

MORMON SEXUALITY IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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This paper summarizes some of the major findings from an on-going, cross-cultural study of premarital sex among college students begun in the late 1930s. Previous publications have developed theoretical propositions of interest to sociologists but without special attention to Latter-day Saint culture. Here I shall attempt to bring Mormon sex norms into focus, while contrasting them with those of non-Mormons.

Mormons Are More Conservative

It is to be expected that attitudes will influence behavior, although no perfect fit can be presumed. Since the Mormon sex norms covered by this review are more restrictive or conservative than those of most non-Mormons, there should be little surprise that the behavioral data show Mormon sexual behavior to be more conservative.

Table 1 compares data collected at nine colleges and universities from widely scattered cultures in Asia, Europe and the United States.¹

Table 1. Percentages Who Approve and Who Have Experienced
Premarital Coitus
(International Comparisons, 1968)

	Approval		Experience	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Europe				
(1) Denmark (state U.)	100.0 (1)*	100.0 (1)	94.7 (1)*	96.7 (1)*
(2) Sweden (state U.)	96.9 (2)	96.3 (2)	87.0 (3)	80.7 (2)
(3) Belgium (Catholic U.)	56.9 (4)	39.7 (4)	13.1 (7)	13.3 (7.5)
United States				
(4) South (Negro, state)	92.0 (3)	63.5 (3)	93.2 (2)	64.4 (3)
(5) Midwest I (state U.)	55.4 (5)	37.6 (5)	50.2 (4)	34.3 (4)
(6) Midwest II (Catholic U.)	50.0 (6)	—	33.2 (6)	—
(7) Midwest III (Mennonite)	12.5 (9)	13.2 (8)	3.8 (9)	13.3 (7.5)
(8) Intermountain	38.4 (8)	23.5 (7)	36.5 (5)	32.4 (5)
Mormon subgroup	22.4	16.4	23.2	25.0
Asia				
(9) Taiwan (state U.)	45.3 (7)	7.9 (9)	8.5 (8)	.8 (9)

*Numbers in parentheses show rank order.

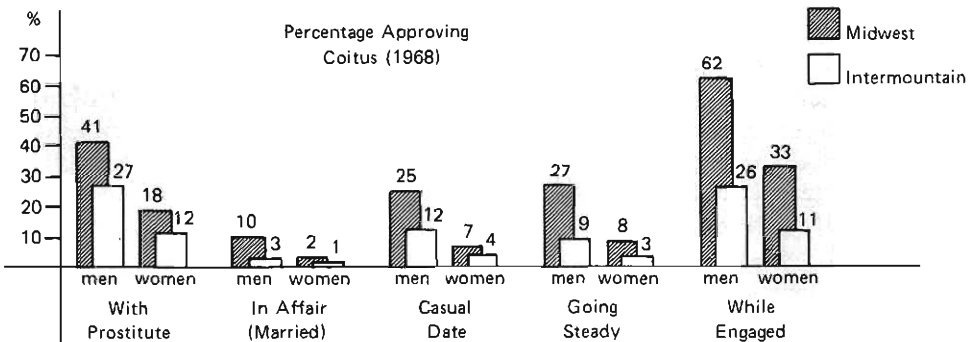
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As might be expected, differences among cultures are considerable. With two exceptions, rank order among the cultures is approximately the same for approval as it is for experience. The exceptions—where approval and experience rankings are inconsistent—are Belgium and Intermountain. Belgium, basically a Catholic sample, is high on approval but low on experience; while Intermountain, basically a Mormon sample, is low on approval but higher than expected on experience. This latter finding suggests that there may be a discrepancy between behavior and values within Mormon culture.

In the interest of brevity, discussions which follow are for the most part limited to comparisons between Midwest I and Intermountain groups. The Midwest I samples are from a largely non-Mormon area, but one that is basically religious. It reflects both agriculture and industry, and its people lean toward political conservatism. Although the Intermountain sample is primarily Mormon, it is similar to the Midwestern sample in most other respects. Both areas encompass one or more large Universities.²

When asked about circumstances under which premarital coitus might be acceptable, Intermountain respondents are consistently more conservative in all categories—though slightly less opposed to coitus with a prostitute than might have been expected.³

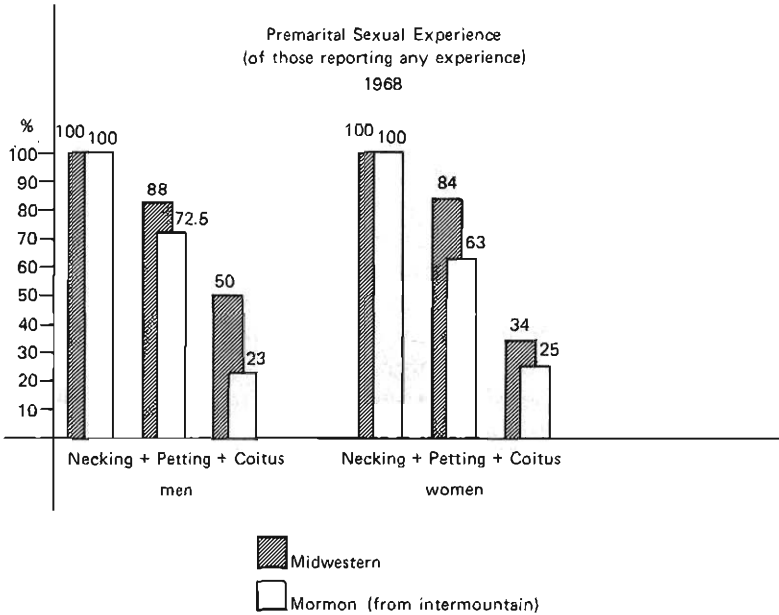
Figure 1



Apparently premarital coitus is apt to receive greatest approval when there either is no commitment (as in prostitution) or there is high commitment (when engaged).

Figure 2 shows respondents with any premarital sexual experience who had engaged in necking, petting, or coitus. Necking was defined as "light kissing and embracing"; petting as "any kind of body fondling below the neck but without sexual intercourse"; and coitus as "complete sexual intercourse." The percentages reflect how far respondents had progressed in intimacy up to the time of the survey.⁴

FIGURE 2



Not only do Mormon college students hold back from premarital intimacy more than do non-Mormons, but the women tend to hold back more than the men—which is a similar pattern to that found for attitudes toward sex. More women than men stop with necking or petting and fewer go on to coitus. Among those who do *not* go on to coitus the Mormons are less likely to have engaged in petting (64% of the men, 51% of the women) than are their Midwestern counterparts (about 75% of both men and women). For some unknown reason a larger than expected number of Mormon women respondents in my survey went on from petting to coitus. This distorted the expected cross-cultural petting pattern and also showed the Intermountain women students to be more coitally active than actually may have been the case in the population from which the sample was drawn.⁵

My data also suggest that living in close proximity serves to accentuate differences between Mormon and non-Mormon respondents. Non-Mormons with Mormon neighbors (in the Intermountain sample) are more liberal (e.g., in coital experience) than are other non-Mormons (Midwestern sample). Although my samples are small, and some of the differences found are not large, the consistency of pattern is remarkable. It holds across the board for men and women alike.

If this suggested relationship proves to be valid, the question is “Why.” Is selection operating through the conversion process, whereby more conservative non-Mormons in Mormon communities are more likely to be converted to Mormonism, leaving the remainder disproportionately weighted with liberal elements? Or does living among Mormons cause a counter reaction which makes some non-Mormons more liberal as an offset against the conservatism of the Church? Although I suspect that both processes are at work, the problem clearly needs further study.

Premarital coitus, of course, exposes participants to the hazards of premarital pregnancy; and since my Intermountain (Mormon dominated) samples were found to be low on the former, they might be expected to be disproportionately low on the latter as well. This is precisely what was found.⁶

Official government statistics regularly picture counties and states containing high proportions of Mormons as having below average illegitimacy rates. For example, one comparison drawing upon these sources reported the illegitimacy rate for Utah County, Utah, as being only about one-third of what it was for Tippecanoe County, Indiana.⁷

Illegitimacy refers to cases in which both conception and birth occur outside of marriage, while premarital pregnancy is used to designate cases in which the wedding takes place *after* the child is conceived, but *before* it is born. My research on child spacing has focused almost entirely upon the latter. The method (record linkage) has been to match marriage and birth records and then to calculate the interval separating marriages from the birth of the couple's first child. Where this interval is found to be abnormally short—say six months or less—one can infer premarital conception. Record linkage is more reliable than either the questionnaire or the interview for gathering sensitive data like this because the subjects cannot refuse to answer nor can they falsify answers. The researcher simply makes his calculations from the recorded sources.

My record linkage studies have shown substantially lower premarital pregnancy rates for the Mormon dominated (Utah and Salt Lake Counties, Utah) as compared with the non-Mormon samples (Tippecanoe County, Indiana). Percentage of first marital births within the first six months of marriage, for example, was only 3.4 in the first instance, but 9.4 in the latter; and percentages within the first nine months of marriage were 15.7 and 24.5 respectively. While the nine-month-interval comparison obviously mixes prematurity and premarital pregnancy, the six-month-interval comparison may be presumed to reflect premarital pregnancy alone.⁸

There is also a difference between Mormon and non-Mormon timing patterns in *postmarital* conception. Not only is Mormon culture low on premarital conception, it is high on *early* postmarital conception. In the Utah sample, for example, 25.2 percent of all first marital births occurred during the tenth through twelfth months of marriage (conception in the first three months) as compared with only 17.3 percent in the Indiana sample. The data also show proportionately more Utah than Indiana first births occurring during the second year of marriage, and fewer during all subsequent years. Thus, the Mormon pattern is one of reduced premarital conception along with an expanded emphasis upon conception occurring relatively soon after the wedding.

But Value-Behavior Discrepancy is Higher

Through socialization, society's norms become internalized within the personalities of its members—showing up as private attitudes and value positions. The public attitude has its private counterpart, and vice versa; social norms and personal values are two different sides of the same coin. The socialization process is seldom complete, however, and there always are unique or idiosyncratic aspects of the personality. Although the correlation may never be perfect, norm violation usually equates with violation of personal standards.

I first used the phrase "value-behavior discrepancy" with my 1958 data to describe differences between culturally held sex norms, on the one hand, and actual sexual behavior on the other. More Danish respondents, for example, approved premarital coitus than had actually experienced it, while the reverse held for the two American samples. Midwestern respondents showed only a slight excess of experience over approval, but the Intermountain (largely Mormon) picture showed great discrepancy—especially with women.⁹

By 1968 both American samples had moved toward a reduction in value-behavior discrepancy (due to a greater liberalization of attitudes than of behavior), but the position of each relative to the other remained essentially the same. It will be noted in Table 2 that the traditional restrictive standard (first column) is substantially higher in the largely Mormon sample as compared with the non-Mormon sample (a fact made doubly clear from the Intermountain with Midwest I comparisons of Table 1). But it also will be noted here that the *discrepancy categories* put Midwest high on approval-exceeding-experience while Intermountain is high on experience-exceeding-approval. (Although both of these patterns reveal a lack of congruence between values and behavior, it is the second that is of most concern, since this implies a breakdown of control and may be presumed to result in an anguish of conscience.)

Table 2. Premarital Coitus Approval-Experience Combinations
(Percentages are from never-married respondents, 1968)¹⁰

	Value-Behavior Congruence		Value-Behavior Discrepancy	
	Disapproval and no experience	Approval and experience	Approval but no experience	Disapproval but experience
Intermountain				
Men (total)	50.0	28.2	14.1	7.6
Dating without commitment	50.8	26.2	14.8	8.1
Going steady or engaged	48.4	32.2	12.9	6.5
Women (total)	65.9	18.7	3.3	12.1
Dating without commitment	76.1	15.2	4.3	4.3
Going steady or engaged	55.6	22.2	2.2	20.0
Midwest				
Men (total)	37.7	39.2	16.2	6.9
Dating without commitment	37.1	41.2	16.4	5.2
Going steady or engaged	38.3	37.4	15.9	8.4
Women (total)	57.3	24.8	10.6	7.3
Dating without commitment	71.1	10.5	14.5	3.9
Going steady or engaged	50.0	32.3	8.5	9.2

In each of the comparisons more of the Intermountain than Midwestern respondents violated their own standards when they engaged in coitus without being married. This underlines the greater value-behavior discrepancy in the Mormon culture. (Notice, however, that Intermountain respondents were more likely to have had coital experience if they approved it than were the Midwesterners.)

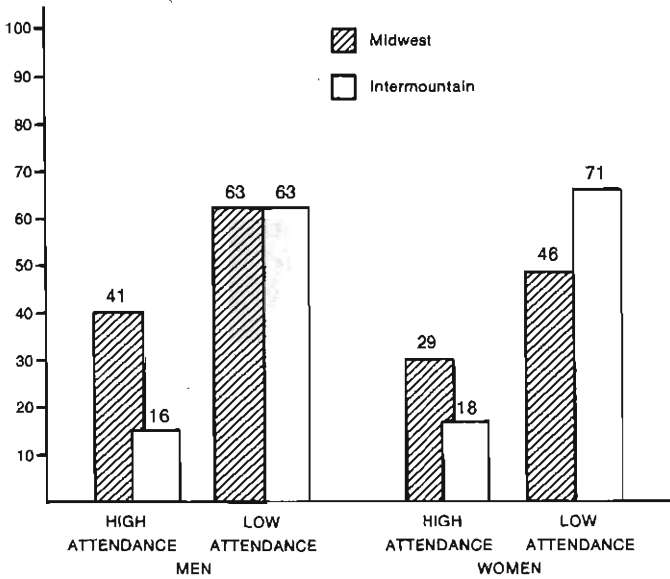
Similarly, more women than men and more of the committed (e.g., engaged) than uncommitted showed this type of discrepancy—in both cultures. Since women generally are more conservative in sexual matters than men, it is understandable that proportionately more of them might feel pressured into coitus and then be disapproving about what they had done.

The fact that it is the committed who most frequently violate their own standards suggests that being committed either makes one more conservative or makes one more vulnerable to sexual temptation. It may be that both of these tendencies are in operation. Those going steady or engaged seem to be thrown off guard to some extent by virtue of their commitments to each other; at the same time they appear to be taking their values more seriously and become more concerned when they step over the boundaries.

The problem of value-behavior discrepancy (of the experience-exceeding-approval variety) is clearly greatest with women and, most especially, with the Intermountain women who are either going steady or engaged. Perhaps a new look should be taken at the kinds of pressures the Mormon woman finds herself under when she commits herself to love.

Thus far it has been noted that Mormon culture is high on sexual conservatism and low on sexual deviancy, while at the same time showing above average value-behavior discrepancy. Perhaps it is not just denominational affiliation that makes the difference, but quality or intensity of devotion as well. Figure 3 compares premarital coital experience with frequency of Church attendance.¹¹

FIGURE 3



It can be seen that premarital coital experience is substantially greater among those who attend church infrequently. This is true of both men and women, and within both the Intermountain and Midwestern cultures. The effect of religious activity, however, was found to be greater for Intermountain than Midwestern respondents. It would appear that for *active* members, the Mormon faith is more influential than most other faiths in limiting premarital sexual activity; inactive Mormons, however, are no more restrained than non-Mormons.

And Negative Accompaniments are Greater

Mormon sex norms are among the strictest in the world, sometimes even placing unchastity next to murder. Not unexpectedly, then, the Intermountain respondents who had engaged in premarital coitus more often reported unpleasant feelings following their first experience.¹² They also reported more frequently that the first experience was either forced or was engaged in from a feeling of obligation.¹³ (Characteristically these percentages were higher for women in both categories.) The sexually experienced Intermountain respondents also were more likely to have been without contraception.¹⁴

I also found that sexually experienced Intermountain respondents were more likely to have been drinking before their first premarital experience than were the Midwesterners.¹⁵ Has the heavy emphasis the Church places on the Word of Wisdom led some to equate it with the chastity code? Perhaps having "fallen" in one direction, a young person finds it easier to "fall" in another. Or perhaps the Intermountain group was less able to control the effects of alcohol.

It is a well-recognized phenomenon that strict controls often lead to rebellion on the part of some, and to excesses among many who do break loose. Chafing under restraints they seek freedom; unaccustomed to freedom, they are not prepared to cope with it. Condemned for small or first-time offenses, they think, "Having the name, I may as well play the game."¹⁶

To measure sexual promiscuity, I compared the percentages of those who had extended their premarital contacts to more than one partner. The percentage is generally higher for Intermountain respondents than for Midwesterners (see Figure 5 below), but I suggest that this be viewed with caution because it did not hold for men in 1958, and because some other measures seem to contradict it.¹⁷

My record linkage data show that premaritally pregnant couples in Utah, more than in Indiana, tend to hurry up the wedding and subsequently are divorced. Estimated dates of conception can be determined by subtracting the normal gestation period (266 days) from the first child's birth date. Both of my American samples—in contrast to the Danish group, which showed virtually no hurried weddings—gave evidence of having stepped up the wedding dates after coitus. Among the Midwesterners, the tendency was to get married as soon as possible after pregnancy had been diagnosed (about two months after conception); whereas with the Intermountain group there was also the tendency to hurry into marriage after coitus without waiting for pregnancy. I speculate that Mormon couples with their strict sex codes are more sensitive to religious and social pressures. Guilt and fear may compel the offenders into marriage once the law of chastity has been broken.¹⁸

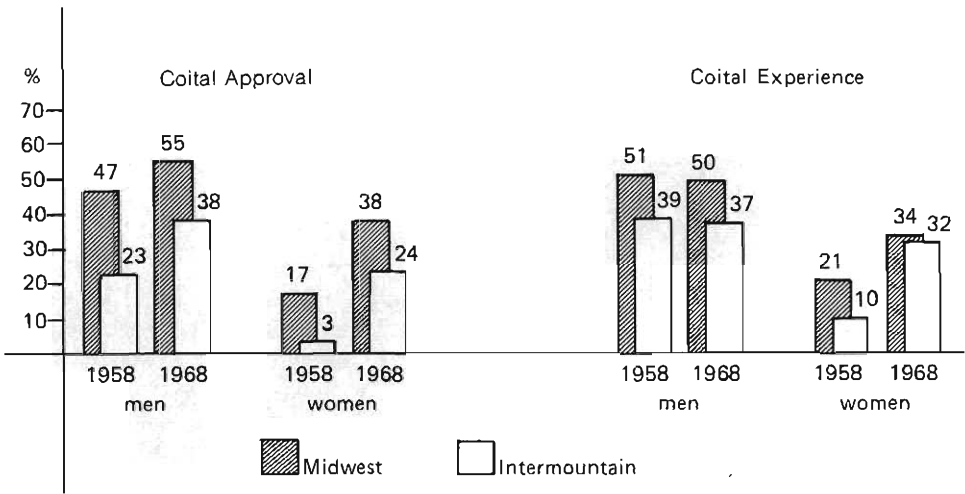
I then found higher divorce rates among premarital conceivers in each of the three cultures. Divorce rate differentials between pre- and post-marital conceivers were almost insignificant in the Danish culture; somewhat higher in the Midwestern culture; and highest of all in the Intermountain culture—evidence that in the Mormon setting premarital pregnancy is highly associated with divorce.¹⁹ It may be that a larger proportion of ill-prepared Mormon couples are getting married just because they are pregnant, but it may also be true that Mormon culture puts offenders under greater strain.²⁰

Thus, while restrictive sex norms do put a damper on disapproved behavior, they may also be causing some young people who have already entered forbidden territory to rebound in an unintended direction. Norms that paint life either black or white provide little to guide or to stabilize the offender.²¹

Changes, 1958–1968

From a mass of data, I have selected four items to illustrate changes over a ten year period, 1958–1968.²² Figure 4 pictures approval and experience trends.

FIGURE 4



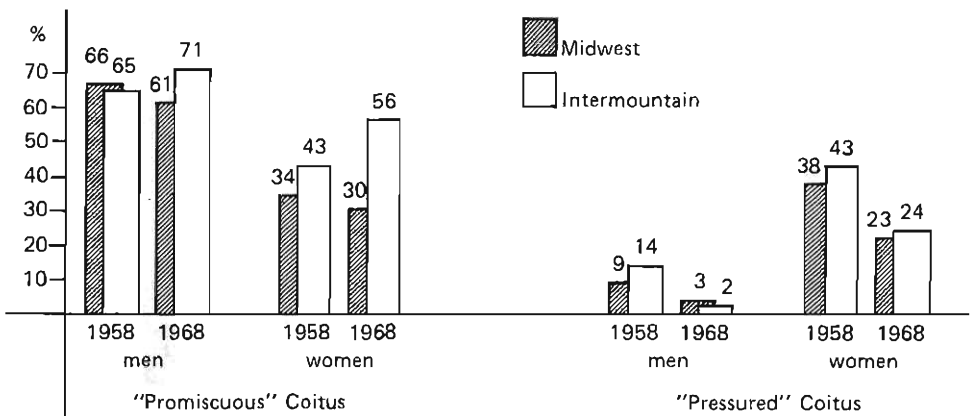
These trends show that the movement was toward more acceptance and greater sexual activity, especially among the women students. Although the women were still somewhat more conservative, the patterns for men and women were converging.²³ Intermountain college men had liberalized their attitudes to a greater extent than Midwestern men, while attitudes of women remained in approximately the same relationship. Although Intermountain women became more liberal in their actual experience than did Midwestern women, the men's percentages remained static. It would seem, then, that Intermountain sexual values and practices were becoming secularized more rapidly than in the non-Mormon environment, thereby blurring the distinctions between them.²⁴

While in 1958 more respondents from both cultures experienced than approved premarital coitus, by 1968 this picture had reversed. The exception was Intermountain women students. Their values and behavior both liberalized as much or more than the others, but these changes paralleled each other, so

that the relationship between them remained the same. This is the group that seemed out of character by having lower than expected percentages for those who had progressed only to petting, along with a higher than expected coital experience percentage. This is the only group to retain a clear discrepancy between experience and expressed values.

Except for the Intermountain women, then, the responses revealed a greater balance between attitude and behavior in 1968 than in 1958. Traditional moralists are apt to see this trend as an unfortunate lifting of deterrents to sex; mental hygienists may welcome it for its guilt-reducing effects.

FIGURE 5



As Figure 5 shows, the trend between 1958 and 1968 has been for sexual promiscuity (pre-marital sexual experience with more than one partner) to decrease somewhat for Midwestern respondents, but to increase for Intermountain men and women, especially the latter. Though these are percentages of those with some pre-marital coital experience (rather than all respondents), when one recalls that total pre-marital coital experience has also increased, it is apparent that there has been a substantial increase in total promiscuity. These developments suggest the need for further study—and corrective guidelines.

The trend over the decade was toward a decrease in pressured coitus (i.e., either forced, or induced by a feeling of obligation) for both men and women, and within both the Intermountain and Midwestern cultures (also Figure 5). This decrease was greater for women than men (an "intersex convergence") and greater for Intermountain than Midwestern respondents (a "cross-cultural convergence"). I definitely think that this trend derives from the reduction in the value-behavior discrepancy; it may therefore lessen the guilt traditionally associated with premarital sex.²⁵

Unfinished Business

My data have revealed conditions that should be a source of both satisfaction and concern for Latter-day Saints. They show Mormons to be considerably more conservative than non-Mormons: fewer of them accept open pornography, fewer of them like the idea of marrying a non-virgin,²⁶ fewer approve either petting or coitus before marriage, fewer actually engage in premarital coitus or become pregnant. These values line up with gospel teachings, and they demonstrate that the Church controls are reasonably effective.

There are sexual problems within Mormon culture, however, which need further attention. Some of these are shared with the general culture, but others are unique, in intensity if not in kind. Although Mormon rates are lower, it might be argued that the one-fourth of students with premarital coital experience and the small percentage who are premaritally pregnant still represent too high a number.

Even more disconcerting are other problems. My data suggest that Mormons are somewhat more promiscuous when they *do* have premarital coitus, that they may be expected to step up the wedding day following coitus, and are more divorce-prone than others in cases involving premarital pregnancy. They are also less likely to use contraception during their first experience, more likely to have felt "forced," and are more likely to suffer unpleasant feelings afterward.²⁷

Mormons more than others who engage in premarital sex are violating their personal standards and those of the Church. The undesirable side effects accompanying these violations appear to be greater than among non-Mormons. It is important to ask whether there is some way to maintain the Church's high standards, yet minimize the unwanted effects of a rigid sex code. Society can either control behavior to fit standards, or adjust standards to fit behavior. I prefer a combination of the two—reinforcing as many positive supports of the chastity norm as feasible while acknowledging that there will always be an irreducible minimum of deviance. I, therefore, favor a continuous reexamination of the framework, not by lowering standards, but by making procedural adjustments to keep standards meaningful and effective.

Our young people are too important to the Church, and marriage too important an institution, to allow a disproportionate number of the youth to make hasty decisions because in a weak moment they "went all the way." This is not to minimize the gravity of sexual indiscretions; rather, it is meant to emphasize the importance of marriage. It must not be entered into out of guilt or simple passion. Even when there is premarital pregnancy, marriage may not be the most promising alternative. Certainly coitus without pregnancy or even sexual passion without coitus do not justify hasty marriages. When young Mormons marry hastily, they too often pay the heavy price of failure in their marriages.²⁸

I believe that young Mormons can be helped to understand their own sexual nature and its relationship to the Gospel plan. Instructions and specific guidelines, rather than frightening or vague exhortations, can foster positive attitudes, meaningful social relationships, and effective self-control. Sex can be incorporated into one's life and can be given appropriate expression while being held in check. Standards are meant to be kept, but the buttresses of fear and guilt can be built too high and too wide, trapping young people between

a sensuous society on the one hand, and a judgmental, inflexible sex code on the other. The Gospel can and should give meaning to the decisions a young person faces while at the same time allowing the healing catharsis of repentance.

NOTES

¹For the most part the study was based on questionnaires administered in sociology classes and other social science classes, for which response rates were very high. Completed sample size for each culture, in the order listed (men, women) are as follows: 134, 61; 206, 250; 260, 120; 104, 175; 245, 238; 291, 12; 82, 145; 115, 105 (Mormons included); 106, 127—a total of 2776 respondents.

²Although the majority of the Intermountain sample was Latter-day Saint (Mormon) some 32 men and 15 women did list another church, and in addition 14 men and 4 women failed to specify religion. When categories for the Mormon subgroup were large enough to compare with the Midwestern respondents, this has been done; otherwise, as indicated in the text, all comparisons are based on the entire Intermountain response.

The interested reader may turn to some of the references listed in the bibliography for further amplification, including discussions of research limitations.

³See reference 23, Chapter 2, of the bibliography listed below for further discussion.

⁴Respondents were asked to indicate which of necking, petting, and coitus represented the most advanced stage of their own premarital experience. For Figure 2, percentages in all three categories have been added to produce the necking percentages, and percentages in the last two categories have been added to produce the petting percentages—on the assumption that each advanced intimacy level implies the lower-level intimacies as preliminaries. Although there may be exceptions which, strictly speaking, would partially invalidate this assumption (experience with a prostitute, for example) it seems generally true and therefore appropriate for the cross-sex and cross-cultural comparisons as presented.

⁵Though relatively fewer Mormons engage in petting than their Midwestern counterparts, it is worth noting that more Mormons reported the final stage of their premarital intimacy to be petting (49.3% for men, 38.1% for women) than either necking (27.5%, 36.9%, respectively) or coitus (23.2%, 25.0%). The contrasting pattern is that of Scandinavia, where coital rates are high and necking, petting, and coitus are seen as belonging together as a single “package.” Although the merits and disadvantages of these two systems might be debated, at least we can recognize that by drawing a sharp line separating coitus from the preliminary intimacies that lead up to it, we perhaps may be overstressing the importance of *technical* chastity while inviting the potential frustrations and pressures of petting as the “terminal” activity. (cf. reference 24:22–24 below).

⁶See references 1, 3, 9, 11, 14, 16, and 20 in bibliography below.

⁷Reference 11:33 below.

⁸Reference 16:121 below.

⁹Reference 28:70–72 below.

¹⁰See references 28, 29:621–624 below. Table 2 considers only the never-married portions of the samples (the married, widowed, and divorced excluded). Numbers of respondents in this category are, from top to bottom: 92, 61, 31; 91, 46, 45; 204, 97, 107; 218, 76, 142.

Separate calculations for percentages of the *sexually experienced* (combined second and fourth columns) who disapproved such experience (fourth column) revealed the following, for males and females respectively: Midwest 14.9, 22.9; Intermountain 21.2, 39.3.

¹¹Each of the samples divided about equally between those whose church attendance over the past year was less than once a month, and those who attended once a month or more. For present purposes, I have labeled the first category “low attendance” and the second “high attendance” (meaning high only in a relative sense). In my Intermountain sample 55.7 percent of the males and 72.5 percent of the females turned out to be high attenders (as defined), compared with 57.3 percent and 67.8 percent respectively in my Midwestern sample.

My record linkage data give added support to the claim that religious conformity and sex-norm conformity go together. They show significantly lower premarital pregnancy percentages for couples married by a religious ceremony, in contrast to a civil ceremony, regardless of the denomination or the culture studied; and there is almost zero premarital pregnancy in the temple-marrying LDS group (11:34–35; 26:29–31).

Kinsey found that religion is the "most important factor in restricting premarital activity in the United States." He reported little difference among the denominations, but considerable difference between the religiously active or devout on the one hand and those less active or devout on the other. The former showed up with substantially lower rates on all of the socially disapproved forms of sexual behavior that Kinsey studied. See Alfred C. Kinsey, *et. al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1953), pp. 324, 686–687 and *passim*.

¹²The eight items constituting the negative-feelings index are as follows: guilt, remorse, disgust, tenseness, fear of religious punishment, fear of others knowing, fear of pregnancy, and fear of disease. Combined percentages from 1968 data for Intermountain and Midwestern respondents respectively are men, 56.4 and 40.7; women, 76.0 and 67.3.

¹³Data presented in Figure 5.

¹⁴

	Intermountain sample		Midwestern sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1958 Data				
No contraception	73.0	100.0	53.2	55.2
1968 Data				
No contraception	69.0	65.6	56.9	56.3

¹⁵

	Intermountain sample		Midwestern sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1958 Data				
Drinking	32.4	0.0	22.4	24.1
1968 Data				
Drinking	34.2	30.0	28.3	13.6

¹⁶Strauss and Bacon reported that the Mormon college students of their samples had the lowest incidence of drinking, compared with students from other church groups, but that, of the drinkers, the Mormons had a disproportionately high rate of alcoholism. This is essentially the same relationship reported for premarital sex. See Robert Strauss and Sheldon D. Bacon, *Drinking in College* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

¹⁷See reference 29:624–625 below.

¹⁸See 11:35–36; 14:275–278; 18:64–66 below.

¹⁹Percentage differences between divorce rates of premarital and postmarital conceivers—for samples adjusted to control for marriage duration—turned out to be 8.7 for the Danish, 116.7 for the Midwestern, and 224.5 for the Intermountain. (See 16:126 below).

²⁰See 14:276–278, 16:119–129 below.

²¹Cf. 13:136–137.

²²Cf. 23, 29.

²³Although I have data no more recent than 1968 for the Intermountain sample, Leonor B. Johnson repeated the study in the same Midwestern university during the 1972–73 school year ("Afro-American Premarital Sexual Attitudes and Behavior: A Comparison with Midwestern and Scandinavian Whites." Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1974). She reported coital experience percentages of 56 and 50 for Midwestern males and females, respectively. When these are seen alongside the corresponding percentages of 50 and 34 for 1968, and 51 and 21 for 1958 (Figure 4), they show a recent upward trend for males. They seem to demonstrate that female liberalization continues and that the two sexes continue to converge. My hunch is that this is also true of Mormon culture.

²⁴There is some evidence to the contrary, however. Kenneth L. Cannon and I (in an unfinished study comparing 1935 with 1973 ethical and religious norms among Mormon youth) are finding shifts toward greater orthodoxy—the opposite of secularization. Wilford Smith, elsewhere in this issue, reports a movement toward greater chastity for frequent church attending Mormons. But his non-Mormons and infrequent-attending Mormons reflect an opposite trend. It seems reasonable to assume that many of the patterns revealed by my own data apply only (or largely) to the

religiously inactive, and that the remainder may be moving away from secular norms toward religious conformity. Future research must take this into account.

²⁵My data show percentages feeling "guilt or remorse" following first premarital coitus to have decreased between 1958 and 1968 in every category: from 29.7 to 7.1 for Intermountain males, from 28.6 to 9.1 for Intermountain females, from 12.1 to 6.6 for Midwestern males, and from 31.0 to 11.1 for Midwestern females.

²⁶Percentages of the 1968 samples opposing the censorship of pornography were 49.3 and 52.3 (for men and women respectively) in the Mormon subgroup of the Intermountain sample, as compared with 71.0 and 58.6 in the Midwest sample. For these same categories, percentages accepting the non-virginity of a marriage partner were 14.5 and 20.0, compared with 24.6 and 43.8.

²⁷Certain of these problem areas have been rather clearly delineated by the data, while others have received only tenuous support. But even as hypotheses requiring further testing—which is all I intend them to be at this stage of research—they can provide valuable clues for understanding the forces affecting sexual patterns within Mormon culture.

²⁸Cf. 16, 19, 26 below. Utah is near the top in the nation in percentage of teenage marriages. It is also known that more teenagers become premaritally pregnant than do older couples, and that disproportionate numbers of both teenage marriages and premaritally pregnant marriages end in divorce.

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There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
yea, four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air;
the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the
midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.

Proverbs 30:18-19 (Solomon speaking)