

# Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism

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## INTRODUCTION

IN ONE SENSE IT IS CURIOUS that there is such a thing as Mormon fundamentalism—only 168 years have passed since the religiously “burned-over district” of New York state gave birth to the Book of Mormon in 1830. Despite its youthfulness, Mormonism is to mainline Christianity what early Christianity was to Judaism—a separatist Judeo-Christian movement of extraordinary growth.<sup>1</sup> The principal organization of Mormonism is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints which has worldwide membership of more than 10 million people who look to Salt Lake City, Utah, with the reverence usually given to Rome, Jerusalem, and Mecca.

Because LDS membership has doubled every fifteen years or less since 1945, a non-LDS sociologist projects Mormonism will be a world religion of 265 million members within 90 years.<sup>2</sup> For more than a century the LDS church has dominated the Mountain West of America so completely that the area is known to geographers as “the Mormon cultural region.” Mormonism is the first or second largest church in nine western states, the fifth largest religious organization in America, and presently

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Note: This essay was first published in 1993, is copyrighted by the University of Chicago Press, appears here in slightly revised form with their permission, but does not update source notes or data on fundamentalists.

1. Whitney R. Cross coined the phrase in his *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950). For a penetrating analysis of Mormonism as a new world religion, see Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985). For general understanding of Mormon history and beliefs, see also Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Knopf, 1979).

2. Rodney Stark, “The Rise of a New World Faith,” *Review of Religious Research* 26 (Sept. 1984): 22. Five years later he found LDS membership growth actually ahead of his projection. Remarks of Stark at annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, Utah, 27 Oct. 1989.

fields 57,000 full-time proselytizing missionaries throughout the world.<sup>3</sup> This Mormon-dominated West is the home of Mormon fundamentalism, a twentieth-century response to changes in the LDS church that began with public abandonment of the practice of "plural marriage" (polygamy) by an 1890 "Manifesto" from the church president.

Which leads to the problem of offensive terms. Mormon fundamentalists have embraced the term "Fundamentalist,"<sup>4</sup> but generally dislike the word "polygamy." First, many regard it as the disbeliever's way of mocking their faith that God sanctions and commands that righteous men of a divine latter-day Covenant marry more than one wife. Second, some object that "polygamy" could also refer to multiple husbands, and therefore "polygyny" (more than one wife) is the only outsider's term that is accurate. Mormon fundamentalists refer to their practice of multiple marriage as the "the Principle," or "Celestial Marriage," or "the New and Everlasting Covenant," or "the Priesthood Work," or (most commonly) "plural marriage." Some even resent an outsider saying "the practice of plural marriage," because this sacred principle is not something they practice at! Outside anthropology, even most academics are unfamiliar with the term "polygyny," and this essay therefore uses the general term "polygamy" because it is universally understood to refer to the marriage of a man to more than one living wife at a time. I hope this study demonstrates there is no disrespect in my use of "polygamy" and "polygamist."

#### STEREOTYPES

Like other fundamentalist movements, Mormon fundamentalism

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3. D. W. Meinig, "The Mormon Cultural Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964," *American Geographers Association Annals* 55 (1965): 191-200; *Deseret News 1991-1992 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1990), 6; LDS church statistical report for 31 Dec. 1991; D. Michael Quinn, "Religion in the West," in *Under An Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, ed. William J. Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York: Norton, 1992); also D. Michael Quinn, "From Sacred Grove to Sacral Power Structure," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17 (Summer 1984): 9-34; "LDS 1997 Statistical Report," *Deseret News*, 5 Apr. 1998, A-13, for missionaries and members.

4. Mormon fundamentalists usually capitalize fundamentalism and fundamentalist when referring to themselves, but this essay will give this capitalization only in their quotes. "They are rightly called Mormon Fundamentalists, for they have not turned with [LDS] Church policy as the main body has, but have revered and upheld the founders." Louis J. Barlow's remarks on KSUB Radio, shortly after the Short Creek raid of 26 July 1953, copy in my possession; also Leroy S. Johnson's statement in 1977, "I was grateful when I heard that [LDS apostle] Mark E. Petersen branded us as 'FUNDAMENTALISTS.'" See Ken Driggs, "Fundamentalist Attitudes toward the Church: The Sermons of Leroy S. Johnson," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23 (Summer 1990): 51, and *The L. S. Johnson Sermons*, 6 vols. (Hildale, UT: Twin Cities Courier Press, 1983-84), 4:1491.

suffers from stereotypes fostered by the mainstream religious tradition and by the secular media. The most prevalent stereotype is that all adult Mormon fundamentalists are practicing polygamists, with the obligatory illustration of a bearded man surrounded by a bevy of young wives.<sup>5</sup> Another common image in the popular mind and media is of Mormon fundamentalist females currently wearing hair in long braids, dresses to the ankle, and long sleeved blouses buttoned to the neck.<sup>6</sup> Non-Mormons and mainstream Mormons often accept the view of the 1981 television drama *Child Bride of Short Creek* that a polygamist's teenage son may have to make a desperate escape to save his girlfriend from the matrimonial clutches of the young man's own father.<sup>7</sup> Like all stereotypes, these distort our understanding of a diverse and complex people.

The 1988 Charles Bronson movie *Messenger of Death* used those polygamy stereotypes in a kinder way, but then portrayed the more recent image of wild-eyed Mormon fundamentalists engaging in murder and gun battles over rival claims to authority. This perception of Mormon fundamentalists as sectarian murderers is only twenty years old, and is based on the acts of a handful of deranged individuals.<sup>8</sup> Even though the largest Mormon fundamentalist group at Colorado City, Arizona, prohibits possession of firearms "as a matter of religious faith," the equation of violence and fundamentalism is powerful enough to crop up in a 1987 scholarly examination of Mormon polygamous families.<sup>9</sup>

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5. Pierre LaForet, "Ce Mormon. Heureux. 'Regne' Sur Ses Quatre Femmes," *Le Figaro*, 16 Apr. 1988; Bella Stumbo, "No Tidy Stereotype. Polygamists: Tale of Two Families," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, Part I, 1; *Reason: Free Minds and Free Markets* 18 (Jan. 1987), photographs on the front page and table of contents page, as well as four illustrations in the same issue for Gerald M. King's article, "The Mormon Underground Fights Back," 23, 24, 26, 28, 29.

6. Example in *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 Mar. 1986, Sec. NV, p. 1.

7. *Sunstone Review* 2 (Jan.-Feb. 1982): 9. This was also a theme about nineteenth-century polygamy in Maurine Whipple's novel *Giant Joshua*, where a son failed to persuade his girlfriend against becoming his own father's plural wife. I watched *Child Bride of Short Creek* on late night television in mid-1991 in New Orleans, a decade after its original screening.

8. For the isolated, sensational murders that created this stereotype, see Ben Bradlee, Jr., and Dale Van Atta, *Prophet of Blood: The Untold Story of Ervil LeBaron and the Lambs of God* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1981), and Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 215-19. The film *Messenger of Death* was also televised more than once in 1990-91. Video store rentals will guarantee the continued circulation of its polygamy stereotypes, as well as those of *Child Bride of Short Creek*.

9. Ken Driggs, "After the Manifesto: Modern Polygamy and Fundamentalist Mormons," *Journal of Church and State* 32 (Spring 1990): 386; Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), xiii-xiv. Although there was also some non-fatal violence during 1990 involving the polygamist mayor of Big Water, Utah, the conflict involved a political and financial dispute within the community, not a dispute about polygamy or about fundamentalist claims. See Jerry Spangler, "Tidal wave of fury in tiny Big Water," *Deseret News*, 5 Sept. 1990.

## NUMBERS

Then there is the problem of counting Mormon fundamentalists. The LDS church, the news media, and fundamentalists themselves have not always been helpful in giving accurate estimates.

Part of the LDS church's campaign for acceptance by non-Mormons has been to grossly underestimate the number of Mormon polygamists, both before and after the 1890 "Manifesto" declared an end to polygamous marriages. Church leaders and members usually claim that nineteenth-century polygamous practice was no more than 2 or 3 percent of the Mormon population in Utah, when it was ten times that rate.<sup>10</sup> During a transitional period of fourteen years after the 1890 Manifesto, LDS leaders secretly authorized and performed about 250 new polygamous marriages, yet only acknowledged the occurrence of "a few," despite disclosures of the larger numbers by a muckraking press and a *three-year* investigation by the U.S. Senate.<sup>11</sup> After 1906 the LDS church's consistent battle against the performance of new polygamous marriages was char-

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10. Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review* 10 (Summer 1956): 229-39, reprinted in *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35 (Fall 1967); James E. Smith and Phillip R. Kunz, "Polygyny and Fertility in Nineteenth-Century America," *Population Studies* 30 (Sept. 1976): 465-80; Phillip R. Kunz, "One Wife or Several? A Comparative Study of Late Nineteenth Century Marriage in Utah," in Thomas G. Alexander, ed., *The Mormon People: Their Character and Traditions* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), 53-73; Dean May, "A Demographic Portrait of the Mormons, 1830-1980," in D. Michael Quinn, ed., *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Mormon Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992); Larry Logue, "A Time of Marriage: Monogamy and Polygamy in a Utah Town," *Journal of Mormon History* 11 (1984): 3-26; Lowell "Ben" Bennion, "The Incidence of Mormon Polygamy in 1880: 'Dixie' versus Davis Stake," *Journal of Mormon History* 11 (1984): 27-42; Logue, *Sermon in the Desert: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, Utah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 44-71.

11. Congress, U.S. Senate, *Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator from the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-1907); H. Grant Ivins, *Polygamy in Mexico as Practiced by the Mormon Church, 1895-1905* (1970; Salt Lake City: Collier's Press, 1981); Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Beyond the Manifesto: Polygamous Cohabitation Among LDS General Authorities After 1890," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Winter 1978): 24-36; Victor W. Jorgensen and B. Carmon Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48 (Winter 1980): 4-36; Kenneth L. Cannon II, "After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy, 1890-1906," *Sunstone* 8 (Jan.-Apr. 1983): 27-35; D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985): 9-105; Jessie L. Embry, "Exiles for the Principle: LDS Polygamy in Canada," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Fall 1985): 108-116; Fred C. Collier and Knut Knutson, eds., *The Trials of Apostle John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1987); Jessie L. Embry, "Two Legal Wives: Mormon Polygamy in Canada, the United States and Mexico," and B. Carmon Hardy, "Mormon Polygamy in Mexico and Canada: A Legal and Historiographical Review," in Brigham Y. Card et al., eds., *The Mormon Presence in Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1990).

acterized by similar distortion. LDS leaders publicly dismissed renegade plural marriages as few in numbers, whereas privately they exhibited a paranoia that new polygamous marriages were spreading like wildfire.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the news media and some fundamentalists have joined in grossly inflating the numbers of twentieth-century Mormon polygamists. To embarrass the LDS church, as well as sell newspapers, early in this century the *Salt Lake Tribune* made the sensational claim that there were "thousands" of new polygamous marriages after the 1890 Manifesto.<sup>13</sup> In like manner the fundamentalist publication *Truth* later claimed that about 2,200 men entered polygamy after the 1890 prohibition "through the blessings of the Authorities of the Church [i.e., to 1904]."<sup>14</sup> This was ten times higher than the actual numbers.<sup>15</sup>

In recent years promotional exaggeration has merged with the perceptions of outsiders. In 1974 one fundamentalist wrote that "no less than 50,000 individuals are personally involved in the living of this law today."<sup>16</sup> That figure is still easy to dismiss as inflated, yet law enforcement officials were soon stunned at the extent of polygamous practice in Utah. Solving the murder of fundamentalist leader Rulon C. Allred in 1977 required close cooperation with fundamentalists of various persuasions who gladly distanced themselves from the aberrant fundamentalists who committed the murder. The Utah attorney general said he was "astounded at the scope of the practice of polygamy" which involved tens of thousands. The Salt Lake County Attorney said: "I think that the immensity of the numbers of people right there in Salt Lake County that were practicing polygamy really did shock me. I didn't think that there were that many people that were committed to the Fundamentalist ideas and actually actively practicing the Fundamentalist theories."<sup>17</sup>

By the late 1980s, it was customary to claim a minimum of 30,000 people living in polygamy. For example, a 1986 study of three suburban

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12. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 195-98; D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1983), 183-85.

13. For example, *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 Aug. 1909, 4.

14. *Truth* 15 (Oct. 1949): 133-134. Mormon fundamentalists, like LDS members, capitalize "Church" when referring to the LDS church. In another example of this exaggeration, the fundamentalist periodical claimed that Anthony W. Ivins performed more than 400 polygamous marriages in Mexico from 1895 to 1904, when in fact he performed 43 verified plural marriages. *Truth* 5 (Apr. 1940): 246; compare Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," 80n281.

15. See n11.

16. Dennis R. Short, *Questions on Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: By the Author, 1974), 94. *Newsweek*, 19 May 1975, also estimated a total of 35,000 people living in polygamy, which this study regards as too high an estimate even now, and certainly an inflated figure then.

17. Paul Van Dam, Utah State Attorney General, interview by Ken Verdoia on 6 Dec. 1989; David Yocum, Salt Lake County Attorney, who prosecuted Ervil LeBaron in 1980, interview by Ken Verdoia on 7 Dec. 1989. Copies in my possession.

polygamist families began by claiming "30,000 people living in polygamous families in Utah today," and the *Salt Lake Tribune* in 1988 reported the estimate of a geographer at Utah State University that "30,000 to 40,000 people could be practicing polygamy in the West from southern Canada to northern Mexico. He estimated that 20,000 to 30,000 of those live in Utah alone." During that same year the *Los Angeles Times* cited an estimate of 60,000 polygamists.<sup>18</sup> In 1989 *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* article on polygamous Mormon groups estimated "approximately 30,000 polygamists," and the *New York Times* claimed 50,000 people living in polygamous households as of 1991.<sup>19</sup> Fundamentalist publisher Ogden Kraut publicly stated in 1989 that "there are probably at least 30,000 people who consider themselves as Fundamentalist Mormons, espousing at least the belief in the doctrine of plural marriage."<sup>20</sup> Although he kept the 30,000 figure of earlier claims, this was actually a major reduction in the estimated number of polygamists because Kraut included people who merely believe in plural marriage.

That figure is still a third too high. Even after accepting higher-end estimates on a group-by-group basis, this study finds about 21,000 men, women, and children are Mormon fundamentalists from northern Mexico through the far western United States into southern Canada. These numbers do not include members of the LDS church who accept fundamentalist doctrines without giving allegiance to the movement. In one interview Ogden Kraut observed that there are "professors of religion that I'm acquainted with who believe all the doctrines of Fundamentalism, and yet they're teaching at BYU, seminaries, and institutes" of the LDS church. He added in another interview that these fundamentalist sympathizers include "high councilmen, bishops, and in some cases stake [diocese] presidents."<sup>21</sup> That may be so, but this study restricts the scope of Mormon fundamentalism to those who demonstrate actual commit-

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18. Carolyn Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," *Utah Holiday*, May 1986, 36; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 Apr. 1988, B-2. See also King, "The Mormon Underground Fights Back," 22; *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, Part I, 24.

19. J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 3rd ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1989), 579; Dirk Johnson, "Polygamists Emerge From Secrecy, Seeking Not Just Peace but Respect," *New York Times*, 9 Apr. 1991, A-22.

20. Ogden Kraut, "The Fundamentalist Mormon: A History and Doctrinal Review," paper presented to the Sunstone Theological Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, Aug. 1989, published by Kraut as *The Fundamentalist Mormon*, 23. In 1986 Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, iii-iv, also estimated "30,000 Fundamentalists."

21. My interview with Kraut on 26 July 1989; Kraut interview by Ken Verdoia on 17 Dec. 1989, copy in my possession. After I arrived at this 21,000 figure, I read the estimate of "twenty thousand or more adherents," in Driggs, "After the Manifesto," 388.

ment.<sup>22</sup> Contrary to common wisdom, *many of these committed fundamentalists are living in monogamous relationships, and about three-fourths of Mormon fundamentalists today have never been members of the LDS church.*

#### THE MORMON MAINSTREAM AND PLURAL MARRIAGE

If living polygamy is not necessary to be a Mormon fundamentalist, how are they different from the currently non-polygamist Mormon mainstream? That definition requires some discussion of Mormon theology, practice, and history.

Even basic theology evolved during the fourteen-year leadership of Mormon founder Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-44), but the single most important characteristic of Mormonism has been its claim to the Old Testament tradition of prophetic leadership within an apostolic church of Christ. The LDS church claimed to have living apostles like those of the New Testament, but more important was the church president's claim to be a prophet like Moses—able (if called upon by God) to challenge the authority of any secular pharaoh, to reveal new commandments, to announce new words of God as revelation and scripture, to hold priesthood that bridged the authority of Old and New Testaments, and to lead God's people as a self-sustaining, theocratic community. In fact, it was this reinvoking of Old Testament norms within a Christian context that almost immediately alienated Mormonism from traditional Christianity and Protestant-dominated American society.<sup>23</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century Mormonism became "Uncle Sam's abscess," as one book title put it. Using biblical references to a pre-millennial "restoration of all things," Joseph Smith restored in practice (sometimes secretly) Old Testament forms, and Brigham Young institutionalized them after the founding prophet's murder by a mob in 1844. Polygamy was the most sensational, but equally disturbing to outsiders were Mormon migration to a central place, political hegemony, theocratic ideals and practices, economic cooperation and communalism, anti-pluralism, and speculative theology that included doctrines that Adam was

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22. For that reason, this definition does not include a Mormon schism called the Order of Aaron, the Aaronic Order, or Levites. Its founder, Maurice Glendinning, officially condemned plural marriage shortly after the group's organization in 1942, even though (or perhaps because) about 20 percent of his early followers believed in continued polygamy. This group defines itself as separate from Mormon fundamentalism. Hans A. Baer, *Recreating Utopia in the Desert: A Sectarian Challenge to Modern Mormonism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), x, 61-63.

23. For a discussion of these issues from different perspectives, see Mario S. DePillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Spring 1966): 68-88; Shipps, *Mormonism*; and Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

God, that Christ was married, and that both God and Christ were polygamists.<sup>24</sup> These were flash points in the conflict between Mormonism and American society, and from 1862 to 1890 the federal government waged a campaign to attack Mormonism through anti-polygamy legislation (which was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1879 and 1890). Polygamy was the easiest weapon for nineteenth-century anti-Mormons to use in attacking everything else they abhorred about Mormonism.<sup>25</sup>

As the government increased its anti-polygamy crusade, Mormon leaders defensively countered that the abandonment of plural marriage was theologically impossible. Jan Shipps, the pre-eminent non-Mormon interpreter of the Mormon experience, has observed that because polygamy alienated Mormons from mainstream America for decades, "the practice of plural marriage gave the Latter-day Saints time to gain an ethnocultural identity that did not entirely rest on corporate [church membership] peculiarity."<sup>26</sup> Mormon leaders gave many rationales for

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24. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 3-69; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Klaus J. Hansen, "The Political Kingdom of God as a Cause for Mormon-Gentile Conflict," *BYU Studies* 2 (Spring-Summer 1960): 241-260; D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *BYU Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 163-197; Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976); Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988); Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830-1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 4-5, 53-54, 64-73, 218-26; David John Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Spring 1982): 14-58; *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 1:345-46, 2:82, 210, 3:365, 4:259, 11: 328. An excellent one-volume compendium of Mormon fundamentalist doctrine is Robert R. Openshaw, *The Notes* (Pinesdale, MT: Bitterroot Publishing Co., 1980).

25. Orma Linford, "The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases," *Utah Law Review* 9 (Winter 1964/Summer 1965): 308-70, 543-91; Gustive O. Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1970); Joseph H. Groberg, "The Mormon Disfranchisements of 1882 to 1892," *BYU Studies* 16 (Spring 1976): 399-408; Richard L. Jensen and JoAnn W. Bair, "Prosecution of the Mormons in Arizona Territory in the 1880s," *Arizona and the West* 19 (Spring 1977): 25-46; Kimberly Jensen James, "'Between Two Fires': Women on the 'Underground' of Mormon Polygamy," *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981): 49-61; Martha Sonntag Bradley, "Hide and Seek: Children on the Underground," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 51 (Spring 1983): 133-53; Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 145; Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 2, 23; Ken Driggs, "The Mormon Church-State Confrontation in Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of Church and State* 30 (Spring 1988): 273-89; Ken Driggs, "The Prosecutions Begin: Defining Cohabitation in 1885," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Spring 1988): 109-121; Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Carol Cornwall Madsen, "At Their Peril: Utah Law and the Case of Plural Wives, 1850-1900," *Western Historical Quarterly* 21 (Nov. 1990): 425-43.

26. Jan Shipps, "The Principle Revoked: A Closer Look at the Demise of Plural Marriage," *Journal of Mormon History* 11 (1984): 67.



practicing polygamy (including its role in producing a larger number of righteous children), but always subordinated those explanations to the affirmation that revelations of God required the Latter-day Saints to live this "Holy Principle." A frequent advocate of that theme was Apostle Wilford Woodruff who sermonized on one occasion that if Mormons gave up polygamy, "then we must do away with prophets and Apostles." He told the Mormons a decade later, "Were we to compromise this principle by saying, we will renounce it, we would then have to renounce our belief in revelation from God."<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, because of the LDS church's official defiance of federal anti-polygamy laws since 1862, its very existence hung in the balance by the summer of 1890. To survive, the church either abandoned or redefined all of these radicalisms, beginning with polygamy. Wilford Woodruff himself, as recently sustained LDS church president, announced the "Manifesto" in September 1890 to end the practice of plural marriage.<sup>28</sup>

#### FUNDAMENTALIST ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS

During a forty-year transition after 1890, many LDS church members looked wistfully back at Mormonism's old time religion. The reasons were larger than polygamy, for as a Brigham Young University historian observed: "The political, social, religious, and economic world [of Mormonism] that emerged after the Manifesto of September 1890 was vastly different from the one that had existed before."<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, only a few Mormons concluded that the church had corrupted itself in the process of accommodating to American society. Those who regarded these beliefs and practices as non-negotiable merely had to read the pre-1890 published statements of the church leader who issued the 1890 Manifesto. These Latter-day Saints regarded pre-1890 Mormonism as pristine, and defined the post-Manifesto church as compromised in theology and authority. By the 1930s Mormonism's fundamentalist movement resulted

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27. *Journal of Discourses*, 13:166, 22:147-48. A massive collection of doctrinal statements and historical events concerning Mormon polygamy appears in Gilbert A. Fulton, Jr. [pseud.], *The Most Holy Principle*, 4 vols. (Murray, UT: Gems Publishing Co., 1970-75).

28. Lyman, *Political Deliverance*; Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), esp. 60-73; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," 9-50; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Coming of the Manifesto," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5 (Autumn 1975): 11-25; Thomas G. Alexander, "The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto of 1890," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 169-206.

29. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Manifesto: Mormonism's Watershed," *This People* 11 (Fall 1990): 23. Jan Shipps had earlier referred to the Manifesto as "a disconfirming event that profoundly altered the character of Mormonism," in her "In the Presence of the Past: Continuity and Change in Twentieth-Century Mormonism," in Alexander and Embry, *After 150 Years*, 24.

from those perceptions.<sup>30</sup>

Being a Mormon fundamentalist involves three essentials. First, a conviction that the LDS church is “out of order”—in other words, has strayed off its divinely instituted path by abandoning or changing various practices and beliefs. Second, a conviction that plural marriage is a divine revelation and commandment that should be practiced today by those who are willing and worthy. Third, an acceptance of priesthood authority and officiators not sanctioned by the LDS church. These are the three pillars of Mormon fundamentalism.<sup>31</sup>

But nearly all fundamentalists retained the essential Mormon views of prophetic leadership and authority, and could not simply advocate as a matter of conscience the return to practices and beliefs abandoned by the LDS church. Thus they needed a claim of authority that could counter the fact LDS president Heber J. Grant (as acknowledged prophet, seer, and revelator in the 1920s) was leading a full-scale retreat from the radical past.

Plural marriage was the central issue of the LDS church’s accommodation, and by necessity was also the foundation of the fundamentalist claim to authority beyond that of the changing church. According to excommunicant Lorin C. Woolley, the main fundamentalist exponent in the 1920s, the president of the church who was living in 1886 (John Taylor) conferred special priesthood authority upon Woolley and others to continue performing plural marriages even if the church abandoned “the Principle.” As the last survivor of those men, Lorin Woolley in 1929 conferred that apostleship upon others, a “Council of Friends” or “Priesthood Council” (most of whom had already been excommunicated from the LDS church). Among Woolley’s council were John Y. Barlow, Joseph W. Musser, and Louis A. Kelsch, Jr., who will be discussed later. More than 90 percent of fundamentalists center their authority on Lorin Wool-

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30. This transition is briefly discussed in Alexander’s *Mormonism in Transition* and in Van Wagoner’s *Mormon Polygamy*, but deserves more detailed study of how Mormon fundamentalism really developed and why it was shunned by most who secretly entered new plural marriages from 1890 to 1907 with church authority. See also Ken Driggs, “After the Manifesto: Modern Polygamy and Fundamentalist Mormons,” *Journal of Church and State* 32 (Spring 1990): 367-89; Driggs, “Twentieth-Century Polygamy and Fundamentalist Mormons in Southern Utah,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24 (Winter 1991): 44-58; Martha Sonntag Bradley, “Joseph W. Musser: Dissenter or Fearless Crusader of Truth?” in Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher, eds., *Differing Visions: Biographical Essays on Mormon Dissenters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

31. Kraut’s *Fundamentalist Mormon*, 9-20, discusses the following “Doctrinal Differences”: 1. Plural marriage, 2. Missionary work, 3. Office and Calling of the Seventy, 4. Priesthood Confirmation and Ordinations, 5. Gathering of Israel, 6. United Order, 7. Adam/God, 8. Persecution and world friendship, 9. One Mighty and Strong, 10. Zion, 11. Blacks and the Priesthood, 12. Kingdom of God. In his original talk, Number 11 was Gifts of the Spirit.

ley's Council of Friends.<sup>32</sup> The fundamentalists who do not trace their authority through Lorin Woolley either claim the charismatic authority of a vision or trace their "patriarchal priesthood" in some way to Joseph Smith.

The easiest division among Mormon fundamentalists to understand is the split between "groups" and "independents." About 90 percent of fundamentalists belong to organized groups. This study identified their numbers after inquiries on a group-by-group basis. Each has a history and character which also need at least some discussion. Even though American society and the LDS church gave Mormon fundamentalists every reason to distrust outsiders, the contours of Mormon fundamentalism are gradually coming into focus for the outside world because fundamentalists are more willing to talk with the media and academics.<sup>33</sup>

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32. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 190-98; Joseph W. Musser autobiography, "Patriarchal," 4, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City; Musser diary, 22 Apr., 14 June, 7 Aug. 1922, 14 May 1929, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS archives); *Truth* 1 (Jan. 1937): 117-20; Jerold A. Hilton, "Polygamy in Utah and Surrounding Area Since the Manifesto of 1890," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1965, 31; Lynn L. Bishop and Steven L. Bishop, *The Keys of the Priesthood Illustrated* (Draper, UT: Review and Preview Publishers, 1971); Kraut, *Fundamentalist Mormon*, 1-4. Dean C. Jessee, "A Comparative Study and Evaluation of the Latter-day Saint and 'Fundamentalist' Views Pertaining to the Practice of Plural Marriage," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959, was restricted by BYU for several years due to Jessee's relatively even-handed presentation. Paul E. Reimann, *Plural Marriage, Limited* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co., 1974), seeks to refute Lorin Woolley's claims in a legalistic analysis that is flawed by Reimann's historically inaccurate understanding of post-Manifesto polygamy. J. Max Anderson's relentlessly historical analysis of Lorin Woolley's claims is *Polygamy Story: Fiction and Fact* (Salt Lake City: Publisher's Press, 1979), which was reviewed by Fred C. Collier, "Tantering Fundamentalism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Summer 1980): 130-32, and expanded in his *Re-Examining the Lorin Woolley Story* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1981).

33. As an outsider, I find some fundamentalists express suspicion and unwillingness to talk, but many have been patient with my ignorance and curiosity, and have been candid about their experiences. The mayor of the polygamist commune of Colorado City, Arizona, has provided interviews to more than a hundred reporters. In addition, fundamentalists of various factions have recently invited to their polygamous households such diverse outsiders as a Jewish psychologist and anthropologist, a feminist historian, an LDS legal historian, newspaper reporters from the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Le Figaro*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and television crews from local news stations, the University of Utah's public station, the nationally syndicated *Current Affair*, and Italian television. Mormon polygamists have also appeared on nationally televised talk shows of Phil Donahue, Oprah Winfrey, and Sally Jessy Raphael. For example, *Le Figaro*, 16 Apr. 1988; *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, 24-25; Dan Njegomir, "Border Towns Embrace Polygamy," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 11 Dec. 1988, 1; Kathryn Casey, "An American Harem," *Ladies' Home Journal*, Feb. 1990, 117ff; Dirk Johnson, "Polygamists Emerge From Secrecy, Seeking Not Just Peace but Respect," *New York Times*, 9 Apr. 1991, A-22. Ken Verdoia (senior producer of KUED-TV in Salt Lake City) to D. Michael Quinn, 16 Oct. 1989; my interview with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 27 Oct. 1989 about her fieldwork in Colorado City, Arizona; Dan Barlow (mayor of Colorado City) interview by Ken Verdoia on 27 Nov. 1989, copy in my possession; Irwin Altman (of the University of Utah's psychology department) to D. Michael Quinn, 1 Mar. 1990, concerning his Mormon fundamentalist fieldwork with Israeli anthropologist Joseph Ginat; Ken Driggs (of University of Wisconsin's Law School) to D. Michael Quinn, 14 Mar. 1990; my telephone interview with Leslie Fagen, reporter for television's *Current Affair*, on 29 Mar. 1990.

## THE GROUPS: FUNDAMENTALIST CHURCH (COLORADO CITY)

The small town of Short Creek (now Colorado City), Arizona, is the centerpiece of the largest fundamentalist group. The town was also the focus of an unprecedented effort by American law enforcement to destroy a peaceful community, eradicate family relationships, and scatter a people to the winds. Its only American parallel is the federal actions against Native Americans in the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

For thirty years after Leroy S. Johnson and other polygamists settled at Short Creek in the late 1920s, the community was the target of outside repression. First, the LDS church conducted wholesale excommunications of Short Creek residents in 1935, the same year the church's behind-the-scenes encouragement resulted in a Utah law defining unlawful cohabitation as a felony. This law exceeded the repressiveness of the Victorian federal government which defined polygamous cohabitation as a misdemeanor. Later that same year Arizona convicted two "Short Creekers" of polygamy, one of them Johnson's brother. After more attempted prosecutions of town residents in 1939, law enforcement bided its time until 1944, when federal and local officers conducted early morning arrests of fifty people from Arizona and Utah. This resulted in the imprisonment of more than twenty men, including Short Creek's leader John Y. Barlow. An original member of Woolley's Priesthood Council, he was now senior president. Barlow lived only a few years after his release, and was spared the sight of Arizona police and the national guard making a pre-dawn raid on Short Creek in 1953 to arrest its entire population.<sup>35</sup>

It is difficult to overstate the trauma of the 1953 Short Creek raid on family life of its 400 residents. Arizona's governor "said that they intended to put the men in prison, put the women in detention homes, take our children and adopt them out and destroy the records so that no stigma would ever be on our children, and take our lands and use them to pay for the costs of the raid."<sup>36</sup> Arresting officers segregated the older teenage boys, told them to scatter wherever they chose (even though legal minors), and then left the unattended youths in a town of empty

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34. Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 241, 247, 248; Jack Norton, *When Our Worlds Cried: Genocide in Northwestern California* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1979); Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The American Indian: Prehistory to the Present* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co., 1980), 229.

35. Elizabeth M. Lauritzen, comp., *Hidden Flowers: The Life, Letters and Poetry of Jacob Marinus Lauritzen and His Wife Annie Pratt Lauritzen* (Brigham City, UT: Bradbury Print, 1982), 101-105; Ken Driggs, "After the Manifesto," 367-69, 378-84; Driggs, "Twentieth-Century Polygamy and Fundamentalist Mormons in Southern Utah," 44-58; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 195-205, and my interview with Sam S. Barlow on 30 Jan. 1990. For the church's quiet encouragement of legal prosecution of fundamentalists, see Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark*, 184-86.

36. Dan Barlow, mayor of Colorado City, interview by Ken Verdoia.

houses that had been ransacked without search warrants for evidence. Leroy Johnson eventually sought out and relocated nearly all of these dispossessed youths back to the community.<sup>37</sup>

Polygamous mothers and their young children were a special target of Arizona and Utah officials in the 1953 raid and its aftermath. Arizona made the children wards of the state and placed them in foster homes.<sup>38</sup> Utah authorities sought to complete the pincer assault on Short Creek and Mormon fundamentalists by defining polygamist children as neglected and abused children, and sending police cars to take them from polygamous parents. The LDS church's newspaper applauded that action, and encouraged government seizure of every polygamist child who could be found. It was two years before 161 young children were allowed to return to their mothers and fathers at Short Creek, and polygamists elsewhere hid their children and lived in dread of having them "taken" on any pretext.<sup>39</sup>

Although the shocks of 1953 reverberated among polygamists of every persuasion, the raid encouraged understandable clannishness in the people of Short Creek (now incorporated as Colorado City, Arizona, and its cross-border "twin city" of Hildale, Utah). In 1977 its Priesthood Council president Leroy Johnson cataloged the collective memory and heritage that bind his group together: "I have been through the '34 raid, raid of '41, when they had Uncle Rich and Uncle Fred arrested, the raid of '44, and the raid of '53. We are still fighting for our liberty." Colorado City's mayor comments, "When people are under persecution from the outside, they always stick tight. They always hold way better together."<sup>40</sup> Often called Short Creekers no matter where they live, this group's economic

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37. My interview with Sam S. Barlow.

38. An "outsider" historian of the Short Creek raid describes a young plural wife who delivered while in detention, and, at the moment of birth, Arizona authorities "took the baby away from her and wouldn't let her see it for a week." Martha Sonntag Bradley interview by Ken Verdoia on 5 Dec. 1989, copy in my possession. Also, Bradley's "The Women of Fundamentalism: Short Creek, 1953," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23 (Summer 1990): 23-31, her "'We Remembered Zion': The 1953 Raid on the Polygamous Community of Short Creek," paper at Western History Association on 20 Oct. 1990, and her *Kidnapped From That Land: The Government Raids on the Polygamists of Short Creek* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993).

39. Previous note; Driggs, "After the Manifesto," 384-85; my interview with Sam S. Barlow; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 201-205. Utah's test case was Vera Black and her children. See their interview by Ken Verdoia on 28 Nov. 1989, copy in my possession; Maureen Barlow interview by Ken Verdoia on 5 Dec. 1989, copy in my possession; Mabel Allred interview by Katherine Lundell on 6 Jan. 1990, copy in my possession; my interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch on 20 Jan. 1990; Dorothy Allred Solomon, *In My Father's House* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 82, 125-26; Ken Driggs, "Who Shall Raise the Children?: Vera Black and the Rights of Polygamous Utah Parents," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 60 (Winter 1992): 27-46.

40. Leroy S. Johnson sermon at Colorado City on 6 Mar. 1977, *L. S. Johnson Sermons*, 4:1352; Dan Barlow interview by Ken Verdoia.

co-operative was incorporated as the United Effort Plan in 1942. Incorporated by Johnson's successor Rulon Jeffs, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is also called the Johnson-Jeffs group.<sup>41</sup>

The Colorado City group has grown in numbers and geographic distribution since the attempted destruction of its small community in 1953. Born as a polygamous child in 1958 and raised in the group's Salt Lake Valley community, one woman observes, "The Johnson group is very low profile," and therefore difficult to count.<sup>42</sup> Recent court documents list 4,600 beneficiaries of the United Effort Plan in Colorado City-Hildale, which corresponds to the population reported for the school board. The Colorado City group has its only foreign settlement in the farming community of Lister, Canada (near Creston, British Columbia). One Colorado City leader says that 500-600 persons in Lister are fundamentalists, and some also live in Creston. Inside sources agree on an estimate of 2,000 Johnson group members in the Salt Lake Valley. There are also multiple-family dwellings of group members in Cedar City and Manti, Utah, and scattered families and individuals elsewhere, which probably add no more than 400 men, women, and children. This adds to a total of about 7,600 people in the Johnson-Jeffs group.<sup>43</sup>

These numbers include a recent split (amounting to 20 percent of the total) originally led by Marion Hammon and Alma Timpson from the

41. In common Utah pronunciation, it is Short "Crick" and Short "Crickers." Ken Driggs, "Fundamentalist Attitudes toward the Church," 51, quotes a sermon by Leroy Johnson that their group was "the Fundamentalist group of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." However, after President Johnson's death in 1986, the leaders of the group adopted the unincorporated title of "Fundamentalist Church," as indicated in my interview with Sam S. Barlow, and in Louis J. Barlow, Director of Colorado City Seminary Program of the Fundamentalist Church, interview by Ken Verdoia, 27 Nov. 1989, copy in my possession. The Colorado City group legally incorporated on 6 February 1991 as a religious corporate sole, "The Corporation of the President of The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" in Utah (#149,512).

42. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley on 28 Jan. 1990.

43. "United Effort Plan's Supplemented Response [as of 27 Nov. 1989] to Order of Court dated July 28, 1989," in Case 87-C-1022J, Roger E. Williams et al. vs. United Effort Plan et al., United States Court for the District of Utah; my telephone interview with Jeff Swinton on 14 Apr. 1990; telephone interview with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 27 Oct. 1989; Caroline Dewegeli Daley interview; Sam S. Barlow interview; Lister's population was 586 in the 1986 Canadian census, according to my telephone interview on 17 April 1990 with Mr. McRae, manager of Population and Social Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations, Province of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. In my telephone interview on 18 April 1990 with a former member of the group in Lister, Aloha Boehmer says a couple of the Colorado City group's families live nearer Creston and a couple of families are in Cardston. She estimates a lower population for Lister and for the group there than reported by sources in the Canadian government and in Colorado City, whose higher estimates are used here. After arriving at the 7,600 total, I learned in a telephone interview with Ken Verdoia on 26 April 1990 that Colorado City's seminary program director Alvin Barlow estimates the group has "close to eight thousand total members."

Priesthood Council at Colorado City. This split has divided families in the tightly-knit community, but is permanent because both groups have filled vacancies in their respective priesthood councils. The Hammon-Timpson group (also called "The Second Ward") often lives in co-residence with the main body of Short Creekers, and is difficult to segregate in such statistics as beneficiaries of the United Effort Plan and in Colorado City's school board records of community population. The split has resulted in on-going lawsuits between the two groups.<sup>44</sup>

#### THE GROUPS: APOSTOLIC UNITED BRETHERN

Of comparable size is the Allred group ("Apostolic United Brethren"). After a stroke, Joseph W. Musser (a member of Lorin Woolley's Priesthood Council and at this time its president) put his physician Rulon C. Allred into the council in 1951, which its other members resisted. In January 1952 the Short Creek members of the council repudiated Allred's position, which split the movement into two groups, each with a rival Council of Friends. This schism has always been peaceful, but it divided families. For example, Rulon Allred had brothers-in-law among the Barlows in Short Creek. Allred's group tended to be urban-oriented and more easy-going than the Johnson group with its population primarily centered in an isolated commune. Allred and other Salt Lake men had spent seven months in jail in 1945, and he and his families frequently moved out of state in the 1950s to avoid arrest. Still, the Allred group did not directly experience Short Creek's sense of trauma until 1977. In that year Rulon Allred was murdered and became a martyr for his people, as Short Creekers of 1953 are for the Johnson group. His funeral attendance was the largest ever in Utah up to that time.<sup>45</sup>

The Allred group (Apostolic United Brethren) has about 7,200 total members. In 1989 its current presiding elder Owen Allred reported 700 adults in the Salt Lake Valley, 200 adults in Cedar City, Utah, 500 adults in its commune at Pinesdale, Montana, as well as 300 Mexican fundamentalists in Ozumba, D.F., Mexico, and scattered families in England, Germany, and the Netherlands.<sup>46</sup> The figures were not provided for the

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44. In my telephone interview on 28 Jan. 1990 with the attorney for the Hammon-Timpson group, Jeff Swinton said that about 20 percent of former Johnson group members from Arizona to Canada have joined the so-called "Second Ward" which has 150-200 male heads of household. Although most members of the Hammon-Timpson group live at Colorado City-Hildale, in 1986 the "Second Ward" also founded a small residential division of Centennial Park, less than a mile from Colorado City, during the centennial of the 1886 revelation.

45. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 196-98, 207, 210, 215-16; Lyle O. Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness of Times," M.S., Brigham Young University, 1963, 61-62; Lynn L. Bishop and Steven L. Bishop, *The Truth About John W. Woolley, Lorin C. Woolley and The Council of Friends* (Draper, UT: By the Authors, 1972), 33-37; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 12, 27-29, 47-48, 70-100, 310.

46. My interview with Owen Allred on 29 July 1989; my interview with Roy Potter on 26 July 1989.

total number of children in the Allred group, but it is safe to assume that three-fourths of these 1,700 adults are married, and of that number more than half are women with children. Interviews and other sources indicate that it is reasonable to expect these women to have an average of seven children. This yields an estimated 5,500 children, or a total of approximately 7,200 members in the Allred group.

#### THE GROUPS: CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN

Next in size, but by less than one-fourth, is the combined total of various LeBaron churches. These organized Mormon fundamentalists bypass Lorin C. Woolley's Council of Friends. Instead, the LeBaron churches claim authority through a patriarchal priesthood conferred from Joseph Smith to his polygamous brother-in-law Benjamin F. Johnson to his grandson Alma Dayer LeBaron and through one of Dayer's sons. Still, from the 1920s to 1955, Dayer, most of his children, and some other LeBaron relatives had been entering into plural marriages performed by Joseph W. Musser and Rulon C. Allred whose authority derived from Lorin C. Woolley. Until 1955 most of the LeBaron family did not discuss the significance of the family's blessings, and instead divided their loyalties among the LDS church, the Allred group, and two LeBaron brothers who had unsuccessfully claimed for twenty years to be the prophetic "One Mighty and Strong" of Mormonism.

When Joel F. LeBaron suddenly incorporated the Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness of Times in 1955, his brother Verlan (before converting) was "convinced that we had another false prophet loose in the family." However, most of Joel's immediate family converted after the formal organization of the Church of the Firstborn on 3 April 1956. Joel was "First Grand Head," even though he was a monogamist at the time, in temporary violation of the traditional Mormon fundamentalist requirement of polygamy for leadership. He turned his family's ranch in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, into Colonia LeBaron, a fundamentalist haven with communal laundry, kitchen, and dining area.<sup>47</sup>

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47. The above perspective on the LeBarons comes from Verlan M. LeBaron, *The LeBaron Story* (Lubbock, TX: Keels & Co., 1981), esp. 122, 134, 170, and 179; also 4-5, 20, 29, 42, 60-61, 64, 71, 99, 105, 112, 115, 117-35. His book states the preference for calling the church over which Joel (and later Verlan) presided by the shortened title Church of the Firstborn. This essay follows that preference, even though there is possible confusion with an alternative Church of the Firstborn organized by their brother Ross Wesley LeBaron. Also see discussion of the claims of various sons of Alma Dayer LeBaron in these outsider studies: Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness of Times," esp. 89-98, 254-56; Reimann, *Plural Marriage, Limited*, esp. 232-34; Bradlee and Van Atta, *Prophet of Blood*, 45-48, 52, 56, 63-123; Melton, *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 575; and Fred C. Collier, *Independent Fundamentalists and Their Claims to the Fulness of the Priesthood: An Open Letter to All Independent Fundamentalists* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1990), 4.



Subsequent activities of LeBaron churches seized the attention of other fundamentalists, the LDS church, and eventually the nation itself. First, unlike other Mormon fundamentalist groups, the LeBarons sent missionaries to proselytize. They churned out pamphlets which they shoved under dormitory doors at Brigham Young University and passed out at the gates of Temple Square in Salt Lake City. They made inroads on other fundamentalist groups which responded with published arguments. After the conversion of a dozen LDS missionaries in 1958, followed by defections of local LDS leaders throughout the West, the LDS church began its first publishing crusade against any fundamentalists.<sup>48</sup> Then a schism—the Church of the Lamb of God led by Joel's brother Ervil LeBaron—murdered Joel in 1972, fire-bombed the LeBaron colony at Los Molinos, killed about twenty other family members and dissident followers, threatened the U.S. and LDS presidents, and then assassinated Rulon C. Allred at his Salt Lake office in 1977. In the decade after Ervil LeBaron's death in the Utah penitentiary, some of his family and followers committed another twelve sectarian murders within the LeBaron groups. These incredible events reversed the momentum of the Church of the Firstborn, and disenchanting all but the most devout.<sup>49</sup>

This murderous violence has poisoned outside perceptions about Mormon fundamentalists generally, and also stigmatized the overwhelmingly non-violent fundamentalists who still traced their authority through Alma Dayer LeBaron. One of the principal law enforcement investigators of the LeBaron murderers affirms that there are fewer than fifty persons responsible for this sectarian violence.<sup>50</sup> In 1990 a tele-journalist from New York City spent two weeks in the polygamous commune

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48. Previous note, and *Los Angeles Times*, 18 June 1967, A-11; Kahile Mehr, "The Trial of the French Mission," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Autumn 1988): 27-45; Bruce R. McConkie [an LDS general authority], *How to Start a Cult or Cultism As Practiced By The So-Called Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness of Times Analyzed, Explained, And Interpreted ...* (Salt Lake City: By the Author, ca. 1961); Hector J. Spencer, *Why I Returned to The LDS Church* (Colonial Dublan, Mex.: By the Author, ca. 1963); Henry W. Richards [member of the LDS church's "Special Affairs Committee," then chaired by Apostle Mark E. Petersen], *A Reply to the "Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness of Times"* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965). For arguments against the LeBarons by mainstream fundamentalists, see Harold Allred, *The Scepter, The Church of the Firstborn, John The Baptist: A Defense of Truth, Peter's Authority* (Fruitland, ID: By the Author, 1958); Francis M. Darter, *Francis M. Darter versus Joel F. LeBaron* (Salt Lake, UT: By the Author, 1964).

49. LeBaron, *LeBaron Story*, 137-307; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 214-17; Bradlee and Van Atta, *Prophet of Blood*, 135-350; my interview with Richard W. Forbes, Assistant Chief Investigator of the Salt Lake County Attorney's office, on 26 July 1989; Richard W. Forbes interview by Ken Verdoia on 7 Dec. 1989, copy in my possession; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 88, 92-93, 150, 250; Rena Chynoweth [acquitted of Rulon Allred's murder, but now publicly admits it], *Blood Covenant* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1990).

50. My interview with Richard W. Forbes; Forbes interview by Ken Verdoia.

of Colonia LeBaron and reported that its population of about 1,000 is divided among the Church of the Firstborn and other LeBaron churches, with an added 300 LeBaron followers in an unnamed location (probably the LeBaron colony of Los Molinos in Baja California).<sup>51</sup> Followers of LeBaron's patriarchal authority are also scattered from San Diego, throughout the West, and in Central America, and now add probably another 400 hundred men, women, and children outside the two LeBaron communes in Mexico.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, the LeBaron churches now have about 1,700 people as the third largest organized form of Mormon fundamentalism.

#### THE GROUPS: DAVIS COUNTY CO-OPERATIVE

Then there is the financially diversified Kingston group, incorporated as the "Davis County Co-operative." One fundamentalist described it as "the most outstanding example in all Mormondom of patriarchal family effort to establish [an economic] united order."<sup>53</sup> Outsiders know a general outline of the Kingston group. Charles W. Kingston was initially aligned with Lorin C. Woolley's fundamentalist authority, but in 1935 his son Eldon Kingston received an angelic commission to begin strict economic communalism with the Kingston family and their followers in Davis County, Utah, immediately north of Salt Lake City. In the early years these ascetic people wore a uniform: blue bib-overalls for males and blue dresses for females, with no pockets and tied at the waist with string.

Fifty years later outsiders knew the Kingstons had given up uniforms, still lived austere as individuals, and were led by Eldon's much married brother John Ortell Kingston. The group had financial holdings in Utah that attracted front page attention of the *Wall Street Journal*: a 300-acre dairy farm in Davis County, a cattle ranch and coal mine in Emery County, the Bobco Discount Store, the United Bank, a restaurant equipment business, a clothing factory, wholesale distributors, shoe-repair

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51. My telephone interview with Leslie Fagen; LeBaron, *LeBaron Story*, 228, 250-54, 293-94, 297, 299. Also my telephone interview with Fred Collier on 7 Apr. 1990; *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, Pt. 1, pp. 1, 24.

52. LeBaron, *LeBaron Story*, v, 228, 294, 299, referred to families living in San Diego and Central America in the early 1980s. In a telephone interview on 7 April 1990, Fred Collier in Utah says he is presiding patriarch of a Church of the Firstborn that has less than one hundred total members in Utah, California, Oregon, and Washington. Although Collier's ordination came through Ross Wesley LeBaron, Ross has had a different organization in Utah which is described along with a Colorado splinter from Ervil LeBaron's church, in *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, Part I, 1, 24.

53. Harold Woolley Blackmore, *Patriarchal Order of Family Government* (Hurricane, UT: By the Author, 1974), 94. Owen Allred, presiding elder of the Apostolic United Brethren, expressed similar praise in my interview with him on 29 July 1989.

stores, as well as a 1,000-acre farm in Idaho.<sup>54</sup> Beyond that, the Kingston group is so secretive that even other Mormon fundamentalists regard it as virtually impenetrable.<sup>55</sup>

More details about the Kingstons have come from a plural wife within its inner circle and a man involved in the economic operation of the Davis County Co-operative.<sup>56</sup> Among the faithful, it was first known as the "New Order," and each of its male heads of household was identified by number, with "Number One" for the descendant of Jesus Christ who leads the group: initially Eldon Kingston and later Ortell Kingston. Only the inner circle used these numbers, but "Ortell Kingston [as "Number One"] was absolutely the dictatorial [leader], in other words, what Ortell Kingston said, went. He was a very wise economic manager. But there wasn't any council—although there was a [priesthood] council—but there wasn't any council that he needed to meet with. He made decisions. Whatever decision he made, it happened." After Ortell's death, his sister provided functional direction for the Co-operative, in concert with Merlin Kingston as religious leader.

The group has abandoned some of its early practices, but not essential ones. In addition to the long-discarded blue uniforms, in its early years the Kingstons were also the only fundamentalists to control the diet of the faithful: only one designated food (such as squash) each day in unlimited amounts. Although non-fundamentalists and even the Allred group's presiding elder have assumed that the Kingstons have also abandoned plural marriage along with the distinctive dress and dietary rules,<sup>57</sup> polygamy is still alive within the inner circle. It is restricted primarily to the Kingstons and their kin. "However, there are a lot of interests that draw away from the interest toward plural marriage, especially the emphasis on economic success."

In fact, the Davis County Co-operative is far more extensive than previously understood. In addition to the already identified holdings, the Kingston group owned Murray First Thrift until it was absorbed by another bank. Through a variety of wholly-owned subsidiaries and a maze of company names, the Davis County Co-operative has published tele-

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54. Above information on the Kingstons comes from Blackmore, *Patriarchal Order*, 94-95; Hilton, "Polygamy in Utah," 38-41; Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn," 58-59; Bradlee and Van Atta, *Prophet of Blood*, 167; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 212; *Wall Street Journal*, 12 Feb. 1985, 1; interview with Richard W. Forbes. In the years since this publicity, the Kingstons have disposed of some of these businesses and acquired others.

55. My interviews with Ogden Kraut, Owen Allred, and Ann \_\_\_\_\_ (this last one on 28 July 1989).

56. The following comes from "Jane Doe Kingston," information submitted in writing on 25 Apr. 1989, and my interview with "George Mason" on 26 Jan. 1990.

57. Hilton, "Plural Marriage," 38; interview with Owen Allred.

phone directories, screen prints T-shirts and sports shirts, owns a trucking company, hardware stores, pawn shops, and clothing stores in Utah, and distributes a variety of products (including video games) to local chain stores and other businesses. In addition, this Mormon fundamentalist organization began doing business with Communist China before it was fashionable in America to do so, and became the exclusive distributor to stores throughout the United States of work gloves and clothing manufactured in the People's Republic of China.

Without stating the full extent of the Kingston group's revenues, the source for this economic information indicated that the Co-operative's income is far more than a million dollars a month. Until recently computerized, the accounting for these businesses and their thousands of employees was done by hand in a warehouse-size office staffed by women, primarily plural wives: "Now, all of these women that did all of this accounting, they brought all of their kids. In the next area, there was a yard and fence and things. And they brought all their kids, and they took turns babysitting each other's kids. Or their older children came [after school] and babysat the children."

The far-flung economic empire of the Davis County Co-operative also creates problems for numbering membership in the Kingston group because there are various levels of participation. Those at the lowest level of trust—numbering in the thousands—are employees who may not even realize that they are employed by a Mormon fundamentalist organization. In the second level, employees agree with the Co-operative to reduce their paychecks to the amount necessary to pay for such things as rent, mortgage, utilities, government taxes, etc. At this level the Co-operative withholds the balance of salary, and each month gives the employee a special card redeemable for all goods and services in Co-operative enterprises, with discounts from 10 percent to 50 percent or more. The discounts are calculated monthly according to the Co-operative's profit margin for each item or service, and applied to the next month's card.

The Kingston inner circle refuses to discuss religion with those at this second level, even if the special cardholders are polygamists from other fundamentalist groups. At the third level of trust in the Davis County Co-operative, the participant receives an even smaller paycheck, but now receives an apartment or house from among the Co-operative's widely dispersed real estate holdings. Some participants at this third level become assistant managers or managers of Kingston enterprises, and because of this trust, religion may enter the relationship, at last. But not necessarily, because "the only people they trusted to really know what was going on were those that were in the family." The Kingston group's children move through the second and third levels with inside knowledge and equal unwillingness to discuss religion with outsiders in those levels of the Co-op-

erative.

Once the Davis County Co-operative became successful, it stopped seeking converts, and now even a trusted outsider may take years (if ever) to finally gain membership at the Kingston group's center. For some, this may come only through polygamous marriage into one of the families at the core. "Those that go to church together are the Kingstons and their families, and a few people of the Fundamentalist point of view." Even here, economic and business matters dominate Sunday meetings for a people who continue to live in austerity despite the cooperative wealth of their organization. This inner circle is really the only level of the Kingston group where participants can be considered Mormon fundamentalists, because "the Davis County Co-operative isn't really a religious organization." Dominated by descendants of the original core of Kingstons, kin, and early converts, the Kingston group's inner circle is made up of about 1,000 persons who can be considered fundamentalist members.<sup>58</sup> This is the last fundamentalist group of significant size.

#### THE GROUPS: MISCELLANEOUS

Ogden Kraut observes that there is a wide assortment of tiny groups—"splinters of splinters"—some with half a dozen followers.<sup>59</sup> A generous estimate is that no more than 1,000 men, women, and children belong to this collection of small organizations of Mormon fundamentalists.

The larger groups duplicate many functions of the LDS church. They have sacrament (Communion) meetings, Sunday school classes, and separate meetings for children, youth, women, and ordained men. In addition, fundamentalist groups accept tithing, have incorporated, and obtained tax-exempt status. Nevertheless, in such groups as Allred's Apostolic United Brethren, the priesthood leadership receives no salary, stipend, or living allowance.<sup>60</sup>

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58. As indicated earlier, all the above data on the Kingston group comes from "Jane Doe Kingston," information submitted in writing on 25 Apr. 1989, and my interview with "George Mason."

59. My interview with Kraut. For brief discussion of fundamentalist groups of even small size, see Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Restoration Research, 1990), and Melton, *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 573-79.

60. My interview with Owen Allred; Owen Allred interview by Ken Verdoia on 18 Dec. 1989, copy in my possession; interview with Sam S. Barlow; LeBaron, *The LeBaron Story*, 123-28, 137-82, 297-300. By contrast, in the LDS church there is an ample monthly living allowance provided to its lifetime general authorities and also to church officers in full-time service temporarily. This amounts to fewer than 500 salaried ecclesiastical officers at one time in a church of 10 million, compared with literally hundreds of thousands of unsalaried LDS church officers.

## OUTSIDE THE GROUPS: THE INDEPENDENTS

This duplication of church functions alienates independent fundamentalists who believe that Lorin C. Woolley's commission of authority was limited to keeping plural marriage alive, and nothing more. They affirm that before his death in 1934, Woolley said fundamentalists should not collect tithing, congregate, colonize, or proselytize. Louis A. Kelsch, Jr., was the youngest member of Woolley's Council of Friends, and is regarded as "the first independent," because he dissented from these developments as early as 1941. Independents share a pessimism that Mormon fundamentalism has also gone "out of order."

The only meetings conducted by independents are private discussions in a family's home, where the sacrament is administered by those with priesthood. If unrelated families gather on Sundays, meeting places rotate, so that a different head of household conducts each week to avoid the appearance of leadership.

Independent fundamentalists estimate their own diverse numbers as two or three thousand. This is supported by the fact that fundamentalists in the Kelsch family alone currently amount to three hundred people.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, it is safe to estimate the total number of independent fundamentalists as approximately 2,500 men, women, and children who live in urban centers like Salt Lake City, Boise, Las Vegas, Denver, Phoenix, and Los Angeles, as well as rural areas throughout the Far West.<sup>62</sup>

Although they might not define themselves this way, independent fundamentalists are anti-institutional, frequently anti-authoritarian, and very pluralistic. Their lack of orthodoxy and hierarchy accommodates such diverse independents as Ernest Strack and Alex Joseph. Strack was a 1970s hippie communalist who continued his Sufi Islamic philosophy as a Mormon fundamentalist. When this gentle individualist and polygamist died of cancer at age thirty-seven during the centennial year of the Manifesto, the funeral motorcade in Utah was almost a mile long.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, Big Water, Utah's, polygamist mayor Alex Joseph says: "I'm not an LDS Fundamentalist, but I personally subscribe to too many Mormon doctrines to deny I'm a Mormon Fundamentalist." His polygamist wives include two Catholics, a Methodist, and a Presbyterian,

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61. Above information on independents comes from Bishop and Bishop, *The Truth about John W. Woolley, Lorin C. Woolley and The Council of Friends*, 11, 85; my interviews with Kraut, Potter, Albert E. Barlow (on 27 July 1989), Ann \_\_\_\_\_, and Barbara Owen Kelsch.

62. *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, Part I, 24, estimated that in the Los Angeles area alone there are 1,200 polygamists. This is a wildly inflated estimate, even though my interviews indicate that Southern California is home to some independent fundamentalists and some members of various groups.

63. Ernest Strack to D. Michael Quinn, 17 June 1989; Mary Hak Strack to D. Michael Quinn, 7 Apr. 1990.

and neither he nor his wives observe the LDS Word of Wisdom's prohibition of alcohol and tobacco. This is contrary to the practice of other Mormon fundamentalists.

At the vernal equinox in 1977, Alex Joseph helped found the Confederate Nations of Israel. *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* classifies it as one of the "Polygamy-Practicing Groups" of Mormonism. Actually, by fundamentalist definitions, this is a *non*-group confederation of independent "patriarchs" (including Ogden Kraut, at first). A fourth of its 400 members are living in polygamous families throughout the United States, yet few of them have ever been part of any Mormon tradition. Catholics, Protestants, Eastern religionists, atheists, and sexually-active homosexuals join independent Mormon fundamentalists as patriarchs in the Confederate Nations of Israel.<sup>64</sup> Independent Mormon fundamentalists include political liberals and conservatives, religious conservatives and ecumenicals, as well as social conservatives and liberals.

#### GROWTH BY BIRTH AND CONVERSION

How then have approximately 21,000 men, women, and children become part of Mormon fundamentalism? First, primarily through birth into fundamentalist families. Second, since fundamentalists do not actively proselytize, the relatively few converts actually seek out fundamentalism.

As much as three-fourths of current membership in the organized groups were born into fundamentalism. Many fundamentalists today are members of families that have an unbroken pattern of polygamy which extends well before the 1890 Manifesto. For example, Louis J. Barlow of Colorado City was the fourth generation to be born in plural marriage, and Morris Jessop in the Allred group was the third generation of his family to be born in the Principle. Both these men were born to fundamentalist parents, and now have grandchildren themselves. This pattern of three or four generations of affiliation with fundamentalism is true of the Colorado City, Allred, LeBaron, and Kingston groups, and is even true of independents like the Louis A. Kelsch, Jr., family. Since the groups account for 90 percent of the movement, few current Mormon fundamentalists have ever been baptized members of the LDS church.<sup>65</sup>

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64. My interview with Alex Joseph on 29 Mar. 1990; *Deseret News*, 5 Sept. 1990. Melton, *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 576, gives the organization date as 1978, but this essay follows the 1977 date given in Joseph's interview. For his earlier view of himself and his activities, see Alex Joseph, *A Nickel's Worth: Channel 4 Television Interview with Polygamist Alex Joseph*, aired May 22, 1977 (Salt Lake City: Dennis R. Short, 1977). See also Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 236, where she discusses Alex Joseph under the name of Ronald Ellison.

65. Morris Jessop interview by Ken Verdoia on 20 Jan. 1990 (copy in my possession), and Louis J. Barlow, interview by Verdoia; my interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch; also my interview with Ann \_\_\_\_\_, and my interview with "Jane Doe Allred" (on 29 July 1989).

What of the converts to Mormon fundamentalism? In the early years of the movement, virtually everyone was a convert directly from the LDS church, for which the church excommunicated most of them sooner or later. A plural wife, who has known many converts to independent fundamentalism in the last decade, notes that most of the converts from the church are in their thirties and forties.<sup>66</sup> My own fieldwork indicates that recent converts to Mormon fundamentalism come from two directions: previous converts to the LDS church from other faiths, and LDS church members with polygamous ancestry. There seem to be few conversions by those with strictly monogamous Mormon ancestry.

No fundamentalist group now actively proselytizes, and so potential converts seek out fundamentalist writers, leaders, or friends. Owen Allred says he is aware of only fifteen or twenty couples annually who convert from the LDS church to fundamentalism.<sup>67</sup> Ogden Kraut's fundamentalist publications cause many investigators to seek him out, and he observes that fundamentalist conversions rise sharply after every change the modern church makes in LDS doctrine and policy. Those changes in the LDS church occur frequently enough that fundamentalism does not suffer by refusing to send out missionaries. Kraut also says, "Actually there's a lot of people who are not Mormons who become interested in Fundamentalism."<sup>68</sup> Therefore, growth in the groups is primarily through the birthrate, but conversions add significantly to the smaller numbers of independents.

#### THE APPEAL OF MORMON FUNDAMENTALISM

Contrary to popular assumptions, polygamy is not what attracts most converts to Mormon fundamentalism. For example, as a convert to the LDS church, Roy Potter sought out fundamentalists in 1979 after being censured by church authorities for inquiring about Brigham Young's Adam-God teachings. He regarded current ecclesiastical denial of the church's past as evidence that the LDS church "is out of order." Plural marriage was a later consideration.<sup>69</sup> A few years ago, about six English families began reading nineteenth-century teachings of the LDS church, sent a representative to Utah, and eventually joined the Allred group. Again, for these men and women in England, polygamy became significant afterwards.<sup>70</sup>

Interviews with fundamentalist youth indicate that a major appeal of

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66. My telephone interview with Ann \_\_\_\_\_ on 27 Mar. 1990.

67. My interview with Owen Allred.

68. My interview with Kraut.

69. My interview with Roy Potter.

70. My interviews with Ann \_\_\_\_\_ and Owen Allred.



fundamentalism is the intensity of its doctrinal emphasis, compared with the primarily social emphasis of the LDS church. A fifteen-year-old girl in a plural family does not like the LDS services she has attended because "it was like they would announce all the sports things, announce all the picnics they were going to, and maybe they had a short verse and a song." Then after a general meeting with too little doctrine, she found she was the only one in her LDS Sunday school class who could answer questions, "just simple stuff that you'd think all the kids in the class would know, but nobody knew it."<sup>71</sup> A nineteen-year-old fundamentalist has joined the LDS church just to go on a full-time mission, and reported back to his friend in the Allred group that "there wasn't really any doctrine presented to the people in their [LDS] meetings." To the LDS rebuttal that its church meetings emphasize faith, repentance, and baptism, fundamentalist teenagers reply, "But not deep doctrine."<sup>72</sup> For these fundamentalist teenagers, the LDS church is too shallow in doctrinal emphasis compared with the sermons and class discussions they are accustomed to.

A young man who converted to fundamentalism at eighteen comments on this from a different perspective. He had been a strict Mormon since childhood, was the leader of his teenage priesthood quorums, and kept doing more than was required, but felt something was missing. "In the Mormon church when I would sit through a meeting I would feel depressed and bored as though I had learned nothing." In LDS classes and release-time seminary, he was always asking questions: "How come this? and How come that?—and they were telling me 'Don't worry about it,' and I told them, 'Well, I've gotta worry about it, because it's buggin' me.'" Two years after his conversion to fundamentalism, this young man no longer pesters teachers or speakers with questions, but instead generally sits quietly in fundamentalist meetings, listening to presentations of "deep doctrine" which he ponders long after the meetings.<sup>73</sup>

The observations of these teenage fundamentalists are consistent with statements by adults who leave the LDS church for fundamentalism. Converts to Mormon fundamentalism do not hunger for polygamy—they thirst for a greater doctrinal and spiritual emphasis than they have known in the LDS church. In particular, interest in Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine leads many church members to feel that there is a chasm between the free-wheeling Mormon doctrines of the nineteenth century and the orderly, sanitized theology of the twentieth-century LDS church.

In fact, polygamy can sometimes be the most difficult part of a Mor-

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71. My interview with Sarah \_\_\_\_\_, age fifteen, on 16 Jan. 1990.

72. My interview with Jeremy Thompson, age seventeen, on 17 Jan. 1990.

73. My interview with Damon Cook, age twenty, on 26 Jan. 1990.

mon's conversion to fundamentalism. The teenage convert's first interest in fundamentalism was the Adam-God doctrine. His second question was whether people should follow "a prophet or was it to be Jesus who we were supposed to follow." This young convert finally got around to polygamy, saying "that was tough for me to accept at first because I'd always been taught that it was wrong and wicked, and things like that." With the church's exponential conversions in recent decades, relatively few Latter-day Saints have a polygamous heritage, and so polygamy is a social and religious obstacle for most church members. "Except for descendants of pioneer polygamists with a sense of history," notes a feminist expert on Mormon fundamentalism, "polygamy is as foreign to the contemporary Mormon as it might be to someone outside the Church. For some it is barely part of their mythic past."<sup>74</sup>

This teenage convert to Mormon fundamentalism explains his slow acceptance of polygamy. "When I heard that people were taking two or three, I felt that wasn't being very faithful to the first wife, and it took a while to accept it. I had to do a lot of praying, a lot of fasting over it. ... Gradually I just started accepting it."<sup>75</sup>

However, there are exceptions to this reluctant acceptance of plural marriage. One plural wife says that in her conversion in Colorado from the United Church of Christ to the LDS church, she read Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132, and became converted to the necessity of plural marriage as part of her conversion to the LDS church. Shortly after her LDS baptism, she was stunned to learn that the church now prohibits plural marriage. A year later, as a transfer student at Brigham Young University, she became a fundamentalist and plural wife at age twenty-one.<sup>76</sup>

#### FUNDAMENTALIST RELATIONS WITH THE LDS CHURCH

Many mainline Mormons do not understand the fundamentalist attitude toward the LDS church, which has certainly not tried to endear itself to Mormon fundamentalists. From the 1930s until recently, LDS church leaders established surveillance teams for fundamentalist meeting places and homes, denied baptism to children of fundamentalists, prohibited fundamentalist children from attending Primary classes, and excommunicated adults on the basis of guilt by association, for beliefs rather than acts, and for refusing to deny rumors or sign loyalty oaths. LDS surveillance teams copied down license plate numbers in order to identify those

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74. Martha Sonntag Bradley, "Changed Faces: The Official LDS Position on Polygamy, 1890-1990," *Sunstone* 14 (Feb. 1990): 32. See also "Monogamous Triumph," in Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 336-62.

75. My interview with Damon Cook.

76. My interview with Carla Foster on 16 Jan. 1990.

visiting the homes of fundamentalists, and a Brigham Young University professor was once discovered using a telephoto lens to photograph license plates of cars at meetings of the Allred group. There were even some fake conversions, so that LDS spies could operate within fundamentalist groups. Beyond ecclesiastical harassment and punishment, LDS church leaders have encouraged punitive legislation, turned over surveillance information to law enforcement, pressured public libraries to remove fundamentalist publications, urged the postal service to deny mailing privileges to fundamentalists, and supported the forced adoption of all polygamous children into monogamous homes.<sup>77</sup>

From the earliest years of the fundamentalist movement to the present, LDS leaders have also encouraged an informer-syndrome that sometimes poisons family relationships. One plural wife was excommunicated in 1970 after her sister reported her to church authorities. "This was not at all vindictive," the plural wife says, "just the involvement of circumstances which we anticipated—to be excommunicated—but even when you expect it, it's still a real heartache." Then she adds, "The whole life you love is the church."<sup>78</sup> That love drove one LDS mother to initiate criminal proceedings against her own son for polygamy, and his polygamous daughter comments of her grandmother: "I think she did that mostly because she was really angry that my dad had gone ahead and entered into polygamy, and she wanted him to stay in the Mormon church. So my Mom was in hiding, and I was raised in hiding until I was five."<sup>79</sup> Church leaders were mistaken if they expected fundamentalists to repudiate the LDS church in the face of these assaults.

Whether excommunicated or never LDS, nearly all fundamentalists (outside the LeBaron churches) regard the LDS church as the only true church—divinely instituted, with God's full authority to receive revelations, perform saving ordinances, proselytize, and teach. Until recently, the leaders of Colorado City's Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints insisted that this title did not refer to a separate church, but only distinguished their Priesthood Work from the "monogamous church," and that they revered the LDS church as God's only true church. The Fundamentalist church legally incorporated in 1991 due to an on-go-

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77. Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark*, 183-85; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 195-98; Driggs, "After the Manifesto," 381; my interviews with Albert E. Barlow, Kraut, Barbara Owen Kelsch, and Larry McCurdy (on 21 Jan. 1990); Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 12, 97, 244; Rhea Allred Kunz, *Voices of Women Approbating Celestial or Plural Marriage*, Vol. 2 (Draper, UT: Review and Preview Publishers, 1985), 482-87; Bradley, "Changed Faces: The Official LDS Position on Polygamy, 1890-1990," 29, 30, 31.

78. My interview with "Jane Doe Allred."

79. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

ing lawsuit by its separatist Hammond-Timpson group.<sup>80</sup>

Like many who were hounded by church repression, Rulon C. Allred felt resentment and pain, but taught his children that the LDS church “was our church—the One True on the face of the earth, he said, although it was currently out of order.” Meetings of the Apostolic United Brethren are canceled during the semi-annual general conferences in Salt Lake City so that the Allred fundamentalists can listen to talks by LDS general authorities. In the Allred academies of Salt Lake and Montana, each morning students pray facing the direction of the Salt Lake temple, to which Mormon fundamentalists are denied admission by the LDS church.<sup>81</sup>

Owen Allred, excommunicated in 1942, says, “Yes, I love the church—I still do to this day. I believe it is God’s church,” even if it “has drifted” in order to be accepted by the world.<sup>82</sup> One excommunicated plural wife (an independent) admits: “I still like it. They have a skeleton of what was given them. It’s true that the services are pretty boring, and you jump for joy if you hear anyone give a speech on Christ.”<sup>83</sup> Most Mormon fundamentalists so thoroughly indoctrinate their children to revere the LDS church that teenagers even express their love for a church whose meetings they have never attended.<sup>84</sup>

In fact, before the groups developed their own church-like functions, fundamentalists participated in the activities of the LDS church until church authorities discovered this duality and excommunicated them. LeGrand Woolley remained active in the LDS church even after he became a member of Lorin Woolley’s Priesthood Council in 1929.<sup>85</sup> In a fundamentalist ordinance in 1941, B. Harvey Allred, Jr., conferred the Melchizedek priesthood on his son, after which unknowing LDS church authorities ordained Owen Allred to the office of elder. Owen remained both a fundamentalist and church member until excommunicated twelve

80. My interview with Sam S. Barlow; my telephone interview with Ken Verdoia on 28 Mar. 1990; also Louis J. Barlow, Director of Colorado City Seminary program of the Fundamental Church, interview by Ken Verdoia; Driggs, “Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward the Church,” 51-52. Information on the incorporation of the Fundamental Church was obtained in my telephone interview with Ken Driggs, 16 July 1991. See n41.

81. Solomon, *In My Father’s House*, 95; Dorothy Allred Solomon interview by Ken Verdoia on 6 Jan. 1990, copy in my possession; Mabel Allred, plural widow of Rulon C. Allred, interview by Katherine Lundell; my telephone interview with Ken Verdoia on 28 Mar. 1990. Rulon Allred’s ambivalence of reverence and resentment is clear in the contrasting obituaries he wrote for LDS church president Heber J. Grant in *Truth* 11 (June 1945): 17, and (July 1945): 41.

82. My interview with Owen Allred.

83. My interview with Carla Foster.

84. For example, my interview with Jeremy Thompson.

85. Jesse B. Stone, “Jewish Influence on Mormon Church” (Salt Lake City, ca. 1940), by a former Mormon fundamentalist turned pro-Nazi.

years later.<sup>86</sup> Ogden Kraut served a mission for the LDS church in 1948 after being ordained to the office of seventy for that mission by Joseph W. Musser, fundamentalist leader and publisher of *Truth*. Kraut continued as an active elder in the LDS church and as a fundamentalist seventy and publisher until his excommunication for apostasy in 1972.<sup>87</sup>

Living a dual church-fundamentalist life remains an individual choice today, even for teenagers. A fifteen-year-old fundamentalist girl (an independent) says: "I've kind of dropped out from being active in the church, because I think it's kind of compromising for me because my mom was a member of the church and they excommunicated her."<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, some teenage boys among the independents today receive ordinations within the LDS church if possible, while those in groups rarely do.<sup>89</sup> A teenage boy in the Allred group says, "They do urge us to go on missions [for the LDS church] but it's not a real common practice,"<sup>90</sup> and the youths I interviewed from the Allred and Colorado City groups have no interest in serving a mission for the LDS church. However, one of these boys has a fundamentalist friend who joined the church for no other reason than to preach the basic principles of the LDS gospel to non-Mormons. This nineteen-year-old is serving a two-year mission (during which he supports himself with savings or family assistance). LDS church leaders do not realize this missionary is a believing fundamentalist.<sup>91</sup>

This study's teenage convert to fundamentalism is not as fortunate. He admitted to local LDS leaders that he believed Mormonism's old-time religion, and they refused to allow him to serve a mission. They rejected his solemn promise to preach only the Book of Mormon and other basic principles expected of LDS missionaries today. Now at age twenty, he can hardly contain his sorrow at this disappointment. He had planned and saved since early childhood to serve a full-time mission for the church he still regards as God's own.<sup>92</sup>

#### MONOGAMY AND POLYGAMY AMONG MORMON FUNDAMENTALISTS

Even less understood is the relationship between the actual living of polygamy and the affirmation of each Mormon fundamentalist that plu-

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86. My interview with Owen Allred.

87. My interview with Kraut.

88. My interview with Ruth Foster on 16 Jan. 1990.

89. My interviews with Ann \_\_\_\_\_, Owen Allred, Jonathan D. Robinson (age sixteen, on 26 Jan. 1990), and James \_\_\_\_\_ (age nineteen, on 30 Jan. 1990).

90. My interview with Jeremy Thompson.

91. My interviews with Jeremy Thompson, Jonathan D. Robinson, and James \_\_\_\_\_.

92. My interview with Damon Cook.

ral marriage must be allowed today. For example, Albert E. Barlow delayed marrying a plural wife for more than twelve years after his conversion to fundamentalism in 1922. He had the distinction later of serving two prison terms for unlawful cohabitation with his wives.<sup>93</sup> Ogden Kraut was a fundamentalist for twenty-one years as an adult before he married a plural wife in 1969, and says he knows many independent fundamentalists who are bachelors "of all ages, for one reason or another."<sup>94</sup>

Some independent fundamentalists are so disillusioned that they discourage their families from entering polygamy. Roy Potter was dismissed from the police department of Murray, Utah, because of his polygamy. Eventually he took his case all the way to the Supreme Court.<sup>95</sup> Due to the strain on his wives of his legal battle to regain a policeman's badge, Roy Potter is now a monogamist. He is not planning to marry again, and has turned down proposals from several women. He also reports that independents who entered polygamy decades ago are now encouraging their children and grandchildren "not to enter into polygamy" because Mormon fundamentalism is "so out of order that you can't possibly do it properly."<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, such disillusioned independents do not reject Mormon fundamentalist essentials or suggest acceptance of the current LDS church position on those essentials.

Owen Allred reports that only a small minority of his group's adults have married polygamously. Only 10-15 percent of the adults are living polygamously in the Allred group in Salt Lake Valley, Cedar City, Utah, and Pinesdale, Montana. Only 5 percent of the Mexican fundamentalists at Ozumba are polygamous. The Allred fundamentalists in Germany and the Netherlands are monogamous, but several English fundamentalists are polygamous. As presiding elder of the Apostolic United Brethren, Allred says, "Actually I discourage it ... if you're not ready for Celestial Marriage, if you're not qualified to live it, if you do not have a testimony that it is a law of God and not something to satisfy your own personal whims ..." When a man or woman comes to him seeking permission to court polygamously, Owen Allred usually responds, "Now wait a minute, dear brother or sister, let's be careful."<sup>97</sup>

On the other hand, leaders of the Johnson-Jeffs group actively pro-

93. My interview with Albert E. Barlow.

94. My interview with Kraut.

95. King, "The Mormon Underground Fights Back," 24-25; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 219-22; Royston Potter, *An Offender for a Word: The Polygamy Case of Royston Potter vs. Murray City, et al.* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1986).

96. My interview with Roy Potter.

97. My interview with Owen Allred; also his interview in *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, Part I, 25.

mote plural marriage among their followers in Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah, the Salt Lake Valley, and elsewhere. The bachelorhood among independents is virtually unknown after the mid-twenties in the Colorado City group, since unmarried young men can expect intense, personal persuasion from family and the Priesthood of the Johnson-Jeffs group. On-site fieldwork indicates that a majority of the adults in Colorado City and Hildale have entered polygamous marriages, and that nearly everyone in these communities is either living in polygamous households and/or was born to polygamous fathers.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, married men of great devotion (and real interest in plural marriage) may not be allowed to marry a plural wife in the Colorado City group.<sup>99</sup> The extensive plural marriage in the Johnson-Jeffs group contrasts with near-reticence among independents and the Allred group.

#### DATING AND COURTSHIP

Which leads to how Mormon fundamentalists enter into marriage, both monogamous and polygamous. This is approached differently by fundamentalists, and the most marked contrast is between the Allred group and independents on one hand, and the Colorado City group on the other.

For the independents and the Allred group, youth activities and dating come before a marriage proposal. A sixteen-year-old boy in the Allred group says, "They have dances for the youth, kind of ballroom dances, but like Virginia reel and stuff like that."<sup>100</sup> A young woman adds that the Allred group's Youth of Zion organizes firesides with speakers, snow tubing parties at Park City, kite-flying parties, treasure hunts, volleyball, basketball and baseball games, and rents rinks for ice-skating and roller-skating parties.<sup>101</sup> Teenagers in independent fundamentalist families do not usually join these organized activities of the Apostolic United Brethren, even if they have friends in the group.

Independent youth and the Allred youth also have activities on their own for group dates or couple dates. Contrary to outsider assumptions about the barrenness of fundamentalist social life, these teenage funda-

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98. My telephone interview with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 17 Oct. 1989, concerning her fieldwork in Colorado City; also estimate that "70 percent of the adults in Colorado City and Hildale engage in the practice of plural marriage," according to dissident Carl Fischer's deposition, 90, on 23 Aug. 1988, Fifth Judicial District Court for Washington County, Utah, in re Probate No. 3023, copy in my possession.

99. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley. Contrary to his own desires, her father has been a monogamist in the Colorado City group since his plural wife left him nineteen years before our interview. As discussed below, the Priesthood Council arranges marriage.

100. My interview with Jonathan D. Robinson.

101. My interview with Heather \_\_\_\_\_, age twenty-two, on 17 Jan. 1990.

mentalists play Nintendo at home, play tennis, go water skiing and bowling, and see popular movies, including a few R-rated movies. In the Salt Lake Valley, teenagers from independent families and from the Allred group also go to the Lagoon amusement park in Davis County, to the 49th Street Galleria (now Utah Fun Dome), to the Raging Waters water park, and to dance clubs in Salt Lake City such as The Bay and Palladium where they can dance to the rock and modern music unavailable at Allred group dances.<sup>102</sup> A sixteen-year-old boy in the Allred group says, "My dad was never very strict so I really could go and do anything I wanted, really, unlike most of the kids in the group." He has played the electric guitar in a rock band, but adds, "I'm trying to get off it, because I shouldn't be."<sup>103</sup>

Dating in the Allred group is a serious matter, though. A twenty-two-year-old young woman says that in monogamous dating, young men can ask the girl directly, but usually ask her father first. Her own polygamist father tells the shy young men, "Well, don't ask me; you're not taking me out!" She and a teenage boy from the group both express disapproval of kissing before marital courtship. He also observes that there is no rule for a young man to follow if he learns (as this seventeen-year-old did) that a married man wants to court the teenager's girlfriend: "There's not really any certain way to go about it other than to follow your priesthood head, and by that I don't mean blindly do whatever he says. ... You need to find out by yourself by prayer and fasting what the proper channel is to take." He continued dating his girlfriend in spite of the older man's polygamous overtures, but "we kind of drifted apart mostly because I found out for myself that it was just too early for me and we needed to be friends." Monogamous courtship can last a year or more for young fundamentalists among the Apostolic United Brethren and the independents.<sup>104</sup>

In the Allred group and among independents, polygamous courtship can begin early but is usually of short duration. A fifteen-year-old girl in an independent family comments: "In the fundamentalist environment—this isn't true all the time—but a lot of men just think that when a girl turns fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, that she's going to get married." She adds that a married man thinks a girl will marry him if she goes out with him more than once.<sup>105</sup> A young woman in the Allred group points out that, unlike monogamist dating, a married man is expected to ask the father's permission to court his daughter who has the right to turn down the request without ever talking to the prospective suitor. "If the girl feels like she wants to go out with them, she can. If she doesn't want to, she

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102. My interviews with Ruth Foster and Heather \_\_\_\_\_.

103. My interview with Jonathan D. Robinson.

104. My interviews with Heather \_\_\_\_\_, Jeremy Thompson, and Sarah \_\_\_\_\_.

105. My interview with Sarah \_\_\_\_\_.



doesn't have to," and this twenty-two-year-old young woman adds that she has told her father to turn down "quite a few married men" who asked him.<sup>106</sup> When one girl joined the Allred group at age seventeen, she had seven polygamous proposals in two weeks, and the first "date" was always a discussion of what the man and his wife (wives) hoped for in a new wife.<sup>107</sup> Some fundamentalist men have their other wife (wives) join the first "date" with a prospective new wife.<sup>108</sup> Neither independents nor Allred group members seem to notice the irony that their patterns of courtship give enhanced status to monogamy through prolonged courtship as compared to brief, business-like polygamous courtship.

#### ARRANGED MARRIAGE

The Colorado City group eliminates that disparity between long monogamous courtship and brief polygamous courtship. As tersely put by one of its young men: "In our group we don't date."<sup>109</sup> Aside from attendance at classes and youth firesides, the Johnson group authorizes only one kind of close interaction between unmarried boys and girls: ballroom dances. These occur, for example, several times a month in Colorado City, where the waltz is a favorite among the youth.<sup>110</sup> A plural wife raised in the Johnson group's Salt Lake Valley community observes that dating is absolutely prohibited because "we were raised believing that the Priesthood [Council] would choose our mate and that we were not to allow ourselves to fall in love with anybody." Predictably, some youths at Colorado City try to "get what they called 'sneaky dates.' I mean they'd sneak off and go places and talk." When a seventeen-year-old friend of hers got caught on a "sneaky date" with an eighteen-year-old boy, "they were called into the Priesthood. They were told they were not allowed to see each other again."<sup>111</sup>

Therefore, in the Johnson group, boys alone or girls alone participate in a variety of unsponsored activities. In Colorado City those are primarily outdoor activities like hiking, camping, horseback riding, but can also include trips across the border to movie theaters in St. George, Utah. If they live in the Salt Lake Valley, the group's same-sex youth go out together and enjoy fast-food restaurants, bowling, miniature golf, Lagoon amusement park, movies such as *Indiana Jones* and *Batman*, and "what-

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106. My interview with Heather \_\_\_\_\_.

107. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

108. Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," 57.

109. My interview with James \_\_\_\_\_.

110. My interviews with James \_\_\_\_\_ and Sam S. Barlow.

111. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley. She left the Johnson group at age seventeen, to become a plural wife in the Allred group.

ever's fun."<sup>112</sup>

Although they enjoy the recreational fun of most teenagers, youth in the Johnson-Jeffs group anticipate with faith and solemnity the decision of the Priesthood Council regarding the most important event of their young lives: the selection of a marriage companion. Arranged marriage in the Colorado City group has three main perspectives: that of the Priesthood leaders, of the prospective husbands, and of the prospective wives.

Whether in Colorado City, Salt Lake Valley, Canada, or elsewhere, the president of the Priesthood (or a fellow member of his Council) in the Johnson group seeks divine inspiration to know God's will as the Priesthood selects worthy spouses.<sup>113</sup> Just days after the 1953 raid, Louis J. Barlow (now director of the teenage release-time seminary program in Colorado City) gave a radio address that included a denial of hostile assumptions about arranged marriages at Short Creek: "There have been no forced marriages. Everyone is free to leave or stay as he chooses."<sup>114</sup> His brother further explains that the Priesthood of the Colorado City group arranges marriages to give greater assurance of their stability and permanence, and also to be sure that the couples are not closely related in the tightly knit community. He affirms: "The first consideration, as I've known it, is to make sure the individuals feel free and at liberty to make their own choices."<sup>115</sup>

A young man in the Colorado City group indicates that males also defer to the marital decisions of the Priesthood. At age nineteen, he has never dated a girl, and when asked how he expects to know a girl, he replies, "Basically through the Priesthood. ... They basically decide who you're gonna marry. You can have a little a bit of your say. It's not just totally that they tell you. You have your say. ... You go to them. They won't come to you." This nineteen-year-old adds that it is most common for men to be twenty to twenty-one years old when "[you tell the Priesthood] you want to get married. Basically, they'll set it up." These are the marital expectations of young men in the Colorado City group.<sup>116</sup> In first marriages the husband and wife are usually close in age.<sup>117</sup>

There are some differences in arranged plural marriages of the Colo-

112. My interview with James \_\_\_\_\_.

113. My telephone interview with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 17 Oct. 1989, concerning her fieldwork in Colorado City, Arizona; also Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 14-15.

114. His KSUB talk shortly after 26 July 1953; for the negative assessments, see Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 12-13; U.S. Senate, Committee of Judiciary to Study Juvenile Delinquency, Plural Marriage, 28 Apr.-2 May 1955, 84th Congress, 2d Session.

115. My interview with Sam S. Barlow.

116. My interview with James \_\_\_\_\_.

117. Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 15.

rado City group. The young man says that, unlike the decision for a first marriage, a man does not announce his interest in marrying polygamously: "The Priesthood decides. Basically, they ask you if you would like to do it. You say yes or no." And the man is free to indicate he is not interested in plural marriage "at the time." Then the nineteen-year-old repeats: "At the time." A faithful male may delay polygamous marriage, but cannot be considered faithful if he refuses the decision of the Priesthood for him to marry polygamously.<sup>118</sup> However, married adults in Colorado City and a young woman who was there in the 1970s agree that men who wish to enter plural marriage can also state that interest to the Priesthood which then advises the men who to marry as a plural wife. In this case, even middle-aged men defer to the choices made by the Priesthood.<sup>119</sup>

Females in the Colorado City group are no more deferential to the Priesthood Council's choice of a mate than males are, except that the female's deference is mediated by her father. "Like if I was sixteen and I wanted to get married," a woman observes, "I would go to the Priesthood and I would say, with my father [there], that I'm ready to get married. Please tell me who I should get married to." In this case, however, her authoritarian father went to the Priesthood without her and obtained the name of a man for her to marry. After he admitted to her that the husband was an "old man," his teenage daughter said she was not even interested in knowing what the Priesthood told him. She eventually left the Johnson group, and became a plural wife in the Allred group. There she married a man of her own choosing, but eventually left him. Her five sisters continue in stable plural marriages that were arranged by the decision of Colorado City's Priesthood Council.<sup>120</sup>

Members of the Colorado City group have assured outsiders that "romantic love [is] a frequent element in the courtship,"<sup>121</sup> but that is supposed to happen *after* the Priesthood selects the partners, not before. This is the whole purpose of prohibiting dating. The discomfort with romantic attachments before the Priesthood's decision is indicated in a comment by one leader of the Colorado City community that if young people "make commitments to each other, then those are respected sometimes."<sup>122</sup> The young woman who lived there in the early 1970s agrees

118. My interview with James \_\_\_\_\_.

119. Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 14; my interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

120. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley. About a year after she formally separated from him, he and his first wife were divorced, and he asked Caroline to remarry him as his legal wife. She did.

121. Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 15.

122. My interview with Sam S. Barlow.

that females could indicate their choice for a husband, but the Priesthood did not welcome such preference: "And then after that, they would call you and ask you if there was anybody you had in your mind. ... And your father would be sitting there, so you were automatically disgraced if you had someone in your mind. And the father would get very angry, because he felt like somebody who hadn't done his job—he hadn't kept his daughter away from other boys properly. So there was quite a bit of disgrace if you actually did fall in love with somebody who you really did want to get married to." Only a couple of her friends expressed the desire to marry young men prior to the Priesthood's choice, in which case the marriage occurred only after much contrary counseling and a long waiting period.<sup>123</sup>

#### AGES OF WIVES AND HUSBANDS

This plural wife's family history raises the question of the age difference between husbands and plural wives in fundamentalist marriages. Her mother became a plural wife at fourteen, when her father was about thirty-seven. This plural wife herself married in the Allred group at seventeen to a man who was twenty years her senior, and shortly afterward introduced her seventeen-year-old friend as a new plural wife to her husband. This woman's sister married at nineteen to one of Colorado City's middle-aged priesthood leaders, Marion Hammon, who led the dissident "Second Ward." The 1953 raid and investigation showed that "the average age at first marriage for fundamentalist women in Short Creek was sixteen, though fourteen and fifteen were not uncommon."<sup>124</sup> Based on her observations twenty years later, this woman (who left the Johnson group and has now abandoned polygamy) says that for the females there "it's personal preference," with most choosing to accept an arranged marriage between the ages of sixteen and nineteen: "By the time you're twenty-one, you're an old maid." Despite her own mother's marriage at fourteen in the Salt Lake community of the Colorado City group, this woman disagrees with the 1953 court findings at Short Creek, and says it is "*uncommon* to be married at fourteen" in that group.<sup>125</sup>

This is not always the case, but plural wives are often teenagers and sometimes twenty years younger than their polygamous husbands. On the other hand, when a fundamentalist male marries his first wife, she is usually close to his own age. This pattern holds true in all the groups, as

123. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

124. *Ibid.*; Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 14.

125. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley. Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," 56, also comments, without source citation, that "In Colorado City many girls marry at fourteen," and that unmarried females there are "old maids" at age twenty.

well as among independent fundamentalists. Rulon C. Allred himself was middle-aged when he married two fifteen-year-old brides.<sup>126</sup> An independent plural wife in this study is twenty-seven years younger than her husband who is twenty-five to twenty-two years older than his other plural wives.<sup>127</sup> Independents like Ogden Kraut express discomfort at such age differences, and some fundamentalist men marry only wives their age or older.<sup>128</sup> On the other hand, the plural wives I interviewed for this study do not regret their youthful decisions after fifteen to twenty years of marriage.

There are LDS church and Utah state perspectives on fundamentalist teen brides. Joseph Smith himself in his mid-thirties married a seventeen-year-old and a fifteen-year-old as plural wives, and their marriages were not platonic.<sup>129</sup> In Utah 23.5 percent of females who married monogamously in 1986 were teenagers, compared with 13.1 percent of females nationally who married that year.<sup>130</sup> "Well, in Utah the age of consent for marriage is fourteen, if the parents agree," observes the director of the Utah Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. "But if they do it for religious reason, then people get upset."<sup>131</sup>

One such upset person is the director of Utah Children. This child advocacy group has filed *amicus curiae* briefs in the Fischer adoption case against the right of polygamist families to adopt any children, including orphaned polygamous children: "We also note that young women are frequently given very early in marriage. And we do not think to give girls in marriage is in their best interest." Such opponents regard teenage monogamous marriage as regrettable, but see teenage polygamous marriage as evil. Although Utah Children and others deny that religion is the issue, they actually regard polygamous religious conviction as inherently coercive for teenage girls.<sup>132</sup>

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126. Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 47, 79. Of the three polygamist families featured in Campbell "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," only one man had married teenage brides.

127. My interview with Carla Foster.

128. My interview with Kraut. Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," 38, 39, gives examples of this alternate pattern of same-or-older-aged plural wives.

129. Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1977), 313, 355; Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippets Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 146-47.

130. *Marriage and Divorce: 1987* (Salt Lake City: Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics, 1987), 10.

131. Michelle Parrish-Pixler interview by Ken Verdoia on 6 Dec. 1989, copy in my possession.

132. Rosalind McGee interview by Katherine Lundell and Ken Verdoia on 15 Jan. 1990, copy in my possession; also "Utah Children Files Amicus Brief Opposing Adoption of Six Children By Polygamist Couple" (Salt Lake City: Press Release by Utah Children, 31 May 1989). The specific instance is the Fischer family adoption case, *In the Matter of Wayne Allen Thornton et al.*, Number 890053, Priority Number 7 (Utah Supreme Court). This family is featured in *New York Times*, 12 June 1989, 10, and in *Ladies' Home Journal*, Feb. 1990, 116ff.

## MARRIAGE DYNAMICS

Fundamentalists also disagree on the question of whether it is necessary to have a minimum number of wives. One author implies that a righteous family "quorum" has a minimum of two plural wives.<sup>133</sup> Ogden Kraut observes that the organized groups regard an increase in the number of wives as requirement or reward for each level of presiding office. Even though Kraut himself now has five wives, he waited two decades to marry polygamously, and says, "Personally, I don't just don't think that they ought to be running around looking for a bunch of wives. Some of the groups kind of have the idea that the more wives you have the more power, authority, whatever."<sup>134</sup> Rulon Allred's daughter says that is often true among the Apostolic United Brethren.<sup>135</sup> In the groups and among independents, some regard the number of wives as a status symbol for men, whereas other husbands are appalled at such a concept.

Polygamist husband-wife dynamics in fundamentalist families vary as much as in monogamist families outside Mormonism, but polygamy obviously adds to the complexity. Psychologist Marvin Rytting notes, "What you have in polygamy is basically an intensification of what you see in all sorts of families."<sup>136</sup> Fundamentalist men say they fall in love with each wife in sequence, and argue that this is no more difficult to understand than a father in any family loving each new child as much as he loves his older children.<sup>137</sup> Unless the marriage is arranged (as at Colorado City), a female can propose polygamous marriage, but usually the man does so. Technically, he requires the permission of his first wife to enter polygamy, but that is not necessary if she is opposed.<sup>138</sup> A plural wife in the Allred group observes that a prospective plural wife meets with the first wife and polygamous wives, if any, to "relate with them and take whatever time is necessary. Everybody is very free about their

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133. Short, *Questions On Plural Marriage*, 77. Compare with D. Gene Pace, "Wives of Nineteenth Century Mormon Bishops: A Quantitative Analysis," *Journal of the West* 21 (Apr. 1982): 49-57.

134. My interview with Kraut.

135. Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 249.

136. Quoted in Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," 58, but mistakenly identified there as a psychiatrist. Rytting presented his intensive study of the polygamous husband, wives, and children in a single household in his unpublished "Between Three Cultures: A Polygamous Marriage," paper at the meeting of the Mormon History Association at Omaha, Nebraska, May 1983, and in his unpublished "Persecuting and Prosecuting Polygamists: Perplexing Public Policies," paper at the meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex at Madison, Wisconsin, June 1986.

137. For example, my interview with Owen Allred, and Owen Allred interview by Ken Verdoia.

138. Short, *Questions On Plural Marriage*, 10, 39.

feelings and expressions."<sup>139</sup> Although optional, the first wife's cooperation is essential for a congenial polygamist family, which the first wife traditionally begins by placing the hand of the new plural wife in her husband's hand at the marriage ceremony.<sup>140</sup>

A teenage boy in the Allred group describes the social customs following the marriage ceremony of fundamentalist couples within the group. "You don't see the marriage performed, but they have a reception with cake and ice cream, entertainment, and all this kind of stuff," including religious testimonials. He adds that "the first wife usually has quite a big reception in proportion to the other wives," as a precaution against attendance at a polygamous reception by someone unfriendly to the Principle.<sup>141</sup> Even though social/legal necessity may require a rule of small (or no) receptions for polygamous brides, this inevitably gives greater status to the monogamous marriages of Mormon fundamentalists. Likewise their tradition of longer monogamous courtship. Preeminence of the first wife is deeply ingrained even within families that have been fundamentalist for generations.<sup>142</sup>

#### JEALOUSY

Even the first wife's approval does not eliminate problems with jealousy, which is clearest from the plural wife's point of view. A plural wife in the Allred group says that with her husband's other wives she had a congenial relationship which "was a very easy, wonderful amalgamation" but quickly adds, "That's not necessarily standard."<sup>143</sup> Some plural wives, like one of Rulon Allred's widows, do not acknowledge jealousy: "it was no different for me, really, sharing my sister-wives with my husband than it had been sharing my sisters with my father." One of his daughters says, "The mothers would sooner die than admit to jealousy or any form of rivalry."<sup>144</sup> On the other hand, plural wives I interviewed volunteered comments on jealousy.

The youngest and last plural wife in an independent household says that "everyone was all threatened" when their husband married her, and it took a year for the other wives "to calm down" as they grew to love

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139. My interview with "Jane Doe Allred"; also Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 22.

140. My interview with Potter and "Jane Doe Allred." Although traditional, the presence of the first wife has often been eliminated at the ceremony, especially when fear of arrests has made it necessary to reduce witnesses to polygamy. In the law polygamy is the ceremony, not the living arrangement.

141. My interview with Jeremy Thompson.

142. Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 45.

143. My interview with "Jane Doe Allred."

144. Mabel Allred interview by Katherine Lundell; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 185.

her. After sixteen years “we’re all still real possessive of [him] and his feelings,” she says. “[He] is one of those creative people who write you love letters and poems, you know, and I always look at us as having an individual relationship with him, you know, like a love affair with our husband. We just had to handle sometimes if we were a little jealous, but we’d rather be passionate than, you know, put all your feelings in a closet so you don’t ever feel jealous. I’d rather just be honest, you know, and if we’re jealous, deal with it at the time.”<sup>145</sup> Louis Kelsch’s widow acknowledges that among his six plural wives, “I have to admit that there are feelings like that, but since we believe that this is a higher principle that we are supposed to live, we believe that we are to control those feelings. And we find out that if we do learn to control those feelings, we become closer than sisters, and we have peace in the family.”<sup>146</sup> Girls raised in a fundamentalist family anticipate this necessity, as a fifteen-year-old acknowledges: “I’ll probably feel jealousy. I’ll have to overcome that.” She adds, “It doesn’t really matter if you’re the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, whatever.”<sup>147</sup>

Still, jealousy can be corrosive even for the most devoted fundamentalist families. Raised as a polygamous child in the Colorado City group, one plural wife praises her father’s first wife who had a daughter the same age as the new plural wife. “[She was] very non-jealous, a very giving person. And very many times she would sacrifice her own needs for the needs of my mother or the needs of my father.” Yet when this polygamous child became a plural wife in the Allred group, she found the first wife to be very jealous: “If you have a lot of jealousy between you, somehow you can’t get along. And that jealousy factor really does have to be minimalized.” After five years this plural wife decided to “eliminate the middle man in our relationship, and [the first wife] was the middleman.” She stopped communicating with the first wife and persuaded the other plural wife to do the same. Since all the wives lived in the same large house, the entire family life disintegrated. After years of unrelieved tension that she is sure caused her husband’s heart attack, this plural wife took her children and left. After she established a life alone with her children, her former husband told her the other plural wife also had left him, and that the first wife obtained a civil divorce. This plural wife is now legally married to the husband in the LDS church. The first wife and other plural wife have both become plural wives of other men.<sup>148</sup>

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145. My interview with Carla Foster.

146. My interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch. One plural wife tells another researcher how she controls jealousy: “But when I felt most hateful I went into my room and closed the door.” See Bradley, “Women of Fundamentalism,” 20.

147. My interview with Ruth Foster.

148. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.



## DIVORCE

Although divorce is a painful topic, fundamentalists do not avoid discussing it. "You have to have a society, if you're going to be civilized, that accommodates for the human error that may occur, and allows for a remedy that is progressive and civilized, and allows for productive things," says Sam S. Barlow of Colorado City. Of the arranged marriages there, he adds, "I don't think anybody's expected to be married to somebody they don't want to be married to."<sup>149</sup> A woman raised in the Colorado City group observes that often there is no formal divorce: "If you were a problem wife you had your own home somewhere else—across the town, preferably. And your husband did not come to see you unless it was a necessity. I mean she was basically just to raise her own family almost like a divorced person, but not quite."<sup>150</sup> Morris Jessop of the Allred group's Priesthood Council says that many polygamists "have lost their families—divorces, breakups, heartaches, you name it—because they fooled themselves to think they could live this way of life and not put an effort to it," but Owen Allred estimates that within his group there is only one divorce for every thirty-seven plural marriages.<sup>151</sup> Ogden Kraut estimates a slightly higher divorce rate for plural marriages among independents: one in thirty.<sup>152</sup>

The estimates by Allred and Kraut translate to 2.7 percent to 3.3 percent of polygamist marriages ending in divorce, which fundamentalists define simply as the permanent dissolution of a plural marriage, since there is no civil divorce for polygamy. Standardized divorce rates (crude and refined) based on per thousand of population are not a workable basis of comparison for the small numbers of Mormon fundamentalists. However, fundamentalist estimates show that current polygamist marriages are far less likely to end in divorce than civil marriages within the LDS church, Utah, and the United States. In 1981 a representative of the LDS bureaucracy and a sociologist conducted a random survey of 7,446 members of the LDS church and found that 5.4 percent of men and 6.5 percent of women divorced after LDS temple marriage. For total marriages (non-temple and temple), 14 percent of married men and 19 percent of married women in the LDS church divorced. In Utah there is one new divorce annually for every 2.2 new marriages performed, and the percent of divorce for ever-married men is 21.1 percent, and for women is 22.0 percent. Nationally, the percent of divorce reported for ever-married

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149. My interview with Sam S. Barlow. For the nineteenth century, see Eugene E. Campbell and Bruce L. Campbell, "Divorce Among Mormon Polygamists: Extent and Explanations," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Winter 1978): 14-23.

150. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

151. Morris Jessop interview by Ken Verdoia; Owen Allred interview by Ken Verdoia.

152. Ogden Kraut interview by Ken Verdoia; my interview with Kraut.

men is 22.3 percent, and for women is 23.3 percent.<sup>153</sup> Fundamentalists have almost a tenth that rate in polygamist divorce.

However, Mormon fundamentalists contribute to the civil divorce rates through the break-up of their first marriages, particularly for couples who convert to fundamentalism. First wives obtained civil divorces from some of fundamentalism's earliest leaders: Joseph W. Musser, Louis A. Kelsch, Jr., Charles F. Zitting, Rulon C. Allred, and Rulon Jeffs. In some cases the divorce came after the mere suggestion of polygamy; in other cases after the first wife had tried for years to share her husband with sister-wives and with the fundamentalists over whom he presided.<sup>154</sup> A girl in an independent family reports that the divorce of a first wife is "kind of common" among independents.<sup>155</sup> This is true because first wives in the groups are now likely to be socialized to polygamy through growing up in fundamentalist homes,<sup>156</sup> whereas independents have a higher proportion of converts confronting polygamy for the first time in their lives. Nevertheless, a first wife's divorce does not always mean she has rejected polygamy—in two of the families of this study the first wives were converts from the LDS church who obtained civil divorces from polygamists, and then became plural wives to other men.<sup>157</sup>

Unhappiness and divorce are part of fundamentalist polygamy, just as dysfunctional families are widespread among LDS and non-LDS monogamists. Of greater interest are the dynamics of polygamous living among Mormon fundamentalists. Polygamous families today manifest several adaptations in the relations of husband and wife, wife with wife, children with parents, children with children, and children with outsiders. Mormon fundamentalist adaptations are sometimes as individual as

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153. "LDS Rank High in Marriage, Low in Divorce, Study Says," *Ensign* 14 (July 1984): 79; Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Graduate School of Business, *Statistical Abstract of Utah: 1990* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 46; Thomas K. Martin, Tim B. Heaton, Stephen J. Bahr, eds., *Utah In Demographic Perspective: Regional and National Contrasts* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 126.

154. Joseph W. Musser and Hugh B. Brown family group sheets in Family History Library of the LDS church, Salt Lake City; Hugh B. Brown interview, 12-13 Nov. 1969, transcription, 24-25, in Edwin B. Firmage papers, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah; Laura Tree Zitting, *The Life of Charles Frederick Zitting: One of God's Noble Men* (N.p., By the Author, 1988), 27; my interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 39. A published autobiography of a first wife's gradual disillusionment with fundamentalist polygamy and return to the LDS church is Melissa Merrill [pseud.], *Polygamist Wife* (Salt Lake City: Olympus Press, 1975), which was published by this devotional press as a warning to its LDS clientele. The narrative is true, however, and her husband was a prominent publisher in the Allred group.

155. My interview with Ruth Foster.

156. Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 22-23, comments on this socialization of daughters in fundamentalist families.

157. My interviews with Jonathan D. Robinson and Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

the persons involved, but the fundamentalist group can also shape family life in prescribed ways. These dynamics can only be sketched briefly here.<sup>158</sup>

#### STATUS OF FEMALES

The question of subservience of females to a polygamous patriarchy is one reason the Utah Children advocacy group has legally battled the right of Mormon fundamentalists to adopt children. This organization's director says that fundamentalist teachings that "women were considered property, that women were expected to be submissive ... are outside of the norms of general society, and we do not believe are in the interest of healthy children growing up to be healthy and normal adults." Thus one argument against the right of polygamists to adopt is that they teach their sons to be patriarchal and their daughters to be subservient.<sup>159</sup> "But," counters the feminist director of the ACLU's Utah Chapter, "the truth of the matter is that not very many religions in this country support the full equality of women. So if we were going to outlaw every religion that didn't promote equality for women, I think that there would be a lot fewer religions in this country."<sup>160</sup>

Among fundamentalists that debate may be more relevant to the Colorado City group. One plural wife raised in the group believes that the husband typically "controls the family, controls the wives, controls the income, controls the discipline," and that wives in the Colorado City group are "expected to submit themselves to their husband in all things." However, she admits that her father was stricter than others.<sup>161</sup> On the other hand, the third of five wives in one Colorado City family argues for their domestic power: "Anyone who thinks a plural wife is weak and submissive can't imagine the strength it takes to manage a large home filled with children."<sup>162</sup> But even that seems to be praise for the endurance of wives,

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158. Compare the following discussion to Vicky Burgess-Olson, "Family Structure and Dynamics in Early Utah Mormon Families, 1847-1885," Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1975; Lawrence Foster, "Polygamy and the Frontier: Mormon Women in Early Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 50 (Summer 1982): 268-89; Kahile Mehr, "Women's Response to Plural Marriage," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Fall 1985): 84-98; Embury, *Mormon Polygamous Families*; and Douglas R. White, "Rethinking Polygyny: Co-Wives, Codes, and Cultural Systems," *Current Anthropology* 29 (Aug.-Oct. 1988): 529-72.

159. Rosalind McGee interview by Katherine Lundell and Ken Verdoia; also "Utah Children Files Amicus Brief Opposing Adoption of Six Children By Polygamist Couple" (Salt Lake City: Press Release by Utah Children, 31 May 1989).

160. Michelle Parrish-Pixler interview by Ken Verdoia.

161. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 15, does not specifically address this question of actual living dynamics, but does show that subservience was the normative value presented in Mormon fundamentalist literature such as *Truth* 14 (Oct. 1948): 134.

162. Anonymous wife, quoted in Ken Verdoia, "A Matter of Principle," *Utah Holiday* 19 (May 1990): 21.

not an argument for female autonomy at Colorado City. This group practices closed communion for priesthood holders only, thereby administering the sacrament only to males above the age of twelve. Females do not receive the sacrament in meetings of the Johnson-Jeffs group in Colorado City, the Salt Lake Valley, or elsewhere, whereas females and males have equal access to the sacrament in the Allred group and among independents.<sup>163</sup>

Deference, not subservience, seems to be the rule for women elsewhere in Mormon fundamentalism. "Pregnant and chained to the kitchen sink is pretty much the image, but that isn't so at all," explains a plural wife in the Allred group. "Our counsel is sought for in the decisions, but we are encouraged to be ourselves. It is not restrictive." "However," she adds, "when you have a head of a family who has four wives, there has to be some system or you have chaotic daily activities constantly. So we do believe in order." Her view of family order is that the husband makes final decisions after consultation with the wives.<sup>164</sup> This is echoed by a plural wife among the independents: "I feel like the husband and the father of the family is definitely the patriarch in that family and should be honored as such."<sup>165</sup> An Allred Council member's plural wife describes her relationship to him as non-subservient: "And he will say, 'Maybe this would be the better way to do it, but that's up to you, you know.' He usually leaves the final choice up to me."<sup>166</sup>

In fact, plural wives often have a practical autonomy that counters stereotypes of fundamentalist patriarchy. This is especially true when the wives have separate residences and the husband is absent for days or weeks at a time. One plural wife of more than fifty years comments, "Well, when you are in different homes, like we were—we had three different establishments—he is only there a third of the time. So you have two-thirds of the time when you do have to run your own affairs and you are independent in a small way. ... We would always consult him about things, but still we had to handle the problems that would come up with the children and with our cars and so on." She admits that her autonomy has sometimes bruised her husband's ego, and so plural wives "have to play dependence one time and independence another."<sup>167</sup> Some fundamentalist wives do not play dependence very well. One plural wife in the

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163. My telephone interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley on 9 Oct. 1990; my interviews with Ann \_\_\_\_\_, Heather \_\_\_\_\_, James \_\_\_\_\_, and Jonathan D. Robinson; my observations of a sacrament meeting of the Apostolic United Brethren on 21 Jan. 1990.

164. My interview with "Jane Doe Allred." This is echoed in Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," 58.

165. My interview with Ann \_\_\_\_\_.

166. June Jessop interview by Ken Verdoia on 20 Jan. 1990, copy in my possession.

167. Maureen Barlow interview by Ken Verdoia.

Allred group vetoed every choice for a new house her husband proposed, which exasperated her sixteen-year-old son who helped his father pick out one house after another.<sup>168</sup>

In fact, the residential pattern for fundamentalist families tends to be decided by wives among the independents and Allred group and by husbands or the leadership in the Johnson group and Kingston group.<sup>169</sup> Co-residence is common for financial reasons, and sometimes is preferred by the wives. One independent plural wife says, "We were all close. Susan and I lived together for twelve years. Karen, Susan, and I lived together maybe six years," although they now choose to live in separate residences with their large families.<sup>170</sup> Co-residence can involve each wife having a separate section of the building for herself and children, or it can involve the more complex arrangement apparently standard in the Colorado City group: "All the bedrooms for the children would be on the top floor, and then all the wives' areas, their bedrooms would be on the middle floor. And then maybe on the main floor just one or two wives that basically didn't have children, and the husband's office and bedroom would be on the main floor."<sup>171</sup> Wives can also be in different states, or separate cities, or across town, or a few blocks from each other, or in a specially constructed polygamous "compound" of adjacent buildings.<sup>172</sup>

Even though co-residence of wives in a large house eliminates the *de facto* independence of wives in separate residences, a fundamentalist husband may actually encourage autonomy for his plural wives living under one roof. When the wives in one household expected their husband to make decisions, he usually replied, "You can handle this, dear, I know you can." One of his plural wives comments: "So he was always encouraging us to be our best selves, to always push forward. And I appreciated that in him." He also handled finances for all the wives, until they decided to control their own income and budgets.<sup>173</sup> At the far end from female subservience is one of Alex Joseph's wives who explains: "Polygamy is a feminist lifestyle. I can go off 400 miles to law school, and

168. My interview with Jonathan D. Robinson.

169. My interviews with Ann \_\_\_\_\_, Caroline Dewegeli Daley, and "George Mason."

170. My interview with Carla Foster.

171. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley. This seems to be a more detailed explanation of the "master bedroom wife" system practiced by one polygamist and rejected by another in Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," 36, 38.

172. My interviews with Ann \_\_\_\_\_, Carla Foster, Heather \_\_\_\_\_, Jonathan D. Robinson, Jeremy Thompson, Owen Allred, and Barbara Owen Kelsch; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 67.

173. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

the family keeps running," to which this plural wife adds: "I am a monogamist. My husband is a polygamist."<sup>174</sup>

This discussion risks creating another fundamentalist stereotype—plural wives as feminists. Nevertheless, husband-wife dynamics can be as diverse in Mormon fundamentalist marriages as in the monogamous marriages of outsiders. In current polygamist marriages, husbands vary from patriarchal controllers to partners in decision-making, and wives from subservient to feminist. No marriage exists in a social vacuum, and all the plural wives in this study volunteered comments about feminism, women's liberation, and society's expectations of the male role in marriage. "But I'm not a feminist or women's libber" was almost a cliché among these plural wives as they described their occupational independence and family autonomy. In fact, American society intensifies the female autonomy that is latent in modern polygamy. Many polygamous couples feel a desire to disprove the stereotype of polygamist wife subservience, and they unconsciously turn to feminist-influenced models of partnership-marriage rather than to biblical models of patriarchal marriage. That process is common among the independents and in the Allred group, less so in the Colorado City group, but is always influenced by the personal preferences of polygamous husbands and wives.

Those differences affect the division of housework in a polygamous household. Louis Kelsch's widow says that for the first few years the wives lived together and decided among themselves what they would do. Later Kelsch himself "would divide up the household duties, and then we would take turns, so that no one had the unpleasant jobs forever."<sup>175</sup> In some families a dominant wife (usually the first) takes charge and assigns everything (including weeks free from housework).<sup>176</sup> In other families the wives permanently specialize in particular household duties.<sup>177</sup> In many families this is a multiple version of "women's work," but some polygamist husbands are very domestic. "When I was a [university] student," observes one plural wife, "he always made breakfast and did dishes at night."<sup>178</sup> Another plural wife adds, "I'm not one that likes to spend five hours in a kitchen all day long, and have a hot meal ready for my loving husband when he gets home. He likes to cook and I'm more than glad to let him."<sup>179</sup>

Whether in co-residence or in separate residences, a man's plural

174. King, "The Mormon Underground," 30; also her similar statements in *New York Times*, 9 Apr. 1991, A-22.

175. My interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch.

176. Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 46.

177. Bradley, "Women of Fundamentalism," 21.

178. My interview with Carla Foster.

179. My interview with Ann \_\_\_\_\_.

wives usually take care of each other's children. Louis Kelsch's widow says, "If some of us left, the others babysat voluntarily. We would say, 'I'm going. Would you watch the children?'"<sup>180</sup> One employed plural wife explains that babysitting by a sister wife "gives the woman much more freedom to go out and work if she chooses, to stay home if she chooses, to do both."<sup>181</sup>

#### FEMALE EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL STRESS

Whether by necessity or personal preference, most polygamous wives are employed outside the home. Traditionally, plural wives in the Kingston group work outside the home, often as accountants for the extensive financial transactions of the Davis County Co-operative.<sup>182</sup> The majority of Colorado City's plural wives work in its public schools, its community college, or its Danco clothing factory which manufactures uniforms for medical facilities and for such national chains as Thrifty Drugs and Sizzler restaurants.<sup>183</sup> Many plural wives work in teaching, in clerical positions, or in Utah's service-industry economy. "In the early years it was necessity," one woman says. "We cried when we left our babies, and the sister wife would hold the baby up at the window and wave good-bye as we left." As a marked advantage over secular society, this sister-wife babysitting leaves children with a trusted adult family member, while allowing their mother to pursue educational or occupational goals. Now this plural wife is preparing for a career as a physician.<sup>184</sup> Although Owen Allred prefers that the wives in his group remain with their families, most wives work outside the home, including two of his daughters who are registered nurses.<sup>185</sup> Alex Joseph's wives include a newspaper editor, attorney, fire fighter, and real estate agent.<sup>186</sup>

Separate incomes can give plural wives economic autonomy if they manage their own occupational income. However, very often (especially in co-residence households) each wife's income becomes part of a family budget administered by the husband, and each wife manages only her allotted portion. On the other hand, wives in separate residences (particularly if long distances from each other) tend to manage their own

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180. My interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch.

181. My interview with Ann \_\_\_\_\_.

182. My interview with "George Mason."

183. My telephone interview with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 17 Oct. 1989; my telephone interview with Ken Verdoia on 28 Mar. 1990.

184. My interview with Carla Foster.

185. My interview with Owen Allred.

186. King, "The Mormon Underground Fights Back," 26. For the diversity of employment by nineteenth-century Mormon wives, see Michael Vinson, "From Housework to Office Clerk: Utah's Working Women, 1870-1900," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 53 (Fall 1985): 326-35.

occupational income, in addition to what their husband provides them from his income.

In fact, outside work for plural wives is common because polygamist families in an urban-suburban setting almost always struggle financially. Polygamous husbands frequently have more than one job, and children grow up with a constant awareness of the family's limited resources.<sup>187</sup> Louis Kelsch's widow comments about the general inability of most polygamous families to buy their children a lot of fashionable clothes and to pay for college education. Most of the children in her extended family begin working full time as teenagers.<sup>188</sup> One of the boys in this study quit school at fifteen to work full time, and a girl began working at the same age so she could pay for her orthodontia. One of the high school boys is in college preparation courses and works part time, but did not go out for track because he could not afford the cost of track shoes, uniform, etc. The high school coach frequently identified polygamist children in classes, and loudly tried to hand him money in front of the other boys. This young man walked away in angry humiliation. So polygamist families are working families for young and old, male and female.

#### CHILD INTERACTION WITH SISTER-WIVES, FATHER, AND SIBLINGS

Sister-wife babysitting also increases the interaction of plural children with the women they call "aunts" and "the other mothers." Teenagers in this study come from large polygamous families representing Colorado City, the Allred group, and the independents. For example, one has twenty-one siblings (ten by one mother), another is from a family of five wives and twenty-six children, and another from a family of three wives and thirty-seven children. Two plural wives point out difficulties in disciplining the other children—resentment between wives if a wife is too severe with a sister-wife's child, and confusion for the children who confront different rules when they enter another wife's "area" in the large house.<sup>189</sup> By an interesting contrast, all the teenagers in this study reported that the other wives disciplined them the same as their own mothers. Their experiences are typical of this boy's: "My other mothers have always just shown all the love that they could give to me, and I'm always welcome at any of their houses at any time. You don't have to knock to go into their houses, because it's pretty much your house, too. And I'm always sleeping over there ... and I can eat there or whatever." A teenage

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187. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 109, 135, 155; Verdoia, "A Matter of Principle," 21.

188. My interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch.

189. My interviews with Barbara Owen Kelsch and Caroline Dewegeli Daley.



girl adds, "Sometimes we even call the other moms our Mom."<sup>190</sup>

In practical terms, it is difficult for polygamous children to have the kind of closeness with the father that they have with his other wives. This is a result of his heavy work schedule, numerous children, and (for separately housed families) his visitation to his other families. A wife in Colorado City notes, "A father may only spend a few minutes each week with each child."<sup>191</sup> One plural wife in the Allred group admits "he was too busy helping his wives and not doing the fatherly things—not hugging them, and not helping them, and not going to the PTA meetings, and the kids got to where they didn't like their Dad. They just didn't because he was too busy. He wasn't a dad to them." Likewise Rulon C. Allred's daughter published a family memoir that expresses her adoration for him as well as her resentment against his emotional distance.<sup>192</sup>

One teenage boy suggests that polygamy simply intensifies a difficulty some fathers would have in parenting even a few children. "My father's father was quite abusive ... and because he didn't receive that kind of love and attention as a child from his own father, it was very hard for him to learn how to be a good father to us. And I'm not saying he wasn't a good father. No way. I'm saying that he's had to learn because he wasn't taught. He's had to learn on his children how to be a family man. ... I've never had any bad experiences with him at all. I've never seen him argue with any of my mothers or with any of the kids for that matter. ... He doesn't get too much involved with the personal affairs of the children because he's not there as much." Then this teenager looks up with glistening eyes, "But he's the best father in the world, and I can say that about him, and I wouldn't choose anybody else."

Despite the logistical problems of parenting a polygamous family, some fundamentalist men are Super-Dads to their children. A teenage daughter reports: "I have a really good relationship with my dad, as far as relationships go. ... It's incredible having so many children, but he can get around and make us all feel special, and he's helped so much in our upbringing. I think it's really neat that he's been able to make us each feel important. ... I mean, he's busy. He has a lot of things to do, but he always has time to sit down and talk with us separately, and then if we have any questions for him, he's always there for us ... just boppin' from house to

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190. My interviews with Jeremy Thompson, Ruth Foster, also Sarah \_\_\_\_\_, Heather \_\_\_\_\_, Jonathan D. Robinson; and James \_\_\_\_\_. Compare with Solomon, *In My Father's House*.

191. Anonymous plural wife, quoted in Verdoia, "A Matter of Principle," 21. This did not appear in the television documentary of same title, broadcast nationally by PBS on 29 Nov. 1990.

192. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 62, 98, 190, 237, 252.

house."<sup>193</sup> Some polygamous children have unavailable fathers, but others have fathers as emotionally connected as the best monogamist is to his children.

Another side of polygamous family dynamics is the relationship among children of different wives. All the polygamous teenagers in this study report that they regard their siblings as full brothers and sisters, just with different mothers, and the children generally have been in close association all their lives. Similar-aged children by different mothers often report being "best friends," sometimes their only close friends. One plural wife comments that in large polygamous families "they don't have the need for a lot of outside friends because they've got somebody their own age. They've probably got three or four their own age."<sup>194</sup> However, the eldest children of the first wife are less likely to feel this same closeness, since they are often ten to twenty years older than the oldest children of the first plural wife. Estrangement among half-siblings is common when the first wife obtains a divorce, but there are always exceptions. A plural wife reports that after polygamy caused her husband's first marriage to end in divorce, the first wife's children drew names each year to send Christmas gifts to their growing number of polygamous brothers and sisters.<sup>195</sup> The "best friend" relationship of polygamous siblings raises the question of their interaction with outsiders.

#### EDUCATION

Public school is traditionally the primary agent in the socialization of outsiders, but that is only partly true for the children of Mormon fundamentalists. There is no consistent pattern for the education of these children (even within the same families). They can be found in public schools, private academies, and home schools. Also, distinctions blur between public education and fundamentalist schools.

The educational mode of lowest socialization is the home schooling favored by some fundamentalists. Out of dozens of independent fundamentalists participating home schooling, the John Singer family alone refused school board supervision of the instruction and engaged in an increasingly bitter conflict with authorities in Utah. This resulted in an armed stand-off and John Singer's death in 1979.<sup>196</sup> Neither Utah state authorities, local school boards, nor fundamentalist families have repeated the errors of that unfortunate confrontation over fundamentalist

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193. My interview with Ruth Foster.

194. My interview with Ann \_\_\_\_\_.

195. My interview with Carla Foster.

196. David Fleischer and David M. Freedman, *Death of an American: The Killing of John Singer* (New York: Continuum, 1983).

education.

Still, some independent fundamentalists are critical of the quality of education that can result from home schools. Ogden Kraut says home schools are fine where wives have good training, but in some fundamentalist home schools "the poor kids never get any training. It had been better for them to go to public schools, than to stay home and to do nothing."<sup>197</sup> A fifteen-year-old girl in a home school agrees that "most Fundamentalists do an awful job educating their children. I mean a lot of their children can't even write their names," but in her case her mother and the sister-wives were college graduates with teaching certificates. To get course work beyond the abilities of their home schools, students take correspondence courses or enroll in selected courses at the high schools. This teenage girl is planning on a pre-med program when she enters college.<sup>198</sup>

After decades of operation, the private academy at Colorado City (formerly Short Creek Academy) closed in the 1980s. It had offered instruction through the twelfth grade. A transfer student found the curricula more difficult than those of public schools she had attended in Salt Lake Valley up to her move to Colorado City in her mid-teens.<sup>199</sup>

Today all the children in the Colorado City-Hildale polygamist commune attend tax-supported public schools. But these "public schools" (two elementary schools larger than many in Salt Lake City, a middle school, and a high school) are operated and staffed completely by fundamentalists for the fundamentalist children of the community. These schools also are rigorously secular and, aside from a moment of meditative silence each morning, have no religious content. Daytime religious instruction comes through the release-time seminary program of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Colorado City. It is almost indistinguishable from the instruction in LDS church release-time seminaries in Utah on the Mormon "standard works" of scripture: Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.<sup>200</sup> Likewise at Colonia LeBaron and Los Molinos, Mexico, fundamentalist children first attended private schools and then government-supported schools within their own communities.<sup>201</sup>

About 85 percent of the Johnson group's young men and women attend college. Most graduate from Mohave County Community College (also staffed by fundamentalists) right in Colorado City. Many go on to

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197. My interview with Kraut.

198. My interview with Ruth Foster, also with Sarah \_\_\_\_\_.

199. My interviews with Caroline Dewegeli Daley and Sam S. Barlow.

200. My telephone interviews with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 17 Oct. 1989, and Ken Verdoia on 28 Mar. 1990; my interview with Sam S. Barlow.

201. LeBaron, *LeBaron Story*, 169-70, 254.

the nearby University of Northern Arizona at Flagstaff or Southern Utah University at Cedar City, Utah. Some attend the University of Utah at Salt Lake City, and a few even go to the LDS church's Brigham Young University in Provo. In consultation with the Priesthood, the Colorado City's graduates go into occupations that reflect traditional gender roles.<sup>202</sup>

The Allred group and the Kelsch family of independents currently have private academies. The Apostolic United Brethren operates its certified Mountain Valley School in Bluffdale, Salt Lake Valley, but the school board restricts enrollment to about 200 students because of the facility's size. Most children in the Allred group attend regular public schools, and only a fourth of the presiding elder's own grandchildren attend his group's school. The Allred commune of Pinesdale, Montana, also has an academy. Aside from opening prayer, the general instruction is secular in the Allred academies which are also attended by non-fundamentalist and non-LDS children. The academies use the Montessori method, and students graduate on a mastery-level at about seventeen or eighteen years of age.<sup>203</sup> The Kelsch family of independent fundamentalists owns and operates the Silver Creek Academy for the benefit of the children who live in a compound of Kelsch brothers and a brother-in-law near Park City, Utah. It also is licensed, but its graduates rarely attend college.<sup>204</sup>

Independent fundamentalists, the Kingston group, many Allred families, and Johnson group families in Salt Lake Valley send their children to public schools. Statistics of higher education are not available for these fundamentalists, but high proportions of males and females attend college in the Allred group and among some independents. Although the independent Kelsch children near Park City have their own academy, most of the children of Kelsch fundamentalists attend public schools, but end their schooling at or before high school graduation in order to work. In fact, if they do not attend a university, fundamentalist boys usually work in the building trades, which Mormon fundamentalists dominate in Salt Lake Valley and elsewhere in Utah. Likewise, the Kelsch family's cabinet factory is one of the largest in the Mountain West. The Kingston group's children also attend public schools, and the Davis County Co-operative may encourage some of its children to attend college and even professional schools in order to provide expert service to the Kingston

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202. My telephone interviews with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 17 Oct. 1989, and Ken Verdoia on 28 Mar. 1990; my interview with Sam S. Barlow.

203. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 Mar. 1986, Sect. NV, 1; Campbell, "Private Place of Plural Marriage," 44; my interview with Owen Allred on 29 July 1989; Owen Allred interview by Ken Verdoia; my interview with Heather \_\_\_\_\_.

204. My interview with Barbara Owen Kelsch.

group as trusted insider-professionals.<sup>205</sup> Despite reservations about the social environment, the majority of urban fundamentalists send their children to public schools, where they interact with outsiders, usually with some discomfort.

#### HARASSMENT BY OUTSIDERS

Many polygamous children have been taunted as “polygies” by neighborhood children or in elementary school.<sup>206</sup> For some, the situation gets uglier during adolescence. When one of Ogden Kraut’s families moved to a new neighborhood recently, someone smashed their windows and threw severed duck heads on the porch.<sup>207</sup> One teenager reports that a few years ago students threw darts at his older sister in the halls of her high school, and a young woman tells of nineteen-year-old neighbors yelling, “We know you, blankety-blank polygamists!” and then “would flip me off and things like that.”

All the teenagers in this study are very reluctant to talk about the religion of those who engage in such harassment of polygamists. They finally acknowledge that this harassment comes from LDS church members, but then quickly add that such behavior is not true of all LDS people. Fundamentalist youth find that most non-LDS children and adults shrug when they learn of polygamists in their midst. However, one teenage fundamentalist explains that even in the heavily LDS high schools there has been almost no harassment in recent years “because there are so many weird people in the school, a polygamist is just another weird group of person.”

Converts and their children suffer the most because they have suddenly entered a category feared by their LDS friends and neighbors. The teenage convert to fundamentalism found his LDS friends suddenly stopped talking to him. Their parents were “my second parents,” but after his conversion, “they didn’t want their kids to have anything to do with me.” He had been a youth leader in his LDS ward but finally stopped attending church meetings because, “I’ll go and [offer to] shake someone’s hand, and they won’t even shake my hand, and they’ll just walk away.” Aside from a fundamentalist girl he has dated for a year, this

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205. My interviews with Roy Potter, Albert E. Barlow, Ann \_\_\_\_\_, Owen Allred, Barbara Owen Kelsch; “Jane Doe Kingston,” information submitted in writing on 25 Apr. 1989.

206. My interview with Jeremy Thompson; Utah children used a doggerel taunt that was both racially and religiously insulting in Solomon, *In My Father’s House*, 15. Although I did not ask them how they spelled the nickname, all the teenagers in this study seemed to pronounce it as given here, rather than the “plyggie” pronunciation in Solomon’s book and in the film *Child Bride of Short Creek*.

207. My interview with Kraut.

teenage convert has not developed any fundamentalist friends his own age. Now at age twenty his friendships are with the middle-aged men and women of the independent meetings he attends.<sup>208</sup>

#### "PASSING" AS MONOGAMISTS

Outside the communes, teenagers from polygamous families lead dual social lives. They have many LDS acquaintances who are unaware of their status, but for most their only close friends are other fundamentalist children. Polygamists' children (particularly independents and those in the Allred group) are proud of blending in. One polygamous boy says of his high school friends: "None of them even know that I am. They just think I'm just another kid." All the teenagers in this study say they would not deny their status if LDS friends asked, but the dual life goes deeper. To avoid questions concerning their families' polygamous status, most fundamentalist teenagers avoid associating at school with each other.<sup>209</sup> This is not a pattern they will grow out of, either, because their parents are rarely known as fundamentalists to outsiders. Aside from their religious meetings, most urban and suburban fundamentalists do their best to be unrecognizable to outsiders.<sup>210</sup>

Which brings up the matter of dress. In its early decades, the Colorado City group "wore fundamentalist Mormonism like a badge: severe buns, long skirts, black suits, faces scrubbed and plain, persisting in old-fashioned dress even for the children."<sup>211</sup> In Colorado City this posed no problem, but elsewhere the Johnson group attracted stares. Such pioneer-type dress invited taunts for their children in school: "I resented the fact that I had to be punished for what my parents did," says one woman born and raised as a polygamist child in the Johnson group's Salt Lake Valley community.<sup>212</sup> This has relaxed a bit in Colorado City, but the door of the community's only restaurant (the Early Bird Cafe) displays a sign: "Cover your elbows, knees, shoulders, and toes, or out this door you goes."<sup>213</sup> In Salt Lake City some fundamentalist children of all ages still wear such distinctive dress, including obviously home-made shirts and trousers for the boys. However, that is a rarity which embarrasses children and teenagers in the Allred group and among independents, and is

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208. My interview with Damon Cook.

209. Even where teenagers wanted to be known by their real names in these interviews, I have not identified them here and in other sections of this essay where I felt their disclosures were too personal.

210. Verdoia, "A Matter of Principle," 22; also specific examples in Campbell, "The Private Place of Plural Marriage," 38-39.

211. Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 27.

212. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley.

213. My telephone interview with Ken Verdoia on 28 Mar. 1990.

even uncomfortable for those youths in the Johnson group who wear modern clothes.

These young people have their own dress code. A leader in the Allred's Youth of Zion prefers Reebok high tops, gray acid-wash Levis, and designer-label shirts. A young woman in the Allred group wears high-tops, 900-series Levis, and a sweatshirt. A teenage girl from a family of independent fundamentalists sports black pants, black blouse, high black soft-leather boots, and a white patent-leather jacket. These fundamentalist girls also use make-up consistent with their secular peers. Owen Allred's grandchildren at his family compound wear the blouses, shirts, shorts, jeans, and surfer jams typical of any teenagers. "I am opposed to it," their grandfather says, "but it's awful hard because of peer pressure from everywhere."<sup>214</sup> It is not so much peer pressure as it is a determination on the part of most urban fundamentalist youth to be inconspicuous: "We act like normal kids and everything," one boy grins. "We don't dress like polygies, or anything."

Hair is another matter. Raised in the Johnson group, a woman says, "I was always trained that it [the hair] was my crowning glory, that according to the Bible, that one of these days I would get to wash the Savior's feet with it, at least if I lived righteous enough. So to cut it to me was a huge disgrace." Rulon Allred would not allow his wives to cut their hair.<sup>215</sup> Most females in both groups still have long hair, but in the Allred group (and to some extent the Colorado City group) those with long hair now style it in contemporary fashion, and avoid the long braid and hair bun. By contrast, women in independent families often have stylishly-cut short hair. Most fundamentalist men now avoid beards, and the Colorado City group expects army-style haircuts for all males. The young man interviewed from this group apologized because his hair was just over his ears.<sup>216</sup> On the other hand, teenage boys in the Allred group tend to have collar-length hair, but if short hair is the style for outsider friends of an Allred group or independent boy, then his hair will be short.

#### DISAFFECTION OF YOUTH

This desire for outsider approval by youth within the relatively easy-going Allred group and among independents often leads to disaffection. One father observes: "There is no middle ground for Fundamentalist youth. Either they're very dedicated or they choose to be completely out of the movement. We respect their choice in the Allred group. We don't try to force them one way or the other. On the other hand, the LDS

214. My interview with Allred.

215. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley; Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 32.

216. My interviews with Caroline Dewegeli Daley and James \_\_\_\_\_.

church provides a middle ground for youth because the church is primarily social.<sup>217</sup> Owen Allred volunteers that alcohol, drugs, delinquency, and sexual experimentation are problems among the Allred group's youths, and that twice as many young men leave the group as females.<sup>218</sup> One teenage boy says, "I've had a lot of influences in the world, and sometimes I wonder why I'm even still here [in the Allred Group]." Many of Rulon Allred's children, and sons of his group's current leadership, have abandoned fundamentalism for the LDS church or no religion.<sup>219</sup>

Defection of independent children from fundamentalism is especially understandable since independents feel estranged from the groups, the church, and the secular society. Ogden Kraut observes that "the percentage is not very high" for keeping their children in the movement that many independent parents also regard as "out of order." He adds, "I know of some men who have large families and almost none of them get back into Fundamentalism."<sup>220</sup> A twenty-three-year-old son in an independent family says, "I don't think that you should believe in just one thing, in one way like Christian or Mormonism or anything."<sup>221</sup>

At the other end of the fundamentalist scale, the strict demands of the Colorado City group and the Kingstons are too much for many of their youths, again primarily young men. In 1953 the present head of Colorado City's youth seminary program claimed that there was no juvenile delinquency or profanity there,<sup>222</sup> and this is a result of rigid social control according to Colorado City's mayor: "If somebody's kids get out of order, you know a man gets some hot breath down his back. It isn't necessarily the police hammering on them. But they get some pressure from the other families and from the people [i.e., the Priesthood] to do something and to take care of them."<sup>223</sup> Many young men leave this control behind as soon as they can.

Raised in the Johnson group until she left it in the mid-1970s, one plural wife says: "There was a very high turnover of young men who left the group." This perception is also supported by recent fieldwork.<sup>224</sup> The

217. My interview with Larry McCurdy.

218. My interview with Owen Allred; also Solomon, *In My Father's House*, 236.

219. Solomon, *In My Father's House*; my interview with "Jane Doe Allred"; Owen Allred interview by Ken Verdoia; Morris Jessop interview by Ken Verdoia.

220. My interview with Kraut.

221. My interview with Brad \_\_\_\_\_ on 30 Jan. 1990.

222. Louis J. Barlow talk on KSUB Radio within a few days of the Short Creek raid on 26 July 1953.

223. Dan Barlow interview by Ken Verdoia; also similar observation in my interview with Sam S. Barlow.

224. My interview with Caroline Dewegeli Daley; my telephone interview with Martha Sonntag Bradley on 17 Oct. 1989.



disaffection is usually total. One man raised in the commune and now in his twenties recently told me, "I've done my best to put it all behind me and live a different life." Of such boys, one Colorado City leader observes, "Percentage wise there's not a whole lot of them who come back and affiliate religiously. There's quite a high percentage that don't."<sup>225</sup> A plural wife in the Davis County Co-operative says that 50 percent of its young people (especially males) abandon the ascetic Order.<sup>226</sup>

#### THE GUARANTEE OF NEW PLURAL MARRIAGES

Since fundamentalists report that twice as many young men abandon fundamentalism as young women, this is the reason that polygamy can continue among fundamentalists with few conversions from the outside. In other words, the rigorous conformity required in the Colorado City group, for example, winnows away the majority of the group's young men. This radically alters the gender ratio of faithful fundamentalists, and leaves a disproportionate number of young women free to become plural wives. This pattern of higher religious persistence for fundamentalist females also allows demographic opportunity for polygamy among independents and the Allred group which promote it less.

Even though polygamy is less common among the Allred group and the independents, there is no evidence that it is dying among those who remain faithful. In Owen Allred's family, all of his daughters and more than half of his sons have entered polygamy. One independent, Albert E. Barlow, reports that all but two of his first plural wife's eight children married polygamously, as did all but one of the twelve children by his second plural wife. A third of Louis Kelsch's family is living in the Principle.<sup>227</sup>

Among the believing fundamentalist teenagers in this study, attitudes vary from cautious to enthusiastic about entering plural marriage in the future. One boy remarks, "I believe it's a true principle, but I don't know if it's for me to live, either. I just have to wait and see." This is echoed by another teenager who says he does not expect to look for a plural wife because "I don't want to have all that responsibility," even though he believes in it. On the other hand, all the married sisters of another teenage boy have married polygamously, and he says, "I definitely do want to live plural marriage because I have a testimony of it." One young woman responds, "It's a big part of my plans. I mean, I don't know, I

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225. My telephone interview with "John Doe Johnson" on 28 Jan. 1990; my interview with Sam S. Barlow. Also dissident Carl Fischer's deposition, 59-60, 105, on 23 Aug. 1988 in the Fifth Judicial District Court for Washington County, Utah, in re Probate No. 3023.

226. "Jane Doe Kingston," information submitted in writing on 25 Apr. 1989.

227. My interviews with Owen Allred, Albert E. Barlow, and Barbara Owen Kelsch.

can't imagine life without it," and the other teenage girls in this study agree. Even in this small group of faithful teenage Mormon fundamentalists, the commitment to marry polygamously is four times higher for females than for males. Such a gender-skewed trend guarantees that Mormon fundamentalism will continue to thrive as a polygamous subculture in America.

#### LIVING WITH ALTERED SOCIAL AND LEGAL REALITIES

These young fundamentalists will enter plural marriage in a more hospitable world than when their parents married polygamously. The 1953 Short Creek raid was a climax of government prosecutions of polygamists, and it backfired in a storm of public criticism for its perpetrators and in enormous financial costs to the government.<sup>228</sup> Prosecutorial interest has sharply declined since then. There was a conviction in 1974 for polygamy, but it was due to a formal complaint by the father of one of the man's plural wives.<sup>229</sup> A polygamist husband expresses the view of Mormon fundamentalists today: "We're taking the position that plural marriage is not prosecutable because of so many deviant practices that the Supreme Court has said are justifiable. ... Because we take that position and because we've had far less persecution over the years, we've become more open." Then he adds, "Some say we'll pay some day. We shouldn't be so open."<sup>230</sup>

Several law enforcement officials explain the lack of prosecutions under anti-polygamy statutes. The assistant chief investigator of the Salt Lake County attorney's office says, "I really doubt that we'll ever see prosecution of those people for the multiple marriage." He explains that because Mormon fundamentalists marry only one wife civilly, the bigamy statutes do not apply. Prosecutors are reluctant to charge fundamentalists with adultery or unlawful cohabitation because of society's acceptance of sexual cohabitation by unmarried persons.<sup>231</sup> Utah's attorney general agrees, and adds that there is not enough prison space to hold all polygamists, so there is "an uneasy truce" between law enforcement and polygamists.<sup>232</sup> The Salt Lake County attorney says the polygamy laws should be taken off the statute books because Mormon fundamentalists in all other respects "are not violating the law." His as-

228. Bradley, *Kidnapped From That Land*.

229. Kraut, *Fundamentalist Mormon*, 22; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 201-207.

230. My interview with "George Mason." Fundamentalists, however, have an exaggerated perception of the judicial acceptance of "deviant practices," which have been decriminalized by several states but not by the U.S. Supreme Court.

231. My interview with Richard W. Forbes.

232. Paul Van Dam interview by Ken Verdoia, and quoted in Verdoia, "A Matter of Principle," 23; also quoted in *New York Times*, 9 Apr. 1991, A-22.

sistant chief investigator adds, "The vast majority of those people are peace-loving. They want no problems with outsiders. They want to be left alone to practice their religion as they best see fit, and we respect that."<sup>233</sup> An FBI agent adds: "At least 99 percent of all polygamists are peaceful, law-abiding people."<sup>234</sup>

These remarkable expressions by senior law enforcement officers are symptomatic of dramatic changes that occurred in less than fifteen years. The murder of Rulon C. Allred in 1977 brought law officers in close contact and cooperation with his successor Owen Allred, as well as with representatives of most other fundamentalist groups anxious to distance themselves from the small band of murderous schismatics connected with Ervil LeBaron. The urgency and intensity of this communication and cooperation broke down walls of suspicion that had previously seemed unbreachable. Owen Allred says, "But as far as the state and the officials of the state—the police departments, head people—they just treat us wonderfully. I am so thankful for that. Right from the governor's office down, they have been very respectful to us."<sup>235</sup>

A renewal of armed stand-offs and bloodshed involving the Singer family and their polygamous son-in-law Addam Swapp in 1988 again placed the local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in the position of seeking cooperation with fundamentalists, this time with the independents.<sup>236</sup> After the Singer-Swapp family bombed an LDS chapel and barricaded themselves at their family compound, Ogden Kraut's efforts at defusing the situation endeared him to the law enforcement agencies. When the resulting publicity of Kraut's polygamous status endangered his position as a civilian employee of the U.S. Army, the local FBI chief and the Utah attorney general intervened with the post commander to protect Kraut's position.<sup>237</sup> It is a long way from the Short Creek raid.

Nevertheless, such developments infuriate powerful elements of Utah and western American society. The *Salt Lake Tribune* printed an editorial in 1988: "Utah officials presumably have tolerated polygamy to keep the peace and to avoid making the dependents of polygamists wards of the state. However, when the state makes special allowances for polygamy, it tacitly approves the practice and scorns its own constitution.

233. David Yocum interview by Ken Verdoia; my interview with Forbes.

234. *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1988, Part I, 24.

235. My interview with Owen Allred; also Robert G. Dyer, "The Evolution of Social and Judicial Attitudes Toward Polygamy," *Utah State Bar Journal* 5 (Spring 1977): 35-45.

236. "The Return of the Patriarch," *Time*, 1 Feb. 1988, 21; Jean Bucher, "Inside Addam Swapp," *Utah Holiday* 18 (Oct. 1988): 31-40, 47; Ogden Kraut, "The Singer/Swapp Siege: Revelation or Retaliation?" *Sunstone* 12 (Nov. 1988): 10-17; an account of the Singer-Swapp stand-off will appear in the forthcoming second edition of Fleischer and Freedman's *Death of an American*.

237. My interview with Kraut.

Such double-dealing cannot continue indefinitely without generating greater contempt for Utah laws and standards.<sup>238</sup> Although LDS church leaders may wish Utah to be as repressive *de facto* as it is *de jure* toward Mormon fundamentalists, the society is in transition and not dictated by church headquarters or its allies.

Mormonism has passed the century mark of its public abandonment of polygamy. The Manifesto saved the church from destruction in 1890, and allowed Utah to become a state in 1896. Now government agencies have entered into a *de facto* gentlemen's agreement with Mormon fundamentalists about their continued living of polygamy. Some law enforcement officials are even looking forward to a *de jure* resolution: a test case before the U.S. Supreme Court that will reverse the 1879 *Reynolds v. the United States* decision allowing criminal prosecution of religiously-based polygamy.<sup>239</sup>

In this instance, disenchanted law officials are joined by legal historians who regard the Reynolds decision as an anachronism that could not be upheld if the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to rule on a challenge to the century-old precedent.<sup>240</sup> In 1988 an Arizona superior court judge fired the first shot of what may be a siege to overturn *Reynolds*: "The court holds, in essence, that the [Arizona] constitutional proscription of polygamy may be applied except where it would interfere with genuine religious practices ..."<sup>241</sup> Those words sounded like the beginning of a judicial battle to fulfill Justice William Douglas's dissent against the 1972 *Wisconsin v. Yoder*: "in time Reynolds will be overturned." Still, the Supreme Court may nullify that effort since its neo-conservative majority used the Reynolds decision in 1990 to deny the use of peyote in Native American religion.<sup>242</sup> The Supreme Court will never relinquish the essential constitutional principle of *Reynolds v. the United States* that there are limits to protected religious practice.

238. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 Dec. 1988, A-22. See also *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 June 1989, A-26.

239. My interview with Richard W. Forbes; James L. Clayton, "The Supreme Court, Polygamy, and the Enforcement of Morals in Nineteenth Century America: An Analysis of *Reynolds v. United States*," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Winter 1979): 46-61.

240. Laurence H. Tribe, *American Constitutional Law* (Mineola, NY: Foundation Press, 1978), 853-54; G. Keith Nedrow, "Polygamy and the Right to Marry: New Life for an Old Lifestyle," *Memphis State University Law Review* 2 (Spring 1981): 203-49; Penelope W. Salzman, "Potter v. Murray City: Another Interpretation of Polygamy and the First Amendment," *Utah Law Review* (1986): 345-71; Ken Driggs, "Lorenzo Snow's Appellate Court Victory," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 58 (Winter 1990): 93.

241. Decision of Judge J. D. Howe in *Samuel S. Barlow v. John A. Blackburn et al.*, on 6 June 1988, Superior Court of Arizona, Maricopa County; copy in my possession.

242. *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205, 92 S. Ct. 1526, 32 L. Ed. 2d 15 (1972); Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 221-22; Bradlee and Van Atta, *Prophet of Blood*, 34; *New York Times*, 18 Apr. 1990, A-10.

However, the *Reynolds* decision is ripe for circumvention. It atavistically defines a non-normative family relationship as deprived of legal protections, even though this family relationship is at least as stable as normative monogamy. If religiously motivated polygamists ever have success with the U.S. Supreme Court, they will do so in an appeal that does not use the First Amendment to challenge *Reynolds*, but instead uses the "equal protection" provision of the Fourteenth Amendment to challenge laws and policies that discriminate against non-monogamous family life.

That is the constitutional potential of the *Fischer* adoption case. In an unappealed decision in 1991, the Utah Supreme Court ruled: "The fact that our [Utah] constitution requires the state to prohibit polygamy does not necessarily mean that the state must deny any or all civil rights and privileges to polygamists." The Utah Supreme Court then ruled that a polygamist family has the legal right to adopt children.<sup>243</sup> This 1991 decision established a precedent for future petitions to obtain judicial recognition of all family rights for polygamous marriages.

#### TRIANGULAR IMPACT: FUNDAMENTALISTS, THE LDS CHURCH, AND THE THIRD WORLD

For its part, the LDS church strenuously resists reversing any policy, and enforcement of the 1890 Manifesto is a big one. In fact, the LDS church applies the Manifesto to countries and cultures where polygamy is legal. For example, Nigerian law allows polygamy, but the LDS church refuses to baptize polygamous husbands or wives in Nigeria unless the husband divorces the plural wives by taking them back to their villages. When the LDS church first sent a representative there, "A Nigerian priest, to become a member of the Church, was told that he could not be baptized unless he sent away one of his wives. He slept on it over night and came the next morning and told Brother Williams that he had decided to let one of his wives go back to her father." Of this, LDS church president David O. McKay lamented: "That is a cruel thing to do." Yet thirty years later that is still the church's policy toward legal polygamists. Nor will the church baptize children of polygamists in Africa, until the children

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243. *In the Matter of the Adoption of W.A.T., V.E.T., J.T.T., J.S.T., J.L.T., and B.D.T., Minors*, 808 P.2d 1083 (Utah 1991): 1085; also *New York Times*, 29 Mar. 1991; Ken Driggs, "Utah Supreme Court Decides Polygamist Adoption Case," *Sunstone* 15 (Sept. 1991): 67-68; T. R. Reid, "The Adoption Case That Shook Utah," *Washington Post* (15 Mar. 1989): B-1; Chris Jorgensen, "Could Adoption Case Affect Polygamy's Future?" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 Apr. 1989, B-1; "Custody Battle in Utah's Top Court Shines Rare Spotlight on Polygamy," *New York Times*, 12 June 1989, 10; "Polygamy Battle: Man Fights Utah over 3rd Wife's Children," *Milwaukee Journal*, 12 June 1989, A-5; *Ladies' Home Journal*, Feb 1990, 116ff.

are old enough to convincingly renounce polygamy.<sup>244</sup>

African polygamy (the normative practice in 78 percent of sub-Saharan tribes) is a challenge for Catholic and Protestant churches as well. Although they lack the LDS church's polygamous scripture and heritage, several Christian churches baptize polygamists. A survey shows that polygamists in Nigeria's capital account for 17.3 percent of Catholics and 23.3 percent of Protestants.<sup>245</sup> Moreover, since polygamy is legal in Nigeria (where there are tens of thousands of Mormons), its polygamists are in compliance with the 1890 Manifesto's wording to "refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."<sup>246</sup> What African polygamists are not in compliance with is U.S. and Utah laws. Thus people who marry legally within African culture are now defined as sinful by a church that once advocated polygamy in defiance of U.S. laws. This contradicts the LDS church's Twelfth Article of Faith as it applies to sub-Saharan Africa: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates and in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." Moreover, a church that defines family life as eternal has a policy that requires the break-up of Third World families as a pre-condition for Mormon conversion.

These ironies will become demographically unbearable once Africa's black LDS population increases significantly beyond its current 100,000. Black African Mormons are in Angola, Cameroon, Botswana, Cameroon,

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244. Discussion by members of LDS First Presidency on 19 Sept. 1962, LDS archives, transcript in my possession; my telephone interview on 4 Apr. 1990 with Mark and Elma Bradshaw, a married couple who were LDS missionaries in Nigeria in 1980-81 and again from 1988 to April 1989. Mrs. Bradshaw knew of two Nigerian polygamists who received LDS baptism from another missionary shortly after they divorced their wives in this traditional manner, but her husband Mark said he would never baptize a man in such circumstances unless the divorce had occurred long before the baptism request. He could not countenance a man divorcing wives for the purpose of becoming a Mormon, but that ethical scruple is not shared by all LDS leaders or their representatives in Africa. On the other hand, in the mid-1970s a Christian missionary in Africa wrote that "very few people today advocate a break up of a polygamous household and even conservative pastors in Africa prefer to postpone baptism rather than do such a thing." See Aylward Shorter, "Review," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 8 (1976): 150.

245. Eugene Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered: African Plural Marriage and the Christian Churches* (Mary Knoll, NY: Orbis, 1975), 34, 94, 96; also G. E. Currens, "A Policy of Baptizing Polygamists Evaluated," *Africa Theological Journal* 2 (Feb. 1969): 71-83; Alan Tippett, "Polygamy as a Missionary Problem: The Anthropological Issues," *Church Growth Bulletin* 5 (Mar. 1969): 60-63; Edward G. Neuing, "The Baptism of Polygamous Families: Theory and Practice in an East African Church," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 2 (1970): 130-41; E. Dale LeBaron, "Africa: The Church In," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism: The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992), 1:23.

246. *Deseret News 1991-1992 Church Almanac*, 153. In the Doctrine and Covenants the Manifesto is included at the back of the volume. It is Document 1 in recent editions.

Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In the 1990s black LDS population increased 50-250 percent in various countries.<sup>247</sup>

As early as 1962, church president David O. McKay was inclined to allow wholesale baptisms of Nigerian polygamists on humanitarian grounds, and LDS temple marriages for those loyal polygamists. He was supported by his lawyer-counselor Henry D. Moyle, who argued that the Manifesto was inapplicable to Third World polygamy. They were dissuaded by Counselor Hugh B. Brown's concern that this would confuse the church's policy toward illegal polygamy in the United States. Brown, also a lawyer and a lifelong opponent of the fundamentalists, had drafted the 1935 law that made unlawful cohabitation a felony in Utah.<sup>248</sup>

Again, about 1979, Apostle LeGrand Richards reported that a meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve had just debated whether to sanction legal polygamy in Nigeria and elsewhere. However, this temple meeting tabled the discussion, thereby continuing by default the policy of requiring legal polygamists to become monogamists. Apostle Richards explained, "The problem is that if we allow it in other places [such as Africa], the people could argue that it should be allowed here [in Utah], too."<sup>249</sup>

African polygamists who seek admittance into the LDS church are not fundamentalists, but are tarred with the same brush by current application of the 1890 Manifesto. For the past three decades, members of the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve Apostles have considered changing the scope of the Manifesto without discarding the document itself, which is now regarded as virtual revelation by LDS church members. Although this will be a wrenching administrative change, the LDS church will eventually open the doors of Mormonism to millions of legal polygamists in Africa, the Near East, and Asia by defining the Manifesto to prohibit only marriages that are illegal in the country of their origin.

The change in LDS church policy toward Third World polygamists will also transform the situation of Christianity in Africa. There, Catholic

247. *Deseret News 1991-1992 Church Almanac*, 119, 145, 328-29. Compare to LDS population for Ghana, Nigeria, and Zaire in *Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1988), 86. Le Baron, "Africa," 23. Excluding South Africa, where the vast majority of Mormons is white, there were 31,900 black Mormons in Sub-Saharan Africa as of January 1991. In 1993 I estimated converts. As a recent update, the total LDS church population in sub-Saharan Africa was 108,000, as of "Missionaries in Africa Grow As They Seek New Converts," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 Apr. 1998, C-2.

248. Transcript of First Presidency meeting, 19 Sept. 1962; Joseph W. Musser diary, 28 Mar. 1935; *Truth* 10 (Nov. 1944): 144.

249. Richards described the meeting and made that statement to Paul and Margaret Toscano, according to their letter to me, 16 Sept. 1990.

polygamists realize they live in violation of the church's canon law and theology. African polygamists are also second-class Christians even in the few Protestant churches which baptize polygamists, because these churches have simply made a grudging exception to their marital theology in order to accommodate African realities. When the LDS church redefines the scope of the Manifesto, African polygamists for the first time will be able to experience a Christian fellowship whose theology, scripture, and heritage glorify honorable polygamous marriage. The LDS church is the only Christian fellowship that can offer African polygamists more than second-class status as Christians, and the Mormon population in Africa will experience explosive growth if the LDS church combines vigorous proselytizing with a redefined Manifesto.<sup>250</sup>

Mormon fundamentalism is the only obstacle preventing the LDS church from making that humanitarily necessary, theologically consistent, and administratively logical acknowledgement of the sanctity and legitimacy of Third World polygamous family life. The LDS hierarchy is understandably reluctant to do anything that would strengthen the position of its polygamous schismatics, who would demand to receive the same dispensation as African, Near Eastern, and Asian polygamists. But the North American situation is completely different because polygamy is illegal (even if the laws are unenforced) in Canada, Mexico, and most of the United States. The LDS church will never repeal the 1890 Manifesto and accept illegal polygamy, just to allow about 21,000 Mormon fundamentalists to become Latter-day Saints.

Nevertheless, because the 1890 Manifesto's prohibitions were defined in terms of the "law of the land" in the United States, changes in U.S. jurisprudence are undermining the document's relevance to Ameri-

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250. This requires a comment about the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, headquartered in Independence, Missouri, with a world population of 250,000. Since 1860 the RLDS church officially denied that the founding prophet Joseph Smith had anything to do with polygamy, and the RLDS church defined polygamy as a disgusting aberration from Christian values. However, because of proselytizing among polygamist Africans, in 1972 the RLDS Book of Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 150:10, stated "Monogamy is the basic principle on which Christian married life is built. Yet, as I have said before, there are also those who are not of this fold to whom the saving grace of the gospel must go. When this is done, *the church must be willing to bear the burden of their sin, nurturing them in the faith, accepting that degree of repentance which it is possible for them to achieve ...*" (emphasis added). Non-RLDS readers, including me, understood the emphasized words to mean that this revelation allowed the RLDS church to baptize African polygamists without requiring an end to their existing plural marriages. However, the RLDS church historian writes that monogamy was ultimately required of these polygamist converts: "The RLDS church baptized polygamists in India and Africa during the 1960s, and then took measures to help these families to make the necessary social and economic adjustments to extricate themselves from polygamous arrangements. This was achieved during the 1970s, and the RLDS church has not baptized polygamists since that time" (Richard P. Howard to D. Michael Quinn, 19 Dec. 1990).



can fundamentalists, just as Third World polygamous realities demand the Manifesto's redefinition. The Manifesto's "law of the land" prohibition ceased to apply to federal law as soon as Utah became a state in 1896, because federal anti-polygamy laws are legally void within all states of the Union. That is why Congress required Utah's state constitution to prohibit polygamy. On the other hand, even if the U.S. Supreme Court continues to uphold *Reynolds*, that 1879 decision's application to polygamists is ironically null in every state that has "consenting adult" statutes which have decriminalized polygamous cohabitation by default. Therefore, the 1890 Manifesto is based upon criminal laws that no longer apply in "consenting adult" states where fundamentalist polygamy exists in ironic compliance with the legalistic definitions of the Manifesto.

In addition, even in Utah and other western states with anti-polygamy statutes and polygamous families, there is judicial change. The grim hostility of law enforcement officials against continued polygamy has now all but vanished into a live-and-let-live attitude. The numbers of polygamists already make enforcement of these anti-polygamy statutes virtually impossible. Mormon fundamentalists have achieved a remarkably successful *modus vivendi* with the United States, its curiosity, and its laws. If the U.S. Supreme Court eventually rules that non-monogamous families have legal rights, then the legalistic basis for the Manifesto will crumble like a house of cards. If there had been judicial recognition of polygamous family rights in 1890, there would have been no Manifesto.

The Mormon fundamentalist population of about 21,000 is a deceptively small percentage of the total population of the LDS church and of the United States. Relatively few people who read the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants will live polygamy, but the number of Mormon fundamentalists is growing exponentially. Short Creek's polygamous population was 400 at the time of the 1953 raid, but less than forty years later it was 4,600. Those now living in Mormon-oriented polygamous families rival the numbers living in plural marriages sanctioned by the LDS church at the time of the 1890 Manifesto. There are ten times more polygamists in the United States now than in 1862, the year of the first federal law against polygamy, or in 1953, the year of the last federal raid against polygamists. Western America is already crowded with Mormons, and will be increasingly so in coming decades, but polygamous family life will also be a growing factor in the West's social fabric. In other words, polygamy will be an ever larger demographic reality for Americans, no matter what the LDS church does regarding its definitions of the Manifesto.

But there is an equal irony in the position of Mormon fundamentalists. "There are many things we would love to see that would give us opportunity for involvement in the Church," says an excommunicated

plural wife, "but I also believe that the Church needs us. So I'm not languishing ..."<sup>251</sup> These fundamentalists have always defined their service to Mormonism as caretakers of the Principle abandoned by the LDS church. The LDS church will challenge Mormon fundamentalism's very reason for existence when church leaders publicly authorize plural marriage, even on a limited basis in Third World countries.

For example, when the LDS church allows the practice of plural marriage wherever it is legal, and ratifies such legal polygamous ceremonies by priesthood ordinance, on what basis can Mormon fundamentalists continue to pursue a separate course? Current fundamentalist leaders do not perform plural marriages for every adherent who may be interested, so can they justify overriding decisions of LDS church leaders who may allow polygamy to some within the church's worldwide flock but deny the Principle to others? Likewise, can fundamentalists embrace the LDS church when it allows polygamous living but continues its doctrinal and procedural policies also rejected by fundamentalists? In other words, can Mormon fundamentalists dictate the terms of their reconciliation to the LDS church once it begins authorizing even limited plural marriage?

When the situation in the Third World requires (as it should) the LDS church to sanction current polygamous living, Mormon fundamentalism will face a challenge it will not survive by using its present definitions. Mormon fundamentalists have a separate line of priesthood, and they will find it difficult to join a newly polygamous LDS church and be deferential to LDS general authorities, rather than to fundamentalist Priesthood councils. Colorado City's United Effort Plan, the Allred's Apostolic United Brethren, and the Kingston's Davis County Co-operative will be reluctant to turn over their extensive economic assets upon conversion to a polygamous LDS church's Corporation of the President. However, that will be necessary if these groups continue to define the continuation of plural marriage as the fundamental reason for their estrangement from what they define as God's true church.

At a personal level, it will be hard to give up the sense of community within Mormon fundamentalism for a somewhat alien LDS community. Despite all the professed (and sincere) reverence for the LDS church, the Mormon fundamentalist has a religious tradition different from that of the LDS church member, and it will not be easy to walk away from that identity. In other words, one day each Mormon fundamentalist will decide whether his or her fundamentalist identity is more important than joining a newly polygamous LDS church.

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251. My interview with "Jane Doe Allred."

In fact, LDS church acceptance of Third World polygamists will underscore the fact that (unlike LDS Mormons) fundamentalist Mormons have retained the nineteenth-century sense of being a gathered people. The dual processes of accommodation to American society since 1890 and massive conversion rates since 1960 have undermined the traditional Mormon sense of ethnicity ("peopleness") within the LDS church. "Mormon ethnicity" is dying in the LDS church (and in some respects has died already through a "Correlation Program" too involved to discuss here).<sup>252</sup> By contrast, Mormon ethnicity lives on actively in Mormon fundamentalism.

Not simply caretakers of plural marriage, Mormon fundamentalists have lost their church but retained and even re-created the crucial sense of Mormons as a people, a *Volk*, an ethnicity. The current LDS church is so alien to its nineteenth-century counterpart that even accepting Third World polygamists in full fellowship will not return the current LDS church to its nineteenth-century character. Fundamentalism may therefore have increasing appeal to LDS church members who feel the loss of that identity as their church hurtles toward its projected population of 265 million before the second-century anniversary of the Manifesto. That is one reason why there will continue to be fundamentalist Mormons after the LDS church becomes polygamous again.

The other reason is that many (perhaps a majority of) Mormon fundamentalists may realize that their fundamentalist identity is more important to them than even a polygamous LDS church. These remaining Mormon fundamentalists will redefine themselves as God's only order (church), and will redefine the LDS church as irredeemably fallen even as it restores polygamous practice. Undoubtedly most members of Colorado City's Fundamentalist Church, the Davis County Co-operative, and the LeBaron churches will remain fundamentalists even if the LDS church sanctions plural marriage again. On the other hand, significant numbers of Mormon fundamentalists (probably not a majority) may join the LDS church if it accepts polygamous living. Because of the traditional fundamentalist reverence for the LDS church, some members of the above three groups and at least a large minority of independents and the Allred's Apostolic United Brethren may seek out the LDS church once it sanctions even limited polygamous living. Sanctioning Third World po-

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252. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 595-622; Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), 15, 59-62, 81-82; Jan Shippo, "Making Saints in the Early Days and the Latter Days," paper given in a plenary session of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, 27 Oct. 1989, in Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young, eds., *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 77-80.

lygamy may be a difficult administrative decision for the LDS church, but it will split and redefine the Mormon fundamentalist movement as nothing else has.

Despite their clannishness and inwardness, Mormon fundamentalists are participating in a transformation of the world around and beyond themselves. Over the objections of the American West's governing elites, Mormon fundamentalists have given the region an enduring polygamous character. The Kelsch family's cabinet business, the Kingstons' Davis County Co-operative, Colorado City's United Effort Plan, and the fundamentalist domination of Utah's building trades have a multi-million dollar combined economic impact that is both regional and national. Mormon fundamentalists feel no affinity with practitioners of other non-normative family relationships in the United States. Nevertheless, Mormon fundamentalists are participating with all other non-monogamous households in a domino effect that has altered judicial and social realities of the nation as a whole. Internationally, Mormon fundamentalism is both the deterrent and the key toward a transformation of the Christian status quo in polygamous cultures such as sub-Sahara Africa. Mormon fundamentalism has significant impact far beyond its small numbers which are growing rapidly.<sup>253</sup>

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253. Since the initial publication of this essay, a major study appeared in Irwin Altman and Joseph Ginat, *Polygamous Families in Contemporary Society* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1996).