

Mormon Women's Forum

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2, JULY 1994

Editor's Note: The 1993 Counterpoint conference, "Spaces and Silences," convened on April 28, 1993 at the University Park Hotel in Salt Lake City. The papers below were presented in a session entitled "The Syndrome of Silence: Personal Views," chaired by Martha Dickey Esplin.

The Second Annual Counterpoint Conference will be held Nov 4-5; see page 7 for details!

The Syndrome of Silence

A Time to Speak: Emma Smith, the Church and Me

Linda King Newell

On 4 October 1984, I held the first copy of *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* in my hands and smelled the aroma of fresh ink. For my coauthor Valeen Tippetts Avery and me, this day culminated nine years of labor to document, understand, and interpret the life of Emma Hale Smith. Emma had long been neglected, even shunned as dangerous, by the LDS Church in Utah; in fact, we wrote the first biographical article about her ever to appear in an official Mormon periodical. It appeared in the *Ensign* in 1979, a hundred years after her death. Emma's life was heroic in many respects, the stuff of sagas; in other ways, it was a round of quiet domesticity and private charity.

We knew that some would be discomfited by what we found, particularly as we sorted through the controversial era of polygamy in Nauvoo; but we hoped Church leaders and members alike would recognize the importance of facing difficult issues, rather than leaving them buried. We were wrong. What happened in the year following publication of our book revealed an unwillingness by Church leaders to evaluate our book on the basis of its scholarship or to respect our efforts to interpret Emma Smith's life as objectively and sensitively as we could. Instead, we confronted a pattern of secrecy, noncommunication and misrepresentation that was utterly distressing to us and to our families.

As I relate these events of 1984-85, I do so with some caution, as I am keenly aware that no two people who

continued on page 3

The Silence of Sexual Abuse

Marion B. Smith

When Margaret Toscano asked me to speak on the subject of "The Syndrome of Silence," particularly in reference to child sexual abuse, I thought about the word "silence." I thought of the many books in the field of child abuse whose titles reflect a connection to silence.¹

In all of these titles, silence does not connote a time of inner spacing or of spiritual renewal. It is instead synonymous with deep bodily shame. Silence. Secrets. Suppression. Shame. The silencing of others—especially of women and children. It is hard to understand the enormity of the damage created by child sexual abuse. Not only the body but the spirit of the child is injured. Betrayal by trusted others makes intimacy extremely difficult, and development is arrested in many ways to the age of abuse.

I began working with sexual abuse in 1982 when I became the first director of the Intermountain Sexual Abuse Treatment Center or ISAT in Salt Lake. In my graduate work a decade earlier, I had not heard or read one word on sexual abuse. Colin Ross, who is probably the foremost authority on multiple personality disorder in the United States, says that when he finished his psychiatric training in 1985, there was still no mention in medical school of sexual abuse as a cause of mental disorders. There were historical reasons for this denial. The imposition of silence is certainly not exclusive to Mormon culture. Victorian taboos about the existence of sexuality and the need to present perfect façades, whether on a national, institutional or family level, persisted far into the twentieth

continued on page 8

Counterpoint 1993

The Second Annual Counterpoint Conference will be held Nov 4-5;
see page 7 for details!

The 1993 Counterpoint conference, "Spaces and Silences," convened on April 28, 1993, at the University Park Hotel in Salt Lake City. Rather than publishing a formal proceedings, the MWF Board and Counterpoint organizers decided to publish selected papers and presentations from this and future conferences (see announcement in this issue) in the *MWF Quarterly*. Lavina Fielding Anderson prepared the following program from the 1993 Counterpoint conference indicating where specific presentations are available or where they will be forthcoming. Please note that, while extraordinary, some of the sessions were not available or did not lend themselves to publication.

Opening remarks: "Who We Are, How We Got Here," by Lavina Fielding Anderson. (These remarks were incorporated into the report of Counterpoint published in *Exponent II*, 18:1. An overview of the 1993 conference also appears in the *MWF Quarterly*, 4:2.)

1. "Private Spaces, Public Voices," chaired by Reva Beth L. Russell, featured poets Linda Sillitoe and Lisa Orme Bickmore (forthcoming in the *MWF Quarterly* 5:3).

2. "Voice Dialogue: Hearing the Silent Selves," chaired by Dian Thomas, was a workshop/demonstration with Sharon Steele, Voice Dialogue facilitator.

3. Erin D. Silva: "Matricidal Patriarchy: Toward an Understanding of the Devaluation of Women in the LDS Church" (published in *Dialogue*, Summer 1994); the contexting remarks of the chair, Michelle Moench Hawes, appear in this issue of the *MWF Quarterly*.

4. "Claiming Our Place: A Student Panel," chaired by Bonnie L. Mitchell, included Rachelle Rigby, Lupe Niumeitolu and Genevieve Taylor.

5. Margaret Merrill Toscano: "Images of the Female Body—Human and Divine: Slide-Lecture," chaired by Kathy Ray. A version of this paper will be printed in the *MWF Quarterly*, 5:4.

4. "Women and Authority: An Authors' Panel," chaired by Maxine Hanks; participants Lorie Winder Stromberg, Vella Neil Evans and Janice Merrill Allred. The presentations by the participants were featured in the *MWF Quarterly*, 4:2, September 1993.

5. Open microphone during lunch.

6. Carol Lynn Pearson: "The Interfaith Search for the Divine Feminine" (forthcoming in the *MWF Quarterly* 5:3), chaired by Linda Q. Jones.

7. "The Syndrome of Silence: Personal Views," chaired by Martha Dickey Esplin; papers by Linda King Newell and Marion B. Smith appear in this issue of the *MWF Quarterly*.

8. Closing session, a group interchange: "Making the Church a Safe Place for Women," facilitated by Lynne Kanavel Whitesides and Lavina Fielding Anderson.

Accompanying this program were two audio-visual presentations: A slideshow without narration of images of women by Jan Cook and Kate Call and *Mother Wove the Morning*, a video of Carol Lynn Pearson's one-woman show.

Mormon Women's Forum—An LDS Feminist Quarterly

MORMONWOMEN'SFORUM AN LDS FEMINIST QUARTERLY is published by The Mormon Women's Forum, a non-profit corporation. The views expressed reflect the perspectives of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the editors, The Mormon Women's Forum or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Mormon Women's Forum, founded in 1988, invites all people to examine women's issues particularly within the context of Mormonism. It makes no formal demands on any organization or system of belief. It does, however, examine and question traditional interpretations of women's roles, their history, and their relationship to deity.

Subscriptions are \$12 for four issues. The Mormon Women's Forum welcomes additional tax-deductible donations as well as advertising to help fund its publishing and networking efforts. Please send all subscriptions, contributions and inquiries about advertising to:

Mormon Women's Forum
P.O. Box 58281
Salt Lake City, UT 84158

The MWF QUARTERLY is interested in your thoughts, ideas, creative works, original artwork, and scholarly endeavors. All submissions, including letters, personal and scholarly essays, reviews, poetry and news stories to be considered for publication should be typed, double-spaced, or on diskette in IBM-compatible Word Perfect 5.1 format, along with a printed copy, and sent to the address listed above or to

the Editor (Lorie Winder Stromberg, 10339 Cheviot Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90064).

The MWF QUARTERLY often receives letters from subscribers who feel somewhat isolated in their communities or who would like to form local MWF chapters. If you are willing to be a contact person for your area, please send your name, address and telephone number to the above address. Be sure to indicate whether or not you are willing to have this information published in the MWF QUARTERLY.

Lorie Winder Stromberg • Editor
Lynn & David Anderson • Production Editors
Margaret Toscano • Theology
Lynne Kanavel Whitesides • Feminist Theory
Lavina Fielding Anderson • Contemporary Issues
Carlan Youkstetter • Networking
Maxine Hanks • Women's Studies
Karen Rosenbaum • Poetry
Barbara Bishop • Book Reviews
Wendy Bagley • Ad Nauseam
Kelli Frame • Business Manager
Cory Sargent • Circulation

Copyright © 1994 The Mormon Women's Forum
All rights reserved.

Newell, cont.

experience or witness the same events will interpret them identically. Nor are they apt to recall the same details later; each is prone to remember his or her role rather than that of others. So also are we inclined to reconstruct or embellish events with hindsight. With this in mind, I have relied heavily on my notes and correspondence of that period, newspaper articles¹ and my husband's detailed journal in my attempt to reconstruct what happened. At the same time, I have tried not to assign motives or interpret others' actions.

Finally, this is my story, rather than my coauthor Valeen Avery's. A number of factors, not the least of which is the difference between my home being in Salt Lake City and Val's in Flagstaff, Arizona, make our experiences somewhat distinct, albeit related.

Sometime during the first week of May 1985, bishoprics in Idaho, Utah, and Arizona received instructions not to invite Val or me to speak in Church meetings. We were later able to reconstruct the chain of command: the action originated with the Quorum of the Twelve in response to several letters asking questions about or criticizing various aspects of *Mormon Enigma*. One or more members of the Twelve then contacted the area presidents, who phoned regional representatives, who called stake presidents, who either instructed stake high councilors to notify bishops or called them personally. Except for parts of Arizona, and perhaps Idaho, nothing was transmitted in writing, resulting in some appalling discrepancies and exaggerations of the instructions.² Val and I were not informed of the decision to silence our voices or of the instructions passed through priesthood channels to implement the decision.

Before noon on Sunday, 9 June, I first received news of the ban from a friend in another stake. His bishop (to whom he served as a counselor) had announced in their early Sunday bishopric meeting that "two girls" had written a book about Emma Smith. Ward leaders were told to discourage the purchase and reading of the book by not inviting the authors to speak in any Church-related meetings.

Before the day ended, I had received several calls from other friends along the Wasatch Front who served in stake presidencies, on high councils or in bishoprics. All were baffled and upset. That evening, I called Val in Flagstaff. She expressed concern and dismay but had heard nothing of such reports. No Church leader from the local to the general level had called either of us, including our bishops or stake presidents. I initiated the contact with my own.

That first Sunday evening I called our bishop and asked if he had received any instructions about my not speaking in Church meetings. He had. When I asked why he hadn't told me, he answered, "Because the stake president told me not to tell anyone." I then called the stake president, Eugene Hansen. Someone was in his office at the time so, rather than talk with me over the phone, he asked if I could meet with him early the next morning. I agreed and told him I would like my husband Jack to be there, too.

President Hansen began our conversation Monday morning by affirming that he supported the Brethren, whether he understood their reasons or not, but he also expressed his concern for me. "You are my parishioner, and I care about you. I will see you through this issue—no matter how long it takes." And he did.

I asked a long list of questions, few of which he was in a position to answer. For instance: if Val and I could not speak in Church, did this mean we could not offer a prayer, conduct a meeting, comment in class, read a scripture, sing in the choir or hold a calling? Had Val and I by this restriction, in fact, been disfellowshipped? Was this action a prelude to further sanctions? Why and on what grounds was it taken? How long was the ban to last? Who had originated the action?

More specifically I asked, when President Hansen received his instructions about me, why didn't he ask if anyone had talked with me? Why hadn't he called me himself? Did he have any idea what this would look like for the Church when the press got hold of the story? At this point, he seemed concerned that I might go to the press,

and I assured him that was not my intent. But when this sort of instruction is given so widely, I pointed out, inevitably someone will eventually tell a reporter.

At this point, I still believed, or at least hoped, that there had been a misunderstanding of some sort. If I could only talk with those who made this decision, I was confident that we could clear the matter up and resolve the issue.

Jack was insistent at this point in our conversation. "You're a lawyer, Gene," he said. "And you know the importance of due process principles in a free society. Linda has a moral right to meet with her accusers."

President Hansen said this was not necessarily the case in Church affairs, but he would try to find the answers to my questions and see if he could arrange for us to talk to someone who could explain what happened and why.

"I'm not interested in talking with someone who can explain it," I said. "I want to talk to the person or persons who initiated it."

He agreed to do the best he could. The meeting ended cordially, with each of us expressing our hope that something could be worked out quickly and fairly.

The word spread so rapidly that, within days, people had called from Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, California, and many points between. By the end of the week, people I didn't even know were calling to express concern about the reports they had heard. They also offered their support. We were buoyed by the concern and affection of our friends even while we felt helpless to stem the rising rumors. As the gossip mill swung into action, ridiculous stories began to surface—rumors that Val and I had been disfellowshipped or excommunicated; that one of us had an affair; that Jack left me and took the children; that I had a cult following.

My next contact with President Hansen came on Thursday. He called to say he had talked to high Church authorities, and he had answers for some of our questions. I arranged for Jack and myself to meet with him the next evening. He began the Friday conversation by saying that he understood why we wanted to talk with someone higher up than he, but,



unfortunately he was “as high up” as we would get.

He then explained that the decision applied only to speaking on historical topics in any Church meeting or in any Church building. I commented, “So I can speak on any subject that I don't know anything about, but not on what I know best.” He nodded but acknowledged the irony with a smile. The decision, he then explained, had been made in a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve. The reason given him for the action was that Val and I had been using Church meetings to promote our book. I replied that I was certainly aware of the line between an invited speech on a subject in which the audience seeks understanding, which I took pleasure in doing, and commercializing, which I scrupulously avoided. When invited to speak in Church meetings, I had made every effort not to cross that line.

President Hansen acknowledged my judgment and showed compassion as I anguished over the accusation. He then expressed his personal feelings. He said that he believed in the inspiration of the Brethren and that he had to sustain them even in this action. “If we don't maintain obedience in the Church, I don't know where we'd be,” he said.

“In cases like this, Gene, I don't know where we'll be if we do,” Jack interjected. “Couldn't you have responded to your superiors by saying, ‘I'm sorry, but I can't act on these instructions in good conscience unless Linda has been informed of the action

and given a chance to speak in her own behalf?’” President Hansen paused, looked at Jack and agreed that such a response from him would have been appropriate.

Our discussion continued and ranged widely over topics of historiography, professional standards for historians, Val's and my goals for the book, responses to the book and ethical concerns with the procedure taken by the Brethren. I described the number and geographical distribution of the calls we had been receiving and expressed my own concern that the press would surely be calling soon. It would be better for everyone if we could present reporters with a resolution. He agreed to continue his efforts to arrange an appointment for us with an apostle.

By mid-afternoon Tuesday, the ninth day, John Dart of the *Los Angeles Times* called me. He wouldn't say how he had heard about the ban, but he told me he intended to write a story about it. I asked him not to, saying that I was hopeful the whole issue could be resolved soon. He said, “Linda, there is a story here, and I will print it with or without your cooperation.” I asked him to at least wait a few days, and he said he would.

I called Gene Hansen with word of this development. He was relieved that I had not given Dart a statement and promised to redouble his efforts. He called the next day to tell me to telephone Elder Dallin Oaks's secretary for an appointment with him and Elder Neal Maxwell. The appointment, made for Thursday (which

is the usual meeting day for the Quorum of the Twelve), was later rescheduled for Friday—the twelfth day of this ordeal.

Just before Jack and I left for the meeting, I received a phone call from a friend who works in the Church Office Building. “You should know that you will not be talking with anyone who has read your book,” he said. “In fact, to my knowledge, no one in the Quorum of the Twelve has read it.”

We met at 2 p.m. in Elder Oaks' office. At my invitation, Gene Hansen accompanied us. Jack and I had previously met both Dallin Oaks and Neal Maxwell, at university and community events or through mutual friends, so we were not strangers to one another. Following initial greetings, Elder Maxwell offered an appropriate and thoughtful prayer. We began with a mutual exchange of good will, then got down to business.

When I asked about the reason for the actions taken against Val and me, Elder Oaks handed me a copy of an old *Priesthood Bulletin* containing a warning against people who push commercial products in Church meetings. He said this was the basis for the decision. I said I agreed with the statement, that I knew the difference between commercializing and being a resource for information and that I tried scrupulously not to cross that line. Therefore, I didn't see how the statement applied to me.

The accusation that I had been hawking the book in Church meetings hurt me deeply, and I explained that the charge was without foundation. If anyone had asked me about this, I explained, I would have told him or her that I had been speaking on Emma Smith for nearly ten years—since people first knew I was researching her life. By my own choice, the last sacrament meeting talk I gave on Emma was the Sunday after the book came out. I did not want someone to read the book on the basis of a sacrament meeting talk. I felt—and still feel—that it is improper to use a Church meeting to promote sales of any product or publication.

When I spoke to Church-sponsored audiences, I explained to Elders Oaks and Maxwell, I followed several guidelines. First, I asked to be introduced

as a student of Emma's life, not as the author of a book. Second, unless I was asked to speak on a particular aspect of Emma's life, such as her role as mother or as the first Relief Society president, I usually spoke from a paper I had presented at the 1980 World Conference on Records that, ironically, had been reviewed and cleared by the LDS Church Correlation Committee. Third, whenever possible, I spoke in a format where people could ask questions if they wished. Fourth, I did not bring up controversial material (like Nauvoo polygamy) in my presentation itself, but I responded to questions about these subjects as objectively and as sensitively I could. Interestingly, the most-often asked question was, "Did Emma push Eliza down the stairs?"

I then asked Elders Oaks and Maxwell if they believed that what Val and I had written was inaccurate. Jack added that he was puzzled that dozens of scholars had recently written frank books and articles on Mormon history, but only Val and I had been singled out for this kind of action. Without responding to the scholarly accuracy issue, but in response to Jack's query, Elder Oaks offered a second reason for the sanctions against Val and me. He said that Church officials had received calls from members asking if the Church endorsed the book; some callers had complained about some of the contents of the book. By this time, *Mormon Enigma* had won the Mormon History Association's Best Book Award and the prestigious Evans Award for western biography—the latter as co-winner with Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*. Elder Oaks cited these prizes, then said that *BYU Today*, which had recently reported the BYU-administered Evans Award, went to 200,000 LDS homes. "We felt that we needed to do something to counter the impression that the Church endorsed your book."

I suggested that the string of phone calls, whatever their reported source or accuracy, was surely one of the least defensible methods that could be used to justify official criticism of a book or its authors. Elder Maxwell, who to this point had said little, apologized that the ban had been implemented without our

knowledge; he did not apologize for the action itself.

Then I asked a question which raised the third and, I believe, real reason for the ban. Had Richard Bushman been forbidden to speak because he had co-won the Evans Award and was mentioned in the same *BYU Today* article? Elder Oaks said, "No, your book represents a non-traditional view of Joseph Smith. The Brethren believe that the image of Joseph portrayed in your book undermines members' faith in his prophetic mission."

"That's the bottom line, isn't it?" I said.

Elder Oaks replied, "Yes."

I asked at this point if either of them had read the book. I could see that Elder Maxwell had some photocopied pages of the book with him, although he did not refer to them at any point in the conversation. He did not answer. Elder Oaks said he had read some of the middle chapters which contained "problem areas"—the ones that had been pointed out in members' letters and calls to the Church. If someone complained about a paragraph, he said he read the entire chapter. I asserted that, if that was his approach, he had read the offending material out of context. The middle chapters do present disquieting information, but we had made a conscientious effort to prepare readers to understand these historical realities in earlier chapters and had returned to the same issues in analysis in later chapters.

I said that anyone who read only selected chapters would not know this, nor would they have the benefit of our interpretation of the remainder of Emma and Joseph's lives. I referred to our reliance on some of Elder Oaks's previous scholarship in that area of Church history.

Elder Oaks took this opening to explain his position as a General Authority. He said some may consider him an intellectual, given his academic background and professional history, but his duty as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve is to protect what is most unique about the LDS Church—namely, the authority of the priesthood and the sacredness of members' testimonies about the restoration of the gospel and the Savior's divine mission. Everything else, he said, **may be sacrificed in order**

to maintain the integrity of these essentials.

At this point Jack observed that it is impossible to manipulate historical facts to fit theological predispositions—and then explained his own conversion to the LDS faith as a college student. His interest in the Church arose largely from then-President David O. McKay's affirmation of our embrace of truth wherever it may be found. Jack argued eloquently that Church leaders might now consider the advantages of dealing openly and honestly with our entire history and begin by reconsidering the "unfortunate restrictions" on Val and me.

Elder Oaks asked if we had any ideas about how the damage to my reputation might be mended.

Jack said, "Certainly. Rescind the ban!"

Elder Oaks said he was sure that wouldn't happen.

I asked how long the ban was intended to last. "We all know that such oral communications expire eventually," was the unsettling reply. There seemed little point in further discussion. The meeting ended politely.

President Hansen rode down in the elevator with us. He expressed satisfaction at how well the two-hour meeting had gone. Jack and I looked at each other in disbelief. We had engaged in a candid yet civil exchange, but nothing—absolutely nothing—had changed. We appreciated that Elders Oaks and Maxwell had met with us, that they treated us with courtesy and listened carefully and that they had explained their rationale, even though it took probing on our part to get at some of the reasons for the Church's actions. It was disappointing to us, however, that Church leaders were willing to defend what we believed were arbitrary, capricious and unjust actions, and that they apparently had no qualms about subordinating historical evidence to institutional values and public pressure.

Jack and I had experienced a few other instances of Church authoritarianism over the years, and we had been dismayed at official reactions to scholarship about the Church in our continuing role as editors of *Dialogue*. Now, however, I was disillusioned in a way I had never been before, and so was

Jack. I had entered the meeting with Elders Oaks and Maxwell, confident that reasonable people, committed to the gospel and the Church, could find a way to resolve the matter. I expected that the procedural irregularities would be rectified, even if the ban was not lifted right away. Instead, I heard an unmistakable message: to protect the Church's authority and its official interpretation of Joseph Smith, Val and I were expendable. The leadership regretted both the unfairness and our pain but accepted these conditions as necessary costs to achieve their purposes.

On Tuesday, 25 June, John Dart called again, as he said he would. Not wanting to be misquoted, I had prepared a statement which I read to him over the phone. In it I gave a brief account of the ban and our meeting with Elders Oaks and Maxwell. I also sent copies to each of those men with a letter and to President Hansen. At the end of the statement I said,

I...believe in the ability of members of my church to understand and benefit from history. It may raise questions but questions are not bad. We grow by seeking answers and understanding. When we attempt to bury aspects of our own past...we only raise another set of disturbing questions and leave people prey to emerging historical information with no context in which to put it. The answers to many of the problems the Church faces today lie in our historical roots.

I have asked that the decision regarding my right to speak in LDS Church meetings be reconsidered by those who made it. I am hopeful that it will.

John asked why I was not angrier, more bitter, than I seemed. I quoted Gandhi's response to his critics after the 1919 massacre of Indians by the British: "Do you want to punish them or do you want to change their minds?"

After John Dart broke the story in the *Los Angeles Times*, the AP and UPI wire services picked up the story and it appeared in newspapers and news magazines across the country. The immediate impact of the newspaper

reports was shattering. Dozens of people called, some of them weeping with anger or sorrow. Letters poured in. Many (not at our request) wrote Church officials. They expressed their belief that the ban was unfair. The questionable procedures for imposing and implementing it were particularly difficult for virtually everyone I talked with.

The ban lasted for ten months. During those ten months, nearly anywhere I went I was asked questions about it. In my role as co-editor of *Dialogue*, the press frequently contacted me for comments on other issues touching on Mormon history or Church-related news (the Mark Hofmann forgeries and bombings and President Spencer W. Kimball's death occurred during that time), and reporters would inevitably ask me about the ban.

In April of 1986, as part of the publicity for the Mormon History Association annual meeting being held in Salt Lake City that spring, I was asked to appear on the KSL program "Talk About" with Shelly Osterloh. The show's format included audience participation. As the date drew near, I started to feel uneasy. My experience told me that, no matter what the assigned subject for the telecast, the second or third question would be about the ban. I did not enjoy having conversation after conversation turned to that incident, and I was not at all happy to be a continuing source of negative press about the Church.

I remembered an earlier conversation with my college-age daughter Chris and a family friend about her same age. Millie had been particularly perplexed by the ban, and I was touched by her concern for me. She had asked me how a situation like this could ever be resolved. When members are disfellowshipped or excommunicated, there are positive steps they can take to regain full status in the Church, but Millie could see no way out of this ordeal for me. Chris quipped, "Well, Mom can always get a lobotomy!"

While we laughed at the time, I thought again that there had to be some other resolution. With this in mind, I called President Hansen and told him about the upcoming TV appearance and that I knew the ban would be discussed. "It would be very nice," I suggested, "if

I could say that the situation had been resolved."

He thought the timing was good and that it was worth a try. He agreed to make some calls and telephoned me again late in the afternoon of Thursday April 24. The Quorum of the Twelve had met that day. "I have good news," he said. "I have just been informed that you and your co-author are no longer under any more restrictions than apply to any other member."

The next morning the second audience question on "Talk About" came from a newspaper reporter and it did concern the ban. I had not talked to anyone in the press about the lifting of the ban. I assumed that the word would spread rather naturally and quickly as soon as the TV program was over, but I was very surprised that a reporter was present that morning. I explained to him that there had been a problem, but that the previous day my stake president had informed me that the issue was resolved and Val and I were no longer under restrictions.

The story went nationwide on both wire services and appeared in newspapers throughout Utah—with one glaring exception: even though the *Deseret News* had published a story on the original action ten months earlier, it did not report the lifting of that ban.

What have been the effects of this episode? Initially, the sale of the book tripled. Doubleday reprinted it in hardback seven times. A new paperback edition is being published by the University of Illinois Press. But many people who have never read the book feel that there must be something improper and dangerous about it because of the earlier Church action against its authors. This, I am sure was the intended result of those Church officials involved in implementing it.

One long-term effect of the ban has been increased mistrust and cynicism toward the Church hierarchy by an astounding number of Church members. The resolution of the situation seemed grudging and forced, a concession to public relations rather than a clearing of our reputations, an apology for the injustice and the institution of procedural safeguards to prevent such capricious action from happening again. If anything, the amount of secrecy in

communication between General Authorities and the field officers seems to have increased since that time, as have acts of intimidation aimed at legitimate Mormon scholars.

What about the impact on my family? Our two older daughters were nineteen and sixteen at the time. They were bewildered that Val and I would be punished for trying to be honest and responsible—values they had been taught both in our home and at Church. They eventually withdrew from Church activity, something they might of done anyway, of course, but my treatment by authorities hardly endeared Mormonism to them. One has become a member of the Catholic Church; the other attends no church. Our son, twelve at the time, served an honorable mission in Louisiana and is now a student at Utah State University. He is active in his student ward. Our youngest daughter, age ten at the time of the incident, continued to attend the Garden Park First Ward with Jack and me before heading off to college at USU last fall. None of the four, however, trusts in the Church leadership as they once did. Jack and I love the people of our local ward and enjoy our somewhat irregular activity there.

From the very beginning of the sanction episode, I realized that I had no control over what anyone else did or said. I could only control my own reaction to the situation and therefore determined that I would not allow it to make me a bitter, angry person. Both Jack and I (as well as Val) have redirected our energy to our families and to other worthy pursuits—which have been most rewarding and fulfilling.

Why after nine years have I chosen to tell this story publicly? It isn't news, nor is my experience wholly unique; others have suffered much harsher discipline from Church authorities. I decided to make a public presentation on this topic and prepare it for publication when I asked myself, "Whom have I protected by my silence?" Certainly not myself or my family—the damage has already been done. Not my colleagues, for I see similar action being taken against LDS scholars at an increasingly rapid and alarming rate. Not the institutional Church with its now nine million members worldwide. The Church's

reputation was damaged far more by the action taken against Val and me than by what we wrote or anything I could say now. My silence did not protect individual Church members, for if my mail and private conversations are any indication in this case, attempts by Church leaders to intimidate scholars does far more to undermine the faith of members than the contents of a scholarly book or article ever could.

By not speaking out, I have protected those who exercised power in ways I regard as unfair and destructive—to the Church as a whole as well as its members. Without public awareness of incidents like this, ecclesiastical leaders escape facing the personal and familial consequences of sanctions against LDS scholars, creative artists and constructive critics. An atmosphere of fear, intimidation and suspicion has hung heavily over the Church's scholarly community for a decade. The idea that good, committed Latter-day Saints and their families are expendable so that others will continue to offer narrowly defined obedience to Church leadership is intolerable. There has to be a better way to solve

differences between religious authority and scholarship than suppressing the voice of reasonable inquiry. I don't pretend to know what that is, but I do know that silence is not the answer.

Linda King Newell is co-author with Valeen Tippetts Avery of *Emma Hale Smith: Mormon Enigma* (New York: Doubleday, 1984) and past co-editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. She gave an earlier version of this paper at the Sunstone Symposium in Seattle, Washington, in the fall of 1992, then a condensed version at the 1993 Counterpoint conference. This version has been updated for publication.

NOTES

¹Dawn Tracy, "LDS Officials Ban Authors from Lectures on History," *Salt Lake Tribune*, Saturday, June 29, 1985, B-1, B-16; John Dart, "Mormons Forbid Female Biographers of Smith's Wife to Address Church," *Los Angeles Times*, Saturday, June 29, 1985, Part II-5; "Co-author Says LDS Ban Her Talks on History," *Deseret News*, Sunday, June 30, 1985, B-4.

² Direct quotations are, with thanks to my husband, L. Jackson Newell, from his detailed journal.



Announcing

"A WOMAN'S WORK ..."

The Second Annual Counterpoint Conference

Friday, November 4, 8–10 pm

Saturday, November 5, 8 am – 10 pm

University Park Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah

Advanced Registration: Regular—\$10.00;
Student—\$5.00; Box Lunch—\$8.50

(We would also appreciate your tax-deductible contribution to help defray expenses.)

Mail to:

Counterpoint
c/o The Mormon Women's Forum
P.O. Box 58281
Salt Lake City, Utah 84158

call (801) 297-2120 in Salt Lake County
or (801) 370-3839 in Utah County

Marion B. Smith on *The Silence of Sexual Abuse*, cont. from page 1:

century. Through the period of my growing up, it was one's loyal duty to keep family secrets and to uphold family respectability at all costs.

The physical abuse of children began to be addressed in the early sixties when the medical profession led a change in America's legal stance from concealment to mandatory reporting. Gradually, the women's movement became a vocal and angry voice in America. Very significantly, it was primarily women who began to take a new look at Freud's premises. In 1980, Florence Rush's book *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (New York: McGraw-Hill) was published. Rush presented a lucid feminist analysis of child sexual abuse from biblical times to the present. Hers was the first scholarly work to accost the so-called Freudian cover-up. In 1984 Jeffrey Masson published his research which challenged Freud's seduction theory and sent shock waves through the psychoanalytic community.² Even before Freud, several European doctors had published studies of large numbers of female clients who claimed to have been sexually abused. Freud's first paper on hysteria among his upper-middle-class female patients stated his belief that its etiology could be traced to the early childhood sexual abuse his patients recalled mainly under hypnosis. Freud's colleagues were outraged at this hypothesis. He recanted and worked out a new theory of sexuality, the Oedipus complex, in which the child, not the parent, unconsciously desires and fantasizes intercourse. This instinctual drive must either be healthily resolved or neurotically repressed according to Freud. Today, this historical interpretation of a change in Freud's seduction theory is generally, though not unanimously, accepted. The importance of Freudian concepts on our everyday thinking can hardly be overstated. He brilliantly turned consciousness—and unconsciousness—upside down. But the damage to childhood victims of sexual abuse was immense, for in the subtle fallout from Freudian theory, it was the child, not the adult, who was the guilty party—first for having sexual feelings toward the parent and then for daring to imply the parent had, in fact, acted

abusively.

Many of the most vocal leaders of the women's movement in the seventies and eighties were victims of childhood abuse. They were enraged by what they perceived as Freud's betrayal and that of the psychiatric community up to the mid-eighties. I attended a conference in Winnipeg in 1984 addressing the subject of adults who had been molested as children. A thousand women and a few men were assembled. (Abuse was still a gender issue, as few males had revealed their own abuse.) Therapists and others in the helping professions met for cutting-edge workshops on sexual abuse. At the conclusion of the conference, there occurred a spontaneous outburst which was hard to imagine in a professional conference setting. I was dumbfounded because it was like a Mormon testimony meeting. Person after person bore witness to their own abuse and that of their clients. They were enraged—at their perpetrators, at those who did not protect them and at a society which denied the reality of this crime. The silence of their secret, they insisted, was often as damaging as the abuse.

Meanwhile, at ISAT we were beginning to see more and more of these adult clients. To me, a shocking number of them came from strongly orthodox LDS families. They cried out stories of grandfathers who were stake presidents and fathers who were bishops, of brothers who blessed the sacrament. These same grandfathers, fathers, and brothers molested, raped and incested them, sometimes for years.

They wept as they told instance after instance of hearing from their ecclesiastical leaders that they must forgive their offenders, uphold the family unit, work for repentance for all involved and—bottom line—keep silence. Most of these leaders were undoubtedly acting in good faith, giving the best counsel they knew. Many worked with the perpetrators toward repentance. Given the historical context, what else would they have known to do?

But for the women, and occasionally men, who faced me in my office, the betrayal was absolute—first by their parents, then their Church and, by unavoidable connection, finally, by their

God. Almost without exception, these women felt they had been betrayed because the Church had lied to them. Over and over and over, I heard them say, "They lied to me." By lying, they meant, "Don't tell me that if I'm good and keep all the rules I'll be rewarded. That's not the way it works." They also meant, "Don't tell me that you as my Church leader have my best interest at heart." Most of these adults were presented with far more guilt than rage. It had to be their fault. From the perpetrator's threats on down, the mandated secrecy implied their guilt. A number of female referrals came to us from the Mission Training Center. Apparently in the stress of that environment and the anxiety about their anticipated missions, these women cracked. Missions were postponed; therapy was instituted which would prove to be inevitably long and painful.

In those early years at ISAT, we also saw a great variance in the way leaders handled current reports of child abuse both as to victim and perpetrator. Marilyn Sandburg, who was an early local child advocate, circulated a report in about 1984 of her collection of multiple cases where bishops had advised the family to maintain silence and had counseled the offender through the "repentance process." The abuse, of course, had continued, sometimes for many years. This report I believe was the first real alert to the Church that policy needed to be changed and action not left just to the inspiration of the individual bishop.

At ISAT I also saw first-hand a number of cases where bishops were still counseling wives and children to use forbearance and love to keep the family together. Again, almost invariably, the abuse continued. It has been only recently that the Church has publicly acknowledged that perpetrators need love and forgiveness but that this is almost always effective only after a public acknowledgement, after silence is broken and responsibility is taken by the offender. Yet speaking in general conference in 1991, Apostle Richard G. Scott, while acknowledging the extent and horror of child abuse, also stated that adults should try to forgive, that they should not necessarily air past events in

therapy groups, that they should go primarily to their bishop for counseling and only “where needed, [to] the qualified professional he recommends,” and that “the Lord may prompt a victim to recognize a degree of responsibility for abuse,” including “increasing consent.”³ A number of outraged letters to the editor from adult victims and therapists alike followed this talk.

The official policy of the Church since 1990 has been that bishops or other leaders like stake presidents must report abuse in compliance with the law unless it is revealed confessionally by the offender. The law rightfully, I believe, exempts the private nature of the confessional. Anyone like a home teacher who suspects or knows of abuse should report it to the bishop who in turn will contact the Division of Family Services or LDS Social Services who report it. It is now pointed out to bishops that it is a Class B misdemeanor not to so report. This means that only the offender is insured confidentiality—not a wife or child victim. While not all Church leaders are following these instructions, certainly it is a huge step forward to have this explicit direction.

In 1986, in *Paperdolls* I told the ironic story of sexual abuse within my own family. The Hadfield case in Lehi was raging when I was asked to give a lesson in Relief Society about symptoms of child abuse. Following this, a woman in my ward, which was also the ward of two of my married children, reported to me that her five-year-old was inserting marbles and twigs into his little sister's rectum. The child was evaluated; and a chain of abuse leading to teenage baby sitters and several adults was uncovered in our neighborhood. One of these adults was criminally prosecuted and is now in prison. Because my children's baby-tender was named by other children, the five oldest grandchildren of my two children in this ward, ranging in age from eight to three, were evaluated. From their little mouths, bodies and hands, through hours of talking, play therapy and art therapy, emerged a tale of horrific abuse involving at least four adults in the neighborhood and four or five teenagers. One of the adults was my son-in-law, then serving in a bishopric.

Our children also specifically named another counselor in the bishopric; so did three other children. This man was the son-in-law of an apostle.

None of my experiences as a therapist or as a mother prepared me for the trauma of the ensuing months. All of us moved from the neighborhood, my daughter divorced her husband, the children received intensive therapy, and my son-in-law voluntarily committed himself to a sexual offender's program at Johns Hopkins Hospital. He never really admitted the abuse; but at Johns Hopkins through intensive therapy, a sodium amythol test, a lie detector test and hypnosis he acknowledged shadowy memories of sex-ring parties, of abusing his children, and of himself being abused by his mother from the time he was small. We had seen what happened to child witnesses in Lehi; we informed the legal system that we would not allow the children to testify. The prosecution against my son-in-law was dropped. He consequently recanted all acknowledgment of his abuse, a position he still maintains.

Throughout this period, the inaction of Church leaders became increasingly frustrating to us. The stake president kept assuring us he believed the children but he took no action. The bishop told my daughter that she should believe her husband because he held the priesthood. After we moved, my husband and I met with a new bishop in the old neighborhood to try to warn him about the children at risk in his ward. His response was, “That's not in my jurisdiction. That's the stake president's problem.” In other words, “Be silent.” No Church experience for my husband or me has ever been as shattering as the stake president's reluctance to protect four small children from statistically almost-certain harm. We could only conclude that the inaction was due to the connection to the apostle's son-in-law.

It was several years later when I met April Daniels, coauthor of *Paperdolls*. She told me of my son-in-law's abuse of her when she was a child. In *Paperdolls*, my son-in-law is the character identified as Hank. Among other things, Hank as a teenager pushed a loaded gun into April's vagina, as well as a lighted candle. He

also urinated on her. April recently went to Hank's new bishop and stake president and told her story. They said they believed her. Nothing happened. In the years since the publication of *Paperdolls*, three other adult women have gone separately to Hank's ecclesiastical leaders and told of abuse they endured from Hank, one just prior to his mission and two immediately following it. Again nothing. Two of these women initiated a civil suit against Hank which he did not dispute nor respond to. They told him if he would get good therapy they would drop the suit, but he did not agree. They received a default judgment of several million dollars, but because of Hank's current financial situation, they get only \$300 a month. There has been no church action. Hank is now married with two stepchildren and two children he has fathered in this marriage.

I could say of our experience that there is no way for a Church leader to know who is telling the truth; abuse is usually just one person's word against another's. Except in this case, there were eight children's words and five adult women's, all of whose lives have been demolished by the memories of Hank's abuse and all of whom have nothing to gain by their stories except the validation of their truths and the protection of other children. The husband of one of the women who sued Hank shared a letter with me that he wrote to Hank's current stake president. Here is one paragraph:

President, I cannot begin to tell you how crushed I felt to look you, a fellow Priesthood holder, in the eye and tell you that a diagnosed pedophile, who had returned from a mission and who had married in the Temple, raped and sodomized my wife and so many others when they were but small and innocent children, only to have you tell me that you would have to check with your legal department and get back to me, which you have not bothered to do. I do not believe Christ would care more about a lawsuit from one of whom Christ said that it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea than He would care about

the lives of God's children. I firmly believe, however, that despite your inaction, Mr. _____ will someday be called to a just repentance and my wife will be healed by a power much greater than yours. In many ways, I am grateful that I do not have the holy calling that you have. I pray for you, as well as for the children.

People are always asking me if I think there is more sexual abuse in Mormon culture than elsewhere. My answer is that statistically Utah is right on the mean of the nation. We have no reason to think that more abuse occurs here than anywhere. I believe, however, that pedophiles adapt to protective surroundings like chameleons change coloration. Mormon culture makes some things easy for pedophiles. We have open, trusting neighborhoods with a lot of access to children. This is a wonderful environment, but perhaps we can no longer afford to be so trusting. Furthermore, we have a patriarchal, hierarchical system in which obedience to authority is stressed. This system is vulnerable to abuse.

And finally, I believe that we encourage denial. As a Church, we want to look good to the outside world. We can admit no historical weakness. As families, again, we must present ourselves as perfect. The family must be preserved at all costs. I know how strong this dynamic was in my own case; we could not conceive that our temple-going son-in-law could be a pedophile. We did not allow ourselves to see subtle signs. It is my conviction that denial operates within the Church context on many levels. We deny physical abuse and spousal abuse—the most prevalent forms of violence in America today—along with sexual abuse. We deny all kinds of weaknesses and sins, especially sexual sins. Too many of our young people must lie about masturbation. They often lie to get temple recommends after sexual activity because they know otherwise they would disgrace their parents. They lie about the Word of Wisdom to go on missions. Too many of us lie about our weaknesses, our vanities, our power plays and especially about our doubts. We lie publicly and privately—too much. Denial exists in all cultures, but I think it is especially rampant in ours and that it is fostered by the institutionalized Church position which

encourages false perfectionism, dependence and sometimes infantilism.

My family has undergone a harrowing transition in relation to the Church. All of us have changed. Some are still active, some are not. It has been heartbreaking to me to watch the struggles of my loved ones over Church issues, but I believe one positive result has emerged for all of us. For better or for worse, we have assumed self-responsibility. We can no longer be presided over by anyone, regardless of our Church activity.

I have always believed the rain falls on the just and the unjust. It has fallen on millions, probably billions, of people far harder than on me. I believe rain can be cleansing. Where it falls is not relevant to basic faith. The nature of human evil, however, is a question all of us grapple with. It seems most difficult to accept when the souls of little children are damaged, sometimes irrevocably, before they are strong enough to fly free. But from my adult clients, from my grandchildren and from other injured human beings, I have learned of a surpassing heroism and an invincible striving toward light, toward whatever it is all humanity aspires to and almost universally calls out to in moments of deepest despair, that loving Being whom we address as God.

Marion B. Smith is a therapist living in Salt Lake City, first director of the Intermountain Sex Abuse Treatment Clinic and the grandmother of sexually abused children. Under the name of Carol Scott, she co-authored with April Daniels *Paperdolls: Healing from Sexual Abuse in Mormon Neighborhoods* (Salt Lake City: Palingenesia Press, 1992).

NOTES

¹See, for example, J. Crewdson, *By Silence Betrayed: Sexual Abuse of Children in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988); Alice Miller, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984); T. Cottle, *Children's Secrets* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1980); C. Polese, *Promise Not to Tell* (Seattle: Parenting Press, 1985); E. Bass, *I Never Told Anyone* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); P. Russell, *Do You Have a Secret?* (Minneapolis: CompCare, 1986); Sanford, D., *I Can't Talk About It* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 1986).

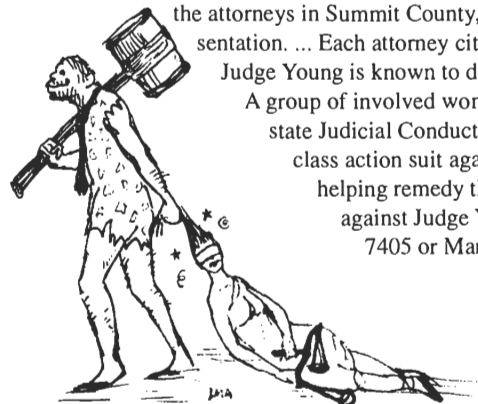
Other good sources for learning more about sexual abuse are Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1988); Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); and Renee Frederickson, *Repressed Memories* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

²Jeffrey Masson, *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984).

³Richard G. Scott, "Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse," *Ensign*, May 1992, 31-33.

Neanderthal Watch

The June 1994 NOW Utah Newsletter reported that Judge David Young, who presides in the state district court system in Salt Lake and Summit counties, has come under scrutiny for "his allegedly unjust, or sometimes illegal, judgments that involve Utah women." The newsletter notes that "when Judge Young's rulings are appealed, they are often overturned. However, many women cannot afford the expense of an appeal...." Among the many allegations against Judge Young is that he "commonly issues 'temporary' rulings that seem especially unjust. ... Sometimes he extends the temporary ruling year after year." (A woman cannot appeal a temporary ruling until it becomes permanent.) Most seriously, Judge Young reportedly has also awarded unsupervised custody to known sex offenders.



According to the NOW newsletter, "Judge Young has such a poor reputation with the attorneys in Summit County, it is difficult for women to find legal representation. ... Each attorney cited a reason that centered around the fact that Judge Young is known to dislike women, women attorneys, and alimony."

A group of involved women intends to make formal complaints to the state Judicial Conduct Committee, and is studying the feasibility of a class action suit against Judge Young. Utah women interested in helping remedy this situation, or who have legitimate complaints against Judge Young, please call Alicia Larson at (801) 645-7405 or Mary Coelho (801) 645-8992.

NEANDERTHAL SUB-SPECIES "JUDICIALUS MISOGYNUS" + JUSTICE, c. 1994

Never Assume

Michelle Moench Hawes

On the morning of the Counterpoint conference, my husband Len and I were having breakfast when he read out loud from an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* headlined “Utah Among Worst in Rape Rates.” He was amazed and angry at the content of the article which attributed the high rate to the large number of “juveniles” in the state (six out of ten rapes occur before victims reach age eighteen) and the prevailing attitudes in Utah about sex.

The opening paragraph reads, “Utah women are more likely to be raped than females living in Washington, D.C., or New York City—and the most dangerous place for many victims is their own home.” It quotes Abby Maestas, executive director of the Salt Lake Rape Crisis center, who said, “Common sense can prevent some rapes. Avoid walking between cars in a parking lot and always lock doors. Never assume your home is safe.”

I repeated the phrase: “Never assume your home is safe.” What does it mean for women not to be able to assume that their home is safe—that they cannot take their physical safety for granted in the one place that is supposed to be a haven?

Given that, and the many, many other things women cannot assume about their physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual safety, the time is over for talking in platitudes and abstractions (in careful and polite tones) about the mistreatment of women at the hands of males, especially within the bound of the very institutions that should be the first to care for them.

I acknowledge the presence of women at the conference who were there despite warnings by male leaders and administrators not to attend, and who knew that they were at risk, professionally and socially, for even being seen at the conference. I also acknowledge women who weren't there, who stayed away to protect their Church positions, their jobs and their relationships.

All my life I have been taught to speak politely and circum-spectly in Church situations, to use soothing figures of speech, to keep within a kind of Church jargon and to use a calm and conciliatory tone. As women in this culture and members of the Church, I and many other women (perhaps men, too) speak in words and tones that can't express what we know to be the reality of our lived experience. Our speech is wholly inadequate to speak the truth of the experience of many women within the Church who have been oppressed and hurt and silenced by males (and some females) in authority over them.

In the lobby of the University Park Hotel on the very morning of the conference, I overheard a conversation in which someone was admonishing a speaker on the program not to be confrontational. How can we be nonconfrontational or even noncontroversial and still tell the truth of our experience? We can't. To be “nonconfrontational” would merely perpetuate the silence in which many Mormon women have been living. To be nonconfrontational would perpetuate the silence that too many of us have come to accept as normal and inevitable.

Some say that there can be no victimizers if there are no victims—in other words, that Mormon women collude with their own oppression. I'm a strong believer that women should take responsibility for themselves, but I do not subscribe to this victims-create-victimizers scenario. Mormonism issues an

incredible number of dictates and judgements about the status, proper place, and value of women and their voices. These judgements purport to come directly from God. From scripture, from Church authorities, from long ecclesiastical traditions, and from the sanction of such practices as plural marriage, both women and men are taught that the subordination and marginalization of women are the will of God, the natural order, even the divine order. We are taught that God wants it that way. We are taught that when and if God wants to change, he will inform the membership through revelation to the authorities.

This worldview means that if I, as a woman, oppose my own subordination, I am opposing the will of God. If I call the practices unfair and wrong, I am saying that God is unfair and wrong. If I want to change that status, then I must take on God, his word in scripture, and God's earthly leaders to do it. That is a very tall order. How can women refuse and resist this description of how the world is and speak in our own behalf, when it means, according to this argument, that we must refuse and resist God to do so?

The argument for the theological and ecclesiastical marginalization of women has its own tightly sealed logic. I have no way out of my own “divinely ordered” subordination except to wait until God wants to change it. Actually, I must wait for a Church leader to be ready to ask God to change it through revelation to the leader, not to me. So accusing me of cooperating in my own oppression is, in this case, too large a claim.

I am a mediator. One of the things I do is to teach women not to be afraid of conflict. Conflict is inevitable, even for the most subordinate. I teach women to stand up for themselves, to speak directly and to speak in their own behalf. Women invalidate their own words and speech when they mismatch their words and the expressions on their faces, e.g., saying with a smile: “I feel terrible about this, and I want something done to change the situation.” I coach women to match their faces and bodies to the words they are saying to give them greater credibility when they do speak.

It is time for women to take it upon themselves to end their silence—not because they have colluded in their own victimization, although they have, but because waiting for permission to speak will give them only permission to speak in the words and voices of the male permission-givers. It is time for women to speak their experience clearly and honestly. Here is an affirmation that has given courage and determination to many women to speak the truth: “I see what I see, not what I've been told to see. I hear what I hear, not what I should hear, and not what others want me to hear. I feel what I feel, not what I should feel and not what others want me to feel. My experience is my experience; it isn't right or wrong—it just is. I know what I know, not what I am supposed to know and not what others think I should know.”

What holds women back is not our intelligence, not our ability and not our worthiness to speak. What holds us back is simply our willingness. We have the choice to speak or stay silent. I believe it is time for us, as women in the Church, to speak the truth of our experience.

Michelle Moench Hawes is a professional mediator with her husband, Len Hawes, in Salt Lake City. Her remarks were context and response for Erin D. Silva's 1993 Counterpoint presentation, “Matricidal Patriarchy: Toward an Understanding of the Devaluation of Women in the LDS Church,” published in *Dialogue*, Summer 1994.

The Blessing

by Susan Elizabeth Howe

In the power of the spirit
We your mothers on this day
Give to you our sacred blessing
To guide you on your way.
Dear blessed, noble daughter
Of great vision, love and soul,
The world, so sad and broken
Needs your gifts to make it whole.

Emulate Christ's loving service
Every moment of your life;
Hold his countenance before you
Through each day of joy and strife.
There is honor in your mission;
There is glory in your youth.
Seek the best in all your labors
That your life may shine with truth.

Many lives will be discouraged;
Many faithful hearts will fail;
Many turn from joy to pleasure,
Many hopes grow old and stale.
In such times of loss and sorrow
When the world would bring you low,
Think on this great love we bear you;
We are here to help you know

There is no end to virtue;
There is no end to might;
There is no end to wisdom;
There is no end to light.
There is no end to glory;
There is no end to love;
There is no end to being;
We will know them all above;
There is no end to glory;
There is no end to love;
There is no end to being;
We will join the gods above.

"The Blessing" was the opening hymn sung at the 1993 Counterpoint conference. Set to the well-loved Mormon hymn, "If You Could Hie to Kolob," it was featured in Ms. Howe's play, A Dream for Katie, staged at Brigham Young University as part of the 1992 BYU/Relief Society Women's Conference. "The Blessing" is used by permission.

NETWORKING

Salt Lake City MWF

Cory Sargent • PO Box 58281
Salt Lake City, UT 84158
(SLC) (801) 297-2120; (Utah County)
370-3839; FAX (801) 364-4256

Bay Area MWF

Nadine Hansen
20571 Scofield Dr.
Cupertino, CA 95014
(408) 255-7235

Southern California MWF

Carlan Youkstetter
1685 West Haven Road
San Marino, CA 91108
(818) 284-2989

Greater Boston MWF

Lynn Matthews Anderson
70 Fairview Avenue
Belmont, MA 02178
(617) 489-9649

Arizona MWF

Joni Adamson Clarke
4805 W. Snowberry
Tucson, AZ 85741
(602) 579-0882

Columbus Ohio MWF

Mary Ellen Robertson
1220 Chambers Road 409-C
Columbus, OH 43212
(614) 481-8835

Area Contacts:

Davis County, Utah

Kristie Morton
555 E. 1400 S.
Kaysville, UT 84037
(801) 451-2173

Washington

Melanie Jenkins
NW 385 Dillon, #B
Pullman, WA 99163
(509) 334-3208

Canada

Howard/Zella Forsyth
Box 584
Magrath AB TOK1J0
(403) 758-3549

Illinois

Violet Kimball
15 Crestwood Drive
Edwardsville, IL 62025
(618) 288-5001

Orange County, California

Kathryn Turley Sonne
8581 Kelso Drive
Huntington Beach, CA 92646
(714) 968-7186

Texas

Phyllis Rueckert
7106 Meadowcreek Drive
Dallas, TX 75240
(214) 661-3809

Mormon Women's Forum
P.O. Box 58281
Salt Lake City, UT 84158

Forwarding and Address
Correction Requested

NON-PROFIT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Salt Lake City, Utah
Permit No. 5486