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FIGURE 31: ANNIE'S DAUGHTERS

*My heritage as a Mormon woman. Grandma Annie, Mother (standing), and Aunt Esther*

*Marilyn Cohen, collage, 41 × 29, 1997*

*Grethe Peterson collection*

## CHAPTER FIVE: NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

*CAMBRIDGE 1972-78*

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### THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND EXPONENT II

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I was coming to know myself as a competent and powerful woman, despite what society was saying at the time. As my mother's daughter and Esther's niece, I read Betty Friedan's

feminist book *The Feminine Mystique* when it was first published in 1963. Many of Friedan's points resonated with me, especially her description of the "problem with no name." In 1963, I was the mother of two toddlers doing daily battle with the *ennui* generated by performing tedious, repetitive, and thankless tasks. Though I understood the value of this service both to myself and to my family, I did sometimes feel overlooked and trivialized.

But I was not as willing as Friedan to abandon the distinctive power of my ways of knowing and being simply because they did not fit male standards of achievement and power. I was particularly dismayed by her denigration of motherhood, which I believed was crucial to the health of society and which had been the agent of so much of my own growth and joy.<sup>1</sup>

In the years since, the women's movement had adopted the same angry and confrontational tone as the anti-war movement. The "Women's Libbers" whom I watched marching, screaming demands, and burning their bras on the evening news were not kin to me. Though I understood the reasons for their anger and frustration, I thought they were throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of seizing the opportunity to expand what it meant to be a woman, feminists like Kate Millett and Gloria Steinem copped out by adopting the ways of the angry, dismissive men they claimed to abhor. When other faculty wives dismissed me as "just a mommy" at cocktail parties, I felt they, like the student protestors, were denigrating something precious they hadn't taken the time to understand. Their blindness to my uniquely female powers made them as sexist as the "male chauvinist pigs" they demonized.

The message some early feminists sent was that I could either become a self-realized woman OR I could be a wife and mother. Period. I didn't believe it. My time as a wife and

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<sup>1</sup> Friedan acknowledges this oversight in a follow-up book called *The Second Stage*, published in 1988. "In our reaction against the 'feminine mystique,' which defined women solely in terms of their relation to men as wives, mothers and homemakers, we sometimes seemed to fall into the 'feminist mystique' which denied that core of women's personhood that is fulfilled through love, nurture, and home."

mother hadn't prevented me from becoming an independent, confident woman with interesting things to say and do. If anything, those roles strengthened aspects of my personality on my road to growing into myself. I had faith that these two aspects of my being could and should be integrated. I just wasn't sure exactly how best to do that.

Many of my Mormon women friends were similarly stumped. We were committed to the Church as an organization and to the belief system—the gospel—that united us. Those beliefs helped us claim our empowering identities as wives and mothers. As we talked through our personal challenges, we came to feel called to create a more equitable society for ourselves and our daughters. All of us had chafed under Church leaders who accepted the sexist assumptions of mid-20th century American culture, failing to see that the gospel called for equality of all mankind.

Elouise Bell's hilariously apt satire "The Meeting" helped educate the men in our lives and challenge some of these cultural assumptions when it was published in the Winter 1981 issue of *Dialogue*. A female bishop opens the meeting with a series of announcements:

To begin with, Brother Hales of the elders group has asked me to tell you that our lovely brethren are collecting empty one quart oil cans, to be used by the group in making special Christmas projects. They are going to construct Christmas tree stands, candle molds and toys from these used oil cans, I'm told. Elder Hales has placed a large carton outside the south entrance and would appreciate it if you'd all deposit your empty oil cans there, and in so doing contribute to this worthwhile project.

Next, we want to remind you of the Education Week program early next month. Four of our members will be participating, and I'm sure we'll all want to attend and take advantage of this special opportunity. Sister Lorraine Larson will be giving a lecture on "Eschatology and Ether in the Perspective of the Book of Revelation." Sister Ellen Hemming is speaking on "The Gnostic Scrolls and Our Concept of Spirit Translation." Brother LeRuth Davis will have a workshop titled "Twenty Tips for Keeping a Tidy Garage," and Brother Terry Joe Jones will repeat last year's popular series on "Being a More Masculine You."

[p.13] Brother Allen informs me that the quorum is having a special fireside this next Sunday evening with two important guest speakers. Sister Amanda Ridgely Knight will discuss “The Role of Man: Where Does He Fit in the Eternal Plan?” And Sister Alice Young Taylor will lecture on “Three Important Men from Church History.”<sup>2</sup>

We hoped for better for both our daughters and our sons. But how should we proceed? We weren't certain. What we did know—thanks to Bonnie Horne reminding us so often—is that we could do anything together.

We were talking in pairs and trios, on the phone and at local playgrounds while watching children play. Eventually we knew we needed more time and focus to discuss the complicated, emotion-laden issues. We all attended Church together on Sundays, but meetings were more teaching-oriented than discussion-oriented, and we did not want to disrupt the sisterhood enjoyed by the large group of women in the congregation. Many had no interest in engaging with the feminist agenda.

Finally Laurel Ulrich invited about a dozen of us to a morning meeting in her home in Newton. We brought our infants, our sewing and our lunches and tried to sort out what was happening around us in the world through the lens of the gospel. As Laurel later recalled:

If I had known we were about to make history, I would have taken minutes or at least passed a roll around, but of course I didn't.... Judy Dushku...came to that first meeting with a rhymed manifesto she had picked up at the university where she taught. We laughed at the poem's pungent satire, then pondered its attack on “living for others.” “Isn't that what we are supposed to do?” someone said. Our potential for disagreement was obvious, yet on that bright morning we were too absorbed in the unfamiliar openness to care. The talk streamed through the room like sunshine.<sup>3</sup>

We couldn't bring ourselves to leave. Scheduling another meeting at someone else's house finally got us out the door.

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<sup>3</sup> Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, “The Pink *Dialogue* and Beyond,” *Dialogue* v. 14, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 28.

Before we knew it, these discussion groups became an essential—if painful—part of our lives. The conversations inspired me to start a brand-new journal. The opening lines are:

The last six weeks have been agonizing but terribly important at the same time. With a group of Mormon women in this area (Claudia Bushman, Dixie Hueffner, Laurel Ulrich, Judi Dushku, Cheryl May, Bonnie Horne, etc.) we have been meeting and talking about issues affecting our lives as women.<sup>4</sup>

Even though we came together as Mormon women, we all had different life experiences and differing levels of tolerance for the language of feminism. Claudia Bushman remembers that:

We did not agree on many topics. No holds were barred in the discussions and considerable heat, light, rage, and pain emerged... We were all exploring the ways in which we thought about women's roles, and we moved from one extreme of reaction to the other in our discussions. During the healthy give and take we confessed, discussed, and argued our views, and sometimes went home with headaches.<sup>5</sup>

Our conversations focused on immediately relevant issues, like how much we hated housework, the moral implications of practicing birth control, and whether it was okay to say no to a Church calling. We re-visited all kinds of questions as we tried to understand our ourselves and our world, especially our Church world. We grounded ourselves with constant references to our shared spiritual beliefs. As we worked to integrate the present challenges to women within a gospel framework, we were going to a place our Church leaders would find unimaginable. Still, we were all believers. We were, as Laurel observed, calling *ourselves* to this task:

Although I had encountered “the problem with no name long before Betty Friedan described it, I was ambivalent about solutions. By 1970, I had begun to make small adjustments in my own life, but I still believed that my deepest conflicts were personal rather than general. If I were a better person, I reasoned, a more Christ-like and less-neurotic person, I would not find it so difficult to “live for others.”

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<sup>4</sup> GBPJ, 3 June 1971, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Claudia L. Bushman, “My Short Happy Life with Exponent II,” *Dialogue* v. 36, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 183.

...That meeting in Newton now seems like the beginning of a long journey outward from self-pity and self-condemnation. The year of talking helped. Seeing myself in others' reactions, I was able to objectify my problems. I remember the amusement on Judy Dushku's face during a meeting at Grethe Peterson's house when I confessed my embarrassment at coming home one day and finding my husband sitting at the sewing machine mending his pants. I also remember one intense meeting at Bonnie Horne's house when the whole group responded in an unbelieving chorus to my tearful proclamation that I would give up my children rather than my courses. Identifying my own worst fears helped me climb over them.<sup>6</sup>

These meetings taught me how valuable it was to have a diversity of perspectives; the contrast helped me to see myself more clearly. The process of claiming our own identities required each of us to abide the conflict and contradiction—both internal and external—that accompany new beginnings. As Laurel noted:

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” To care enough about the Church to want to see it better, to cherish the past without denying the future, to love and respect the brethren while recognizing their limitations, to be willing to speak when no one is listening—all of these require faith.<sup>7</sup>

Eugene England founded *Dialogue*, a journal that explored the intertwining of faith and intellect in the Mormon community, in 1966. He saw his friends the Bushmans while on a trip to Boston. Claudia asked him if he might be interested in publishing an issue of *Dialogue* that reflected women's experiences. He thought it was a great idea.

Claudia had us all over to lunch and said, “The women's movement is happening in front of us here. Where do we stand? What is our experience as Mormon women? We need to get it down on paper.” Soon our conversations became more structured and task oriented. Most of us were housewives who didn't think of ourselves as writers. The painful challenge of verbalizing

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<sup>6</sup> Laurel Ulrich, “Pink *Dialogue*,” 31.

<sup>7</sup> Laurel Ulrich, “Pink *Dialogue*,” 38.

my thoughts honestly and with precision became one of the most important exercises of my adult life. I told my journal that:

[We] now are putting together an issue of *Dialogue* which will hopefully come out in the fall. As a response to some of the articles, I felt I had to write my story, with my resolutions to life at this time. It was the most painful effort I can recall—first to know what I want to say, and then to say it with some style.<sup>8</sup>

As the deadline for the issue approached, I had a hard time getting started. I decided I needed a quiet, secluded “room of my own.” I chose the library, left elaborate instructions for meals, and told everyone who would listen how important it was that I not be interrupted. As I took my place in front of the typewriter, I wondered if I was programmed to hear every noise, every call, every movement outside the library door. After filling the wastepaper basket with crumpled pages of false starts and disjointed thoughts, I left my seclusion discouraged and questioned whether I had anything of my own to say.

One night, feeling the clock ticking down toward an editorial meeting scheduled with Laurel for the following weekend, I plunked my typewriter down on the kitchen table after everyone had gone to bed. As I sat in that familiar and nourishing place, I felt something unlock inside me. Feelings and insights crowded in, and I began to write. As the night wore on, confusing feelings settled into a kind of order. When I eventually packed up the typewriter and staggered off to bed, I realized it was the physical and very personal space of my kitchen table that gave me the psychic space I needed to spread everything out and see it whole.

Editing and re-writing the piece to get it to a place I was willing to share with Laurel was just as challenging as getting it down in the first place. I dealt with constant interruptions and my

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<sup>8</sup> GBPJ, 3 June 1971, 6.

own internalized expectation that I was “allowed” to work on a personal project only after the house was clean and everyone was happy.

When I got in the car and headed to Laurel’s New Hampshire home on Saturday morning, I was nearly shaking with terror. I couldn’t understand the reason for such strong emotions. Laurel was one of the kindest and most understanding people I knew. Sharing my thoughts with her shouldn’t be such a big deal. However, it was true that I had invested a considerable amount of time, energy, and ego at a time when I didn’t have much time, energy, or ego to spare. Much later I realized that literally everything else I had ever done had been *for* and *because of others*. This time, I had created an offering that was truly my own—for and because of me. That essential experience taught me I was a capable thinker and writer, even when I felt vulnerable.



FIGURE 32: REVIEWING MY ARTICLE FOR THE “PINK” ISSUE OF *DIALOGUE* AT HOME IN SALT LAKE, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

*Writing “Somewhere In Between” was one of the hardest and most important things I have done during my life.*

*Image courtesy Kimberley Heuston*



## SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN

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I had always known, or at least hoped, that my role as an adult female would be varied and progressive. I didn't know it would be as complicated and conflicting as it has been. My model was my mother, who gave as much time to her community and public commitments as she did to our family.

I had anticipated that this move [to Cambridge] would provide me with a chance to return to school or pursue a career as my mother had done. The children were all in school at least half a day. I found a woman in the ward who could help keep the household together. My husband urged me to audit classes and attend lectures. But the children's lives in the city took more time and support than I had expected. I had to coordinate their play activities as well as their school life. It seemed to be important for all of us that I be at home when they returned from school.

In addition, I had to try to keep up with the intense political life that had descended upon Harvard College. What with driving elaborate carpools to and from everywhere and keeping the household running, I had little time for additional consciousness raising or plotting out a new career. For the first time I questioned whether or not I really wanted to have that "career" beyond the home.

In addition to these private doubts, the problems of our society were banging on our front door. Disillusion with the war was no longer academic. The students were taking out their frustrations on the university. My husband confronted angry students daily. The issues were complicated, and the entire family was affected. More alienated street people gathered around Harvard Square. Our children walked through this tableau every day. They were sensitive and concerned about what they saw and needed us to help them sort things out. They needed explicit confirmation of our beliefs, our values, and our goals, which demanded a resourcefulness and tenacity difficult to sustain day after day. They were relieved to go to Church on Sunday, but that didn't diminish their perception of the problems they saw on Monday. As we observed the weakening of family ties of many young people and the extremes to which they were going to recapture human contact, I wanted to bolt the door and hold the children close. But of course I didn't. I had to be there, but I also had to back away, hoping they could cope with their complicated world.

After a hectic day, I felt pulled in all directions. Why weren't my solutions as clear cut as my mother's had seemed to be? Where was that balance I was once so sure I could achieve?

Ironically, as other women were seriously looking for new avenues of expression beyond the home, I was turning in the other direction. I had not expected to feel as fulfilled as I actually was. At a time when I assumed I would be preparing or participating in a career, I have chosen not to. While my greatest satisfactions are with my family, I realize that the quality of our home life is better when I extend my interests and energy to some issue, idea, or project. I have chosen to live between worlds. There are satisfactions in trying to mediate between these two worlds, and I await with interest the next nudge.

*Condensed version of Grethe Ballif Peterson, "Somewhere In Between," Dialogue, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer, 1971), 74-76.*

By the time the issue was ready to go to press, *Dialogue* had a new editor: Robert Rees. He was not happy with our articles, feeling that they were too personal and ignored the larger historical questions of polygamy and priesthood that he thought we ought to be worried about. After informing him that his male assumptions about what women ought to care about was an excellent example of why the women's movement was necessary—he did publish the issue in the end—Claudia told us we had a responsibility to learn what we could from Rees's criticism. She encouraged us to research Mormon women's history and prepare lectures for an Institute class on these topics.

When Susan Kohler went to Widener Library in 1972 to do research on her Institute presentation topic, she came upon a complete set of *The Women's Exponent*, a publication none of us had heard about. *The Women's Exponent* was not only the country's first newspaper for women, but it was also conceived and edited by—wait for it—pro-suffrage Mormon women living in Salt Lake City in 1872 who had the support of the Church's male leader.

Years later in 2008, Laurel Ulrich, by now one of America's most acclaimed historians, published *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History*, an examination of “how and under what circumstances women have made history.” While briefly reviewing her own journey as a historian, she explains how learning about our own history helped us reframe the way we understood our own lives:

Most of us had grown up knowing about the heroism of pioneer ancestors who had participated in the epic trek across the United States, but until we discovered old copies of the original *Woman's Exponent*, few of us knew anything about early Mormon feminism. We did not know that Utah women voted and held office fifty years before women in the eastern United States, nor that polygamists' wives had attended medical school, published newspapers, and organized cooperative enterprises. Reading their words, we were astonished at how confidently these pioneer women insisted on their right to participate in public life and work... [W]e found in their lives models for religious commitment, social activism, and personal achievement that seemed far more

powerful than the complacent domesticity portrayed in popular magazines or in our own congregations.<sup>9</sup>

These women were the models we had been searching for: women devoted to family, church, and community; women who believed in the equality of men and women; women who worked to better their conditions in a society that glorified women's roles but marginalized their lived experience; women who were determined to work *with* instead of *against* their brothers. We couldn't understand why or how these marvelous stories could have disappeared from mainstream Mormon narratives. After much painful discussion, we could only conclude that busy male leaders had not understood that these women's stories were worth saving, that they mattered.

It was a devastating realization that we fought against for a long time. We women had put a lot on the line for our families. We'd found the strength to do so because we believed that men and women were in this together. We'd been willing to absorb our virtual exclusion from public influence because we trusted that our priesthood leaders, husbands, fathers, and sons, poor communicators though most of them were, understood and honored our capabilities, our sacrifices, and our needs. What if we'd been wrong?

The gospel itself helped us avoid a good deal of bitterness and blame as we struggled with this question. As Mormons, we believed that the primary task of our earthly lives was to nurture a personal relationship with divinity so loving, true, and trusting that it enabled us to abide the paradoxes and confusions of growth. When things didn't go well, we had been taught to look for the beams in our own eyes before rushing to judgment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), xxixf.

<sup>10</sup> For more on Mormon doctrine's emphasis on a "growth mindset," see Adam S. Miller, *An Early Resurrection: Life in Christ Before You Die* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Neil M. Maxwell Institute, 2018). Contemporary

A more careful examination of the historical record taught us that Mormon women could be as dismissive of their own spiritual powers as unsympathetic male leaders. Eliza Snow, for example, arguably the most influential Mormon woman of her generation, presented women's subservience as an appropriate punishment for Eve's disobedience in a poem written in 1852:

woman...led in transgression, and was placed  
By Elohim's unchangeable decree  
In a subservient and dependent sphere.<sup>11</sup>

When she addressed members of the Relief Society in Weber County twenty years later, she was still of the same mind:

It was through disobedience that woman came into her present position, and it is only by honoring God in all the institutions he has revealed to us, that we can come out from under that curse, regain the position originally occupied by Eve, and attain to a fulness of exaltation in the presence of God.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, women are just as liable as men to confuse unexamined and transitory cultural assumptions with the enduring principles of the gospel. In recent years, the Church reframed Eve's choice as a brave, creative, and deeply righteous act.<sup>13</sup>

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scholars attribute the historical absence of women's voices from Mormon scripture and structures of power to an unsophisticated Church that had a hard time distinguishing between the gospel as revealed by Joseph Smith and the shared (and hence invisible) assumptions of their patriarchal Victorian culture (Armand Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*; Joanna Brooks, *The Book of Mormon Girl*; Neylan McBaine, *Women at Church*).

<sup>11</sup> Eliza R. Snow, poem 216, "The New Year 1852," ll. 42–44.

<sup>12</sup> "Miss E. R. Snow's Address to the Female Relief Societies of Weber County," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 33 (12 September 1871): 578, cited in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "The Eliza Enigma," *Dialogue* 11 (Spring 1978), 31–43. Beecher points out that the institution Eliza is referring to is plural marriage. Not all of Eliza's contemporaries agreed with her. See Boyd Petersen, "Redeemed from the Curse Place Upon Her: Dialogic Discourse on Eve in the Women's *Exponent*," *Journal of Mormon History* 40 (Winter 2014): 135–174.

<sup>13</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, "The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood," <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2014/04/the-keys-and-authority-of-the-priesthood?lang=eng> ; Jean B. Bingham, "United in Accomplishing God's Work," <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2020/04/34bingham?lang=eng> . See also Terryl and Fiona Givens, "Fall: From Corruption to Ascension" in *All Things New: Rethinking Sin, Salvation, and Everything in Between* (Faith Matters Publishing, 2020).

Another example of lost history that put early Mormon women in a completely different light was equally telling. Mormon women had once been authorized to anoint, bless, and heal the sick, especially women facing childbirth.<sup>14</sup> Tempting though it was to blame the disappearance of these practices on the women's male leaders, we discovered that that was not the whole story. After polygamy was repudiated and Utah became a state in 1890, Mormon leaders and members began to identify more closely with American cultural values. For the new generation, spiritual manifestations of the Church's first generations seemed increasingly "old-fashioned" and out of step with contemporary life, not to mention invitations to encounters with the darker side of spiritualism. It now appears that the decision to restrict authorized ordinances to male priesthood holders was motivated by women repeatedly asking for reassurance that their activities were authorized. While their grandmothers and mothers had assumed their right to claim gifts of the Spirit directly from heaven, these women believed that they needed men's permission to do so.<sup>15</sup> If we wanted the Church to treat women more equitably, to understand and honor women's gifts as an important *complement* to (rather than adversary of or substitute for) male priesthood offices, we had work to do among both ourselves AND our brothers.

The Institute classes introduced us to women's struggles to adapt to the inconvenient realities presented by everything from polygamy to the unfamiliar plants of the Utah frontier. The stories were so compelling that class sessions were often "standing room only." Some of the

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<sup>14</sup> Claudia Lauper Bushman, "Mystics and Healers," in *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Cambridge: Emmeline Press, 1976): 1–23. Carol Lynn Pearson had also described these practice three years earlier in *Daughters of Light* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974), 65–75.

<sup>15</sup> Mike Hale, *Faded Legacy*; Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 219–22; Joseph F. Smith, *Conference Report*, April 1900, 41. See also Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 37 (Winter 2011), 1–85.

women turned their presentations into essays that Claudia edited into a book: *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*.<sup>16</sup>

The story continued. Excited by Susan's discovery of *The Women's Exponent* and motivated by Claudia's vision, Carrel Sheldon and Heather Cannon suggested we publish our own *Exponent*. We knew how valuable it was to us to be in touch with each other in Cambridge. We also wanted to know how LDS women outside our small circle were coping with their lives.

I have to confess that at first I was very skeptical about the endeavor. Despite my reservations, things moved very quickly. Claudia's husband, the historian Richard Bushman, was our stake president, and he thought it was a fine plan. So did Leonard Arrington, director of the Church's History Department, who donated Church funds to help cover some of our startup costs. The first issue of *Exponent II*, edited by Claudia Bushman, appeared in July 1974.

The intention, as Claudia's inaugural editorial made clear, was to make a home with enough room to accommodate both our faith in the goodness of the Church that had transformed each of our lives and our growing sense of our capacities. As Laurel explained:

Remembering our own early struggles, we refused from the first to promote any other platform than diversity. Our objective was to give Mormon women space to think and grow. Occasionally someone complains about the cheap paper we use. *The Exponent* crumbles and turns yellow, they say. Although I see the practical problem, I wonder if the symbolic value of newsprint isn't part of the paper's appeal. Most Mormon women have had too much indelible ink in their lives—lessons written seven years in advance, slogans engraved in gold. It is reassuring to know that some thoughts can be thrown out and thrown away.<sup>17</sup>

My existing commitments to CCFS, Harvard Neighbors, and Shady Hill's Parent Council among others prevented me from participating fully in the adventure that was *Exponent II*. By

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<sup>16</sup> Claudia Lauper Bushman, *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Emmeline Press, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> Laurel Ulrich, "Pink Dialogue," 34.

the time Claudia resigned as editor in December 1975, I was ready to do more. Nancy Dredge became the editor and I was named Managing Editor.

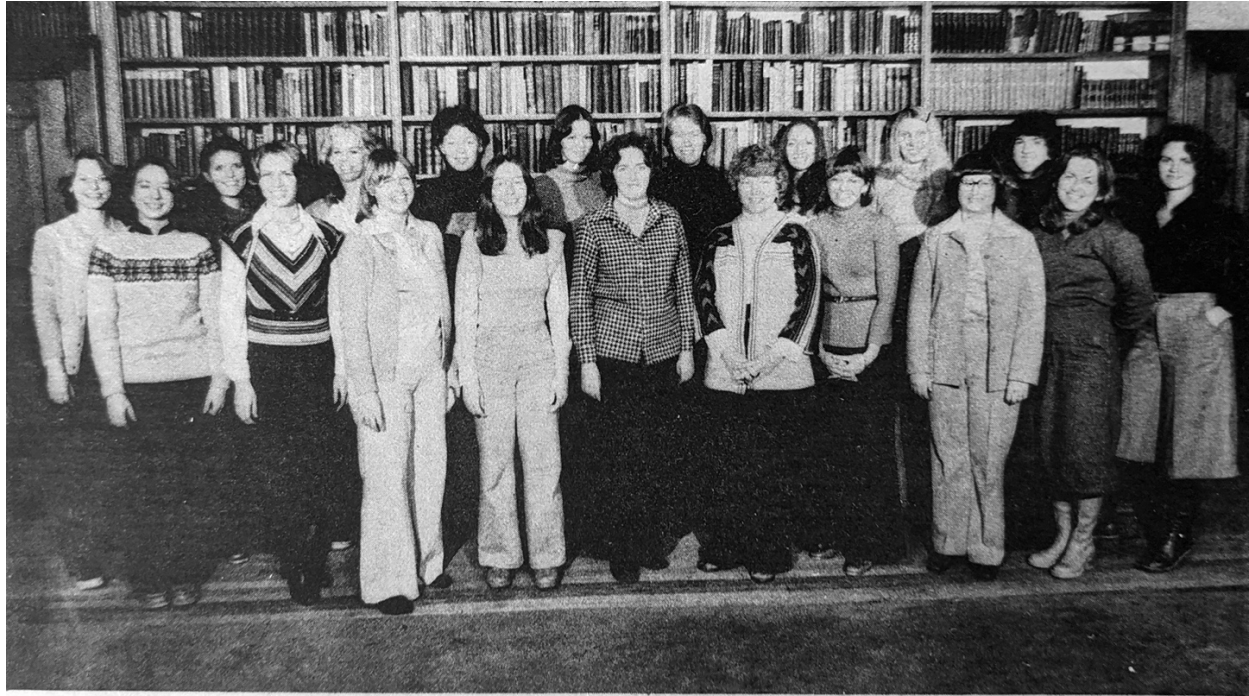
For the next few years, 95 Irving served as the editorial offices of *Exponent II*. The editorial board met in the library; we assembled mailings around the kitchen table; and pasted up the paper in our uninsulated attic amidst the clutter of boxes, discarded furniture, and an old ping pong table. Our golden retriever, Muffin, loved company; she was our receptionist. I was convinced that William James was looking over our shoulders, cheering us on.

When I say the issues were “pasted up,” I mean it literally. Those were the days before computers and delete keys. Susan Kohler typed out each article by hand on her husband’s Selectric typewriter after his office closed for the day. When she made a mistake, she cut away the rest of the page and started a new page with the correction. She would arrive in the attic with lots of little scraps of paper that had to be fit together like a jig saw puzzle. We kept the lines straight with the help of graph paper whose blue lines wouldn’t show up in the finished product. The ping pong table was soon littered with lamps, graph paper, scotch tape, scissors, glue, and a special light table Carrel Sheldon’s husband Garret, an engineer at MIT, had assembled for us. Instead of an electronic template, we pinned up the previous issue of *Exponent II* on the wall behind the table to help us keep our formatting consistent. Nancy Dredge, Sharon Kohler, Bonnie Horne, Judi Dushku, and Carrel Sheldon manned the operation. Carrel also handled finances and subscriptions with the help of keypunch cards she typed in her husband’s MIT lab. New women were welcomed at paste-up and untold hours were spent on that labor of love, wiping away sweat during summer issues and rubbing frozen hands back into service for winter issues. Even our children were caught up in the excitement. They knew we were doing something important.

LDS women from all over the world quickly found their way to *Exponent II*. Perhaps it was exactly that forum they needed, and the one we had hoped to find when we began our discussion groups five years earlier.

It's never easy for institutions to adapt quickly to change, and the Church was initially wary about our project. In 1976 I flew out to Utah to speak at BYU's first Women's Conference on a panel with my mother, aunt, cousin, and daughter. Barbara Smith, the General President of the Relief Society, asked me to come in for a brief visit. I told her about our project. She asked me what more I thought the Relief Society curriculum needed. I answered that these were troubling times for the sisters, and what we needed were more lessons focusing on spiritual strength and guidance. Sister Smith said she was surprised that I would say that because she assumed the Exponent women were more intellectual than spiritual. I felt it was a good meeting and perhaps she understood us better.





*Front row (left to right): Janna Haynie, Jeanne Decker, Robin Hammond, Sandra Buys, Carrel Sheldon, Bonnie Horne, Trish Butler, Nancy Dredge, Judi Dushku.  
 Back row (left to right): Linda Hoffman Kimball, Wendy Whitman, Sharon Miller, Janice McKinnon, Susan Porter, Gretne Peterson, Renee Tietjen, Diane McKinney, Helen Claire Sievers, Kathleen Watt.*

FIGURE 33: EXPONENT II AT 95 IRVING

*These pictures are from the Winter 1978 issue of Exponent II, which answered readers' questions about who we were and how we put the paper together. The picture above shows us in the library at 95 Irving, scene of many of our editorial meetings. The pictures are of me and Edward, and my dear friend Diane McKinney Kellogg (standing) pasting up in the attic.*



## Exponent II Is Born

One hundred and two years ago a group of Mormon women began publication of a forthright newspaper called the Woman's Exponent. This ambitious paper circulated worldwide women's news, reports of the Church auxiliaries, feminist editorials, suffrage progress, household tips, letters, humor and more to sisters from Salt Lake to St. George and throughout the territories. The Exponent was published until 1914.

The discovery of this newspaper has meant a lot to women today. Our foremothers had spirit and independence, a liveliness their daughters can be proud of. Devoted mothers and wives, they tended their homes and children, helped support the family, and turned out a dynamic newspaper on the side. Can we do the same?

The Mormon women of the Greater Boston area have been thinking and talking about Mormon women's issues for five years now. Our network of sisterhood grows constantly. Sisters write us from far off and come to visit our meetings. These relationships have enriched us all, and we hope to catch more of our sisters in this net of common experience and understanding.

To that purpose we begin publication of Exponent II, a modest but sincere newspaper, which we hope will bring Mormon women into closer friendship. Faithful, but frank, Exponent II will provide an open platform for the exchange of news and life views. We not only welcome but invite contributions: news articles, short essays on pertinent topics, poetry, suggestions and letters.

Exponent II, poised on the dual platforms of Mormonism and Feminism, has two aims: to strengthen the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to encourage and develop the talents of Mormon women. That these aims are consistent we intend to show by our pages and our lives.

Claudia L. Bushman

## THE MISSION OF EXPONENT II

*Exponent II*, poised on the dual platforms of Mormonism and feminism, has two aims:

- To strengthen the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
- To encourage and develop the talents of Mormon women.

That these aims are consistent, we intend to show by our pages and our lives.

*From Claudia L. Bushman's inaugural editorial, July 1974*

## “JUST WAKE ME UP WHEN JESUS COMES”: GROWING AS A FAMILY

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Despite all the things I was learning and experiencing as an individual during these busy years, the focus of my time and attention continued to be our family. In the spring of 1971, for example, I wrote in my journal that Shady Hill had invited me to become president of their Parent’s Council:

I was flattered, but fully able to say no. There is no question about what needs to be done there, but I cannot take it on. The main responsibility I feel now is to the family, the church, and myself.<sup>18</sup>

I recognized that much of our strength and resilience as a family came from the fact that I had the time and energy to create family activities that drew us together, and the time and space to reflect on and communicate their meaning to others. During the summer of 1971, for example, we took a family trip to the Hill Cumorah Pageant, an annual production that told the story of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon in the location where it had all happened. As I noted in my journal, the pageant itself was “rather disappointing,” but that really wasn’t the point of the experience:

We were so glad we went because of the drive and being together.... We had a marvelous moment with Edward. After a half hour of the Pageant, he was getting tired, and decided to put his head down [on my lap.] He said, “Mom, wake me up when Jesus comes!” I was so amused—the statement is perfect. A sermon, a song, a book—that’s it—just wake me up when Jesus comes.

We fall dreadfully short in our attempts to articulate the Gospel. It is so much more than any part of it. It is the strong thread of love and living, it is the word of God, it is the green countryside, it is Edward’s curiosity—it is so much, and such awkward attempts to relate as the Pageant must be overlooked—maybe it is moving and good for some, but not for me.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> GBPJ 4, entry dated 16 April 1971.

<sup>19</sup> GBPJ, 29 July 1971, 11.

The time and energy I had at my disposal helped our family support Chase's professional commitments. Being a physician was core to Chase's identity. He had always planned to return to his practice after our time in Boston had run its course, and when it became obvious that we would be in Cambridge for a while, he hunted around for a way to keep his skills honed and retain his license as a physician. Beginning in the summer of 1969, he accepted a weekend position running a medical clinic on Cape Cod for a couple of months each summer. It was not a busy place and he treated minor injuries while referring serious medical problems to Mass General in Boston.

We made it work by renting a cottage near the beach while Chase was at the clinic. We made candles, took picnics of tuna fish sandwiches and lemonade to the beach, and explored the salt marsh near our cottage. In the summer of 1971, my parents and sister Gene joined us there for a week; we also hosted a retreat for the women of *Exponent*. Chase and I even found time to begin jogging together, something that improved our health and our spirits.

Six months after taking office, Derek Bok decided he'd had enough of alumni and fundraising events. He decided to create a new Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations and asked Chase to take the job. Despite his personal reservations about Bok and his disappointment that this would reduce his opportunities to engage with students, Chase accepted the position. He quickly found that he loved his new work and was quite good at it. The only downside was the travel. As Dean of Admissions, Chase traveled during certain seasons of the year, but now he traveled at least once a week. He also found working with Derek Bok, who was not skilled at tending relationships, extremely stressful. As a result, he needed more from me than he had before, as Erika recalled:

They were really partners in every project. I feel like she knew everything. You know, Dad would come home in Cambridge and complain about Derek Bok and how difficult it

was to work with him. Sometimes I listened in on their conversations, and she was just on top of everything, everything going on in his life.<sup>20</sup>

Our children were growing older, which eased some of my responsibilities while increasing others. It became more practical for me to accompany Chase on some of his shorter trips and even schedule a couple of badly needed getaways that gave us more time together. I came to understand his challenges more clearly. At the same time, the children needed extra support (if tactfully offered) as they began to move through adolescence. The Cambridge Ward was a terrific help. The youth teachers and advisors were drawn from a group of simply outstanding graduate students and young professionals, including the likes of Mitt and Ann Romney, Hal and Jeneal Miller, and Sandra and Joe Buys. The adults in their lives exemplified Exponent's twin foundations of strong spiritual faith and independent thinking. Our kids had a very different experience growing up in the Church than I had. They came home from meetings feeling both cherished and challenged, a great recipe for happiness.

Now that we knew a return to Utah was not imminent, Chase and I began to think about things that our Utah homes had provided for us that we wanted to replicate for our urban children. We both felt that the confidence and capacity that Chase earned during his summers as a ranch hand and that I had acquired working as my mother's deputy had been crucial to our ability to live rich and satisfying lives. We wanted our children to have similar experiences. And both of us yearned for time outside the noise and crowds of the city.

In the fall of 1972, we bought a working farm in Winchendon, Massachusetts, a one-and-a-half-hour drive from Cambridge. It included thirty acres of pasture, and thirty-three more of New England woods that seemed to have changed little since the first Thanksgiving. Even better,

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<sup>20</sup> Erika Peterson Munson, 19 January 2021.





FIGURE 34: “EDEN EAST,” WINCHENDON, MASSACHUSETTS

*Gift of the artist, our friend Emily Watts. The stables are visible in the barn's left foreground.*

*Grethe Peterson collection*

it shared a border with a state nature preserve, protecting us from the threat of suburban sprawl. The property featured a spacious if run-down farmhouse; stables for the livestock; and a remarkable barn whose clinker-built roof resembled the keel of a Viking ship. We were only a few miles from the New Hampshire border and its ski areas and hiking trails.

Our initial plans were ambitious. We moved onto the farm we dubbed “New Eden” the following summer and planted a large garden north of the house. Soon the hours that I spent weeding and caring for the rows of vegetables became a treasured retreat from the cynicism and corruption of the Watergate hearings. The memory of those happy hours in the sun took on a special glow the following winter, when the energy crisis touched off inflation that increased the cost of food between 7–10% a month. We were very grateful for the vegetables I had put by!

I took the kids to a livestock auction to buy some sheep a week or so after our move. We came home with three, as well as a goat Stuart bought with his own money. We later acquired two pigs (the kids named one of them “Picasso,”) and what I kept referring to as a “cattle—no, wait, do I mean a cow?” Perhaps our best purchase was a tractor mower. It was a sufficiently



FIGURE 35: EDWARD & STUART RELAXING AT THE FARM, ABOUT 1977

*Grethe Peterson collection*

glamorous alternative to a regular lawnmower to motivate Stuart and Edward to keep the lawn mown.

We loved our farm, although its easy access to Cambridge and our busy lives limited its usefulness as a character-builder. Chase made a token effort every Thanksgiving when he insisted that the children and our guests cut down an oak tree and split and stack the wood before the traditional Thanksgiving feast. We eventually had to bow to the inevitable and hire caretakers to cut and stack the hay and mind the animals when we could not be there. We still cherished our time there whenever we could get away, as I wrote in my journal in August 1974:

I was struck by the beauty of this place as we drove in last night. It was just before sunset. Everything was crisp-green and quiet. And the moon was sitting right above the barn, yellow in the clear deep blue sky. It was comforting and friendly, and we were glad to be here.<sup>21</sup>

It was comfort I was beginning to need. Adding *Exponent II*, *Young Women's*, and the farm to my already busy life had been enriching, but stressful. During the summers, Chase generally made it up to the farm only one night a week, due to his travel and obligations at the

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<sup>21</sup> GBPJ 45*f.*, entry dated 1 August 1974.

Cape Cod clinic. I eventually persuaded him to transfer to a clinic closer to the farm. That turned out to be a mixed blessing; it required that he work one weekend a month during the school year.

Chase's widowed mother died shortly after we bought the farm. Now it was my parents who were ageing. Dad had been struggling with chronic health problems for years. Chase arranged for him to be treated by a wonderful specialist at Brigham Hospital named Hartwell Harrison. We'd met Dr. Harrison when the University of Virginia approached Chase as a potential replacement for their departing president. Dr. Harrison, who was as fine a human being as he was a urologist, made my father more comfortable and prolonged his life. But Dad's deteriorating health complicated my parents' visit in the summer of 1975. We visited the Peterson/Decker farm in Vermont for a weekend after Dad had recovered from some procedures, but even that previously reliable haven failed us. One evening while the men were barbecuing, the deck collapsed under their feet. Miraculously, no one was hurt. But the experience left us shaken.

Our children continued to be a source of life and joy. But as they got bigger, so did the issues they were wrestling with. Their school, Shady Hill, ended in ninth grade. Erika had happily transferred to Concord Academy, which she commuted to on the T every day. When it was Stuart's turn to transfer, things did not go quite as well. A wonderful athlete, he had chosen to go to Belmont Hill, which was big enough to field competitive athletic teams. But it was also significantly more demanding academically, and Stuart was feeling overwhelmed. As chief chauffeur between his summer basketball league in Cambridge and the farm, I understood exactly how he felt.

## ESCALATING RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Monday after Mother and Dad finally returned to Provo, our friend Richard Bushman called to see if he could come by and talk to us in his capacity as Stake President. After a summer away, it was good to see him. But our jaws dropped when he told us he had come to call Chase to be the Branch President for the University (Student) Branch.<sup>22</sup> We were absolutely bowled over. Richard said he knew of Chase's professional commitments to both medicine and Harvard, but he felt strongly that this call came from God. I felt an instant confirmation of his words, but Chase did not.

During the week that followed, I sensed it was necessary for Chase to accept this call, even though I knew Chase had to come to a decision by himself without my urging. By Saturday, he had concluded that it was impossible to take on this major responsibility along with everything else he was doing. We decided to talk with the children as a final confirmation of his decision.

Words and reasoning that seemed all right when we talked to each other now some sounded clumsy and false as we repeated them to the children. When Chase finished explaining why he planned to turn down the calling, Erika was visibly upset. "But Daddy," she said, tears rolling down her face. "If people like you won't do it, who will?" As Stuart said that Erika was right, Chase and I looked at each other. He picked up the phone and called President Bushman and told him he would be honored to accept the calling, and the decision was made. As I wrote that night in my journal, "It is clear that this is what the Lord wants him to do, and a way will be made, I am sure, so he can meet all his responsibilities secular and religious."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> At that time student wards of any size were known as "branches," and were led by "Branch Presidents" instead of "Bishops." Chase's successor, Roger Porter, was ordained Bishop of the Cambridge Student Ward.

<sup>23</sup> GBPJ 54, entry dated 21 August 1975.

And that was true. As the weeks went on, I noticed that Chase had more energy and seemed to be more organized at work. We both loved getting to know the young men and women of the University Branch. Young and talented, their personal lives ran the gamut from emotional neediness to enormous strength. Diane McKinney, a grad student studying organizational behavior at the Harvard School of Education who served as Branch Relief Society President, became a particularly dear friend. We soon scooped her up for *Exponent II*, and the two of us began to run 3-4 miles together each weekday morning. Though the first twenty minutes were always tough, the fresh air, exercise, and good company helped stabilize and strengthen me at a time of increasing demands.

In December, a General Authority told Richard and Claudia that it was inappropriate for the Stake President's wife to be editing a feminist newspaper like *Exponent II*. Characterizing herself as "unrepentant but obedient," Claudia acquiesced, resigned as editor, and turned her attention to finishing her dissertation at Boston University. I was suddenly part of Exponents' editorial board, along with Laurel and Nancy Dredge. In January of 1977, about the time Edward had an emergency appendectomy, Laurel decided that she, too, had to withdraw in order to finish her dissertation at the University of New Hampshire. Nancy was named Editor and I was named Managing Editor of *Exponent II*. Life became even more complicated. I found myself hosting dinners for Chase's work on the first floor, supervising homework on the second floor, and pasting up issues and resolving hurt feelings and competing agendas in the attic. I loved it, but it was a lot. In addition, national politics were straining my relationship with my extended family.

The issue *du jour* was the Equal Rights Amendment, or ERA. 1976 was the "International Women's Year," or IWY. Every state was given money to celebrate in the way they thought appropriate. Many of these state celebrations turned into marketing events for the

ERA. Fearing that the ERA would open the door to doing away with some women-friendly policies, Church leaders including Barbara Smith, General Relief Society President, and Ruth H. Funk urged Mormon women to oppose the amendment and register as delegates to Utah's convention. Too naïve to understand the implications of crossing the line between church and state, they also sponsored an organization known as "Let's Govern Ourselves," or LGO. Unfortunately, political operatives on the far right took advantage of this inexperience. Claiming to represent both the Church and LGO, Dennis Ker and the Conservative Caucus distributed materials and organized meetings that demonized the ERA and encouraged women to "just vote no" to every proposal.<sup>24</sup>

The result was not what anyone had hoped. As I sadly noted in my journal, the convention became:

a shameful exhibition by many Mormon women who would not listen to different points of view and railroaded their agenda through the convention. This episode certainly tells us a lot about the anger that exists under the surface of many Mormon women. They went into a meeting unprepared and dogmatic—a deadly combination.<sup>25</sup>

Though I was deeply embarrassed by the episode, that didn't mean that I supported the ERA. Although I believed in the equality of men and women, I wasn't necessarily in favor of a gender-blind society. I had personally benefited from attending a women's college, as had many of my friends, family, and associates, and I worried that in ignorant or malevolent hands, the ERA might end up working against women and their needs. I also felt the issue had become too

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<sup>24</sup> Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority, and Equal Rights* (Signature Books, 2005), 219-232.

<sup>25</sup> GBPJ 93, entry dated 5 August 1977. I believed that the embarrassing episode revealed the limitations of a culture that taught its women to fear and avoid the outside world. Clearly, Mormon women needed to become both better informed about their communities and more adept communicators. When I spoke to the Stake Relief Society president about my concerns, she agreed. I was called as Stake Community Affairs Leader with a charge to work with Relief Society presidencies to educate and prepare women for more effective involvement in the community. GBPJ 104f, 116, entries dated 9 December 1977 and 30 January 1978.

politically charged to be discussed rationally. Both sides of the political spectrum were demonizing the other. Your status as a good or bad woman depended on the position you took on the ERA. I felt that the issues were much more complicated than that. In fact, we made an editorial decision not to write about the ERA in *Exponent II* because it was such a divisive issue.

Mother was very disappointed in me. Now eighty years old, she and some of her friends had organized themselves into a group they called the “Gray Panthers.” The Panthers were vehemently in favor of the ERA, and she couldn’t understand why any right-minded person would disagree. She said, “Well, that’s just the influence Chase has had on you! His family's always been conservative.” Which, by the way, was not true. It’s easy to laugh about it now, but it wasn’t so easy then.

My older sister Gene was equally critical—and much closer. After her husband left her for another woman, she went to Washington DC and worked for the Library of Congress. Once it was clear to her that we were going to be in Boston for a while, she invited herself to come live with us while she taught at a local college. She was magic with the children, and I tried hard to be grateful for the contributions she made to their lives. Gene’s confidence in her beauty and acumen had always allowed her to play by her own rules. Now nearly fifty and divorced, emotional, physical, and financial realities were beginning to impinge on the lifestyle she had always taken for granted. Gene experienced our happy family life as a rebuke, and managed her feelings with a never-ending stream of criticism directed toward the Church and my decision to be part of it.

In November 1976, Gene suffered a detached retina during a month-long visit from my parents, who were in town seeking medical treatment for my father. Four months later came the first chink in my willingness to cheerfully absorb my sister’s negativity:

Gene had two detached retinas, which meant two hospitalizations and long recovery at home. It has been very difficult for her and my concern about her plus the care that she has needed has added to my load.<sup>26</sup>

A third and more serious surgery in July while my parents were again visiting for a month left me so tired and discouraged that the floodgates burst:

I don't know where to begin. The significant areas are the pressures on Chase at Harvard, his complicated scheduling of medicine, being Branch President & husband & father, Erika's college decision [to attend Harvard] her graduation from Concord Academy, Chase's 25th Reunion, Gene's third eye operation, Erika working at the Supreme Court in Washington, and the ever-present responsibility of Exponent II....

Chase continues to struggle with Derek Bok. He, i.e., Bok, has had so many opportunities to express his appreciation to Chase for his efforts, but he never does. Chase led Harvard fundraising to an all-time high this year—no word from the President.... Chase convinced Derek that it is now time to begin a core capital drive—which probably means at least another 5–10 years here. Lately I have felt that we should return to medicine, which I hope we will.

The Branch experience is very good for Chase and very hard on me. I find Sundays dismal—trying to find a time when we all can eat is almost impossible because Chase is scheduled all day & the children go to the meetings of the Cambridge II ward. The scheduling is hard but the association with the men & women makes it worthwhile.<sup>27</sup>

When Mother and Dad left ten days later, I admitted:

It was very difficult for me to say goodbye because I fear it will be the last time I see Dad alive. In the month or so that they were here, Dad became weaker... He was not interested in eating & had to be encouraged to join us for meals. Mother continues strong & determined [though] she gets very scared when Dad gets sick.<sup>28</sup>

Five days later, Gene's retina re-detached for the fourth time, and she was scheduled for emergency surgery:

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<sup>26</sup> GBPJ 78, entry dated 24 March 1977.

<sup>27</sup> GBPJ 80f, entry dated 6 July 1977.

<sup>28</sup> GBPJ 84f, entry dated 16 July 1977.

My heart aches for her because she is so burdened with this eye. She has been so careful to convalesce following precisely the directions from the doctors.

Since I am her sole support, it means another month of giving drops, doing her shopping, being available to her for whatever is needed. I find this last operation almost more than I can bear. There have been times during the last few months when I resented terribly being so depended upon—a feeling that Gene felt it was my obligation to arrange my life around hers—that so happens to be what has happened out of necessity—but the assumption is that I must always be there and do what needs to be done. I suppose I am complaining because there is nothing that either of us can do to change the circumstances. It seems it is to [be] my lot to be Gene's keeper. Perhaps the physical problems can strengthen her emotionally—and even bring us closer together.<sup>29</sup>

On August 1, after a painful exchange with Gene followed by surgery that didn't go as well as anyone hoped, Chase and I stopped by the farm long enough to pick some vegetables after dropping Edward off at camp:

We have decided that we are going to sell [the farm] this year. It is clear that we can't keep up the place when we are not spending more time there. The kids are now involved in other activities, including the family commitment to church, leaving no time for the farm. I am relieved that we have made the decision and hope we can sell it by spring.<sup>30</sup>

A month later, we helped Erika move into the Harvard dorms. A few days later, we were robbed. The thieves broke down the kitchen door and took family silver, my gold jewelry, and other precious heirlooms. In some ways we were lucky—there was more they could have taken—but it left me shaken:

It isn't so much what they took, but the violation of someone coming into our house—the vulnerability that one feels. I am anxious about future break-ins and what the solution is for more protection.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> GBPJ 87*f*, entry dated 22 July 1977.

<sup>30</sup> GBPJ 91, entry dated 1 August 1977.

<sup>31</sup> GBPJ 96, entry dated 14 September 1977.

“More protection” wasn’t something that we’d ever felt we needed during our Cambridge adventure, even during the unrest of the late sixties and early seventies. We’d believed that we were there on the Lord’s errand and were confident that He could and would protect us. It took me some time to understand that the compounding difficulties and losses of the last few months were preparing us to say goodbye to a precious season of our life.

A harder blow struck a month later. After contracting a virus his compromised body couldn’t fight, my father died early on Halloween morning. The loss of the soft, warm mantle of love he had so carefully draped over each member of our family left me feeling unanchored, despite a lovely gathering of our entire extended family to his funeral service in Provo. A perfect Thanksgiving on the farm also provided some relief, as did my regular morning runs with Diane McKinney, which I confessed to my journal had become “the only stability in my routine.”<sup>32</sup> As my productivity and ability to focus began to slip, Chase and I reluctantly decided that the pace of our lives was no longer sustainable, especially as we looked forward to the increased travel Harvard’s Capital Campaign would demand from him. We needed time together, as a couple and as a family, to heal and replenish. He was released as Branch President on December 11. We had a quiet, restful Christmas, little imagining the storm that would follow.

#### THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT, JANUARY–JUNE 1978

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The storm was literal, as well as metaphorical. That winter was the coldest and snowiest in Boston’s history. Twenty inches fell in one twelve-hour period; two weeks later 24 inches more fell in 24 hours, accompanied by gusts of wind up to 100 mph) By the beginning of

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<sup>32</sup> GBPJ 104, entry dated 3 December 1977.

February, we were out of heating oil and our wonderful house was very cold. Fortunately, we had wood in the basement and a gas stove, so we muddled on until relief (oil) could come.

More seriously, after 2 ½ years of trying to make things work at Belmont Hill, Stuart had decided that it was time to move on. As he explained to us when he suddenly appeared in our bedroom one night at 1:30 am, there were just not enough rewards to make all his hard work worth it. While our first instinct was to dismiss his concerns and exhort him to work harder, the more we thought about it, the more inclined we were to agree with Stuart. We had seen how much his athletics had required of him on top of the three or four hours of homework he had on school nights. Chase gave him a beautiful father's blessing that confirmed that he had made the right decision. He transferred to Cambridge Rindge and Latin, an excellent public high school, the next day.

I was becoming increasingly concerned about Chase, who despite an aggressive running program was feeling tired and run-down. He had his kidney function tested and discovered he was suffering from anemia—the complaint that had weakened my father during the last years of his life. But the real threat was what it always had been: his fraught relationship with Derek Bok. By April, the two men were barely speaking.

Our Salt Lake City bishop Bill Smart and his wife Donna came for a visit at the end of April. Our dear friend Eric Walsh, who had long since graduated, was in town for the Boston Marathon, held on Patriot's Day, the anniversary of the first encounter between British and colonial troops. We drove out to Lexington Green to share the annual re-enactment of the battle with our friends at six o'clock in the morning. After it was over, Bill and Chase decided to run home via the Freedom Trail, participating in a mini marathon of their own.



On the way, the men talked about an issue that had always bothered both of us: the Church's policy of withholding the priesthood from Black members. We felt strongly that the policy was an example of early Church leaders mistaking the cultural assumptions of their day for the will of God. It was the only doctrinal issue the two of us took exception to, to the point that whenever Chase received a calling, he felt obligated to communicate his reluctance to openly support the policy. It had become even more painful to Chase when his efforts to create a critical mass of Black students on campus were routinely dismissed and he was labeled "racist" because his church did not extend full fellowship to its Black members.

In April 1976, we and seven other couples were invited to the Mission Home, for dinner and conversation with Elder Boyd K. Packer, a particularly conservative member of the Council of the Twelve. Neither one of us particularly wanted to go, since we had found some of Elder Packer's talks and positions offensive. But things didn't go as we anticipated, as I recorded in my journal:

Last night, he seemed very different from the man I remember as the New England Mission President. He was thoughtful [and] appeared generous and loving. When Chase asked him if the Brethren were praying daily about the Blacks, he said with tears in his eyes, "Yes, every day, and we are not getting any answers—the Lord is shutting it off." I was moved by his sincerity and apparent anguish...He also said that he cannot believe that ultimately the Black people will be denied celestial blessings...[and] that the issues that will tear the Church apart will be the Black issue and the women and the priesthood issue. I must think more about that!<sup>33</sup>

Though that meeting gave us both a feeling of hope, several returned missionaries and graduate students who had worked in Samoa and Brazil asked to meet with Chase as their Branch President during the months that followed. They were troubled by the practical difficulties of determining the racial lineage of Samoans and Brazilians who wanted to join the

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<sup>33</sup> GBPJ 63, entry dated 12 April 1976.

Church. Did they have Black ancestors or not? One Law School professor felt these lineage decisions could create legal problems for the Church. Chase felt that this was information he should get to President Kimball but wasn't sure how best to do it. As they jogged from Lexington to Cambridge, Chase explained his thinking to Bill and asked for his advice.

Bill, then editor of the *Deseret News*, said Chase's arguments were persuasive and encouraged him to write a letter directly to the prophet laying out his reasoning. Chase did—and then forgot the matter.<sup>34</sup>

We had other things on our minds. That Sunday, April 23, was the first time we confronted our feelings that it was time for us to move on. My journal entry that night is a powerful statement about the gift our eleven years in Cambridge had been to me:

[The decision] is painful and sad in many ways, but there comes a time when you must realize that you have completed the mission you were sent to do—even though it [the mission] was never that clear. I developed a strong testimony of the gospel. I have learned about abilities I was never willing to face. I like organizing people around objectives & issues that help us grow and develop.<sup>35</sup>

The University of Utah had approached Chase about becoming vice president of Medical Sciences a few months earlier. Though the position sounded fascinating, he explained that he had just begun a new capital campaign and was unlikely to be free to consider other options for several years. When he called to see if the position was still open, things moved very quickly. The U brought us out to Salt Lake, where we met President-elect David Gardner. We were very impressed by his competence and sensitivity and felt he would handle the inevitable stress

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<sup>34</sup> See also William B. Smart interview with Everett L. Cooley, Salt Lake City, Utah, 5 September 1989, 74-76. Digitized transcript available at <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6ks8ct2>.

<sup>35</sup> GBPJ 123, entry dated 23 April 1976.

between the Mormon and non-Mormon community very well. We were particularly delighted that Chase had the option of spending up to 30% of his time in the medical practice of his choice.

On Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, Chase met with Derek Bok and formally resigned from Harvard. The journal entry I wrote that night described our duty to put our sadness behind us and begin to look forward to our new life in Utah. Even though I knew it was the right decision, I couldn't help expressing one misgiving.

I felt a polarization of opinions in Utah—more extreme positions. I am uncomfortable with the far right & the far left. I am really a mediator—appreciating the many points of view.<sup>36</sup>

Three days later, on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1978, I was at home when the telephone rang. It was Chase, and he could hardly speak. I was terrified, I confessed to my journal:

knowing something of enormous importance had happened. He said that he had just received a phone call from Bill Smart, the editor of the *Deseret News*, saying it was shortly to be announced that President Spencer W. Kimball had received a direct revelation from the Lord making the priesthood available to all male members of the church. This meant that our Black brothers could receive the priesthood. It meant that the one issue that we have never accepted as a theological position was resolved. I was so overcome I wept and could not speak.... There is no doubt in my mind that the Lord reveals his gospel when his children are ready for the responsibility of the message.... When Chase called David Evans, our dear Black friend, he paused & in a serious voice said, "Now your group will be the most powerful group in the world." ... I never dreamed that it would happen in our lifetime.<sup>37</sup>

It was a graceful period to our Harvard experience.

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<sup>36</sup> GBPJ 127, entry dated 6 June 1978.

<sup>37</sup> GBPJ 132, entry dated 12 June 1978.

# Mormon Church Strikes Down Ban Against Blacks in Priesthood

## Change in 148-Year-Old Policy Was a Result of a 'Revelation,' Letter to Leaders Says

By KENNETH A. BRIGGS

The 148-year-old policy of excluding black men from the Mormon priesthood was struck down by the church's leaders yesterday.

Spencer W. Kimball, president of the 4.2 million members of the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, made the declaration from church headquarters in Salt Lake City. It was a result, he said in a letter to all church leaders, of a revelation given to the top leaders of the church.

"He has heard our prayers," the letter reads, "and by revelation has confirmed that the long promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the church may receive the holy priesthood

with power to exercise its Divine authority and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the Temple.

"Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the

*Text of letter is on page 24.*

priesthood without regard for race or color."

The statement's emphasis on "every faithful, worthy man" is clearly meant to include the only racial or ethnic group that until now has been explicitly barred from the priesthood. The declaration left intact the church exclusion of women from all priestly functions, a policy that has also begun to arouse criticism.

### Source of Friction

By Mormon custom, it is the duty of all males to take on the functions of priests beginning at the age of 12. The exclusion of blacks, which was based on the previous understanding of Divine will by the church fathers, without explanation or textual basis, has been an increasing source of friction between the church and minority groups. Many believe that the controversy has hindered the church's vigorous missionary activity.

The change is expected to have both real and symbolic meaning. The church was one of the largest institutions in the nation to have an explicit exclusion of blacks from its leadership.

The removal of the barrier was accompanied in the official statement by a reminder that among the "promises" made by former church leaders was that "at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood."

The policy change allows black males to be interviewed by bishops according to the traditional standards of "worthiness" applied to the priesthood. The criteria include willingness to lead a "clean,



Associated Press  
Spencer W. Kimball

Continued on Page 24, Column 1

FIGURE 36: FRONT PAGE OF THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1978.