EDUCATIONAL VALUES AND PRACTICES OF FUNDAMENTALIST MORMONS

BY

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DISSEPTION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Policy Studies in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

Fundamentalist Mormons believe in plural marriage, or polygamy. Many practice it. Polygamist groups live in insular settlements and in mainstream communities, mostly in the western United States and Canada. Polygamists often have large families, and they educate their children in a variety of settings: a public charter school within a polygamous town, private religious schools in suburban and rural areas, “priesthood schools” based on home school models, and in public schools in which polygamists’ children are invisible minorities. They trace their origin to Mormons who refused to abandon polygamy after the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) renounced it in 1890. Polygamists model their economies, religion, and education on the “theodemocracy” of 19th century Utah. In the scriptural world view that they embrace, polygamists are a remnant people, entrusted with continuing plural marriage.

The purpose of this study is to explore the educational component of fundamentalist Mormonism. Their schools transmit the values and practices of plural communities to children. What are these values? How do schools transmit them? Do they prepare students for participation in a pluralistic society? To explore these questions, I conducted field work at several polygamist communities’ schools and developed case studies about two of them, Spring Hill School and Link Academy. To understand these schools in their historical and religious contexts I examined the history of education and polygamy in Utah. The work of several philosophers of education helped me to explore themes of autonomy versus servitude and education for pluralism in polygamist communities’ schools and informed my recommendations for how the state and civil society should respond to fundamentalist Mormon education.
To my wife, Barbara Hunt Hamilton
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to my dissertation committee, whose diversity strengthened my project: Nicholas C. Burbules (Advisor), Chris Higgins, Liora Bresler, and Jonathan H. Ebel. I would also like to thank several other scholars at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign: Walter Feinberg, Robert E. Stake, and Alma Gottlieb.

I am thankful for the support that I received at Principia College, Elsah, Illinois, where I taught for ten years, from the Dean of Academics, Scott L. Schneberger, and the Associate Dean of Academics, Joseph M. Ritter; from my colleagues in the Department of Religion and Philosophy: Barry R. Huff, Helen Mathis, Heather Martin, and Bradley Stock; and from my students. I am grateful for the encouragement I received to complete this project at The Mary Baker Eddy Library, where I now work.

I am indebted to my family for their love and support: to my wife, Barbara Hamilton; to our children: Brandon Hamilton, his wife Jenna Hamilton, and their daughter Aubrey; Laurel Hodne, her husband Jason Hodne, and their daughter Laila; Travis Hamilton and his wife Tiffini Hyatt Hamilton; Meredith Hamilton; and Corinna Hamilton, and to other relatives and friends.

This project stimulated my intellectual and spiritual life. I am deeply grateful to the participants, all of whose names have been changed to protect their privacy, for helping me to understand the educational values and practices of fundamentalist Mormons.
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INTRODUCTION

This study is based on my field work in 2012 and 2013 at schools serving fundamentalist Mormons in two states in the western United States. It grew out of earlier contacts with polygamists in 2010.¹

During the 2008 raid on the Yearning for Zion (YFZ) Ranch,² Texas Rangers and Child Protective Services took 418 children into state custody and placed many of them in foster homes, although most were soon returned to their mothers. The state contended that underage girls were being sexually abused through polygamous marriages to older men. Evidence gathered during the raid led to charges against Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) leader Warren Jeffs and several other men, who were convicted and sentenced to prison. In addition, authorities claimed that the children of YFZ were being inadequately educated, although community members denied it.

I became interested in the reporting on the raid and contributed a chapter, “Reader Responses to the Yearning for Zion Ranch Raid and Its Aftermath on the Websites of the Salt Lake Tribune and the Deseret News,” to the book, Saints Under Siege: The Texas Raid on the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints (2011). I learned that the FLDS was one of many fundamentalist Mormon sects; that these groups shared much in common but sometimes differed on doctrine, polity, and politics.

FLDS representatives read Saints Under Siege and believed that it gave a balanced picture of the YFZ raid. They contacted the book’s editors Stuart A. Wright and James T. Richardson with an invitation to contributors to tour Short Creek—the twin towns of Hildale,

¹ Fundamentalist Mormon polygamist sects are not part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) although they share a common, if contested, history.

² The YFZ raid took place April 3-5, 2008.
Utah, and Colorado City, Arizona. In 2010, my wife Barbara, youngest daughter Corinna, and I spent six hours as guests at Short Creek and listened to FLDS members’ impassioned defense of their leader and of their way of life. I asked questions about the effects of the raid on FLDS men and boys; media attention had been focused on fundamentalist women, who went on camera to plead their cause after the raid.

During that first contact, which included a hearty breakfast and a long driving tour of Short Creek, I met an educator in the community. Later I learned that Warren Jeffs had ordered the FLDS to withdraw their children from public schools in 2000. I also learned that other plural marriage groups had their own private unaccredited schools, and that one community had organized a public charter school. In another public school, polygamists comprised the majority of staff and students. I also learned that Independents--fundamentalist Mormons who belonged to no organized group--spanned the spectrum from home school to public school. As the educational picture grew more complex, I became more interested.

Soon after my visit to Short Creek, I entered the PhD program in Religious Educational Policy Studies in the Department of Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the College of Education, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. A coherent project gradually took shape informed by Cultural Anthropology and Ethnography, American Religious History, and Philosophy of Education. I conducted a pilot study in January 2012, “Fundamentalist Mormon Polygamist Educational Values and Practices,” visiting five schools and interviewing fifteen participants. I built trust with participants by sharing drafts, asking for feedback, and incorporating it into the completed study. I received approval from my advisor and from the Institutional Review Board for a more extensive project and conducted three additional periods of field work in 2012 and 2013, visiting six schools in two states, interviewing over forty
participants, observing classroom and extracurricular activities, and surveying teachers and staff. My most durable research question was, do fundamentalist Mormon schools prepare students to participate in a pluralistic society? Other questions emerged along the way. I created case studies of two schools: Spring Hill (pseudonym), a K-9 public charter school in a rural area, and Link Academy (pseudonym), a private unaccredited K-8 school in an inner suburb of a large city. They are located about 300 miles from one another. Each school is controlled by a different fundamentalist sect. I selected these schools, in part, because their administrators allowed me to have access, although the extent of that access differed and affected the case studies of each school, as will be explained in Chapter 2, “Methodology.”

In support of field work, I studied the entwined history of Mormon polygamy and education in Utah (see Chapter 3). Writings by several philosophers of education helped me to explore themes of servility versus autonomy and education and pluralism and informed my recommendations for how the state and civil society should respond to fundamentalist Mormon education (see Chapters 5 and 6).

In this Introduction and in Chapter 3 I refer to fundamentalist Mormon communities by name in order to establish the historical and cultural context for this project. Elsewhere, pseudonyms protect the identities of participants and groups. I denominate the fundamentalist sects I visited as Communities A, B, C, and D. For example, Spring Hill School is located in Community B, and Link Academy was established by Community D.

Many fundamentalist Mormons dislike being called polygamists. They call their polygynous marriage practices plural marriage or celestial marriage. Some also object to being

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3 Celestial marriage, or eternal marriage, signifies the Mormon belief that marriages solemnized by proper Mormon priesthood authority are binding not only now but in the afterlife. Before 1890, celestial marriage and Mormon polygamy were synonymous; that is, eternal marriage could be ratified primarily through polygamous
described as fundamentalists. Spring Hill School administrator Mary Jane Laughlin explained that she was simply practicing the true teachings of Mormonism, although the LDS would dispute her claim. Fundamentalists believe that they are living the original tenets of the faith, a “restoration of all things,” including cooperative economics, gathered communities, and the “patriarchal order of marriage,” the polygyny of the Hebrew Scriptures. I use the terms plural marriage and polygamy interchangeably and refer to polygamists as fundamentalist Mormons or simply as fundamentalists. Not all members of plural marriage communities practice polygamy, but most accept it.

The FLDS, Centennial Park, The Apostolic United Brethren (AUB or the Allred group), the Davis County Cooperative Society (DCCS or the Kingstons which organized the Latter Day Church of Christ), the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ, and The Righteous Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Peterson Group) are all plural marriage sects. The largest Mormon organization, the fifteen million-member LDS Church, publicly approved polygamy from 1852 to 1890 but abandoned the practice. It now considers polygamists to be apostates. Practicing polygamy is grounds for excommunication.

There is no reliable census of fundamentalist Mormons; one estimate puts their number in the United States at 38,000 (Adams, 2009). Another study counts 60,000 to 80,000 (Bennion, 2008). Concentrated in the American West, groups also live in Canada and in Mexico. The best known community is Short Creek, on the Utah and Arizona border, which was estimated to be 80% FLDS in 2004 and had a population of about 10,000 (Bistline, 2004; Driggs, 2001). In 2004, the FLDS established YFZ Ranch near Eldorado, Texas, and there relocated up to 700

unions. In the 20th century, LDS and fundamentalist Mormons have diverged in their definitions of celestial marriage.

4 LeRoy Johnson, leader of the Short Creek polygamists from 1949 to 1987, wrote that he was “grateful when I heard that [a Mormon Church leader] branded us as ‘FUNDAMENTALISTS’” (Bradley, 1993, p. 28).
people. Centennial Park, Arizona, population 2,000, is near Short Creek and was established in the 1980s after an FLDS schism.

In contrast to these isolated communities, the 7,500-8,000 member Apostolic United Brethren is headquartered in suburban Salt Lake City. The Davis County Cooperative Society is also centered there, with membership estimated at 2,000-3,500. Several smaller polygamous sects are located in Utah, including the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ, and The Righteous Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, most with memberships of fewer than 1,000. Up to 15,000 independents espouse fundamentalist Mormonism.

Attempts to police the polygamists have been sporadic. Highly-publicized raids on their communities in 1945, 1953, and 2008 were greeted with ambivalence by press and public. The shared history of mainstream Mormons and polygamists has complicated their coexistence. Joseph Smith, Jr., introduced polygamy to the church he founded. It was his most startling innovation, fatal for Smith, and fateful for his followers. It caused violent opposition in the 1840s, and was the greatest stress on Mormonism until 1890. Smith claimed to receive a revelation from God in 1832 (not formally recorded until 1843) establishing the practice. Not publicly announced until 1852 in Utah, during the church presidency of Smith’s successor Brigham Young, up to 20% of church members practiced “the Principle” (Gordon, 2002). Hounded by the federal government and the implacable hostility of public opinion which called polygamy and slavery “the twin relics of barbarism,” LDS president Wilford Woodruff officially ending the practice with the Manifesto of 1890. After an interregnum of fifteen years when polygamous marriages were secretly sanctioned by some church authorities, polygamy was more decisively prohibited by the LDS in 1904.

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5 Plural marriages were already declining by the 1880s. See Bennion, L. “Plural Marriage, 1841–1904,” in Plewe (2013), p. 122–25.
But this was not really the end of plural marriage. Some Mormons refused to abandon the
practice, believing that Woodruff’s predecessor, third LDS president John Taylor, had authorized
a select group of followers to keep the practice alive in perpetuity. These new polygamists
gradually coalesced into organized groups. Their history is one of obscurity and poverty, but also
of entrepreneurial energy and vernacular spirituality that might be better described as Mormon
primitivism than as fundamentalism. Their separation from the LDS accelerated in the 1930s,
and groups have multiplied since that time.

The FLDS have become the best known plural marriage group because of imprisoned
leader Warren Jeffs. He was arrested and tried for facilitating an underage marriage, and has
been in prison since 2007. Although his conviction was overturned in 2010, he was extradited
from Utah to Texas and convicted of the more serious charge of marrying underage girls.
But outsiders know little about polygamists, much less their schools. When the Legal Affairs
Director of the Utah State Office of Education addressed a meeting of SafetyNet in 2012, she
did not seem to know of the AUB community, which operated private religious schools nearby.

Polygamists’ schools educate a significant number of children. For example, Link
Academy has about 700 students. As staff member Tammy said to me over a hot lunch in their
bustling cafeteria, “We have a big investment in the future here.” Spring Hill School enrolls over
520. Large plural families make for a young population. In the FLDS stronghold of Colorado
City, Arizona (part of the bi-state Short Creek community), 67 percent of the 2010 population of
4,821 was under nineteen years of age. The Salt Lake Tribune (2013) noted that, “Across all of
Utah, only 34.7 percent of the population is that young”. The median age in that fundamentalist

6 See Chapter 3 for an account of Taylor’s reputed vision and its effects on the new polygamists.
7 Although primitivism usually refers to an artistic movement, I use it here to get at the fundamentalist relish for
both the earthy and the sublime, a sensibility that ties them to 19th century Mormonism more than to the 21st
century LDS.
8 A cooperative forum for polygamists and helping agencies
community was 12.6 years, compared to 29.2 years for the state Utah, which has the youngest median age in the country. Although the populations’ sizes are different, they point to disparities that are hard to bridge. Polygamist families are often poor: 81% of Spring Hill students are eligible for federal free and reduced price school meals compared to 37% of all Utah students (Utah State Office of Education, 2010) and 51% of the US student population. This young, poor, white population may have more in common with children in Appalachia than with the mainstream communities around them.9

DISSECTATION CHAPTER SUMMARY

This study is comprised of an Introduction and six chapters.

Chapter One: Literature Review, focuses on (1) educational research related to fundamentalist Mormons; (2) scholarship on the history of religion and education in Utah; and (3) philosophers of education whose work is applicable to issues related to fundamentalist Mormons and education. The review touches upon other American religious groups’ educational issues to provide context, including the Amish, Orthodox Jews, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. But polygamists’ educational situation is unique because polygamy’s illegality leaves them culturally, economically, and religiously isolated.

The literature chronicling the entwined history of education and religion in Utah tells of resistance and accommodation by the LDS Church to Protestant missionaries and to local, state, and federal governments. Little has been written about new polygamists’ expansion of their educational work. I argue that it is part of building their Kingdom of God on earth.

Educational philosophers have not yet written on fundamentalist Mormonism. But they have written on religious schools, accommodation of religion in public schools, parents’ and

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9 However, there are no studies of infant mortality, high school or college graduation rates, wages, divorce, and other social and economic issues among polygamists.
children’s rights, and education for participation in a pluralistic society. All are issues related to plural marriage groups.

Chapter Two: Methodology, explains my use of qualitative tools of observation, interview, and survey, to study schools. Gaining and maintaining access to plural communities and schools, pseudonimity, site selection, finding principal informants, balancing reports by elites and by critics, and building trust with participants are addressed. The Institutional Review Board at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign played an important collaborative role in focusing the scope of field work.

Chapter Three: The Entwined History of Education and Polygamy, examines religion, education, and polygamy in Utah beginning with the territorial period. It traces the development of the School of the Prophets as a prototype for Mormon intellectual activity; and the story of education in Utah Territory, especially Protestant mission schools and their part in the fight against polygamy. The introduction of public education in Utah in 1890 coincided with the Manifesto. Plural marriage groups’ educational activities in the 1950s through the 1970s are examined as predecessors to the two types of schools represented in the case studies: a public charter and a private unaccredited school.

Chapter Four: Case Studies, examines Spring Hill School and Link Academy through extended narrations and discussion of issues facing the two polygamist sects’ schools.

Chapter Five: Educational Philosophy and fundamentalist Mormon schools, examines Eamonn Callan and Walter Feinberg’s work, especially concepts of servility and autonomy, in relation to fundamentalist Mormon schools.

Chapter Six: How should the state and civil society respond to fundamentalist Mormon education, and on what philosophical grounds? This chapter includes discussion of state
oversight, networking among schools, and the role of higher education in fostering more effective education in plural marriage communities. It proposes changes in state law and the creation of a polygamist school network to foster student achievement across communities.

Appendix A: Survey of Spring Hill School teachers and administrators.

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Letter

WHY IS THIS STUDY NECESSARY?

“New life as a found boy,” in the *Las Vegas Sun* (Glionna, 2013) profiles the teenaged Bowers brothers, who fled the FLDS. “The brothers’ learning curve is often steep,” it explains, continuing,

Zach was home-schooled—lessons involved reading the Bible and the Book of Mormon exclusively—and he was forbidden from watching TV or reading newspapers. He left the sect with little grasp of math, science, or history. Multiplication tables baffled him, and his reading skills were below normal. Zach admits he didn’t know who Osama bin Laden was until the terrorist leader was killed in 2011.

“I didn’t even know what the president was,” he said. “I knew there was somebody over the United States, but I didn’t know they called it the president.”

*Salt Lake Tribune* webcast guest Bruce Wisan, court-appointed manager of the FLDS United Effort Plan (UEP)\(^\text{10}\) (Trib Talk, 2013) offered these observations:

The children were pulled out of the public schools [in 2000] and the FLDS had their own schools for a period of time and now the children are homeschooled. There are separate family home schools. Sometimes, I’ve been told, the families will join together and have two or three families, or maybe it’s all part of brothers and sisters joining together, but it’s, again, from people I’ve spoken to who have left, the education is very unequal, and you have some very well-trained highly educated people that are doing these home schools and then you have others who are-- there is not necessarily the case. I had an acquaintance in the community that had a 17-year old nephew that left, he wanted to go to school, and he was tested at the third grade level in reading. Now, obviously there are people that are doing well in the home schooling but there are also many that are not getting a proper education and even the curriculums I’m told are very restrictive in terms

\(^{10}\) The UEP was seized by the State of Utah from the FLDS in 2005 because of suspected mismanagement.
of what they’re learning. My general sense from the people I’ve spoken to in the community is that the education of children is suffering.

These are valuable reports on fundamentalist Mormon education among the FLDS. But more is needed to enlarge the picture, including information on other plural marriage groups and their involvement in public and private schools. The dominant narrative of neglect needs to be broadened to portray the educational projects of these communities of the polygamist co-culture. Schools that educate these children offer solutions that are tailored to the needs of this population. But as the case studies show, polygamist schools also reflect troubling aspects of the communities that should be addressed by education reform.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

We traveled over 1,000 miles to Short Creek by invitation in 2010 but our contact could not confirm that our visit would actually take place until we checked into our motel. We met the next morning at a designated place and drove through winding back streets to a gated compound. By contrast, in 2012 I planned meetings with the administrators of Spring Hill and Mountain View School (a public K-12 school in a plural marriage community) by email. My first attempt to visit Link Academy was deferred but finally took place months later. The development of this qualitative study hinged on my ability to gain access to schools. I was always shown courtesy but did not always gain access. This study examines two schools and does not represent the variety of educational activities among fundamentalists. Three limited periods of field work ranging from one to two weeks limit the depth of this study; it is not an ethnography.
CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

When I surveyed teachers and administrators at Spring Hill School I put this question to them: “Outsiders sometimes claim that fundamentalist Mormons do not teach their children democratic values, and that plural communities do not fit into mainstream American society. How would you respond?” One of them wrote:

Many people claim many things without having a knowledge of them. We can look at almost every segment of society and find individuals without democratic values if a small enough sample space is used. A more broad sampling of fundamentalist Mormons, I think, would tell a different story than what mainstream Americans perceive due to poor data collection coupled with media hyperbole. It has been easy for misconceptions to be portrayed and perpetuated because the fundamentalist Mormon culture has had to hide the lifestyle or show an untruthful front to the public to avoid persecution and prosecution. This stigma on the fundamentalist Mormon society has contributed greatly to creating a gap of understanding between them and American society at large.

This chapter surveys literature on fundamentalists and, by acknowledging gaps, encourages future investigation. It discusses the scant educational research related to fundamentalist Mormons and examines other scholarly and popular works on polygamy that help to throw light on education in plural marriage communities. It also touches upon educational issues affecting the Amish, Hutterites, Orthodox Jews, and Jehovah’s Witnesses religious groups. These provide context for polygamists’ educational situation but they also amplify its uniqueness. Scholarship on the history of religion and education in Utah helps to situate the new polygamists and their schools in continuity with earlier Mormon educational projects. But these groups are not simply trying to recapture the past. They are building the future with plural marriage, united economic orders, and education in their communities. Philosophers of education Eamonn Callan and Walter Feinberg’s writings on autonomy versus servility and the role of religious education in a pluralistic society are particularly relevant for understanding polygamist education and framing policy related to it.
Few scholars discuss the religious dimensions of educational policy. A conversation with Erik Owens of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College confirmed that surprisingly little scholarly work was being done in this area. Diane L. Moore of Harvard Divinity School’s Program in Religious Studies and Education concurred “that we have little published here in the US on these matters compared with other parts of the world” (E. Owens, D. L. Moore, personal communications, 2010). Walter Feinberg contends that the silence is due to the misconception that “only those within a religious community had any serious interest in the moral education of children in religious schools” (W. Feinberg, personal communication, 2012).

At Spring Hill, a public charter school, religion was indirectly expressed by conservative clothing, polygamist families, and the surrounding fundamentalist Mormon milieu. At Link Academy, a private school, the imprint of faith was visible in hallways and classrooms lined with pictures of sect ancestors who were fathers and mothers of the community. These leaders were to be emulated by students and staff. Religious education was conducted in all grades.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH RELEVANT TO FUNDAMENTALIST MORMONS AND THEIR SCHOOLS

*Education Week* has reported twice on polygamists and schools since 2000, including the story, “Polygamy Case Raises Complex Schooling Issues” (2008). It was prompted by the YFZ raid and described the inadequate education of FLDS children. It raised a number of issues: the deterioration of FLDS education “in the past 10 years, after leaders of the religious group stopped supporting public schools;” uneducated mothers conducting their children’s home schooling; and tensions between sect members and local educators. But these issues have not been thoroughly examined. My lack of access to the FLDS after 2010 places them beyond the scope of this study.
Without scholarship or much journalism on fundamentalist Mormon education, I turned to memoirs by former sect members to learn how they had been educated in plural communities. Their books sometimes hark back to the 19th century narratives of women who escaped polygamy, such as Ann Eliza Young (1875). She wrote that her ex-husband, LDS president Brigham Young, “was a bitter opponent of free schools and liberal education” (p. 525). Her criticism helped to fuel the establishment of Protestant church-sponsored mission schools in Utah Territory. Today’s memoirists still write about limited educational opportunities. Jessop’s (2007) primary themes are the horror of polygamy and her struggle to get an education. Brent W. Jeffs (2009) writes about polygamist school Alta Academy (now closed) and his Uncle Warren Jeffs’ abuse.11

Altman’s (1996) *Polygamous Families in Contemporary Society* was the first ethnography of the new polygamists, focused on Community B (using a different pseudonym). Altman, a social psychologist, told me that protecting the anonymity of participants in his study had been difficult. Distinctive practices might identify a particular group and the small size of plural marriage sects made it easier to identify individuals within a group. Bennion (1998, 2008) published two studies of modern polygamist women, including a comparison of their experiences in four communities. *Modern Polygamy in the United States* (2011) includes an examination of education and economic status among the FLDS.

In addition to these memoirs and a few scholarly studies, *The Polygamists* (2004) offers an exhaustive history of Short Creek by a community historian and ex-FLDS member. Bistline’s intimate treatment contrasts with the sweeping indictments by investigative journalists who have produced widely read books on modern polygamy, *Under the Banner of Heaven* (Krakauer,

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11 Other titles in this genre include F. Jessop (2009), *Church of Lies*; R. Musser (2013), *The Witness Wore Red*; E. Wall (2009), *Stolen Innocence*. 

13
2003) and *Prophet's Prey* (Brower, 2011). Krakauer equates new polygamy with 19th century Mormonism. Brower conducted his research from an office at a community college serving Community A and Community B. According to the College Dean it was a serious setback for higher education in that isolated area. Fundamentalist students stayed away because of Brower’s affiliation and it took several years after his departure to coax them back to campus.

The Amish, Hutterites, Satmar Hasidic Jews of Kiryas Joel, New York, and Jehovah’s Witnesses have navigated education-related controversies, such as the Amish requirement that formal schooling be completed with the eighth grade (DeWalt 2001, Kraybill 2003, McConnell 2006, Ruxin 1967). An Amish father explained: “With us, our religion is *inseparable* with a day’s work, a night’s rest, a meal, or any other practice; therefore, our education can much less be *separated* from our religious practices” (Kraybill, p. 131). The Hutterites, a less well known Pietest community centered in the Upper Midwest and Canada, have a similar standard for schooling12 (Ediger 1985, Hostetler 1965, Wardle 1995). The establishment of a de facto Orthodox Jewish public school district at Kiryas Joel received substantial attention (Purringto n 1996, Walsh 1998 and 1999, Wood 1997).13 During World War II, a number of teachers who were Jehovah’s Witnesses were fired and Witness students expelled from schools (Peters 2000, Urofsky 1995) for refusing to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance and other patriotic activities. These groups resolved legal conflicts over education: state opposition to the Amish practice of leaving school after the eighth grade eventually resulted in the Supreme Court case Wisconsin vs. Yoder in 1972; the court ruled that Amish children could not be compelled to

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12 The Hutterites communal farm colonies have something in common with polygamists’ aspirations for united economic order communism. But the Hutterites have successfully implemented their system while most polygamists have struggled to approximate a united order.

13 Hasidic groups have sometimes had an uneasy relationship with more dominant forms of American Judaism; parallels could be drawn to the LDS/fundamentalist Mormon conflict.
remain in school after the eighth grade. The communalist Hutterites also benefited from this decision. Jehovah’s Witnesses refused to salute the flag or to participate in other school patriotic and holiday-related exercises. This resistance resulted in two Supreme Court Rulings: in the 1940 case Minersville School District vs. Gobitis, the Court found against the Witnesses. However, in the 1943 case West Virginia State Board of Education vs. Barnette, the High Court reversed itself and ruled in favor of the Witnesses. Public opinion favored the beleaguered sect (Engardio, 2006).

In each of these cases, practices motivated by religious beliefs and related to education caused the conflict between the group and the State. On the other hand, among fundamentalist Mormons educational projects are partly the result of their conflict with the State over polygamy. This makes such schools unique. Polygamists have founded their schools to educate children in an environment reflecting their plural marriage beliefs and practices. Unlike the Amish and Jehovah’s Witnesses, their conflict with the State is unresolved. One plural marriage groups is actively lobbying for the decriminalization of polygamy; most sects hope for a change in the law.

The lack of state regulation of private education in Utah makes it difficult to gather quantitative data such as standardized test scores from polygamists’ private schools. However, the schools I visited in three communities voluntarily administered a variety of standardized tests and used the results for their own purposes. Link Academy shared aggregated scores with me. But it is not just a lack of test results that have left fundamentalist Mormon schools largely unexamined and unknown. Without a relationship with the State Office of Education, there is no point of entry into the schools for outsiders. One Link Academy administrator explained that the only representative of the state that they saw in a complex housing 700 children was the building
inspector who checked the facility. Without data and other links to educators outside the polygamist co-culture, it will continue to be difficult to research, or to write about these schools.

But plural marriage communities do not see their schools as entirely apart from the mainstream. A respondent to my survey of Spring Hill teachers and administrators wrote:

We are people just like you. We have families. We love our children. We want to be instrumental in changing lives, inspiring minds, and preparing a set of people who can carry on the future of this world. We want our kids to be knowledgeable with current events, technology, and most importantly to think for themselves. Children who can (for example) conduct an internet search for a research project and not take the first opinion they find as fact, but to test the source, try other sources, compare and contrast, understand if there is an agenda or slant on the information, and then either accept or reject the information based on their findings.

Fundamentalist Mormons groups have created total institutions that encompass the lives of their members. Schools are an important part of that totality. It wasn’t until I visited a Community C school that used the A Beka curriculum that I began to consider the parallels between the educational aims of Protestant fundamentalists and polygamists. Of course, the public charter school I studied did not use this curriculum. Finding common cause among communities that feel under threat from mainstream society is not surprising, nor is the challenge of gaining access and maintaining perspective when studying them. God’s Choice (Peshkin, 1986), God’s Schools (Wagner, 1990), and For Goodness’ Sake (Feinberg, 2006), offer case studies of religious schools. Peshkin’s perspective on his role as researcher resonated with me:

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14 Accreditation of private schools is optional in Utah and there are no state requirements for registration, licensing, or approval. Teacher certification is not required and there is no state requirement for the number of school days. Immunizations are required (with exemptions available for religious reasons). Criminal background checks of employees may be conducted but are not required, although the state is required to notify private school administrators if an employee has been arrested for a controlled substance or for sex abuse (US Department of Education (2009), State Regulation of Private Schools).
15 A Beka Book publishes curriculum materials and is affiliated with Pensacola Christian College. The development of fundamentalist Christian education materials and controversy among fundamentalists about them is explained by Laats (2010).
“…I continue to shift contexts from the *research* I who tried to stand in the shoes of others, becoming an as-if-Christian in order to see and understand the world as Bethanyites do, to the *human* I, with personal dispositions intact, [who] never ceased to be present” (p. 276). Like him, I tried to simultaneously empathize with my participants and to evaluate them.

As a non-practicing Jew the religious context stirred Peshkin’s memory. Walter Feinberg (2008) described to me his own sporadic Jewish religious observance as motivated by guilt. Unlike Peshkin and Feinberg I am an active member of a religious community. As a Christian Scientist I have some experience with feeling misunderstood. However, my religion does not attempt to create the total institutions of fundamentalism. There is no place where Christian Scientists are a permanent majority population. But there were unexpected resonances. At the start of my 2010 visit to Short Creek community leaders asked me if I was a religious person. My wife, daughter, and I were sitting on one side of a long table facing about ten men. I had not intended to reveal this aspect of my commitments but answered that I was. That was not enough for my questioners. They wanted to know to which religion I belonged. This may have been motivated by their desire to know where I fit into the LDS universe: was I a member of the LDS Church. A former Mormon? I explained my affiliation and received a startling response. I assumed that no one in Short Creek would know anything about Christian Science. But the oldest man at the table, who had already told me that he had lived through the 1953 Short Creek raid, spoke up. “You are the people who have healings through prayer,” he said. I assented. The charged atmosphere noticeably relaxed and we moved on to another subject. I ventured that one of my great-aunts by marriage was from a fundamentalist Mormon polygamist family. That brought a smile to some of the men.
I was never again asked this question in a field work encounter. I identified myself as an educational researcher and graduate student at the University of Illinois on many occasions. But I felt that my first connection to the fundamentalist community was somehow ratified by revealing my religious identity. Because I sometimes found issues raised by field work troubling, I made sure to maintain my spiritual practices of study and prayer during these times, as well as church attendance. On two occasions I attended fundamentalist Mormon religious services in the afternoon after attending Christian Science services in the morning. This helped me to maintain an equipollence of my “human I” and my “research I.”

Callan (1997) writes that

understanding ethical diversity in the educationally relevant sense presupposes some experience of entering imaginatively into ways of life that are strange, even repugnant, and some developed ability to respond to them with interpretive charity, even though the sympathy this involves must complement rather than supplant the tough-mindedness of responsible criticism (p. 222)

As unfamiliar as plural marriage communities at first seemed to me, their totality made it difficult at times to maintain perspective and to report my impressions. This eclipse was both frightening and alluring. I found some of the reported practices of Community D especially troubling, such as incestuous marriages. But several community members impressed me with their grit and good humor. At Spring Hill School I observed pedagogical practices and personal conduct that I admired.

Peshkin, Feinberg, and Wagner confirmed the value of studying schools founded by religious communities. These schools show the elasticity of American pluralism but may suppress that pluralism if they do not expose students, teachers, and parents to a range of ideas different from those of the founding community. Spring Hill School and Link Academy have developed different approaches to this task. Spring Hill emphasized the importance of critical
thinking and exposure to alternative world views. Link Academy showed some aspirations toward openness but was hobbled by reliance on rote learning and inexperienced teachers.

SCHOLARSHIP ON THE INTERTWINED HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND POLYGAMY

Studies of Mormon polygamy in the 19th century include *Mormon Polygamy* (Van Wagoner, 1986) and *More Wives Than One* (Dayne, 2008). Quinn (1993) offered information on secret plural marriage in the LDS Church in the early 20th century, linking the mainstream church with the new polygamists. But these historical studies barely mention schools and education. Fortunately, accounts of 19th century Protestant mission schools in Utah detail the symbiotic relationship between education and polygamy. The missionaries largely failed to achieve their goal of converting and reintegrating Mormons into mainstream Protestantism. But they succeeded in laying the foundation of the Utah public school system, established months before the formal abandonment of polygamy in 1890. Two studies, *Presbyterians in Zion* (Burton, 2010) and “Heathen in our Fair Land:” *Anti-Polygamy and Protestant Women’s Missions to Utah, 1869-1910* (Riess, 2002) offer contrasting assessments of the missionaries’ aims and claims, but agree on the positive impact of the mission schools. These modest institutions, established all over Utah Territory, challenged the LDS monopoly on education and received considerable support from the LDS rank and file. Burton may overplay the educational malaise in pre-statehood Utah, but he usefully calls into question the LDS rosy picture of pioneer communities as beacons of learning. Burton attributes the situation to decades of conflict with the federal government and to early Mormon millennialism that discounted the need for secular learning.

Following the territorial period, *Culture Clash and Accommodation: Public Schooling in Salt Lake City, 1890-1994* (Buchanan, 1996) recounts the first century of state-sponsored public
education in Utah. It is particularly helpful in framing early competition between public and LDS schools and the eventual abandonment of a separate parochial system as Mormons transferred their allegiance, their children, and their political energies to the public schools. With church-sanctioned polygamy receding, the educational equation rebalanced in favor of public schools which increasingly fell under Mormon control. Buchanan, Burton, and Riess develop important themes—building the kingdom of God, accommodation and marginalization—that can be extended to explain the gradual development of educational activities in plural marriage communities. But none of them investigate educational activity at the religious and economic margins where the new polygamists gradually organized and gained strength in the 20th century. During this embryonic period, seeds were being sown that influenced polygamists’ attitudes toward education and helped to shape the schools that they founded. To get at these obscure decades I explored the careers of several prominent plural marriage advocates, including inventor and entrepreneur Nathaniel Baldwin, whose factory employed many prominent early fundamentalists (Fleisher and Freedman, 1983). The earliest plural marriage organizations were born in this environment. Baldwin hired polygamists when others would not and provided the steady employment that helped to finance and dignify the movement. Bowman (2012) discusses the Depression-era rise of theological fundamentalism among the mainstream LDS, spearheaded by Joseph F. Smith. Fundamentalist Mormons were influenced by Smith and his conservative, separatist vision for the LDS, even while Smith and the Church rejected them. We glimpse polygamists’ emerging attitude toward education in the life and thought of Baldwin the inventor and Smith the theologian.

In her comprehensive study of the 1953 government raid on Short Creek, Bradley (1993) describes fundamentalist education. She recounts the post-raid pressure placed on three school
teachers by the Arizona State Board of Education to renounce polygamy as the condition of their re-employment. The case, ultimately decided by the Superior Court of Arizona in 1954,\textsuperscript{16} barred such a religious test. Bradley touches on the themes of exile and return that characterize polygamous history, echoed in the homespun poem written by a plural wife to her husband:

Exiled  
Phoenix—1954  
By Aunt Fern

When shall I see you, husband dear,  
And fold in fond embrace,  
To bridge the gap and span the tide,  
Since last I saw your face?  
I long to tell you all my woes,  
Cause you will understand.  
And tell you the joys I’ve had  
Since kidnapped from that land… (pp. 145-146)

The exile’s mingled hope and anguish is the theme of fundamentalist Mormonism, a self-designated remnant people with a special mission to rebuild a compromised kingdom. Shipps (1987) explains that early Mormons reenacted a biblical story that closed with the 1890 Manifesto. The new polygamists extended the scriptural reenactment that Shipps places at the heart of early Mormonism. Givens (2007) contrasts Mormon conceptions of authority and radical freedom; searching and certainty; the sacred and the banal; and election and exile, that also offered insight into fundamentalism. Both scholars supplied me with a theoretical rationale for plural marriage communities’ continuity with early Mormonism.

New polygamyists have embraced education in their attempt to recreate the political and economic Kingdom of God. Bloom (1992) describes the fervent embrace of theocracy in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and contends that, while hidden, the impulse to kingdom-build is a key to understanding

\textsuperscript{16} “In the Matter of the Revocation of Teachers’ Certificates of Clyde Mackert, Louis J. Barlow, and Jerold Williams, Findings and Order, 31 July, 1954” (Bradley, 1993, p. 238, n. 11).
mainstream Mormonism. The same is true for the new polygamists. Kingdom-building involves creating, supporting, and educating the plural family--one husband with two or more wives and many children.

RELEVANT WORK BY PHILOSOPHERS OF EDUCATION

Do fundamentalist Mormon schools prepare children for participation in a pluralistic society? The writings of Walter Feinberg and Eamonn Callan are at the heart of my response to that question in Chapter 5, “Educational Philosophy and fundamentalist Mormon schools.” Callan’s essay, “The Great Sphere” (1997) sets the table for this discussion, as its subtitle, “Education against servility,” suggests. Feinberg (2006) explains that “the public has a strong interest in the work of religious schools and…this interest extends beyond the academic performance of their students into the shared moral understandings required to sustain and reproduce liberal, pluralistic democracies” (p. xviii). He writes that liberalism:

First….must allow strong differences, even inconsistencies, to be held across faith communities regarding the most important questions of human existence. Second, consistent with the requirements of liberalism, it cannot be laissez-faire about the merits of religious education to the point of permissiveness. This means that religious education must address standards for reasonable education as these are defined in part by the interest of liberal, pluralist democracies in the development of an informed and critical citizenry.

By “religious education,” Feinberg means academic education in a religiously-controlled or -influenced context. He lays down several useful markers on the limits of parental rights, intellectual growth and autonomy, and the problem of religious chauvinism. His methodological approach, combining interpretive and qualitative research, was a helpful roadmap for me. The alternating sections of educational philosophy and ethnography create a vivid window into a complex problem.
In an interview, Feinberg (personal communication, 2012) discussed what he thought might be a problematic aspect of fundamentalist Mormonism for education: the demand for a high degree of servility. While religions generally teach submission to a higher power and humility in community, Feinberg wondered whether extreme servility was a distinguishing mark of fundamentalist Mormon culture. Are servility and pluralism irreconcilable? Callan claims that pluralism’s encouragement of autonomy is the antidote to servility. All constituencies are given a place on the sphere of experience and educators help students to explore territories different from their own. *Creating Citizens* (1997) argues that democracy and servility are incompatible. Membership in a religion is an acceptance by an individual of “simple integrity” based on three conditions: the identification of the individual with the circumscribed role of the good in that community; the harmony between the responsible roles required of the individual; and the wholehearted identification of the individual with these roles (p. 60). This is part of a broader consideration of autonomy and choice, also one of Feinberg’s primary concerns. Callan offers “the common school” as a locus for the articulation of virtue in the community that it serves (p. 196), a point I heard repeated at Spring Hill School by the administrator and teachers.

I turned to several other philosophers to think through the relationship between fundamentalist Mormon schools and broader society. “Liberal civic education and religious fundamentalism: the case of God versus John Rawls?” (Macedo, 1995) argues for “liberalism with teeth.” All religions must be treated equally, although liberals should not accommodate dissenters when they threaten core liberal values. This argument raises questions: What are the limits of legal coercive power over religion? Who are the arbiters of “core liberal values”? At what point are the values of polygamist communities (for example, servility) subject to state countervention and regulation? Other useful works on education and citizenship include *Making
Good Citizens (Ravitch and Viteritti, 2001) and The Demands of Liberal Education (Levinson, 1999). Galston’s Liberal Purposes (1991) challenges Rawls with a more limited characterization of the pluralism possible in liberal societies.

Joel Feinberg (2007) is helpful here: his focus on autonomy and critical reflection, the child’s possible futures, and their tension with religious commitment, get at root questions about polygamists and their schools. “The Child’s Right to an Open Future” argues for tightly circumscribed parental rights. Feinberg thinks that children’s choices about the future trump the custodial rights of parents who act outside of accepted social norms. This stance is countered by Gilles (1996) who argues for a robust “Parentalist Manifesto.” He goes further than Galston (1991) who argues for parental rights with some restrictions.

Brickhouse contrasts the responsibilities of schools with the responsibilities of parents. McConnell (2000) explores the religious dimension in “Obligations of Citizenship and Demands of Faith.” Taken together, these articles probe the relationship between parents and children, and by extension, the relationship of religion and education.

Practicing Virtues: Moral Traditions at Quaker and Military Boarding Schools (Hays, 1994) combines a comparison of virtue ethics at two schools, one religiously based, with strong case studies. Hays’ honesty about her bias and its subsequent modification was as interesting as any of her findings. This willingness to work provisionally and to shape existing theory to the evidence drawn from new experiences is what I aspired to do, as well. The teachers and parents that I came into contact with in field work urged me not to pre-judge their schools. A Spring Hill teacher wrote: “…our students are our precious commodity. Their growth into citizens who can productively function in any society is key to what we ask of them in the school environment. We are in a global world and need various sets of skills beyond academics.”
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

I was leaving a sixth grade math class at Spring Hill School in Community B when I struck up a conversation with Violet Oaks, a “Parent Professional,” or teacher’s aide. She was hesitant at first. “Are you recording what I’m saying?” When I told her I wasn’t recording, she became more animated and spoke quite freely about her experience. Oaks had been a student at the school and had gone on to graduate from high school. She was married and a mother of two children and said that she enjoyed working at the school very much. She was attending community college. I thought, this job gives her a dignity. She was in a purposeful professional world with the goal of being a teacher. She ended by saying that she hoped she didn’t sound critical or that she had said anything that would reflect badly on the school.

My encounter with Oaks was shaped by my fieldwork methods. Her relief at not being recorded helped to counterbalance the formality of the researcher/participant relationship, expressed in her desire to say good things about her school. This project combined three methodological approaches: historical research, case studies constructed through ethnographic field work, and consideration of pertinent issues through the lens of philosophy of education. Research questions gradually emerged through progressive focusing (Stake, 1995, 2010) during field work, reflection, reading, and writing. As mentioned in the Introduction, I asked FLDS community members during my 2010 visit to Short Creek how fundamentalist men and boys had been affected by the YFZ Ranch raid in 2008. This etic interest was modified by the emic issues that were important to the FLDS and these emic issues came to predominate in my project. As I learned about the variety of educational programs in plural marriage communities, I wondered

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17 My field notes record my initial confusion about the job title, Parent Professional. Most are women in the community who are working toward teaching degrees and began as volunteers. They usually work two paid days a week in the school. They represent an important piece of administrator Mary Jane Laughlin’s strategy for qualifying Community B members to teach at Spring Hill School.
how polygamy affected education and how education affected polygamy. This broad question had several aspects. The first was historical: What was the relation between education and polygamy in the past? What had changed over time? Were there recursive patterns that continued to characterize fundamentalist Mormon educational values and practices? This led to a second set of questions about current fundamentalist culture and education: How do fundamentalists engage with schools? What is familiar and what is strange to outsiders when polygamist communities operate and participate in schools? What are fundamentalists’ perspectives on education? Finally, as I designed my project and tested it in a pilot study, I wondered about the relationship between communities’ needs and students’ desires. What was the balance between what the sect wanted its children to become in service to its mission and what the children needed to explore and understand to participate in a pluralistic society?

Jonathan Z. Smith (1982) writes that, “Religion is solely the creation of the scholar’s study”, and that the self-conscious student of religion is engaged in acts of imagination that first depend on the examples chosen for study, and second, on how they are studied. He writes that religion can be “imagined as an ordinary category of human expression and activity,” connected to many other activities. This approach is particularly important when studying education among fundamentalist Mormons, since the alternative is to focus on polygamy which, in the famous words of Lord Shaftsbury, “excite[s] horror and make[s] men stare.” As Smith points out, there is a tension between religion as an ordinary human activity and “religion imagined as an exotic category” (p. xi). My aim is to reduce exoticism by observing the routines, voices, and problems of educators, parents, students and schools.
PILOT STUDY AS TEMPLATE FOR METHODOLOGY

My research strategy emerged during my January 2012 pilot study visits to several schools over two weeks. Basic process issues such as gaining and maintaining access to plural marriage communities and schools, selecting case study sites, finding principal informants, conducting research in insular communities, and building trust with participants were as important as any research question to determine the feasibility of conducting more extensive educational research. I wondered how to interpret my findings. How would I handle the technical aspects of field work: making contacts, interviewing, recording, observing, and taking field notes? Would people talk to me? Would I be allowed into the communities’ schools? Melville writes in *Moby-dick*: “There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method.” My “careful disorderliness” was a combination of preparation and expectant openness to opportunities as they presented themselves.

Making contacts and finding participants

I arrived at a town near my first research site after driving through a deep rocky gorge. It felt like a passage between two worlds. A last-minute intuition led me to get there a day earlier than planned, in time for a public meeting of Safety Net, the state-funded program to provide “equal access to justice, safety, education, and services for those associated with the practice of polygamy.”18 I explained to the group that I was doing research on plural communities and education, and asked if it was OK for me to sit in on the meeting. I had expected wariness about my participation, or at least some interrogation, but there was none --perhaps because I explained

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18 SafetyNet [http://www.utah.org/](http://www.utah.org/) was organized in 2003 by the Utah and Arizona state attorneys general. Monthly meetings are rotated between sites; I attended via conference call. Other attendees at my site included the workforce coordinator for the local branch of the state labor force office, the domestic violence coordinator, attorney, and director of the DCFS office, and two staff members from the public school district; one was the coordinator for services to homeless students, the other was director of adult and continuing education.
that I was an education researcher from the University of Illinois. I did not represent state or federal government but a university. Mormon respect for education may have helped me to quickly enter into the activities of Safety Net. We joined the live meeting by conference call, attended by about fifteen people. Only three represented polygamist groups, including Joan Wood, a leading spokeswoman for plural marriage, who became one of my chief informants. She asked for my phone number at the end of the Safety Net meeting, then called and invited me to a presentation at a women’s shelter the following week. She also facilitated visits to schools in Communities C and D, and accompanied me to a Community C church service. I was surprised and grateful, since I had no previous contacts in either of these groups.

Paula Martin, LCSW, the Safety Net therapeutic services coordinator, also called me. Together, Martin and Wood gave presentations on polygamy to various service providers. Attendance at that SafetyNet meeting opened up my pilot project by providing me with willing informants who pointed me to others and facilitated my contact with them. Why did they help me? Subsequent conversations revealed their passionate belief that plural marriage communities needed to be understood. Joan Wood was a committed insider, a widowed wife of a well-known independent polygamist. I fit into her work of building bridges to mainstream society. She gave me valuable contacts that I used during my subsequent field work, including Yvonne Golding, the director of educational programs for The Options Group, which serves young people from Community A. Paula Martin was a knowledgeable outsider who conducted individual and group counseling with polygamists. She was also LDS, and I found that my Mormon participants had a different angle on fundamentalists than did non-Mormon participants. To the LDS, polygamists are apostates who refuse to follow the leadership of the LDS prophet. They view plural marriage as not only illegal but schismatic. She spoke from several years of experience with polygamist
families, and was deeply concerned about the state of education in plural marriage sects. The Safety Net meeting included discussion of the educational situation. In my field notes I wrote:

> The state has almost no enforced regulations for homeschooling. Law requires affidavit by parents which promises to follow state curriculum, cover same amount of material in a year, and give children’s names, birthdates, and home address. However, this is not monitored—there are no penalties for non-compliance. Someone said this was educational neglect, but Department of Child and Family Services [DCFS] attorney said that under law it was not classified as neglect—that is why DCFS does not pursue cases. It seems a disastrous loophole allowing the FLDS to exist completely outside educational supervision by the state. Paula Martin explained that FLDS children, home schooled since 2000, usually have about a 6th grade education. Boys now tend to go to work with fathers at 11 or 12, girls with mothers at same age.

At Safety Net I also met two local school district staff members. The homeless services coordinator served several hundred students classified as homeless, including those whose families were “doubling up” by living with relatives, as well as those in shelters. Many were from polygamous backgrounds. He reminded me that the mainstream LDS and the polygamists shared a common heritage, and, in some ways, were closely related. The director of adult education explained that most students she encountered from polygamist backgrounds preferred to get GEDs. They needed jobs. She said that integration of other plural community students into the high schools has been fairly successful; they benefited from broader anti-bullying efforts.

Finding other participants led me to school districts, a community college, and non-profit organizations. Through an Internet search I found Lehi Grant, a retired teacher in Community B and coauthor of a chapter of a book on modern polygamy. He seemed delighted to organize a meeting for me with teachers and two community college administrators. This was one of several group interviews I conducted. With Grant’s encouragement I also interviewed the principals of two public school serving Community B. One of them, Mary Jane Laughlin, was administrator of Spring Hill School, which became a site for my case study. An online learning coordinator participated in one of these interviews—she was one of Lehi Grant’s plural wives. However,
after a second meeting and more email exchanges, Grant stopped responding to me. During our last conversation he bitterly remarked that when people wanted to know about who was married to whom and how they arranged their lives, he did not tell them! His remarks were consistent with other participants’ mingled openness and defensiveness: polygamy was at the center of their lives, and seldom far from the surface.

I wanted to interview people from each of the four largest polygamist groups but all attempts to make contacts in Community A were unsuccessful. During my second stint of fieldwork I hand-delivered letters to the post office to two educators but received no response. However, I was able to interview Community C principal and teacher Moses Johnson and observed his busy K-8 private religious school with over 150 students in a sect settlement. Joan Wood connected us. An invitation to visit Link Academy, a Community D school, was made but then withdrawn during the pilot study, but the group offered an interview with Barbara Gunn and Holly Yates, two mothers of students.¹⁹ This initial contact led to two visits to Link Academy. As I presented consent forms to both women, the word “polygamy” in the text stood out. Participants rarely used it, even Kerry Peters, an ex-Community D member who bitterly talked about her schooling. Gunn and Yates explained that they practiced plural marriage, not polygamy. For them, this is not a sleight of words. But it indicates the predicament of fundamentalists. Founder Joseph Smith steadfastly denied to the public that he practiced polygamy while in private he promoted plural marriage among his closest followers. The power of the LDS priesthood to bless the union of one man to multiple women made the difference. Without this spiritual authority, taking multiple wives was just polygamy. With the heavenly mandate, what looked to outsiders like polygamy was transfigured into celestial marriage.

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¹⁹ I later learned that Gunn may be the mother of as many as fifteen children; Yates may be the mother of ten.
Two public school principals I interviewed shared the same surname: Mary Jane Laughlin of Spring Hill and Laura Laughlin of Mountain View School. Fundamentalist Mormons are generally descended from a small number of families, and several surnames predominate. Instead of many “Ms. Smiths,” teachers and administrators are called “Ms. Mary Jane,” or “Ms. Alice.” Most participants approved their pseudonyms, but a layer of anonymity already exists in polygamist schools, where plural family relations are not immediately apparent to outsiders. Plural wives of one husband might work side by side at a school but that relationship may not be revealed to outsiders. This web of relationships has the potential to foster nepotism in a way that is hard to avoid in a world where everyone seems to be related to everyone. I also encountered a group of elementary school children who were eager to tell me their surnames: “I’m a Smith!” “I’m a Jones!” These are markers of group identity; the Jones family might be a complex of several plural families connected across generations by intermarriage and cousinhood. But there appears to be a degree of privacy around polygamy even within the communities that practice it. For example, a new plural marriage might not be known to others in the community for some time after it has taken place, especially if husband and wife do not cohabit fulltime. There is also instability; divorces and remarriages among multiple partners can make family relations difficult to trace.\textsuperscript{20} When participants occasionally referred to family relations I listened with interest, but I abandoned early ideas of mapping polygamist families in order to relate patterns of kinship relations and education. My participants might have feared that such information would be used for a husband’s arrest and the separation of children from each other and their mothers—the great fear of polygamist life. A recently

\textsuperscript{20} The reassignment of wives of excommunicated men to other men in the community among the FLDS has been documented but this practice may not be widespread in other sects.
created website denouncing a polygamist sect published a sect family tree as its biggest bombshell.

Three subsequent periods of field work expanded the circle of participants, but access to most new informants came from those who had been willing to speak with me during the pilot study.

Recordings and Notes

It was during my meeting with the Lehi Grant’s educators that I learned of polygamists’ aversion to being tape-recorded. We met at a combination restaurant and gas station run by Community B members. Everyone willingly signed consent forms, but when I asked for permission to record our conversation, Mark Jones, community college administrator and Community B member, said that he preferred that I only take notes. This became the pattern in subsequent interviews: members of plural communities asked not to be recorded. Jones was also quite interested in the notes I took during our discussion and during the windshield tour he gave me of the Community B settlement. It is not hard to understand polygamists’ dislike of being recorded. Audio recordings played an important part in convicting FLDS leader Warren Jeffs.

Because of this limitation, I experimented with several ways of writing notes. Even during recorded interviews with non-polygamists I used my notebook to write impressions, since recording could not capture my own thoughts about what was happening as it happened. Without notes, these impressions were sometimes too ephemeral to recall. During school observations I took notes during instruction but relied on journaling to bring together what I had written and what I had seen and heard. At the end of each day in the field I expanded my notes, either in a notebook or on a laptop computer. During the pilot study I gradually moved from handwriting to word processing the entries. In subsequent field work I skipped the handwritten journal and
created journal entries directly on the computer, protected by password. This seemed more
efficient but it also marked a move from more personal handwritten journals to the easily edited
pages of Microsoft Word. I spent several hours each night in my motel room making sense of the
day’s events. During a later visit to Community A and B I spent two weeks at The Sands Motel,
in a room with a small kitchenette and neighbors who were either bargain tourists or construction
workers.

I slept well most nights. I had wondered if my interactions with fundamentalists would be
disturbing and keep me up at night; instead I was spent by each day’s end. My other haunt 300
miles to the north was The Royal Garden Motel, where I stayed several times when visiting
Communities C and D. Establishing a base of operations at each location became important to
me. These motels were comforting and ordinary and made moving in and out of contacts with
fundamentalists seem less strange. My ability to observe and to retain impressions for later
journaling was sharpened, as well as my realization of the subjective nature of my impressions.

Attending two plural marriage communities’ religious services in 2012 helped me to
understand the link between religion and education. Unlike Peshkin’s (1986) experience at
Bethany Baptist Academy, none of my participants made any attempt to convert me to their
religion. This is an interesting difference, since the four communities I visited practice a way of
life that is as all-inclusive as that of fundamentalist Protestants in God’s Choice. Participants
sometimes talked more freely than I had expected about their beliefs in ways that helped me to
make the connection between religion and educational practices. For example, one
fundamentalist principal, Laura Laughlin, made our meeting conditional on my limiting my
questions to scholastic topics. Her email to me specified questions only about academics, not
about polygamy. After learning about the purpose of my project she opened up and talked about
polygamy and its effect on education. Most conversations with participants yielded rich information. This was true even in settings that did not become the focus of my case studies. These conversations provided context for the cases and showed the variety of educational practices in polygamist communities.

During all field work I wore long-sleeved button-down shirts, long pants and kept my hair short without mustache or beard out of respect for the communities and in appreciation to them for admitting me into their schools. In Community B, adhering to “priesthood standards” for dress was required for admission to community events such as parties, dances, and religious services. I did not attempt to meet priesthood standards but only to approximate them. No one commented on my attire but I felt that it was appraised. This was especially true when I attended a packed church service in Community B and was the only man present not wearing a coat and tie! I had not expected that degree of formality even in church, since men’s modesty in everyday clothing was achieved with jeans and buttoned down shirts. But like the LDS, Community B went to church in “Sunday best.”

This generic approximation was the best that I could do since polygamist groups adhere to different clothing standards. The prairie dresses and puffed hairstyles made famous by FLDS women are not worn in other communities. At Spring Hill School uniforms enforced a standard of modesty that contrasted with the casual clothes worn at Link Academy. Men in Communities A, B, and C wear long-sleeved button-down shirts throughout the year with a white undershirt and long pants. Like fundamentalist women in the same groups, they are often covered from neck to wrist to ankle. Facial hair and long hair are rare. But variations exist within communities. From my observation, Communities A and B appeared more conservative in their dress than members of Communities C and D. In fact, these groups lined up along a spectrum ranging from
Community A (most conservatively dressed) to Community D (least conservatively dressed). My passport to acceptance was to dress as conservatively as a member of Community A.

Finding and defining a case study

By the end of the pilot study, I was sure that Community B’s Spring Hill School would be a good case study site. More information was available about this public charter school than about the private religious schools administered by polygamists. Test scores and a state school report card were available. Community B appeared more open to outsiders than other plural marriage settlements, and the administrator, Mary Jane Laughlin, had indicated a conditional willingness for me to visit her school again, concerned that I portray Spring Hill as a public and not a religious school.

However, a single case study could not show the diversity of education in polygamist communities. Three of the four sects I encountered relied on private schools to educate at least some of their children. It was important to study a second school but not initially clear who would allow me access, or whether a school would offer the best opportunity to compare cases. My visit to a K-8 private school in Community C provided a tantalizing glimpse of a polygamist school with a Christian fundamentalist curriculum working with conservative Christian education consultants. Community C was also fairly open to outsiders as I learned when I attended one of their worship services with principal informant Joan Wood. However, Principal Moses Johnson responded to my request to return to the school with a courteous but firm rebuff. He had taken the matter to the school council. They had concluded that there was no more to be gained by my studying their school, perhaps believing that the secular interests I represented were too different from its spiritual purpose. In a follow-up exchange, Johnson asked me not to
contact the consultants who worked with his school, but agreed that I could use him as a reference if I contacted another Community C school.

This led me in another direction. Looking back, I see why I initially gravitated to this comparatively open community. Although the educational models in Communities B and C were different, their stance toward the outside world was similar, making comparison less valuable. Instead, a door I had assumed would remain tightly closed opened to me.

My first request to visit Link Academy, the Community D School, had been redirected to an interesting interview with mothers Barbara Gunn and Holly Yates. They explained that my school visit had been canceled at the last minute because the staff had not had sufficient time to prepare for it, but I assumed that I would never get inside Link Academy. Community D was small and secretive. Some of their members had received unwanted media attention because of charges of child abuse and neglect. However, during my second period of fieldwork I met with the principal and several staff members, toured the school, and had lunch in the cafeteria. The invitation to eat lunch came by cell phone as I was driving away from the school, and appeared to be a gesture of good will and trust. With some trepidation on both sides, we agreed that I would visit the school again. This resulted in a day-long observation at Link Academy during my last fieldwork period, detailed in the case study.

Differences in the two communities meant differences in the degree and frequency of access to the schools, but these differences were part of the case and helped to define its boundaries. The table below compares access and activities at the two sites.
Table 1: Research activity at Spring Hill School and Link Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Community B: Spring Hill School</th>
<th>Community D: Link Academy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed Parents</td>
<td>Y: 10 parents</td>
<td>Y: 5 parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed classrooms</td>
<td>Y:10 classrooms</td>
<td>Y: 6 classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed Principals, lead teachers</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written survey of teachers and administrators</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied access to all areas of school</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed teachers</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed recess/P.E.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of days at school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended community religious services</td>
<td>Y: 1 service</td>
<td>N: request not approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared drafts of some writing with participants</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received written response to writing</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation

Stake (1995, 2010) emphasizes the importance of observation and cautions against over-reliance on interviews and surveys in developing cases for analysis. As he pointed out to me,
participants sometimes lie and often do not disclose important information. This was good
counsel for research in plural marriage communities where secrecy protects the group. I observed
the communities at worship services; at parents’ organization fundraisers; at lunch in the school
cafeteria; and at a conference at the Utah State capitol sponsored by Safety Net and attended by
representatives of plural marriage groups. It featured a panel discussion on “Education Issues
with Fundamentalist Mormon Youth.” I ate in restaurants, shopped in grocery stores, walked
through parks in polygamist communities.

During my fourth field work period I observed kindergarten, elementary, and middle
school classrooms at Spring Hill School. My presence in the school was announced by the
administrator and I moved around the school without an escort. At Link Academy I was
accompanied by a staff member and was not permitted to speak to teachers. In both schools I
observed instruction in a variety of subjects, including mathematics, language arts, social studies,
science, and music. Some of my most useful time in the schools was spent with artifacts: student
work posted on bulletin boards, student art projects, and classroom configuration and decoration.
At both schools, distinguishing indicators of polygamist identity intermingled with common
school décor. These indicators were visible and static at Link Academy where pictures of sect
ancestors lined the walls. At Spring Hill School, the polygamist context was apparent in
women’s long dresses and large family groups entering and leaving the school.

Ethnographic elements of case study research

Lutkehaus (1995) notes, in writing about Margaret Mead, that most ethnographers
“oscillate…between different rhetorical intentions.” He lists some of the ethnographer’s roles:
“subjective stylist…author…privileged expert…social scientist” (p. 190). The optimum method
for studying educational practices and values among fundamentalist Mormons would have
involved an extended stay in their communities, but none of them appeared ready to accommodate this. Instead, I conducted four periods of field work, ranging from one to two weeks, to create ethnographically-informed case studies. By moving between different settings in and around plural marriage groups – public and private schools, a community college, helping agencies, a school district office, a restaurant in a polygamist town, church services, homes of polygamists—and interviewing current and former polygamists about their educational experiences, as well as mainstream Mormons, former Mormons, and non-Mormons, I created a varied portrait. This involved repeatedly plunging into the experience of polygamy and education for short periods of time over two years. The results of immersion are qualitative, impressionistic, descriptive, and reflexive.

Survey

I created an online survey for teachers and administrators during my fourth and last period of field work. It included seven questions after asking whether the respondent was a teacher or an administrator:

1.) Based on your experience, what are the strengths of this school?
2.) This school serves at least some students from plural marriage communities. How does this affect the school’s mission and delivery of education?
3.) If you were speaking with someone from outside the fundamentalist Mormon community, what would you want them to know about your school?
4.) When someone wants to learn more about your school, what kinds of questions should they be asking? What should they seek to understand?
5.) What values are emphasized at your school? What is most important?
6.) Outsiders sometimes claim that fundamentalist Mormons do not teach their children democratic values, and that plural communities do not fit into mainstream American society. How would you respond?

7.) Finally, please take a moment to write about your own faith and the way it affects your work at school. If you are in a public school, this question is not meant to imply that you are teaching religion to students. How does your faith affect your approach to education as a teacher, parent, or administrator?

Mary Jane Laughlin agreed to make the survey link available to the staff at Spring Hill School, and twelve teachers and administrators responded within a week of its posting in 2013. The survey was created to probe emerging themes in my research as well as to elicit feedback from staff in a way that would be safe and promote reflection. Unlike Spring Hill School, Link Academy did not agree to participate in the survey. This silence was mitigated by conversations with several administrators, but no interviews with teachers were allowed. At Link Academy, a number of teachers appeared to be young plural wives. Many had their infants with them in the classroom.

Collaboration as Ethic and Strategy

I promised participants in the 2012 pilot study that they could read the draft report and suggest changes and additions. I created separate electronic documents for each participant, marking their name and their comments wherever they occurred using Microsoft Word yellow highlighter, but giving them access to the whole report. In an accompanying e-mail, I explained the use of pseudonyms and invited them to change theirs if they wanted to. I requested frank feedback, while expressing thanks for their willingness to be interviewed. I was surprised by the speed at which participants responded. Within 24 hours, six out of fifteen had sent their
comments. Two were brief notes of approval, but several requested changes; it was notable that participants who were polygamists asked for changes in almost every case.

For example, Joan Wood responded:

I would like to suggest that you use the term "fundamentalist Mormon" (rather than Mormon fundamentalist) when referring to people in our culture. We first and foremost consider ourselves to be Mormons, and the adjective fundamentalist describes what kind of Mormons we are--as compared to liberal, feminist, orthodox, etc.

Mary Jane Laughlin wrote:

I have one concern about my interview and that is the part about teachers viewing themselves as accountable to God. I think that a lay person reading this may interpret that statement as teachers being accountable to religion for their jobs and professions. This is not the case. Our school is not a religious school. My answer was an attempt to help you understand the serious commitment teachers have to educate the youth in their classes. Could you please change the language there so as to not miscommunicate this idea? A misinterpretation could cause some trouble for us; we are a public school and subject to the laws of the state.

Laura Laughlin read the report with care and responded:

I would not like the use of the word “elite” used by me to represent [a nearby] School. My reference was that their student population was quite similar to each other whereas our student population was quite diverse. Also, regarding the 17 and 18 year olds. I don’t recall saying that “College is Kinder” to them rather that they belong at the college level because of their age. By the time they meet a four-year graduation requirement, they would be 21 to 22 years old. Community College would put them with their adult peers rather than minors. They can also obtain a GED quicker than a high school diploma.

On page 18 of 37, you used my [real name instead of a pseudonym]

“Competition between mothers” should be replaced with “competition between students.” This is regarding class placements (an educational concern). It is sometimes beneficial to place siblings [from a polygamous family; children of different plural wives of the same man] together because they support one another and benefit the classroom setting. In other situations, it is beneficial to place siblings in different classrooms because they compete with each other or they combine together in mischief causing concern in the classroom. This was said simply to give you an indication of a consideration for our school that would be different than a “regular” school.
I read these and other participants’ comments and made the changes requested, responding to the writer and letting her/him know what I had done and promising to send the completed report to them when all comments had been received and changes made. The responses I received informed me of errors in fact, but, more importantly, alerted me to sensitivities that I did not notice in the field. I did not promise changes to the text in cases where I disagreed with participants.

In 2014 I circulated a draft of the dissertation Introduction and Chapter Three, “The Entwined History of Polygamy and Education in Utah,” but received only one response, from Joan Wood. As Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) note, participants soon lose interest in the research and researcher. Joan Wood suggested a source, *Vickie Singer Tells Her Story* (n.d.) and asked Adam Swapp, who played a part in the story of John and Vickie Singer, found in Chapter 3, to speak with me, but he had just been released from prison and declined. I received no feedback from Community D participants. When I asked Barbara Gunn during the 2012 Safety Net conference if she had read my draft, she demurred and explained that she had recently had a baby.

Participants read my version of their words and actions. But what about letting them read what others had said? I struggled with that; it affected my writing of the pilot study report. I wrote in my field notes,” A challenging aspect of navigating this project was the cross-current of loyalty and wariness that flowed beneath the surface.” I omitted an interview with Kerry Peters who had left Community D. She was quite critical of the education she had received but her report was not entirely negative. It corroborated some points made by Community D mothers Barbara Gunn and Holly Yates. However, I feared that if I placed these interviews side-by-side in my report, I would lose my contacts within Community D. Later, I attended a Safety Net
meeting where Peters told her story in the presence of Gunn, Yates, Wood and other fundamentalist Mormons. Excerpts from both interviews appear in the case studies.

Behar’s (1995) participants reassured her, “Look …people aren’t emotional hemophiliacs who you prick and they bled to death in front of you. They can take it better than you think” (p. 69). However, letting participants “take it” meant that I had to think about how I was going to give my draft work to them. The method turned out to be a fairly simple one. I rejected allowing them to see only the section of my paper that featured them. My observations and analysis often included reflection on several interviews. Without the full report, participants would see their own words out of context, separate from the connections and conclusions that made sense of them.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The IRB at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign helped me to define the scope of fieldwork. Their approval of my pilot study had been routine, but the staff became more involved as I applied for a more complicated set of permissions for subsequent field work. Where I wanted to be expansive, the IRB counseled modesty: they advised me to start small and to set achievable goals. The Board was also concerned about safety during field work because of the security precautions taken by the FLDS during my 2010 visit to Short Creek. We had met their representative at a designated place and followed him by a circuitous route to the site of our shared meal.

My application to the IRB included this risk/benefit analysis:

The primary risk of this study is that I will not gain access to community members and will not be able to interview them. The risk of coming back empty-handed after days of field work is far outweighed by the potential benefits to educators and to the polygamist community if I am able to gain enough access to interview those in and around polygamist communities and thus construct a dissertation documenting my findings. Although polygamists have some history of violence, it is usually directed against other
community members, or, very rarely, against the police. Outsiders considered hostile to community interests are usually simply shunned. My contacts, including a well-connected principal informant, and my status as a researcher should help to shield me from aggressive behavior. In addition, I will maintain regular contact with my wife during field work, and she will always know where I am, especially during visits to remote sites.

The IRB’s concern alerted me to be sure that I was not over-dramatizing my research, or indulging in the kind of orientalism that might make me look more daring than I really was. I was over-confident about what I could achieve. Although I had proposed case studies of four schools with one hundred interviews, the IRB rightly pointed out that there was no educational research to build upon. Multiple sites and large numbers of participants indicated a desire for objectivity and authority that was not realistic for an initial qualitative project involving an under-studied group.

The IRB worked with me to design consent forms that met research requirements, until further analysis of my project led them to conclude that only general consent was required of participants without the formality of forms and signatures. This was more natural for participants, although they were aware of my role as a researcher.

Themes and Issues

To what extent does education in fundamentalist Mormon communities prepare children to participate in a pluralistic society? This question stirred up a number of issues. At the end of field work for the pilot study I reflected in my journal:

Is my research an endorsement of what some people label a patriarchal subculture that oppresses its members, especially women and children? This is one way to view the groups whose members I interviewed. On the other hand, some might view them as oppressed and marginalized groups, facing persecution from both religious and state power. I had been aware of these views, and many others, when I started my field work.
What I experienced during the course of it was something like Peshkin’s experience at Bethany Christian School.…

Viewing plural communities either as oppressors or as oppressed does not fully represent them. Attempts by the state and religion to wipe out these communities have failed. Likewise, plural communities have also failed to gain either the acceptance or the tolerance that would allow them to live unmolested. In this complex situation, surely more understanding is better than more stubborn prejudice, from whatever source. With some of the highest birthrates in the United States, these groups have a great stake in their children’s education. Their most strident critics paint the polygamists as almost wholly “other,” as un-American, unable to live in an open society. This rhetoric is dangerous, both to the mainstream and to polygamists, and may lead to educational policies that are yoked to political strategies for dissolving these groups; a goal that even their opponents must admit has not been realized.

In the meantime, hundreds of children are being educated in and around plural communities. What might these schools and educators have to teach us? What might they be able to teach each other through strengthened communications and shared experiences? These are all questions that interest me.

These issues emerged during additional field work and reflection:

1.) Differences in state oversight at public charter Spring Hill School and private unaccredited Link Academy.

2.) Lack of engagement with plural communities by education policymakers.

3.) Better utilization of plural marriage community resources to improve the education of children.

4.) Recursive patterns that inhibit learning in plural community schools.

5.) Empowering plural community educators to partner with outside educators and to identify strengths as well as issues in their schools.

6.) Greater empathy for fundamentalist Mormon educational aspirations to promote partnerships while allowing for diversity.

7.) A balanced approach to polygamist schools that listens to participants questions and answers.
Whenever I asked participants to frame questions for me, I felt that we were getting closer to what really mattered to them. When I asked Mary Jane Laughlin what I should ask her teachers, she responded, “Ask them why teachers at this school give so much?” and began answering her own question: “It’s a calling…. it is a life choice. Teachers go home and take care of families, then return to work.” When I visited Short Creek in 2010 I was barely able to ask my questions. Community leaders questioned me about my work, family, and religion, and then poured out their fear and resolve about the intense legal pressure that they were under. I should have asked them what they thought I needed to know. Fortunately, they told me anyway.

Who knew that the leaders of a polygamist community would be such good tutors in feminist hermeneutic (Fontana and Prokos, 2007, p. 104-105)? This is not really surprising in a patriarchal culture that is also communitarian with a Western frontier mythos of female capability and strength. Both men and women in polygamy are under threat: the men, to arrest; the women, to having husbands and children taken away. Ortner (2006) warns, “An over-emphasis on [gender] difference, regardless of the context, can create serious mystifications in our analyses, blinding us to the disadvantages women share with many (if not indeed most) men, and allowing us to sweep under the rug the many real advantages that some women share with some men” (p. 137). The shared disadvantages of men and women seemed to me to potentially flatten the hierarchies of polygamist communities.

Notes, Oral Version, and Coding

Organizing and interpreting my field work went through several stages. I began by taking notes during interviews and observations and expanding on these notes at the end of each day to create a daily journal of activities and impressions that became the backbone of my study. As the structure of my dissertation took shape I read my journals and notes from scholarly research. I
named the chapters of my dissertation and constructed an oral version of my project. To do this, I recorded on an iPhone a rough version of the chapter’s contents based on a review of my journals, notes, and on unwritten impressions. This was a laborious and important step in releasing what I had thought and written. Getting it outside that orbit and privately speaking aloud what I was learning, however haltingly, gave me confidence and showed me that there was enough material to create a dissertation.

After recording an oral version of the introduction and six dissertation chapters I employed an undergraduate student to transcribe them, numbering the paragraphs. The oral version had showed me that the case studies needed further organization. I used the numbering system as I read the case study chapter transcript. I assigned a letter to each paragraph related to themes I was exploring: “A,” pluralistic society; “B,” critical thinking, reflection; “C,” cultural awareness; “D,” peer to peer interaction; “G,” general description; “P,” people, biographical information; “M,” methodology; “T,” teaching practices, pedagogy.”

These numbers and accompanying letters were the basis for lists of subject matter for the case studies. A large number of notations reminded me that a subject was important, such as “Community Standards,” at Spring Hill School. The lists also drew together observations of a classroom that occurred over a period of days and were scattered through the case study draft. Lists for Link Academy and Spring Hill School were compared to find areas of commonality and dissimilarity. When the lists were complete, I wrote the case studies.

Conclusion

Hsiung (1997) writes of her field work in Taiwanese satellite factories, “My critical attitude…puts me in direct conflict with the phenomena I set out to study….I found myself in constant negotiation with the system itself and with agents of that system” (p. 122). I had
imagined coming to field work with a “critical attitude” toward polygamists. The pilot study redirected my criticism toward education policies that ignored some of the schools I visited. The methods employed for this study were used to ask questions and record data, but also to learn what questions plural marriage communities were asking me to answer. My ethical conflict with polygamy remained but was mitigated by my empathy for the students I observed and the teachers instructing them. Researching the history of polygamy and education showed me that I was involved for only a brief moment in a very long story.
CHAPTER 3: THE ENTWINED HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND POLYGAMY

INTRODUCTION

Boldly blazoned on elementary classroom walls of Spring Hill School are the four cardinal directions. The children learn where they are located in the world and which way to go to get to somewhere else by orienting themselves by this big compass. This chapter serves a similar purpose, but the orientation is historic, looking to the past in order to understand how fundamentalist Mormons traveled to their current, ever-evolving educational situation. This involves tracing the relationship between education and polygamy from the 1830s until today.

I begin by extending Shipps’ (1987) explanation of pre-Manifesto Mormonism to the post-Manifesto new polygamists and by using Givens’ (2007) description of the creative tensions in Mormonism to deepen Shipps’ analysis. I then describe the development of Mormon ideas of education beginning with Joseph Smith’s seminal School of the Prophets; argue that polygamy affected and complicated education in Utah Territory; follow the move of the new polygamists away from the Mormon mainstream after 1890 and the development of their schools, with special interest in the ideas that influenced early leaders; touch on the seminal 1953 raid on Short Creek and the educational situation before and after the raid; and, examine two notable new polygamists, John Singer and Warren Jeffs, in relation to education in the 1970s.

By the end of this chapter it will be clear that polygamy and education were intertwined in early Mormonism to a particularly complex effect, and that much of the same history is repeating itself among the new polygamists. However, in contrast with Krakauer (2003) and
Egan (2008) I argue against equating 19th century Mormons with 21st century polygamists.21 In fact, the differences that have developed between these communities over the last century tell us more about their present situations in regard to education than does their shared pre-Manifesto history.

EXTENDING ON SHIPPS AND GIVENS: UNDERSTANDING NEW POLYGAMY

Although this chapter traces the development of education in communities that embraced plural marriage from the 1830s until today, new thinking is especially needed to understand polygamy after the Manifesto of 1890. Plural marriage has come under renewed scrutiny in the 21st century. The 2008 YFZ raid; the trials and imprisonments of Warren Jeffs and eleven other FLDS men; television melodrama and reality shows focused on polygamy, have raised the national profiles of polygamists. News coverage showed an empty classroom at Eldorado22 after 416 children and their mothers had been taken into custody, but very little is known about what happens in populated classrooms in plural marriage communities.

For fundamentalists, history is not only a record of the past, but a blueprint for appropriating that vision and enacting it today. Brooke Adams, Salt Lake Tribune polygamy reporter,23 said, “These are people with long memories” (B. Adams, personal communication, 2010). These memories reach back to the dark days of the 1880s, when Mormon Church President John Taylor was in hiding. Congress disincorporated the LDS Church and seized most

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23 Brooke Adams was the only reporter in the US solely covering polygamy, for the Salt Lake Tribune, 2006-2010. The Tribune, founded by ex-Mormons in 1870 and taken up by their allies, is the source for most of the reporting on education, as well as on polygamy, in territorial and early statehood Utah. Its anti-Mormon bias moderated over the years, but its masthead motto is “Utah’s independent voice.” Adams’ reporting on the YFZ raid was especially noteworthy; she used her knowledge of the FLDS to debunk several widely reported but inaccurate stories in other newspapers.
of its assets. Fundamentalists believe that in 1886 Taylor selected six men to continue
performing plural marriages, whatever might befall the Church. When the Manifesto ended
polygamy, they were authorized to continue it. This is the founding story of fundamentalist
Mormonism.

Historian Jan Shipps (1987) offers a paradigm for understanding 19th century
Mormonism that can be adapted to understand the new polygamists. Shipps argues that Mormons
reenacted and embodied the experiences of the ancient Hebrews and the early Christian Church,
establishing a new religious tradition. She writes that “the [pre-1890] Saints came to see
themselves not as forming a new Israel but as establishing a very real connection with an ancient
one” (p. 83). Their prophet, persecutions, and trek to the “Promised Land” in the Valley of the
Great Salt Lake, showed that they were God’s Chosen People, recapitulating the sacred history
of the Hebrews. As pressure mounted to abandon polygamy, including federal raids and arrests
of polygamist men in the 1880s, the Saints saw parallels between their suffering and the
Babylonian Captivity of the Jews in the sixth century BCE. While this latter-day reenactment
was not a linear timeline parallel with biblical history, the same themes were pervasive, and
enacted where the Saints gathered in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and, finally, in Utah. Mormon
pioneers’ first priority “was building up the kingdom and inhabiting it,” and “expressive worship
signs were irrigation canals, or neatly built and nicely decorated houses, or good crops of sugar
beets” (p. 125). Building schools was part of constructing the kingdom. These schools were not
commissioned to separate church and state, but to unify learning and piety. Buchanan (1982)
writes about

Brigham Young’s personal view of education as a process of learning how to make the
Kingdom of God a reality on earth. According to his daughter, he believed that ‘there
should be no broken links between the school door and the shop, farm, or kitchen.’ And,
it might be added, between the school and the Kingdom of God (p. 44).
Religion and learning were as important outside the church and school as within them, since the land that the Saints had trekked west to inhabit and to cultivate was holy ground. The sacred and the secular were one sphere, not two. Leone (1979) explains,

Early Mormons made their experiences into, and saw the resultant experiences as, the literal reenactment of large chunks of ancient Hebrew history and of early Christian history…. They became saints because they were living like earlier saints; they were Israel and apostolic Christianity because they had found a way, through a prophet and a text, to be the reborn natives in the earlier traditions.

Mormons had their own scriptures to build the parallel story. In the Book of Mormon, Christ Jesus visited the Americas after his ascension to give hope and comfort to a righteous remnant of embattled Nephites, descendants of the Hebrews who traveled from Jerusalem to the Western Hemisphere in 600 BC. With them, Jesus founded a Christian Church like the *ekklesia* of the New Testament. This American church disappeared after several centuries of warfare between the Nephites and the Lamanites; the latter group was the ancestor of Native Americans and the peoples of the South Pacific. By uncovering the Book of Mormon and adopting it as a founding text, early Latter-day Saints reestablished Zion on the ruins of an older theocratic civilization located not in Palestine but in ancient America. Although driven by enemies across the plains to the Rocky Mountains, theirs was no “errand into the wilderness” like that of the earlier Puritans; they were on a path that their Hebrew ancestors had cleared two thousand years before them. However, like the Puritans, the early Mormons saw the world as infused with a spiritual intensity and divine immanence that caused Emerson to describe their religion as “an after-clap of Puritanism.” Gordon (2002) explains that, “As Emerson saw it, the

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24 “The quote is from a reminiscence published by James Bradley Thayer a dozen years after Emerson visited Salt Lake with a party of friends in 1871. In response to an observation by one of the party that Mormonism appealed to common people through biblical names and imagery, Emerson is reported to have said, ‘Yes, it is an after-clap of Puritanism. But one would think that after this Father Abraham could go no further’” (Gordon, 2002, p. 245).
authoritarianism and communal ethic of Mormonism replicated explicit connections between belief and social standing that many nineteenth-century Americans associated with Puritan colonists of the seventeenth century” (p. 244).

This communal journey through sacred time ended with the 1890 Manifesto and the abandonment of polygamy and the political Kingdom of God for monogamy and statehood. According to Shipps (1987), “With Zion and Babylon come to terms, the past was filled up. Complete” (p. 63). This détente reshaped Mormonism: history would be replicated through ritual and adherence to standards of personal conduct, not through the society-building reenactment of sacred history.

But not everyone accepted the Manifesto. Some believed that “Zion and Babylon” could not be reconciled. They called themselves “Joseph Smith Mormons” or “Old Line Mormons,” and Brooke (1994) notes that “by the 1950s these groups were claiming to represent a restored kingdom, constructing competing hierarchies of key-holding priesthoods and the communal economy of the old United Order” (p. 297). Those who persist in polygamy continue their journey as Chosen People in sacred time. Plural marriage and economic cooperation are the markers of their identity. Unlike 19th century Mormons living in a Utah Territory theocracy, modern polygamists are stripped of political power. They are a remnant people attempting to build Zion, to resist assimilation, and defend liberty of conscience and freedom of religion. But unlike the ancient Jews, their projects are built on fierce commitment to plural marriage.

Fundamentalists understand themselves as: (1) the faithful remnant of a faithless Israel led by prophets and priests who demand obedience and promise blessings; (2) rebuilders of an

25 Brooke (1994) also makes the interesting claim that fundamentalist Mormonism is not primarily a reaction to the Manifesto, but is rooted in an earlier crisis, the Reformation of the 1850s “Mormon fundamentalists seek to restore the structure of purity and danger that the church left behind after the Reformation of the 1850s” (p. 297). I do not find this assertion entirely convincing, since the Reformation reinforced rather than reduced the boundaries of doctrine and praxis.
American Zion constantly threatened by mob action;\textsuperscript{26} (3) the trustees of liberty of conscience and freedom of religion, promised in the American Constitution and in their scriptures.\textsuperscript{27} They are “dual citizens” of the United States and of the Kingdom of God.

Shipps grounded her thesis in the history of religions, especially the psychology of religious movements. Mircea Eliade (1957) encouraged scholars to imaginatively apply the humanities and social sciences to the study of religion. More recently Givens (2007) has offered a cultural-historical analysis that complements Shipps and that can be applied to fundamentalists as well as to mainstream LDS. At the heart of Mormon culture are a series of paradoxes: the tension between authority and radical freedom; searching and certainty; the sacred and the banal; and election and exile. He writes, “The cost of their chosen status appears recurrently in the Mormon psyche as both nostalgia and alienation; and the opposing movement toward integration into the larger world they had fled was fueled by both a longing for inclusion and an imperative to redeem the world….Isolation is often felt as a burden of exclusion and is frequently transformed into a quest for connections and universals” (p. xv-xvi). This quest is particularly poignant and complex for the fundamentalists, who are excluded from both mainstream society and mainstream Mormonism. But this alienation coexists with fundamentalists’ desire for justice and mutual respect. Many of the fundamentalists I met were eager to explain and defend their convictions about education and religion. While public school teachers and administrators were careful to separate religion and education, explaining, as Mary Jane Laughlin did, that “we don’t teach religion here; that’s the responsibility of the family,” their situations made religion an ever-present backdrop. Laura Laughlin, Mountain View principal, showed me samples of long sleeve

\textsuperscript{26} The “Mob” has painful historical meaning for the LDS, and, among some fundamentalists, is still used to characterize those who they believe are actively hostile to them (“FLDS: Inside the secret sect,” 2011).

\textsuperscript{27} See, for example, Book of Mormon, Alma, chapter 46
athletic jerseys as she decided which brand the school should issue to its basketball teams; most of the players would not compete in immodest tank tops or short sleeves.

The fundamentalists are exemplars of both election and exile, the remnant that “returned with weeping” to Zion. The LDS Church is a more assimilated Diaspora, scattered around the world, with its own tensions between nostalgia and alienation. The tension between authority and radical freedom might be seen in the contrasting cohesiveness of the LDS Church and the fractured sects of polygamy. The LDS successfully adapted to seismic shifts in their religion. But a vociferous minority would not be led into the new order. Free agency in Mormonism for them was bound up with the authority to make plural marriages. They were contrarians who created new patterns of authority through a free adaptation of doctrine that slipped beyond the control of the organized church.

Shipps (1987) supplies a framework for understanding both the continuities and discontinuities of past and present polygamy, and Givens points to the tensions that sustain it. With these core concepts in mind we can examine the history of education and plural marriage, beginning with the School of the Prophets, founded by Joseph Smith and repurposed by Brigham Young.

THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

Mormonism simultaneously democratizes and stratifies religious experience, delimiting private inspiration from public revelation by Church-designated leaders. As religious historian Kathleen Flake explained on the PBS documentary, “The Mormons” (Whitney, 2007),

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28 This gives new interest to the ongoing debate over how many 19th century Mormons actually practiced plural marriage. Recent scholars, including, Van Wagoner (1986), estimate 20%. Although most modern Mormons with polygamous ancestors are monogamists, one of my polygamous participants observed that, in her experience, the small but steady stream of converts to polygamy today are made up mostly of Mormons with pioneer polygamous ancestors. Descendants of later converts to the LDS Church do not seem attracted to plural marriage.
Joseph Smith was the Henry Ford of revelation. He wanted every home to have one, and the revelation he had in mind was the revelation he thought he’d had, which was seeing God. And so, for Joseph Smith, seeing God was what it was to be religious. And so he sets about duplicating that original experience for everybody else. Revelation is everything to this church [at Kirtland, Ohio]. It is revelation or nothing for these people.

Without formal education, but as spiritual translator and prophetic teacher, Smith offered a ladder of learning for both prosaic and transcendent subjects through what Warnick (2004) describes as “deliberative councils” (p. 358ff) in the School of the Prophets. The School was created through an 1832 revelation received by Smith and recorded in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 88. Its inauguration coincided with what may have been Smith’s first secret plural marriage in 1833. The dissemination of knowledge through deliberative councils also paralleled the secret propagation of polygamy by Smith to the council most directly connected to him. Plural marriage was not part of the Kirtland-era School of the Prophets curriculum. The practice did not penetrate deeply down the Mormon chain of authority until the 1840s. By the time that the School was reconvened in Salt Lake City, polygamy was an acknowledged part of the Restoration, and the School promoted it, along with many other topics.

The School of the Prophets met for several years in a room over a village store in Kirtland, Ohio (Givens, 2007), but the permanent home that Smith envisioned was in the temple his followers built and dedicated in 1836.29 The Church’s first temple at Kirtland was a tremendous accomplishment for Smith’s fledgling organization, and it was there that the School of the Prophets eventually came to hold its sessions. Unlike modern LDS temples, Kirtland was centered on two auditorium floors in which the congregations faced tiers of pulpits reserved for the emerging Mormon hierarchy. The third floor was used for classes and offices (Plewe, 2012).

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29 A similar initiative, a “school in Zion” was established at Far West, Missouri in 1833 (Doctrine and Covenants 97).
The building’s dedication was said to be marked by vivid spiritual manifestations. Smith’s prayer on that occasion included the following:

And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith; Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing, and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God (Doctrine and Covenants 109:7, 8).

This prayer yoked education, the “house of learning” to the developing priesthood “house of order,” and this connection between school and ecclesiastical authority grew with time.\textsuperscript{30}

School of the Prophets\textsuperscript{31} students were mostly male, at first both men and boys, although the children were eventually enrolled in the new Kirtland High School. The School taught spiritual and temporal subjects: grammar, government, languages, literature, current affairs, and biblical studies.\textsuperscript{32} In some ways, it mirrored the 19\textsuperscript{th} century adult education movement springing up everywhere from Shaker villages to textile towns (Givens, 2007, p. 74). However, Smith’s intent was closer to the Shakers than to the weavers; the school was part of building the Kingdom of God (Taysom, p. 2011). As LDS apostle (later, church President) John Taylor proclaimed in The Government of God (1852), that kingdom was not beyond the skies; it had descended to earth through revelation. Men were initiated into the School of the Prophets by foot washing, and employed a ritual greeting at the opening of each session (Smith Papers). A carefully ordered

\textsuperscript{30} The curriculum evolved from strictly religious subjects to embrace more secular learning; this change may have begun with Smith’s interest in ancient languages (Brody, 1945, p. 169).

\textsuperscript{31} Doctrine and Covenants 95:17, given in 1833, refers to a “School of Mine Apostles” to be established in the Kirtland Temple’s “second court [story];” it is unclear if this is identical with “the school of the prophets” (verse 10) which was founded the previous year, and whose activities are censured: “Nevertheless, my servants sinned a very grievous sin; and contentions arose in the school of the prophets; which was very grievous unto me, saith your Lord; therefore I sent them forth to be chastened.” Despite apparent problems, the School of the Prophets continued.

\textsuperscript{32} Smith commissioned Sidney Rigdon, his counselor in the First Presidency of the LDS Church, to write the Lectures on Faith, which Brown (2012) describes “as a catechism for the mystically fraternal School of the Prophets. The lectures and their school anticipated the temple’s emphasis on empowerment through knowledge” (pp. 153-154).
male hierarchy presided during school; it was this ranked structure, headed by a president, which made its sessions “deliberative councils” as well as lessons. Without formal education, economic status, or ethnic differences to separate most of the adult scholars, Smith’s insistence on “order” allowed for, and created, tensions between authority and radical freedom, as indicated by constant struggles in the community over prophetic leadership. Warnick (2004) portrays the School’s sessions as intended to mirror Mormonism’s polytheistic heavenly “councils of the gods:”

If the goal of life is apotheosis, what follows is an important task for Mormon education: since God works through deliberative councils, and since humans are to become like God, then learning to engage in deliberative council becomes a pathway to the divine life. Section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which is widely regarded as Joseph’s most important statement on education, reflects this educational trajectory (p. 358-359).

Smith called Section 88, “the ‘Olive Leaf’ which we have plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord’s message of peace to us” (History of the Church, Vol. 1, p. 316). LDS Church commentary explains that “the revelation contains numerous keys for achieving spiritual peace” (Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, 2001). According to Section 88, two modes of learning lead to this peace. God commands “that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom,” as well as what might be interpreted as secular knowledge: “things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms.” Learning “the doctrine of the kingdom” and “knowledge…of countries and kingdoms” were the dual functions of the School of the Prophets. The self-taught Smith made pursuit of knowledge eclectic, perhaps a reflection of his own opulent nature.
(Brody, 1945, p. 26), as shown by the School’s early curriculum. He envisioned his missionary followers peacefully spreading their message among mankind during the latter days as the result of this instruction.

Smith’s philosophy of education was invoked at Link Academy over 170 years after the Olive Leaf revelation. On the bulletin board of a classroom of twenty-three elementary students I read Smith’s words, “Obtain a knowledge of history and of countries and of kingdoms, of laws, of God, of man, doctrine, and covenants.” The words lettered on a black background were as inescapable as the teacher’s, “Posture check!” Students straightened in their seats and responded in unison, “Check!”

The Saints abandoned Kirtland in 1838, and the School reconvened at Nauvoo, Illinois, in the 1840s. After a lengthier hiatus, Brigham Young revived it again in 1867. That same year Episcopalians founded the first Protestant school in Utah Territory, starting twenty-five years of intensive mission school activity. Meeting twice each month at Salt Lake City Hall, the School of the Prophets drew hundreds of men to what Turner (2012) describes as “a forum for the coordination of economic policy, political decision-making, and doctrine.” After sometimes hearing a sermon by Young, “The assembled priesthood leaders discussed a wide variety of other topics: remedies for grasshopper invasions…; the hygienic disposal of human excrement; and the purported advantages of plural marriage…” (p. 352). Young did not skimp on doctrine; one of

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33 This changed somewhat in the 1860s under Young: it was “not a school in the ordinary sense, [but]…an assembly of community leaders holding the Mormon priesthood in which theology, church government, and problems of church and community were discussed and appropriate action taken…So far as its secular phase was concerned, [in Utah] the School of the Prophets resembled an economic planning conference” (Hanson, 1967, p. 143). With an enrollment of about 5,000, the School’s branches may have been used to carry out the plans of the Council of Fifty, the LDS governing body of the Kingdom of God.

34 During the School’s first two years, Young inveighed against Gentile merchants (Turner, 2012, p. 352), not missionaries; the merchants later helped finance mission schools.
the first sermons he gave to the school promulgated the controversial Adam-God teaching.\(^{35}\) He franchised the School of the Prophets with branches throughout Utah Territory. Any man, if counted worthy,\(^{36}\) might attend it. Unlike the ward schools and stake academies, there was no tuition charge.

The School of the Prophets’ evolution coincides with the Mormon march through sacred time. Their developing sense of peoplehood included government by the male lay priesthood, whose nascent quorums were part of the earliest School organization. Education mirrored the vision of a society in which church and state were separate but closely aligned. Religion penetrated every aspect of life, and like the Saints’ “irrigation canals…and good crops of sugar beets,” there was no apparent discontinuity between a School of the Prophets session that included both biblical exegesis and “remedies for grasshopper invasions.” This interpenetration of the sacred and banal produced an educational experience that, during the territorial era, 1847-1896, provoked very different responses from Mormons and outsiders, especially the Protestant missionaries sent to evangelize and to educate them.

SCHOOLS IN UTAH TERRITORY

Schools were part of pioneer Mormon society, but their purpose was contested almost from the start of Great Basin colonization in 1847. Gordon (2002) explains that for 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century Mormons, “to protest against the dominant culture by instituting plural marriage was also, implicitly, to challenge prevailing Protestant theories of child-rearing and education” (p. 198). The Saints differed among themselves over exactly how to mount that challenge, although each ward, or parish, was directed by the Church to start a primary, or ward, school by 1850. While

\(^{35}\) Young taught that Adam and Jehovah were actually the same person; Jehovah was an “exalted” man.

\(^{36}\) The School of the Prophets in Utah was open to priesthood holders “who observed the Word of Wisdom and promised to obey church leaders in all matters” (Turner, 2012, p. 351-352).
sometimes referred to as “common schools,” the ward schools were never fully tax-supported, and were administered and taught by the Saints for their children. Brigham Young (1877) opposed free education, equating school taxes with robbery:

> I am opposed to free education as much as I am opposed to taking property from one man and giving it to another who knows not how to take care of it… I do not believe in allowing my charities to go through the hands of robbers who pocket nine-tenths themselves and give one tenth to the poor… Would I encourage free schools by taxation? No!” (Discourse 44)

When the cash-strapped Territorial legislature made school appropriations, they amounted to no more than $5 per pupil per year ($5 in 1870 is the equivalent of about $89 in 2017). When a group proposed starting free schools, Young called them apostates. Some proponents were ex-Mormons and free public schools would certainly have mitigated Mormon domination of education.  

The common school movement championed by Horace Mann radiated from New England and the Middle Atlantic States, home to some of the most determined political and religious opponents of Mormonism, although New England was also the birthplace of Brigham Young and Joseph Smith. While many American Protestants may have shared an understanding of citizenship, scripture, and morality, by the mid-nineteenth century church disestablishment and increasing religious diversity limited their power to mold school curricula. Both Protestants

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37 Young (1874) encouraged the Saints to recall their pioneer experiences and demonstrate the self-sufficiency required to privately support schools:

> We had to pay our own schoolteachers, raise our own bread and earn our own clothing, or go without; there was no other choice. We did it then, and we are able to do the same to-day. I want to enlist the sympathies of the ladies among the Latter-day Saints, to see what we can do for ourselves with regard to schooling our children. Do not say you cannot school them, for you can... I understand that the other night there was a school meeting in one of the wards of this city, and a part there—a poor miserable apostate—said, “We want a free school, and we want to have the name of establishing the first free school in Utah.” To call a person a poor miserable apostate may seem like a harsh word; but what shall we call a man who talks about free schools and who would have all the people taxed to support them, and yet would take his rifle and threaten to shoot the man who had the collection of the ordinary light taxes levied in this Territory—taxes which are lighter than any levied in any other portion of the country? (Discourse 4).
and LDS had their hegemony in education challenged by outsiders. For Eastern Protestants, the challenge came from Roman Catholics; for Utah Mormons, the gauntlet was thrown down by the federal government and Protestant missionaries.

The American consensus-Protestantism of common school Bible reading and generic prayers was paralleled by Mormon versions of both practices. In addition, instruction in “theology” constituted a major part of ward school teaching, with many, but not all, advocating a system in which the Mormon scriptural canon was a primary textbook. The “bishop,” or ward lay leader, and his council acted as the school board. Budgets came from tithes. Significantly, new schoolhouses promoted a sense of community among the pioneers and contributed to the emergence of the modern LDS ward and stake system. Before the schoolhouses were built, Sunday sacrament meetings in the Salt Lake Valley were held in one central location, the boweries on Temple Square. As they were built, schools became hubs of ward activities, gradually including local church services (Plewe, 2002, p. 129). Although scholars have taken for granted that schools were housed in ward meetinghouses, in some early cases the reverse was true.

Histories of the territorial period in Utah disagree on the educational situation between 1847 and 1890. Burton’s *Presbyterians in Zion* (2010) offers a scathing retrospective that echoes 19th century Protestant diatribes:

In the mid-1800s the Mormon leadership displayed a surprising lack of interest in providing consistent, tax-supported education for the youth of Utah, in contrast to other communities, perhaps because “doctrinal solidarity seemed more important than intellectual diversity.” Mormon children were considered potential producers of wealth and, since they were in an agricultural community, there was no need seen for much education; simple literacy and elementary arithmetic were sufficient. This attitude was consistent through the early years of the growth of Mormonism and would continue until they reached statehood. As examples, the Mormons of Kirtland, Ohio, built a temple but no schools. The million dollar temple at Nauvoo, Illinois, was not accompanied by
schools (although a university was discussed there, it only existed on paper). Part of this Mormon lack of vision for the need for education may have derived from the proposed coming of the millennium; an education was less important than the religious beliefs of those to be saved. Revelation was the method by which humanity would advance; schooling was not a necessity (582).  

Burton fails to mention the School of the Prophets, the Kirtland High School, and the transport of educational materials across a continent during the Mormon migration, the charter of the University of Deseret, or the establishment of some stake academies, all before the Manifesto. Given these omissions, the characterization is inaccurate but not atypical of critics of education in Utah Territory. However, the millennial expectations and theocratic structure of Mormonism created unique tensions between education and religion, manifested in the schools.  

Later LDS publications emphasized the heroic educational efforts of the pioneers, often quoting Smith’s maxim, “The glory of God is intelligence.” In 1913, the president of Brigham Young Academy, George Brimhall, and University of Utah professor Levi Edgar Young, wrote about Utah’s educational development in glowing terms. According to Brimhall “getting an education” had always been a dominant theme in Utah’s “humble homes,” schooling in Utah had never known a “backwoods era and cosmopolitanism characterized Utah’s educational development from the earliest days” (p. 436).

Buchanan (1996) offers a more sober assessment: “...it is not obvious that a smooth development process of growth occurred [between 1847 and 1896]. The historical path is, instead, strewn with numerous bright beginnings, false starts, political maneuverings, and value conflicts” (p. 439).

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38 See Bennion, 2008, p. 25, for a brief description of the University of Nauvoo’s activities, which she shows did include some academic instruction.

39 Young (1877) offered this assessment:
We have today, more children between the ages of 5 and 20 years, who can read and write, than any State or Territory of the Union of a corresponding number of inhabitants. This is not exactly sustained by the statistics published of a few of the States, but from what we know of them we believe it to be the fact. On the whole we have as good schoolhouses as can be found, and it is our right to have better ones, and to excel in everything that is good (Discourse 44).

40 They may have been projecting back to a more recent past; since 1892, Brigham Young Academy had sponsored summer institutes that brought progressive educators, including John Dewey, to Utah (Richards).
Gordon (2004) writes that, on the one hand, anti-polygamists charged that Mormons were victims of “enforced ignorance” kept in thrall by their leaders’ opposition to public education. But Mormons knew that free schools were not value-free; they were carriers of the very Protestant morality that was being deployed against them. Leaders were not opposed to private education, but tuition put schooling out of reach for many and “the majority of Mormon children did not attend school until the 1890s” (p.198-199).41

Even then, for most children, school terms were short. In an oral history, Miriam Adelia Cox Wilson Riding (1969) recalled, “Our school didn’t start until after the crops were planted in the fall. Then [school] was out as soon as work [could begin] in the fields in the spring. I went as far as the fourth reader…..” Isaac Loren Covington (1970) recalled the skills of the early Mormons, which had been as important to his education as formal schooling: “A lot of those early pioneers were from England, they were skilled workmen [and] very adept at anything they undertook. I don’t know of anything that my grandfather wasn’t an expert in. He could paint signs and paint pictures and make violins [Laughter].” Covington described the ward school: “It was a two-story building….with three different big rooms….In those days, [the teachers] were very strict. There was no whispering….If you did, you would expect a good whipping.” He remembered his father’s arrest for polygamy and the “six months or a year” he was incarcerated. The prisoners encountered Protestant missionaries, and Covington recalled that after his release, his father would entertain with his violin and “mock[ed] some of the preachers and ridiculed them. They tried to convert them but [inaudible] [laughter].”

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41 Givens (2007) claims that, by 1870, a higher percentage of Utah children attended school than those in several Eastern states. National attendance rates in the second half of the 19th century were about 50%. Substantial national increases in school attendance began in 1900 (National Center for Education Statistics). Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp#enrollment.
In spite of the unusual situation in the Territory, participation in education followed national trends. Interestingly, Tyack (1976) dates the transition between the two major phases in the history of compulsory schooling in America to 1890, the same year as the Manifesto and the introduction of public schools to Utah. In fact, he states that the first national phase lasted from the mid-nineteenth century until 1890—roughly parallel to the Utah territorial era. That period was marked by increasing participation in schools and compulsory-attendance legislation that was unenforced: the “symbolic stage.” The second, “bureaucratic phase” saw increases in size, complexity, and enforcement. Utah’s educational history can be seen as a case of the two-phased changes that dominated the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like the rest of their fellow-citizens, Mormons became more favorable toward compulsory schooling after 1890. The abandonment of polygamy and the consequent end to federal efforts to destroy the LDS Church removed a barrier to Mormon participation in public schools.

However, there are other aspects of the national trend toward bureaucratization that were not reflected in Utah. Substantial increases in American school spending had no real parallel in the Territory. Literacy rates in Utah, which had been above the national average in 1860, increased slightly but reflected the rest of the country by 1890. What is clear is that contention and conflict marked Utah education. But Givens is probably right to caution against drawing too great a contrast between Mormon educational attainment and that of other Americans. Despite the passage of many compulsory attendance laws, by 1890 children in the U.S. attended school for an average of five years.

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The early pioneer days in Utah were marked by struggles for survival and intensive colonization efforts. Local conditions, social class and ecclesiastical standing determined the type and availability of schooling. The quality of the ward schools in Salt Lake City was tied to the affluence of the residents. Elites had other options. Apostle George Q. Cannon had his forty children educated in a schoolhouse located on the grounds of his compound. Lack of equal educational opportunities was sometimes a problem within plural families as well, with the children of a favored wife receiving more schooling. There is a parallel between Cannon’s family school and the priesthood schools of the FLDS.

The anti-polygamy movement, invigorated by the end of slavery and aided by mainline Protestant denominations, revived after the Civil War. Polygamy was illegal, and to most Americans it was immoral, one of the “twin relics of barbarism.” After completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the increasing immigration of Gentiles, or non-Mormons, into Utah, education became an arena for intense competition between Mormons and Protestant missionaries. It was through their schools that the missionaries made their most lasting contributions. Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians planted 100 schools throughout Utah beginning in 1867 (Burton, 2010). Gentile reformers charged that polygamy had infected every aspect of Mormon life, and the Saints agreed with them, although

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43 For example, “In the Henry Roper family—one which had a good deal of conflict and trouble—the children of wife number two had little or no schooling beyond the lower grades. On the other hand, at least two sons of the first wife had some college training” (Young, 1875, p. 255).

44 That was also the year that Sir Richard F. Burton visited Salt Lake City and wrote: “The object of the young colony is to rear a swarm of healthy working bees. The social hive has as yet no room for drones, bookworms, or gentlemen...At fifteen a boy can use a whip, an axe, or a hoe...to perfection...It is not an education which I would commend to the generous youth of Paris or London, but it is admirably fitted to the exigencies of the situation...Every one learns to read and write....The Mormons have discovered...that the time of school drudgery may profitably be abridged” (McNiff, 1940, p. 71).

45 “The body politic, the family, our common Christianity, have all been infected with the poison of polygamy,” declared Rev. G.W. Phillips at the opening of his 1885 discourse before the New West Education Commission.
they saw plural marriage as the medium for the spread of great good, not evil, in their society.

They held that education necessarily must benefit from celestial marriage and its progeny, although these educational benefits were more theorized than realized in Utah Territory.

Buchanan (1982) points out,

> Mormons and ‘Gentiles’…both recognized the school as an agent of society whose prime purpose was the reinforcement of societal values. The difficulty for the development of a unified school policy in Utah lay in the fact that the Mormon ‘Kingdom of God’ was not quite the same as the secular society to which most ‘non-denominational’ Protestants gave allegiance. These differences over what the ‘good society’ in Utah should be, helped shape the way public schooling developed in Utah Territory” (p. 439).

Protestant churches sought to shape the “‘good society’ in Utah” through an intensive educational effort fired with a missionary fervor that matched the Mormons’ own zeal as they gathered converts from Europe.

PROTESTANT MISSIONARY EDUCATION AND POLYGAMY

Mormons understood themselves as both a “peculiar people” and as quintessentially American. They identified the United States with ancient Israel. They were God’s Chosen People and the North American continent was the new Promised Land. Their mission to the Gentiles might engender opposition, but it was designed by God to be ultimately redemptive. While relishing their isolation, the Mormons also believed that they were at the center of the world.

In the mid-1860s Protestant missionaries invaded that world, Utah Territory, to Christianize and Americanize the Mormons. They failed in their first purpose but came to believe that they had largely succeeded in the second, according to denominational historian George K. Davies (Szasz, 2004): “The measurable results of the Presbyterian work in Utah were not so much in the actual conversions from Mormonism to Christianity as in the social changes

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(NWEC) in Chicago. The NWEC was founded by Boston Congregationalists in 1879 and headquartered in Chicago. It funded Protestant mission schools in Utah.
wrought in the culture-crucible of Utah, statehood without polygamy, and in the free public school system” (p. 45). Conversely, the encounter with Mormonism spurred evangelistic innovation among Protestant churches, especially increased missionary opportunities for single women. In fact, women were on the front lines of the evangelical war against Mormonism.47

Mission schools were established in virtually every city and town in Utah between 1867 and 1890. Catholics built schools in the largest towns, but mostly to serve their own immigrant communities.48 It was true that Protestants served only a minority of students (Esplin, 2006); by 1885, LDS ward and stake schools counted 31,583 children, while the mission schools enrolled 3,170 (p. 54-55). But the mission schools were free, boasted longer terms, better materials, and more qualified teachers than ward schools.

Stake academies, or LDS high schools, offered a more viable challenge to the missionaries, although their late start made the confrontation brief. Most academies were founded after 1887, within a few years before the decline of Protestant schools starting in 1890, when public education came to Utah. Although most of the academies later ceased operations, the largest and best became both public and Church-operated colleges and universities.49 Attendance at church academies was prized by some Mormon students, and they made

46 Protestant missionaries had earlier used schools as their primary means for evangelism in New Mexico (Szasz, 2004, p. X).

47 “Father Lawrence Scanalan (later the first Catholic bishop of the Diocese of Salt Lake), complained in 1888 that the Protestants ‘have schools in every small settlement in the Territory of Utah”’ (Pflewe, 2012, p. 113). The first Catholic school, St. Mary’s Academy, opened in 1875 in Salt Lake City, founded by Sister Augusta of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, who raised money from miners to fund her school (B. Mooney and M. Murphy).

49 Public: Snow College (formerly, Sanpete Stake Academy), Dixie State University (St. George Stake Academy), Utah State University (Brigham Young College), Weber State University (Weber Stake Academy), Eastern Arizona College (St. Joseph Stake Academy); Private: Brigham Young University (Brigham Young Academy), Brigham Young University—Idaho (Bannock Stake Academy), LDS Business College (Salt Lake Stake Academy). Both Brigham Young Academy and Brigham Young College included teacher training and, sometimes, other post-secondary coursework. Protestant missionaries founded Salt Lake Collegiate Institute in 1875, which became post-secondary Sheldon Jackson College, and finally Westminster College in 1902; it continues to operate today.
substantial physical and spiritual efforts to get their education. In an oral history, Wallace Mortimer Willis (1969) recalled his school in rural Henrieville: “It was a log cabin and was built quite nice.” He told of riding on horseback 100 miles to attend the stake academy in Cedar City: “There was only one way, I took a horse and rode over.” Joseph Alma Terry (1969) told of the difficult transition from the one-room schoolhouse in Hebron, Utah, to Brigham Young Academy, where he attended for a term after completing eighth grade. He asked for God’s help when facing a particularly daunting assignment:

I took my topic and I looked over it and looked over it. I could not get much understanding of it because it was foreign to me, quite different….I knelt down by the table, put my hands on the book and I offered up a little simple prayer. [I] asked the lord to direct me, enlighten my mind and make [it] plain to me so I would understand. I got up and went over the lesson and it cleared itself up to me….”

Protestant missionaries also left accounts of prayer-filled efforts, battling what they sometimes claimed was implacable hostility. They also exploited internal divisions among Mormons, who, contrary to the missionaries’ own propaganda, were not a monolithic bloc but a mosaic of social and ethnic constituencies. Despite Church opposition, Brackenridge explains that, “in some instances, Mormons helped to finance construction of some Presbyterian buildings. In 1879 the Gentile Salt Lake Tribune reported that Mormons in Springville and Ephraim had raised funds for Presbyterian schools in their respective communities” (p. 197). Two narratives about mission schools developed: Protestant advocates claimed that missionaries endured harassment, intimidation, and violence. Mormons told of their tolerance and generosity toward the outsiders. The real situation was more complicated.

By entering Utah Territory, Protestant missionaries also entered the Mormon reenactment of sacred history. Old Testament stories of the Hebrews and their enemies, and New Testament narratives of the trials and triumphs of the early Church, seemed ready made for the
missionaries, who might be cast as Canaanites or Pharisees in the Restoration story. However, entering the religiously charged environment of Utah also heightened the Protestants’ identification with biblical motifs. They had been sent by the Church of Jesus to reclaim his “lost sheep.” Their work among the Mormons was like the early Church’s efforts among the Samaritans, whose hybridization of paganism and Judaism had made them worse than pagans. Hadn’t the Book of Acts shown that the Samaritans responded eagerly to the Gospel? Protestant educators brought their own stories to the encounter with Mormonism, and became participants in the drama of Zion. The connection with ancient Israel that Mormons cherished made the missionaries both opponents and co-participants in the march through sacred time. The extent of Protestant investment in the Mormon story, and their reliance on it to motivate their own efforts, meant that, when the Manifesto effectively foreclosed its corporate reenactment, the animus for Protestant education evangelization collapsed and missionary schools quickly disappeared.

Rev. Duncan J. McMillan (1846-1939) learned this firsthand (Burton, 2010). An ailing Illinoisan seeking a better climate and evangelistic opportunities, McMillan stopped first in Salt Lake City in 1870, and then, with permission from mission director Sheldon Jackson, ventured 150 miles south into the Sanpete Valley, “the most lovely… I ever beheld” (p. 141). His sally had been prompted by disgruntled Scandinavian immigrants at Mt. Pleasant, population 2,000, apostate Mormons, whom he planned to use as the nucleus for a Presbyterian church (Brackenridge, 1997). Instead, they begged him to start a school. Mormon leaders quickly grasped the potential for trouble and Brigham Young told residents: "Take your children to some one who is full of the gospel and cast away your hypocrisy and be at peace, and in union, not as the pretended Christians who contend and fight for their attainments.” The townspeople who backed the new school resisted Young but were none too easy on the missionary McMillan. They
told the latter (Burton, 2010): “We won’t believe a damn word you say, for we are done with all
religions. If there be a God in heaven, He is an enemy to our people, but we will stand by you if
you stand by us” (p. 143-144). They financed the new venture and the school flourished,
enrolling 150 students by the end of its first year. McMillan stayed on for eight years with a
growing staff.

Like some other Protestant missionary educators in Utah Territory, he was ambivalent
and self-contradictory in his assessment of the Mormons. With the perspective of years
McMillan later wrote that “they were always personally kind and were most courteous in their
treatment of me” (Brackenridge, 2011, p. 196). However, early in his tenure at Mt. Pleasant he
wrote in the fledgling *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* that the Saints were

poor, ignorant, deluded, degraded priest ridden serfs. The men stand about their
customary loafing places with their hands up to their elbows in their pants pockets, their
old hats on the backs of their heads and their mouths open, utterly incapable of
comprehending an intelligent thought; the women are literally servants of servants, and
the children are legion.

His fellow Protestant ministers in Salt Lake wisely collected and burned copies of that
inflammatory issue of the *Presbyterian*. However, McMillan’s words were not really directed at
the Mormons. They were “An Appeal to Christian Women,” and he was pleading for more than
the ladies’ money and prayers. McMillan believed that young female normal school graduates
would arouse less hostility than men as teachers among “exceptional populations,” such as the
Mormons, and “women worked cheaper than men would, and were more willing to exercise the
necessary self-denial than men are.” The life of a teacher-missionary in Utah Territory was hard,
as several hundred women learned after 1877, when McMillan won over the Presbyterian
General Assembly with an impassioned speech. They authorized assignment of single women to Utah. Their service led to the establishment of the Women’s Executive Committee of the Board of Home Missions, whose influence eventually extended far beyond the relatively short-lived mission schools of Utah to schools, colleges, and hospitals throughout the United States.

One contingent of young women who traveled west together by train in 1880 became known in Presbyterian hagiography as “The Fourteen.” Carrie Rea, supported by the Peoria, Illinois Presbytery, was part of this group. She arrived at Ephraim, Sanpete County, and began a decade of missionary teaching. An earth-covered pioneer home had been turned into a mission school, but had been abandoned for several months due to a diphtheria outbreak. Rea reopened the school, bought a nearby building lot for a Presbyterian church with her teacher’s earnings, and made a go of it. The school prospered, although, according to another teacher, Rea was tolerated but not accepted; according to Burton (2010) some of the townswomen “did not like her school nor her way of teaching children” (p. 317).

The Ephraim situation probably seemed enviable to Eliza Hartford, who arrived in Cedar City in 1881. No one would rent space to her for a school, and she secured lodging from a plural wife on condition that she not “teach or preach in her room.” The Presbytery of Utah bought a building the following year, and the school opened with twelve students. By 1884 she wrote (Burton, 2010), “Total enrollment, ten. This is a strong Mormon settlement. No Gentiles here, and but two or three apostates” (p. 201). She later wrote that LDS Church President John Taylor

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50 McMillan’s long career included stints as synodical superintendent of schools in Utah, Montana, and Idaho; president of the College of Montana (now Rocky Mountain College); and corresponding secretary of the Board of Home Missions in New York. He contributed to the article on Mormonism in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (1908), an important resource for Protestant ministers for many decades.

51 The school McMillan founded defied the odds and continues to operate today as non-sectarian Wasatch Academy, a college preparatory boarding school.

52 Perhaps on the half-price fare available to Christian missionaries traveling to Utah Territory (Riess, 2000, p. 160).
visited Cedar City the day after she arrived and denounced her. When Hartford decamped in 1885, the school closed. She was not replaced.\textsuperscript{53}

While Mormons dominated Utah Territory, around its edges they, too, sometimes felt the sting of prejudice. Bertha Wheeler Woodbury (1969) recalled arriving in Mancos, Colorado as a young girl: “That was the first year I went to school. The teacher was a fellow [who] hated the sight of a Mormon…. Our closest neighbors [were] the Don McEuen’s. [He stood up] for the Mormon [children]…. [This teacher] would sit there and chew tobacco. Then he would open the backs of the Mormon [children’s] clothes and spit his tobacco juice down their backs. Mother said, ‘We can’t have that.’ I was a little [child] at the time.”

Recollections from the mission period suggest that Mormon Country was tightly woven but ragged around the edges. While LDS leaders might inveigh against Gentiles, their world was becoming an undeniably American one that appeared both strange and familiar to the stream of diarists, reporters, and bon vivants who passed through the “the top of the mountains.”\textsuperscript{54} The Mormon political kingdom’s borders were never secured, and the educational projects that occupied much of the rest of the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century found their way to Utah, complicated by adversarial policies that pitted the Mormons against the country that was growing up around them.

THE END OF LDS POLYGAMY AND THE IMPACT OF PROTESTANT MISSION SCHOOLS

Historian Ferenc Morton Szasz (2004) writes, “Although the modern American West participated in all national religious trends, westerners generally bent these trends along their

\textsuperscript{53} Riess (2000) systematically challenges the validity of stories of persecution, noting their probable exaggeration, pp. 172-185. But she does not deny the moxie of women such as Rea or Hartford.

\textsuperscript{54} This Mormon description of their Utah homeland is from Isaiah 2:2: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”
own trajectories” (p. xv). This was certainly true of the post-Manifesto Latter-day Saints. The development of public school systems in the United States had provoked suspicion and opposition from Catholics and Lutherans, who responded by building vigorous parochial school systems. But in the West, the denominations over-extended their resources, forcing abandonment of some schools and colleges within two or three generations of their founding. This declension was exacerbated in Utah by the establishment of public schools in 1890; denominational funding for Protestant mission schools dried up. The Mormons faced similar pressures, despite their dominance in Utah, as parents abandoned both mission and ward schools for tax-supported public schools. The Church may have anticipated this change, since there were warnings: the Territorial legislature had approved a tax levy for schools in 1886, providing partial public funding. This meant less religion in the classroom. George Q. Cannon wrote (Buchanan, 1996), “Thus it is that all our schools are secularized, and the Bible, the Book of Mormon and all our church books are rigidly excluded from our schools. No teacher is permitted to inculcate any religious doctrine, and no one is required to teach even morality, lest in doing so would trench on the domain of religion” (p. 7). The Church’s fear was that when Mormonism was excluded from the classroom, Gentile influence would fill the vacuum. However, initial attempts in 1890 to start LDS private elementary schools were quashed. Church leaders knew that they were financially unsustainable and that withdrawal from the public schools would feed the common charge that Mormons were opposed to education.

The proliferation of Protestant mission schools had spurred the establishment of LDS stake academies, or secondary schools,55 in three phases: the first two, at Provo and Logan, Utah,

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55 About 20 primary schools, or seminaries, were also established at the stake, not the ward, level, augmenting the ward school system. They should not be confused with later LDS seminaries established for religious instruction of public secondary school students.
were founded in the 1870s, but most were started in the late 1880s, shortly before the demise of polygamy. Six more were founded between 1891 and 1910. The 26 Stake academies were private religious high schools, the largest of which grew to include normal and liberal arts college courses. The LDS Church Board of Education was formed in 1888 to oversee these schools and marked an organized response to Protestant educational initiatives. In some ways, it is remarkable that the Church effort took shape so slowly, nineteen years after missionaries established their first school. However, the Mormons were beset with so many challenges that parity in schooling may have seemed secondary to the fight for religious survival.

Stake academies played an important role for several more decades after the Manifesto. They offered a Church-sanctioned educational space for the transition of Mormon society from plural marriage to monogamy, among other things. The academies demonstrated by their very existence that Mormonism had survived, and through educating its children, had a future. At the same time, the academies’ curriculum was similar to the new public schools, except for religious instruction. In that way they could be identified with the parochial schools of Catholics, Lutherans, and Adventists. Because they were part of the LDS Church, academies were important purveyors of the new monogamous way of life. The Manifesto created many practical problems for polygamous families, especially poignant when explained by children. Zora Smith Jarvis (1969) remembered her schooling in the 1880s and 1890s: “Somehow I [had] the idea that I wanted to have an education [and] I kept telling my parents that I wanted to be educated. That grew up as the family byword—this is the girl [who] was to be educated.” She said that after eighth grade, “I picked some berries [and] cherries….I did this [for] money to go to school.” Jarvis recalled her high school graduation from Brigham Young Academy in Provo, Utah, in 1902:
The happiest moment, I believe, of the graduation was as I stood at the pulpit and received my certificate. I looked down and saw my father standing there. [Emotional] I haven’t mentioned this, but there was a law about polygamy that you could not have two wives. It was being observed by the Church….When I was fourteen years old, and being the youngest, my noble mother told my father to go and live with his second wife and help her raise the children, which he did. But he was there for my graduation.

While the children of polygamists were retrained for the new order, money to fund Protestant schools in Utah disappeared because donors believed that their fight against polygamy had been won. The primary intent of the churches, to re-convert the Mormons to orthodox Christianity, was, by and large, not realized. But the other aim, to Americanize the Mormons through schooling, was more successful and the mission schools, minus their overt proselytizing function, served as models for the new public system.

Parents’ enrollment of young Saints in Protestant schools hostile to their religion may tell us several things. First, parents wanted good educations for their children, no matter who provided it. The mission schools, with their trained teachers, denominational funding, and purpose-built facilities, provided schooling superior to most ward schools. Second, Protestant proselytizing was not so offensive as to alienate all Mormon families; in fact, they may have recognized commonalities between their ways of life, thus reducing the strangeness of the “other” on both sides and in some measure preparing the way for rapprochement with the federal government. Third, Mormons demonstrated independence from their ecclesiastical leaders, who

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56 However, enrollment statistics at mission schools complicate binary Mormon/Gentile categories and suggest higher rates of reaffiliation than have been previously portrayed (Fife, n.d.). For example, in 1890, 26 schools were operated by the Methodist Church in Utah, with 1,467 students and 32 teachers. 544 students were Mormons, 673 were former Mormons, and 250 were Protestants (emphasis added). Assessing the educational situation in Utah vis-à-vis religion requires a better understanding of the disaffected, disaffiliated, and unchurched populations who were identified as Mormons but had minimal connection to the LDS Church.

57 While religion was not taught as a subject in mission schools, the curriculum was clearly subversive to Mormonism. Students were encouraged to attend mission Sunday Schools; in some cases, school and Sunday School enrollment were about the same.
denounced the Protestant schools. As Riess (2000) notes, “Many Mormon parents weighed their religious leaders’ suggestions against their own realization that mission schools offered the best education in the Territory, and decided in favor of the Protestant schools.” Mormons demonstrated to a critical American public that they were not slavishly obedient to their Church leaders. In that sense, despite tales of LDS/Protestant conflict, the mission schools changed perceptions on both sides and moved Utah closer to the American mainstream.

FOUNDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE FOUNDING STORY OF NEW POLYGAMY

During the transition to public education, polygamous marriages continued to be secretly solemnized for about fifteen years after the Manifesto (Flake, 2009; Quinn, 1992). But polygamy declined as pluralism grew. Mormons voted and entered multi-party politics with less frequent directives from church leaders; the LDS People’s Party was dissolved in 1891. The corporate project of building a theocratic society was muted. Increasingly emphasizing codes of behavior and rituals, Mormons moved toward becoming identified as Americans. However, the LDS were not satisfied with religion-neutral public schools. They imprinted those schools with Mormonism.

While the Manifesto eased the strained relationship between Mormons and other Americans, it intensified the paradoxes of Mormon identity. Nostalgia coexisted with the embrace of patriotism, monogamy, and capitalism. Mormons transformed those values by identifying them with their theological principles. Plural marriage was transmuted into a new practice of marriage that was both celestial and legal. Although fuller integration into American life offered hope for survival and new opportunities for missionary work, it was not clear what would be the cost of inclusion. Progressive impulses toward creating and supporting public
agencies and institutions clashed with wariness about sharing authority in those projects with enemies of Mormonism.

The establishment of public schools was heady and confusing; the Utah situation was unique. The path to change, and resistance to change, were framed by LDS theological arguments and cultural arrangements. While the majority of citizens participated in a long road to compromise, moving from church schools to public schools, dissenters were not any more satisfied with educational changes than they were with the end of polygamy and the political kingdom. The last decade of the mission school era coincided with events that the new polygamists later identified as a turning point in Mormon history. They were on their way to creating a different narrative, one that negated the Manifesto and LDS Church authority, and at the same time created tropes for Church and priesthood power to make a case for dissent. The emerging narrative of the new polygamists redefined the tension between authority and radical freedom that Givens (2007) places at the center of Mormonism. In this reimagined story, an LDS Church President was pitted against his own Church.

At the center of that story was John Taylor, successor to Brigham Young from 1880 to 1887. He had been a Mormon apostle since 1838 and was also Territorial Superintendent of Schools from 1876 to 1880, working to blunt the influence of mission schools, as Presbyterian teacher Eliza Hartford recalled from her first day in Cedar City. Better educated than either of his president predecessors, Taylor wrote hymns, tracts, letters, newspaper articles, pamphlets, and books, a unique contribution to 19th century Mormonism (Teachings, 2001).

Taylor’s most substantial work, Government of God, was published in England in 1852, insisted that the divine kingdom was a “literal kingdom, rule, and reign” (p. 83) being built by the Mormons. He wrote of two gathering places for God’s people: Jerusalem and North America, the
first to be re-inhabited by the Jews, the second by the LDS. He quoted LDS leader Parley Pratt, who had written admiringly of “the Ancients,” and their attainments, based on divine communications that “are alone calculated to exalt the intellectual powers of the human mind,” not degraded by “priestcraft and doctrine.” Taylor continued quoting Pratt,

Compare this intelligence, with the low smatterings of education and worldly wisdom, which seem to satisfy the narrow mind of man in our generation; yea, behold the narrow-minded, calculating, trading, overreaching, penurious sycophant of the nineteenth century who dreams of nothing here but how to increase his goods, or take advantage of his neighbor; and whose only religious exercises or duties consist of going to meeting, paying the priest his hire, or praying to his God without expecting to be heard or answered, supposing that God has been deaf and dumb for many centuries, or altogether stupid and indifferent like himself. And having seen the two contrasted, you will be able to form some idea of the vast elevation from which man has fallen; you will also learn how infinitely beneath his former glory and dignity, he is now living, and your heart will mourn, and be exceedingly sorrowful, when you contemplate him in his low estate—and then think he is your brother; and you will be ready to exclaim, with wonder and astonishment, O man! How art thou fallen! (p. 111-112).

The Saints meant to reverse that fall, and a primary means of restoration was plural marriage. Celestial marriage was an important predictor of intellectual capacity and academic success.58

Taylor wrote in The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star (1852), “. . . [T]he one-wife system not only degenerates the human family, both physically and intellectually, but it is entirely incompatible with philosophical notions of immortality; it is a lure to temptation, and has always proved a curse to a people” (Vol. 15, p. 227). Because of that purported connection, Taylor’s work as an Apostle and as a school superintendent was coincident to the Saints. The Apostles

58 LDS leader, historian, and politician B.H. Roberts (1857-1933) wrote (Welch, 1996):
  It was in the name of a divinely-ordered species of eugenics that Latter-day Saints accepted the revelation which included a plurality of wives. Polygamy would have afforded the opportunity of producing from that consecrated fatherhood and motherhood that improved type of man the world needs to reveal the highest possibilities of the race, that the day of the super man might come, and with him come also the redemption and betterment of the race (p. 556-557).
were religious teachers, and their words carried weight in temporal and spiritual matters in theocratic Utah Territory. For Taylor and the Saints, true education was a means of “eternal progression” toward exaltation, but it had been degraded by “worldly wisdom” rooted in centuries of religious apostasy. Protestant missionary education was rooted in this dangerous corruption.

But it was as a fugitive prophet that Taylor taught his most enduring fundamentalist lessons. Most believe that while hiding from federal authorities at the home of John W. Woolley in Centerville, Utah, in 1886, Taylor received a spiritual visitation from Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith. A witness assigned to guard Taylor’s room during the night reported seeing bright light emanating from under the closed door. When the President emerged in the morning, he explained that both Smith and the Savior had commanded him not to let plural marriage die out. He was to give Woolley and to five of his associates transmittable authority to continue conducting polygamous marriages.59

Taylor’s bona fides with Latter-day Saints were strong. He had been jailed with Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage, Illinois, in 1844 and witnessed their mobbing and murder. Seriously wounded in the melee, Taylor said he was saved by his pocket watch; he found a slug embedded in the watch face with the crystal turned to dust. He supported the emerging leadership of Brigham Young, made the trek to Utah, married six wives, served as missionary to his native England, and inherited an increasingly untenable situation as president of a church at odds with the United States.

59 This founding story emerged in two stages: in 1912, Woolley published an account of Taylor’s night vision and the command to maintain polygamy. In 1929, son Lorin Woolley published an expanded account, with explicit authorization from Taylor to six men to conduct plural marriages ceremonies.
The account of 1886 precedes by several years the suspension of plural marriage, and was not published by Woolley for twenty-five years. Taylor died in 1887, still on the run, but he probably did leave an unsigned account of an experience at Centerville. The wording on two pencil-written sheets is ambiguous, and although Church officials said in 1933 that it was not in their archives, a photocopy was later discovered there. Taylor apparently never submitted his revelation to the vetting process required for it to become Mormon scripture; the chaos of the period may have prevented that action. In some ways, this was irrelevant to polygamists, who developed a theology in which church and priesthood were separated as the result of leaders’ disobedient renunciation of plural marriage. Instead, priesthood authority became vested in polygamist leaders (Bradley, 1993, p. 27). Mary Jane Laughlin of Spring Hill School told me that the Woodruff Manifesto had “saved the priesthood.” While many polygamists see the Church as sapped of spiritual power, or “out of order,” they also believe that when Christ returns, he will set the Church in order and restore them to membership in it.

ENDING POLYGAMY, BEGINNING PUBLIC EDUCATION

In 1887, Congress passed the Edmunds-Tucker Act, which disincorporated the LDS Church and funded Utah public education with its liquidated assets. Section 25 of the Act banned the use of “sectarian” books in schools, abolished the office of Territorial Superintendent of Schools (replaced by a superintendent appointed by the Gentile-controlled Territorial Supreme Court), and directed that a religious census of teachers and pupils be conducted (Buchanan, 1996). Before these changes could be fully implemented, the Church saved itself by capitulating to federal demands. Public education was funded through taxation and was enshrined in the State’s Constitution. As if anticipating the change, the first public schools in

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60 The separation of the LDS Church and priesthood was explained by fundamentalist Joseph Musser in The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage (1933).
61 The 1889 Cullom-Strubble Bill proposed stripping Mormons of US citizenship.
Utah opened ten days before the Manifesto was published. The territorial legislature had been moving slowly in that direction for years, but Utah was the last state or territory in the United States existing at that time to establish free public schools.\(^{62}\)

The watershed of 1890 marked a transition in family relations, economics, and politics, and opened the way for Utah statehood in 1896. It also signaled a new phase in education. The array of quasi-public Mormon ward schools, the LDS seminaries and academies, the handful of non-sectarian private schools,\(^{63}\) and the mission schools were eventually supplanted by the public school system inaugurated in that year.\(^{64}\) The first school superintendent in Salt Lake City was an eminent non-Mormon, Jesse Millspaugh.\(^{65}\) One of his successors, D. H. Christensen, serving 1901-1918, was a Mormon product of Protestant mission schools (Burton, 2010). He contended that these schools had advanced education in Utah by at least a decade, and that “the Christian schools of Utah had not only paved the way for our public school system, but made it a necessity” (p. 592).

LDS Church leaders initially believed that public schools would undermine Mormonism, and resisted them as mission schools in sheep’s clothing. Parents were less reluctant to embrace free education and most quickly migrated to public primary schools. Public high schools were also established. As Mormons reentered local politics after the Manifesto, the balance of power

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\(^{62}\) Arrington (1958) describes the educational impasse in Utah Territory:

> It would be fair to say that the primary reason for the slow development of a public school system in Utah—beside the obvious one that people engaged in conquering an inhospitable wilderness could not afford the luxury of much education—was the conflict between Mormons and Gentiles. Gentiles objected to public schools because Mormon teachers would expose their children to Mormonism; Mormons, to protect the standing of their own faith, refused to alienate control to non-Mormon elements (p. 513).

\(^{63}\) A few private non-sectarian fee-based schools enrolled both Mormon and Gentile students.

\(^{64}\) Utah had the highest rate of public school attendance in the US in 2013: 98%.

\(^{65}\) Millspaugh had been principal of Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, the only Protestant post-secondary school Utah, (1883-1890). After serving as superintendent (1890-1899), he was president of the Los Angeles State Normal School (1904-1917), the forerunner of UCLA, and served on the California State Board of Education (1904-1912). (Online Archives of California). Retrieved from [http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf609nb387/admin/](http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf609nb387/admin/)
on school boards and in districts, initially controlled by Gentiles, shifted back to the LDS. Candidates for the first Salt Lake City school board were described on the ballot as Mormon or non-Mormon. That board was made up of three Mormons and seven Gentiles. Although the capital was Utah’s most diverse city, the Gentile board majority reflected Mormon uncertainty regarding the new school governance system, not their proportion of the population. Over the next few decades, the religious balance of the board was a matter of great interest and debate. Mormons gradually came to predominate, evidence of their consolidation of political power. Buchanan (1996) writes, “Much of the conflict over school elections in Salt Lake City can be viewed as a struggle between those who wanted the schools to express the local culture and those who wanted them to reflect national republican values” (p. 30).

The local-national religious divide remained the most important fact in Utah educational policy. However, this divide was multifaceted. It sometimes pitted Church leaders’ fear of public schools against members’ desire for quality education, reflecting Givens’ (2007) contrast between “a longing for inclusion and an imperative to redeem the world.” The Protestant clergy in Utah were sometimes at odds with each other, as well as with the Mormons, over educational policies—this was the case during the debate over released-time religious education. And on school boards, interest groups sometimes gained control; Freemasons were the most important non-Mormon bloc on the Salt Lake City school board for decades. Masonic lodges served a unique function in Utah; Masonic brotherhood was a Gentile alternative to the solidarity of the Mormon lay priesthood; Mormon temple ceremonies resembled Masonic rites, and Masonic promises of mutual aid and support took on heightened meaning in the Mormon cultural context, and helped to create an anti-Mormon political bloc. Masons positioned themselves against LDS clannishness, emphasizing their universalist values.
The LDS Church was slower to close stake academies than ward schools. In some areas such as St. George in southern Utah, the academies were the only high schools (Esplin). Salt Lake City’s Latter-day Saints High School did not close until 1931 (Plewe, 2012). By that time, the Church’s seminary program, initiated in 1912, was firmly established. It offered an hour of LDS religious instruction during the school day in Church-owned buildings adjacent to public high schools through a released-time arrangement with districts. State legislation in 1943 protected released-time religious education.\footnote{The first seminary was founded in 1912 in Salt Lake City. Outside of Utah, seminary curriculum is adapted to a before-school format based in LDS chapels. In 2013, 391,680 students in grades 9-12 were enrolled in the seminary program, almost half of them outside of Utah (Walker, J. [2013, May 22]. “LDS seminary stretches beyond Utah to reach all-time enrollment high,” Deseret News).} After-school religion classes for younger children added to the pervasive Mormon influence in Utah public schools.\footnote{First held after hours in public schools, these “Primary” classes later shifted to church buildings.} The released-time solution to Mormon concerns about the secularizing influence of public schools was part of a larger movement for weekday religious instruction. Begun in 1901 in New York City, where it continues today in some public schools, primarily in Orthodox Jewish communities, released-time reached its highest enrollment in the United States shortly after World War II. Limited to off-school facilities after McCollum v. Board of Education (1945), it continues to in several states, but is most widespread in Utah.

This gradual acceptance of public education was part of Mormons’ negotiation for acceptance as Americans.\footnote{Leone (1979) offers a broader summary of this period: “By the early 1900s Mormonism had changed. Independence was lost, in one sense because the kingdom had been occupied and in another because the institutions upon which Mormonism based its differences had been forsaken….Under force, the church was compelled to disassemble the programs that had operationalized its differences, so these differences were dying, but not in the sense of becoming part of Mormon history or precedent” (p. 167).} Plural marriage became an anachronism but protecting children from hostile Gentile influences remained important. In the 1910s and again in the 1930s, the LDS Church actively pursued and excommunicated the new polygamists, accelerating the
establishment of plural marriage organizations. Beginning in the 1920s, when some gathered in Short Creek, a public school reflected polygamist values and practices. Others remained in largely non-polygamist communities and schools, until watershed cultural and religious change in the 1960s and -70s led them to establish schools of their own, or to join the growing national homeschooling movement.

NEW POLYGAMISTS EMERGING: 1920s and 1930s

The anti-polygamy tenure of LDS Church president Heber J. Grant was the culmination of years of increasing tension. When Mormon Church representatives were sent to administer loyalty oaths at Short Creek in 1935, the fundamentalists’ mournful rebellion was hard for them to fathom (Bradley, 1993, p. 57-58). The Short Creekers refused to sign the oath but cried and pleaded not to be “cut off” since they did not want to “be left outside” the Church when Christ returned (Bistline, 2004). Most pre-Manifesto polygamists were dead. New polygamists saw Church and Priesthood moving ever farther apart. Bradley writes, “In the 1930s, the fundamentalists began to refer to the ‘corporate church’ or the church as separate from the ‘priesthood’” (p. 28). In a podcast, Quinn (2015) explains, “From 1918 onward, those who wanted to continue plural marriage…were faced with having to acknowledge that they were in direct defiance of the [LDS] First Presidency….and eventually they acknowledged themselves as rebels.” Forming organizations separate from the mainstream Church was a “process that took decades.” Quinn (1993) writes that between 1890 and 1918 fundamentalists “believe[d] that they

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69Grant, who became seventh President of the LDS Church in 1918, although convicted of a post-Manifesto polygamy-related misdemeanor, was determined to stamp out plural marriage. “...He delivered stern messages denouncing the practice in 1925, 1926, and 1931” (Driggs, 2001). Grant moved decisively against the polygamist when he appointed his second counselor, J. Reuben Clark, to suppress the practice. Clark prepared a “final Manifesto” in 1933 that was publicly read in every Mormon ward. This was followed with a loyalty oath to be signed by suspected polygamists and their sympathizers. Their refusal to sign led to the excommunication of most members of the branch at Short Creek in 1935. The oath affirmed not only that the signer did not practice or support plural marriage, but also that he did not believe that LDS leaders practiced it.
were a kind of chosen remnant who was keeping the principle of plural marriage alive” within
the LDS Church. Grant’s stance forced polygamists out, and intensified their self-identification
as a righteous remnant:

By the 1920s they had to admit that they could not continue [as LDS members] and that they were in clear violation of the rules and requirements demanded by all the leaders of the Church. They moved more distant [sic]; they became harsher in their criticism…especially of Heber J. Grant, who they believed fulfilled a supposed prophecy about the seventh president of the Church who would lead the Church to ruin, to Babylon.

Polygamy in pre-Manifesto Utah had been illegal but it had been honored in the Church. With that support gone, the new polygamists were estranged from both Church and State. Shipps’ (1987) assertion that the Manifesto marked a transition from sacred time to ordinary time for the Saints did not apply to them. They were moving toward a destination of their own. They continued to teach their children a gospel with plural marriage at its core, becoming fundamentalists who were a People within a People.

What they taught them about Joseph Smith’s “doctrine of the kingdom” and “knowledge…of countries and kingdoms” was shaped by the experiences of their early leaders, as well as by a fundamentalism streak that ran through the mainstream LDS Church (Bowman, 2012). Joseph Fielding Smith, the grand-nephew of founder Joseph Smith most articulately represented LDS fundamentalism. The era of fundamentalist Mormon school-building was several decades away, but the experiences of new polygamist founders offer clues about the atmosphere that shaped them. Driggs (1991) describes these men:

It would be a mistake to write off early fundamentalist leaders and sympathizers as…crackpots….John W. Woolley was from an old, well connected LDS family….His son Lorin C. Woolley had twice been a missionary in Indian Territory, a service which brought him in contact with other men who would become important to the fundamentalist movement.
Driggs credentials the first-generation leaders of new polygamy, concluding that, “For their times, these men were well placed, relatively well educated in religious matters, and enjoyed deep blood lines in the Latter-day Saints movement.”

They associated with inventor and polygamist sympathizer Nathaniel Baldwin, a Stanford-trained electrical engineer who taught physics and theology at Brigham Young Academy. The influence of a charismatic fellow faculty member, the “talented but marginalized and ignored” John T. Clark\(^\text{70}\) converted him to a supporter of post-Manifesto plural marriage. He lost his BYU position because of it in 1905 when his mentor Clark was excommunicated.\(^\text{71}\)

Baldwin patented the first headphones in 1910 and sold them to the US Navy. He built a factory\(^\text{72}\) that by 1922 employed 150 people including excommunicated Mormon Apostles Matthias Cowley and John W. Taylor.\(^\text{73}\) Baldwin hired many polygamists, including Cowley, Taylor, Lorin Woolley and John T. Clark. They were so prominent at the Baldwin Radio Factory that it was rumored that all employees were required to marry plural wives (Singer, 1979). It was notable that “many of the ideas and beliefs of contemporary Fundamentalist groups were formulated in the cottage meetings and prayer gatherings dating to the Baldwin period” (p. 51). These core tenets were institutionalized by Woolley and his associates in 1928 as the Council of Friends, the leading polygamist umbrella organization for the next fifty years. Baldwin incubated new polygamy and showed its early leaders what could be done by educated and innovative

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\(^{70}\) Hales, B. (2006). “John T. Clark: The ‘One Mighty and Strong,’” *Dialogue*. 39:3, p. 47-49. Clark claimed to be the Mormon apocalyptic figure, “The One Mighty and Strong,” from Doctrine and Covenants 85:7. This passage of LDS scripture is probably quoted more often than any other by fundamentalists, and their interpretation of it is key to understanding polygamists’ teachings.

\(^{71}\) Historians disagree on the period and nature of Clark’s employment at Brigham Young Academy.

\(^{72}\) Inventor Philo Farnsworth may have built his prototype television at the Baldwin Radio Factory.

\(^{73}\) LDS apostles Matthias F. Cowley and John W. Taylor, son of the former Church President, were asked to resign their church positions in 1905 during congressional hearings regarding the seating of Reed Smoot, Mormon apostle and US senator-elect. Their advocacy of plural marriage was the cause of their dismissal.
people. This entrepreneurship resonated with their plans to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, through plural marriage and a united economic order. Connecting themselves to an earlier order of learning, the 1930s Council members referred to their meetings as “The School of the Prophets.”

Soon after Lorin Woolley organized the Council of Friends during the Baldwin period, sympathetic landowners from Short Creek (Bistline, 2004) “offered their property to the Priesthood Council as a gathering place for polygamists” (p. 26) and a plural marriage community began to grow in the Arizona Strip. The area was lightly settled, with the first elementary school conducted in a tent in 1913. It was associated with pre-Manifesto polygamy. The new arrivals soon outnumbered the older settlers, and the public school became a center of the polygamist community for decades. However, there was no high school in the area until 1960. The settlement and the school were small and isolated. There was little reason to think that either would grow.

While Short Creek was being transformed into a modest Zion, fundamentalism of a different order was surging within the LDS Church. Bowman (2012) links the organization of fundamentalist Mormon sects to the rise of fundamentalism in mainstream Mormonism in the 1930s. Another example of the influence of early leaders on fundamentalism’s developing intellectual emphases is Rulon Allred (1906-1977), homeopathic physician and leader of the Apostolic United Brethren. Homeopathy and naturopathy continue to be important in fundamentalist sects, with leadership in some groups devoting substantial effort to educating their communities along these lines.

See [http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/ChartLinks/CouncilofFriends.htm](http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/ChartLinks/CouncilofFriends.htm)

It was replaced by a wooden school house in 1914 or 1915.

Pipe Springs Ranch, near Short Creek, had been a refuge for plural wives and their children in the 1880s (Bradley, 1993, Bistline, 2004).

The anti-plural marriage documentary, “Lifting the Veil of Polygamy,” (2007) includes a comment from a more recent plural wife that, in spite of its bias, indicates the hardships awaiting new arrivals at Short Creek through the years: “Oh my heart, it’s just...I said the only celestial kingdom here is for the rats. Trailers just flung in there any old way. Mud and dirt and no grass and I just stood in the streets and I said, “Father in Heaven, This is the city of God?”
1920s. The struggle between progressives and conservatives was influenced by Protestant fundamentalism and reaction against LDS progressives’ assimilationist agenda. There was mainstream ancillary support for polygamists’ beliefs. In about 1933 polygamists began holding “cottage meetings” in Salt Lake City to explain their views and to recruit new members. In this climate of ferment Joseph Musser published *The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (1933), outlining polygamists’ priesthood authority. Musser extended his influence through the magazine, *Truth*, which he started in 1935.79

Joseph Fielding Smith80 was the leading fundamentalist LDS thinker during these formative years for new polygamy, speaking to their concerns but not associated with the movement. The new polygamists were eager students and interpreters of LDS history and doctrine. They resonated with Fielding Smith’s spirited opposition to evolution, to the Protestant doctrine of salvation by grace, and with his promotion of the Mormon scriptural canon to the exclusion of other sources. A “forceful and timely address” by Fielding Smith was extensively quoted in the 1935 issue of *Truth*. The editor commented, “In characterizing the Latter-day Saints as ‘covenant-breakers’, the speaker [Fielding Smith] is in harmony with remarks made by the late President Anthony W. Ivins [LDS Apostle and facilitator of polygamy in Mexico].”

Historian Hans Baer (1988) emphasizes the class distinctions between mainstream Mormons and the emerging plural marriage groups of the 20th century. In contrast to Mormonism’s 19th century communalism, the post-Manifesto Church became a class-based society. He writes, “In response to this accommodation…, various sects that appealed to the

79 The first issue’s (June 1935) prospectus included this: “As we view it, the fundamentals governing man’s existence on earth and his efforts to achieve salvation in the life to come, may be grouped under four general headings: POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, and SPIRITUAL. These four must be fully coordinated in the lives and actions of man kind [sic] before a complete success is possible.”

80 Smith later served briefly, from 1970 to 1972, as President of the LDS Church.
‘disinherited’ of Mormon culture emerged during the post-Manifesto era” (p. 25). Baer argues that while the Church appealed to the middle class aspirations of its members, poor Mormons were sometimes alienated. They were less affluent and less educated. Their desire to revitalize Mormonism, to recapture its distinctive practices and to reinstate charismatic leadership, motivated the new polygamists. The idealized economic unit of their remembered theocratic kingdom was the plural family. The Great Depression advanced the cause. Polygamists convinced some Mormons that a return to a united economic order and plural marriage would restore their prosperity. Their status would be based on religious commitment, not middle class attainments. Several polygamist sects emerged during this period. Poverty continues to plague some of these communities and to constrain their educational efforts.

Pressure from the LDS Church and occasional prosecution by the State, including the 1953 Short Creek raid (Bradley, 1993) quarantined polygamists at the margins of society, while enhancing their conviction that they were a remnant people. Poverty connected them with the scriptural record; the exiles returning from Babylonian captivity had also faced privation.

SHORT CREEK RAID AND ITS EFFECT ON EDUCATION

In the early 1950s, cattle ranchers around Short Creek complained to state officials that their grazing fees “were used to support the education of polygamous children” (Van Wagoner, 1986, p. 201). The agitation helped lead to a 1953 federal raid on Short Creek that was a public relations disaster. Its purpose was to rescue women and children from the tyranny of plural marriage, but most of the women and 263 children hauled away on school buses did not want to be rescued. Their passive resistance created a sympathetic backlash.

The local public school, Short Creek Academy, had about 65 students and only went through the eighth grade. A correspondence program through Phoenix Union High School was
available (Bradley, 1993). Few in the community continued their education, and some went to
school only intermittently. The difference number between the 65 students at the Academy and
the 218 children taken into state custody indicates that many children in Short Creek probably
did not attend school at all. Their homes had limited plumbing and electricity and no central
heating. Leaving school after eighth grade, girls married at an average age of sixteen. Two
fifteen year-old girls, who *did* seem glad to be rescued (Bradley, 1993), told a newspaper that
their school curriculum groomed them for polygamy: “The only books that were pressed on us
were books about celestial marriages.” Other women in the community countered their claims (p.
135-136).

After the raid, Short Creek children were forced to make a difficult transition to schools
in Phoenix, where they were relocated with their mothers. Three men who were the
community’s teachers were also scrutinized. The Arizona State Board of Education asked them
to sign an affidavit stating that they would not practice polygamy. All refused and sued the
Board. In 1954, the Arizona Superior Court ruled that the Board of Education had exceeded its
jurisdiction.

During the initial hearing, the Short Creek principal, who was also a teacher, was candid
about conditions at the school (Bradley, 1993):

> The five years I have been at Short Creek have been full of challenges. I accepted the
> responsibility of administration of this small school the first year and set out first to
> inspire the children to enjoy school and enjoy learning. Along with all the duties of an
> administrator of a small school… I had the responsibility of teaching full time with fifty-
> four students in four grades and at as many different levels of achievements as there were
> children. There were not enough desks or chairs for all the class to sit down at one time.
> There were not enough books of any course in any of the four grades for each child to
> have an individual book. The operating budget was almost the smallest in the state. The

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81 Maricopa County Superior Court “ordered the children returned to their parents” in March 1955 (Bistline, 2004, p. 66).
buildings were run-down and unpainted. The children often had to wade through deep mud in the school yard to reach the creaking frame school house (p. 161).

The 1953 raid and the chaos that followed put an end to the correspondence program that some Short Creek students had used to complete high school. Religious beliefs and rural culture combined to stymie progress for awhile. Bistline (2004) claims:

Few of them [Short Creek polygamists] showed any concern about the lack of their children’s high school education. When a girl graduated from the eighth grade, she was considered old enough to marry and became fair game for the men (or boys) to court her. They believed the only education a girl needed was how to be a good housekeeper and mother. The boys coming out of eighth grade were expected to help on the UEP [United Effort Plan] projects, or go to work earning money to support [polygamist leader] Fred Jessop’s storehouse” (p. 83).

This attitude was not universal. Some community leaders envisioned a coeducational private religious high school in which both doctrine and academics would be taught, and they spearheaded the construction of Colorado City Academy in 1960. Rock was quarried from nearby mountains, and, mortared with adobe, the walls went up. Timber for the roof came from the community-owned sawmill. Donated labor built it all. The raid had shaken but not destroyed Short Creek, and spurred greater efforts to modernize education. The polygamists were reclusive, but sensitive to negative publicity. Post-raid reporting and the teachers’ testimony in their lawsuit had painted a negative picture of education vis-à-vis polygamy.

Tensions related to the development of a more comprehensive educational program in the community were sometimes rooted in conflicts over priesthood leadership. This theocratic model placed responsibility for community life in the hands of a quorum, or council, who delegated responsibility for education. For example, the new high school’s home economics classes prepared lunch on school days and transported it to the elementary school. Children brought their

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82 After the 1953 raid they also centralized control over the contracting of marriages (Bistline, 2004).
own utensils and a slice of bread, and the school supplied them with a bowl of stew or soup. All were required to participate. This continued for several years until the principal made a bid to expand the program to include breakfast. He was concerned about malnutrition and parental neglect (Bistline, 2004). A senior priesthood leader responded to the initiative by discontinuing all meals at school. Feeding the community’s hungry children was seen as a bid for influence. This was part of a larger power struggle that eventually led the principal to join a rival polygamist community.

EDUCATION AND CONFLICT: WARREN JEFFS, JOHN SINGER

The Short Creek raid reverberated in other fundamentalist Mormon communities. Sects grew because of high birth rates and conversions. In addition to organized groups, many families independently practiced polygamy. Growth brought visibility and made coexistence with mainstream society more problematic. Polygamists founded Alta Academy in 1973. Warren Jeffs became principal in 1976. Brower (2011) sardonically writes, “Too many things that were taught in public classrooms were religiously unpalatable and in stark contrast with what the [fundamentalist Mormon] kids were learning in their homes, such as the nonsense that man had walked on the moon” (p. 53). Some fundamentalists claimed that the 1969 moon landing was a government hoax. Joseph Fielding Smith had predicted that humans would never reach the moon.

The Academy, located at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon in suburban Salt Lake City, had been the residential compound of Warren Jeffs’ father. With forty-four bedrooms, twenty bathrooms, and 30,000 square feet under roof, it had plenty of space for students from about ninety polygamist families. They began their education in first grade and graduated from

83 Rulon Jeffs was president and prophet of the Short Creek polygamists 1986-2002; the FLDS Church incorporated in 1990.
high school at the unaccredited private religious school. Some children’s first exposure to Alta Academy came even earlier, since it was the site of a polygamist birthing center staffed by midwives. The sending families did not live at the compound but in the surrounding communities; in some ways, suburban sprawl offered more cover for plural marriage groups than desert isolation.

The curriculum at the school evolved over the years’ of Jeffs’ leadership. According to “FLDS Life 101—Alta Academy” (2009) on the website FLDS 101, 84

The curriculum included fairly standard subjects. Jeffs taught most of the math classes, all of the history classes, accounting, geography, computer science, chemistry, and chorus. Each day began with an hour-long devotional that included hymns, scripture reading and sermons. The school's motto was: "perfect obedience produces perfect faith." The devotional was held in an enormous room on the ground floor. Those in grade 4-12, attended, while the lower grades listened over the PA system in their classrooms.

There was no Pledge of Allegiance. Jeffs explained to a student (Adams, 2006), "It's because we answer to a higher power." She said, "He didn't want us to get confused about who our allegiance was to."

Jeffs illustrated a woman's allegiance to her husband during a home economics class taught by his first wife Annette (Jessop, 2007). Jeffs ordered male students to join female classmates in the classroom. As students looked on, Jeffs grabbed his wife's long braid and twisted it, sending her to her knees. He said, “A man has a duty to be a leader. And a wife needs to be submissive, no questions asked” (p. 195).

Jessop described the incident as consistent with a violent authoritarian culture. Brent Jeffs claimed that his uncle Warren Jeffs sexually abused him at the school. Brower (2011) testified

84This anonymous blog, active 2008-2012, includes extensive insider accounts about FLDS life. The blogger balances negative and positive comments by former Alta Academy students and his/her own critical perspective.
during a 2005 Texas State House Bill 30-06 hearing that “the curriculum [at Alta Academy] is history of the Priesthood….Reading is taught as part of that history….School is basically to get [them] so they can read a tape measure and go out and go to work….The boys are treated as slaves” (p. 5).

Polygamist resistance to State-sponsored education led to the killing of John Singer in 1979 (Fleisher, 1983). He was a Mormon converted to independent fundamentalism with two wives and eleven children living on a tiny farm in Summit County, Utah, not far from the famous Park City ski slopes. He was arrested for withdrawing his children from public school in 1977. The Singers believed that the curriculum conflicted with their religious beliefs; among other things, school textbooks pictured blacks and whites together. Singer wanted to teach his children at home, and built a schoolhouse on his small farm. The board’s responses were confusing but it insisted that Singer return his children to school or face arrest. Singer exploited this confusion, refusing to return his children to school, and making strong statements about his right to educate them.

The district eventually allowed Singer and his two wives to home school their children under state supervision, with twice-yearly testing and psychological evaluations. Singer came to feel that this regimen was too restrictive. He also balked when his second wife’s children from her first marriage were ordered into the custody of her former husband. Singer refused to give them up. Police were sent to the farm, and during a tense stand-off, John Singer was shot and killed by police, who claimed that he had pointed a gun at them. His first wife was jailed and her children were placed in foster homes.

85 Vickie Singer (n.d.) claimed that her husband’s objections were not racially based (p. 5).

86 The official account of Singer’s death has been challenged by polygamists; an autopsy showed that he was shot in the back (P. Merkley, personal communication, 2013).
Nine years later, in 1988, Singer’s son-in-law, husband to two of the home schooled daughters, and one of Singer’s own sons, dynamited an LDS religious center and barricaded themselves with relatives inside the Singer home. They believed that these acts would lead to the resurrection of John Singer. They flew the Ensign of the Kingdom of God over the house. In the 13-day standoff that ensued, Singer’s son killed a corrections officer. Eventually the family members surrendered, and several served prison terms. Brooke (1992) places the Singer debacle in the context of fundamentalism that persists in and out of the LDS Church, a “countervailing force” that rejects the “rising movement of ‘neo-orthodox’ or ‘redemptionist’ Mormons press[ing] for further movement toward Christianity” (p. 297).

These dramatic incidents were part of a complex chain of tensions over parental rights, state education of children, and the role of religion in education. The two explosive confrontations that bookended a decade made polygamists suspicious about the state’s intentions in the education of their children.

Coates writes (Brooke, 1992) that, “It is not improper to ask whether there is something unique about Mormonism that creates a deadly fringe element along with a main body of admirable family-loving, civil-minded church goers” (p. 298). Pre-Manifesto Mormonism reordered family, economic, educational, and civic life. The new polygamists have revived these efforts, and, in the cases of Warren Jeffs and John Singer, the results have been troubling.

The Book of Mormon includes accounts of aggression and determined resistance. About one third of the Old Testament Book of Isaiah, whose prophetic oracles span the Jewish Exile

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87 Vickie Singer explained, “The thought came to us to put up our flag—the flag of the Kingdom of God that Brigham Young had flown from Ensign Peak shortly after the Saints entered Salt Lake Valley [in 1847]” (Singer (n.d.), pp. 22-23).
and the Return, is reproduced in the Book of Mormon. Fundamentalists might identify with these words of Isaiah 54:11-13 and Third Nephi 22:11-13:

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of precious stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord: and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Mainstream LDS might point to their temples as reproducing the prophetic windows, gates, and “borders of precious stones.” But polygamists--impoverished, secretive, and marginalized--have generally not built temples. They have built schools which are sacred to plural communities. Community C Principal Moses Johnson said emphatically, “The greatest liberty parents can have is to educate their own children.” In fact, school buildings also serve as places of worship; this is true of the private religious high school of Community B and of the K-8 school in Community C. Like the early “irrigation canals, or neatly built and nicely decorated houses, or good crops of sugar beets,” the schools are “expressive worship signs.”

POLYGAMISTS AND EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

What R. Laurence Moore (1987) wrote of 19th century LDS can be applied to 21st century polygamists: “They were different because they said they were different and because their claims, frequently advanced in the most obnoxious way possible, prompted others to agree and to treat them as such” (p. 31). Moore argues that Mormons muted their rhetoric of difference after 1890, but did not much change their behavior.

88 Doctrine and Covenants 88:119 points to a multipurpose temple; some plural marriage communities appear to have applied this template to schools. Instead of making the temple a school, the school has, in some sense, become a temple: “Organize Yourselves, Prepare Every Needful Thing, And Establish a House, Even a House of Prayer, A House of Fasting, A House of Faith, A House of Learning, A House of Glory, A House of Order, A House Of God."
Five years after Warren Jeffs ordered his followers to withdraw their children from the public schools in 2000 the school system went into state receivership because of mismanagement by FLDS employees. FLDS children were educated in priesthood schools, home school groups of one or more families. These were reminiscent of the schools of 19th century elite families such as that of Apostle George Q. Cannon. These priesthood schools have led to deteriorating educational outcomes for children (Brower, 2011). In “FLDS: Inside the Secret Sect,” (2011) former community member Arnold Richter explained:

Any and all schooling is church-written textbooks. They’ve gone and taken regular textbooks and sanitized ‘em. The history is very much a revisionist history, and mostly what they say [is] priesthood history, trying to show how the power of God and the “one man” [doctrine of church leadership] has come all the way through father Adam, so we’re God’s one and only Chosen People.

Meanwhile, other polygamists developed new approaches to school-based education. Community B founded public charter Spring Hill School. Several others established private unaccredited religious schools, including Community D’s Link Academy. Short Creek’s schools emerged from state receivership in 2010 to serve plural marriage groups as well as non-fundamentalists. Polygamists’ children are substantial minorities at other public schools, including community colleges; they are often well-known locally but unknown or ignored at the state level.

Water Canyon School reopened in Short Creek in 2014. This public school primarily enrolls children from families who have grown disenchanted with Warren Jeffs’ leadership but remain in the fundamentalist orbit. The state has taken over the FLDS United Effort Plan (UEP), the fundamentalist trust that owns much community land and infrastructure, and reflects the polygamist ideal of economic communalism. The break-up of the UEP has allowed some families, who in the past would have been driven out of Short Creek, to remain there. Partially
disengaged from the priesthood leadership that regulates many aspects of FLDS life, including education, some of these families have re-engaged with public education. The new principal, Darin Thomas explained in 2014, “This was a Hildale community decision. Basically, the citizens of Hildale requested it of the county.” This request came from the fractured community’s patriarchal structure, with a former lieutenant of Jeffs orchestrating the reopening of the school in cooperation with the Washington County Board of Education.
CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

My cases occupy two landscapes: Spring Hill School is in the red rock country of the Southwest and Link Academy is near the granite walls of a Rocky Mountain range. Porous red sandstone and adamant granite characterize the boundaries of the communities and their schools. Red sandstone is relatively soft, shaped by water. Public charter Spring Hill School is being molded by the interaction between school, Community B, and state. Granite is more resistant. Link Academy operates without public oversight, carved by Community D’s secretiveness.

The cases were chosen, in part, because of the differences in the communities and schools. Community B’s qualified openness contrasts with Community D’s guardedness. Ault (2012) applies co-cultural communication theory to polygamists. His explanations of “assertive accommodation” can be applied to Community B:

The assertive accommodators do not view themselves as acting in opposition to the dominant group or its members; rather, they aim to create a balance between both cultures that fosters respect and mutual understanding. They feel that through education, both the co-culture and the dominant culture are flexible enough to adapt to the other culture; thus, creating a stronger and richer joint culture as a result (p. 37).

This accommodation contrasts with the “assertive separation” that characterizes Community D and Link Academy, “self-assured in their attempts to create a society or culture without dominant group members and without the influence of outside society.” However, elements of

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89 This contrast includes limitations and exceptions. Even in the more accommodating Community B, a participant would not share with me the names of the leaders of sect’s missionary program, fearing that identification of these men might mark them for increased scrutiny. Identification is part of the chain of events that has led to arrest and possible imprisonment in the communities’ histories. In reclusive Community D, my first participant, Holly Yates, helped me to gain access to Link Academy, agreed to be interviewed at length with Barbara Gunn, and responded to texts and e-mails. This was noteworthy because Holly had been under court supervision several years earlier in a case related to her membership in Community D.

90 For more on co-cultural communications theory, see Orbe, M. (1998). From the standpoint(s) of traditionally muted groups: Explicating a co-cultural communication theoretical model. Communication Theory, 8:1, pp. 1-26.
accommodation and separation can be found within the same community. For example, Community B supports a K-9 charter school as well as an unaccredited private high school that features robust religious instruction. Accommodation gives way to separation in the tenth grade.

Other communities rejected my overtures. My attempts to interview Community A educators were unsuccessful. Early in my project I spoke with a teacher from that group but when I contacted him by mail there was no reply. Several years later I contacted that teacher’s adult son through social media and explained my efforts and my respect for his dad, a well known figure in Community A. The son responded by telling me that because of community upheaval he had hardly seen his father since shortly after the time I met him.

The table below includes basic information about the schools that I visited during field work, with case study schools in bold:

**Table 2:** Plural marriage communities and schools mentioned in this study

<table>
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<th>Community/ School</th>
<th>Accredited</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Testing</th>
<th>Certified Teachers</th>
<th>Consulting</th>
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<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Y</strong></td>
<td><strong>Y</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm. B: Private HS</td>
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<td>Various</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm. C: K-8 School</td>
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<td>A Beka</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comm. D: Link Acad.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Y</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
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CASE 1: SPRING HILL SCHOOL, COMMUNITY B

Aesop and flag salute

Spring Hill Charter School starts each day at 8:55 with a flag salute assembly in the carpeted common room, across the lobby from the main entrance to the elementary school. This room barely holds all the school’s students, who enter by class with their teachers with arms folded loosely across their chests, and are seated in rows on the floor. All students and teachers appear to be white. There is a moment of silence after the Pledge of Allegiance.

One day when I am present, Mary Jane Laughlin, the school administrator, reads Aesop’s fable of the fox and the crane to the assembled children and teachers. She explains before reading that the story has a moral, or lesson, behind it. After reading, she asks the children if they know the lesson. Many raise their hands and volunteer answers. Finally, one student says, “Treat others as you want to be treated.” Laughlin approves and talks about kindness and fair treatment at school. Students then sing, “This little light of mine,” and disperse. At the next day’s assembly Laughlin asks if anyone remembers the lesson of yesterday’s fable. One answers that it was to treat others as you want to be treated. Laughlin asks, “Can you think of a way in which you can do this today?” She then says, “Let’s sing ‘Home on the Range.’” The students sing along to recorded music as they leave the room for their classes.

91 The customary LDS posture for prayer.
92 “A Fox invited a Crane to supper and provided nothing for his entertainment but some soup made of pulse, which was poured out into a broad flat stone dish. The soup fell out of the long bill of the Crane at every mouthful, and his vexation at not being able to eat afforded the Fox much amusement. The Crane, in his turn, asked the Fox to sup with him, and set before her a flagon with a long narrow mouth, so that he could easily insert his neck and enjoy its contents at his leisure. The Fox, unable even to taste it, met with a fitting requital, after the fashion of her own hospitality.” Townsend, G. (1867). *Three Hundred Aesop’s Fables*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from https://en.wikisourcex.org/wiki/Three_Hundred_%C3%86sop%27s_Fables
93 The flag salute assembly song repertoire included “Jingle Bells” and other seasonal, patriotic, and regional songs.
Travail and birth of a school

Spring Hill School is a public charter school located in the rural polygamist enclave of Community B. The town’s 2,500 people live within a larger complex of polygamist settlements dominated by Community A, from which Community B seceded several decades ago. With 520 children in grades K-9, the school is presently housed in two buildings. K-6 grades are in an L-shaped one-story building with spacious classrooms and large windows. An administrative center, media center, common room, computer lab and a downstairs childcare center for employees are also included in this attractive facility. The building opens onto a large playground with athletic fields beyond it. Visible across those fields is an older two-story building that houses both the charter school’s grade 7-9 junior high school and an unaccredited private religious high school. This doubling up is temporary. A new two-story junior high school is rising not far away. Spring Hill School is one of several educational options in the area, including the public K-12 Mountain View School. There, Principal Laura Laughlin (same surname as Spring Hill administrator Mary Jane Laughlin) presides over 500 students. She estimates that about 25% are associated with Community A but no longer active in it. Other students come from Community B and the surrounding area.

Education in the area is shaped by the religious environment. Mary Jane Laughlin explained the origins of Spring Hill School. Although she was modest, it was clear that Laughlin was a moving force in its founding; her master’s thesis in Education at a state university had been a charter school plan. Her M.Ed. diploma hangs on the office wall. The school was chartered in 2001 with 150 K-6 students, expanding to 300 in three years and adding a junior

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94 On-site daycare is contracted to a provider and her staff who are not school employees.
95 Laughlin’s leadership of Spring Hill School suggests that she is well-connected in a community where support of male priesthood leaders is essential to the success of any activity.
high school. Community B put up $1,000,000 and a group of investors she will not name contributed an additional $1,500,000 to support the start-up of the school. The US Department of Agriculture has a rural development program that Community B School tapped to build Spring Hill School—the first school built under that program.

Why was a charter school needed? According to Laughlin, it was the result of the religious conflict between Communities A and B. The local school board was controlled by A members and B people were allowed no voice. Community B students were bullied. The school board would not hire any teachers from Community B. As a result, Community B withdrew and started a private unaccredited school. In a poor community with no state funds the school had limited resources. But in the 1990s the state amended its school charter law and Spring Hill was born. Laughlin emphasized that Spring Hill is a public school. She said that they do not teach Religion, but they can still teach values, which is what is really needed. Parents can teach religion at home.

The charter and public funding meant that teachers could be paid a living wage. Laughlin recalled that certified teachers from Community B had not been able to get jobs: not in the Community A-controlled local school, or anywhere in the county school district. When interviewed, these teachers were never hired and no explanation was given. In this complicated educational landscape, Laughlin thinks that Spring Hill School’s emergence as a charter has also improved nearby Mountain View School. As a charter, it’s a school of choice, with stiff requirements for academics, parental involvement. Uniforms erase differences in polygamist sects’ garb. She noted that introducing uniforms in the community took some adjustment. Per pupil spending is about $7,000. She cannot pay teachers as well as she would like. Laughlin ruefully remembers an applicant who came from outside the area. She was highly qualified, but
thought that coming to Spring Hill would be akin to employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on a reservation. Where were the higher salary, housing allowance and other perks offered by that federal government agency? None of those things were on offer and she took a BIA job. It’s not easy to find teachers from outside Community B, but Laughlin hires them when she can get them.

Socratic seminars and critical thinking

I entered the class of an outsider to Community B, teacher Sally Westbrook, in room nine with sixteen second graders working on math borrowing skills. As she monitored their progress, Westbrook praised the students’ interaction and said, “I sure like that I-Care language that I’m hearing.” On the walls were I-Care posters encouraging positive behavior, which Westbrook modeled.96 She was not a member of Community B or any polygamist sect but came to the school when her husband relocated because of his work as a hunting guide. Laughlin found them a place to live. Sally’s two children attend Spring Hill. The adjustment to living and working in a plural marriage community has been more challenging for her husband than for her and their children. When they tell people where they live and work, eyebrows are raised and questions are asked. They are surprised that the Westbrooks are allowed to live in what many regard as a closed compound.

Westbrook talked about the goodness of the people she encounters in Community B. She and her family attend an evangelical church about 15 miles away. She sees great potential in working with this school, and notes that it’s one of the most outstanding schools she’s worked in during about fifteen years of teaching. She’s enthusiastic about the creativity and innovation that

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96 The I-Care program is a graded supplemental conflict resolution curriculum developed by the Peace Education Foundation. [http://www.peaceeducation.org](http://www.peaceeducation.org)
are fostered in the school. She is referring to Laughlin’s often-repeated dismissal of the packaged curriculums purchased by some charter schools and her advocacy for seeking out best practices in other schools and replicating them at Spring Hill. For example, Westbrook is learning to facilitate Socratic discussions with her class, and has been impressed with the results. One such discussion began as Westbrook talked about the I-Care rule of active listening. This meant eyes and ears open. “Is this time for criticism?” she asked. “No, it is a time for listening.” She reminded students who had trouble staying quiet to listen to her, “It’s my turn to talk; it will be your turn.” She told me that the skill they were trying to build with the second graders was paraphrase—their ability to say things in their words. They read a short poem together and formed four groups to discuss it. Westbrook and a Parent Professional moved between groups, observing and encouraging the children to face everyone in their group and to look each other in the eye as they talked. They asked students to look for connections, to ask other children whether they agreed or disagreed with what they were saying. There was some input from the adults as the students talked, showing how to make inferences or to bring the discussion back to the poem. The Socratic element in this structured discussion revolves around the use of open-ended questions designed to elicit thoughtful feedback and avoid rote answers. The method itself is not remarkable, but its application to young students and their responsiveness is fascinating.

In a nearby third grade classroom the large windows let in much natural light. Written on the board were the words, “Improve your reading skills. Neat handwriting. Write a paragraph—Topic, Three supporting sentences and Conclusion. Resolution.” Steven’s behavior absorbed much of teacher Bonnie Jones’ attention. Jones is another veteran teacher with nineteen years of experience and students addressed her as “Teacher,” not by name. A white board included a plan for the day and students rotated between activity centers—small group reading, computers with
headphones, an audio listening station. Jones had been absent the previous week and Steven was struggling to adjust to her return. Her comments imply that his conduct was less cooperative than it was before her time away. She spoke to him many times, asking Steven to control his behavior and threatening to call his mother and send him home.

Jones played musical scales for transitions between the activity centers. A Parent Professional came into the classroom to see if assistance was needed with the students. Whenever I walked the hallways during class time, I saw these helpers working one on one with students at tables outside classroom doors. Steven appeared to be at loose ends and might need that kind of help with his work. Two other students left the classroom without permission or Jones noticing them.

Surveying bulletin boards and teachers

The hallway bulletin boards offered a curated look at students’ work. One bulletin board was titled “Dare to Dream Big” with resolutions for 2013: “I will listen to my brother and sister,” “I won’t hate or be on the computer so much or say bad words.” “This is the year of the completely caught-up club.” “I will look back on 2012 and remember the gospel learned.” “This year I will not lie as much.” “I will touch the Dallas Stadium and listen to the Holy Ghost.”97 “I will listen to my big brother, in my heart I will keep the Lord, in my head I will keep thinking about the future.” “I will touch a nice dog with black fur and listen to my mothers more often.”

I asked Mary Jane Laughlin what I should be asking her teachers. She responded with characteristic alacrity, “Why do teachers at this school give so much?” She went on to say that teaching is “a calling; it is a life choice.” This can make her job more challenging since her staff

97 In fundamentalist Mormonism the Holy Ghost is often associated with an inner, spiritual prompting to do the right thing, to listen to God and act upon His guidance. Touching Dallas stadium was probably a reference to a trip to the home of the NFL Cowboys.
members are so determined to be good teachers. They go home after school and take care of families, then return to work in their classrooms in the evening. Laughlin works hard and her teachers work hard. I see evidence of that dedication and of teachers who approximate the ideal, such as Sally Westbrook, and of a few who do not, like Bonnie Jones.

When I anonymously survey teachers I ask: “When someone wants to learn more about your school, what kinds of questions should they be asking? What should they seek to understand?” A dozen responded with a variety of questions and observations, including:

What are your goals for students? What technology do you have? How do you take care of disciplinary issues?

They should want to know if the children who have special needs are getting the learning and support necessary to help them be successful. Are the mainstream teachers getting educated enough to handle these children with special needs? Particularly those children with autism. They are coming in more frequently. Are we capable of educating them successfully?

Our first...concern is working to help children develop the skills they will need to be successful in life and in society. It is not on making sure all children share our religious beliefs.

Are students that complete your school program able to functions in the real world? Are the students college and business ready? Do students have the reading, writing, and thinking skills required to function in society? Will the students be able to function in their community only or will they be able to leave and function outside of the community?

Less about the sensational--more about what pedagogical implementations are being used to ensure our continual educational success and growth.

...questions that actually pertain to the education program. Don't make everything about how many moms a kid has. We actually have quite a diversity of home situations among our student body, and guess what? It does not define the child. People who really want to know should look past the stereotype, the gossip, the rumors, and what they see on “Big Love,” and get to know the people for what they are...just people, doing the best they can with the resources that they have.

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98 2006-2011 HBO television series
Sixth grade riches

In a sixth grade classroom classical music is playing as thirty students, nineteen girls and eleven boys, return at 1:00 p.m. from lunch at home. The girls’ uniform is different from the lower grades to mark the beginning of the transition to junior high school the following year. There are no more jumpers; they wear plaid skirts and long-sleeved blouses. Boys are still in dark slacks, and long-sleeved polo shirts. Veteran teacher Vera Smith is in charge. She says to the talkative students, “It’s my turn.” Her classroom is richly, almost riotously, decorated with posters of the Lascaux Caves in France, the Coliseum and Roman aqueducts, ancient Egypt, and medieval Europe. Over the door is a picture of three types of Greek columns. On top of the bookcases are a student-made Roman silver helmet with a red plume, a medieval sword with accompanying shield emblazoned with the fleur-de-lis, and painted papier-mâché models of ancient Greek vases. Nearby are statuettes of Greek gods, Jesus Christ, and Buddha. These figures are part of Smith’s unit on world religions. She laughingly tells me that when her daughter first saw how she had decorated the classroom in preparation for teaching world religions, she said, “Mom, you can’t teach religion in a public school classroom.” Smith responded, “I’m not teaching religion, I’m teaching about religion, and that’s perfectly legitimate.”

Students’ desks are in groups of six. Smith reads aloud as she does every day after lunch. The students listen intently to The Hobbit. She occasionally stops and asks about figures of speech, similes, and metaphors. “How does mischief get into a fire?” A student immediately says, “That’s personification.” Smith asks the students to write about inferences and their speculations about what she’s just read and comments, “It’s not as much fun watching the movie

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99 Modesty standards in dress for women and men in Community B are notably egalitarian.
100 She is a sister of one of my earliest participants, Lehi Grant.
as reading the book.” The students agree and don’t want her to stop. But they transition to a grammar assignment, beginning with handwritten work and then moving to school-provided laptops, working at their own pace. They are practicing for state assessment tests later in the year.

Junior high and Bloom’s taxonomy

The 134-student junior high school occupies most of the first floor of the two-story building belonging to the high school. While grades seven through nine are part of Spring Hill, the high school is a private unaccredited institution with its own administration. It graduates about 30 students a year. Other Spring Hill students go on to attend Mountain View School. Athletics draws many students to that school. Competing in junior high or in high school is not without risks. Junior high principal Doris Heidtkamp says that students were very excited to participate in a local basketball league but that there were problems with heckling. People called the students “plygs” and yelled other epithets at them. Once the van they were in was surrounded and rocked as people yelled at them. The mother who was driving and the students were frightened. They are not participating in the basketball league this year. “It seems like only one kind of prejudice is still OK,” she says.

Heidtkamp is a small woman with a big smile. She stations herself in the central courtyard of her school as the day winds down. Students sweep walkways and clean, as they do at the elementary school. There is no maintenance budget. She receives hugs from both boys and girls as they pass, and reprimands them for infractions of the dress code, primarily boys’ untucked shirts. She reminds them that dress regulations are in force as long as they are on school grounds. Days are long at Spring Hill School: Monday through Thursday from 8:30am to 4:35pm, and on Friday from 8:30am to 12:30pm for junior high students. Elementary school
starts at 8:55am and students are dismissed at 3:45pm except on Friday when school ends at 12:30pm.

Spring Hill is a Title I school, with about 80% of students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch. But no lunch is provided by the school. Students are dismissed at noon and return at 1:00 pm, except on Friday when there is no lunch break because of the shorter day. Most live within walking distance. Fundraising by the parents’ association includes occasional hot lunches that bring students and parents to the playground to eat, play, and talk, but usually the school is quiet for an hour. Getting back to school for the afternoon can be difficult, especially for the younger children, many of whom arrive late.

One afternoon I observed a ninth grade social studies class with 15 students and a vigorous young female teacher, Veronica Klein. They were working on developing close reading skills using Bloom’s taxonomy to find the language needed for analysis. They discussed racism and building a border wall between the United States and Mexico. On the board was this question: “Should immigration be state or federally regulated?” In the middle of an animated discussion, a student came in to give Klein a hug and then left.

One boy in the class had long hair. It was neat but not within Community B norms. As he and the other students talked about the impact of immigration on different countries, they grappled with Bloom’s seven elements of critical thought. Klein paused the discussion to drill them on appropriate usage of “what” and “which.” The students listened, but quickly resumed challenging their teacher’s understanding of the preparatory reading assignment. Was the wall continuous? Weren’t there a number of gaps in it? There might not be a unified Mexican perspective. One student tried to sum up: “Borders attract violence, and violence builds walls.”

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Another joked that since “Mexicans can jump high,” they can jump over any border wall. Klein responded, “That is a generalization, and more than that it is a stereotype.” There was a moment of tension as the boy floundered and looked away. Klein said quietly, “Look at my eyes.” She explained that his remarks stereotyping an entire community “are not OK.” She moved on and emphasized the importance of using credible sources. After class Klein talked about the hard work that Spring Hill teachers were doing to align curriculum with Common Core standards, which the state had adopted.

Rough at the edges

The survey asked teachers, “Based on your experience, what are the strengths of this school? One answers:

The teachers. They are well educated and they are always trying to improve their teaching skills. The school provides means to help teachers stay up with the latest research and development. The focus of the school is to "unleash the learning power of students" and teachers do it by teaching students the elements of critical thought.

But sometimes distractions threatened to upend learning. A very pregnant Language Arts teacher proceeded with a lesson centered on a short story until her seventh grade students reminded her that they had already done it the preceding week. A science teacher’s eighth graders cannot always get access to the lab they share with the high school. Students in safety goggles worked at experiments that can be performed safely outside a lab, such as measuring rates of acceleration of small balls on two parallel tracks. Not all were engaged; a few wandered the room. A boy and girl talked intensely during the lab sitting face to face. He had copied her homework at his desk at the start of class. Their teacher mused after class about the positives and the challenges of the small school and community. In one sense it is a like teaching school in any rural town. She says, “I go further for students because we are from the same community,” then adds, “In many cases, I’m literally related to them.”
A church visit

Religion is the glue that holds Community B together, and general meetings, or worship service, are held in the high school auditorium, which is more like a church than a school. A portrait of Joseph Smith and early LDS prophets adorn the wall. On a day that I attended, a choir of about twenty-five men and women sang a Mormon anthem. A dozen chairs on the stage were occupied by Community B leaders, all men. When men or boys met, they formally shook hands, even self-conscious teens. There were a variety of family groupings. Instead of seeing men with several wives and children I saw several women together, mothers and children, and couples with and without children.

A general meeting can occupy the better part of two hours with talks by the men on the stage, opening and closing prayers by men from congregation, and singing. These talks had bite: speakers scolded, joked, and called for repentance and especially for obedience to the priesthood—both community leadership and male leadership in the home. Speakers might use notes, but did not read their remarks. One really yelled. Another admitted that his adult son was not following the faith. The congregation was muted but attentive. Unlike Peshkin’s (1986) experience at Bethany Baptist Academy, none of my participants made any attempt to convert me. Of course, Peshkin was Jewish. In Community B, no one asked about my religion.

At the heart of the school

Mary Jane Laughlin often reminded me that Spring Hill was a public school, but she did say that schools should reflect the values of their communities. What were those values? In the high school auditorium to the left of the stage was a plaque headlined, “The Key to the Success

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102 Praying with right arm raised to the square is patterned on prayer offered in LDS temples. Participant Joan Wood told me that her late husband had introduced this prayer stance to Community B and other polygamist groups.
of the Order,” with the main tenets of Community B. I saw a similar document-- “What does the Lord want me to do today?”-- posted in classrooms of Community D’s Link Academy. I was not permitted to read the posted documents in their entirety in either place and copies were not made available to me. But I was able to read part of the text in the auditorium, including this: “And who is my neighbor? My neighbor is the man, wherever he may reside, who is seeking to build up the Kingdom of God as I am doing, and in the same, unselfish Spirit as I am working, and with the same hope of salvation and exaltation, that I am entertaining, that is my neighbor.”

Three phrases in this fragment are key components of Community B values: “my neighbor,” “the Kingdom of God,” “and “salvation and exaltation.” In this communitarian co-culture, the neighbor and the community are important. Individual talents are used to advance its mission. Individual agency motivates the choice to submit to priesthood authority. The work of these neighbors is to build the Kingdom of God on earth—a society that is supposed to grow increasingly like the Zion envisioned by Joseph Smith with a self-sufficient united economic order and plural marriage. Through building the kingdom here, community members pursue gradual improvement and redemption of human life leading to exaltation, or godhood, in the afterlife. This vision of united neighbors, kingdoms, and positive potential for divinity requires a vision that is both optimistic and eschatological, reflecting Givens’ (2007) tension between the banal and the sacred.

When I spoke to Mary Jane Laughlin about the Kingdom of God being at the heart of Community B’s values and essential to understanding Spring Hill School, she quizzically asked me, “Have you read our Scriptures?” Laughlin was more interested in talking about

103 The Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price are canonized. After Laughlin questioned my familiarity with basic Mormon teachings I listened to an audio book of The Book of Mormon and found more evidence for the importance of an earthly kingdom of God.
Community B in relation to the dominant culture. She remembered her mother’s worry when Laughlin enrolled in the master’s degree program at the state university. She found stimulation and a measure of acceptance there, but understood her mother’s wariness. The older generation had experienced the 1953 raid on Short Creek. Her mother’s family had been temporarily scattered. Although her generation was more open, Laughlin said that only the decriminalization of polygamy would bring substantial change for the better.

Issues at Spring Hill School

In spite of comparative openness, there are tensions between the dominant culture and the community. A survey respondent wrote, “Our first…concern is working to help children develop the skills they will need to be successful in life and in society. It is not on making sure all children share our religious beliefs.” But the community’s beliefs have an impact on the education that Spring Hill School delivers and the challenges it faces. The school’s success and emphasis on professional development make it a potential model for schools in other polygamist communities.

Funding, food, and poverty

Spring Hill receives government financial assistance as a Title I school serving a substantial number of students living in poverty. However, budget cuts have hurt the school and teacher pay is reportedly low. Commitment to the school’s mission and isolation limit turnover. An interesting aspect of this issue is Spring Hill’s practice of sending students home for lunch from 12:00 to 1:00 pm. This lengthened the instructional day and led to many tardy returns to

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104 Spring Hill School has received the Blue Ribbon in the Blue Ribbon Schools Program of the US Department of Education.
class during my observations. The cost of providing meals may be driving the policy. Food insecurity may be a concern for some families.\textsuperscript{105}

High school and college options

When I asked a teacher whether Spring Hill’s success will lead to higher rates of educational attainment she said, “We sure hope so,” and added, “You know, the purpose of polygamy is to make people better.” She may have meant that the demand for self-sacrifice in plural marriages is intended to produce unselfish, caring people. We talked about the transition for students from elementary to junior high, to high school, and to college. She was able to make all of those transitions. She taught for 22 years in a nearby school before the charter school opened, and for the last eight years at this charter school.

Students leaving Spring Hill School attend the private unaccredited religious high school or Mountain View School. Some may also be home schooled. Following high school many young men and women engage in a period of full-time missionary work. Unlike the far flung missionaries of the LDS Church, these young peoples’ full-time service is local. The men build fences, pick up trash, visit the elderly, deliver meals, and set up for community events. During their time of service they hold no other employment. They live at home and each morning gather as the missionary leader assigns daily tasks. Marriage is not permitted during the time of missionary service, and many men marry shortly after completing it. Young women can serve in the community health clinic’s Nightingale Program, named for Florence Nightingale. Missionary work lasts for up to two years.

The mission is a natural continuation of the religious high school experience. The juxtaposition of a charter school subject to state regulation and an unregulated and unaccredited

\textsuperscript{105} A participant outside Community B advised me to take food to share with the staff during field work at the school, implying that supplementing the food supply for adults as well as children was always welcome.
high school suggest an ambivalent embrace of pluralism and the duality of polygamist life. Members are dual citizens of the United States and of the Kingdom of God.

Gender relations

Spring Hill School is primarily staffed by women, with only a few men in the buildings. Spring Hill’s seven-member governing board includes three women, one of whom served as chair during my study. School administrative leadership is female. However, the dean of the nearby community college cautioned against taking power relationships at face value. She noted that while men and women work together, there is a gender ladder, in which men are at the top and women are expected to form their preferences and activities around those of men. She has to remind her assistant, Community B member Mark Jones, to take women’s voices into account.

I am told that more Community B women than men attend college. This is related to requirements for jobs performed in the community. Women are teachers and nurses, among other things, professions that require college education and certification. Many men work in construction as laborers, carpenters, tile setters, plumbers, roofers, HVAC technicians, and electricians. Skilled tradesmen need licenses but not degrees. However, there may be opportunities for strengthening vocational education in high school. The local community college offers vocational training through traditional, online, and hybrid courses. Moving from informal training on the job to certified or degreed qualifications would increase job opportunities for many men. Some men obtain degrees in the liberal arts and sciences, as one young man told me he planned to do during a conversation at the community café.

Questions and dancers

When students went to recess I got a barrage of questions from the younger ones: Who are you? Where are you from? Are you married? How many children do you have? Once my
details had been established, some students asked, “Do you know my mom? Do you know my other mom?” One red-headed little girl adopted me and stopped to hug me whenever we passed. One day three sixth grade girls asked what I thought of their school. They were part of a co-ed after school line dancing group. I asked them how they had found sixth grade boys who would dance. Wasn’t that unusual? They laughed and said that these boys were more mature than the others in their grade, “except one who gets carried away.” They were preparing to perform at a Community B event. I had seen the flier, with a reminder that priesthood standards of dress were required for entrance.

There was dancing during school, too. In a noisy common room I watched 50 sixth graders being coached by their teachers. One teacher told me that they were working hard to make students more aware of world history. They introduced prehistory through learning about petroglyphs. They performed a play about life in the Middle Ages. Students were creating dances in connection with a unit on Native Americans. Instead of imitating videos of Native dance, teachers were encouraging them to use basic concepts they had learned about Indian culture and to interpret them through dance. Each group of five or six was equipped with a blanket. A teacher told them to lose self-consciousness and to work together.

Nearby: Mountain View School

Spring Hill School was not the only school Community B members attended. A few miles away, public Mountain View School served about 500 K-12 students. The staff came mostly from Community B but the school had been shaped by inter-community strife with Community A. I interviewed principal Laura Laughlin and specialist Beverly Grant.

Laughlin and I had e-mailed but she committed to an interview. I decided to stop by Mountain View School and introduce myself. The building was new and attractive. The school
secretary was a senior citizen whose dress identified her as a Community B member. She announced me to Principal Laughlin and I stuck my head in the door. Laughlin was meeting with a woman who I soon learned was Beverly Grant, first wife of Lehi Grant and mother of Henry Grant, two of my participants. We talked for 90 minutes. Laura Laughlin was a vigorous woman with brown short hair, wearing a satin blouse with the Mountain View logo.

Laughlin and Grant explained the Community Online instructional program for K-12 that Beverly designed and they were piloting. They called it a form of community outreach to people “across the road” -- Community A, whose members refused to send their children to Mountain View. The women had counted on Community A families using the online curriculum in their own homes, but this had been thwarted by leaders ordering members to disconnect from the internet several months ago. However, they believed that some were still using Community Online. It may be a step toward some families enrolling children in school. This had worked to a limited extent; about 30 students had come into the brick-and-mortar school through the virtual school. Beverly had presented her online work at a recent academic conference.

About 25% of Mountain View students are from nearby Little Grove [a mostly non-polygamist community]; 50% are from Community B; 25% are from Community A but are not active in the sect. About 80% are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch at school.

Principal Laughlin was hired to lead Mountain View School after a state takeover, referred to in my interview with Lehi Grant, because of her business background. Her first priority was to clean up school financial problems. The new campus opened in 2002; Laughlin said it was located outside of town by leaders of Community A so that their people would not see it. She contrasted Mountain View with Spring Hill School and noted that the charter school had a more homogenous population made up of Community B members. Mountain View, although
dominated by students from plural marriage sects, was more diverse with a student body that included Native Americans and Hispanics. There was also a Jewish group in Little Grove whose children attended the school. The previous spring they enrolled the first students from Community A who retained their conservative religious attire after enrolling; more had followed.

Laughlin said that religious diversity had not led to many problems but that a bigger challenge was student racism. Some students received this message at home. Students lacked experience with people of other races. Laura shook her head at this point and said, “I hate racism.” The specter of racial intolerance has hung over Mormon communities for decades, rooted in folklore of black inferiority in the premortal existence. The LDS Church has distanced itself from racially charged teachings since the late 1970s, but some fundamentalists may view this as another retreat from genuine Mormonism. The benignity of fundamentalist racism has something to do with the homogeneity of polygamist communities and with the twin Western American traditions of hospitality and suspicion—both directed at outsiders. Fundamentalists often have little experience with people of color but this is changing in the urban area that is home to communities C and D.

Mountain View was a new name for the school, adopted to make a fresh start after the state takeover. The old name identified the school with the community where it was located and led to raucous name-calling at away athletic events where opponents would identify them with Community A. The school’s gym is the first in the community, and is used constantly seven days per week, but is too small, with only one basketball court. There had not been enough funding for a bigger gym. Sports were important, especially boys’ and girls’ basketball. There was no football field yet but Laughlin was working on obtaining approval to build one. Boys who wanted to play football were traveling to a school 30 miles away and joining that team. Laughlin,
who graduated from the school she was leading, remembered that when she attended school, all
came from same religion and that was the unifier. There were no interscholastic sports. But with
more diversity athletics was the glue that held the school together and provided social
fulfillment. The boys’ basketball team had gone to the state tournament the previous year—it
was a real Cinderella story and very exciting for the school and community.

Laughlin talked about the stigmas attached to her students who were stereotyped by
outsiders as “inbreeds” and incapable of learning. She wondered why no genetics research was
being done and laughed, “This population is a geneticist’s dream.” She said that large families
magnified tendencies, for better or for worse. I mentioned the power I had observed polygamous
women wielding in schools but Laura Laughlin and Beverly Grant responded by emphasizing the
importance of a father to a family’s stability. He had to be willing to grow with his family as he
added wives. Laughlin described a husband as having one soul mate among his wives but also
having to stretch to work with all wives; she was amazed at the development of polygamous men
as they took on added responsibilities. She said that plural wives were freer than monogamous
wives and could more easily have their own careers.

We finished our interview with a walking tour of the school, and Laura seemed to
embody it, the way a mother embodies her family. She mentioned that in most ways her school
was like any other, although working with plural families added some interesting twists. For
example, multiple children from the same household, with the same dad but with different
mothers, sometimes worked well together and could be placed in the same classroom. At other
times, competition between the students made it difficult to place siblings together.
Survey Responses from Spring Hill teachers and administrators

The twelve respondents to my survey wrote thoughtfully, passionately, and occasionally, with exasperated sarcasm. When I asked them to name the strengths of Spring Hill they identified a strong teacher corps, cooperation between teachers and administrator, and community support. Other comments filled in a positive assessment. For example, school uniforms were identified as a school strength. Visible uniformity erased differences in dress that marked degrees of commitment to Community B or differences in socio-economic status. In the communitarian world of Community B, mansions of prosperous polygamous families were a block from modest stucco houses and within sight of mobile homes on the outskirts. Uniforms made those gradations less visible.

How did plural marriage affect the school? Most respondents maintained that polygamy had minimal influence. But one respondent noted that the community had few latch-key children; in a polygamous household one mother is usually at home when children return from school. Spring Hill’s no-lunch policy seemed to affirm this. Several stressed the stability of plural families as an asset to students.

These teachers wanted others to know that their school was “a progressive, high functioning charter school,” “a place where we care about people,” “not a crazy school for crazies.” Respondents stressed commonalities with mainstream society. One claimed something more: “Students in my school, especially those from plural families, are generally loved and nurtured more than most single households, almost without exception.”

Spring Hill teachers and administrators were eager to shape the questions that would be used to understand their school. They proposed evaluative questions about mission, technology,
discipline, special education, curriculum. One asked for “less about the sensational” and more about measurable results.

When I asked about values emphasized at the school, responses were generally brief lists including terms such as respect, hard work, responsibility. This led to more impassioned responses to a more provocative question: “Outsiders sometimes claim that fundamentalist Mormons do not teach their children democratic values, and that plural communities do not fit into mainstream American society. How would you respond?”

A…broad sampling of fundamentalist Mormons…would tell a different story than what mainstream Americans perceive due to poor data collection coupled with media hyperbole. It has been easy for misconceptions to be portrayed and perpetuated because the fundamentalist Mormon culture has had to hide the lifestyle or show an untruthful front to the public to avoid persecution and prosecution.

What exactly do you mean by "democratic values"? We believe in governing ourselves, and that God's law is higher than anything man could come up with. Read the Ten Commandments lately?

I would beg to differ. We are very much a part of what goes on in the world and we recognize that it absolutely affects us and encourage students to be active with these values. We encourage our children to ask questions and understand the world outside of us.

Hahahaha..........sorry, that was my first reaction to the idea. While I cannot speak for every fundamentalist group, I know that in my experience we hold democratic values and the Constitution and its ideals very important. We have family and friends who have fought in America's wars throughout the 20th century and have been taught to value freedom and the sacrifices that are necessary to maintain it. We are encouraged to vote and to take our other civic duties seriously. We also recognize that it is the values of democracy and our republic through the Constitution that even made it possible for our fundamentalist beliefs a place to develop in this country….Since our American society is already so diverse I do not know how there could NOT be a place for plural communities along with everyone else.

Teaching the children about other cultures outside of their own varies from home to home. While many children are informed, not as many experience a much of the "outside world." In the school, the children are taught democratic values…

Since the beginning of our school, as our educational coaches (from outside the community) can attest, we have striven to build a curricular framework that hinges on
critical thinking. We are not threatened by students who ask questions "outside the box"; indeed, as a teacher, I feel my greatest sense of success when I have students who seek to make connections with perspective outside the immediacy of their lives. In my curriculum, I use texts that will raise discussion on human rights, human dignities, and cultural differences.

Just exactly what is meant by "democratic values?" The only reason plural communities wouldn't fit into mainstream American society is that the mainstream American society is prejudiced against them. Many people from plural communities live and work among mainstream Americans and are well tolerated and liked. Mormon fundamentalists teach their children to be honest and have faith in God. If that is contrary to democratic values, so be it.

that is not true of our community. we as a community are high involved, strongly encourage our youth to know what is going on politically, and be involved in upholding the values our nation was founded on.

We teach government, democracy, hold voting activities for classroom laws, discuss political campaigns with the students, let them participate in presidential elections, and hold elections for student body governments. They also participate in sports programs locally, and travel to compete against other schools... We have a student who won the county spelling bee and is going on to participate in the State Spelling Bee. They travel on field trips to museums, conservatories, National Parks, science exhibits such as "Bodies the Exhibition"…

Our community realizes that we are a part of the United States…We have our values and beliefs but they do not stop us from learning how to function as normal human beings. We are not a closed society that controls and limits what is presented to our people. We are taught to analyze and make intelligent decisions based on what we believe. We have the right to refuse any teachings we don't agree with. We can chose to leave this community any time we would like if the customs are not what we want in our lives.

These responses range from explanatory to conciliatory to sarcastic. The gulf between Babylon and Zion is variously characterized, but respondents agree that polygamists’ commitment to democracy is misunderstood. They imply that Community B has more at stake in promoting democratic values than mainstream America. Degradation of those values is likely to first affect minorities.
Finally, when asked to describe the way that their faith affects their teaching, several respondents mentioned their conviction that all are “children of God.” This inclusiveness is balanced by a comment articulating the particularity of fundamentalism:

I am a practicing fundamentalist Mormon. I live with a man and three other women. It affects my teaching in that I can relate to the students who are from families that believe in plural marriage. I don't teach the religion at school, but if questions or comments come up, I don't shy away from them either. Anyone who doesn't wish to participate in a discussion that may have to do with religion or is uncomfortable with it is welcome to sit outside for a minute or two while the question is answered. Conversely, I may take the person with the question outside and speak to them. I would do the same for any other religion, although I might have to do some research on it. I believe that children were sent here from God for us to take care of, so I try to approach my teaching in that way. I have been called to teach; I try to do my job in a way that I believe God would approve.

This teacher’s approach to religion in the classroom would probably not receive administrator Mary Jane Laughlin’s endorsement. It comes too close to religion in school and Laughlin was at pains to tell me that church and school were separate spheres. This distinction was pragmatic as well as philosophical; religious instruction in the classroom might lead to loss of Spring Hill’s charter.

CASE 2: LINK ACADEMY, COMMUNITY D

Lunch in the cafeteria

My cell phone rang as I was driving away from my first visit to Link Academy. Tammy from the school’s administrative team asked me to come back and to eat lunch in the cafeteria. She and Jackie, the elementary principal, would join me.106

We stepped into the serving line before the next class of children. The younger ones were obedient to teachers’ instructions to “put a bubble in your mouth;” their pursed lips and puffed

106 Tammy was a jack of all trades who seemed to keep the whole school running, from facilities to scheduling. She and Jackie, along with assistant principal for middle school, Mary, appeared to be the real backbone of the school. Although they were sometimes referred to as “Sister,” e.g., “Sister Tammy,” in accord with the Mormon custom of addressing all adult female members in religious settings, the title was not consistently applied.
cheeks prevented all talking. Older students disregarded the teachers and whispered in line. The small kitchen fed hundreds of children and adults. Workers were Community D members probably participating in the united order in which able-bodied teenage and adult adherents are employed in sect enterprises. We ate ground beef and gravy, mashed potatoes, cut corn, green salad with dressing, bread, milk or water, served on a tray with a fork, spoon and plastic cup. Anna explained that no white flour or sugar was used in the cafeteria. Ingredients are usually fresh. When I ate in the cafeteria during my next period of field work, the lunch was meatless. I remembered that the Community’s businesses reportedly include ranches and farms. The children were given good sized portions.

What would be routine in another school is tinged with significance at Link Academy. These meals for hundreds of children and adults are evidence that Community D is feeding its children. For decades coverage of Community D has contrasted its corporate wealth with the reputed poverty of rank and file members, with former members reporting hunger and neglect. The orderly lines entering and full bellies leaving the cafeteria point to a different reality, or a different aspiration. The news media that has investigated the wrong-doing of Community D has not been invited to report from the cafeteria at Link Academy. This cafeteria and the school that houses it are the Community’s proof to itself that it can care for its children—educate and feed them. Tammy says as we eat, “We have a big investment in our future here.”

Inside Link Academy

Link Academy is located in a light industrial area of a major US city. The downtown skyline a few miles away is visible from the small campus. The school is housed in contemporary commercial buildings with truck-loading bays and offices repurposed as classrooms, cafeteria, and gymnasium. The school is inconspicuous with modest signage and no
residential neighbors. A light rail line and a major street are nearby. Two charter schools operate across the street and up the block, amid a web of businesses and light industry that employ hundreds of people.

Link Academy’s two tan buildings parallel a long playground between them. The playground was formerly a loading area and the loading docks are now the back of the school buildings. In one large classroom the overhead garage door apparatus still dangles from the ceiling. The interior is serviceable, repurposed more than renovated. The appearance contrasts with the sparkling condition of Spring Hill School. Some floors are dirty. Does this reflect a difference in the two communities’ finances, or evidence of contrasting priorities? Poverty is reportedly widespread in both groups, partly because of large families.\footnote{While 81\% of Spring Hill School students are eligible for the free or reduced price federal meal program, no figures are available private Link Academy.} Discrimination by the fiercely anti-polygamist LDS majority further complicates matters, as do Community D’s remarkable religious claims. The school is maintained by community labor, including teenage boys doing maintenance work when I visit. They appear to be too old to be students.

There are over 700 children in this K-8 school, with three or four classes per grade in the elementary unit. Crowding is a problem because of growing enrollment. However, when I ask for specific student numbers, Jackie demurs. The school is governed by a board, which Jackie and Tammy affirm is deeply involved and invested in the school—monitoring student test scores, setting goals for growth. But when I ask for board members’ names, they smile and refuse to answer. The board may be identical with Community D’s priesthood council, or may be a quorum within this council. This would recall the governance of LDS ward schools before 1890, when ward councils acted as school boards and the bishop was the superintendent/principal. Several men from Community D leadership have faced criminal charges related to child abuse.
and underage marriage. Identifying them with the school might bring unwanted attention. Although Principal Alvin affirmed that Link Academy charged tuition, he would not tell me the amount.

So, the cordial reception was mixed with reticence. Principal Alvin welcomed me each time I visited Link Academy. Tammy and Jackie were my guides in the elementary section of the school, and Mary, the assistant principal for junior high school, went from classroom to classroom with me in her area of responsibility. As we became acquainted, I noticed that my participants did not share their last names with me. I later learned from another source that at least one of the women may have been a plural wife to Alvin.108

Stomping to the same song

Students were transported to and from school by car. Tammy coordinated the morning line as cars drew up and with other staff cheerfully opened sliding doors, greeting many children, most of them appearing quite happy on the winter morning I observed this orderly transfer. Well-worn minivans, pickup trucks, and sedans exited the loop.

Male and female students were uniformed in short sleeved navy or maroon polo shirts and navy pants. A few of the girls wore navy skirts. This contrasted with Spring Hill School’s dresses for girls and long sleeves for all. At Link Academy, some children were in old clothes and had unkempt hair. All were white.

By 8:09 a.m. students were lined up by class on the playground. Both Link Academy and Spring Hill School valued morning rituals. At Link Academy the main feature was the School Stomp,109 “S.H.I.N.E.” The students and staff sang:

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108 Community D critics claim that members’ surnames are aliases used to disguise their affiliation with a sect where many members share a single last name.
109 “Stomp” is slang for “dance” in the Intermountain West and implies music and song.
Stand up for what is right to show the world my light.

Hope, faith and charity are all a part of me.

I will write each part of the gospel in my heart.

Noble, strong and true, in all I say and do.

Enduring to the end, I’ll keep Jesus as my friend.

When finished singing, all shouted in unison: “I love this school!” before moving to their classrooms. The school day starts at 8:15 and students are released at 3:15. An after school study period for extra help from teachers is available until 4:00 pm.

Learning by rote and loosening up

Teachers in the elementary classrooms were young women, and some appeared to be related. I guessed but did not confirm that some were less than twenty-one years old. I noticed a teacher’s public high school diploma on a classroom wall. Teachers’ infant children lay in strollers at the rear of most classrooms. Jackie quietly tended to them when she entered the room, administering bottles where needed. She told me that allowing an infant in the classroom signified the importance of the family. Teachers are permitted to bring infants to school until six months old; after that child care is off site. The teachers were vigorous and plainspoken, with the unique regional blue collar brogue: “listen close;” “I’m lookin’ at you;” “sit nice and respectful.”

I observed much rote teaching and learning in the elementary grades. A first grade classroom of twenty-five students—ten boys and fifteen girls—were studying math using the Saxon curriculum, also employed at Spring Hill School. After a timed test, the teacher returned to the day’s material, and in response to her questions students repeated in unison either the same

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110 I speculated that the ubiquitousness of bottle-fed babies at Link Academy may have added secondary significance in light of Community D’s emphasis on fertility, especially among plural wives of sect leaders. Lactation’s contraceptive function, although effective for only about six months after birth, is at odds with expectations for frequent, even annual, pregnancies.
information that she had given them or an obedient “Yes, Mrs. Berger.” The teacher read from the textbook. In a fourth grade classroom the teacher worked from the textbook that students had open, controlling the pace of instruction as pupils read math word problems in unison: “You may turn the page in your book now,” to which the students responded, “Yes, Mrs. Davis.”

But all was not solemn formality. Rachel, a kindergarten teacher of thirteen children, worked with them as they sat cross-legged on sight words and on counting. The students chanted: “wa says WHAT and hu says WHO.” More chanting followed: “ew, stew, crew, pew.” Pew (as in P-U), according to the teacher, was a baby’s stinking diaper. Every child knew what that was, and gleefully shouted “pew!” She guided them in filling in blanks in simple sentences, such as “Jim’s team will win the ____ (game),” “Can Kim ride the big ____ (bike)?” Rachel said warmly, “You guys are doing way good. That’s a way long sentence.” She also gave much attention to sitting up and sitting straight. One student was eating a banana.

Full of energy and enthusiasm, first grade teacher Tanya worked from the textbook, *English Made Easy*. Students clapped and chanted through the subject-pronoun jungle. They sang a song about seven subject pronouns, and another about possessive pronouns. The teacher clapped out, “Everyone get ready,” and students sang and chanted: “What does a question do? What goes at the end of a question? What does a statement do?” The teacher used overhead projector transparencies as the students sang, identifying synonyms and antonyms.

When given the opportunity to express themselves individually instead of as a member of a chanting cohort, children enthusiastically competed to name right answers, picking up on Tanya’s exuberance. As they finished the lesson Tanya counted down from five to one as they put their books away and said, “I want everyone’s hands locked on their desk where I can see
them.” The lesson was not over. “The mother robin chirps to her babies” was taken apart and diagrammed. A student asked the first question I’ve heard in over fifteen minutes.

An older teacher presided over a history lesson in a fifth grade classroom, reviewing the causes of the Civil War, discussing slavery and the plantation system and contrasting the economies of the North and South. The Emancipation Proclamation and Lincoln’s assassination were presented. The classroom was lined with pictures of famous inventors as well as Community D leaders. A bulletin board includes:

Freedom
Freedom to learn
Freedom to think
Freedom to work
Freedom to play
Freedom to grow
Freedom to speak

In an eighth grade Language Arts class, students listened to their teacher read an article on solar cooking and then discussed it. The reins were looser and discussion flowed more freely as students became engaged. The teacher recorded their questions on the board. The classroom setting was not ideal: cement floors and exposed fluorescent lights in a windowless space. Pictures of women forbearers from Community D were featured prominently with aphorisms next to them: “Pretty is as pretty does;” “Always give others the benefit of the doubt;” “What would the Lord have me do?” Students made comments that showed some knowledge of the world around them, mentioning scientists and the role of universities in education.

Middle school science and sex segregation

Mary was a Community D member and the assistant principal in charge of sixth, seventh and eighth grades. She came to Link Academy with experience in a nearby public school district as a certified teacher and administrator. She stood out because of her qualifications. Sheila was a
highly competent teacher in a sixth grade science classroom that Mary and I observed. During a lab on refraction, her explanations of Newton were playfully but usefully wrapped around references to Superman, Yoda, and the Green Lantern. These characters were used to personify the concepts presented. Students gathered around the lab table to observe and discuss an experiment. The nearby computer lab was equipped with Dell computers with sixteen inch monitors. A no-nonsense teacher took charge of the rotating groups of pupils from middle school and the elementary grades who attended her class. One group filed in holding their arms loosely across their chests as the students had at Spring Hill for morning assembly—the Mormon attitude of prayer—in this case serving the secular purpose of establishing quiet and order.

I observed a group of girls in gym class stretching and preparing for the President’s Physical Fitness Award testing. Most classes at the middle school level were segregated by sex, although band class was coeducational. This was a part of strict behavioral standards for interaction between male and female students at Link Academy. Public displays of affection such as holding hands were prohibited. More strikingly, boys and girls in the middle school were not allowed to talk to one another in the hallways while moving between classes. All contact between the sexes in the school was supervised. However, the boys and girls together in band class seemed relaxed in their interactions. The focus was on music for an upcoming concert that night and several students expressed excitement about the performance. It was not being held at the school and when I inquired about the location, it was not shared with me.

“Turn the hearts of the children to the fathers”

Link Academy featured bulletin boards typical of American schools but those displays often carried religious messages. In addition, hallways and classrooms were lined with framed photographs of Community forbearers, both men and women. Students were encouraged to bring
photos of family members to school. On the wall of one classroom were pictures of family and other community members with the motto over the top: “’Put on the armor of righteousness’ (II Nephi 1:23).” A nearby bulletin carried these words from Joseph Smith’s Olive Branch revelation: “Obtain a knowledge of history and of countries and of kingdoms, of laws, of God, of man, doctrine, and covenants,” over a world map. To the right of the map were pictures of Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses Grant, Clara Barton, Louisa May Alcott, and pioneer houses associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder. To the left were pictures whose order was significant: at the top was Christ Jesus; in the middle was a rendering of young Joseph Smith’s iconic First Vision of God and Jesus; below were photographs of the male leaders of Community D. An American flag hung nearby, as it did in every classroom.

In one hallway, a male community member was pictured in a military uniform. As indicated in some responses to my survey of Community B, polygamists often express pride in family military service. They don’t see fundamentalist Mormonism as a barrier and are often highly patriotic. A classroom bulletin board explained the United States Congress, showing the difference between the House of Representatives and the Senate.

In Sheila’s high-ceilinged science classroom, mounted on the wall above students’ heads were the words, “Turn your hearts toward your father,” a paraphrase of Malachi 4:6 and the LDS hymn, “Turn Your Hearts.” Below the words were pictures of thirteen men, undoubtedly the leadership of Community D. They were “your father[s]” in three ways: fathers of the Community in its spiritual and business mission; biological fathers of many of the students and teachers at

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111 II Nephi is one of the fifteen books in the Book of Mormon.
112 Smith’s First Vision is the foundation of Mormonism’s claim to be the restoration of original Christianity. It is a favorite subject of Mormon artwork and is extensively displayed in homes and meetinghouses.
Link Academy; and husbands in polygamous families with plural wives who were teachers at the school.

Several classrooms displayed a poster headlined, “What does the Lord want me to do today?” The answer began below the question: keep the Lord’s spirit with you and live the ABC Order standards. Community standards are important in both Community B and D. More than rules, they are covenant agreements. They are not for publication. I was not permitted to have a copy of the ABC Order, which is an acrostic, or to look long enough to read all of its contents. But it was clear that Link Academy students were expected to assimilate it. The homespun language may make that easier. It began, “Membership in the order is like a hunting license, it doesn’t guarantee anything but it allows you to participate in the hunt for life eternal.” I was able to see some of the following elements: the student is part of a community and the purpose of this community is to build up the Kingdom of God; students promise to save themselves for their marriage partner and not to kiss or hold hands with a person of the opposite sex until they wed. Other standards related to dispositional traits, treatment of others, and obedience to Community D leadership as well as to parents.

Founding Link Academy

I talked with Phyllis, one of the first teachers at Link Academy. She explained that the school was started because of Community D members’ discontent with what their children were being taught in the local public schools. They were particularly dissatisfied with Whole Language reading instruction. They wanted their children instructed in Phonics. Phyllis pointed out that while the school was started partly because of religion, it was also born to meet curriculum and instruction needs.
The school took shape gradually over several years, beginning in 1994 with eight children in a home nursery school. Phyllis was the first teacher, and the school was held in her basement. It became popular in Community D. Other homes, teachers, and grades were added until it became unwieldy to maintain such a scattered network of home school groups. Parents with large families shuttled children between different homes so that they could take advantage of the program. Community D decided to use one of its own buildings and to create Link Academy. Another staff member told me, “When we found that the children who were attending these home schools were teaching their older siblings, who were attending the public schools, how to read, we realized that we needed to have our own school.”

After a decade in operation, this private unaccredited religious school has achieved a growing enrollment based on Community D parent support. But a number of issues need to be addressed:

Teacher training

Jackie and Tammy explained over a vegetarian cafeteria lunch that all teachers must have a high school diploma. Link Academy has its own in-house teacher training program. Three levels take about three years to complete but teachers in training progress through them at their own rate. On level one, the trainee serves as a teacher’s aide, moving between classrooms assisting teachers. Level two includes training in curriculum and lesson planning. At level three the trainees are put in charge of classrooms with intensive mentoring. This qualifies them to become teachers at Link Academy. Some teachers work outside the school at other jobs, too. Jackie says that 75% of their teachers are attending college. This attendance ranges from one course to a full load in the evenings or in the summer.

Accountability
Both Jackie and Tammy acknowledged the need for more college-trained teachers in the school, and they hope that their in-house training program will help to lead to more college qualified and certified teachers; however, under the laws of the state this is not required. When I ventured that they had no state oversight, they said that while they did not have direct oversight by the Department of Education, the building was periodically inspected by the office of public safety. Inspectors came unannounced and were free to move about the building. They had passed all the inspections that had been made on their facility.

High school and college opportunities

I asked about the possibility of starting a high school. There was interest among the Link Academy staff I talked to but a larger facility was needed for current grades and this was more important than adding a high school. Many of the students go on to home schooling or to attend public high schools. Community D members portrayed themselves as invested in higher education for students. Some graduates attend a nearby community college. According to Jackie, an instructor there joked with a student, “I better not fail you. We need to keep other [Community D students] coming to the college.” Instructors were reputed to prefer students from this polygamist group because they did their work and got good grades. But the passage from the nearby community college where Community D students are known and accepted to a university can be perilous. A Community D member reported that one student was publicly mocked by a professor who recognized his surname as associated with the sect and that others had experienced uncomfortable classroom discussions about their religion.

Kerry Peters disputed claims of her former community’s commitment to education. She was a part-time college student who had married a non-community member in 2010 and had a two year-old son. Her schooling included five years at Link Academy. Peters finished high
school online at the age of fourteen. She spoke of the inconsistency of her school experience, interrupted because she was sent to live on a rural ranch due to her rebelliousness. Peters was articulate and animated in her descriptions of sect life. It was a mixed bag, with good and bad elements, but she was glad that she was out of it. She portrayed herself as more free to pursue her own goals and to gain an education. Sect members, she said, pursued degrees in subjects approved by their leaders and only for the benefit of the community. For example, she had wanted to study something related to health care but her father insisted she study business. Peters said that she was handling bookkeeping for their vending machine business when she was thirteen.

On the other hand, Barbara Gunn measured the school’s success based on the college performance of her older children. They are doing quite well, she told me, but provided few details.

Polygamy

Withholding routine information—enrollment, tuition, identities of board members, the location of a band concert—was related to fear of arrest and prosecution. Plural marriage produced a secretive school culture. Participants Gunn and Yates emphasized the positive impact of Link Academy on polygamous families. Fathers attended children’s school events without fear and children acknowledged their dads at school. No wonder band concert locations were confidential! Fathers were comfortable being contacted by the school. All this contrasted with public schools where polygamous family ties were hidden.

Community D’s practice of polygamy is reputed to emphasize members’ belief that they are the literal descendants of Israel, and that the leadership family is descended from Jesus.113

113 Some Mormons believe that Jesus was married and fathered children.
Maintaining pure bloodlines has led to some close kinship marriages—incest—over the last eighty years. Physical effects on children including special education needs are not within the scope of this study. In contrast with earlier practices of wearing distinct clothing and even going barefoot, Community D members today are almost indistinguishable from the general population. The sect’s reported business empire and wealth are not apparent in the modest facilities and dress at Link Academy. Feinberg (2006) maintains that toleration of widely divergent views must be the hallmark of a pluralistic education, so long as a common core is maintained. However, Community D’s most extreme practices threaten the future of Link Academy. Another round of prosecutions might bring attention to the school and force its closure.

Mary, the middle school principal, seemed wary of my intentions for visiting the school. Her guardedness contrasted with Tammy and Jackie’s comparative openness. At a final informal meeting, Mary questioned my methods and what I would report. Her protectiveness was understandable. In addition, she was the only professionally trained administrator at the school. My qualitative project, seeking to describe and to understand Link Academy, was somewhat threatening. I wondered if she feared exposure and professional disrepute if her role in the school became known to former colleagues in public schools. Pseudonymity was designed to prevent that result.

Autonomy and Servility

In addition to advocating pathways to autonomy for students, Callan (1997) distinguishes between the submission to authority required of most religions and the cruel servitude required of members of extremist cults. Where do Link Academy and the community that created it fall along the spectrum? The history of polygamy and education cautions against easy conclusions.
19th century Presbyterian missionary Rev. Duncan J. McMillan had called Mormons “poor, ignorant, deluded, degraded priest ridden serfs…utterly incapable of comprehending an intelligent thought; the women are literally servants of servants, and the children are legion” (Burton, 2010). But McMillan later wrote that the Mormons “were always personally kind and were most courteous in their treatment of me.” While these two estimates are not mutually exclusive, they are in tension. Similarly, Community D’s Link Academy is shaped in part by tensions between submission and servility. Both tendencies exist in fundamentalist Mormonism and I agree with Callan and Feinberg that while submission may be compatible with education in a pluralistic society, servitude is not. Which tendency predominates at Link Academy? The autonomy allowed administrators points to submission to authority based on an exercise of agency. Other aspects of Community D life that form the backdrop for the school are more problematic. Underage and close kin marriages have been disavowed by Community D, but critics charge that the practice continues.

Descriptive details and documents

Although the number of staff was not shared with me, I encountered people in support roles who were competent and courteous: the quiet, but gracious, receptionist, in a tiny front office handling more children’s needs than seems possible seemed to know all and to handle everything, including me. The school’s two crowded buildings and playground made it hard to choreograph the day.

Quantitative data on student achievement was limited to a folder provided by Principal Alvin. My first attempt to visit Link Academy was delayed, in part, so that student scores could be gathered, according to participant Holly Yates. The information I was given included a snapshot of student progress from preschool to college; the cohort was made up of students who
attended Link Academy’s first preschool program during academic year 1994-1995. No information was provided on the size of the group. Measures of achievement included “Graduated high school early.” This emphasis corroborated former member Kerry Peters’ assertion that early completion of academic training was highly valued. She claimed that it allowed Community D to claim academic achievement while rushing young members to complete formal schooling.

Triangulation of data was particularly challenging at Link Academy because of limited access to the school by other outsiders. Paula Martin, clinical director at Safety Net, provided general background but had less experience with Community D than other sects. Newspaper articles provided context. Internet searches revealed angry detractors railing at a hated organization that they described as an organized crime ring.

Conclusions

Link Academy is an educational project of a marginalized community brought into being by a group of polygamist women who wanted a better education for their children than what they were receiving in public schools. This grassroots effort had the support and supervision of male leadership represented by Principal Alvin. Low visibility for men in polygamist communities is typical and should not be interpreted as a lack of interest in the school.

Link Academy allows its staff to fulfill callings as teachers, principals, and students. Being set apart by priesthood authority to fulfill a calling is deeply important to fundamentalist Mormons. The admonition to “magnify [your] calling” (Doctrine and Covenants 84) encourages community members to excel at the work assigned to them. In fundamentalist sects, callings extend beyond strictly religious roles to the whole scope of activities included in a total community built around a united economic order and plural marriage. Like pre-Manifesto
Mormons who might be given a calling anywhere in the sphere of the community’s activities for the purpose of “building up the kingdom and inhabiting it,” and whose “expressive worship signs were irrigation canals, or neatly built and nicely decorated houses, or good crops of sugar beets” (Shipps, 1987, p. 125), Link Academy is a site for kingdom-building.

Academics and religion are in partnership at the school, but unresolved tensions may exist between the community’s religion and its members’ hunger for achievement. Greater acceptance and the possibility of assimilation is a double-edged sword for fundamentalists. As Givens (2007) explains, “The cost of their chosen status appears recurrently in the Mormon psyche as both nostalgia and alienation; and the opposing movement toward integration into the larger world they had fled was fueled by both a longing for inclusion and an imperative to redeem the world.” To develop a professional corps of teachers will mean institutional contact with and scrutiny by state institutions that are sometimes unfriendly to fundamentalists—the Department of Education and schools of education at universities.

The path-breaking work of Community B in establishing a public charter school offers reasons for both hope and caution in Community D. Spring Hill School offers a model for what is possible. But that Community B school is located in another state. Mary Jane Laughlin, Spring Hill administrator, bitterly told me that when its founders applied for a charter in the state where Link Academy is located, the application was denied. Why would they resist replicating a successful model in a community that needed it? To Laughlin, there was a simple answer: prejudice against polygamists.

This antagonism is not likely to diminish in the near future. Inconsistent enforcement of existing anti-polygamy laws means that Community D is left alone most of the time. Link Academy is ignored by the authorities. But the asymmetry of power in the situation has led to an
uneasy coexistence. This instability means that members’ pursuit of education, especially higher education, is unlikely to co-opt the sect. Their concern will be retaining highly educated members with access to more economic, social, and spiritual options. If these members can be retained, their skills may help to mitigate the ills that reportedly trouble Community D.

Link Academy can play a significant role in shifting the balance decisively from servitude to submission in Community D if the state’s Department Education assumes a necessary oversight role in unaccredited religious schools. This engagement is possible. The Department is not a law enforcement agency. Its standards and requirements could provide clear direction to Link Academy and the expertise of its staff could offer development opportunities through training and mentorship to a dedicated staff that is committed to the success of the school.

A step out of the shadows

Jackie told me that her teenage son had recently been in the hospital. What had stayed with her from that frightening ordeal was the respect shown to him and to the family by hospital staff. It was clear to all that the patient was from a polygamist family because of the large number of people who lined the hallway outside his room during visiting hours, waiting to comfort and encourage him. Jackie was convinced that such respect would not have been shown to them in the past. She said that this was because her community, and other polygamist communities, had begun to come out from the shadows to tell people who they were and why they believed that they had a right to live as they did. Jackie said, “When I read news articles about us I sometimes wonder who they are talking about.” Link Academy, which to me appeared nearly hidden from the outside world, was for them a bold move toward the dominant culture.

Jackie confided that, while she enjoyed her work as elementary principal, her goal was to
become a nurse. I wondered if nursing offered more independence for her than did school administration.

I asked Jackie and Tammy what was most important to them at the school. They agreed that it was appreciation. I remembered that as the first word in the ABC Order acrostic. What did that word mean to them? Appreciation meant the students’ gratitude to their Heavenly Father. I pressed, what did appreciation mean, in addition to gratitude? The response was quick: relationships characterized by empathy.

TWO SCHOOLS SERVING FUNDAMENTALIST MORMONS

Comparing these public and private schools is not easy although both are engaged in education. Comparing two such schools controlled by plural marriage communities adds another layer of complexity. However, Spring Hill School and Link Academy are bound together by their missions to serve those communities. Like the red rock and the granite mountains that form their contrasting settings, the two schools are affected by environments beyond the practice of polygamy. But it is the communities’ approach to that practice that has, to a large extent, shaped the schools. Community B’s assertive accommodation with the dominant culture made Mary Jane Laughlin’s plan for a charter school feasible. The Community D co-culture’s assertive separation meant that parents were able to conceive of a separate, private institution from the public schools for their children.

Centers of leadership

The role of the principal/administrator differed at the two schools. Mary Jane Laughlin was a founder and driving force in the progress of her school. Her office was a hub of activity with a stream of parents and staff in and out of her door. Laughlin’s sometimes austere demeanor combined with her passionate belief in Spring Hill School made her a formidable advocate.
Principal Alvin was an affable presence at Link Academy. He facilitated my conversations with his staff. But knowledge and authority seemed to reside with Mary, Jackie, and Tammy. They were visible throughout the building and had answers for questions posed by other staff members and by me. They were respectful to Alvin but his absence might not have affected the operations of the school. These varied dynamics indicated two things: the vitality of women’s educational leadership in these schools and the varying ways that male priesthood authority was embodied at these community-based institutions. At Link Academy, Alvin seemed to me to represent that authority. He was more than a figurehead and probably represented the investment of the community’s leadership in the school. His presence was a living version of the pictures of ancestors that lined the halls. In contrast, Moses Johnson of Community C was a vigorous leader of his small school, serving as teacher and administrator. Like Laughlin, he refused to take credit for his school’s founding, but as he explained its genesis it was clear that he had been an indispensable participant in its creation.

I was reminded of the limits of Laughlin’s influence when I wandered into the auditorium at the junior high/high school building one day. Spring Hill shared space there with the private high school, and the principal’s office adjoined the auditorium. As I examined the plaque headlined, “The Key to the Success of the Order,” the principal emerged from his office and I immediately realized that I had unwittingly crossed a line. My peripatetic wanderings around the K-9 part of the complex were not welcome at the high school. The principal shook and gripped my hand a long time as I explained what I was doing and Laughlin’s permission to do it. I did not venture any farther.

Daycare where?
Both schools assembled students and teachers to start the instructional day but the care of staff’s preschool age children during that day was markedly different. Spring Hill’s daycare space on a walkout lower level of the building was easily accessible by stairwell to parents. Run by a community member and her helpers as a separate organization, it made employment possible for many women who otherwise might have found childcare difficult to arrange. I was told that the modest charge was affordable. At Link Academy, infants quietly lying in strollers at the back of many classrooms created a vivid impression for me of competing demands on the teachers. But in a co-culture of large families where new infants arrive year after year, neither students nor teachers seemed distracted or even particularly interested in the babies. After six months these youngest members of the community are absorbed into the network of care that plural families provide. It’s possible that their early exposure to the school may be seen as a way to prepare for their return to the classroom a few years later in kindergarten.

Training and development

Spring Hill and Link Academy are at different stages in the professionalization of their teachers but it is not clear if they are moving along the same trajectory. Spring Hill School’s teachers were certified, experienced, and often effective during my observations. Laughlin emphasized professional development in our conversations and noted that unlike some charters that relied on packaged curriculum, her school sought out the best, tested it, and then adopted it for instruction. Link Academy’s in-house preparation encouraged college training for teachers but did not require it. The three-stage training Jackie and Tammy outlined for me had some similarities to the Parent Professional activity at Spring Hill but the latter required certification before assuming the lead teacher role in a classroom. Both programs provided pathways to
employment in service to their communities for women and were seen as highly important by school leadership.

Classroom and cafeteria

Link Academy’s single-sex junior high classrooms set it apart from Spring Hill, where there was no such separation. The bar on talking or public displays of affection between boys and girls in most areas of the school seemed to be in accord with the prohibitions enumerated on the poster, “What does the Lord want me to do today?” This might seem strange to outsiders unfamiliar with polygamy but aligns with the Mormon view of that practice as a self-sacrificing way to build the Kingdom of God rather than a romantic enterprise. In a co-culture that operates around plural marriage the tight regulation of sexuality might not be surprising. The rules at Link Academy, where students live among the dominant culture, are more explicit than at Spring Hill, where there was no indication of interest in single-sex education.

Another interesting area of contrast is school lunch: Spring Hill sends students home and Link Academy operates a cafeteria. This difference may be rooted in community histories. Providing meals at school was controversial in Community B’s parent sect and the power struggle over sponsorship of breakfast for children revealed tensions that led to painful schism. Although one of Community B’s founders had instituted that controversial program, Spring Hill does not feed its children. On the other hand, Link Academy, embraces a meal program that requires a significant expenditure of labor and money. Tuition probably does not cover meal costs and no money was exchanged in the cafeteria. For a community portrayed in news media as neglectful of women and children, lunch at school is a commitment to nutrition and community maintenance. Food insecurity in communities B and D is indicated by use of government supplemental food programs by some members.
Aspirations and obstacles

Both Link Academy administrators and the broader staff surveyed at Spring Hill School expressed desires for their students to attend college. However, as indicated by anecdotes of harassment, the path is seen as somewhat risky. Paradoxically, participants from Community B, who stand out because of their conservative clothing, expressed fewer reservations about acceptance by others than did Community D participants. Access to a community college near Community B that serves a polygamist student body might ease that transition. The larger institutions attended by some Community D members are seen as arenas of opportunity and danger. It is not surprising in both groups that online education offers an appealing alternative for some, although Community B members explained their practice of living with other students from the sect when they went away to school. There was little indication of overt gender bias regarding access to higher education, although early marriage complicated college attendance, especially for women who were mothers such as Parent Professional Violet Oaks of Community B. As mentioned, in Community B, more women than men have probably attended college.

Spring Hill, a unique case because of its status as a public charter school, is a trailblazer for education in plural marriage communities. Although Link Academy’s inauguration marked a significant response to the educational needs of its community, the school has followed the pattern of other polygamist schools as a private unaccredited institution. This easier pathway may have allowed for the school’s creation but its progress will be limited by a state educational system that allows private schools to be completely unregulated. Spring Hill’s fuller integration into the dominant culture may test its community’s flexibility and tolerance of change.
CHAPTER 5: PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND FUNDAMENTALIST MORMON SCHOOLS

Miles away from Moses Johnson’s rural school, Community C holds a worship service, or sacrament meeting, in a cavernous multipurpose room at a facility on the suburban edge of a large city. Priesthood leaders speak from a portable pulpit facing followers on hundreds of folding chairs. The day that my chief informant Joan Wood and I are present, they focus on health-related matters: illnesses in the community, a difficult surgery and a miraculous recovery explained by a physician in the congregation. There is a talk on the harm of carbonated drinks. A long table stands below the stage, white linen covering the bread and water until the long and meditative distribution of the Eucharist. The words of Brigham Young on a placard preside over the assembly: “The kingdom of God or nothing.”

The world has forced many compromises on the fundamentalists and “The kingdom of God or nothing” has at times left them with more of nothing and less of the kingdom. But polygamists’ hope for the future is tied to their sense of history. The Manifesto of 1890 was a watershed for the new polygamists. John Taylor’s reputed 1886 revelation was their founding story. But Brooke (1994) points even farther back. He writes, “Mormon fundamentalists seek to restore the structure of purity and danger that the church left behind after the [Mormon] Reformation of the 1850s.”¹¹⁴ The purity is in matters of practice: polygamy, the united order. The danger is that the Kingdom of God cannot be easily platted across the culture and institutions of the United States. The schools that fundamentalists have established are part of their attempt to map the future of their communities in schools, some of the most basic institutions of a pluralistic society. Rawls (1993) writes,

¹¹⁴ Turner (2012) writes that “the reformation enhanced plural marriage’s place within the church and within Utah society.” He also notes a decrease in the age of marriage for females during this period of reemphasis on polygamy among the LDS. “Mormon leaders...blessed an unusual number of early marriages” (p. 257-258).
Various religious sects oppose the culture of the modern world and wish to lead their common life apart from its unwanted influences. A problem now arises about their children’s education and the requirements the state can impose. The liberalisms of Kant and Mill may lead to requirements designed to foster the values of autonomy and individuality as ideals to govern much if not all of life. But political liberalism has a different aim and requires far less. It will ask that children’s education include such things as knowledge of their constitutional and civic rights so that, for example, they know that liberty of conscience exists in their society and that apostasy is not a legal crime, all this to insure that their continued membership when they come of age is not based simply on ignorance of their basic rights or fear of punishment for offenses that do not exist. Moreover, their education should also prepare them to be fully cooperating members of society and enable them to be self-supporting; it should also encourage the political virtues so that they want to honor the fair terms of social cooperation in their relations with the rest of society (p. 199).

Rawls’ liberalism, that “requires far less” of religious sects in education, still requires a great deal of religious communities’ schools. This chapter will explore where Communities B and D meet Rawls’ broad requirements, where they fall short, and why. Philosophers of education Eamon Callan (1997) and Walter Feinberg (2006) expand Rawls’ definition of what is needed for education in religious communities, with Feinberg showing that many of the resources needed are already present, at least potentially, in these schools.

As I progressed with my field work, I wondered how much polygamist communities’ schools shared with each other. There was no organization to link educators in Communities A, B, C, or D. Principal Alvin never mentioned Community B or Spring Hill School but Mary Jane Laughlin was aware of Link Academy. She said that educators from other polygamist schools had visited Spring Hill. She wished Community D would adopt some of Spring Hills’ approach to learning. Long distances, competing claims of authority, and secrecy made collegial communication difficult.

These communities understand themselves as keepers of the flame of Joseph Smith’s faith. The prosecution, poverty, and stigma that come with that conviction lend a tragic
dimension to their faith. Whether tribulations are self-inflicted or the result of pressure by an overweening state and church is less important than the widespread conviction among polygamists that they are a persecuted people. Mainstream Mormonism has tried to leave behind the stormy history of the 19th century and to build a worldwide church but fundamentalist Mormons live between the tensions of election and exile (Givens, 2007). They are chosen by God to continue plural marriage but are exiled to the margins of society by its illegality. Yet it is at these margins that they build Link Academy and Spring Hill School that are part of their earthly Kingdom of God. A sense of continuity with Mormonism’s history of rejection, exile, martyrdom, and loss has imprinted the polygamists. This coexistence of woe and bliss marks a qualitative difference from mainstream Mormonism and its triumphant story of geographic and spiritual conquest. But the fundamentalists who I met were also energetic promoters of their communities. They were not beaten. Bushman (2008) writes,

Some observers say that Mormons lack a sense of the tragic. They are too optimistic, so the critique goes, and fail to grasp the despair that envelops so many of the world’s people. The tragic is certainly present in Mormon theology and history….the Mormon people have been persecuted and driven. But rather than taking these as evidence of the essential tragedy of human history, Mormons remember their friendly Father in heaven and the promise of eternal life. They are not borne down by the setbacks in their own history, the recurring persecutions and the terrible mistakes. They read existence as a divine comedy with a happy ending always in sight. Their resolve is not easily broken (p. 80).

When I visited Short Creek in 2010, my hosts gave me a bottle of what appeared to be Hidden Valley Ranch salad dressing. But closer examination revealed a joke: *Hidden* Valley was renamed “*Happy* Valley, the Original Compound, YFZ Anniversary Edition,” and bottled on April 3, 2009. The label included, “Texas Attorney General’s Warning: Looks like Ranch, tastes like Ranch, smells like Ranch, feels like Ranch, but it’s really ‘Compound.’” Happy Valley

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115 The first anniversary of the YFZ raid.
becomes toxic when mixed with the following… Becky Musser, Sam Brower, Carolyn Jessop…” and other FLDS enemies. Under “Special Cure-All for the following” was a list that included “Cyanide Poisoning, Broken Bones, Tempers CPS Brutality, Texas Ranger BS, Underage Marriage, CASA Nausea, Bus Ride Sickness, Mean People, Grumpy Men.” The salad dressing bottle was a comic souvenir of a tragic community experience.116

Polygamists match the resolve that Bushman attributes to mainstream Mormons, even if history has not been as kind to them. Experience has taught them that things can go badly wrong when civil and religious authorities turn against them. Spring Hill School administrator Mary Jane Laughlin told me of her efforts to help parents when their adolescent children got in trouble. They did not trust the juvenile justice system. Laughlin spoke of persuading families that the police, social workers, and judges genuinely wanted to help them. She told parents that cooperation could prevent greater problems for teenagers later on. She also touched on a deeper issue: “Some of our people think that they are above the law, that because of what’s happened to us they don’t have to obey laws they don’t like.” Behind this disregard is the great fear of fundamentalist parents that their children will be taken from them, as in the Short Creek raid of 1953 and the YFZ raid of 2008.

The schools that I visited are, in a way, responses to their sect’s precarious situation. Spring Hill and Link Academy intend to reshape those circumstances by taking control of their futures through taking control of their students’ schooling. They serve as educational united orders for fragmented and harried communities with many children117 and insufficient material

116 “Socrates was making them agree that the same man knows how to compose comedy and tragedy, and he who is a tragic poet by art is a comic poet, too.” Symposium, trans. R.E. Allen (1993). New Haven: Yale University Press.
117 For example, the small Community C enclave where Principal Moses Johnson’s school is located has a population of about 400. 85% of households include children under eighteen, and about 60% of the town’s population is under that age.
resources under threat of prosecution. Laughlin’s story of fundamentalist parents facing the juvenile justice system showed how fear and the label of criminality affected families and alienated them from civil society.

But plural marriage community members that I met did not see the families of their students as predominantly dysfunctional. A teacher at Spring Hill describes polygamist families as better able to support education than “single [monogamous] households:”

Students in my school, especially those from plural families, are generally loved and nurtured more than most single households, almost without exception (not that the single households in the community are not loving and nurturing, but because successful plural households tend to be more so)…. In my opinion, our school has more students from stable homes than the national average, even though a large portion of them live below poverty level (which is [usually] an indicator of low student achievement). I believe this stability is largely due to having more adults working and helping to support the family thus increasing the efficiency and stability. Also, the core beliefs and values of most of these families are very religious and moral, creating an environment where students naturally acquire more effective learning behaviors.

But this portrayal of plural family nurture is countered by Jessop (2007) and others who describe the abuse at Alta Academy under Warren Jeffs’ principalship as intrinsic to polygamy and inevitably infecting education. Others compare polygamist sects to organized crime families. To them, polygamists are like Dewey’s (1916) “gang of thieves” at the bottom of the social order. Their interests are opposed to the interests of other social groups. Without admitting the validity of this identification,—since both Spring Hill and Link Academy would surely claim that their schools are quite different from Alta Academy and the opposite of any criminal gang—Dewey’s description is thought-provoking:

Now in any social group whatever, even in a gang of thieves, we find some interest held in common, and we find a certain amount of interaction and cooperative intercourse with other groups. From these two traits we derive our standard. How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association? If we apply these considerations to, say, a criminal band, we find that the ties which consciously hold the members together are few in number, reducible
almost to a common interest in plunder; and that they are of such a nature as to isolate the group from other groups with respect to the give and take of the values of life. Hence the education such a society gives is partial and distorted. If we take, on the other hand, the kind of family life which illustrates the standard, we find that there are material, intellectual, aesthetic interests in which all participate and that the progress of one member has worth for the experience of other members—it is really communicable—and that the family is not an isolated whole, but enters intimately into relationships with business groups, with schools, with all the agencies of culture, as well as with other similar groups, and that it plays a due part in the political organization and in return receives support from it (p. 27).

For Dewey, the gang of thieves is a less worthy environment for education than a more legitimate “standard” social group (Phillips, 2016). The gang lacks external connectedness. Its few shared interests are introverted; it looks outward only to exploit, not to interact. What does this suggest in relation to the schools of Community B and D? Spring Hill School is more externally connected than Link Academy. Its charter status requires regular interaction with educational authorities. A disposition toward openness by some members of Community B may outweigh the fear of arrest and separation. Relationships between Community B and mainstream society are forged through work outside the community. A survey respondent wrote, “Please come and ask the community members…where they work and how successful in mainstream American society they are and see how well off they are because of their ability to work with others.” This positive estimate of members’ success supports connections.

Link Academy has fewer external connections. Without accreditation the state is minimally involved. Most Community D members live among other citizens in a large metro area. But this integration is mitigated by the sect’s businesses which employ many members as part of a united order. Other indicators point to a desire for cautious integration: voluntary standardized testing; Mary’s role as assistant principal of the junior high school and her previous
experience as a public school teacher and administrator; willingness to let me talk with parents and administrators and to visit the campus.

Polygamists were seen as thieves and plunderers by some of my participants. The director of adult education in a school district serving many people leaving polygamous communities described her office’s success at helping them pass the GED test. But she also described welfare fraud by polygamist women at her family’s pizza parlor. The district director of homeless students services (a population that included some polygamists) took a softer line, telling me that the LDS and the polygamists shared a common heritage.

Members of a gang of thieves might have no way out of criminality except by breaking free for positive participation in society. Former Amish, ultra-orthodox Jews, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and fundamentalist Mormons might point to education as a passport to a happier life. But what about the effect of improved education on those who remain inside? The Amish and Hutterites limit members’ education. Jehovah’s Witnesses are less likely to pursue higher education than the general population; only 9% hold a bachelor’s degree (Pew Research Center, 2007). Ultra-orthodox Jews may leave their communities to obtain a secular college education (Brodesser-Akner, 2017).

The educational neglect of FLDS children belies a more complex situation in the fundamentalist world. My participants on Communities B and D spoke positively about higher education. But an ex-member Kerry Peters offered a negative assessment of the sect’s commitment, while admitting that attending college was an option for members. The question in Communities B and D is not as much about access as about the purpose of education. Is it primarily for individual growth and progress that extends to the betterment of society, or is it a
tool by which the community can accomplish its purpose of building the Kingdom of God on earth through the development of members’ abilities?

Polygamist sects are patriarchal. The priesthood plays a central role in economic, family, and religious life. Priesthood holders include all men and older boys who adhere to the sects’ teachings, and while it is a lay organization, it carries real authority, radiating from the home. Priesthood authority is heightened by polygamy; in plural families, the father is the center around which wives and children revolve. But a strange thing happened to my outsider view of polygamy in theory as it was refracted through the lens of observation: I saw women exercising great autonomy and authority in schools. Spring Hill and Mountain View were both administered by polygamous women. Link Academy was nominally headed by Alvin but operational authority was vested in Tammy, Jackie, and Mary. Only in Community C, where Moses Johnson was principal, was a school under the day-to-day control of a man. Of course, women in charge of schools were answerable to male priesthood leaders. But the schools provided space for the expression of their considerable energies and abilities.

Callan’s (1997) concerns about servitude in religious communities and its effect on pluralistic education are relevant in this patriarchal context. Feinberg (2006) enhances the discussion by distinguishing between submissiveness and servitude. While most religious commitments involve submission to a power beyond self, they need not require servitude. As with Dewey’s gang of thieves, servitude isolates members from outside influences. Thus a servitude-centered group may be fragile, focused on the patriarchal leader. When FLDS leader Warren Jeffs ordered his followers to withdraw their children from public schools in 2000, the community responded with servile obedience to a plan that was harmful to many children. Some of my participants from other communities despised that act of subservience.
When I attended a general meeting, or worship service, in the high school auditorium of Community B, the speakers, all men, acknowledged the importance of willing obedience. One emphasized that women should not wear pants. Another said that the people were ready to walk away from the gospel; another that they resisted and grew hard-hearted and would leave. Cajoling, haranguing, joking, self-abasing speakers told of their own repentance, of their faithless children. It seemed like a pretty severe way to deal with a people gathered for instruction. Several speakers implied that the people were constantly challenging priesthood leadership. Maybe they were right. The next day, as I drove through Community B on my way to Spring Hill School, two young women wearing pants waved at me.

Fundamentalists are famously fractious. Schisms create new groups. In a religious culture where revelation is personal, the line between private illumination and public proclamation is not easy to locate. This spiritual orneriness makes servitude difficult to impose without the extreme measures of the FLDS. Agency, the individual’s innate ability to hear “the whispering of the Spirit,” and to follow it, is prized. But the harness can be tight, as evidenced by the Community B general meeting. Several of my participants affirmed that some young people leave after high school. Mark Jones, community college administrator, mused about the effect attending a university had on his best friend and on himself. He had returned home ready to contribute but his friend had chosen not to come back. Both paths evoked a wistfulness that others, especially ex-Community members, have recorded in memoirs. The song “When I Return” (Thompson, 2006) expresses their ambivalent longing:

Bind me not to the pasture,
Chain me not to the plow,
Set me free to find my calling
And I'll return to you somehow.
Both the exits and the walls were sometimes invisible. Touring Short Creek in 2010 our guide drove by Carolyn Jessop’s (2007) former house. He pointed to it and said that Jessop did not need to “escape.” There was no fence around the house! His own wife had a car and a cell phone and was not forced to stay with him. Callan (1997) writes of a “‘zone of personal sovereignty’…a sphere of conduct in which individuals are rightfully free to make their own way in the world, even if the exercise of that freedom might often warrant censure” (p. 244). Mark Jones’ boyhood friend probably felt that his new experiences were incompatible with his childhood and that he needed to start a new life. In that way he was like many college-educated young people. He was crossing from comparative isolation into a world of larger possibilities. In addition, leaving Community B meant that he could shed identification with its illegality.

Jones submitted his achievements to the priesthood when he came home after college. But he makes his living as a community college administrator paid by the state. Servility is not practicable in sects where united economic orders are not fully functional. Private employment is required and with it comes a measure of autonomy weighted by a scrutinized and group-centered life. This affiliation is voluntary for adults. Children are obligated by their parents. Mormons believe that spirits await mortal bodies to carry them through the tests of mortality that will lead them back to God. Some polygamists emphasize the importance of women bearing as many children as possible in order to facilitate these journeys. Children reach the age of accountability for their actions when they are eight years old. It is at this point that they become fuller members of the community through baptism and laying on of hands (Doctrine and Covenants 68:27). Their development is nurtured by family, church, and school.

Plural marriage sects are reproductive communities. Their commitment to sex as the means to religious ends puts them in continuity with early Mormon polygamy. The denigration
of romance and the foregrounding of self-sacrifice touch members’ autonomy. In mainstream society, the passage through adulthood includes the selection of a mate. While influenced and inhibited by family expectations and cultural pressures, partnerships are not often arranged. Polygamy, on the other hand, requires orchestration by stakeholders ranging from church leaders to sister wives. Even as husband and wife choose each other, they must be chosen for each other and approved. Marriage in monogamous American culture is an expression of autonomy. Plural marriage is submission and servitude to the community for both husband and wives. Children born into this way of life are uniquely located and in danger of isolation from people outside their sect.

Callan (1997) likens education to traversing “The Great Sphere.” Wherever a child starts out on that sphere, her educational experience should involve an exploration of areas different from her own. But Callan is interested in more than difference: exploration must include engagement with ideas opposed to those received by the student at home and in the community. This develops the capacity for critical thought and the ability to navigate in a heterogeneous society.

Polygamists have a strong sense of history. We might go so far as to say that plural marriage sects are communities of memory; they keep alive the practice of polygamy in tribute to Mormonism’s founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., as part of a continuing generative flow. A worldview in conflict with the dominant culture place Spring Hill and Link Academy children at the same landing point on “The Great Sphere” as Jewish and Christian fundamentalists. “Children land upon the sphere at different points, depending on their primary culture; the task is to help them explore the globe in a way that permits them to glimpse the deeper meanings of the dramas passing on around them” (p. 159). My evocation of polygamists as a remnant people
need not lead to pessimistic views on the potential of their schools to embrace the pluralism of the diverse society around them. Marginalized groups may know a lot about empathy. Noddings (2012) explains that for communitarians, rights “do not precede community building. They are the outcome of a shared sense of what is good” (p. 179). This is easy to misconstrue, possibly leading to reactions from mainstream society that are more defensive and exclusionary than the polygamists’ own position. Rawls points out the need for society to encompass, “unreasonable and irrational, and even mad, comprehensive doctrines” (p. xvi). But he also notes that unreasonable doctrines need not gain much influence in societies where a strong overlapping consensus evolves over basic conceptions of justice.

Plural marriage communities’ belief in the justice of polygamy may not be shared by mainstream society. But these communities’ commitment to educating their children should be supported by that strong overlapping consensus. Society limits abuse in polygamist societies by prosecuting underage and close kin marriages. Promoting justice and fairness should be the job of hardy and adaptable polygamists and state partners.

Do polygamists understand justice as fairness to all members of society? A teacher at Spring Hill School wrote in a survey response, “American society is already so diverse I do not know how there could NOT be a place for plural communities.” She recognized that a pluralistic society not only surrounds polygamists but already included them. Far from feeling alienated by a diverse society, she understood that her community was dependent on its tolerance. Other respondents complained that they were excluded from full participation in society. Their deep sense of injustice indicated something hopeful: they identified justice with fairness required that should apply to them, too. Part of this conviction is teleological: even if Zion and Babylon are
irreconcilable, God will compel this world’s power to accommodate the kingdom of God, as Cyrus the Persian did when he freed the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem.

Mapping Spring Hill School and Link Academy on “The Great Sphere” helps to answer the question of whether, and how well, they prepare students for life in a pluralistic world. A few examples of preparation come to thought.

I visited a sixth grade class whose teacher introduced me: “This is Mr. Hamilton, who is studying our school because he wants to learn about schools in polygamist communities, and about what we do and how we do things.” 27 students worked quietly for awhile, some munching popcorn at their desks. On the walls were paper medallions picturing famous explorers, and the motto: “Good readers ask questions as they are reading.” The teacher launched into discussion of the short article they had read, “A Fighting Chance,” about female soldiers serving in Afghanistan. The discussion began with a student asking how to pronounce “momentous” and later included corrections of the teacher’s mispronunciation of several words they knew. Teacher and students looked at a map and talked about the geography of the region, and moved on to questions about women as combatants and a recent lawsuit by female service members seeking assignment to combat units. Gender issues were freely discussed by female and male students. They were inquisitive and expressive. Their teacher was comfortable with the give and take as she guided discussion and shared ideas of her own. There was no self-consciousness in discussing gender roles for female soldiers who wanted to serve in combat. At least in that moment, students and teacher did not connect the controversy about gender roles of the soldiers to questions about gender roles and aspirations in Community B. In that case the students were moving across the sphere but only observing other actors from a great distance. From so far away it was difficult to compare and contrast their experiences.
Another example: parents and children at Spring Hill School meet as families with the administrator twice each year to discuss the student’s academic plan. Laughlin explained that the student led the discussion with parents and school about their plan. This self-determination is intended to translate into classroom initiative. The school’s mission is, “To unleash the learning power of students.”

Finally: the daily routine at Link Academy takes place under the watchful eyes of Community D ancestors\(^\text{118}\) whose pictures line the walls along with photographs of current leaders, Mormon prophets, and, in the classrooms, family photos. As one administrator explained to me, the pictures were there to remind students of where they came from. All students and teachers that I encountered were white, and there was a strong physical resemblance between many of the teachers. But in a first grade classroom diversity was introduced through reading instruction. Colorful pictures of people of different ethnicities with corresponding names populated the book students were using. This touch of multiculturalism should not be taken for granted at Link Academy, however incidental it might appear. Fundamentalist Mormons share a history of racism with the LDS. Mormons believed that they were literal descendants of the Hebrew people and that their tribal identity was revealed through inspiration when they received a personalized patriarchal blessing. Although one might become part of the Mormon new Israel “by adoption,” the community believed that they had Hebrew blood in their veins.

Native Americans were said to be descendants of the Hebrews as well, through the Book of Mormon Lamanites. But African Americans were not positively accounted for in this tradition. Instead, blacks bore the curse of Cain. Tradition held that they had been less valiant

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\(^{118}\) Identified as “Brother Jones” or “Sister Smith,” the photographs appeared to portray Community D members from the 1930s onward.
than their white counterparts in the pre-mortal existence, not fighting against Satan in the war in Heaven. The ban on black males holding the Mormon priesthood was lifted in 1978.

For students to learn their own cultural location before exploring other landscapes is complicated by the alternative history of ancient America that is part of the Mormon story as well as by racism. Feinberg’s (2006) generous allowance for widely divergent views in a diverse society applies here. And Mormon children learn that outsiders do not agree with the version of pre-Columbian history that their faith teaches. This alternative prehistory concludes in the fourth century AD with the burial for safekeeping of the golden plates that later constitute the Book of Mormon.

To challenge racism, exploration of The Great Sphere at Link Academy would include the stories of nonwhite people and cultures. The most likely path to opening up these encounters may come from the increasingly multicultural palette of curriculum resources in general use. That rising tide may lift Link Academy along with other schools. In addition, most Community D members live in a metropolitan area that is diversifying. Poverty may make sect members more likely to encounter the poor minority communities that are increasingly dominating the areas that they call home. But the danger of servility is real at Link Academy. The presence of ancestors and authority figures at every turn can be comforting and promotive of group solidarity. But it might also be stifling for students in the process of shaping their identities and seeking models, not molds. Nozick (1989) makes the analogy that parents are as connected to their children as they are to their own hands, but Callan call this analogy calls “as dangerous as it is illuminating.”

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119 Callan (1997) writes, “Children are not well placed even to ‘glimpse the deeper meanings of the dramas unfolding around them’ until they have some secure sense of the meaning of their culture of birth” (p. 221).
Students at Link Academy are more liable to be treated as extensions of their parents at school. We might claim that they are no different than other over-protected children in our society. But their experience as young members of a total community devoted to polygamy is unusual. In this co-culture children become fingers on the hands of their ancestors, not just of their parents. But this conversation between past and present might be harnessed to help students look to their possible futures. Martin Buber (Noddings, 2012) writes that “the relation in education is one of pure dialogue” (p. 190). Buber said that intercommunication led to God (p. 62). In the polygamist world, promoting intercommunication between students, teachers, and parents holds promise. Training teachers to reduce their reliance on drill and rote would be a step in the right direction. Giving students a role in academic planning, as is done at Spring Hill, would also help to promote autonomy. Accidental encounters with diversity in textbooks could become intentional opportunities to experience the world from the standpoint of other people. In spite of the sense of community superiority implied by beliefs in literal descent from the Hebrews, Community D members have experienced discrimination and marginalization. This may be the basis for developing more empathy in students, their passport across the Great Sphere. If exploring The Great Sphere is an exploration of the world with God, then encounters with difference are not to be avoided.

Feinberg (2006) puts humility as the heart of moral education in religious schools. This humility is belief in an ongoing human and divine coincidence. This bowing before a higher power at Link Academy and at Spring Hill School offers the possibility of changing entrenched attitudes that separate them from pluralistic society. The history of Mormonism shows that shifts in belief and practice occurred when external pressure and internal pragmatism produce a change
that once seemed improbable. Willingness to yield to these forces has made humility a survival tool for fundamentalists. Mormons call it “continuing revelation.”

Feinberg contrasts the response to bullying in two classrooms, one secular and one religious. In the secular setting a teacher might ask the bully, “How would you like it if someone did that to you?” In a religious setting, the question might be, “How would Jesus feel about what you have done?” (p. 11). By placing the bullying in a religious frame, the second educator tries to show the student that the standard of right exists outside the self and that there really is no choice as to how one must act. The fable of the fox and the crane told by Mary Ann Laughlin to the students at Spring Hill School represents a highly moralistic but secular approach. This contrasted with religious appeals to priesthood authority at the Community B general meeting. A history instructor at the local community college who accompanied me, Henry Grant, told me afterwards that he was concerned that service’s tone would make me think that Community B religion was overly coercive. But he lauded a speaker who emphasized how important it was to be “buried by the priesthood:” to be faithful throughout one’s life and thus worthy of a Community funeral. When I shared what I had written about the general meeting, months later Mary Jane Laughlin spent part of our interview explaining that people came to be instructed and to sometimes hear things that were uncomfortable. It seemed to me that they were asked to humble themselves and to admit that the right way was the priesthood way.

Two women from community D who I had interviewed, Holly Yates and Barbara Gunn, attended a SafetyNet conference with me that featured a session on education in polygamist communities. One of the speakers was Kerry Peters, the ex-Community D member who I had also interviewed. I watched Gunn and Yates sit quietly as Peters told her story and lambasted her family and the sect. After the session they countered her claims with reporters and others. Was
Gunn only an attractive spokeswoman whose husband told her what to say? The polygamist woman as puppet of her husband is a 19th century trope with currency today. But the public forum required Gunn to respond in the moment and to speak from her own experience. This spontaneity contrasted with the wooden repetition that I observed in some Link Academy classrooms. Of course, Gunn was an adult. But the high stakes of her encounter with the public at the SafetyNet conference and the humility with which she responded indicate that Community D is not simply attempting to program students as automatons. They will need to be able to think and to speak if they are to defend their faith.

The religious dimension of education at Spring Hill and Link Academy are expressed differently because of the public and private requirements placed on the schools. But Spring Hill has embraced its public charter status, using it create a space in the community for women to lead and for children to explore the world while remaining grounded in their co-culture. The tension between this relative openness and the strictures of priesthood control represent the experience of Community B in the world, where hope is tempered by long memories. Link Academy students and teachers are exploring the world more tentatively. Its private status has placed responsibility for curriculum and administration on the community. The pull toward servility may swamp the school’s efforts to prepare students for the world.

Rawls (1993) points out that free societies can be profoundly divided, and can include groups who insist that their beliefs alone are true. Fundamentalist Mormons might be one of those groups, with their claim to be the one true church. However, the paradox of Election and Exile that characterizes Mormonism--the tension between being a Chosen People and a Displaced People--tempers fundamentalist claims by placing them within a society that they must save even as it rejects them. This sense of mission takes on different forms. In contrast with
Spring Hill School’s embrace of the public charter model and their success at implementing it, Link Academy seems more interested in an independent course infused with Community D’s values. The pictures lining hallways and looking down on students in classrooms are one indicator. The young teachers with their infant children in the classroom are models for emulation.

Understanding these communities in the framework of a pluralistic society requires careful thought. Rawls explains that a democratic society is not a community: it has no final ends or ultimate aim. Dewey’s theory of education as continuous growth and development without a predetermined goal fits Rawls’ democratic society. But communities and associations within the society may have diverse and conflicting comprehensive doctrines. For example, Community D is built around a definite final end of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth in preparation for Christ’s return. The establishment of Link Academy was an important step toward realizing this goal. Although this attempt to build a self-sufficient society, including schools, recalls Peshkin’s (1986) Protestant fundamentalist schools as total institutions.

Callan (1997) argues that parents’ right to provide their children with an education consonant with their deeply held beliefs must not be allowed to shut down “substantial critical engagement with ethical beliefs at odds with the culture of the family within which the child was reared” (p. 222). A general reservation about this argument is that students from minority religious, cultural, or racial backgrounds might be required to regularly engage these differences, while students of the dominant religion, culture, or race might engage to the same degree. In religious organizations where values are sharply defined and constantly reinforced, encounters with beliefs at odds with the student’s own, if attempted, are explicit. Students in society’s mainstream may find differences more difficult to define. Because of this, plural marriage
schools are in a good position to follow Callan’s guidance. However, there is a caveat that I heard expressed in a variety of ways: polygamist communities’ students should not be required to do more in coming to grips with other cultures and ways of life than other students. The polygamist parents and teachers that I encountered did not believe that their children could live apart from the rest of society any more than they could.
The success of Spring Hill School demonstrates the positive role that the state can play as a partner with a polygamist community in supporting education. While Link Academy might prefer to remain a private school, lack of accreditation and oversight is hurting the school and limiting the progress of the population it sincerely seeks to serve. Private school accreditation organizations should consult with Spring Hill’s Mary Jane Laughlin to create and mediate partnerships with leaders in polygamist education such as Link Academy administrators Alvin, Jackie, Tammy, and Mary; and Moses Johnson of Community C; in order to create a trusted process for developing standards of accountability that are mutually endorsed by accrediting bodies and by the communities they serve. However, the complex relationship between plural marriage groups and government, along with legislators’ penchant for deregulating education, mean that change may be slow in coming. In the meantime, the work of charitable groups is vital to those most disadvantaged by lack of education, especially in Community A.

There may be lessons to be learned today by looking back at the clash between Mormons, Protestant missionaries, and the federal government over education in Utah Territory, and their eventual, imperfect accommodation. As Riess (2000) and Buchanan (1996) point out, reforms in education took hold gradually. Insurgent missionaries introduced better schools that attracted students. That spurred Mormon leaders to improve their own schools. They were not impervious to national educational trends. The progress of education in Utah paralleled changes in the dominant culture. Heavy-handed tactics by the federal government were primarily directed toward destroying polygamy and the Mormon Kingdom of God but education was deeply affected. Today, educational reformers like Mary Jane Laughlin come from within the
communities. They need more partners inside and outside polygamy. Plural marriage groups may be insular but they are interested in improving their children’s educational performance and expanding their opportunities.

But history also cautions us about complications. Joseph Smith inaugurated the Council of Fifty, the governing body of the restored Kingdom of God, in the 1840s at Nauvoo, Illinois (Brodie, 1945). He was secretly crowned King of the Kingdom of God by his closest followers. The Council of Fifty allowed for Gentile members and recognized that church and state were not synonymous. But the state was to be subordinate to the church in the Kingdom of God. The leader of both entities was to be the Mormon prophet. This remarkable arrangement, which Smith said “would one day revolutionize the whole world,” offers a sobering reminder that the new polygamists are rooted in aspirations that may never be realized but will always create tension between them and civil society.

History continues to affect policy and opportunity. Spring Hill School is located a few miles from a state line that tradition says has served polygamists well in evading law enforcement. If wanted in one state, a fugitive could cross into the other state. Boundaries seem unnecessary in the vast land. With so much space and rugged territory there are plenty of places to hide. But administrator Mary Jane Laughlin was foiled by that invisible border when she applied for a charter to start a new school near Spring Hill but across the state line. She praised the State Department of Education where her school is located but said that the adjoining state had not been receptive to her group’s charter application. Their approach was too formulaic. Many charter schools single-source their curriculum. Spring Hill built a program on consultation with a variety of experts on best practices and has received awards for the results. But next door, under a different state’s education policies, this was questioned. Laughlin said that they took a
cookie cutter approach and denied the charter application. But she said that the subtext for the rejection was polygamy. This was the same state where Laughlin told me no one from Community B could get a teaching job in a nearby city.

Whether or not Laughlin’s setback is reversed and a second charter is eventually granted to Community B, educational policies have had a strong impact on Spring Hill School and on Link Academy, as well as on other schools serving polygamists. The charter granted to the group from Community B allowed them to build a school that represents its community and is accountable to the state. Ironically, the state that denied Laughlin a charter is remarkably laissez faire in its oversight of private education. Link Academy is located there.

When I marveled at the lack of state oversight at that school, administrators Tammy and Jackie said that the school met state requirements by regularly allowing a building inspector into the school. Some areas of the school appeared to be in good repair when I visited. But I wondered about a loading area repurposed as a music room with overhead doors still in place. In other spaces interior walls appeared to be poorly constructed. The overcrowded buildings had only the former loading area between them for a playground. Was that enough space for so many children?

Of course, this only touches on the physical plant. I observed teachers who heavily relied on rote learning. The school’s three-phase training program indicated a desire to improve instruction but there was no state support for this effort. Link Academy is probably not interested in state oversight. It is easier to operate within the community’s framework. But students and families are ill-served by this uber-independence. It leaves teachers and administrators without the benefit of professional expertise. It defeats Link Academy’s mission to provide good education to children and to prepare them for useful lives as adults.
How did things come to such a pass? Why do adjacent states foster a culture of innovation and accountability in one school (Spring Hill) and of benign neglect in another (Link Academy)? Both states are deeply conservative and promote deregulation of education through a menu of school choices including home schooling. In fact, if Spring Hill was a private unaccredited school, the state would have almost no control over it, either.

If plural marriage communities are to create their own schools, they should think carefully about what kinds of schools they wish to establish. The intensive communal participation required to launch a school should produce a lasting benefit. Grassroots support was a striking part of the founding story of schools in communities B, C, and D. While the staff might include outsiders, the core group of teachers and administrators from within the sect should hold bachelor’s degrees and teacher or administrator certifications. More than that, such qualifications are needed to help them conceptualize their projects and to skillfully incorporate community input into development. Although Moses Johnson of Community C told me that his school did not need to be accredited because its graduates were accepted at public high schools, the reasons for embracing the challenge of accreditation are bigger than that, more philosophical than bureaucratic.

State departments of education should consider what kinds of schools they want polygamists to establish. So far, little attention has been given to this growing phenomenon. Even home schooling has been difficult to regulate. Paula Martin of SafetyNet explained that state law required parents to register their home schooled children each year with the local school district and to submit an education plan. But there were insufficient resources to enforce the law. It was largely unheeded. I wondered if the tragic outcome of the standoff decades earlier
between John Singer and Summit County Schools was still affecting home schooling by making authorities leery of engagement with parents.

Private schools may seek accreditation with a regional accreditation agency not controlled by the state but are not required to do so. Curriculum devised by an unaccredited school is not regulated or reviewed and virtually none of its activities are subject to outside scrutiny. While accreditation is an indication of quality for mainstream consumers, unaccredited institutions that tailor instruction to plural marriage communities are attractive to some polygamists who value education but do not believe that the state’s imprimatur is necessary to ensure its quality.

But plural marriage sects are not responsible for this deplorable lack of oversight. Other groups have lobbied state legislatures to maximize parental control and minimize state control of education. Leading these efforts in the state where Link Academy is located is a chapter of the Eagle Forum. Its website declares, “We believe in the right of parents to guide the education of their children without oppressive government regulation.” The Eagle Forum’s origins date to founder Phyllis Schlafly’s 1970s opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. The Legal Defense Fund of the Forum has this mission: “To study and research problems concerning the status of women, including the conduction [sic] of surveys, and to defend the civil liberties, legal, economic, and social rights of women” (IRS Form 990, 2015). An unintended consequence of Eagle Forum lobbying and subsequent legislation has been unregulated schools for polygamists.

Unfortunately, potential motivation for reform may be less likely to come from positive models of plural community education than from memoirists telling about the principalship of

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120 The National Eagle Forum was founded in 1972 by Phyllis Schlafly.
Warren Jeffs at Alta Academy. Even if every story of Jeffs’ abuse is true, it is important to distinguish between his criminal conduct with students and teachers at that school and the activities of polygamist schools today.

It’s not likely that the current situation will be addressed by changes of law or policy anytime soon. Instead, two very different groups—plural marriage communities and a network of charitable organizations--are promoting better education for students from polygamist communities. Plural marriage groups’ efforts have focused on establishing schools that reflect their values. Charitable organizations such as the Options Group have focused on the educational needs of people exiting polygamist communities.

I met Yvonne Golding at a Chinese restaurant to talk about the Options Group, started by a wealthy former member of Community A. It provided a variety of services to young people leaving polygamy, especially teenaged males who, according to critics, were expelled to reduce competition for wives among the men who remained. Yvonne, an LCSW, worked with the education program. Her dad was Presbyterian, her mom was raised LDS. Some maternal relatives had become polygamists but Yvonne did not grow up in the co-culture. She administered education grants to college students and to a few high school students. In addition to funds, the young people needed socialization and life skills. Golding said, “These kids need a mother.” She described them as homeless refugees. The boys went wherever there was a job with no thought of the future.

Golding said that about 400 people had used Options Group services during her six years with the organization. 50 of them were currently in college; five were attending high school or working toward passing the GED exam.
Golding operated conducted intake interviews and created formal agreement with students for a maximum aid grant of 75% of public college tuition or up to $3,000 per year in 2013; 50% of private college tuition or up to $3,000, plus books in both cases. She funded study at accredited institutions only; “no massage therapists or aestheticians.” Former Community A members were required to regularly attend school and to maintain a 2.0 GPA. Options Group was over budget on education when we talked. In addition to seeking grants, students asked her for help with other challenges. She taught a boy who wanted to go into the Navy how to swim. He was so lean that at first he could not float; she kept telling him, “paddle harder!” He later passed the swim test at boot camp.

Golding believed that there was much harm done by “bleeding hearts who feed these kids’ sense of entitlement.” She said that they came from a welfare culture and families that defrauded the government. Options Group had volunteer host families but did no formal recruitment. Golding noted that these families took on huge liability; these kids often got into trouble as they transitioned; she could only hope that it was not serious. Older siblings and other relatives who had already left and succeeded were mentors.

The male/female ratio of grantees was 70/30. At the time we talked grantees were studying at several public colleges. The women were training for service jobs. Few aspired to more than that. The men were studying architecture, accounting, business, and law. Golding proudly called herself their first educator. They had a group on Facebook.

Golding said that Community A educated its people only to the degree needed to survive in the sect. She spoke about the paradox of the young peoples’ untested, grandiose ambitions and their homeless mentality as they left the community. They had missed normal stages of development and were immature and often inappropriate in their interactions. She held weekly dinners to
teach basic etiquette and tutored them in communication skills. A panel of young women had discussed their views of men as the boys listened with rapt attention. Golding conducted a workshop on basic sex education. . The education crisis in Community A is a reminder that the work of Community B’s Spring Hill and Community D’s Link Academy is vital.

Golding’s modestly-funded tough love for students was rooted in her sense of justice. Options Group is one of several organizations serving people leaving polygamy but its focus on education is unique. However, Options Group’s potential as a partner for polygamist communities in improving education is limited. The Group’s founder is a former member of Community A and is an apostate viewed by some as less trustworthy than any outsider. In addition, Options Group and other charitable organizations have focused on aiding people leaving polygamist communities, not on partnering with those communities. The rhetoric of some helping organizations is similar to the 19th century’s Rev. Duncan Miller and his “Appeal to Christian Women.” But the expertise of these 21st century groups should not be brushed aside. The seemingly incompatible goals of polygamists and groups aiding former polygamists may converge around some issues. I saw this at SafetyNet meetings where representatives of two states attorneys general, plural marriage communities, state agencies, and helping organizations sat at the same table. Education is an issue of interest to all of them.

Feinberg (2006) reminds us to make generous allowance for widely divergent views in a diverse society. This necessity was evident in a school district where I interviewed the homeless services coordinator and the director of adult education. The district included a polygamist

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121 Rawls’ (1993) on the role of the liberal state in mediating the educational experience of its citizens is trenchant: But political liberalism...will ask that children’s education include such things as knowledge of their constitutional and civic rights so that, for example, they know that liberty of conscience exists in their society and that apostasy is not a legal crime, all this to insure that their continued membership [in a religious group] when they come of age is not based simply on ignorance of their basic rights or fear of punishment for offenses that do not exist (p. 199).
community. When internal controversy or external pressure periodically destabilized that group, the district saw a surge of displacement and demand for services. Polygamists’ practical needs tended to outweigh personal qualms about polygamy felt by these veteran employees. Teenagers needed GEDs to obtain jobs not tied to the sect. Mothers appeared with large numbers of children and no permanent place to stay. They were hungry. The common factor in moving beyond individual opposition to polygamy was the availability of basic educational and social service resources and the conviction that services offered would move the recipients toward self-sufficiency. The homeless services coordinator and the director of adult education seemed willing to make allowances for divergent views. Compassion was a factor and shared history was not forgotten. What they found repugnant were the poverty, ignorance, and dependence that they associated with polygamy.

Any successful response to the educational needs of children in plural marriage communities must be rooted in a commitment to fair treatment of students and their families, acknowledging differences between sects. Polygamy’s illegality and moral repugnance for outsiders is not an ethically insurmountable barrier to cooperation. Education for prisoners or for undocumented immigrants is considered by many to be a worthy cause. Internal cooperation between plural marriage educators against schism and rivalry would benefit schools. A remnant people may have a deep sense of grievance but they also know something about justice, and should promote their own educational agenda.

I recommend that educators and community members join with allies in the dominant culture in order to improve educational opportunities for children in polygamist groups. The history of education in Utah, especially the early decades of public schooling after 1890, show how unlikely alliances can achieve positive ends.
State requirements for accreditation of private schools would benefit the polygamist culture. Assessment by qualified outsiders would enable fundamentalist educators to compare their schools to other private schools. Preparation for accreditation would encourage better administered and organized schools. It would also tend to make private educational consultants such as those advising Moses’ Johnson’s Community C school more accountable and the results they promise more measurable.

Requiring appropriate certification for private school teachers would help to address inconsistencies in teaching competence that I observed at Link Academy. The teacher training program at the school indicated the community’s desire for higher standards but did not go far enough. Coursework leading to certification would put polygamist community teachers in contact with the expertise many of them are eager to develop. Student teaching experience would ensure evaluation of their ability to function outside of sect schools. In addition, schools of education in regions serving polygamists should include material on these communities in their curriculum and place student teachers in accredited schools serving them.

Plural communities should be encouraged to obtain charters for their schools as an alternative to private school accreditation. Spring Hill School demonstrates the positive effect of linking a school with the state charter superintendent. Community B’s experience with the charter is a promising indication that other plural communities can expect equitable treatment in the chartering process and beyond it. However, the difficulty Mary Jane Laughlin had in obtaining a second charter in a neighboring state shows that clearer expectations of the chartering authority may need to be established in policy, as well.

Modest requirements for standardized testing of private school students also seems in order but should not be mandated in a way that places an undue financial burden on schools operating
in poverty communities. Link Academy has already embraced some testing in order to demonstrate the value of the education it provides. Testing administered to all students in private schools would provide data for analysis by state departments of education. Measures of student progress could become truly useful to polygamist schools when compared to other private and public schools. Spring Hill School’s scores indicate that children in high poverty plural marriage communities can perform well on standardized tests.

Polygamist educators should establish a robust network for professional development that addresses the unique needs of their students and communities. The fragmentation of plural marriage groups may be an obstacle but contacts between groups on other matters are ongoing. A coordinated proposal to priesthood leaders by established educational leaders such as Laura Laughlin and Mary Jane Laughlin, Moses Johnson, and Mary of Link Academy might speed approval and provide first generation leadership. While the involved communities must set their own goals, I would suggest priority be placed on professional development. To this end, a conference open to all working in the polygamist context could provide valuable resources.

Strengthening connections between sects and higher education could be the project of a team led by Yvonne Golding of the Options Group and Mark Jones, the Community B community college administrator. Dealing with issues of access and student support could yield immediate fruit by training admissions and advising staff at colleges and universities to provide services tailored to the needs of polygamist students. Similar to service to veterans, staff would provide support to students with substantially different experiences from their peers. Outreach to public and private high schools with significant plural marriage populations should be an important outreach activity.  

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122 These schools and organizations may be located in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, South Dakota, and Utah; in British Columbia, Canada; and in Mexico.
Finally, the states should provide adequate protection to children from underage marriage and child labor. Labor practices among some polygamist communities do not sufficiently differentiate between the work performed by adults and work permissible for children. A social worker at a non-profit founded to assist polygamists was definite on this point. How can children go to school if they are at work all day? This practice is known outside plural communities because outsiders observe children working at construction sites and elsewhere. Communities A and D are most involved with these practices. Without enforcement of child labor and school attendance laws it will be difficult to reach the children most in need.

As these points show, there really is no summing up, no hearing “the conclusion of the whole matter” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). But there should be a Deweyan commitment to the progress of education in plural marriage communities. There are two aspects of this progress that are apparent to me. The first and most important is the determination within fundamentalist Mormon communities to educate children in ways that acknowledge their heritage while providing them an opportunity to find a place in the diverse society that we share. This progress is going on in some places. In areas where engagement is seen as a fearful thing, courage and humility is needed on the part of the community and by the dominant culture. Both must ask themselves how they have treated the other and what can be done about past wrongs.

The second aspect of progress is the commitment to partnerships between polygamists and other educators and interested friends to create clearer pathways to educational opportunity for children in plural marriage communities.

I was as wary of polygamists as they probably were of me when I began visiting their schools. I had not been in my first school very long when I heard a morning assembly singing “Jingle Bells,” even though it was after Christmas in January. I thought ruefully how hard it was
to reengage students after the holidays. That was true of children in any school. As those children streamed through the halls I realized the obvious, these were children. Their zest, distraction, seriousness, and inquisitiveness meant that they were not really strangers to me. As I observed teachers in classrooms and talked to administrators, I felt the kinship we shared as educators. This good will, the relief of common humanity, was only a start. Beyond it were perplexing questions of difference that could not be resolved but observed and, possibly explained.
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APPENDIX A: SURVEY OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AT SPRING HILL SCHOOL

This survey was made electronically available to teachers and administrators for two weeks during and after a period of field work in 2013. Participation was voluntary. About 1/3 of Spring Hill teachers responded.

Q1: You do not need to provide your name, but it would be helpful to know if you are a:

11 Teachers, 1 Administrator (Total Respondents=12)

Q2: Based on your experience, what are the strengths of this school?

The strengths of our school are founded in the dedication of teachers to meeting the needs of students both educationally personally. For most teachers at the school their circle of influence with students extends into the community and many times into the home of the student. The school focuses on core subjects of Reading, Math and Writing while incorporating technology and life skills. Professional development is focused on year-round with teachers working collaboratively to develop grade-level curriculum units, tracking of students with unique needs and personal research to improve the teacher's skills in the classroom. Support from the community to construct the school building has resulted in a superior facility. This support continues on a daily basis with parental involvement, usually as parents spending time in the classrooms working with students and the teacher to improve student performance. These are a few of the strengths of the school - many more could be listed.

high level of collaboration between teachers, support staff and administration. community involvement is highly encouraged, appreciated, and sought after. Students are taught from kindergarten on to problem solve rather than place blame on others for their difficulties and recognize their personal growth and celebrate their achievements.

Where do I begin? I think one of the most pronounced strengths of my school are the unity and professionalism of the administration and staff. I also feel like the positive parent relations and the value placed on parental involvement in their child's education are strengths.

Uniforms for students Focus of Students ability for life long learning Caring for a clean and learning environment

The teachers have a genuine love and concern for the welfare of every student who comes through our school.

Small class size Commitment to professional development Commitment to national education standards Technology

Strong community support; continuous staff development with working professionals from within and without the community; cohesive care from staff and faculty towards students; relative homogeneity in student population allows for gains each year.
The teachers. They are well educated and they are always trying to improve their teaching skills. The school provides means to help teachers stay up with the latest research and development. The focus of the school is to "unleash the learning power of students" and teachers do it by teaching students the elements of critical thought.

elegant parent support for the students; excellent administrative support for the teachers excellent teaching staff & staff development

Cooperation on all levels. Also a high focus on the student as a whole person and an emphasis on facilitating his/her development in all areas. Overall parents and school have the same goal in mind for the students who come here.

This school really encourages parent involvement and are always looking for ways to involve them.

Staff development, commitment to new and innovative teaching practices

Q3: This school serves at least some students from plural marriage communities. How does this affect the school’s mission and delivery of education?

The mission and delivery of education at the school is founded upon researched best practice principles which apply to all students not just those of a plural marriage background. The student population is predominantly from this background which results in little or no bias toward the religious choices of the children's parents.

It doesn't except to be sensitive to the needs of all

There are times when communication becomes complicated or messages are scwed because one is not always certain who to contact in a family with more than one mom.

I don't really know that it affects the school's mission so much since that remains the same regardless, however I think that since some of our staff as well as our students come from plural marriage communities the delivery of our education is more family-like. In many ways all of our students are treated like and respond like an extended family. Every student is known and cared about by multiple adults within the school. No student is anonymous or known only to their own classroom teacher.

There are practically no "latch-key kids." This further empowers the school to unleash the learning of its students.

The mission for Masada is to "unleash the learning power of students". It doesn't matter what life style a student comes from, the goal is the same.

Our school's mission is "To unleash the learning power of students." In my experience, students raised in the plural family's in this community arrive at school with self esteem and physical health intact. They are generally raised in environments holding education and intellectual
growth/industry as a high priority. These students, having worked already with a diverse range of other children before arriving school, easily adapt to other children in the classroom and adjust easily to the school environment.

In my experience I have taught students from plural families, students with one mom and one dad, students with divorced parents, remarried parents, students living with a step mom and step dad, students living with grandparents, students who were adopted, students of single mothers whose dads are deceased, students of single fathers, etc. Teachers know that the student's home life can either be a huge resource for supporting the student's education or it can be a source of stress and instability. There is no set rule that states children from divorced parents have to struggle in school or that children from plural families will succeed, but I do know that the more involved adults a child has in his or her growing up and education, the greater chance he or she has of getting help with homework, getting notes signed, having a decent breakfast, not forgetting to bring snack on his or her day, getting a good night's sleep, having a bedtime story read to them, and being successful in school. Whether those children are extra mothers, teachers, aunts and uncles, or grandparents, it takes a village to raise a child.

We are sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of all our students. We keep "church and state" separate, but we do deal with whatever issues may come up.

It helps because they know how to work together with big groups of people and they have a caring ability for the students life long learning.

My experience with dealing with families involved in plural marriage has proven to be very beneficial to students. There is more support and stability at home (as a general rule) because of the multiple mothers being involved in keeping regular routines and support systems for students at home. Students coming from STABLE plural marriage families are at an advantage because they have a larger safety and support group as well as varied perspectives to help them with homework and life choices in general. The children from plural homes generally carry-over a respect and value for education and respect from home.

there is a strong belief among us, that each is valuable, although we all possess different talents, and may come from backgrounds.

Q4: If you were speaking with someone from outside the fundamentalist Mormon community, what would you want them to know about your school?

First and foremost, the school provides a quality education for all students that attend. This education is backed up by several awards the school has been recognized for over the years. The school is a highly performing school according to state measurements criteria and continues to excel. I would want someone to know that I choose to send my children to this school because the quality of education is unmatched in the area.

We are a progressive, high functioning charter school committed to serving each student individually to improve the community as a whole.
This school emphasizes the importance of education and are constantly implementing new ideas and strategies to help us excel in educating the children.

This is a place where we care about people. Our connections with each other are important to us and to the culture of our school. We also have high expectations for performance for both students and staff.

It is not a crazy school for crazies! It is a very high-quality school with high quality people working in it, delivering exceptionally high quality education to wonderful, normal children.

We value good education. We hold our standards to the same level as any highly qualified school. Education is key to developing children into adults that can give and lend to the building of a community.

We hold the value of children paramount and actively seek the welfare of our students.

We are people just like you. We have families. We love our children. We want to be instrumental in changing lives, inspiring minds, and preparing a set of people who can carry on the future of this world. We want our kids to be knowledgeable with current events, technology, and most importantly to think for themselves. Children who can (for example) conduct an internet search for a research project and not take the first opinion they find as fact, but to test the source, try other sources, compare and contrast, understand if there is an agenda or slant on the information, and then either accept or reject the information based on their findings.

We're a nationally recognized charter school committed to preparing our students to face the challenges that await them in high school and beyond.

It's a small community that look out for one another however they put forth a lot of effort to make sure outsiders feel comfortable and invited.

I would want them to know that the students in my school, especially those from plural families, are generally loved and nurtured more than most single households, almost without exception (not that the single households in the community are not loving and nurturing, but because successful plural households tend to be more so). I would also want them to know that, in my opinion, our school has more students from stable homes than the national average, even though a large portion of them live below poverty level (which is an indicator of low student achievement). I believe this stability is largely due to having more adults working and helping to support the family thus increasing the efficiency and stability. Also, the core beliefs and values of most of these families are very religious and moral, creating an environment where students naturally acquire more effective learning behaviors.

I would want to communicate our students are our precious commodity. Their growth into citizens who can productively function in any society is key to what we ask of them in the school environment. We are in a global world and need various sets of skills beyond academics.
Q5: When someone wants to learn more about your school, what kinds of questions should they be asking? What should they seek to understand? What is the mission and vision of the school? What evidence can be shown that indicates the mission and vision are being accomplished? Would you choose this school for your children? Why?

What are your goals for students? What technology do you have? How do you take care of disciplinary issues? What are your resources for students with special needs? They should understand that we are a school that wishes to serve all students who attend according to their individual needs.

They should want to know if the children who have special needs are getting the learning and support necessary to help them be successful. Are the mainstream teachers getting educated enough to handle these children with special needs? Particularly those children with autism. They coming in more frequently. Are we capable of educating them successfully?

What values and ideas are foundational in making this a strong school and a child friendly learning environment? Our first a foremost concern is working to help children develop the skills they will need to be successful in life and in society. It is not on making sure all children share our religious beliefs.

What are some of the school procedures, and why does it have those procedures? Why did the school board choose to require uniforms for the children? What are some of the awards the school presents to its students at the end of the year?

Are students that complete your school program able to functions in the real world? Are the students college and business ready? Do students have the reading, writing, and thinking skills required to function in society? Will the students be able to function in their community only or will they be able to leave and function out side of the community?

Less about the sensational--more about what pedagogical implementations are being used to ensure our continual educational success and growth.

Questions about our curriculum, the qualifications of our teachers and paraprofessional staff, our professional standards, how we deal with problem solving, student achievement, what our mission "Unleashing the Learning Power of Students" means...questions that actually pertain to the education program. Don't make everything about how many moms a kid has. We actually have quite a diversity of home situations among our student body, and guess what? It does not define the child. People who really want to know should look past the stereotype, the gossip, the rumors, and what they see on Big Love, and get to know the people for what they are...just people, doing the best they can with the resources that they have.

Ask us about our curriculum, instructional methods, teacher qualifications, etc. Understand that we wish to serve any students who attend the school and that we are sensitive to the needs of all.
What kind of Curriculum do you teach? What resources does your school have to help students learn the standards? Do you have a staff that cares for students learn and achievement?

What does the data show? What values are most important to your school and community in general? How does your school compare to other schools in reference to violence, delinquent behaviors, etc?

we are like many, many other schools. our expectations are high of ourselves, of students, and parents who choose to lend themselves to that end.

Q6: What values are emphasized at your school? What is most important?

Student performance, learning, unleashing learning power, setting and meeting goals, using data to drive educational decisions, the student as a whole person. This last value is the most important.

Respect (for each other, teachers, learning, etc) Responsibility for learning Work Ethic Value knowledge Value community and integrity within a community

Honesty Hard working Learning how to learn no matter what type of person you are

belief in yourself, there is always room for improvement, be honest about who you are and where you are at. we as teachers are here to assist the students become the best they can.

Honesty, integrity, self-reliance, individual learning. All are important.

The values emphasized come of making life long learners. Life Long Learning skills encourage students to not only be successful academically but in life, through out, as well.

Personal growth, honesty, integrity, respectfulness. along with several others. I do not know how to rank these values because they are so interconnected. The main focus is on healthy interactions with others and working for our personal best.

1. (and most important) Be respectful. 2. Use active listening. 3. Be kind. 4. Be responsible. 5. Always do your personal best.

Respondent skipped this question

Traditional values--honesty, strong work ethic, determination and perseverance, respect for others (including language and mannerisms), punctuality, preparedness and responsibility, integrity.

The kids are most important, without a doubt. The needs of each child (academically, emotionally, socially, and developmentally) are the highest priority. As far as our academic values, we emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, student self reflection, student's setting and meeting their own goals for their education, and safe classroom environments.
We emphasize honesty and integrity, individual learning, commitment to being part of the 21st century. What is most important varies from person to person, however I feel that honesty and integrity are crucial to achieving other goals.

Q7: Outsiders sometimes claim that fundamentalist Mormons do not teach their children democratic values, and that plural communities do not fit into mainstream American society. How would you respond?

Many people claim many things without having a knowledge of them. We can look at almost every segment of society and find individuals without democratic values if a small enough sample space is used. A more broad sampling of fundamentalist Mormons, I think, would tell a different story than what mainstream Americans perceive due to poor data collection coupled with media hyperbole. It has been easy for misconceptions to be portrayed and perpetuated because the fundamentalist Mormon culture has had to hide the lifestyle or show an untruthful front to the public to avoid persecution and prosecution. This stigma on the fundamentalist Mormon society has contributed greatly to creating a gap of understanding between them and American society at large.

What exactly do you mean by "democratic values"? We believe in governing ourselves, and that God's law is higher than anything man could come up with. Read the Ten Commandments lately?

I would beg to differ. We are very much a part of what goes on in the world and we recognize that it absolutely affects us and encourage students to be active with these values. We encourage our children to ask questions and understand the world outside of us. However, we do use each other to help support and sustain one another. We do not encourage "government handouts".

Hahahaha..........sorry, that was my first reaction to the idea. While I cannot speak for every fundamentalist group, I know that in my experience we hold democratic values and the Constitution and its ideals very important. We have family and friends who have fought in America's wars throughout the 20th century and have been taught to value freedom and the sacrifices that are necessary to maintain it. We are encouraged to vote and to take our other civic duties seriously. We also recognize that it is the values of democracy and our republic through the Constitution that even made it possible for our fundamentalist beliefs a place to develop in this country. In my experience, I have always held these values to be very important and since our American society is already so diverse I do not know how there could NOT be a place for plural communities along with everyone else.

As any parent should, they teach their children what they believe is right. Teaching the children about other cultures outside of their own varies from home to home. While many children are informed, not as many experience a much of the "outside world." In the school, the children are taught democratic values often and thoroughly.

Since the beginning of our school, as our educational coaches (from outside the community) can attest, we have striven to build a curricular framework that hinges on critical thinking. We are
not threatened by students who ask questions "outside the box"; indeed, as a teacher, I feel my
greatest sense of success when I have students who seek to make connections with perspective
outside the immediacy of their lives. In my curriculum, I use texts that will raise discussion on
human rights, human dignities, and cultural differences.

Just exactly what is meant by "democratic values?" The only reason plural communities wouldn't
fit into mainstream American society is that the mainstream American society is prejudiced
against them. Many people from plural communities live and work among mainstream
Americans and are well tolerated and liked. Mormon fundamentalists teach their children to be
honest and have faith in God. If that is contrary to democratic values, so be it.

Please come and ask the community members where they work and how successful in
mainstream American society they are and see how well off they are because if there ability to
work with others.

I believe that, in my experience with Fundamentalist Mormons (which is not all of them) they
put a huge amount of value in democratic values. I believe that, at least in the group I work with,
they are true patriots of this country and are very much concerned with conserving the
democratic values of this nation. I believe they are much more conservative in their values than
mainstream society, which doesn't necessarily mean they don't fit in, but often times are above
mainstream American society in their integrity and morality. This all being said generally from
my own limited experience. I have seen exceptions to this, and I too have heard "rumors" of this
claims about various Fundamentalist groups. American democracy is founded on diversity. I
think that America needs to make room for this population of people instead of trying to fit them
into the "box" of mainstream America. As long as American values are not lost.

that is not true of our community. we as a community are high involved, strongly encourage our
youth to know what is going on politically, and be involved in upholding the values our nation
was founded on.

You can refer to my response to question 4 for this one. We absolutely teach our children about
the world we live in. They are the future, so they better be equipped with the technology, the
knowledge, and the ability to think for themselves. We teach government, democracy, hold
voting activities for classroom laws, discuss political campaigns with the students, let them
participate in presidential elections, and hold elections for student body governments. They also
participate in sports programs locally, and travel to compete against other schools in the Border
League program. We have a student who won the county spelling bee and is going on to
participate in the Arizona State Spelling Bee. They travel on field trips to museums,
conservatories, National Parks, science exhibits such as "Bodies the Exhibition" in Las Vegas,
Nevada. If you think we are not teaching our kids about the world they live in, think again.

Our community realizes that we are apart of the United States. Many of our community members
work out in mainstream American society. We teach our students to be able to participate in
mainstream American society. We have our values and beliefs but they do not stop us from
learning how to function as normal human beings. We are not a closed society that controls and
limits what is presented to our people. We are taught to analyze and make intelligent decisions
based on what we believe. We have the right to refuse any teachings we don't agree with. We can chose to leave this community any time we would like if the customs are not what we want in our lives.

Q8: Finally, please take a moment to write about your own faith and the way it affects your work at school. If you are in a public school, this question is not meant to imply that you are teaching religion to students. How does your faith affect your approach to education as a teacher, parent, or administrator?

I use every opportunity possible to work with students in a religious capacity, with their permission, to help instill values that will help the student become productive members of the larger society of America as well as a better person within the faith.

my belief in God, and the fact that he holds me accountable for all my actions and words helps me temper myself and weigh what i do carefully. my influence impacts my students daily, and it should be one that causes my students to think for themselves and not be lead to make uneducated decisions. if i don't check myself, my thought process, my frame of reference and experience and where i get my information, how can i expect my students to do likewise. appropriate words, actions, and interactions are modeled by the home, school and society. as an educator it is my responsibility to model responsibility, to myself, others, and my community.

My faith has everything to do with my work. I look at each child I teach as a child of God and as deserving my love and attention. I also see my success as a teacher as an important service in helping raise a community of people who are educated, moral and able to support themselves and their families, as well as build up the community and country. I believe that, when I am doing a good job, I am helping raise men and woman who are intelligent and educated enough to make good and sound decisions in their lives as far as their values and morals are concerned, as well as in their ability to be industrious and competitive in todays markets. I feel like, in my experience, I am a better teacher when I am "in tune" to my own spirituality and teaching through inspiration as I teach the curriculum and the standards. My students are as much soul as brains (or more so) and I feel like the education of the soul is as important, or more so, than just educating their brains.

I believe that every child is a child of God and it is my responsibility to teach them morals and educate them with all the knowlegde I can through out the year that will help the State of Arizona see that they are being taught exactly what all other students around the state are being taught. Also it is my belief to teach all students that come under my care how to be a moral and ethical person.

I am a practicing fundamentalist Mormon. I live with a man and three other women. It affects my teaching in that I can relate to the students who are from families that believe in plural marriage. I don't teach the religion at school, but if questions or comments come up, I don't shy away from them either. Anyone who doesn't wish to participate in a discussion that may have to do with religion or is uncomfortable with it is welcome to sit outside for a minute or two while the question is answered. Conversely, I may take the person with the question outside and speak to them. I would do the same for any other religion, although I might have to do some research on
I believe that children were sent here from God for us to take care of, so I try to approach my teaching in that way. I have been called to teach; I try to do my job in a way that I believe God would approve.

I believe that we are all God's children, and as such I have a responsibility to all of the kids who come under my care. I love them; I want them all to succeed; and I take my work very seriously. It's not a job to me...it's not a paycheck. It's about making a difference in the world. It's about facilitating education, inspiring minds, and loving these kids as my brothers and sisters. I turn to my faith in God for guidance, support, encouragement, and inspiration. If I am successful in my work, it is through answered prayers, I take none of the credit, but thank Him for his continued love and support for me.

Faith, as a dynamic paradigm, must be a system that informs one's actions. My personal beliefs encompass a value for improvement and character progress: I believe this is largely accomplished through the acquisition of knowledge. Education, then, is the primary vehicle for personal improvement. I approach teaching my students from this perspective, and strive to instill in my students a value for education as the means of growth.

My faith expects me to always be improving my character based on the tenets of my religion. As an educator at Masada, I take my job very seriously because I have influence in the students' lives. I try to be a positive example they can look up to. I try to help the students understand that the things they learn at school is the foundation for when they become adults in society. Their actions have an effect no matter what, it can be a positive or negative effect based on their actions. I want to help them see how to be a person that brings good to the community and not some one that takes away and destroys the community.

I am not a member of the community's church (The Work) I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is, was, and always has been God. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, sin and its penalty, death, entered the world. An animal's blood was shed when God provided animal skins for them to wear. (The life of the flesh is in the blood.) Later, when the Children of Israel were trying to leave Egypt, the last marvelous sign which finally got Pharaoh to let them go was when the Death Angel passed over Egypt and killed the first-born of any house-hold that did not have the blood of the lamb God required on the door posts and mantel. It was a picture of what God does for us today. We are helpless before Him with our sin, which separates us from Him. The penalty for that sin, no matter what the sin, is death - eternal separation from God. God loves us and wants us to be with Him, so He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to take our place, crucified on a cross with all of our sin dumped on Him. Because He was a perfect man, He could do this for someone, and because He was still at the same time infinite God, He could do this for all mankind. When we realize our helplessness and cry out to Him for mercy and forgiveness, trusting in what He did to take our place, He gives us forgiveness and cleansing from sin as a free gift to us. No works we can do can be added to what He did for us -- the penalty is death, not works. However, when we ask him to forgive us and tell Him we want to receive His free gift of forgiveness and cleansing, He also gives us a new nature that wants to please God, and sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in the believer, both of which should show fruit in a person's life. It begins a special relationship with God that every person in this world needs. Our sin is the one thing that separates us from God, and the shed blood of Christ ("The Lamb of God") is the only thing that
can remove it. The believer, "under the blood of the Lamb," is rescued from sin's ultimate penalty and delivered from its bondage. I pray that wherever I go, people with whom I cross paths will see God's love and working in my life and realize they need a personal relationship with Him, cleansed from sin, as I have (not because I am great and wonderful, but because He is). It was not my intent to come here as a missionary, though I sometimes feel like one. I do not verbally instruct about my faith in Christ in the school. However, I pray daily during the moment of silence following the pledge, that God will help me, even with my imperfections, to respond to and be proactive toward my students and all those around me only in His righteousness, His wisdom, His justness, His mercifulness, His truth, and His love.

My faith teaches me that my whole life is about growth and progress in all areas of my life. It teaches me to be charitable to others and to look out for the welfare of others. These ideals as well as all the values of my faith motivate me to work to improve myself and the job I am doing; to become better at honing my teaching skills and to treat every student as a valuable individual who has something to share with me just as I have something to share with them. I feel compelled to excel and to help others excel where I can, through encouragement, support and genuine caring.

My religion does affect how I teach in that I encourage students to be true and honest and working members of our society. I teach them to value each other and work for the good of the whole and to always consider others, as adult members in our society strives to do, as well families that have more than one mother working together.

I believe that we are all God's children and I try to keep that in mind in my daily dealings with students, administrators, and other teachers/staff members.
APPENDIX B: IRB LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
Institutional Review Board
528 East Green Street
Suite 203
Champaign, IL 61820

February 21, 2013

Nicholas Burbules
EPOL
378 Education Bldg
1310 S Sixth St
M/C 708

RE: Dissertation Project: Educational Values and Practices of Fundamentalist Mormon Polygamists
IRB Protocol Number: 13373

Dear Dr. Burbules:

Your response to required modifications for the project entitled Dissertation Project: Educational Values and Practices of Fundamentalist Mormon Polygamists has satisfactorily addressed the concerns of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) and you are now free to proceed with the human subjects protocol. The UIUC IRB approved the protocol as described in your IRB-1 application with stipulated changes, as part of their monthly review. Certification of approval is available upon request. The expiration date for this protocol, UIUC number 13373, is 02/19/2014. The risk designation applied to your project is no more than minimal risk.

Copies of the attached date-stamped consent form(s) must be used in obtaining informed consent. If there is a need to revise or alter the consent form(s), please submit the revised form(s) for IRB review, approval, and date-stamping prior to use.

Under applicable regulations, no changes to procedures involving human subjects may be made without prior IRB review and approval. The regulations also require that you promptly notify the IRB of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated side effects, adverse reactions, and any injuries or complications that arise during the project.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our Web site at http://www.irb.illinois.edu.

Sincerely,

Anita Balgopal, Director, Institutional Review Board
Attachment(s)
c: Michael Hamilton

telephone (217) 333-2670 • fax (217) 333-0405 • email IRB@illinois.edu
WAIVER OF DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT (45CFR46.117(C))

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE TYPEWRITTEN, SIGNED, AND SUBMITTED AS SINGLE-SIDED HARD COPY. PLEASE, NO STAPLES!

Responsible Project Investigator (RPI):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name: Barbules</th>
<th>First Name: Nicholas</th>
<th>Dept. or Unit: EPOL</th>
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<td>Fax:</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:burbules@illinois.edu">burbules@illinois.edu</a></td>
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Project Title:

Dissertation Project: Educational Values and Practices of Fundamentalist Mormon Polygamists

To request a waiver of documentation (signature) of informed consent, please provide a response to EITHER of the following questions. Please be specific in explaining why either statement is true for this research.

(1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern. *Note: A waiver of documentation of informed consent is not permissible under this category if the research is subject to FDA regulation.

(2) The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. **

Many conversations between students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other community members take place on a daily basis in the schools that I will study. I can effectively and safely join this conversation by requesting oral assent from participants after sharing an information statement with them about the purpose and scope of the research. Oral assent protects participants from possible scrutiny based on signing their names, and should increase their confidence in the researcher and the research process. This also means that the researcher will not retain signed documents which community members might fear would be passed to law enforcement and result in investigation of them as polygamists. The study represents no more than minimal risk of harm because the conversations and observations I will conduct are like the interactions between staff, students, parents, and community members that informally occur on a regular basis in and around the school setting. For example, administrators often ask teachers about classroom instruction, student behavior, and their approach to teaching. Teachers, administrators, and parents often ask students about what they are learning. Administrators may be asked by district or state staff about their school's programs, or, in the case of private schools in fundamentalist Mormon communities, these same questions may be regularly and informally posed by interested community members. Such questions and responses represent no more than a minimal risk in the research context because they are paralleled by similar activities in the course of the every day conduct of educational activities. I will seek feedback from participants in individual interviews and focus groups during a subsequent face-to-face meeting after writing drafts of my study results, offering them an opportunity to comment, suggest corrections, and request changes to the draft document. This, too, should increase
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

participants' trust in the transparency of the field work process.

** In cases in which the documentation requirement is waived, the IRB may require the investigator to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research.

[Signature]

Responsible Principal Investigator

Date: 11-6-12

IRB Member Approval:

APPROVED

FEB 20 2013

UIUC INST REVIEW BOARD