolved the theoretical problem of priesthood eligibility, but did not help with the practical problem of identifying the "blood of Cain" in those not already known to have Negro ancestry . . .

The growth of the international Church was clearly bringing new problems. Brazil was particularly difficult. Later that year J. Reuben Clark, First, Counselor to George Albert Smith, reported that the Church was entering "into a situation in doing missionary work . . . where it is very difficult if not impossible to tell who has negro blood and who has not. He said that if we are baptizing Brazilians, we are almost certainly baptizing people of negro blood, and that if the Priesthood is conferred upon them, which no doubt it is, we are **facing a very serious problem.**" (*Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 1, Spring 1973, p. 41)

On March 1, 1975, the LDS Church announced plans to build a temple in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Mark L. Grover, of Brigham Young University, commented:

Few non-African countries have been more influenced by Africa than has Brazil. Slavery was legal until 1888, and between 1550 and 1850 over three million African slaves were brought to Brazil . . .

The sheer size of the black population significantly affected Brazilians' attitudes toward race. Estimates suggest that over 40 percent of the population is either black or some combination of black, white, and/or Indian. The latest Brazilian census that included racial categories (1950) showed 26 percent of the population to be racially mixed. In actuality this figure is much higher since Brazilians classify many as whites who are actually mixed. Interracial marriage is an acceptable and common practice within most classes of Brazilian society. The large, mixed population has engendered a society which considers any form of racial segregation illegal; prejudice, though not eliminated, is less of a social factor than in most other countries of the world . . . ("The Mormon

Priesthood Revelation and the Sao Paulo, Brazil Temple,” *Dialogue*, Spring 1990, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 40-41)

Further on, Grover observed:

Once missionaries began teaching Brazilians, two racial issues surfaced. First it was impossible to avoid contact with persons of African descent in most parts of the country. . . .

Second, American missionaries ran into problems when their identification of blacks differed from that of Brazilian members. Faithful Church members respecting the policy on priesthood restrictions would interest family and friends in the Church only to discover that the missionaries believed the potential investigators had African ancestry In general priesthood leaders considered physical appearance first and then family and genealogical records. If these methods were not successful, spiritual means such as patriarchal blessings and the inspiration of Church leaders were used to make the final determination. Though not always appreciated by the members, this system was acceptable and insured that Church policy was followed

Most Brazilian members, however, were uncomfortable with the Church’s policy. (*Dialogue*, pp. 41-42)

On page 47 of the same article we read:

The pivotal event in the history of the Church in Brazil was the March 1975 announcement of the forthcoming construction of the Sao Paulo temple. . . . the Sao Paulo Temple presented the Church for the first time with the dilemma of restricting from entrance into a temple large numbers of members who were morally worthy. Many of those who would not be allowed to enter had offered labor and financial contributions to the temple construction.” (*Dialogue*, Spring 1990, pp. 47, 51)

D. Michael Quinn relates a curious event at “the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Brazilian temple on 9 March 1977.” He states that “Kimball privately told Helvecio Martins, a faithful black member, to prepare himself to receive the priesthood” in the not too distant future. (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, p. 16)

With the 1978 scheduled opening of the new temple in Brazil, the situation could have turned into a real public relations nightmare for the church. If church leaders denied faithful members, like Helvecio Martins, access to the temple because they had black ancestry, it could have caused a major defection from the church in the country. It would also put the church at odds with the government, which would not have allowed a public building to have a policy of discrimination.

Will Pressure Bring Change?

As early as 1963 we printed a sheet entitled, “Will There Be A Revelation Regarding the Negro?” At the bottom of this sheet we predicted:

If the pressure continues to increase on the Negro question, the leaders of the Mormon Church will probably have another revelation which will allow Negroes to hold the priesthood.

Pressure seemed to work before. Twenty-five years before the LDS Church leaders gave up the practice of polygamy, they were declaring that no such change could be made. In 1865 an article in the *Millennial Star*, an LDS publication, stated:

We have shown that in requiring the relinquishment of **polygamy**, they ask the renunciation of the **entire faith** of this people. . . .

There is no half way house. The **childish babble about another revelation is only an evidence how half informed men can talk.** (*Millennial Star*; October 28, 1865)

As the pressure increased against polygamy, in 1890 Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto, printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Declaration No. 1, which suspended the practice of polygamy.

In the *National Observer* for June 17, 1963, the following statement appeared:

As Federal pressure enforced a **major doctrinal change in polygamy**, many Mormons consider it inevitable that the pressures of the present day will force a major change in the doctrine about the Negro.

Mormon writer John L. Lund said that those

who believe that the Church “gave in” on the polygamy issue and subsequently should give in on the Negro question **are not only misinformed about Church History**, but are apparently unaware of Church doctrine . . . Therefore, those who hope that **pressure will bring about a revelation need to take a closer look at Mormon history and the order of heaven.** (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pp. 104-105)

On page 109 of the same book, Lund emphasized that

. . . those who would try to pressure the Prophet to give the Negroes the Priesthood do not understand the plan of God . . . Revelation is not man’s will expressed to God. All the social, political, and governmental pressure in the world is not going to change what God has decreed to be.

Despite all of the problems that were facing the Mormon officials, they claimed that they could not change their doctrine regarding blacks. In 1967 N. Eldon Tanner, who was the second counselor to church president Joseph Fielding Smith, was insistent the ban would not be changed and spoke publicly concerning the matter:

Even such harsh criticism has done nothing to budge Mormon officials from their adamant position. “The church has **no intention of changing its doctrine on the Negro**,” N. Eldon Tanner, counselor to the First President, told SEATTLE during his recent visit here. “Throughout the history of the original Christian church, the Negro never held the priesthood. There’s really nothing we can do to change this. **It’s a law of God.**” (*Seattle Magazine*, December, 1967, p. 60)

Writing in 1973, O. Kendall White Jr. commented on the problems that would accompany a revelation to change the LDS Church’s stand on blacks:

Since they believe in “continuing revelation,” Mormons have a mechanism that enables them to reverse previous positions without repudiating the past. . . . That the church will invoke such a mechanism to resolve the racial issue is not too

unlikely . . . this approach has a serious drawback. It is the tendency not to acknowledge the errors of the past. While revelation could be used to legitimize a new racial policy and to redefine Mormon relations with black people, **Mormons might still be unwilling to condemn the racism involved in their history.** They might be inclined to argue that Mormons in earlier periods were under a different mandate than the one binding them. This obviously implies that the church is never wrong. Thus, change may come through the notion of continuing revelation, but the racist aspects of Mormon history will not necessarily be condemned. (“Boundry Maintenance, Blacks, and the Mormon PR,” *Journal of Religious Thought*, Autumn-Winter, 1973, pp. 57-58)

With the mixed racial profile of many people in South Africa and South America, especially Brazil, it was becoming obvious that some priesthood holders had black ancestry. Through the years there had been numerous private meetings of LDS Church leaders discussing these issues and trying to resolve the problems.

When the church announced in 1975 that a temple would be built in Brazil some of the leaders must have realized that the priesthood ban would have to come to an end once the temple was dedicated (see *All Abraham’s Children*, p. 237). LDS scholar Jessie L. Embry discussed the struggle that had been going on in Brazil:

. . . church membership in Brazil had grown enormously during the 1960’s and 1970’s. Determining who was black had always been a sensitive issue in the racially mixed country. In 1978 a temple, from which blacks would be excluded, was under construction. Complicating the problem was the perplexity of determining which deceased men were “eligible” (that is, not black) for proxy ordinations to priesthood. (Mormons believe in vicarious proxy baptisms, priesthood ordinations, and marriages for the dead.) (*Black Saints in a White Church*, p. 28)

As if on cue, the revelation to extend priesthood to blacks came in June of 1978, just months prior to the dedication of the Brazilian temple at the end of October.

The 1978 Announcement

For over a hundred years the Mormon leaders had taught that blacks could not be given the priesthood until the millennium.

Yet on June 9, 1978, the LDS Church's *Deseret News* carried a startling announcement by the First Presidency of the LDS Church that stated a new revelation had been given:

We have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the upper room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. (*Deseret News*, June 9, 1978, p. 1A)

Writing in the *New York Times*, June 11, 1978, Professor Mario S. DePillis observed: "For Mormonism's anti-black policy a revelation was the only way out, and many students of Mormonism were puzzled only at the lateness of the hour."

Even though most Mormons claimed they were happy with the doctrinal change with regard to blacks, there is evidence that the revelation came as a real shock to some. Shortly after the 1978 revelation was announced a class at Brigham Young University conducted a "random telephone Survey" of Utah County residents [home to BYU and predominantly LDS community] to determine peoples' reactions to the change. They found that 79 percent of those interviewed did not expect a change at this time. Furthermore, many people compared the news to an announcement of some kind of disaster or death:

Some 45 percent of those who heard of the doctrine from personal sources expressed doubt that the news was true. This compares with only 25 percent of those who learned from media sources. Sixty-two percent of the former group expressed shock, compared with 52 percent of the latter, . . .

Those surveyed appeared surprised by the announcement Haroldsen said. Thirty-nine percent said they did not think "it would ever happen"—that the priesthood would ever be given to blacks.

Another 40 percent expected it years in the future, after Christ's return, during the Millennium, or "not in my lifetime," . . .

In trying to explain how they reacted to the news, 14 persons compared its impact with that of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Another 13 compared it to the news of the death of an LDS Church president. Eight compared it to a natural disaster, especially the Teton dam break [in Idaho].

Others compared the news with the death of a family member or friend, with a declaration of war, or other major political event. (*The Daily Universe*, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, June 22, 1978)

Mormons apparently realized the deep doctrinal implications involved in the change and therefore associated it with death or disaster. If they were really pleased with the change, why did they not relate it to a happy event, like marriage, the birth of a child or the end of a war? We feel this survey unwittingly reveals the LDS members mixed feelings about the change.

Brigham Young Misrepresented

While we are pleased that the LDS Church changed its restriction on blacks, we must point out that the LDS Church is misrepresenting the statements of its past leaders in order to make the change palatable. For instance, the *Deseret News*, owned by the LDS Church, would have us believe that the change was a fulfillment of a prophecy uttered by Brigham Young:

The announcement Friday fulfilled statements made by most LDS Church presidents since Joseph Smith that blacks would one day obtain the full blessings of the church, including the priesthood. Speaking against slavery, Brigham Young once told the Utah Legislature, ". . . the day will come when all that race (blacks) will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have." (*Deseret News*, June 10, 1978, p. 1A)

However, the context of Young's speech to the legislature shows that he believed it would be a sin for the church to give blacks the priesthood before the "last of the posterity of Able" had received it. He went on to say that if the church gave "all the blessings of God" to the blacks prematurely, the priesthood would be taken away and the church would go to destruction. The full text of this speech is printed in Appendix A.

Another example of how the church misused past statements can be seen in the Church Section of the *Deseret News* for June 17, 1978. It claimed that "former presidents of the Church have spoken of the day when the blessings of the priesthood would come to the blacks." The article then quoted a sermon by Brigham Young, from the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 291, where Young promised that "the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain." However, they did not cite the entire passage and thus took it out of context. In this sermon Brigham Young plainly taught that blacks could not receive the priesthood until all of Adam's other descendants received it:

How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and they **never can hold the Priesthood** or share in it **until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises** and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the **last ones** of the residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favourable position, the children of Cain **cannot** receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. They were the first that were cursed, and they will be **the last** from whom the curse will be removed. When the residue of the family of Adam come up and receive their blessings, then the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will receive the blessings in like proportion. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 290)

Polygamists Oppose Giving Priesthood to Blacks

The various polygamist factions (also referred to as Mormon fundamentalists) saw the 1978 announcement as further evidence that the LDS Church had gone into apostasy. On July 23, 1978, a

group calling itself "Concerned Latter-day Saints" placed a full-page ad in the *Salt Lake Tribune* denouncing the recent change. It read, in part:

It appears that a portion of The Pearl of Great Price, one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church, is about to be repudiated or "dissolved." Will Latter-day Saints remain true to their former revelations, or will they yield to the pressures of this crucial day? ("LDS Soon To Repudiate A Portion of Their Pearl Of Great Price?," full-page ad in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 23, 1978)

The ad went on to demonstrate how the LDS Church was distorting past statements of its leaders to imply that there was no contradiction with giving blacks the priesthood at that time in stead of after the resurrection. The ad warned Brigham Young had taught that if the priesthood were to be given to the blacks prematurely it would mean the end of priesthood in the church. The ad continued:

The Church has invited this situation. . . . It is to be regretted that we have camouflaged the truth, convincing the world and ourselves that we want to play in harmony with its institutions. Wolves always await the departure of the Priesthood shepherds, that they might neutralize the flock. And when we insist enough, the Lord will send us the delusion we have sought.

Once the Saints were willing to burn their own homes and orchards and seek hiding places in the mountains rather than submit to improper governmental or group pressure. Now they generally will sacrifice principle, doctrine and ordinance to comply with any law of the Land. Eager to digress in 1890, the Church crippled her priesthood blessings and power by discarding exalting principles. . . . The Church has drawn a large step nearer to a merely man-made religion, . . . For many years the Church has shown that it is ashamed, and therefore apologetic, of some of the teachings of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and John Taylor. In their embarrassment the Church would like to sweep certain teachings under the rug, or call them misinterpretations, etc. Since the Church is uneasy over some sections and passages of scripture, and might again institute alterations at any moment, where can its members safely place their trust? . . .

There are still a few valiant, uncompromising men, within and without the official Church, whose integrity leaves no room for changing the doctrines and ordinances, breaking the everlasting covenant, or for presuming to bestow blessings out of season. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, July 23, 1978)

Lester Bush commented:

The full-page ad in the *Salt Lake Tribune* that was taken out by fundamentalists criticizing the Church's change of the Negro doctrine . . . It chided the [*Deseret*] *Church News* for putting together a series of quotations by presidents of the Church allegedly showing that the change was to be anticipated, . . . The *Church News* only gave enough of a Brigham Young quote to indicate that the change would happen someday, but not that he believed that to be post-millennial. ("Mixed Messages On The Negro Doctrine: An Interview With Lester Bush," *Sunstone*, May 1979)

Armand Mauss also commented on the polygamists' opposition to the change:

. . . Those disposed to apostatize over the ending of the ban seem already to have done so over the Manifesto of 1890, for polygamous fundamentalists offered the only apparent organized opposition to the new priesthood policy (as just another "retreat" from orthodoxy). The liberals, for their part, scarcely had time to notice that their favorite target had been removed before they were handed a new one in the form of the ERA controversy. Mormon intellectuals, whether liberal or not, have reacted predictably with a number of publications (like this one) offering post-mortems on the whole Mormon/black controversy. (*Dialogue*, vol. 14, no. 3, Autumn 1981, pp. 28-29)

Ken Driggs, author of various articles dealing with legal issues, discussed the fundamentalists' objections to the various changes made by the LDS Church:

Change and division brought with it new theological constructs . . . Fundamentalists consider themselves part of the LDS Church, living within special priesthood organizations set apart to continue and preserve sacred ordinances. In 1991

the Colorado City community incorporated itself in Utah as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for the first time announcing its break with the Church through a legal creation. Outside of these priesthood groups, independent polygamists, not surprisingly, are much less concerned with direct lines of priesthood authority.

The priesthood councils believe that the temporal Church—the popularly accepted [LDS] Church—is not the head of the priesthood. To them the leadership of the priesthood and the leadership of the Church are not one in the same but were divided sometime after the death of President John Taylor. . . .

As a consequence of this perception, fundamentalists do not always view changes that come through the Church as proper and binding. They do not recognize either the first or second manifesto or the suspension of plural marriage. They also feel the Church is "out of order," to use their phrase, in other significant ways. They do not accept changes made since the administration of President Joseph F. Smith in the temple ceremony or in the garment design. They refer to "priesthood garments" rather than "temple garments," as most Mormons call them. This is more a concern of the Allred group. (Many have stressed that they do not need to "sneak" into LDS temples to perform their ordinances: they are concerned about proper priesthood authority, rather than ordinances performed in a specific place.)

Fundamentalists disagree with the Church's turn-of-the-century suspension of a literal, physical gathering of Zion and with temple-building outside of the old Zion. (The first temple opened outside the Great Basin was the Hawaiian Temple, dedicated in 1919 by President Heber J. Grant.) They also reject the discontinuation of religious communalism, such as the United Order efforts. All of the priesthood groups attempt to continue some form of communalism, including the United Effort Plan in Colorado City. In addition they reject the ordinations of blacks to the priesthood, what they refer to as the "Canaanite Revelation."

Other disagreements include the present more worldly role of apostles in the Church; the discontinuation of the Adam/God theory; the decision to stop sending missionaries out without purse or script; the infallibility of the prophet, especially when he appears to modify doctrines

introduced by Joseph Smith; . . . (“Twentieth-Century Polygamy and Fundamentalist Mormons and Southern Utah,” by Ken Driggs, *Dialogue*, vol. 24, no. 4, Winter 1991, pp. 53-54)

Intermarriage

After the First Presidency made their announcement, many people became confused over the church’s position on interracial marriage. It soon became apparent, however, that the church’s ban on marriage to blacks had been lifted.

Joseph Freeman, the first black man ordained to the priesthood after the change, indicated that he wanted to be sealed in the temple to his wife who was not of African descent. Church spokesman Don LeFevre said that such a marriage would be possible and that although the church did not encourage interracial marriage, there was no longer a policy against whites marrying blacks:

That is entirely possible, said Mr. LeFevre. . . . “So there is no ban on interracial marriage. If a black partner contemplating marriage is worthy of going to the Temple, nobody’s going to stop him—if he’s marrying a white, an Oriental . . . if he’s ready to go to the Temple, obviously he may go with the blessings of the church.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 14, 1978).

On June 24, 1978, the *Salt Lake Tribune* announced:

Joseph Freeman, 26, the first black man to gain the priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Friday went in the Salt Lake Temple with his wife and sons for sacred ordinances . . . Thomas S. Monson, member of the church’s Quorum of Twelve Apostles, conducted the marriage and sealing ceremonies.

Revelation Sustained at Fall Conference

Although the priesthood ban was lifted in June and the priesthood was given immediately to blacks, the declaration was not presented to the church for formal acceptance until September 30, 1978, at the Fall Conference. N. Eldon Tanner, counselor to President Kimball, read the declaration to the congregation:

To Whom It May Concern:

On September 30, 1978, at the 148th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the following was presented by President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church:

In early June of this year, the First Presidency announced that a **revelation** had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to **all worthy male members** of the Church. President Kimball has asked that I advise the conference that after he had received this **revelation**, which came to him after **extended meditation and prayer** in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it, and was subsequently presented to all other General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously.

N. Eldon Tanner then read President Kimball’s letter to the priesthood:

Dear Brethren:

As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth. . . many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, . . . This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to **every worthy member** of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God’s eternal plan, **all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood**, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been **withheld**, we have **pleaded** long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by **revelation** has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when **every faithful, worthy man** in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, . . . including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, **all worthy male members** of the Church may be ordained

to the priesthood **without regard for race or color**. . . .

Sincerely yours,
SPENCER W. KIMBALL
N. ELDON TANNER
MARION G. ROMNEY

The declaration was then presented to the assembly who gave it their full support.

Declaration 2, in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, was obviously carefully crafted by church officials. As a matter of fact, it never even mentions that it was the blacks who had been discriminated against prior to the revelation.

In stating that they “pleaded long and earnestly” for the change implies that God has been a racist for thousands of years, and that Mormon leaders “by pleading long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the upper room of the Temple” finally persuaded God to give blacks the priesthood.

The Bible, however, informs us that “God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35). It was the Mormon leaders who kept blacks under a curse.

Finally, when missionary efforts around the world were being hampered by the doctrine, Mormon leaders were forced to change their position. Historian Jan Shipps commented on the reason for the announcement:

The June 9 revelation will never be fully understood if it is regarded simply as a pragmatic doctrinal shift ultimately designed to bring Latter-day Saints into congruence with mainstream America. . . . This revelation came in the context of worldwide evangelism rather than . . . American social and cultural circumstances. (*Black Saints in a White Church*, p. 27)

How Did the Revelation Come?

LDS scholar Lester E. Bush Jr. observed:

The 1970’s will be a challenge to historians for years to come: Black activist harassment of BYU; the Genesis Group; litigation with the Boy Scout movement; Roots-spurred interest in genealogy;

heightened leadership awareness of the historical antecedents of current Mormon beliefs; and once again questions over the identification of the cursed lineage, this time with reverberations in both Brazil and the U. S. Congress. Did any of these developments influence the events of 1978? A circumstantial case can be made that they did. But there is about as much evidence, (i.e., none) that they mattered not at all. Conclusions, then, must be a matter of faith and philosophy.

The greatest challenge to future historians, and that of most interest and importance, will be 1978 itself, about which very little can now be said with confidence. There are a few tantalizing hints. That the forthcoming dedication of the Brazilian temple figured conspicuously in the deliberations leading up to the revelation is clear from some published comments. LeGrand Richards, for example, is quoted as saying, “All those people with Negro blood in them have been raising the money to build the temple. **Brother Kimball worried about it.** He asked each one of us of the Twelve if we would pray—and we did—that the Lord would give him the **inspiration** to know what the will of the Lord was. . . .”

Beyond this the story is hazy and intriguing. According to his son Edward, President Kimball was “exercised about the question” for “some months at least,” during which time “he could not put it out of his mind.” He solicited individual written and oral statements from the Twelve, conveying, to Apostle Richards, the impression that “he was thinking favorably toward giving the colored people the priesthood.” That any such disposition followed a great internal struggle is evidenced by a statement from President Kimball himself, in an interview with the *Church News*: “. . . I had a great deal to fight, of course, myself largely, because I had grown up with this thought that Negroes should not have the priesthood and I was prepared to go all the rest of my life till my death and fight for it and defend it as it was.” Indeed, according to son Edward, his father “could not comfortably debate things about which he felt deeply.”

Whatever the contributing factors, President Kimball apparently was persuaded even before the June first revelation—as Richards suggested—that a change in the priesthood policy was indicated. Again from the [Deseret News] *Church News* interview:

I went to the temple alone, and especially on Sundays and Saturdays . . . when I could have it alone. It went on for some time as I was searching for this, because I wanted to be sure . . . [“Gradually, most of his doubts and questions faded away,” writes Edward. Then, on June 1, in a special prayer circle with the Apostles,] . . . I offered the final prayer and I told the Lord if it wasn’t right, if He didn’t want this change to come in the Church that I would be true to it all the rest of my life, and I’d fight the world against it if that’s what he wanted . . .

The “revelation and assurance came to me so clearly,” Kimball later said, “that there was no question about it.” The revelation thus appears to have been a **spiritual manifestation in confirmation of a decision made after a period of lengthy and profound study and prayer**. This “spiritual witness” was reportedly experienced by all present at that time as well as a week later when the First Presidency presented their official statement to the Twelve. (*Dialogue*, vol. 12, no. 2, Summer 1979, pp. 10-11)

Historian D. Michael Quinn discussed this process. He observed that President Kimball had

met privately with individual apostles who expressed their “individual thoughts” about his suggestion to end the priesthood ban.

After discussing this in several temple meetings and private discussions, Kimball wrote a statement “in longhand removing all priesthood restrictions on blacks” and presented it to his counselors on 30 May. (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, p. 16)

The next day, on June 1, 1978, the group prayed in the temple and received personal confirmation that it was time to change the policy. Gordon B. Hinckley explained:

No voice audible to our physical ears was heard. But the voice of the spirit whispered into our minds and our very souls. (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, p. 16)

Quinn goes on to explain the events leading up to the public announcement:

On 7 June 1978 Kimball informed his counselors that “through inspiration he had decided to lift the restrictions on priesthood.” In the

meantime he had asked three apostles . . . to prepare “suggested wording for the public announcement of the decision.” The First Presidency used the three documents to prepare a fourth preliminary statement which was “then reviewed, edited, and approved by the First Presidency. This document was taken to the council meeting with the Twelve on Thursday, June, 8, 1978.” The apostles made additional “minor editorial changes” in the nearly final statement which was then presented to all general authorities the next day, just hours before its public announcement. (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, p. 16)

Does this process sound like a direct revelation from God to the prophet?

What Constitutes Revelation?

In what way does this chain of events equate with a “revelation”? How is this process any different from any other religious leaders discussing an issue, praying for divine guidance and then acting on those spiritual promptings?

If a revelation was received in June of 1978, why isn’t the specifically worded revelation published instead of a statement about a supposed revelation? Declaration 2 is not the revelation.

Many Mormons have maintained that the priesthood ban was a policy, not established by revelation. Then why did it take a revelation to end it?

If Declaration 2 represents a revelation to the church, why wasn’t it numbered with the other sections of the *Doctrine and Covenants*? The two Declarations at the back of the *D&C* seem to be policy statements putting an end to practices, but neither contains the words “thus saith the Lord” or repudiates the doctrine behind the practice.

If the revelation included a repudiation of past teachings on race and color why isn’t it published?

Another contradiction is the fact that the revelation was given too early. According to Brigham Young, the priesthood would not be given to the blacks until after the resurrection:

When **all the other children of Adam** have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and . . . **have received their resurrection from the dead**, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity. . . . **he is**

the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God.
(*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, p. 143)

This was obscured in the 1978 declaration that said “Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God’s eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood.” Past leaders had said that blacks would eventually receive the priesthood, but it would be after everyone else had had a chance to hold it.

Which prophets are people to follow? If one answers “the current prophet,” then it should be remembered that at one time Brigham Young was the “current” prophet. People listening to his sermons took them as God’s word to the people. Why wouldn’t those sermons be valid today? Are Mormons free to ignore all past statements by their prophets or only those teachings that are not in line with current policy?

Fighting Racism

In spite of the granting of priesthood to blacks, racial attitudes continue to plague the LDS Church. Reporter William Lobdell wrote:

It took until 1978—14 years after the Civil Rights Act—before the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints lifted the ban following what leaders said was a revelation from God to make the priesthood available to “every faithful, worthy man.”

The new doctrine came without an apology or repudiation of the church’s past practice. . . . Mauss and others believe that a church repudiation of past policies would help, but that would be difficult because it was never clear whether the racism was a divine revelation—which couldn’t be apologized for—or man-made law. (“New Mormon Aim: Reach Out to Blacks,” *L.A. Times*, Sept. 21, 2003)

Armand Mauss observed:

Certainly these old doctrines have not appeared in official church discourse for at least two decades. . . . However, as long as these doctrines continue to appear in successive reprintings of authoritative books and are freely circulated at the Mormon grassroots, they will continue to rankle many of the black Saints. (*All Abraham’s Children*, p. 252)

On page 262 Mauss continues:

To repudiate any of the cherished religious lore of their immediate ancestors seems to some Mormons, especially the older ones, to be almost a repudiation of the grandparents themselves, to say nothing of *their* teachers, who might have walked with God. . . . One need point only to the struggle in Utah even now over plural marriage: Despite the long arm of the law and the church’s strenuous repudiation of polygamous *practices*, the traditional *doctrines* underlying plural marriage still survive even in mainstream Mormonism. Why should traditional racial doctrines be any easier to set aside? (*All Abraham’s Children*, p. 262; italics in original)

Writing in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Peggy Stack pointed out:

For most white members, the ban controversy is over, but the issue continues to haunt many black members, especially in the United States. They are constantly having to explain themselves and their beliefs—to non-Mormons, other black converts and themselves. And no matter how committed to LDS teachings and practices they are, they must wonder: If this is the true church, led by a prophet of God, why was a racial ban instituted in the first place? (“Faith, Color and the LDS Priesthood,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 8, 2003, pp. A1 & A12)

Armand Mauss observed:

The 1978 declaration of the church leaders . . . was widely expected to bring an end to the most important controversy in Mormondom during the second half of the twentieth century. That the church president, two decades later, was still facing questions about it suggested that the issue was not entirely dead. . . . Even the struggle to divest Mormonism of its polygamous heritage is still underway, at least on the margins, more than a century after the official abandonment of the practice. The more contemporary struggle to cast off “the curse of Cain” from Mormons, black and white, has persisted for a full generation, largely because the “die-hards” among white Mormons have been as reluctant as white Americans more generally to relinquish traditional prejudices and stereotypes based on race or lineage. (*All Abraham’s Children*, p. 231)

Although many Africans had joined the LDS Church, Eugene England, a professor of English at Brigham Young University, was deeply concerned about the racism that still existed in the church. In an article published in *Sunstone* in 1998, England wrote:

This is a good time to remind ourselves that **most Mormons are still in denial about the ban**, unwilling to talk in Church settings about it, and that some Mormons still believe that Blacks were cursed by descent from Cain through Ham. **Even more** believe that Blacks, as well as other **non-white people**, come color-coded into the world, their lineage and even their class a **direct indication of failures in a previous life** . . .

In the twentieth century, speculation by Mormons that Blacks were being punished for some sin committed before they came to earth gradually gained in popularity and was extended to other races. When I was growing up in the 1940s and 50s in Utah, I was a racist in a thoroughly racist society. The predominantly Mormon Utah legislature passed anti-miscegenation laws and consistently killed fair housing laws. Blacks were neither allowed in the Church-owned Hotel Utah nor on Salt Lake's east bench, where even Japanese-American Chieko Okazaki encountered prejudice and efforts to keep her out and where a good sister in our ward came to our home with a petition to exclude a Jewish family. . . . In the 1960s, as the Civil Rights and Black Power movements gained in strength, there was criticism, both from without and within the Church, of the priesthood ban and racist Mormon teachings, criticism that produced its own apologetic theological response by white Mormon writers . . . President Kimball told the press after the 1978 revelation that the revelation came at this time because conditions and people have changed. "It's a different world than it was 20 or 25 years ago. The world is ready for it."

However, as is too often the case, we Mormons didn't all follow the prophet; some continued to believe the racist theology, even though the practice that gave rise to it had ended—and even though it contradicted central Mormon doctrinal principles . . . The majority of Mormons were clearly still racists in the 1960s . . . Sadly, some of that baggage is still with us. I check occasionally in classes at BYU and find that still, **twenty years after the revelation, a majority of bright, well-**

educated Mormon students say they believe that Blacks are descendants of Cain and Ham and thereby cursed and that skin color is an indication of righteousness in the pre-mortal life. They tell me these ideas came from their parents or Seminary and Sunday School teachers, and they have never questioned them. They seem largely untroubled by the implicit contradiction to basic gospel teachings . . . (*Sunstone*, June 1998, pp. 54-58)

On May 18, 1998, the *Salt Lake Tribune* printed an article written by Larry B. Stammer, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*. The headline in the *Tribune* read as follows: LDS Church Mulls Revoking Doctrine On Black "Curse."

In the article Mr. Stammer pointed out that the church was struggling to deal with embarrassing questions regarding blacks in the church:

Twenty years after the Mormon Church dropped its ban against blacks in the priesthood, key leaders are debating a proposal to repudiate historic church doctrines that were used to bolster claims of black inferiority.

The proposal to disavow the teachings, which purport to link black skin color to curses from God recounted in Hebrew and Mormon Scriptures, is under review by the church's Committee on Public Affairs, made up of members of the church's highest governing circles, known as general authorities.

Sources close to the sensitive and still-secret deliberations hope that a statement will be issued as early as next month, the 20th anniversary of the landmark 1978 decision by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to admit all worthy men to the priesthood, regardless of their race or color.

Although the church's leaders now proclaim racial equality as a "fundamental teaching," the process of repudiating old doctrines remains difficult.

"They feel like a lot of people may not believe the church is true because a lot of these things were said by previous prophets, and a true prophet of God shouldn't make mistakes," said David Jackson, a black Mormon who is among those calling for change.

The call for change comes at a time when the 10 million-member church is enjoying unprecedented growth in Africa and other developing countries. . . .

But black members of the church in the United States as well as some Mormon scholars warn that the “racist legacy” contained in various Mormon documents and authoritative statements risks undermining its mission unless they are disavowed. “In the absence of any official corrections, these speculative and pejorative ideas will continue to be perpetuated in the church indefinitely,” Armand Mauss, president of the Mormon History Association, wrote recently.

“What [the 1978 revelation] doesn’t say is we’re no longer of the lineage of Cain, that we no longer did these things in pre-existence. It does not say we are not cursed with black skin,” Jackson said.

Although church officials would not comment directly on what Hinckley and his counselors or the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles may have considered, they confirmed that discussion of the issue is moving forward.

William S. Evans, a public affairs committee staffer, confirmed that the committee members have discussed the matter. But only the church’s highest authorities—not the committee—could make such a statement. . . . (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 18, 1998)

Unfortunately, if the Mormon leaders were really thinking of dealing with these issues, it now appears that they have changed their mind. Cala Byram, a *Deseret News* staff writer, reported:

LDS Church leaders say a newspaper story indicating they were considering a plan to retract early church doctrines concerning blacks was a surprise to them. . . .

Monday afternoon, the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a statement denying that the church’s First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve was considering issuing such a statement.

“We have read the story which appeared in the May 18, 1998, *Los Angeles Times* and are surprised at its contents. The matter it speaks of has not been discussed by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve,” said the prepared statement issued by the church’s governing body.

Instead the presidency, led by President Gordon B. Hinckley, said the church’s 1978 official declaration giving all worthy males the priesthood “continues to speak for itself.” . . .

The *Los Angeles Times* story said a statement was being reviewed for release as early as next month to repudiate early church teachings that linked dark skin color to curses from God recounted in Hebrew and LDS scriptures.

The *Times* quoted sources who said the “racist legacy” in early LDS Church doctrines could undermine the mission of the church unless they were repudiated.

That legacy hasn’t slowed the growth of the 10 million-member church, which has 110,000 members in Africa . . . (*Deseret News*, May 19, 1998)

This statement by church leaders was very disappointing to many Mormons who were hoping that the church would address the issues. On June 6, 1998, twenty years after blacks received the priesthood, the *Salt Lake Tribune* made some interesting comments regarding the matter:

The vast majority of Mormons greeted the stunning announcement of June 9, 1978, that lifted a 126-year-old ban on black men in the LDS Church’s priesthood with relief and joy . . .

The reversal, which Mormons believe was based on a divine “revelation” to LDS President Spencer W. Kimball, dramatically increased the church’s missionary successes in the multi-racial populations of South America and launched proselytizing among the black peoples of Africa. . . .

But in the United States, with its not-too-distant heritage of slavery and Jim Crow laws, exorcising past racist attitudes among Mormons has not been entirely successful.

Some people quietly left the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; others simply moved to a different neighborhood so they would not have to worship alongside blacks.

Estelle Blalock, a Mormon who has lived with her husband, Walter, in Liberty, Miss., for more than 50 years, said they accepted the change fully.

“We knew it was the Lord’s will that these things came about when they did,” Blalock said. But some members of their congregation “were unhappy . . . they still haven’t embraced blacks.”

Roy Spear of Atlanta said he is not aware of anyone in his area who left the LDS Church over the change. But he said some Mormons, particularly the “older member” continues to make disparaging remarks “out of the hearing of black members.” . . .

“Some join the LDS Church without ever knowing about its earlier racial policy and doctrinal folklore,” [Sociologist Armand] Mauss said. “When they find out later, they feel angry and betrayed.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 8, 1998, p. C1)

The same issue of the *Salt Lake Tribune* discussed other problems concerning blacks in the LDS Church:

“No one has ever treated me in any way as inferior,” said Moore, now of Centerville. “I feel loved and appreciated and respected.”

But others see the ideas persisting among church members, supported by several widely used books by LDS authorities. Without strong denial by the church, they believe, racism will continue to plague the church . . .

The *Book of Mormon*, which Latter-day Saints believe is a historical account of ancient Israelites who sailed to the Americas, tells of two races: the fair-skinned Nephites, who were faithful and righteous, and the Lamanites, rebellious people, who were cursed with a dark skin . . . some Mormons have promulgated the belief that in the premortal “war in heaven,” some spirits “sympathized with Lucifer, but did not follow him,” as summarized by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith in *The Way to Perfection*, published in the 1930s but **still in circulation today**.

“The negro race, for instance, have been placed under restrictions because of their attitude in the world of spirits,” wrote Smith, who became church president in 1970 . . . the blacks-are-cursed beliefs can be found in several books that enjoy an almost official status among Mormons, particularly the late Apostle Bruce R. McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine* and his *Mortal Messiah* series.

In the 1979 edition of McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine*, reprinted as recently as 1997, it says: **“Cain, Ham and the whole negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as a caste apart.”**

Ronald Coleman, professor of history and ethnic studies at the University of Utah, was surprised to learn that these statements can still be found in LDS literature.

Coleman, who is not LDS, said that if they do exist, the church “has a job to do in cleaning up contemporary writings that reflect biases from the past which the church no longer holds”

(*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 6, 1998, pp. C1 and C3).

In a letter to the editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Jerry Whipple made some significant comments:

The doctrine of a curse on black people espoused by the LDS Church for over 125 years cannot be erased in the mind of the true believer by saying that blacks may now hold the priesthood. BYU professor Eugene England confirms in the May 19 *Tribune* that ‘majority of the bright, well-educated Mormon students still believe the blacks-are-cursed theories.’ Very simply, this translates into racism. These feelings of superiority will prevent many from choosing or accepting blacks as equals or as leaders.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said racism is as destructive to the oppressor as to the oppressed. How can one be a loving ‘brother’ to a group he has looked down on, and in many cases, has viewed as subhuman, when no other change has been made than the acceptance of black men into the priesthood?

Hello up there, Brethren! Can you hear? . . . Or are you totaling your growing membership for boasting rights? Malicious doctrine passed on for generations in writing and speeches by all levels of leadership can only be reversed by bold action from the highest level. Followers must be told, clearly, that all references to a black curse must be revoked even though this will be tantamount to admitting that earlier prophets were wrong. The alternative to this is no action at all, leaving church members with pernicious, racist views for generations to come, inflicting pain on those around them. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 16, 1998, p. A-10)

Missionaries to Brazil

In 1830 six men met to organize the Church of Christ, later renamed The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see *Doctrine & Covenants* 15:3-5). Since then the church has grown to nearly 12 million members with approximately 56,000 missionaries. Many of these missionaries work in Brazil.

Peggy Fletcher Stack, writing for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, commented on the church’s growth in Brazil:

Today, Mormons in Brazil . . . number more than 800,000, more than in any country besides

the United States and Mexico. Brazil has 26 LDS missions, more than Germany, Italy and Great Britain combined. One in 10 missionaries is called to this most populous South American nation. . . .

Holding onto the flock: Though the LDS growth rate in Brazil is impressive by U.S. standards, “revolving door” baptisms continue to be a major problem for the church. According to several Brazilian leaders, the LDS activity rate here is between 25 percent and 35 percent. **That means for every three or four converts, only one stays.** (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 5, 2003)

Since 1978, LDS missionary work in the United States has gained a small but significant number of black converts. However, there seems to be a problem with retention. Armand Mauss observed that “Mormon missionary work among American blacks does not seem to be thriving, even after the 1978 change in priesthood policy” (*All Abraham’s Children*, p. 261). Their greatest success among blacks has been in Brazil and Africa.

Work in Ghana

Even though there are less than 200,000 Mormons in all of Africa, the Mormons have just dedicated their second temple on the continent, in Ghana. They have one in South Africa and another one is under construction in Nigeria.

On the news page for the official Mormon web site, www.lds.org, is an article on their growth in Ghana. They report that in 1978 Ghana had about 400 Mormons.

However, ten years later, with about 6,000 members, the LDS Church fell out of favor with the government of Ghana. On June 23, 1989, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

ACCRA. Ghana- The Mormon Church, banned in Ghana earlier this month, will never be allowed to operate in the West African nation again, a government official said Thursday. . . .

Mr. Lefevre [manager of press relations for the LDS Church] said the LDS mission president in Ghana has flown to London, where he will discuss with church leaders on the possibility of convincing Ghana’s government officials to rescind the order. . . .

Church officials said there were 89 Mormon missionaries in Ghana, but 72 were natives and only 17 were affected by the expulsion order. . . .

The Mormon Church has about 6,000 members in the nation of 14 million, and has maintained a missionary program in Ghana since 1979, a church spokesman said. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 23, 1989, p. A1-2)

Eventually the situation was resolved and missionary work was again put into operation. In December of 2003 the LDS Church dedicated a new temple to serve the 23,000 members in Ghana.

Minorities in Leadership

While European members have regularly been advanced in LDS leadership, ethnic minorities have been less visible. Historian D. Michael Quinn observed:

Much as a corporate board of directors represents significant minority blocks of stockholders, the appointment of General Authorities to represent significant ethnic populations of the LDS Church has continued from the 1830s to the present. As the American-born Mormons were supplemented by tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints from Canada and Great Britain, twelve Canadian and British General Authorities served from 1837 to 1938, and five from 1960 to the present. . . .

As the population of the international church has accelerated since the 1960s, the newly expanded Quorum of Seventy has become the vehicle for representing diverse ethnic and foreign populations of Mormons, rather than the tight-knit Quorum of the Twelve Apostles which had non-American members from 1838 to 1975. Since that latter year, the following ethnic and non-American populations have become represented by appointments to the Quorum of Seventy: the Hawaiians with Adney Y. Komatsu, the French and Belgians with Charles A. Didier, the Navajos with George P. Lee, the Dutch with Jacob deJager, the Germans with F. Enzo Busche, the Japanese with Yoshihiko Kikuchi, the English with Derek A. Cuthbert, the Canadians with Ted E. Brewerton, and the Latin Americans with Angel Abrea. (“From Sacred Grove to Sacred Power Structure,” *Dialogue*, vol. 17, no. 2, Summer 1984, p. 23)

George P. Lee

George P. Lee, mentioned in the above quote, was the first Native American to be appointed as a general authority in the LDS Church. He was sustained a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1975. However, fourteen years later he was excommunicated for criticizing the leaders. On September 2, 1989, the *Salt Lake Tribune* announced:

The only American Indian general authority in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was excommunicated Friday after claiming church leaders are perpetrating a “silent, subtle scriptural and spiritual slaughter” of his race.

George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy since 1975, was stripped of his membership . . . for “apostasy” and “other conduct unbecoming a member of the church.” He is the first Mormon general authority excommunicated in 46 years. . . .

He claimed church leaders have “turned their backs” on Native Americans and, in pride and arrogance, are discriminating against the very people Mormon scriptures say they must rely on for salvation.

“There is a racist attitude I could just no longer stand,” Dr. Lee, 46, said in an interview . . . “It is aimed at the poor, at the Indians. . .

“They have washed their hands of their responsibilities to the Lamanites.” He said. . .

“Church leaders have set themselves up as interpreters of the gospel, rather than its followers,” he said. It has resulted in pride, Dr. Lee claims.

“I have heard a few of you declare that you are greater than ancient apostles such as Moses, Abraham, Noah, Isaiah, Isaac, Jacob. . . . This reflects the attitude of all of you,” Dr. Lee said in the letter. “I have heard one or more of you declare that you can change anything Jesus had said or taught. This also reflects the attitude of all of you.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, September 2, 1989)

The *Book of Mormon* makes it very clear that the descendants of Lehi will perform a mighty work in the last times. The Gentiles, on the other hand, are threatened with destruction at the hands of the Native Americans if they do not repent:

And my people who are a remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, yea, in the midst of

them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.” (3 Nephi 21:12)

Instead of playing the major role, the Gentiles who repent will “assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 21:23).

George P. Lee believed the Book of Mormon prediction that his people will play the major role in the last days and felt that the LDS Church leaders were deliberately trying to circumvent what God had ordained.

In a handwritten, 23 page letter he presented to the hierarchy on the day he was terminated, he wrote:

1. You have set yourself up as a literal seed of Israel when the Lord Jesus designated you as Gentiles or “adopted Israel[.]” You have set yourself up as [the] true seed of Ephraim thereby displacing the true seed of Israel[.]

You have shoved true Israel out of his own home or house and have given great importance and status to your own role as Ephraim... Gentiles or “adopted Israel” have set themselves up as true Ephraimites with little or no obligation or sense of responsibility to the Lamanites and other true seed of Israel. This kind of teaching runs counter to the instructions of the Lord Jesus and collides with the will of God. I cannot be a party to this type of policy or doctrine. It is not God’s but man-inspired[.] It is getting to the point where every Gentile that is baptized is told and taught that he is literal seed of Ephraim unless he is a Jew, Indian or Black. This type of teaching encourages an attitude of superior race... I cannot be a party to false teaching, teachings which are man-inspired.... You have come very close to denying that the Book of Mormon is about Lamanites. You have cut out Indian or Lamanite programs and are attempting to cut them out of the Book of Mormon. (Letter to the First Presidency and the Twelve, by George P. Lee, 1989, pp. 13-16, photocopy in our files)

While George P. Lee is probably correct with regard to the teachings of the *Book of Mormon* concerning Lamanites and Gentiles, from a Biblical

perspective both his view and that held by the Mormon leaders seems to be out of step with the teachings of Jesus. In Mark 9:33-37, we read that some of the Lord's disciples had been arguing over "who should be the greatest." Jesus, therefore, "called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." In the book of Matthew 18:1-4, we find that Jesus answered the question of who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven by calling "a little child unto him." He "set him in the midst of them" and then said: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Apostle Paul made it clear that "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). To waste time debating over who has the "royal blood" seems to be an exercise in futility. It is unlikely that either the Mormon leaders or the Indians have the blood of Israel.

While it is undoubtedly true that George P. Lee and his people have suffered because of the racist views held by some of the present church leaders, Dr. Lee must face the fact that a great deal of the prejudice against Indians in Mormonism originated from the *Book of Mormon* itself. It is that book which tells of God putting a "curse" on the Lamanites and causing "a skin of blackness to come upon them" so that they would be segregated from those with a "white" skin.

Four years after his excommunication, charges of sexual misconduct were brought against Lee for abuse that happened while he was a general authority in the LDS Church. The *Deseret News* reported:

George P. Lee, former LDS Church general authority, is expected to surrender to authorities next week on charges that he sexually abused a 12-year-old girl in 1989.

Investigators say he fondled the girl at his home and during official trips he made as a member of the church's First Quorum of Seventy. . . .

According to the complaint filed in 3rd Circuit Court, the girl said Lee was in bed with her some time during the summer of 1989 and put his hand on her breasts, buttocks and genitals after talking

to her about polygamy. She also described more than five similar acts in Utah and other states. . . . The girl is a friend of one of Lee's daughters . . . (*Deseret News*, July 30, 1993, pp. B1-2)

In 1994 Lee pleaded guilty to attempted sexual abuse of a child, a third-degree felony. In 1996 Lee again made the news when it became known he had violated his probation order to attend specific sex-abuse counseling (see the *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 14, 1996, p. C2).

Other than George P. Lee, no other North American Indian has been called as a general authority in the LDS Church.

Helvecio Martins

The only black, as of April 2004, to be appointed as a general authority was Helvecio Martins. He joined the LDS Church in 1972 in Brazil and after the 1978 priesthood revelation was ordained to the priesthood. He was soon involved in various leadership positions, such as president of the Brazil Fortaleza Mission. He was appointed to the Second Quorum of Seventy on March 31, 1990 (*Deseret News 1991-1992 Church Almanac*, p. 33). After successfully completing his assignment, he was released from that position on September 30, 1995.

In the March 2003 issue of *Sunstone*, Newell G. Bringhurst professor of history and past president of the Mormon History Association, observed:

But as I see it, the Church still faces two significant challenges. First, the Church officially needs to unequivocally renounce all the "racist folklore" previously used to justify black priesthood denial and the inferior place of blacks within Mormonism. . . .

A second crucial challenge stems from the **lack of ethnic diversity at the highest levels of Church leadership. . . . There is currently no black General Authority**—a void since the 1995 release of Brazilian Helvecio Martins from the Second Quorum of Seventy. Such diversity in the Church's top leadership would, perhaps, engender greater sensitivity to the needs and problems of an increasingly ethnically diverse Church membership. . . .

At the very least, a greater number of General Authorities from Asian, Latin American, and black African backgrounds would more accurately reflect

the reality of an increasingly international Church where an ever-increasing majority of Latter-day Saints reside outside the United States. As an ultimate scenario, it is perhaps not too much to hope for “the long-promised day” when the Quorum of the Twelve itself will consist of one or more persons of black African descent, along with individuals from Latin America and Asia. (“An Unintended and Difficult Odyssey,” *Sunstone*, March 2003, p. 27)

The LDS Church occasionally calls a Latin American or Asian to a position in one of the quorums of the Seventy, which are not permanent callings. These assignments are usually for about five years. However, the LDS apostles are life-time appointments and are all white North Americans.

Prominent Black Converts to Mormonism

Eldridge Cleaver

One of the most controversial blacks to join Mormonism was Eldridge Cleaver. *Sunstone Review* reported:

Eldridge Cleaver, former Black Panther leader, author, political activist and ex-convict, was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at a “well-attended” service on December 11, 1983. The baptism, held in the Oakland Inter-Stake Center, attracted upwards of 100 people including many, of Cleaver’s LDS friends from the San Jose area. Ending some two years of speculation concerning Cleaver’s plans to become a Mormon, the baptism was performed by Carl Locher, an associate in the Berkeley area.

Cleaver, who achieved celebrity status in the 1960s after publication of his book, *Soul On Ice*, first indicated his interest in Mormonism in 1981. At that time he received the missionary discussions and met with Elder Paul H. Dunn. (*Sunstone Review*, January 1984)

Mr. Cleaver’s activity in the LDS Church “was not consistent, but he always referred to himself as a ‘Mormon and a Christian.’ He died in 1989” (“The Story of Eldridge Cleaver,” www.ldsconversion.com).

Gladys Knight

Famous singer Gladys Knight converted to Mormonism in 1997. John Goodie wrote:

... For those of you who need a little schooling, I’m talking about Gladys Knight of *Gladys Knight and the Pips*, who has more gold records than most of us have dishes. Her song *Midnight Train to Georgia* still hits radio waves throughout America. ... Gladys Knight didn’t appear in any fancy arena. And admission was free. ... You see, Gladys Knight was on a mission call in Mesa for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She became a Mormon on Aug. 11, 1997, and was here giving a moving testimony on how she and her daughter, through her son, converted to the LDS Church. ... Gladys spoke about her son, Jimmy, who led her and her daughter to the church. She noted that it wasn’t until 1978 that African-American men could receive the honor of priesthood. Jimmy became a priest two years ago. (*Arizona Republic*, March 2001, as quoted on www.ldsconversion.com)

On June 8th of 2003 the LDS Church had a special commemorative service in recognition of the 25th anniversary of giving priesthood to blacks. Gladys Knight, and her choir from Las Vegas, sang with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on that occasion. The *Deseret News* reported:

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the LDS revelation on priesthood, received on June 8, 1978, which made full priesthood privileges and blessings available to LDS black men and their families.

On Sunday, June 8, a worship service in the Tabernacle, titled, “The Long Promised Day: A Celebration,” will feature music by the Saints Unified Voices choir conducted by Gladys Knight, along with personal stories of faith and testimony shared by black church members. (“LDS to celebrate priesthood revelation,” *Deseret News*, Saturday, June 7, 2003)

Thurl Bailey

Thurl Bailey, professional basketball player and musician, was a Baptist until joining the LDS Church in 1995. While separated from his wife in 1989 he

met Sindi, a young Mormon woman. Through his exposure to Mormonism during his nine years with the Utah Jazz basketball team and Sindi's influence he started looking into Mormonism. Thurl and Sindi married in 1994 and he joined the LDS Church in 1995. Their marriage was solemnized in the Swiss LDS temple in 1997. He is now a popular speaker and musician in Mormon circles.

Deseret News reporter Doug Robinson wrote:

Thurl Bailey is retired from professional basketball, but that doesn't mean he's slowed down. Just try to keep up with him.

There's his singing career, with concert appearances and CDs to his credit. There are his various business interests, everything from corporate speaking to literally spreading fertilizer. There is his foundation and his work with various charities.

There are the dozens of "firesides" he does for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are his broadcasting duties, providing TV color commentary for Utah Jazz and University of Utah basketball games. And there is his young family — a wife and four children. ("Thurl Bailey's Wonderful Life," *Utah News*, *Deseret News*, February 22, 2003)

Current Attitudes

Although current LDS leaders are careful to avoid any sort of racial denigration, they are still faced with the problem of all their sermons and books promoting racism prior to 1978. Jessie Embry discussed Apostle McConkie's approach to race:

An important exemplar of changing attitudes was Apostle McConkie, who had become a prolific theologian. His 1966 *Mormon Doctrine*, used by some members as a dictionary of theology, contained the following justifications for the black exclusion policy: "Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them are known to us as the negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain." He went on: "Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty." Two months after the announcement [in 1978], he declared to a group of church-employed teachers:

"There are statements in our literature by the early brethren which we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things . . . All I can say to that is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. **Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation.** We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world. We get our truth and our light line upon line and precept upon precept. We have now had added a new flood of intelligence and light on this particular subject, and it erases all the darkness, and all the views and all the thoughts of the past. They don't matter any more. **It doesn't make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June of this year [1978].** It is a new day and a new arrangement, and the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light out into the world on this subject. As to any slivers of light or any particles of darkness of the past, **we forget about them.**" (*Black Saints in a White Church*, pp. 34-35)

Bruce R. McConkie's speech was given at a Book of Mormon Symposium for Seminary and Institute teachers, at Brigham Young University, August 18, 1978. The entire speech can be read in our publication, *Following the Brethren*, and on our web site www.utlm.org.

But is McConkie's position to "forget" all the past sermons reasonable? Does this mean LDS Conference talks by prophets and apostles may contain false doctrine? The Mormons listening to Brigham Young accepted his sermons as inspired. How is one to know when to dismiss past prophets and apostles and only accept the current statements? What is the current official LDS teaching on pre-existence and birth order? Where is their current explanation on the origin of race and color?

Those who point to McConkie's statement as an example of the church's position need to remember that he was not issuing an official statement from the LDS First Presidency.

Why should McConkie's statement carry any more weight than his earlier ones? If he could be wrong the first time he could be wrong the last time.

How is one to reconcile this approach with past teachings that we are to always follow the brethren? The Ward Teacher's message for June of 1945 instructed the LDS faithful:

It should be remembered that Lucifer has a very cunning way of convincing unsuspecting souls that the General Authorities of the Church are as likely to be wrong as they are to be right. . . .

When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan—it is God's plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy. (*Improvement Era*, June, 1945, p. 354)

This concept has been repeated through the years in various sermons. Bishop Glenn Pace, speaking at the April 1989 LDS Conference, said:

There are some of our members who practice selective obedience. A prophet is not one who displays a smorgasbord of truth from which we are free to pick and choose. However, some members become critical and suggest the prophet should **change the menu**. A prophet doesn't take a poll to see which way the wind of public opinion is blowing. He reveals the will of the Lord to us. (*Ensign*, May 1989, p. 26)

Yet we have already seen that the church did change its doctrine after years of public outcry, numerous discussions and drafts of the revelation.

In 1994, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency, assured the faithful that "the Mormon Church will never be without a prophet and that prophet will never lead the church astray" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, September 3, 1994, p. D-1).

How does one put this together with all the past statements by church leaders regarding race? How is one to determine when a prophet or apostle gives accurate doctrine? As someone once quipped, "Today's truth may be tomorrow's heresy."

Professor Karl Sandberg commented:

Given the popular belief in apostolic **infallibility**, many people reason that the Brethren are instructed constantly by the Lord and therefore easily conclude that everything in current belief and practice in the church is upheld by, and is in conformity with, the will of God. If God wants anything changed, he will say so, and the message will come from the top down. Yet many people are uncomfortable in maintaining beliefs that seem to hang in the air waiting for God to speak further. Therefore, in order to defend the current position, they invent reasons for it, and these reasons metastasize into doctrines, which become part of the status quo and which in turn come to be accepted in all docility as the word of God. An example is in the question of the **blacks and the priesthood**. There was no founding revelation for such a practice: the only person in all of the scriptures to be "cursed as to the Priesthood," i.e. the Pharaoh pictured in facsimile three of the *Pearl of Great Price*, was white, and Joseph Smith himself ordained Elijah Abel, a black man, to the priesthood and sent him on missions. Nonetheless, a prevalent cultural belief at that time, the status quo, was that blacks were inferior, still laboring under the curse of Cain or Canaan, and Brigham Young accepted it in the nineteenth century. Joseph Fielding Smith and his son-in-law Bruce R. McConkie both echoed it in the twentieth century. B. H. Roberts also endorsed it and even elaborated on another reason given for withholding the priesthood from blacks: they were less valiant in the pre-existence. In 1978 all of these statements which had been proclaimed and accepted as the word of God were unhinged. Brigham Young was wrong. Joseph Fielding Smith was wrong. Bruce R. McConkie was wrong. B. H. Roberts was wrong. Either that or Spencer W. Kimball was wrong in now extending priesthood to all worthy black men. What had been accepted as the word of God turned out to be the status quo. Venerating the status quo as the word of God is not easily distinguishable from idolatry, always a vexatious problem, but one we will continue to encounter in the future. ("Thinking About the Word of God in the Twenty-First Century," by Karl C. Sandberg, *Dialogue*, vol. 29, no. 1, Spring 1996, p. 71)

Most of the blacks who join Mormonism today are not aware of the past racist teachings of its prophets and leaders. When they read the earlier statements

they are usually upset and want an explanation from the church. A black convert, participating in a round table discussion on race and Mormonism, observed:

We can say what we want to say in this room today, but nothing is going to change until somebody says in General Conference meeting, "Racism in the Church is wrong." By not saying it, they're condoning it. They're condoning **Brigham Young's statements**; they're condoning **John Taylor's statements**; they're condoning things that need to be **repudiated**. A statement may not stop everything, but it will make people think, because, by not saying it, they're condoning it. ("Speak the Truth, and Shame the Devil," *Sunstone*, May 2003, p. 33)

Armand Mauss reflected:

It is at the grassroots level, however, where the racist residue of the past remains most strongly entrenched. In LDS classes and conversations, a question sometimes arises about the erstwhile denial of the priesthood to black members. Such a question is often raised by new black members themselves, who often discover that historic anomaly only after having joined the Church. Many, perhaps most, LDS members and leaders will answer this question with a response like "We don't know, but that's all in the past." This kind of response, if not very satisfactory, is at least fairly benign and, for most members, probably the most accurate. All too often, however, the grassroots response from a member or teacher or leader is to resort to the folklore of the past with an explanation something like, "well, black people, you know, are descendants of Cain and were therefore under a curse. However, that curse was removed by revelation in 1978 so that even the descendants of Cain can now receive the priesthood." I have encountered that "explanation" periodically in LDS gatherings ever since 1997 and as recently as 1999. The late Eugene England found it common among his BYU students well into the 1990s. ("Reflections on a Lifetime with the Race Issue," *Sunstone*, March 2003, p. 30)

In the March 2003 issue of *Sunstone*, Darron Smith, a black convert, wrote:

. . . even though the priesthood ban was repealed in 1978, the discourse that constructs

what blackness means is still very much intact today. Under the direction of President Spencer W. Kimball, the First Presidency and the Twelve removed the policy that denied blacks the priesthood but did very little to disrupt the multiple discourses that had fostered the policy in the first place. Hence there are Church members today who continue to summon and teach at every level of Church education the racial discourse that blacks are descendants of Cain, that they merited lesser earthly privilege because they were "fence-sitters" in the War in Heaven, and that, science and climatic factors aside, there is a link between skin color and righteousness. . . .

Further anchoring the early LDS appropriation of negative notions concerning blackness are several Book of Mormon teachings that associate dark skin with that which is vile, filthy, and evil, and white skin with that which is delightful, pure, and good. . . .

I did not find out about the priesthood ban on blacks until after I had joined the Church, and, sadly, I passed on much of the folklore while serving an LDS mission in Michigan. Looking back on that experience, I venture to say that had I known about such teachings in the Church, I might not have joined. . . .

Blacks who do move toward Mormonism should not be made to feel that blackness is synonymous with curses, marks, or indifference. And this can be accomplished only by a formal repudiation, in no uncertain terms, of all teachings about Cain, the pre-mortal unworthiness of spirits born to black bodies, and any idea that skin color is connected to righteousness. ("The Persistence of Racialized Discourse in Mormonism," by Darron Smith, *Sunstone*, March 2003, pp. 31-33)

It will be hard to eradicate racism from Mormonism as long as the old statements and books of past leaders are still sold and distributed by the LDS Church, without an official explanation or repudiation of the teachings. In an article titled "Out of the Best Books? Publications Continue to Promote Folklore" we read:

Although the priesthood ban was lifted in 1978 and today's Church leaders no longer teach that blacks descend from Ham or Cain, nor speak about curses or historical or doctrinal justifications for the original restriction, **books and pamphlets**

containing such teachings are easy to find. Many are still in print and for sale at most LDS bookstores, including Church-owned Deseret Book. Are such speculations and pronouncements really “in the past” when they are in print and allowed to stand without repudiation? (*Sunstone*, March 2003, p. 34)

The article goes on to mention the titles *Mormon Doctrine* by Apostle Bruce McConkie, *Gospel Kingdom* by President John Taylor, *Doctrines of Salvation* by President Joseph Fielding Smith, and *Answers to Gospel Questions* by Joseph Fielding Smith as examples of books currently for sale that promote the old teachings of the curse on blacks. The article then states:

In addition to these titles still available in most LDS bookstores, there are many other out-of-print titles readily accessible to Latter-day Saints. The *Journal of Discourses* contains statements from Brigham Young identifying the curse of Cain as the “flat nose and the black skin.” . . .

These titles are available through libraries and used bookstores. And the majority are also offered on the *Gospelink 2001* CD-ROM program produced by Deseret Book. (*Sunstone*, March 2003, p. 35)

Until the LDS Church officially repudiates its past racial doctrines and statements they will continue to be promulgated among its members. A white LDS woman, married to a black convert, recently wrote about her experiences in the December 2003, LDS Genesis Group newsletter:

. . . My husband, a convert and a Black man, joined the Church in 1995. . . . He is now the only Black adult member that I have seen in this stake since we’ve moved here two years ago. . . .

I can say that my husband being a Black member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints makes things awkward at times. Like a few months ago, when our nine-year-old son came home from Sunday school and asked us what color Jesus was. Naturally, we asked why this was important for him to know. He told us that his Primary teacher told him that Jesus was White and that Jesus could not possibly have been

Black because Blacks were cursed—cursed with the mark of Cain.

My heart breaks as our family experiences over and over again that outside feeling of being a minority among the Saints. I wish I could say that my husband’s love of the Church has carried him through the hard spots, but it hasn’t been. His love of the Lord is profound. Yet, he continually struggles with concepts of the doctrine. Remarkably, whenever something like this happens, the Lord places someone there to fellowship my husband. It has almost always been another Black man. . . . (as quoted on the LDS web site—<http://www.ldsgenesisgroup.org/news0312/page3.htm>)

Conclusion

While the LDS Church is to be commended for its humanitarian work in Africa, Latin America and among minorities, it does not offset the damage done by racial teachings of its past leaders. Professor Mario S. DePillis pointed out that “the revelation leaves unsolved other racist implications of the *Book of Mormon* and the *Pearl of Great Price*—scriptures that are both cornerstones and contradictions” (*New York Times*, June 11, 1978).

Besides the teachings of the *Book of Mormon* and *Pearl of Great Price* associating dark skin with a mark of God’s judgment, racist statements of past prophets and apostles need to be officially explained and repudiated. Until then, the past racist teachings will continue to be passed on to future generations.

The Bible reminds us that “God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

[*Words in Bold in the quotes were done for emphasis and did not appear that way in the original.*]

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Brigham Young's Address to Legislature February 5, 1852

Wilford Woodruff's Account of B. Young's Address

Appendix B

Mark E. Petersen's Address on August 27, 1954 at BYU

Race Problems—As They Affect The Church

Appendix C

Joseph Fielding Smith letter to Joseph H. Henderson

Joseph Fielding Smith letter to Morris L. Reynolds

Appendix D

Genealogical Records of Prominent Black Activists

Appendix A

Speech by Gov. Young in Joint Session of the Legislature, [Territory of Utah]. Feb. 5th 1852 giving his views on slavery

I rise to make a few remarks. The items before the house I do not understand.

The principle of slavery I understand, at least I have self confidence enough, and confidence enough in God to believe I do. I believe still further that a great many others understand it as I do. A great portion of this community have been instructed, and have applied their minds to it, and as far as they have, they agree precisely in the principles of slavery. My remarks in the first place will be upon the cause of the introduction of slavery. Long ago mama Eve our good old mother Eve pertook of the forbidden fruit and this made a slave of her. Adam hated very much to have her taken out of the garden of Eden, and now our old daddy says I believe I will eat of the fruit and become a slave too. This was the first introduction of slavery upon this earth; and there has been not a son or daughter of adam from that day to this but what where slaves in the true sense of the word.

That slavery will continue, untill there is a people raised up upon the face of the earth who will contend for righteous principles, who will not only believe in but operate, with every power and faculty given to them to help to establish the Kingdom of God, to overcome the devil, and drive him from the earth, then will this curse be removed. This was the starting point of slavery. Again after adam, and Eve had pertook of the curse, we find they had two sons Cain and Able, but which was the oldest I cannot positively say; but this I know, Cain was given more to evil practices than Abel, but whether he was the oldest or not matters not to me. Adam was commanded to sacrifice, and offer up his offerings to God, that placed him into the garden of Eden. Through the faith and obedience of Able to his heavenly father, Cain became jealous of him, and he laid a plan to obtain all his flocks; for through his perfect obedience to father he obtained more blessings than Cain; consequently he took it into his heart to put able able of this

mortal existance. after the deed was done, the Lord enquired to able, and made Caine own what he had done with him. Now says the grand father I will not distroy the seed of michal and his wife; and cain I will not kill you, nor suffer any one to kill you, but I will put a mark upon you. What is the mark? you will see it on the countenance of every African you ever did see upon the face of the earth, or ever will see. Now I tell you what I know; when the mark was put upon Cain, Ables children was in all probablility young; the Lord told Cain that he should not receive the blessings of the preisthood nor his seed, until the last of the posterity of Able had received the preisthood, until the redemption of the earth. If there never was a prophet, or apostle of Jesus Christ spoke it before, I tell you, this people that are commonly called negroes are the children of old Cain. I know they are, I know that they cannot bear rule in the preisthood, for the curse on them was to remain upon them, until the resedue of the posterity of Michal and his wife receive the blessings, the seed of Cain would have received had they not been cursed; and hold the keys of the preisthood, until the times of the restitution shall come, and the curse be wiped off from the earth, and from michals seed. Then Cain's seed will be had in remembrance, and the time come when that curse should be wiped off.

Now then in the kingdom of God on the earth, a man who has has the Affrican blood in him cannot hold one jot nor tittle of preisthood; Why? because they are the true eternal principals the Lord Almighty has ordained, and who can help it, men cannot, the angels cannot, and all the powers of earth and hell cannot take it off, but thus saith the Eternal I am, what I am, I take it off at my pleasure, and not one partical of power can that posterity of Cain have, until the time comes the says he will have it taken away. That time will come when they will have the privilege of all we have the privelege of and more. In the Kingdom of

God on the earth the Affricans cannot hold one partical of power in Government. The the subjects, the rightfull servants of the resedue of the children of Adam, and the resedue of the children through the benign influence of the Spirit of the Lord have the privilege of seeing to the posterity of Cain; inasmuch as it is the Lords will they should receive the spirit of God by Baptisam; and that is the end of their privilege; and there is not power on earth to give them any more power.

You talke of the dark skin, I never saw a white man on earth. I have seen persons whoes hair came pretty nigh being white, but to talk about white skins it is something intirely unknown, though some skins are fairer than others; look at the black eye and the jet black hair, we often see upon men and women who are called white, there is no such things as white folkes. We are the chldren of Adam, who receive the blessings, and that is enough for us if we are not quite white.

But let me tell you further. Let my seed mingle with the seed of Cain, that brings the curse upon me, and upon my generations, — we will reap the same rewards with Cain.

In the preisthood I will tell you what it will do. Where the children of God to mingle there seed with the seed of Cain it would not only bring the curse of being deprived of the power of the preisthood upon themselves but they entail it upon their children after them, and they cannot get rid of it. If a man in an unguarded moment should commit such a transgression, if he would walk up and say cut off my head, and kill man woman and child it would do a great deal towards atoneing for the sin. Would this be to curse them? no it would be a blessing to them. — it would do them good that they might be saved with their Bren. A man would shuder should they here us take about killing folk, but it is one of the greatest blessings to some to kill them, allthough the true principles of it are not understood.

I will had one thing more. It is not in the power of a man on the face of the earth to take more life than he can give, that is a proper son of Adam. How many times I have heard it said, and how many times has it been reiterated in my ears, and in yours, that to take a life, is to take what you cannot give; This is perfect nonsense; What do I do by

taking a mans head off after he is condemned by the Law? I put an end to the existence of the mortal tabernacle; but the life still remains. the body and the spirit is only seperated, this is all that can be done by any mortal man upon the face of the earth.

Can I give that life? I can, I can make as good tabernacles as any other man, if you do not beleive it go and look at my children, therefore that saying is nonsense. We form the tabernacle for the eternal spirit or life that comes from God. We can only put an end to the existence of that tabernacle, and this is the principle of sacrifice.

What was the cause of the antients drawing up hundreds and thousands of Bullocks, and Hefiers, and Lambs, and doves, and almost every other creature arround them, of which they took the best and the fatest, and offered them up as sacrifices unto the Lord. Was it not for the remission of the sins of the people. We read also in the new Testament that a man was sacrificed for the sins of the people. If he had not shed that blood which was given to him in the organisation of his body or Tabernacle, you and I could have had no remission of sins. It is the greatest blessing that could come to some men to shed their blood on the ground, and let it come up before the Lord as an atonement. You nor I cannot take any more life than we can give.

Again to the subject before us; as to The men bearing rule; not one of the children of old Cain, have one partical of right to bear Rule in Government affairs from first to last, they have no buisness there, this privilege was taken from them by there own transgressions, and I cannot help it; and should you or I bear rule we ought to do it with dignity and honour before God.

I am as much oposed to the principle of slavery as any man in the present acceptation or usage of the term, it is abused. I am opposed to abuseing that which God has decreed, to take a blessing, and make a curse of it. It is a great blessing to the seed of Adam to have the seed of Cain for servants, but those they serve should use them with all the heart and feeling, as they would use their own children, and their compassion should reach over them, and round about them, and treat them as kindly, and with that humane feeling necessary to be shown to mortall beings of the human species. Under these sercumstances there blessings in life are greater

in proportion than those who have to provide the bread and dinner for them.

We know there is a portion of inhabitants of the earth who dwell in Asia that are negroes, and said to be jews. The blood of Judah has not only mingled almost with all nations, but also with the blood of Cain, and they have mingled there seeds together; These negro Jewes may keep up all the outer ordinances of the jewish releigon, they may have there sacrifices, and they may perform all the releigious seremonies any people on earth could perform, but let me tell you, that the day they consented to mingle their seed with Cannan, the preisthood was taken away from Judah, and that portion of Judahs seed will never get any rule, or blessings of the preisthood until Cain gets it. Let this Church which is called the Kingdom of God on the earth; we will sommons the first presidency, the twelve, the high counsel, the Bishoprick, and all the elders of Isreal, suppose we summons them to apear here, and here declare that it is right to mingle our seed, with the black race of Cain, that they shall come in with us and be pertakers with us of all the blessings God has given to us. On that very day, and hour we should do so, the preisthood is taken from this Church and Kingdom and God leaves us to our fate. The moment we consent to mingle with the seed of Cain the Church must go to desstruction, — we should receive the curse which has been placed upon the seed of Cain, and never more be numbered with the children of Adam who are heirs to the priesthood untill that curse be removed.

Therefore I will not consent for one moment to have an african dictate me or any Bren. with regard to Church or State Government. I may vary in my views from others, and they may think I am foolish in the things I have spoken, and think that they know more than I do, but I know I know more than they do. If the Affricans cannot bear rule in the Church of God, what buisness have they to bear rule in the State and Government affairs of this Territory or any others?

I the Government affairs of States and Territorys and kingdoms by right God should Govern. he should rule over nations, and controle kings. If we suffer the Devil to rule over us we shall not accomplish any good. I want the Lord to rule, and be our Governor and and dictater, and we are the boys to execute. I shall

not consent for a moment to give way to a Gentile Spirit of contention, which is the cause of angry ----- Difference to the alinations of every Good feeling. It is for you and I to take a course, to bind our feelings together in an everlasting bond of union inasmuch as we love the Lord, which we ought to do more than selves. Consequently I will not consent for a moment to have the Children of Cain rule me nor my Bren. No, it is not right.

But say some, is there any thing of this kind in the Constitution, the U.S. has given us? If you will allow me the privilege telling right out, it is none of their damned buisness what we do or say here. What we do it is for them to sanction, and then for us to say what we like about it. It is written right out in the constitution, “that every free white male inhabitant above the age of twenty one years” &c. My mind is the same to day as when we where poreing over that constitution; any light upon the subject is the same, my judgement is the same, only a little more so. Prahapes I have said enough upon this subject. I have given you the true principles and doctrine. No man can vote for me or my Bren. in this Territory who has not the privilege of acting in Church affairs. Every man, and woman, and Child in this Territory are Citizens; to say the contrary is all nonsense to me. The indians are Citizens, the Africans are Citizens, and the jews than come from Asia, that are almost entirely of the blood of Cain. It is our duty to take care of them, and administer to them in all the acts of humanity, and kindness, they shall have the right of Citizenship, but shall not have the right to dictate in Church and State matters. The abolishonists of the east, have cirst them them, and their whol argument are callcultated to darken Counsel, as it was here yesterday. As for our bills passing here, we may lay the foundation for what? for men to come here from Africa or else where; by hundreds of thousands. When these men come here from the Islands, are they going to hold offices in Government No. It is for men who understand the knowlege of Government affairs to hold such offices, and on the other make provisions for them to plow, and to reap, and enjoy all that human beings can enjoy, and we protect them in it. Do we know how to amilerate the condition of these people? we do. Suppose that five thousands of them come from the pacific

Islands, and ten or fifteen thousands from Japan, or from China, not one soul of them would know how to vote for a Government officer, they therefore ought no in the first thing have anything to do in Government affairs.

What the Gentiles are doing we are consenting to do. What we are trying to do to day is to make the Negro equal with us in all our privilege. My voice shall be against all the day long. I shall not consent for one Moment I will call them a counsel. I say I will not consent for one moment for you to lay a plan to bring a curse upon this people. I shall not be while I am here.

(Typescript by H. Michael Marquardt, Brigham Young Addresses, Ms d 1234, Box 48, folder 3, dated Feb. 5, 1852, located in the LDS Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah)

**Wilford Woodruff's Account of
Governor Brigham Young's address before the
Legislative assembly of the Territory of Utah
upon slavery**

He remarked that the whole world were slaves. Eve partook of the forbidden fruit & also Adam & it brought slavery upon all their posterity in some way or other & this will continue untill we become righteous enough to drive the devil & evil from the Earth.

Adam had two sons Kane & Abel. Cain was more given to evil than Abel. Adam was called to offer sacrifice also his sons. The sacrifice of Abel was more acceptable than Canes & Cane took it into his heart to put Abel out of the way so he killed Abel.

The Lord said I will not kill Cane But I will put a mark upon him and it is seen in the [face?] of every Negro on the Earth And it is the decree of God that that mark shall remain upon the seed of Cane & the Curse untill all the seed of Abel should be re[deem?] ed and Cane will not receive the priesthood untill or salvation untill all the seed of Abel are Redeemed. Any man having one drop of the seed of Cane in him Cannot hold the priesthood & if no other Prophet ever spake it Before I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ. I know it is true & they know it. The

Negro cannot hold one particle of Government But the day will Come when all the seed of Cane will be Redeemed & have all the Blessings we have now & a great deal more. But the seed of Abel will be ahead of the seed of Cane to all Eternity.

Let me consent to day to mingle my seed with the seed of Cane. It would Bring the same curse upon me And it would upon any man. And if any man mingles his seed with the seed of Cane the ownly way he Could get rid of it or have salvation would be to Come forward & have his head Cut off & spill his Blood upon the ground. It would also take the life of his Children.

It is said if a man kills another that he takes that that He cannot give. If a mans head is cut off his life is not destroyed or his spirit that lives. His tabernacle is destroyed But I can make as good tabernacles as I can destroy. If you do not believe it look at my Children. Much blood was shed in ancient days both of man & Beast. The firstlings & best of the flock was sacrafized on the Altar & in some instances many men & almost whole Nations were sacraficed or put to death because of their sins & wickedness. This was the ownly way they could be saved at all. If Jesus Christ had not had his Blood shed the Blood that He received from his Mother Mary the world would not have been saved.

Their is not one of the seed of old Cane that is permitted to rule & reign over the seed of Abel And you not I cannot Help it.

Those that do bear rule should do it in righteousness. I am opposed to the present system of slavery. The Negro Should serve the seed of Abram but it should be done right. Dont abuse the Negro & treat him Cruel.

It has been argued here that mney of the Jews were Black. Whenever the seed of Judah mingled with the seed of Cane they lost their priesthood & all Blessings.

As an Ensample let the Presidency, Twelve Seventies High Priest Bishops & all the Authorities say now we will all go & mingle with the seed of Cane and they may have all the privileges they want. We lift our hands to heaven in support of this. That moment we loose the priesthood & all Blessings & we would not be redeemed untill Cane was. I will never admit of it for a moment.

Some may think I dont know as much as they do. But I know that I know more than they do. The Lord will watch us all the time. The Devil would like to rule part of the time But I am determin He shall not rule at all and Negros shall not rule us. I will not admit of the Devil ruling at all. I will not Consent for the seed of Cane to vote for me or my Brethren. If you want to know why we did not speak of it in the Constitution it was because it was none of their Business. Any man is a Citizens Black white or red and if the Jews Come here with a part of the Canaanite Blood in them they are Citizens & shall have their rights but not to rule for me or my Brother. Those persons from the Islands & foreign Countries know nothing about Governing the people. The Canaanite cannot have wisdom to do things as the white man has. We must guard against all Evil. I am not going to let this people damn themselves as long as I can help it. (Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898 Typescript, vol. 4, edited by Scott G. Kenney, Signature Books, pp. 97-99)

Appendix B

Race Problems—As They Affect The Church

Address by
Elder Mark E. Petersen

*At the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah*

August 27, 1954

The discussion of civil rights, especially over the last 20 years, has drawn some very sharp lines. It has blinded the thinking of some of our own people, I believe. They have allowed their political affiliations to color their thinking to some extent, and then, of course, they have been persuaded by some of the arguments that have been put forth.

It is a good thing to understand exactly what the negro has in mind on this subject. I'll be talking about other races besides negroes, of course, but it is the negro question which pinpoints it, so I would like to talk first of all about the negro and his civil rights. We who teach in the Church certainly must have our feet on the ground and not be led astray by the philosophies of men on this subject any more than on any other subject.

I would like to begin by quoting from an interview conducted by the United States News with Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., a very prominent negro leader, and a member of the Congress of the United States. The United States News published this interview in its September 5, 1952 issue, That was before the supreme court decision as you recall. Congressman Powell was asked a number of questions, and he answered them. The first question:

Q. The question of civil rights in connection with segregation, Congressman Powell, opens up the often-mentioned subject of social equality, and

I was wondering: What is the viewpoint of the leaders of the Negroes in this country today on the broad subject of social equality?

A. Of course, social equality is something that covers so many different things that it would have to be defined more closely.

Q. Well, would you say that, in principle, the desire is for social equality?

A. No. I would say that there is a demand for social equality in all public places. Any place that is operating publicly, regardless of what its nature may be, should not have the right to refuse anyone. For a club or a private institution, that may be another question.

Q. But it would include hotels, restaurants and, of course, all forms of transportation?

A. That's right.

Q. Would that mean the ending of segregation on the railroads in the South?

A. Yes, that would.

Q. What is the status of that controversy? Is segregation on railroads now forbidden by law?

A. No, it is not forbidden by law. But, under Supreme Court rulings in the past years, there is no longer any segregation allowed in dining cars, no longer any allowed on busses in interstate transportation—

Q. What about Pullmans?

A. This is an optional thing which the Pullman company itself has been instituting. Nevertheless, now and then, you will meet an individual Pullman

conductor who interprets it on his own terms of bigotry. That, however, is rapidly changing. The only place still left is the so-called “Jim Crow” car, and even that has been abolished on through trains leaving Northern cities.

Q. What is the basic reason for the opposition to the ending of segregation?

A. I think it is just inherited public opinion of days past when the Negro was not as mature and educated and advanced as he is today—and neither was the white man. I think a private poll would produce tremendous statistics supporting the fact that the vast majority of people in the South are changing, but they are afraid of having their views become public.

Q. Is there any similar point of view in the North where there are now large numbers of Negroes? Is any opposition manifest there to non-segregation?

A. Yes, indeed. I think that the problem is one that is sort of leveling off and is no longer a strictly sectional problem —

I will now skip some. Let us now go into the matter of intermarriage with the negroes. I continue to read from this interview:

Q. Do you think many of the people who oppose discontinuing segregation are afraid breaking down of the social lines may lead to intermarriage?

A. That is the great bugaboo used to scare them, when the truth is that when two people are in love—black, white, Jew, Gentile, Protestant, Catholic—no one can stop them.

Q. What is the attitude of the Negro leaders toward the intermarriage question? Do they feel that it is a probability over a long period of time?

A. Yes, they do, but not as any conscious thing to go out and campaign for.

Q. They think that, ultimately, intermarriage will be commonplace in this country?

A. Personally, I do.

Q. How far away would you say that is?

A. Well, that is hard to say. I never thought India would be free in my lifetime, but today India is free. I didn't think that Africa would have a black Prime Minister, but they do today in the Gold Coast.

Q. Do you think there is much intermarriage today between whites and Negroes in this country?

A. No, very little, But it is the idea of the old sore thumb — it stands out so when it does happen.

Q. Do you think that the presence of a good many Negro troops in Europe where there's been intermarriage has affected the problem?

A. No, I don't, because I have just come back from an official five-month trip through Europe and the Near East, and there is no problem over there.

Q. You mean intermarriage is accepted?

A. Yes. They don't understand our fears here in America.

Q. Do you think there is much intermarriage in Europe?

A. Oh, yes, a great deal.

Q. Could you say in what countries it is more frequent? Is there a country that you could name?

A. I don't think I could say. I saw it all through Scandinavia. I saw it all through the Benelux countries and in Italy.

Q. But isn't it a small minority?

A. No. In comparison with the number of Negroes there, it was large.

Q. In comparison with the number of intermarriages in the United States, would you say that it was an equal or a greater number or a lesser number?

A. On a percentage basis there is no comparison. It is more prevalent abroad. In fact, the rare thing in Europe and England is to find a couple that is not an interracial marriage. I saw very few marriages to two Negro people.

Q. It was mostly Negro and white?

A. That's right.

Q. What is the attitude of the Negro in the United States on the subject of intermarriage? Is it discussed frequently in the press?

A. Yes, but on an objective basis. In fact, an increasingly large number of Negro leaders are marrying whites of extremely stable and respected families.

Q. Is there much more fraternizing in the Northern cities between Negroes and whites, especially in the large Negro centers like Harlem, than there used to be?

A. Yes, much more.

Q. Is there any tendency among the Negroes to reject that, or are they welcoming it?

A. They are very definitely welcoming it. An increasing number of fine leaders on both sides are marrying.

Q. Is there in New York city a greater number of interracial marriages than there has been?

A. Yes, but interestingly, the largest number of interracial marriages occur in Milwaukee and Los Angeles.

Q. To what do you attribute that?

A. I can't figure it out. Milwaukee has always been a very liberal city. Los Angeles, however, I can't figure out at all.

Q. What is the argument that is used by Negro leaders in answer to the point that is sometimes made that, if intermarriages continue in the next 25 or 30 years, then the races will be adulterated somewhat as they are in Cuba and Brazil?

A. I have heard that argument but it doesn't amount to any argument at all from my standpoint, because if we are fighting for integration, well, then, there it is. I mean, you can't fight against segregation and want separation. We must be consistent.

Q. I'm not sure that is clear—

A. The Negro leaders are fighting against segregations. Therefore, they can't have a position on one hand against segregation and on the other hand against interracial marriage.

Q. What I meant was, do you believe that the quality of the white race would be reduced by intermarriages?

A. No. Anthropologists, like Boas of Columbia and the late Malinowsky of Yale and Hooton of Harvard, especially, have shown that such a thing would be a benefit. That is a scientific fact.

Q. They contend that it would not change the quality of one race or the other?

A. That is correct—either not change it or actually improve the stock of both groups.

I think I have read enough to give you an idea of what the negro is after. He is not just seeking the opportunity of sitting down in a cafe where white people eat. He isn't just trying to ride on the same street-car or the same Pullman car with white people. It isn't that he just desires to go to the same theater as the white people. From this, and other interviews I have read, it appears that the negro seeks absorption with the white race. He will not be satisfied until he achieves it by intermarriage. That is his objective and we must face it. We must not allow our feeling to carry us away, nor must we feel so sorry for negroes that we will open our arms and embrace them with everything we have. Remember the little statement that we used to say about sin, "First we pity, then endure, then embrace."

How different is the Chinese attitude on intermarriage! Sister Belle S. Spafford, president of the Relief Society, has been attending the conference of the International Council of Women in Europe. I asked her what she learned there about inter-racial marriages as affecting other races than the negroes. She said there was one outstanding figure in the conference who expressed herself most emphatically on this subject. She was the Chinese representative, Matilda Ng. She is chairman of the Chinese council and heads the moral welfare section of the I.C.W. and this is what she said:

In Hong Kong there are two and one-half million people living in very crowded conditions. The population has more than doubled during the past five years bringing many serious social problems. The presence of so many men in the armed services has also created social problems extremely difficult to handle. A large number of illegitimate children have been born to Chinese girls, fathered by men of other races who are in the armed services. Neither the Chinese nor the Whites will accept these children.

The Chinese are bitterly opposed to Eurasian marriages or to marriages between Chinese and persons of any other race, even under the most favorable circumstances, and children born out of wedlock to Chinese mothers with white fathers are in an extremely unfortunate position. The Chinese mothers themselves are in a very difficult position. They have strong maternal instincts and traditions and because of this most of them make determined effort to keep their children, frequently turning to prostitution to support them.

What should be our attitude as Latter-day Saints toward negro and other dark races? Does the Lord give us any guidance? Is there any Church policy on this matter? Is segregation in and of itself a wrong principle? Are we as individuals against segregation as a matter of principle? Just where should we stand?

Before going into this, there are a few fundamentals that I would like to mention on which, of course, we must all be agreed.

1. God is the creator. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

2. The purpose in His creation of this earth was to provide a habitation for His children.

3. God [is] just. He is fair. He is no respecter of persons.

4. We must accept the fact of pre-existence, and that in our pre-existence we had free agency. We could be lazy there, or we could be industrious. We could be obedient or careless. We could choose to follow Christ or to follow Lucifer.

5. The gospel is eternal. It is as eternal as God, and He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His course is one eternal round.

6. The Lord has a definite method of dealing with both sinners and Saints, based on the way we personally live. We shall be judged in accordance with our own acts. We shall be punished for our own sins and not for Adam's transgression, nor for anybody else's transgression. I like a quotation from Ezekiel very much. It is found in the 18th chapter beginning with the fourth verse:

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbor's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God.

And if he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,

And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbor's wife,

Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge,

and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination.

Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase; shall he then live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,

That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbor's wife

Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

I think that is a marvelous statement of policy on the part of the Lord—a great announcement of doctrine.

Now I would like to come to the Ten Commandments for a moment:

I am the Lord thy God which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow thyself down to them or serve them, for I the Lord thy God and a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the

fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

I draw your attention to the fact that many people in reading this scripture stop before the sentence stops. They think in terms of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation—period, and they forget that the Lord goes on and says, “of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.”

This scripture clearly indicates that He shows mercy to those who love Him and keep His Commandments, but visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of them “that hate me.” In other words, we reap what we sow. The souls that sinneth shall die. We will be punished for our own sins but not for anybody else’s. We must accept that as a policy together with the thought that God is just to everybody, and that the gospel is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

7. Since the gospel is eternal and God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and since He is dealing with the same group of spirits, meaning you and me and the rest of us on earth, both in the pre-existent state as well as here, is there any reason why the Lord’s method of dealing with sinners and saints in the pre-existence should be different from His method of dealing with them here?

8. For sins we commit here we will be given places in the eternal world, in the Celestial, Terrestrial, and the Telestial kingdoms, and as one star differeth from another in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead. There will be wide variations of classifications in the hereafter, all based on our performance here in this life.

9. Is there any reason to think that the same principles of rewards and punishments did not apply to us and our deeds in the pre-existent world as will apply hereafter? Is there reason then why the type of birth we receive in this life is not a reflection of our worthiness or lack of it in the pre-existent life? We must accept the justice of God. He is fair to all. His is not a respecter of persons. He will mete to us according to what we deserve.

With that in mind, can we account in any other way for the birth of some of the children of God in

darkest Africa, or in flood-ridden China, or among the starving hordes of India, while some of the rest of us are born here in the United States? We cannot escape the conclusion that because of performance in our pre-existence some of us are born as Chinese, some as Japanese, some as Indians, some as Negroes, some as Americans, some as Latter-day Saints. These are rewards and punishments, fully in harmony with His established policy in dealing with sinners and saints, rewarding all according to their deeds.

I would like to read to you now from *The Way to Perfection*, by President Joseph Fielding Smith. I believe the chapters in this book, there are three of them primarily, provide the best statement of our interracial position that I know anything about, and I certainly highly recommend them to you. I will begin to read under a section, “Pre-assignment to nation or tribe.”

Our place among the tribes and nations evidently was assigned to us by the Lord. That there was an assignment of this kind before earth life began is a declaration of the scriptures. Certain spirits were chosen to come through the lineage of Abraham, and this choice was made in the beginning. Other selections were also made and the nations determined upon by the councils in the heavens. When Paul was speaking on Mars Hill, he said to the Athenians, “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious, for as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown God.’ Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshiped with men’s hands as though he needed anything. Seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation.”

If the Lord appointed unto the nations the bounds of their habitation, then there must have been a selection of spirits to form these nations. And I think we must recognize that. There must have been a selection of spirits to form these nations. In greater

clearness, Moses has declared the same thing. President Smith quotes from Deuteronomy next:

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask thy Father and He will show Thee, thy Elders, and they will tell thee when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel, for the Lord's portion is His people. Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. (That is Deuteronomy 32.)

If bounds were set according to the number of the children of Israel, and they were the Lord's portion—that is those with whom He made covenant, when the Lord divided the sons of Adam it must have been done before this earth life began, for in these days of old when this division was made, the nation of Israel had not been brought into existence on the earth.

Is it not a reasonable belief that the Lord would select the choice spirits to come to the better grades of nations? Is it not reasonable to believe that less worthy spirits would come through less favored lineage? Does this not account in very large part for the various grades of color and degrees of intelligence we find in the earth? Is not the Lord doing the best that can be done in accordance with the laws of justice and mercy for the people of the earth? In His mercy He has a salvation with some degree of exaltation even for the heathen and for those who die without law. However, we must not be unmindful of the fact that these worldly conditions have also been brought about in large degree by rebellion and disregard of the laws of God in this life. Retrogression has come upon mankind because they have rejected the counsels and commandments of the Almighty. Advancement has come largely because man has been willing to walk, in part at least, in the light divine inspiration.

Now, I have always been interested in Jeremiah's own statement, that is quoting the Lord, of course, for the Lord tells Jeremiah that before He formed him in the belly He knew him and chose Him to be a prophet unto the nations. Why was Jeremiah chosen before he was born? Because along with all of the rest of us, in the pre-existent life, he had his free agency. He had the right to go with Lucifer

if he wanted to. He had the right to be lazy or industrious or he had the right to study the gospel and come with full allegiance to the banner of the Savior. Because he came with full allegiance to the banner of the Savior and was loyal, and because he developed himself both in faith and otherwise in the pre-existent life, he came to a point of development where the Lord was glad to have him as one of His leaders, and so He chose him for one of His prophets even before he came into the world.

You remember the vision of Abraham when he was shown the spirits of certain great ones, and the Lord told him, "Abraham, thou art one of them." Why were these spirits chosen above anybody else? Is the Lord a respecter of persons? Again it was a reward based upon performance in the pre-existent life, and people who came in the lineage of Abraham received their blessing because of their performance in the pre-existent life. People who had not performed well enough in the pre-existent life obviously were given some other birth. I think this statement of Brother Smith's here is wonderful.

Another paragraph in the next chapter, under "Traits developed in the World of Spirits," says:

In the parable of the talents, the Lord makes use of this very significant expression. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods, and unto one he gave five talents, to another two and to another one. To every man according to his several ability." Without doubt, these characteristics were born with us, in other words, we developed certain traits of character in the world of spirits before this earth life began. In that life, some were more diligent in the performance of duty, some were more obedient and more faithful in keeping the commandments. Some were more intellectual and others manifested stronger traits of leadership than others. Some showed greater faith and willingness to serve the Lord, and from among these the leaders were chosen. Because of this condition, the Lord said to Abraham, "These I will make my leaders for He stood among those that were spirits and He saw that they were good and He said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them. Thou wast chosen before thou wast born." There must be leaders, presiding officers, and those who are worthy and able to take command.

During the ages in which we dwelt in the pre-mortal state we not only developed our various characteristics and showed our worthiness and ability, or the lack of it, but we were also where such progress could be observed. It is reasonable to believe that there was a Church organization there. The heavenly beings were living in a perfectly arranged society. Every person knew his place. Priesthood, without any question, had been conferred and the leaders were chosen to officiate. Ordinances pertaining to that pre-existence were required and the love of God prevailed. Under such conditions it was natural for our Father to discern and choose those who were most worthy and evaluate the talents of each individual. He knew not only what each of us could do, but also what each of us would do when put to the test and when responsibility was given us. Then, when the time came for our habitation on mortal earth, all things were prepared and the servants of the Lord chosen and ordained to their respective missions.

And then he goes on and shows how some were appointed to greater missions than others. I would like to recommend chapters 7 and 8 and chapters 15 and 16—four chapters in this very wonderful book.

Now let's talk segregation again for a few moments. Was segregation a wrong principle? When the Lord chose the nations to which the spirits were to come, determining that some would be Japanese and some would be Chinese and some Negroes and some Americans, He engaged in an act of segregation. When he permitted the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael again He indulged in segregation. In the case of Jacob and Esau, He engaged in segregation. When He preserved His people Israel in Egypt for 400 years, He engaged in an act of segregation, and when He brought them up out of Egypt and gave them their own land He engaged in an act of segregation. We speak of the miracle of the preservation of the Jews as a separate people over all these years. It was nothing more nor less than an act of segregation. I'm sure the Lord had His hand in it because the Jews still have a great mission to perform. In placing a curse on Laman and Lemuel, He engaged in segregation. When He placed the mark upon Cain, He engaged in segregation. When he told Enoch not to preach

the gospel to the descendants of Cain who were black, the Lord engaged in segregation. When He cursed the descendants of Cain as to the Priesthood, He engaged in segregation. When He forbade intermarriages as He does in Deuteronomy 7th chapter He established segregation.

You remember when the Israelites were about to come into Palestine and there were evil nations there, the Lord was anxious to preserve His own people by an act of segregation. He commanded His people Israel: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them. Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto they son." It was a law for the preservation of Israel and it certainly was an act of segregation.

Who placed the Negroes originally in darkest Africa? Was it some man, or was it God? And when He placed them there, He segregated them. Who placed the Chinese in China? The Lord did. It was an act of segregation. When He placed only some of His chosen people in the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe, wasn't that an act of segregation? And when He gave the birthright only to Ephraim, wasn't that an act of segregation?

The Lord segregated the people both as to blood and place of residence. At least in the cases of the Lamanites and the Negroes we have the definite word of the Lord Himself that He placed a dark skin upon them as a curse—as a punishment and as a sign to all others. He forbade intermarriage with them under threat of extension of the curse. (2 Nephi 5:21) And He certainly segregated the descendents of Cain when He cursed the Negro as to the Priesthood, and drew an absolute line. You may even say He dropped an Iron curtain there. The Negro was cursed as to the Priesthood, and therefore, was cursed as to the blessings of the Priesthood. Certainly God made a segregation there.

And do you remember in Section 76 where the Lord is talking about the Terrestrial kingdom and those who shall go there? He mentions those who were without law. I presume He means that all during mortality the people referred to were not permitted to have the law of the gospel and He assigned them directly to the terrestrial kingdom. Isn't that segregation?

Let's look at it another way. In the world to come, some of us will go to the celestial glory, some to the terrestrial, others to the telestial, and we are told that as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is resurrection of the dead. So there will be a wide variation there. But isn't that segregation? And you remember that He, himself, said with respect to some of them: "Where God and Christ dwell, they cannot come, worlds without end." That is segregation.

So, do the Latter-day Saints believe in segregation as a principle?

Let us consider the great mercy of God for a moment. A Chinese, born in China with a dark skin, and with all the handicaps of that race seems to have little opportunity. But think of the mercy of God to Chinese people who are willing to accept the gospel. In spite of whatever they might have done in the pre-existence to justify being born over there as Chinamen, if they now, in this life, accept the gospel and live it the rest of their lives they can have the Priesthood, go to the temple and receive endowments and sealings, and that means they can have exaltation. Isn't the mercy of God marvelous?

Think of the Negro, cursed as to the Priesthood. Are we prejudiced against him? Unjustly, sometimes we are accused of having such a prejudice. But what does the mercy of God have for him? This negro, who, in the pre-existence lived the type of life which justified the Lord in sending him to the earth in the lineage of Cain with a black skin, and possibly being born in darkest Africa—if that negro is willing when he hears the gospel to accept it, he may have many of the blessings of the gospel. In spite of all he did in the pre-existent life, the Lord is willing, if the Negro accepts the gospel with real, sincere faith, and is really converted, to give him the blessings of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. If that Negro is faithful all his days, he can and will enter the celestial kingdom. He will go there as a servant, but he will get a celestial resurrection. He will get a place in the celestial glory. He will not go then with even the honorable men of the earth to the terrestrial glory, nor with the ones spoken of as being without law.

In the great mercy of God, He allows all men to rise above themselves. Isn't this a great testimony to the principle of repentance, that if a man does the best he can to rise above conditions and if he

is faithful and devoted, the Lord recognizes him and lifts him up? I think that is one of the great evidences of the mercy of God.

Some years ago, back in 1936 to be exact, I became acquainted with a Negro family in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was back there for three months in connection with a newspaper assignment. I went to Church there and became acquainted with the family of a Negro man named Len Hope. Accidentally he had found some of our tracts when he lived down in Mississippi. He read them and became interested. He wrote to the mission headquarters for a Book of Mormon, and by his own study, converted himself. Later he met the Elders and joined the Church. Then he joined the army in the first World War. When he came back, having carried a Book of Mormon with him all through the war and studied it carefully he converted his Negro sweetheart whom he married and she was baptized. Then they moved up to Cincinnati to escape the "Jim Crow" law.

Up in Cincinnati, some of the members of the Church became extremely prejudiced against this Negro family. They met in a group, decided what to do and went to the Branch President, and said that either the Hope family must leave or they would all leave. The Branch President ruled that Brother Hope and his family could not come to Church meetings. It broke their hearts. But, the missionaries went out to the Hope home and there conducted Sunday School every Sunday, and served them the Sacrament.

I had the privilege of visiting with the Hope family. I was in their home. I saw how their song book had been literally worn out and likewise their Doctrine and Covenants and Book of Mormon. As soon as I got to my hotel that Sunday afternoon, I wrote home to my wife and had her send them a supply of books.

They were very faithful people. Brother Hope died just a little while ago. He was a man who was as thoroughly converted to the Gospel as any one I know. He was a full tithe payer all through the depression. He earned the most meager kind of living, but he never failed to pay his tithing. The Branch President showed me the tithing records, and all through the depression Brother Hope paid \$1.50 a week. It was a full tithing. Sometimes Brother Hope didn't even

have that, so he went into the hills and picked berries and sold them on the streets of Cincinnati to get enough money to pay that \$1.50 tithing.

And then Brother Hope told me, as a testimony, that in the Negro area of Cincinnati where he lived, during the depression he didn't know of one man who had a job. But he said, "I had a job. I paid my tithing and during that whole depression, I didn't lose one day's work. Sometimes I didn't make much money on that day, and I did have to go out into the hills and get berries, but I always had an income."

Brother Hope asked me if it would be possible for him to have baptisms for the dead done in the temple on behalf of members of his family who had passed on. I went to President Smith and he said, "Yes, you get their records and we will take them over to the temple and have the baptisms done for them." I did, and we performed vicarious baptisms for these Negroes. Only the baptisms and confirmations—nothing else, but we did that much. Again I thought of the great mercy of Almighty God, and how He is willing to lift people up if they do their part.

Well, what about the removal of the curse? We know what the Lord has said in the Book of Mormon in regard to the Lamanites—they shall become a White and a delightsome people. I know of no scripture having to do with the removal of the curse from the Negro. I think that we should not speculate too much about that. As long as the scriptures are silent on the subject, we should not try to determine on our own what the ultimate end of the Negro is going to be. I don't think we have a right to do that, do you? It is speculation.

We do have a few suggestions from the early brethren as to their own views, but I assume that these are their own private ideas—I don't know whether I am wrong in that, President Smith, but that has been my assumption—that when the brethren spoke about the removal of the curse from the Negro, they were expressing their own views. But there is no scripture on it, and therefore, I don't think any of us, as teachers of the gospel, should speculate on it.

You remember that Brigham Young has said, "Cain conversed with his God every day, and knew all about the plan of creating this earth, for his father told him. But for the want of humility and through jealousy and an anxiety to possess the kingdom and

to have the whole of it under his own control, and not allow anybody else the right to say one word, what did he do? He killed his brother. Then the Lord put a mark on him. When all of the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received the resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from his posterity. He deprived his brother the privilege of pursuing his journey through life, and of extending his kingdom by multiplying upon the earth, and because he did this, he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God."

President Woodruff added, "The Lord said, 'I will not kill Cain, but I will put a mark upon him, and that mark will be seen upon every face of every Negro upon the face of the earth. And it is the decree of God that mark shall remain upon the seed of Cain, until the seed of Abel shall be redeemed, and Cain shall not receive the Priesthood until the time of that redemption. Any man having one drop of the blood of Cain in him cannot receive the priesthood. But the day will come when all that race will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have.'"

I couldn't add to that because I don't know anything more than that, and I will leave it there. We should not go into the mysteries of what is going to happen to the Negro in the eternities far off, because the Lord has been silent on that subject.

Now what is our policy in regard to inter-marriage? As to the Negro, of course, there is only one possible answer. We must not intermarry with the Negro. Why? If I were to marry a Negro woman and have children by her, my children would all be cursed as to the priesthood. Do I want my children cursed as to the priesthood? If there is one drop of Negro blood in my children, as I have read to you, they receive the curse. There isn't any argument, therefore, as to inter-marriage with the Negro, is there? There are 50 million Negroes in the United States. If they were to achieve complete absorption with the white race, think what that would do. With 50 million negroes inter-married with us, where would the priesthood be? Who could hold it, in all America? Think what that would do to the work of the Church!

Now we are generous with the negro. We are willing that the Negro have the highest kind of education. I would be willing to let every Negro drive a cadillac if they could afford it. I would be willing that they have all the advantages they can get out of life in the world. But let them enjoy these things among themselves. I think the Lord segregated the Negro and who is man to change that segregation? It reminds me of the scripture on marriage, “what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Only here we have the reverse of the thing—what God hath separated, let not man bring together again.

What is our advice with respect to intermarriage with Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiians and so on? I will tell you what advice I give personally. If a boy or girl comes to me claiming to be in love with a Chinese or Japanese or a Hawaiian or a person of any other dark race, I do my best to talk them out of it. I tell them that I think that Hawaiians should marry Hawaiians, the Japanese ought to marry the Japanese, and the Chinese ought to marry Chinese, and the Caucasians should marry Caucasians, just exactly as I tell them that Latter-day Saints ought to marry Latter-day Saints. And I’m glad to quote the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy to them on that. I teach against inter-marriage of all kinds.

Curse of Cain?

Appendix C

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Apr. 10, 1963

Mr. Joseph H. Henderson
33 Corning Park
Webster, New York

Dear Sir:

I am very sorry that I offended you in my letter in regard to the status of the Negro. I had no intention whatever when writing to do so. The fact is that I have been asked so many times why the Negro cannot receive the Priesthood that I made the remark to you which I did. I humbly apologize.

Nevertheless it is only fair that I should give you some information from our view why the Negro is denied the Priesthood although he has the privilege of baptism, confirmation and membership in the church. According to the doctrine of the church, the Negro, because of some condition of unfaithfulness in the spirit--or pre-existence, was not valiant and hence was not denied the mortal probation, but was denied the blessing of the Priesthood. In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints he has the privilege of baptism, confirmation and membership along with everyone else, as far as this life is concerned.

I am aware of the fact that he can find membership and be given a place in the ministry in any of the so-called Christian churches. However these churches are not governed by revelation and they are without divine authority therefore they may honor the Negroes with any position they desire in their ministry. It is true that I said no other church can offer them more than we do. The reason for this statement is that no other church has the Divine Priesthood. That had to be restored and was given by heavenly messengers to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by the opening of the heavens and the coming of heavenly messengers with this authority which these messengers bestowed upon these two young men.

My statement is not contrary to the "original" writings of the church. It is true that elders of the church laid hands on a Negro and blessed him "apparently" with the Priesthood, but they could not give that which the Lord had denied. It is true that Elijah Abel was so "ordained." This was however before the matter had been submitted to the Prophet Joseph Smith. However for some reason this statement that Elijah Abel was so ordained

Mr. Joseph H. Henderson

April 10, 1963

Page 2

has traveled to the end of the earth. It was afterwards that the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that the Negro was not to be ordained. In the Book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price is a statement to the effect that the seed of Canaan were denied the Priesthood. In the book--The Way To Perfection, Chapters 15 and 16, I have recorded something about the Negro and the Priesthood. Now if the Lord declared to the Prophet Joseph Smith that for some reason the Negro was not to receive the Priesthood, then that is the end of the question.

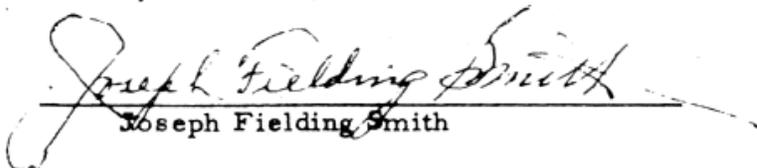
I am aware that the Catholic Church and most if not all of the Protestant churches receive the Negro into their ministry, but they have not had any revelation from the Lord to the contrary. Now I have stated and I repeat it, the Negro is, on his repentance and acceptance of the Gospel, entitled to be baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint. Moreover, I can also say after he is baptized, if he remains faithful and true, the time in the eternities, the restrictions will be removed.

Now I am not responsible for this restriction. According to the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham, the descendants of Cain were denied in the beginning. This is set forth in these records. Permit me to say that members of the church have no animosity or ill-will towards the Negro. I feel sorry for them. It is my duty and that of every other person to be kind and considerate of them. Moreover it is my belief that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offers more for the Negro than can any other religious organization, for all other religious organizations or churches are without divine authority. They do not have the Priesthood nor are they led by revelation.

Now I feel that I owe to you this communication and hope that you will receive it in the spirit in which it is intended. I am sorry I said I was "fed up," but this question has come to me very many times. Moreover it appears that every one every where has heard of Elijah Abel, but they do not know the rest of the story.

Humbly submitted,

JFS:re


Joseph Fielding Smith

Curse of Cain?

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
 THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
 47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
 SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

May 9, 1966

Morris L. Reynolds,
 311 Nichols Hall
 I.S.U.
 Pocatello, Idaho

Dear Sir:

This is in answer to your letter of no date, which reached me on my coming to the office this morning. I will endeavor to answer your questions, but permit me to give you a little good counsel. In the study of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, kindly confine your study to the Standard Works of the Church. They are The Bible, The Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price and The Doctrine and Covenants. It will be the part of wisdom if you will leave extraneous matters alone, and confine your study to the FOUR Standard Works of the Church. It is my judgment that you will do well to leave individual discourses alone and the statements of individuals.

The doctrine concerning Adam has been distorted. You may accept what has been given us by revelation, and I call your attention to the Doctrine and Covenants. In Section 29, verses 23 to 34, you will find some interesting information in relation to Adam. It is also true that Adam being the first man, will eventually preside over his posterity as outlined in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 107, verses 53 to 56, and in Section 78:15-16, which are as follows:

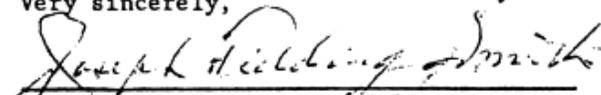
"Who hath appointed Michael (Adam) your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high, and given unto him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One (Jesus Christ) who is without beginning of day or end of life." (Verse 16.)

Yes! The Law of the Lord has been from the beginning that if a man committed murder, he was to pay the penalty by the shedding of his own blood. This is a divine law. (See Genesis 9:6.)

The descendants of Cain were barred from the blessings of the Priesthood. They may be baptized for the remission of their sins, but they cannot hold the Priesthood by divine decree, as pointed out in the Book of Abraham. It would be a serious error for a white person to marry a Negro, for the Lord forbade it.

Your fourth question, "Was Jesus a polygamist?" There is NO reference whatever to Jesus being married, in the New Testament. Will you accept some good counsel? Keep both of your feet on the solid ground. By that I mean keep within the teachings of the STANDARD WORKS. The Bible, Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price and the Doctrine and Covenants, then you will not be led astray.

Very sincerely,


 Joseph Fielding Smith

JFS:re

Appendix D

The following pages contain some of the LDS Temple Ordinance Records for prominent black activists Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm Little (Malcolm X), Frederick Douglass and David Walker.

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Ordinance Record

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Martin Luther King

Male

Event(s):

Birth: 15 JAN 1929 Atlanta, Campbell, Georgia
Christening:
Death: 04 APR 1968
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 05 NOV 1991 SLAKE
E **Endowment:** 14 NOV 1991 SLAKE
S **Sealing to Parents:** 17 NOV 1992 SLAKE
 Martin Luther King /

Parents:

Father: Martin Luther King Family

Messages:

Record submitted after 1991 by a member of the LDS Church to request LDS temple ordinances. No additional information is available. Ancestral File may list the same family and the submitter.

Source Information:

No source information is available

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Martin Luther King

Male

Event(s):

Birth: 15 JAN 1929 Atlanta, , , Georgia
Christening:
Death: 04 APR 1968
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 06 OCT 1992 PROVO
E **Endowment:** 10 OCT 1992 PROVO

Messages:

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Malcolm Little

Male

Event(s):

Birth: 19 MAY 1925 Omaha, Douglas, Nebraska
Christening:
Death: 21 FEB 1965
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 23 JAN 1993 PORTL

Messages:

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MALCOM LITTLE

Male

Event(s):

Birth: 1925 Omaha, Douglas, Nebraska
Christening:
Death: 1965
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 01 OCT 1991 JRIVE
E **Endowment:** 25 JAN 1992 JRIVE

Messages:

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FREDERICK DOUGLAS

Male

Event(s):

Birth: FEB 1817 Tuckahoe, , Talbot, Maryland
Christening:
Death: 20 FEB 1895
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 21 DEC 1991 SLAKE
E **Endowment:** 25 SEP 1992 SLAKE
S **Sealing to Parents:** 27 OCT 1992 SLAKE
 DOUGLAS / HARRIET BAILEY

Parents:

Father: DOUGLAS Family
Mother: HARRIET BAILEY

Messages:

Record submitted after 1991 by a member of the LDS Church to request LDS temple ordinances. No additional information is available. Ancestral File may list the same family and the submitter.

Source Information:

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FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Male

Event(s):

Birth: 1817 Tuckahoe, Caroline, Maryland
Christening:
Death: 20 FEB 1895
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 10 FEB 1995 PROVO
E **Endowment:** 07 APR 1995 PROVO

Messages:

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DAVID WALKER

Male

Event(s):

Birth: 1785 Wilmington, Brunswick, North Carolina
Christening:
Death: 1830
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 21 MAY 1991 JRIVE
E **Endowment:** 09 NOV 1991 JRIVE

Messages:

Form submitted to request LDS temple ordinances. The form lists the submitter's name and address and may include source information. The address may be outdated. Details vary. To find the form, you must know the batch and sheet number.

Source Information:

Batch Number: 9035591
Sheet: 05
Source Call No.: 1553918 **Type:** Film

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Ordinance Record

FamilySearch™ International Genealogical Index v5.0

North America

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David Walker

Male

Event(s):

Birth: 28 SEP 1785 Wilmington, , , North Carolina
Christening:
Death: 28 JUN 1830
Burial:

LDS Ordinances:

B **Baptism:** 10 SEP 1993 PROVO
E **Endowment:** 07 DEC 1993 PROVO

Messages:

Record submitted after 1991 by a member of the LDS Church to request LDS temple ordinances. No additional information is available. Ancestral File may list the same family and the submitter.

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