

# THE PAUL DUNN STORIES

ON 16 FEBRUARY 1991, THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC reported that many of Elder Paul H. Dunn's baseball and war stories had serious factual problems. The highlights of the report were that Harold Brown did not die in Dunn's arms as Dunn had repeatedly told audiences, but is still living in Odessa, Missouri; and that Dunn never played for the St. Louis Cardinals. The story was printed in newspapers across the nation and was widely discussed by the Utah Saints. Some were angry at Elder Dunn; others defended him. Interestingly, some of the strongest hostility was directed toward Lynn Packer, the reporter who uncovered the story and sold his research to the *Republic* and to a Salt Lake television station. There was also a lot of finger pointing among the press as to why the Utah media sat on the story and waited for the *Republic* to break it.

In a statement issued at the time of the *Republic* story, the LDS church stated that it could not confirm the allegations in the *Republic*. It did affirm that Dunn was made an emeritus general authority for health reasons. Reporters contacted Dunn, who expressed sorrow over the pain the revelations had caused the Church and said his stories were created simply to illustrate moral points, as did Jesus' parables.

Newspapers printed numerous letters to the

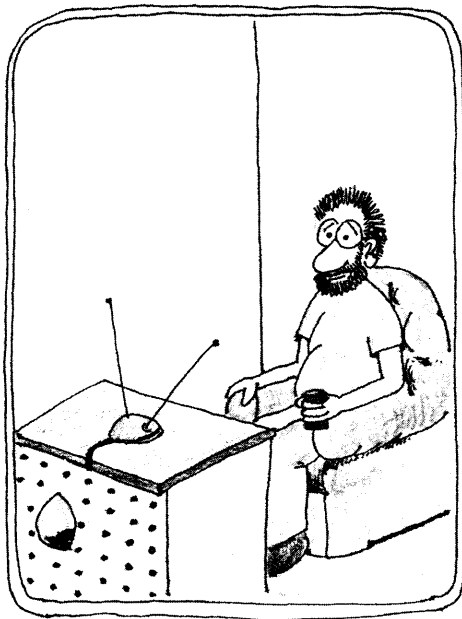
editor; some featured cartoons and editorials. The *Davis County Clipper*, headquartered in the conservative Utah Mormon community of Bountiful, ran strong critical opinion columns and cartoons.

As expected, the Mormon folk culture immediately began assuaging the tension of the event through humor. Perhaps the most common joke was about document forger Mark Hofmann making Paul Dunn Cardinals baseball cards. Other jokes placed Dunn in unlikely settings, such as catching BYU Heisman quarterback Ty Detmer's first touch-down pass. Several individuals submitted unsolicited cartoons to SUNSTONE.

SUNSTONE believes that this event should be confronted so as not to be forgotten and perhaps repeated. The articles we have gathered concerning the Paul Dunn episode are grouped into three general sections: (1) reprints of news accounts which reported the event, including the original *Arizona Republic* story; (2) an edited version of the original Lynn Packer story, which he wrote for the 1989 Salt Lake Sunstone symposium but did not give because SUNSTONE felt the story needed to be put into a broader context; and (3) essays responding to the episode. Examples of the community's effort to deal with the event through humor are interspersed throughout the articles.

Although this episode is a painful one, we believe that a sympathetic yet thorough inquiry into the matter is salutary, helping us to become a stronger and more honest community.

THE EDITORS



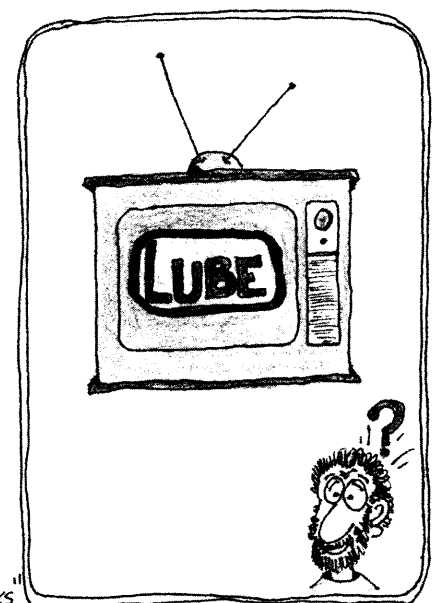
(on the TV.)

"In 1945 a young man was sent to fight in Okinawa."



It was literally a 100 yard dash for life!

"Upon returning, he embellished a few stories and became successful giving inspirational talks and writing books."



"Some people want to change the facts... we just want to change your oil."

# MORMON LEADER ADMITS EXAGGERATING STORIES

By Richard R. Robertson  
*The Arizona Republic*, 16 February 1991

SALT LAKE CITY—Among Mormons, Elder Paul H. Dunn is a popular teacher, author and role model. As a prominent leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for more than 25 years, he has told countless inspirational stories about his life:

Like the time his best friend died in his arms during a World War II battle, while imploring Dunn to teach America's youth about patriotism.

Or how God protected him as enemy machine-gun bullets ripped away his clothing, gear and helmet without ever touching his skin.

Or how perseverance and Mormon values led him to play major-league baseball for the St. Louis Cardinals.

But these stories are not true.

Dunn's "dead" best friend isn't dead; only the heel of Dunn's boot caught a bullet; and he never played for the St. Louis Cardinals or any other major-league team.

Dunn acknowledged that those stories and others were untrue, but he defends fabrications as necessary to illustrate his theological and moral points.

He compares his stories to the parables told by Jesus—acknowledging, however, that Jesus' parables weren't about himself.

One of the Mormons' "Thirteen Articles of Faith" deals with honesty.

Other Mormon leaders apparently were concerned about this in September 1989, because, within weeks of investigating allegations that his war and sports stories were fabricated, they quietly placed Dunn, 66, on "emeritus" status "for health reasons."

As a "general authority" since 1964, Dunn had been among the top 90 men who govern the 7.3 million-member world-wide church.

The church also pressured Salt Lake City freelance writer Lynn Packer, a Mormon, not to publish stories about Dunn's fabrications. In the fall, after the church had terminated Packer's teaching contract at Brigham Young University for pursuing the story, he provided information he has collected over the past four years to *The Republic*.

Despite Dunn's "retirement," his grandfatherly demeanor and down-home, self-deprecating storytelling style continue to make him a popular public speaker and author.

He also remains the most prolific author among current and former church leaders. He receives royalties from 23 inspirational cassette tapes and 28 books, many of which contain his exaggerated war and baseball stories. They are among the more popular items in LDS bookstores.

Relying partly on his reputation as a former professional athlete, Dunn also is promoting his new business, Sports-Values Training Centers, which brings professional athletes and teenage boys together for inspirational workshops. One such workshop is tentatively planned in Mesa for this spring.

Dunn, 66, who has a doctorate in education, said he doesn't consider it deceitful to exaggerate or alter facts.

He said his technique is to "combine" elements of several true stories to create a single story that will better convey a message and capture an audience's interest.

In the case of his false claim to have played for the St. Louis Cardinals, he said youngsters can relate better to a major-league team than to the farm teams for which he briefly played.

"The combining of stories seems justifiable in terms of illustrating a point. My motives are pure and innocent," Dunn said during an interview in Salt Lake City attended by his attorney and a friend.

"I haven't purposely tried to embellish or rewrite history. I've tried to illustrate points that

was not advised of its conclusions. He denied that it was connected to his retirement, which he insisted was for poor health that has since improved.

FIRE FOR CRITICIZING  
ELDER

At the same time, however, the university terminated Packer's teaching contract, in part because he wanted to publish a story about his findings.

Gordon Whiting, then chairman of the BYU communications department, had warned Packer in a memo that "publication of

## FIRST PRESIDENCY STATEMENT

The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued the following statement Friday:

"In consideration of factors of age and health, Elder Paul H. Dunn was given emeritus status on Sept. 30, 1989, along with seven other General Authorities.

"We have had no way of fully or finally verifying the accuracy or inaccuracy of the current allegations or accounts that are now under challenge. We are naturally concerned about the well-being of Elder Dunn and his family during this stressful time.

"We appreciate the service Elder Dunn has given and the sacrifices he and his family have made, often at the cost of their own comfort and health." (*Deseret News*, Saturday, February 16, 1991)

would create interest," Dunn explained, "Combining war stories is simply putting history in little, finer packages."

But concerns about Dunn's rewriting of history prompted BYU faculty editors to delete segments about Dunn from a now-released book about Mormon soldiers, titled *A Time to Kill: Reflections of War*.

"Elder Dunn's stories didn't match military history documents," explained one of the editors, Grant P. Skabelund.

And Dunn's retirement occurred within two weeks of the probe into his storytelling practices by top church officials, who had been given copies of Packer's findings.

Dunn said he cooperated with the church's investigation but

the Paul Dunn article will damage the church will damage the university, will damage the department and will damage you."

Whiting acknowledged that Packer's contract was not renewed for the 1990-91 school year in part because Packer was violating church and university policies that prohibit public criticism of church leaders, even if the criticism is true.

BUDDY'S STIRRING  
LAST WORDS

One of Dunn's most dramatic embellished stories, told on a tape titled *War Experiences*, is about the combat death of his closest wartime buddy, Harold Lester Brown.

Dunn, who was a private in an anti-tank platoon, vividly described how he and Brown were

## FURTHER STORIES OF ELDER'S CAREER

ELDER PAUL H. DUNN'S exaggerated stories mention that he:

- Was the sole survivor among 11 infantrymen in a 100-yard race against death, during which one burst of machine-gun fire ripped his right boot off, another tore off his ammunition and canteen belt and yet another split his helmet in half—all without wounding him.
- Kept a Japanese prisoner from being butchered by GIs bent on revenge for the torture-slayings of American soldiers.
- Wrestled a dynamite pack off a child kamikaze infiltrator, saving himself and the child.
- Miraculously survived being run over by an enemy tank, while others were crushed.
- Was one of only six in his 1,000-man combat group who survived, and was the only one of the six who wasn't wounded.

He has since acknowledged that only 30 soldiers in his unit died during the entire war, but he said the exaggeration of numbers is unimportant.

"The thing I'm trying to say is that there was a power higher than my own . . . a wonderful spiritual force out there."

pinned down for the night in separate foxholes on Okinawa.

"Unfortunately, one of the (mortar) shells caught a direct hit on the foxhole of my friend . . . and I could hear him call out when that shell first hit," Dunn recounted. He said he listened all night to Brown's moans, while fighting off "two or three banzai attacks and artillery attacks."

At daybreak, Dunn said, he was able to rush to his friend's rain-filled foxhole, where he found Brown's head barely above the water.

"How in the world he lived that night I don't know. I counted, after his death, 67 shrapnel wounds, some large enough where you could put your whole hand in," Dunn said.

Brown's last words, as recounted by Dunn, were:

"I know this is the end. . . . If you ever have an opportunity . . . to talk to the young people of America, will you tell them for me that it's a privilege to lay down my life for them?"

"And with that testimony on his lips, he died!"

### FRIEND NEVER HEARD STORY

The problem with the story, Packer discovered, is that Brown didn't die on Okinawa.

In fact, he hasn't died yet.

Brown said from his home in Odessa, Mo., that he was perplexed by Dunn's story.

"Maybe he got me mixed up with someone else," Brown speculated, although he noted that he and Dunn have stayed in contact since the war—even visiting occasionally and exchanging Christmas cards.

Dunn never has mentioned the story to him, he said.

Dunn didn't get mixed up. It's

"combined," he said.

He said he based the story loosely on the death of another soldier, Ralph Cocroft, who was mortally wounded in a mortar attack that Dunn said he witnessed.

Cocroft didn't live through the night or die in his arms, Dunn admitted.

Military records confirm that Cocroft died on Okinawa on May 15, 1945.

"I came home many months later, talking to kids in a teaching situation," Dunn said. "All I did was take Harold Brown's relationship (with me) and combine it with Ralph Cocroft's dying."

Once he had told the fabricated version of the story, Dunn said, he couldn't change it.

"Rather than go back and change something where it would be deceitful, I just kept it the same," he explained.

### LEGENDS OF

#### BASEBALL, FAMILY

Dunn's baseball stories are as legendary as his war stories.

He has written and told audiences that he signed a contract to play for the St. Louis Cardinals after graduating from high school.

the St. Louis Cardinals. Now it takes a lot of preparation to become a big-league ball player," he wrote in one book, *You & Your World*.

But in truth, Dunn never played a game for the St. Louis Cardinals or any major-league team.

The closest he came was playing six weeks "off-roster" in several practice and exhibition games in 1942 for the Pocatello (Idaho) Cardinals, a St. Louis Cardinal farm team. He was cut.

Baseball records show that Dunn signed a professional player contract in 1947 with the Ontario Orioles, in California's "Class C" Sunset League. But he practiced only a few weeks, played only in the first regular game and then was released.

Most of Dunn's recent books and tapes contain no references to either using war or baseball. He said he stopped using them because his audiences want to hear new material.

He uses new stories, including many humorous and touching ones about his family, to illustrate his religious points.

Some of those stories, too, are "combined," Dunn acknowledged.



# DUNN STORY PROVES COSTLY FOR VETERAN JOURNALIST

By Vern Anderson  
Associated Press Writer  
*Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 February 1991

LYNN PACKER was serving a Mormon mission in Germany in 1964 when he heard 39-year-old Paul H. Dunn had been appointed to the church's hierarchy.

"I clearly remember my impression—youthful, Southern California, baseball player, and it's about time. Here's someone we can identify with. It says youth. It says real person," Packer recalled.

More than a quarter century later, the veteran broadcast journalist's reminiscence is rich in irony.

For it was Packer's relentless pursuit of Dunn over most of the 1980s that led to Saturday's revelation by the *Arizona Republic*: the churchman had fabricated many of the personal war and baseball stories that had fed his reputation as the faith's most spellbinding speaker and popular author.

Dunn, 66, was placed on emeritus status on Oct. 1, 1989, for what the church said were "factors of age and health." The church said it had no way of verifying the accuracy of the *Republic* story.

Packer himself paid a high professional price for the research on Dunn that he sold to the *Republic*, only a small portion of which formed the basis of the newspaper's story.

He ultimately lost his teaching position at church-owned Brigham Young University and today, working on a one-year contract at the University of Dortmund in Germany, feels beaten "to a pulp."

Why did the story that *Republic* reporter Richard Robertson

calls "the worst-kept secret in Salt Lake" take so long to come out?

The answer appears to lie in the church's efforts to avoid a scandal and in Packer's own vulnerability as a BYU employee without tenure whose wife had been diagnosed with cancer early in 1987.

The combination led, on Sept. 30, 1987, to a "deal" between Packer and a "high church official" in which he withdrew the story he had submitted to United Press International in exchange for a guarantee of continued employment at BYU, according to Packer.

Packer declined to identify the official, but has told others it was his uncle, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

"Lynn claims he had an agreement with his uncle through his father," said BYU spokesman Paul Richards. "That the agreement fell apart when he continued to ask questions about Paul Dunn. When he continued to ask questions, Elder Packer felt he had not been true to the agreement."

Through spokesman Jerry Cahill, Boyd Packer said Wednesday, "There was nothing ever stated. It never happened. There was no such agreement that Lynn Packer would be retained in exchange for no publication."

In 1986, Lynn Packer had been dividing his time since 1981 between reporting at KSL-TV and teaching journalism at BYU. When he lost the KSL job, he decided to freelance a story on

Dunn's involvement with AFCO Enterprises, which had gone bankrupt in 1982 in the biggest real estate development fraud in Utah history.

Dunn, then a member of the church's First Quorum of the Seventy, claimed his tenure as an AFCO director had ended in 1978; Packer sought to prove it had lasted much longer. He also began looking at the veracity of Dunn's stories—long familiar to Mormon audiences—about having played major league baseball and having survived many brushes with death in World War II.

"There isn't a single significant baseball or war story I could find that was true," said Packer, who in September 1987 complied under pressure with a BYU administrative request that he inform the church of his allegations.

After an unsuccessful attempt to market the story with Utah

Holiday magazine, Packer took it to UPI. The wire service was preparing to run it when Packer's department chairman at BYU, Gordon Whiting, told him in a memo dated 30 September 1987 that he should permit church leaders to deal privately with the Dunn matter.

"After providing the information, we accept the judgment of those responsible. We will not take accusations against a General Authority to the media," Whiting wrote, adding that publication "will damage the church, will damage the university and will damage you."

Fearing for his job, Packer agreed to the deal he said was offered him that night: don't publish the story and you can teach at BYU as long as you want.

Packer bristles at suggestions by BYU officials that he was using coercion.

"They can never give you a time or a place when I went to

## PAUL H. DUNN'S STATEMENT

ELDER PAUL H. DUNN today issued the following statement in response to the article which appeared in *The Arizona Republic* Saturday, February 16, 1991.

I was deeply sorrowed to read the article which aims at a great institution and those officers who represent it. Unfortunately the article chose to base its headline and conclusions on just a few stories taken from over 40 years of speaking and writing. Over the years as a teacher and an officer of the LDS Church, I have shared my personal experiences in order to teach and motivate people. In that capacity, I have used hundreds of illustrations from a variety of sources including my own life. The places and events from my own life I have described, including my war assignments and minor league baseball affiliations, were actual experiences. As I stated to the reporter in the interview, I have on some occasions changed the names of people involved to provide confidentiality, combined events to try to make a more pointed or vivid illustration, and added emphasis or detail to stories to increase their teaching impact. I did not state that I fabricated those stories because I had been in the places and experienced the events. It has always been my objective to teach more effectively. In so doing, I have never intended to mislead or to aggrandize my own circumstances, and I regret if such an impression may have been given.



anybody with that story and said, 'Do this for me or else,' " he said. "And I can show you the times and places and dates when they told it just the opposite: 'Do the story and you're history.' "

Packer maintains that Elders James E. Faust and David B. Haight, Quorum of the Twelve, were aware of the arrangement. Like Boyd K. Packer, the pair declined to be interviewed, but denied through spokesman Bruce Olsen there was any deal.

"I guess it boils down to what people are going to believe—what Lynn Packer had to say or what the general authorities have to say," Olsen said.

He said Faust and Haight told Lynn Packer "clearly and forcefully on two occasions there is no quid pro quo attached to this." The two officials did tell Packer they were willing to "encourage BYU to keep you on" out of consideration for his wife's health, Olsen said.

"They were trying as members of the Twelve to help out a brother," he said.

And yet, in a memo to church spokesman Richard Lindsay after the alleged deal was struck, Packer wrote: "I had received assurances, prior to my decision, that my job at BYU would be secure for the indefinite future if I withdrew the story."

At BYU, Whiting decided in early 1988 not to renew Packer's contract for the 1988-1989 school year, a step he first had wanted to take in 1986 out of concern about Packer's continued year-to-year status without retirement and other benefits.

"I thought the decision was mine to make," Whiting said.

After being told his contract would not be renewed, Packer said he met "with the 'high church official' and reaffirmed the alleged prior understanding.

A subsequent memo from department chairman Whiting told

Packer that BYU administrators had asked him to reconsider his decision "after study of reports about the signals and communications you have received." The contract was renewed.

The following year, "after consultation with the appropriate people," Whiting offered Packer "a final year's contract" for 1989-1990.

BYU's Richards says that when Rex Lee took over as the school's president in 1989, he was determined to end the part-time relationship with Packer, who has no advance degree.

"I don't care if he publishes it or not," Lee said at the time.

Whiting has said the final decision not to renew Packer's contract came, in part, because Packer was violating church and university policies that prohibit public criticism of church leaders, even if the criticism is true.

When Packer completed his teaching duties in August 1990, he was given a year's salary as severance pay, a move that surprised Whiting since it didn't come out of his departmental budget.

"I think it probably looks to many people . . . like an effort to bribe him not to go with the Paul Dunn story," Whiting said.

But Lee said it clearly was not a bribe since Packer was told he was free to publish the Dunn story with no strings attached.

"It seemed like the decent thing to do. Lynn didn't have another job and was facing personal problems," Lee said.

For his part, Whiting said he was pained by "the degree to which the university has been pulled into this situation. And I guess I'm also pained at the church being pulled in.

"But the church will have to fend for itself and do what it can to rescue its reputation for honesty and integrity."

## LYNN PACKER COMMENTS

*SUNSTONE invited Lynn Packer to comment on the stories in the press about his involvement with Brigham Young University; his comments follow.*

BYU comments to the press were outrageous. Through my attorney, I demanded a retraction and correction and apology. One of the most sensitive parts about the BYU statements (and these were in the *Provo Daily Herald* story) involved my wife's cancer. Those statements were outrageous for two separate reasons. First, they constituted an extreme invasion of privacy. Second, their statement that my contracts were extended because of my wife's cancer are absolutely false. I have documentary proof which shows that it was *after* my wife contracted cancer that they began challenging my contract. Now, [BYU] President Rex Lee did call my wife personally and apologize. I consider that apology insufficient and in some ways insulting, but I do not want to pursue any legal action because I would be bringing more attention to the very aspect of our personal lives that is so sensitive. Before that story had broken, my wife and I had decided to keep her cancer confidential. We had good friends who we hadn't even told. They found out through the newspaper.

One thing has to be understood: the conflict at BYU was between the administration—[former BYU provost] Jae Ballif and Rex Lee—and not between me and my colleagues in the broadcast news program. As an example, one of my best students at the University of Dortmund in Germany this past year attended BYU's broadcast news program this summer. BYU provided her with a scholarship and assistance at my arrangement and request. I've already met with and will meet again with colleagues at BYU about improving their European journalistic contacts. I plan to help BYU set up further exchanges with the University of

Dortmund and to help BYU with its desire to have more international influence.

There was a serious dispute and confusion among the administrators and not the department. BYU did give me the equivalence of two semesters severance pay. Without that help and assistance I would not have been able to afford to teach at the University of Dortmund during the last school year. That severance pay was offered at the end of nine years of service with BYU. Frankly, it was never fully explained why it was paid because I was on a year-to-year, contract and they had no obligation. However, I thought I had earned it and deserved it.

There was a deal with a Church official [that I could stay at BYU as long as I did not publish the Dunn story]. It was an unfortunate deal for both parties. It was a devil's agreement—one that neither side should have entered into. It was wrong for me to do that, from a philosophical, ethical, and journalistic standpoint. The agreement was broken by the Church. The deal was never honored by the Church. I never broke the story while teaching at BYU.

[When asked to comment on Packer's statement, BYU spokesman Paul Richards said that sufficient information was presented in Vern Anderson's AP story and BYU has no further comment on the matter.]

**MILLI VANILLI & PAUL DUNN**  
**Music & The Spoken Word**

*A Salt Lake bumper sticker.*

## PACKER SAYS MORMON CHURCH LIED TO DEFEND DUNN

By Vern Anderson  
The Associated Press  
12 August 1991

SALT LAKE CITY—Mormon Church officials lied when they said they had no way of “finally verifying” whether a former church official’s accounts of his war and baseball experiences were accurate, a reporter claimed Saturday.

Lynn Packer, whose research into Paul H. Dunn’s stories showed several had been fabricated, said members of the faith’s Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were well aware the stories were false when Dunn was abruptly retired from the church’s hierarchy in 1989 for reasons of “health and age.”

Packer told an audience at the Sunstone Symposium that church leaders had conducted at least two internal inquiries into the veracity of Dunn’s stories and whether he had falsified copies of tax documents.

The second investigation was headed by a church attorney, Harry Pugsley, with whom Packer, a Mormon, said he cooperated.

“His report, confirming the allegations, was delivered to the Quorum of the Twelve just a couple of weeks before Paul Dunn was given emeritus status,” Packer said.

Packer’s research was purchased by *The Arizona Republic* and formed the basis of the newspaper’s story in February about Dunn, whose tales of World War II and playing in the St. Louis Cardinals organization helped make him the most popular speaker and author in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Dunn, 67, conceded to *The*

*Republic* some of his stories were untrue but he defended them as necessary to better illustrate moral and theological points.

When *The Republic* story was published, the church’s Department of Public Communications issued a statement saying, “We have had no way of fully or finally verifying the accuracy or inaccuracy of current allegations or accounts that are now under challenge.”

That statement, Packer said, is a “falsehood.” He said he was told by Quorum members James E. Faust and David B. Haight that if the truth about Dunn’s fabrications ever became public, it would shake the faith of some members.

Asked about Packer’s statements late Saturday, church spokesman Don LeFevre said: “We stand by the statement that was issued at the time.”

Packer criticized *The Republic* for “soft-pedaling” the story by not touching the issue of allegedly falsified documents, the Utah news media for failing to follow it up and the church for sacrificing truth to protect one of its own.

The result, he said, was that his reputation suffered because his motives—not Dunn’s—were unfairly questioned.

“You can scratch your head a long time trying to understand the Paul Dunn myth making and coverup in terms of the truth,” Packer said. “But if you think of it in terms of connections, you can easily understand.”

Someone like Dunn, a member of the church’s “good-old-boy network, sort of the LDS

leadership social-business club, gets every benefit of the doubt.”

During his presentation, Packer held up an enlarged copy of a W-2 form for 1947 given him by Dunn, through his attorney, as proof Dunn played a season of professional baseball with the Ontario, California, Orioles minor league club.

“Observation alone reveals problems with this document,” Packer said. Numbers are obviously hand-altered. One typewriter was used for wages; an-

other for the amount withheld.

“Research backed up what was obvious: the W-2 form is no more credible than counterfeiting a thousand dollar bill with a one dollar bill and a crayon,” Packer said.

Asked about the document, Dunn admitted to *The Republic* that the \$5,024.75 figure on the form did not reflect wages from the Orioles, but a “grouping” of wages from “semi-professional baseball.”

## PAUL DUNN’S FATHER’S DAY BOOK CANCELLED

By Mark Eddington  
Davis County Clipper, 18 June 1991

BOUNTIFUL—A scheduled Saturday appearance by Paul H. Dunn at an LDS book store in Bountiful was cancelled after his publisher, Bookcraft, decided to cancel the printing of his latest book.

Dunn, a Mormon general authority on emeritus status, was supposed to appear at Seagull’s Book and Tape Store at 273 W. 500 South in Bountiful to promote his latest work, a Father’s Day pamphlet entitled “A Man Called Dad.”

But Seagull’s owner Loren Richards said the autograph party was cancelled when Bookcraft informed him the pamphlet would not be printed for Father’s Day because of the controversy surrounding Dunn.

The controversy broke last February when newspapers across the country carried Dunn’s admission that many of the inspirational stories in his books and tapes were a combination of fiction and fact.

Bookcraft President Russell B. Orton denies the cancellation had anything to do with adverse publicity over Dunn’s admissions.

“It was scheduled for Father’s Day but it wasn’t ready, which is

a very common occurrence in the publishing business. Books often don’t make deadlines,” Orton said.

Asked whether Bookcraft would still publish the booklet, Orton said that wasn’t anyone’s business but his own, but later said he had plans to print the pamphlet for Father’s Day next year.

“It’s a Father’s Day booklet, so it wouldn’t be published until next Father’s Day,” he reiterated. “It’s delayed because it wasn’t ready.”

Officials at the church-owned bookstores could not verify Orton’s contention the booklet was unfinished, but said they had received quite a bit of pre-publication publicity.

Roger Toone, vice president of retail sales at Deseret Book, said they had placed an initial order for the pamphlet, but later contacted Bookcraft and cancelled the orders after the Dunn story appeared in papers and sales of his books declined.

“We expressed our concern to Bookcraft. We weren’t really sure how many of our customers would really be interested. And I think they reconsidered and determined not to bring it (the

pamphlet) out," he said.

Sales of Dunn's books and tapes have fallen off dramatically over the past few months, and Toone said the majority of Dunn's books and tapes have been returned or are now being returned to Bookcraft. One exception is the book, "The Birth That We Call Death," which has continued to sell well despite the controversy.

The decision by Deseret Book to cancel orders for "A Man Called Dad" and to discontinue the sale of many of his other works has reportedly rankled Bookcraft, according to several sources who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"We've tried to be as fair as we could and treat his material just like we would any other product. When we have books from other publishers, other authors, that do not sell, we return them to the publisher. That's what we are doing with the majority of

Dunn's material because frankly people just aren't buying them," Toone said.

Deseret Book officials maintain the return of Dunn's books and tapes is strictly a business decision and has nothing to do with the content or controversy surrounding his books.

## LDS MILITARY CHAPLAIN CHARGED WITH FAKING RECORD IN VIETNAM

*"Editor's note: In the course of preparing this issue, this particular event was brought to our attention by several individuals. We thought it was interesting that they brought it up in the context of Paul Dunn. Obviously there is no connection between Paul H. Dunn and Gary Probst."*

FORT LEWIS, WASH. (AP)—A military chaplain is charged with faking a heroic record with the elite Green Berets and Army Rangers in the Vietnam War, base officials say.

A court-martial is planned Aug. 7 for Maj. Gary Probst, 37, an LDS chaplain and the highest-ranking officer on the base in recent memory to face such action, post officials said.

Prosecutors will show Probst never served in Vietnam with the Marines or the Army, never earned the Bronze Star or 14 other insignia he wore and was not an expert field medic or explosives expert as he claimed, said Army Capt. Martin Eckert.

He faces a dishonorable discharge and a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

He was a student at Brigham Young University during the early 1970s, when he claimed he was in the Marines and Army, Eckert said.

Probst joined the Army in 1980 as a chaplain and served at Fort Gordon, Ga., and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, before coming to Fort Lewis in 1987, Eckert said. He has been reassigned to other duties pending the court-martial.

[In August, Probst was dismissed and fined \$10,000 after pleading guilty during a court martial.]

### BOOKCRAFT

February 19, 1991

Dear Book Dealer:

In view of the recent stories about Elder Paul H. Dunn and the accuracy of his books we thought it might be helpful if we provided you with some facts.

We are enclosing with this letter a copy of Elder Dunn's official statement which was released after the initial story was printed. We believe this will help clarify the situation. We want to also remind you that just because something is printed in the newspaper or seen on television does not make it necessarily true.

We believe that things Elder Dunn said to the *Arizona Republic* reporter were taken out of context and used in a way to change his original meanings. We know also that the original story and subsequent coverage have been deliberately slanted to hurt Elder Dunn and the Church.

We want to call attention to the fact that after all the "investigation," these reports are dealing with stories that are a minuscule part of elder Dunn's writings.

Bookcraft has been and is still proud to be associated with this fine man and outstanding teacher. We intend to continue publishing his books, and there is absolutely no question of any of his books being recalled.

We hope this information will be helpful and want you to feel free to call if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Orton

President

### DESERET BOOK MEMORANDUM

TO: Retail Store Managers, All Retail Employees, Roger Toone, Buying Office, Rex Carlisle, Matt Cole.

From: Jeff Clark

RE: Status of Paul H. Dunn Product

IN RESPONSE to the media controversy concerning Paul H. Dunn and the customer feedback concerning the appropriateness of selling his authored product, our existing returns policy should be used as a guideline.

If customers return product and demand a refund, we will accept for return items in saleable condition. Use judgement in handling these situations so that we may win loyal customers rather than offend.

The corresponding buyers, Paul and Carla, are reviewing the min/max levels on Paul H. Dunn items and will reduce inventory levels as appropriate. Please feel free to pass along to them helpful feedback in this regard. It has also been suggested that if customers are persistent about the appropriateness of producing and selling the product, you may suggest they call Bookcraft or Covenant, or the appropriate producer of the items. Their numbers are:

Bookcraft 972-6180

Covenant Communications 800-662-9545

Thank You.

*Until recently, Paul Dunn's exploits were well on their way into the history books as fact. With this research, they will at least go into the books for what they are: myth.*

# PAUL H. DUNN FIELDS OF DREAMS

By Lynn Packer

*In March 1982 Elder Paul H. Dunn's name was being linked to the most publicized investment fraud in Utah history—Grant Affleck's AFCO. It was while I was investigating Paul Dunn's connection with AFCO that I heard rumors about the questionable veracity of his war and baseball stories.*

*This article is a condensed and updated version of a speech I prepared for delivery at the 1989 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City. Sunstone canceled the speech, but rumors of it triggered an internal LDS church investigation into Paul Dunn. The investigator handling the matter for the Church was provided a copy of the speech and used it as the basis for his probe and independent verification. The speech was also the basis for the stories KUTV-News and the Arizona Republic did on Paul Dunn, whose reporters independently verified the facts they published.*

**I** WAS NEVER PERMITTED TO INTERVIEW PAUL Dunn about his war and baseball stories. Perhaps an intimation of his answer appears in his latest book:

Some stories are fiction, but appear to be fact; some are fact but appear to be fairy tales. It takes some experience and time to tell the difference.<sup>1</sup>

The opening chapter in which this philosophy appears is titled "Once Upon A Time," which discusses the difference between fairy tales like Santa Claus and true religious stories such as the Atonement.<sup>2</sup> "There seems to be something magical in the phrase" once upon a time, he wrote, "that allows those of any age to 'stretch' the imagination—even the stories' authors do it until it sometimes becomes difficult for us to separate what really is fact from what is fiction." Dunn's observation also applies to his own stories about baseball and war.

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*LYNN PACKER is a television news consultant for Germany's second largest commercial station and a freelance reporter. Recently he returned to Utah after teaching broadcast news at the University of Dortmund. Packer was a reporter for fifteen years for KSL-TV and a broadcast instructor for nine years at Brigham Young University.*

## THE BASEBALL FIELD

**"A**RE you telling me there is baseball in heaven?" Mickey Mantle asked Paul Dunn, as the two were participating in a celebrity golf tournament. "If there isn't, I don't want to go," was the response Dunn told audiences he gave Mantle.<sup>3</sup> While Dunn never said he played baseball with Mantle, the names of players he has claimed to encounter reads like a *Who's Who* of baseball immortals. Dunn's brushes with greatness include:

- STAN MUSIAL. "When I was 18 years old, a rookie with the St. Louis Cardinals, I reported to spring training."<sup>4</sup> There, he said, were some real pros like Stan Musial who was "just climbing into his heyday."
- JOE DIMAGGIO. "As a young baseball player I once had the honor and challenge of pitching against Joe DiMaggio of the Yankees."<sup>5</sup>
- TED WILLIAMS. "He was no slouch. I know; I have pitched to him a time or two."<sup>6</sup>
- WILLIE MAYS. "I pitched against Willie Mays as he broke into baseball and I was leaving the scene."<sup>7</sup>
- LOU GEHRIG. "You're going to be great," Gehrig told Dunn, then a twelve-year-old bat boy for the Arkansas Travelers, after Gehrig let the kid pitch to him during batting practice.<sup>8</sup>
- BABE RUTH. Another star that Dunn, as a bat boy, says he threw to during batting practice.<sup>9</sup>
- BOB FELLER. "If you ever want a lesson in humility, bat against [Bob] Feller," Dunn said about his experience during a servicemen's exhibition game during World War II.<sup>10</sup>

Dunn said he played professional baseball for up to five years. Professional baseball included both the major and minor leagues. Dunn says outright that he played in the minors; he has merely alluded that he played in the majors.<sup>11</sup> In fact, he had virtually no professional baseball career—in either the major or the minors—failing to make at least three teams in

the minor leagues. Paul Dunn did play baseball in high school, in the U.S. Army, and in the so-called semi-pro leagues, a euphemism for commercial leagues. He did not play college ball, despite receiving an award reserved for former college players.<sup>12</sup> Here is a summary of Paul Dunn's baseball career.

### ARKANSAS BAT BOY

**P**AUL Dunn's father—J. Harold Dunn—moved his family to Salt Lake City, to Tulsa, Oklahoma, and—in 1929 when Dunn was five—to Little Rock, Arkansas, while advancing his career in the grocery business. Paul Dunn spent most of his school years in Little Rock, picking up baseball skills on the sand lots.

Little Rock was the home of the Arkansas Travelers baseball club, a triple-A team in the Southern Association. Each spring, major league teams would stop briefly in Little Rock to play exhibition games as they "barnstormed" their way back to their hometowns from spring camps. Paul Dunn says he was a bat boy for the Travelers, giving him the chance to meet some of the major leaguers.<sup>13</sup>

Babe Ruth is one of the stars Dunn says he pitched to during batting practice before an exhibition game. Babe Ruth was in Little Rock for an exhibition game with the Travelers. But that was in 1929, when Dunn was only five years old. Moreover, Ruth was confined to his hotel room with a sprained ankle and missed that particular game.<sup>14</sup> Finally, it is possible that the Dunn family had not even moved to Little Rock when Ruth made his appearance there in 1929.<sup>15</sup>

The next time the Yankees played in Little Rock was in April 1937, just before Dunn's thirteenth birthday.<sup>16</sup> The team was loaded with the stars who had won the World Series a few months earlier: Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, and Bill Dickey. The Yankees were riding a pre-season, fourteen-game winning streak when they played the Travelers. But in the bottom of the ninth, local hero Leo Nonnenkamp smashed a monster 450-foot home run, and the Travelers upset the world champs, 9-8. Possibly 12-year-old Paul Dunn was among the 4500 fans the paper says "went goofy" with the upset.

One of Paul Dunn's most repeated baseball stories tells how Lou Gehrig befriended him during that visit. In one of his

accounts, the Yankees spend two days in Little Rock. On the first day Dunn was assigned to "shag" balls in the outfield at the Yankee batting practice. Afterwards, Gehrig signs Dunn's baseball, then takes the youth into the clubhouse, where Bill Dickey and Joe Dimaggio sign it, too.<sup>17</sup> Dunn says he told Gehrig, "Every time I go out to play I get so nervous and afraid I can't perform." Gehrig invited him back the next day for an answer saying, "Let me think about this." The next day Dunn was shagging balls behind Yankee pitchers who were throwing

for batting practice. Dunn says eventual Hall of Famer "Red" Ruffing was on the mound when Gehrig came up for his practice hits. "Hey, Red, let that kid behind you pitch to me," Gehrig said, according to Dunn. Red refused, saying, "I want to get through, Lou, and take a shower." "I said let the boy pitch!" Gehrig fired back. Then follows the story of Gehrig missing some of Dunn's pitches on purpose to build the twelve-year-old's confidence, of Gehrig saying he called on a higher source to combat nervousness, and of Gehrig predicting Dunn would be great.<sup>18</sup>

There are problems with the story as Dunn tells it. The Yankees, including Gehrig, were in

Little Rock only for part of one day, but Red Ruffing was not there at all.<sup>19</sup> He was a highly publicized holdout that year and missed spring camp altogether. There is no way to verify that Paul Dunn was the bat boy. Leo Nonnenkamp, the one who hit the winning home run, now 78, says, "I can't remember if we had a regular [bat boy] or just kids hanging around."<sup>20</sup>

### HOLLYWOOD HIGH BASEBALL

**I**N 1940, the Dunn family moved to Hollywood, California, where Harold opened his own food store: Hal's Market. Paul made the high school baseball team—the Hollywood Sheiks—and was a first-string pitcher his junior and senior years, in 1941 and 1942.

Paul Dunn tells a story set in 1942, when he was a senior at Hollywood High School in Los Angeles, California. He was with his teammates as coach Meb Schroeder quizzed star second baseman Jimmy Daniels. It was the day before a league championship game and the coach discovered Jimmy had broken a team rule—he had been smoking. Coach Schroeder



Paul Dunn (right), his father, Hal, and his two brothers



kicked Daniels off the team, and Paul Dunn got the nod to start on the mound for Hollywood High's most important game of the year. The championship game turned into a classic pitching duel. It went into extra innings with the score tied 0-0. As Dunn explains:

They beat us one to nothing in the top of the thirteenth. Do you know how it happened? A ground ball was hit to second and the ball went through the substitute's legs, and that proved to be the winning run. Well, I went home that night and literally cried myself to sleep. . . .<sup>21</sup>

His Church biographers say he participated in baseball, football, basketball, golf, and track.<sup>22</sup> However, in the Hollywood High yearbooks, Dunn was not pictured on the football, track, or basketball teams. There is no Jimmy Daniels listed on the baseball roster. Perhaps Dunn was using a pseudonym for Daniels without disclosing it. That hardly matters, because no one on the team was in a playoff game: Hollywood High finished next to last in 1941 and third in 1942.



Paul Dunn (center) and the Hollywood Rangers

### THE POCATELLO CARDINALS

**P**AUL Dunn graduated from Hollywood High in 1942. He says eight major league scouts were tracking him as he completed his high school pitching stint.<sup>23</sup> He says he signed with the St. Louis Cardinals for "what was then a pretty good bonus." He says the parent club farmed him out to their Pocatello, Idaho, team—also named the Cardinals.

The prospect of playing ball in 1942 in Dunn's home state of California was bleak. The California State League, which was made up of teams in Southern California, folded because of World War II. Not only did the war eliminate baseball jobs in California, it also sent a flood of position-seeking players to the other minor leagues that decided to play through the '42 season. For whatever reason, Paul Dunn went to Pocatello, Idaho, where three of his aunts lived. Sometime in mid-summer 1942, Dunn moved in with Lucille Dunn Harrison, whose husband owned a jewelry store in town. His cousin Merline recalls that her father "thought he could be helpful" in getting Dunn a tryout with the local team.<sup>24</sup> Merline, a year younger than Dunn, says her family had season tickets and attended most of the Cards' games.

Paul Dunn says he won his first professional game 7-1, with the Pocatello Cardinals.<sup>25</sup> Dunn also says he taught his first manager, Danny, how to pray.<sup>26</sup> Before the season ended, Dunn

says the first baseman, the shortstop, and the left fielder were joining him and the manager in nightly prayers.

That season ended with Pocatello playing the Boise Pilots for the Pioneer League championship. Dunn says he drew the assignment to pitch one of those games. A story he tells about it shows his reputation for spirituality had spread beyond his own team. It was the top of the eighth inning and the score was tied 0-0. Dunn was on the mound with a runner on second. The batter hit sharply to left center. Pocatello's center fielder took the ball on one hop and fired home, attempting to cut down the runner who was trying to score from second. Con-

tinuing in Dunn's own words:

The center fielder . . . threw a perfect strike to the plate and caught the runner by a good six inches. The umpire hollered, "You're out!" This man got up—and I had never heard such foul language in my life. I was back behind the catcher by this time, the normal position for the pitcher on a throw to the plate. The umpire bellowed, "You're out of the game! Out!" And he ejected him, which he

should have. As I was walking back to the mound, the umpire—not a Mormon—about ready to replace his mask, turned to me and said, "Paul, forgive him; he doesn't understand."<sup>27</sup>

However, when Paul Dunn graduated from high school in 1942, the '42 baseball season for professional clubs was already well underway. His account that he reported to the Cardinals spring training camp his rookie year could not be accurate;<sup>28</sup> such camps had been over for at least a month. A spokesman for the St. Louis Cardinals says no Paul Dunn played for that club or for any of its farm clubs.<sup>29</sup> The *Sporting News*, which keeps records of baseball contracts, has no record of Paul Dunn ever signing with St. Louis.<sup>30</sup> In addition, Pioneer League records show no Paul Dunn as a pitcher for the Cardinal farm club, Pocatello.<sup>31</sup> Newspaper clippings fail to show any Paul Dunn winning a regular-season game 7-1, as he claims, or playing in any game whatsoever.<sup>32</sup> The same clippings indicate all the pitchers who played in the championship series, which Dunn said he did; however, Dunn was not listed.

When confronted with evidence that he did not play for Pocatello, Dunn, through his attorney, continued to say he had. To respond to the journalistic research, Dunn solicited letters from several eyewitnesses who say they saw him pitch in league games in Pocatello. Dunn's attorney declined to make the letters public. Dunn may have used them when the LDS church made inquiries about his stories in 1988. The Church





were a team sponsored by Hal's Market, which was owned by Dunn's father, and that the writer of the brochure confused the market's ownership with team sponsorship.

Another team Dunn played for was Peterson Scoremaster, sponsored by a company that prints baseball scorebooks used by amateur and college teams. Rod Dedeaux, who helped found the team, remembered Dunn as "an above-average pitcher" and "a great competitor." He said the team consisted primarily of high school players and members of the team from the University of Southern California, where Dedeaux coached.<sup>44</sup> Teams like Peterson Scoremaster were dubbed "semi-pro" back then. How much did semi-pros make? "They made nothing," Dedeaux says. "Mrs. Peterson [the team's sponsor] would give them Pepsi-Colas and hot dogs."

## THE BATTLEFIELD

**P**AUL DUNN says he turned eighteen the same month the draft age was lowered to eighteen.<sup>45</sup> "How is that for timing?" he asked. He tells audiences it was the draft that interrupted his pro career:

I reported to that first team, and I stepped into that dugout with a new number. You know what a thrill that is? Then to get a letter two or three months later that says, "forget that, brother, and follow me. . . ."<sup>46</sup>

Actually, the 1942 baseball season had been over more than two months when Congress lowered the draft age to eighteen. And it was not until early 1943 that the draft machinery brought in those under twenty. Paul Dunn was almost nineteen when he was inducted.

Dunn was about to step onto a new field of dreams: the battlefield. Even though war held out the opportunity for heroism, it also held out the possibility of death. Lose on the baseball field and you play another day. Lose on the battlefield and there's no tomorrow. Religion starts taking on a whole new meaning. Before leaving for basic training, Dunn was ordained an elder in the priesthood in February 1943. He also sought out the Los Angeles Stake patriarch for a blessing. Among other things he was told:

Thou shalt experience combat. Angels shall intercede in thy behalf and protect thee all the days of thy life. . . .<sup>47</sup>

Many times after the war Dunn credited this blessing and those angels with saving his life. He would say that his numerous, harrowing brushes with death were not escaped by luck but by design; he would call them "verifications" that the LDS church is true.<sup>48</sup>

## HARROWING WAR EXPERIENCES

**A**S an infantry private in the U.S. Army's 77th Division, Dunn participated in three major operations during World War II: Guam, the Philippines, and Okinawa. A year transpired from the beginning to the end of combat, a year that yielded a lot of stories for Paul Dunn about valor, patriotism, and brushes with death. Many of these stories are tied to religious

and moral lessons of life. There is not enough space to detail the stories, but some might be headlined:

- Paul Dunn discovers, shoots lock off POW camp.<sup>49</sup>
- Paul Dunn lone survivor as eleven infantrymen race against death.<sup>50</sup>
- Paul Dunn survives in foxhole as tank runs over it.<sup>51</sup>
- Paul Dunn survives grenade explosion at his feet; guns down samurai sword-wielding enemy soldier.<sup>52</sup>
- Paul Dunn saves Japanese prisoner from being butchered by American soldiers.<sup>53</sup>
- Paul Dunn lands at the Philippines with a "special cadre" two days before MacArthur's famed "return."<sup>54</sup>
- Paul Dunn meets famous war correspondent Ernie Pyle hours before Pyle's death.<sup>55</sup>
- Paul Dunn wrestles dynamite pack off a child kamikaze infiltrator just before its mother hits the plunger.<sup>56</sup>
- Paul Dunn survives banzai attacks on Okinawa.<sup>57</sup>
- Paul Dunn, over the course of the war, kills thirty-five enemy soldiers.<sup>58</sup>

## CONVERSION DURING A BLOODY LANDING ON GUAM

**G**UAM, an island in the central Pacific, lies about three-fourths the way between Hawaii and the Philippines. The Japanese had captured Guam from U.S. control at the same time they bombed Pearl Harbor. Now, in the summer of 1944, almost three years later, the United States wanted Guam back to use as a stepping stone to the Philippines and Japan. Dunn's 77th Division got its first combat assignment: help retake the island. The division of perhaps 10,000 men strong was loaded onto troop carriers and steamed southwest.

D-Day to attack Guam's beaches was 21 July 1944. Navy artillery and Air Corps bombers pounded the island in preparation. Then, at the appointed hour, troop ships disgorged hundreds of landing craft, each boat packed with heavily armed soldiers. The landing craft circled and formed "waves" that hit the beach one after another. Those in a holding pattern could see the first waves hit. Dunn, he recounts, is in the seventh wave.

"Nobody is getting ashore," Paul Dunn says in his account.<sup>59</sup> "One craft after another is getting hit, scattering American soldiers in the water." Then a flare goes up, signalling Dunn's seventh wave to land. "All of a sudden the whole shoreline opens up, zeroing in on you," he says. To make matters worse, his landing craft gets hung up on a coral reef; so they have further to wade, not to mention having to make it past those who failed to reach shore. Navy boat operators tell the soldiers to get out anyway.

We jump in the water, the water's chest high. You gotta hold your rifle over your head. If the muzzle drops in the water—that's salt water—it would blow up when you fire. Did you ever try to run in water up to your chest, loaded down? You don't move very fast. And the enemy starts to pick you up. You're pushing with the butt of your rifle the dead bodies and

# DOUGLAS STRINGFELLOW'S WAR STORIES

THE PAUL DUNN EPISODE MAY REMIND SOME Utah residents of a similar incident in the 1950s.

In 1923, a year before Paul Dunn's date of birth, Douglas R. Stringfellow was born in Draper, Utah. Stringfellow's name, today, has almost vanished from public awareness. But in the early fifties his name was a household word in Utah and his war stories were widely publicized.

On 19 November 1944, Douglas Stringfellow was helping clear a mine field in France. A mine exploded unexpectedly, its shrapnel ripping through Stringfellow's leg. The wounded infantry private was transported back to the United States—to Bushnell General Hospital in Brigham City, Utah—to recover. While recuperating, he began telling fellow patients about his war exploits before the mine accident. Soon he began speaking in LDS church meetings about the religious implications of his heroism. The first time Douglas Stringfellow dated his wife-to-be, Lee, he invited her to one of his sacrament meeting talks about his war experiences.<sup>1</sup> Lee was a freshman at the University of Utah. An accomplished dancer, she took the train to Bushnell to entertain convalescing soldiers.

In June 1946, Lee and Douglas married. They immediately moved to Hollywood, California, where Doug would attend broadcasting school for six months. After returning to Utah, Doug Stringfellow began work as a disc jockey and announcer for KLO Radio in Ogden. He became active in the Jaycees and Young Republicans. His speaking ability improved even more as he told and retold his war stories. And what stories they were.

Stringfellow claimed he had been assigned to the Army's elite OSS. His team was assigned to parachute behind enemy lines in Germany and kidnap atomic scientist Otto Hahn. Although the team accomplished its mission by capturing Hahn and getting him on a pickup plane, it failed to escape and was captured by Nazi soldiers. After being tortured and confined in a concentration camp, Stringfellow was able to escape into France where he eventually was assigned to a regular army unit. He said his outfit was searching for a underground German jet propulsion laboratory when one of them tripped a mine, injuring several soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

Stringfellow expanded his forum from church to civic audiences, then throughout the United States. In 1952 Utahns in the first district elected him to Congress. In 1954 Stringfellow was the featured guest on the nationwide broadcast, "This Is Your Life," he was the subject of a nationally syndicated newspaper series, and he was easily renominated by Utah Republicans to run for a second term.

Some Utah reporters had information that Stringfellow had made up his military accomplishments, but they sat on the story. The *Army Times* newspaper broke the story just days before the 1954 election. When LDS church President David O. McKay confronted Stringfellow, the Mormon congressman

swore his story was true and said the allegations amounted to a "smear" campaign against him. Finally, Utah Senator Arthur Watkins got Stringfellow to confess to him. The next day, 16 October 1954, in perhaps the most dramatic moment in the history of Utah television, the congressman went on KSL television, live, and confessed his fraud. He withdrew his candidacy, failed to regain public prominence, and died in 1966 after suffering a series of heart attacks.

University of Utah professor Frank Jonas credited Stringfellow with creating "a new style, a new format for public address."<sup>3</sup> Jonas said the congressman used the war story as a principal ingredient to win attention and fame. But he blended in two additional parts: his religious experiences and his lectures on good and evil. Stringfellow's genius, Jonas said, "might be found in the total blend he concocted and in the smooth transitions from one part of his story to another." Pacing, he said, complemented the blending:

Certainly he held the attention of all his audiences with his sometimes rapid-fire account of the dramatic and spectacular events which led him to the brink of death, but just as certainly it was his slower-paced account of how God came to his rescue . . . that made his war story plausible.<sup>4</sup>

Stringfellow's administrative assistant, Keith Jaques, had a similar analysis of his boss's speaking style:

He never told of his exploits for their own thrill value.

He simply used them as a means to drive home an inspirational point.

Jaques had believed Stringfellow right up until the time of the confession. He felt especially betrayed because of his work behind the scenes to suppress any media exposé of the hoax.

Jaques prepared an article for *Life* magazine, but it was never published. He said he wrote the article for two reasons. First, because he thought the "full account should be known."

And perhaps for one other reason. When I think of how many thousands of Americans were fooled, I think of something else that makes me really uncomfortable. I wonder how many other Stringfellows may still be around in other lines of endeavour—undetected, unsuspected, still getting away with it. I wonder.<sup>5</sup>

—BY LYNN PACKER

## NOTES

1. Lee Lemmon Stringfellow Noffke, telephone interview, 29 June 1989.

2. Douglas R. Stringfellow, *Chaff Before The Wind*, unpublished, copy is in BYU Special Collections, #84-152. See also Frank Jonas, *The Adventures of PFC Douglas R. Stringfellow* and the Frank Jonas collection at Special Collections, University of Utah Marriott Library.

3. Jonas, 86.

4. Jonas, 86.

5. Keith H. Jaques, "The Stringfellow Hoax" a manuscript submitted to *Life* magazine on 15 February 1955, but not published, U-6.

wounded bodies of your friends and associates you've been training with. The coral is so sharp it cuts the boots off your feet and your feet are starting to bleed like mincemeat, and you're trying to get ashore. I was one of the first ashore that morning. And I dug my first foxhole with my fingernails and I crawled in it. And just as I crawled into that mucky hole an ambu gun opens up that shoots about 700 rounds a minute and it went down my right arm and took off my identification bracelet. And I rolled over and started to talk to Heavenly Father. And he answered me. And I have never been the same since.<sup>60</sup>

As Paul Dunn lay in that foxhole, blood oozing from the wrist of his pitching arm, he pulled out his patriarchal blessing and read—with greater understanding—that angels would intercede on his behalf.<sup>61</sup> “And since that day, I have given my life to [the Lord].”<sup>62</sup>

Paul Dunn did participate in the Guam campaign, but his account of the landing is problematic. The Japanese defenders set up their line of defense several hundred yards inland—they were not waiting on the beach for the assault. Also, the First Provisional Marine Brigade, not Dunn's 77th Army Division, landed first. The 77th had no combat experience and were not asked to spearhead a major landing. At Guam, even the first Marine waves were able to get ashore. They had long learned how to avoid disastrous landings. Eight months earlier the Marines had botched their landing at Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. That Marine operation was highly publicized and occurred a month before the 77th practiced amphibious operations back in Virginia. The story of the Tarawa landing reads very much like Dunn's account of Guam. At Tarawa, some Marine landing craft got hung up on coral. “Most of [the Marines] had to struggle ashore through hundreds of yards of shoulder-high water.”<sup>63</sup> “Of the first wave, only 30 percent got ashore. In the second wave, less. The third wave ‘were practically wiped out.’”<sup>64</sup>

In fact, the 77th Division landing at Guam was unopposed. The division history says, “Fortunately little fire was received, as the enemy was occupied by the Marines now half a mile inland.”<sup>65</sup> Two soldiers who were on Dunn's landing craft affirm it was caught on a coral reef during the landing.<sup>66</sup> But both say they spent the night on the reef, landing the next day.

One of them recalls a casualty that happened in connection with the landing:

One died shortly after we landed at Guam. It was an accident. He had laid his gun down on a jeep; it fell off [and discharged].<sup>67</sup>

#### A BUDDY DIES IN DUNN'S ARMS



Paul Dunn and Harold Brown

**H**AROLD BROWN stood half a foot shorter than Paul Dunn and tipped the scales at 140 pounds. Brown—from Odessa, Missouri—had red hair, spoke with a “southern drawl,” and was a Southern Baptist. Dunn and Brown would end up in the same platoon, go on leave together, share foxholes, and sustain each other right up until shortly after this photograph was taken on Okinawa.

The Japanese were not the only enemy faced by Dunn and Brown. Just as Brown represents the “good guy” in many of Paul Dunn's stories, Staff Sergeant Harry Izzo represents the “bad guy,” the tough sergeant. “He and I did not hit it off the day I walked into the orderly room,” Dunn says of his sergeant, calling him “the most miserable,

filthy, unrighteous dog I have ever known.”<sup>68</sup> “Two of us decided to stand up against him,” Dunn said after Izzo ordered his men to get tattoos and “have an experience in a house of prostitution” while on leave.<sup>69</sup> Dunn and Brown refused. As a result, according to the story, they got thirty straight days of K.P. and guard duty every night.

Ironically, these two primary characters in Dunn war stories experience contrasting fates: Brown—who saved Dunn's life numerous times—takes a direct mortar hit and bleeds to death; Izzo—who tried to corrupt Dunn—ends up converted to Mormonism. Recently, Dunn said that Izzo was not the real name of the sergeant in his stories: “I just pulled ‘Izzo’ out because that name popped in my mind when I first shared it [the story] forty years ago.”<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps no story better challenges the credibility of Dunn's war stories than his account of the death of his buddy, Harold Lester Brown. The action takes place near the end of the last campaign. In May 1945, combined American forces were driving toward the Japanese stronghold on Okinawa: Shuri Castle. Even though the Japanese were vastly outnumbered, they had established a strong, concentric perimeter around the

ancient castle town of Shuri.<sup>71</sup> Dunn tells the story of how his unit dug in near “Chocolate Drop Hill.” Normally he and Harold Brown shared a foxhole. But this night, their ranks were so depleted that the two occupied individual foxholes about fifty yards apart.<sup>72</sup> At about 11 P.M. Brown’s hole took a direct mortar hit. Dunn says he could not go to his rescue because of a rule against leaving foxholes at night. All Dunn could do is endure the night listening to Brown’s moans. At daybreak Dunn rushed to his companion’s side, finding him alive but bleeding from sixty-seven shrapnel wounds. Brown, barely clinging to life, said, “Paul, I know this is the end.” As Dunn took him in his arms, Brown made two requests. First, he wanted his mother assured he had been faithful to the end to the principles she taught him.

And he said, Paul, the second thing I’d appreciate your doing—and he could hardly talk, I had to bend down to hear him—if you ever have an opportunity . . . to talk to the young people of America, will you tell them for me that it’s a privilege to lay down my life for them. And with that testimony on his lips, he died. . . .<sup>73</sup>

Dunn helped carry Brown’s body to a “crude” burial ground several miles away. “There, in an old rain coat and a poncho, I placed Harold in that shallow grave,” he said.

The truth is Brown did *not* die on Okinawa during the drizzly, cold morning Dunn describes. Harold Lester Brown continues to live in Odessa, Missouri, where he grew up. He came through the war unscathed. In a telephone interview, he described his closest call during the war: a mortar round that almost hit a truck he was riding in. Although he wasn’t hit by shrapnel, he said some in the truck were.

While I had him on the phone, I asked about the evil Harry Izzo. Brown said he knew a Sergeant Louie Izzo, a “little, Italian fellow, good soldier.” But Izzo was in another platoon. Brown said his staff sergeant was an Italian named Anthony Piano. “A nice, quiet, considerate fellow,” Brown said. Did anyone pressure you to get tattooed or visit prostitutes while on leave? “Some wondered why you didn’t,” Brown said. “They really didn’t pressure me.” Did he ever save Dunn’s life? No. Did Dunn ever have any close calls? He believes he was on the truck that almost got hit by a mortar round.<sup>74</sup>

When the LDS church investigator confronted Dunn with the fact Brown was still alive, Dunn said the soldier who died in his arms was really Ralph Cocroft.<sup>75</sup> During the *Arizona Republic* interview, Dunn said he simply combined two events: “So all I did was take Harold Brown’s relationship and combine it with Ralph Cocroft’s dying.”<sup>76</sup>

Ralph Cocroft, PFC, from Hazlehurst, Georgia, was a member of Dunn’s anti-tank squad. And he did die on Okinawa, but apparently not in a foxhole. In an interview, the real Sgt. Louie Izzo (not Dunn’s pseudonym) said he was squad leader the day Cocroft died: “We were on Okinawa, carrying the wounded back. There were four to a litter. One time he [Cocroft] got reckless.” Izzo said Cocroft peeked over a hill just as a mortar went off. “He didn’t get hit directly, but the blast got him.” Izzo said Dunn might have been around, “but I don’t recall he was

there that day.”<sup>77</sup>

## CASUALTIES

**I**N addition to reporting Brown’s death in his war stories, Dunn also reports the death of almost everyone in his unit:

There were 1,000 of us in my combat team who left San Francisco on that fateful journey, and there were six of us who came back two and a half years later. How do you like that for odds! And of the six of us, five had been severely wounded two or more times and had been sent back into the line as replacements.<sup>78</sup>

I couldn’t find the casualty figures for Dunn’s 2nd Battalion, which may have been made up of about one thousand soldiers. But there are records for the two hundred men who served in his anti-tank company over the course of the war. Of those two hundred, five were killed in action and fifteen were wounded sufficiently to earn a purple heart. These figures reflect the fact the 77th Division never spearheaded any major attacks, and the anti-tank company of the 77th did not play a front-line role for the division. The war for Paul Dunn was likely what it was for what author Ronald Spector said it was for the vast majority of troops: it “was not an adventure; it was more likely a time of loneliness, physical discomfort, boredom, and fatigue—punctuated by occasional action and danger.”<sup>79</sup> Spector quotes figures that say only a third of the enlisted men in the Pacific were actually in combat, another fifth of them have been under fire, and 45 percent saw no action at all.<sup>80</sup>

## MYTH MORE IMPORTANT THAN HISTORY

**I**N the interview, *Arizona Republic* reporter Richard Robertson asked Paul Dunn if it is appropriate to use fabricated stories to teach moral lessons. “That’s a fair question,” Dunn responded. “I’d never put it in that category because the events were real. The combining of a story seemed justifiable in terms of illustrating a point.” During the interview, Dunn’s attorney, James Jardine, shared with Robertson a quote by writer Robert Fulghum to explain and justify the changes in Dunn’s stories. Fulghum said his writing profession gives him an “official storyteller’s license.” He said the license “gives me permission to use my imagination to rearrange my experiences to improve a story, so long as it serves some notion of truth.” Fulghum said he posted a “storyteller’s creed” above his desk, three lines of which read:

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge.

That myth is more potent than history.

That dreams are more powerful than facts.<sup>81</sup>

Paul Dunn’s own “fields of dreams”—baseball and war—are based on imagination and myth. The extent to which Paul Dunn recognizes this is unclear, even after repeated inquiries and investigations he has yielded only partial admissions. Until recently, Paul Dunn’s exploits were well on their way into the history books as fact. With this research, they will at least go into the books for what they are: myth. Whether it is right or

wrong to pass off apocryphal stories as real in order to make spiritual points, I will leave for the reader to evaluate, with assistance from the discussants in this magazine. 📖

## NOTES

1. Paul H. Dunn, *No Greater Gift* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 5.
2. Dunn, *No Greater Gift*, 5.
3. Paul H. Dunn, Taylorsville, Utah, Regional Fireside Speech, 22 June 1988.
4. Paul H. Dunn, "Sports & The Gospel," audiotape (Salt Lake City: Covenant Recordings, 1983).
5. Paul H. Dunn, *Variable Clouds* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986), 94. See also "Sports & The Gospel," audiotape.
6. Paul H. Dunn, "Four Basic Ingredients For Success" (Provo, UT: [BYU] *Speeches of the Year*, 13 February 1968), 8.
7. Paul H. Dunn, "Seek and Ye Shall Find" (Provo, UT: *BYU Fireside and Devotional Speeches*, 28 February 1984), 76.
8. Paul H. Dunn, "Life Experience," audiotape (Provo, UT: BYU Electronic Media Department, 1972) (Note: The BYU Harold B. Lee Library Learning Resource Center [hereafter BYU HBLL LRC] has tape labeled 30 April 1972. Speech was actually given in California in 1963.)
9. Dunn, "Life Experience," audiotape.
10. Dunn, *You and Your World* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 163. (Note: In the book Dunn says he batted against Feller during the war. But in his 1963 speech he says he batted against Feller in an exhibition game when Dunn was fourteen.)
11. Dunn, *You & Your World*, 128: "I used to play ball with the St. Louis Cardinals. Now, it takes a lot of preparation to become a big league ballplayer." See also "Ex-bat Boy Honored," *Deseret News*, Church News section, 28 May 1977, 14: "... Elder Dunn, a pitcher, played for five years with the St. Louis Cardinals organization in Pocatello, Idaho; Hollywood, Calif., and with the parent St. Louis team."
12. "Baseball Honors Elder P. Dunn," *LDS Church News*, 10 January 1976, 6.
13. There are many references where Dunn claims to have been a bat boy. Among them the *Church News* article "Ex-bat boy honored." In the April 1983 *Friend*, Dunn says in a "Friend to Friend" article he authored, "When I was 12, I became a batboy for a local professional team."
14. "Poindexter . . . to Oppose Yankees in Saturday's Exhibition," *Arkansas Democrat*, 9 April 1937, 19.
15. There is some ambiguity about when the Dunns moved to Little Rock. In his interview with the *Arizona Republic*, Paul Dunn said the Safeway organization sent his father to Tulsa, Oklahoma, in about 1928 or 29, "Then in 1929, thereabouts, he was transferred to Little Rock, Arkansas." However, LDS church membership records show the Dunn family memberships being transferred from Tulsa to Little Rock on 25 August 1931 (see Reel 601 884, Record #262). It could be that the record was transferred well after their arrival. Although, the LDS church had a Little Rock congregation when the Dunns arrived, Paul Dunn either didn't know it or remember it. In a speech, he said, "When I was a little boy growing up in Arkansas, we were the only Latter-day Saints in the city of Little Rock for many, many years" (BYU devotional address, 25 October 1977).
16. "Travelers Oppose Champion Yankees in Exhibition Today," *The Arkansas Gazette*, 10 April 1937.
17. Dunn, "On Feeling Inferior," 164.
18. Dunn, "On Feeling Inferior," 165.
19. "Yankee Holdout at His Own Training Camp," *The New York Times*, 9 April 1937.
20. Leo Nonnenkamp, telephone interview with author on 17 June 1989.
21. Paul H. Dunn, "Happiness Is" (Provo, UT: *Speeches of the Year*, 18 April 1967), 1.
22. LDS Public Communications Department, "Paul Dunn Biography," February 1986.
23. Paul H. Dunn, "World War II Experiences" (Salt Lake City: Covenant Recordings, 1979), audiotape.
24. Merline Harrison Rasmussen, San Jose, California, telephone interview with author on 7 January 1988.
25. Paul H. Dunn, "On Feeling Inferior" (Provo, UT: *Speeches of the Year*, 25 October 1977), 165.
26. Paul H. Dunn, "Time-out!" (Salt Lake City: *Conference Reports*, 5 April 1980), 56. Audio tape recording of *Arizona Republic* interview with Paul Dunn on 4 January 1991 in Dunn's lawyer's office in Salt Lake City. Dunn's attorney

James Jardine and Richard Eyre were present along with the reporter and a *Republic* photographer. In the interview, Dunn admitted to combining names, which he has apparently done in this case. The manager of the Pocatello Cardinals was Nick Cullop, the "big old filthy catcher" Dunn describes in other stories. Danny Reagan, who was a catcher, was not the manager of the Pocatello Cardinals, he was the manager of the Ontario Orioles.

27. Dunn, "On Feeling Inferior," 166.
28. Dunn, "Four Basic Ingredients of Success," 13 February 1968 BYU speech. Covenant Recordings' audiotape of the speech (1983 copyright) says, "When I was eighteen, a rookie with the St. Louis Cardinals, I reported to spring training."
29. David Norse, spokesman for the St. Louis Cardinals, interview with author on 15 December 1986: "He might have played, but not for the Cardinals." Other confirmation: Paul McFarlane, *Sporting News*, Jackie Hollis, *The Baseball Bluebook*, Bill Weiss (Pioneer League, PCL statistician), and Chuck Stevens with California Pro Ballplayers Association.
30. David Norse telephone interview, 22 December 1986. Also telephone interview with Steve Gietschier. Both Norse and Gietschier are librarians for the *Baseball Sporting News* in St. Louis.
31. *Pioneer League Records*, 1942, 560-66 (includes "players in less than 10 games" on 564, and "pitchers in less than 45 innings" on 566.) Also Pocatello, Idaho, 1942 roster provided by St. Louis Cardinals.
32. *The Pocatello Tribune*, various articles from 14 April to 10 September 1942.
33. Conversation with Harry D. Pugsley—assigned by two quorum members to investigate Paul Dunn allegations—on 28 September 1989.
34. "Baseball Honors Elder P. Dunn," *Church News*, 10 January 1976, 6.
35. Bob Hoenig, "The Inside Look," *Hollywood Citizen News*, 29 March 1946, 18. Paul Dunn was not only competing with a flood of returning servicemen, as Hoenig points out ("A lot of servicemen will be back and their true value is uncertain"), Dunn was also competing with players coming down from Pittsburgh and from other Pittsburgh farm clubs, the Stars "being bolstered by a steady stream of Pittsburgh talent." (Last quote from 27 March edition, 17.)
36. The *Arizona Republic* did not follow-up, neither asking Dunn why his tax returns show he played for the Stars, nor asking who is the actual team in the *Church News* photograph.
37. "Orioles Drop Opener to Riverside Dons," *Daily Report*, Ontario, California, 21 April 1947.
38. "Orioles Meet Vols Tonight," *Daily Report*, 29 April 1947.
39. Arnold J. Irvine, "California Educator Fills Vacancy in Council of Seventy," *Church News*, 11 April 1964, 8: "For a year and a half, he pitched for the Hollywood Stars of the Pacific Coast League. During the winters he attended Chapman College. While pitching a game in the Sunset League, he snapped his collarbone."
40. At various times Dunn has claimed to have played between two and five seasons of professional ball. When he was called as a general authority the *Deseret News* said, "For two years he played professional ball before going into business for himself as manager of a food market which he left to continue his studies" (Henry A. Smith, "Conference Sustains California Educator," *Deseret News*, 6 April 1964). His 1986 biographical abstract provided by the LDS Public Communications Department says he "played professional baseball for four years with the St. Louis Cardinals." The flyleaf of Dunn's 1987 book *The Light of Liberty* (Bookcraft) says, "Outstanding in athletics, [Dunn] played professional ball for four years." While attempting to document precisely how long Dunn played professional ball, through Dunn's attorney James Jardine, Lynn Packer was told that Dunn played a season with Pocatello, one with Ontario, and one with Hollywood.
41. Ellsworth "Babe" Dahlgren, letter to author, 9 September 1987.
42. Telephone conversation with Len Monheimer, date not in notes.
43. "A Tribute to Paul H. Dunn," undated brochure. The brochure was in connection with an award Dunn received. The brochure's author said that Dunn's mother supplied the information.
44. Rod Dedeaux, telephone interview with the author, 1 April 1988.
45. Paul H. Dunn, *Seek the Happy Life* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 5. See also "Time-out!" *Conference Reports*, 5 April 1980, 55: "Near my eighteenth birthday I was drafted into World War II."
46. Paul H. Dunn, "If Thou Art Willing," *New Era*, August 1975, 5.
47. Dunn, "Seek and Ye Shall Find," 75.
48. Dunn, *You and Your World*, 137, 141. See also "If Thou Art Willing," 5.
49. Paul H. Dunn, BYU HBLL LRC audiotape 14 Pt. 45: "I took a squad," "tug at foot." See also *Anxiously Engaged* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974),



96, "thump on my boot," "less than 100 lbs."; and "Be Not Ashamed" (Provo, UT: BYU Speeches of the Year, 1970), 5: "kiss my boot"; and "Preparing for Parenthood" (BYU devotional address, 14 October 1975), 270; and *Ours To Hold It High* (Washington D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1947), 478, 484: "Many produced tiny American flags they had hidden from the Japanese until the day of liberation."

50. Dunn, "World War II Experiences," audiotape; "If Thou Art Willing" *New Era*, 8.

51. Dunn, *You and Your World*, 137; "World War II Experiences," audiotape.

52. Denny Roy, 1987 interview with Paul H. Dunn, unpublished, on file with David M. Kennedy Center, Brigham Young University.

53. BYU HBLL LRC audiotape 14 pt. 45

54. James S. Jardine (Paul Dunn's attorney) telephone interview with author, 20 August 1987; "Our Newest General Authority," *Improvement Era* (June 1964), 448; "Put On Your Spiritual Clothes," 236.

55. "Our Newest General Authority," 449.

56. *Seek The Happy Life*, 181; Maurine Ward, "Elder Paul Dunn," *This People* (Summer 1981), 36.

57. BYU HBLL LRC audiotape 14 pt. 45: "The enemy tried several suicide attacks into our line." *You and Your World*, 107 (A story about Christmas Eve, 1944.) In contrast, see an account in *Ours To Hold It High*, 192, where U.S. soldiers wanted "to encourage the Japanese to 'Banzai,' as the easiest known method of killing off large numbers without much effort." (See also, "Be Not Ashamed," 7.)

58. BYU HBLL LRC audiotape, 14 pt. 45.

59. "Seek and Ye Shall Find," 75-76. See also "If Thou Art Willing," 4; Kevin Stoker, "Elder Dunn stresses value of chaplains," *Deseret News*, 13 January 1987, B1; *Seek The Happy Life*, 8-9; "War Experiences" (Salt Lake City: Covenant Recordings), audiotape.

60. Paul H. Dunn, "Seek and Ye Shall Find," Videotape Devotional #1914, 28 February 1984. See also William E. Berrett, "Our Newest General Authority," 448: "Paul's wrist was bleeding from a shrapnel wound—his right wrist—his pitching arm. His identification tag had been shot away."

61. *Seek the Happy Life*, 6.

62. "World War II Experiences," audiotape.

63. Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against The Sun* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 264.

64. Isely and Crowl, *U.S. Marines and Amphibious Warfare*, 241.

65. *Ours To Hold It High*, 63.

66. Harold Lester Brown, Odessa, Missouri, telephone interview with author on 10 October 1987. Phillip Cunningham, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, telephone interview with author in October 1987 (Cunningham was the platoon sergeant). (Company Staff Sergeant was Anthony J. Piano of West New York, N.J.)

67. Brown interview.

68. Paul H. Dunn, *Discovering The Quality Of Success* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 62. See also "Be Not Ashamed," 7: "That man was so mean, so filthy, and miserable, he would not die." Also BYU HBLL LRC audiotape AC233 for "unrighteous dog" quote.

69. Paul H. Dunn, "World War II Experiences," BYU HBLL LRC audiotape AC 1889. See also *Discovering The Quality*, 68.

70. Dunn interview with *Arizona Republic*.

71. Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against The Sun* (New York: Random House, 1985), 573.

72. BYU HBLL LRC audiotape 14 pt. 45; BYU HBLL LRC audiotape 14 pt 51; *Deseret News*, 13 January 1987, B2.

73. "World War II Experiences," audiotape. See also Paul H. Dunn, "Who Shall Lead Them?" 1147 and BYU HBLL LRC audiotape 14 pt. 45: "[While] out with your ball team, talk to the youth of America."

74. Brown interview.

75. Dunn interview with *Arizona Republic*. In my conversation with Church investigator Harry Pugsley on 28 September 1989, Pugsley said Dunn told him he "goofed" when he used Brown's name in the story.

76. Dunn interview with *Arizona Republic*.

77. Louie Izzo, interview with author on 4 October 1989.

78. Dunn, "If Thou Art Willing," 7; *You & Your World*, 137; "Be Not Ashamed," 7; BYU HBLL LRC audiotape 14 pt. 51 (1963 speech).

79. Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against The Sun*, 383.

80. Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., *Studies in Psychology in World War II*, (Vol. 2, *Combat and Its Aftermath*), 163 (as cited in *Eagle*).

81. Dunn interview with *Arizona Republic*.

*You have to put the whole thing in perspective.*

## PAUL DUNN'S COMMENTS

*On 4 January 1991 Paul H. Dunn—accompanied by his attorney Jim Jardine and confidant Richard Eyre—was interviewed by Arizona Republic investigative reporter Richard Robertson. To date that interview in his lawyer's office is the only face-to-face interview Dunn has allowed in connection with his war and baseball stories. Here are excerpts from the interview.*

When you're speaking, you don't try to get into the details: I was signed here and played there. You're talking about an affiliation which kids, particularly can identify [with]. And I don't think, through any of my writing or speaking, I've tried to put myself up as any kind of a hero or a star. I've used sports stories to teach basic principles of truth because kids relate to sports, so sports, whether you and I think so or not (and I think we do), is America's religion. And so I just capitalized on sports, to get attention and to drive home a higher point of value. During this period of time, and since, I have associated with literally hundreds of big-name stars. Some I knew personally and some I just had a casual acquaintance with. So I draw on that to teach. . . .

### ON PLAYING WITH THE CARDINALS

I've said that my emphasis was simply that I was with the [Cardinal] organization. . . . You know when you're in the pulpit you're not trying to say you're in this league or that league because people don't really care. If I've done that, [say I was with the St. Louis Cardinals] then that wasn't the intent certainly. The intent is to teach people a principle through the medium or vehicle of sports. . . .

I think you have to put the whole thing in perspective. . . . [The] stories . . . , baseball and some of the army, go back forty-five and fifty years. When those were first told, that was in a setting entirely different than what I find myself in now. It was my intent, simply, to illustrate a point, in history, that affected me personally, emotionally, and spiritually and faithfully. And I didn't try to unravel the whole World War II history with it. . . . I haven't purposely tried to embellish, I've tried to illustrate points that would create the interest. Are you familiar with what Robert Fulgram [says in his book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*]. He talks about this very thing in terms of ordering, not the facts per se, but the events to illustrate the point. I think we all do that in terms of

speaking and writing. I don't think the point here, Richard, is number. The point is to give an impact to young people about the horrors of war, the price we pay, patriotism and the like.

## THE WAR STORIES

MY intent when I tell one of these war stories is not to recreate history. You talk about a landing. . . . I'm not trying to relive the exact historical data per se. Again, I'm using it as a vehicle. You take the scriptures. The Bible is not an historical account of the creation. It's not an historical, accurate account of all the events that transpired . . . , but it is a verification of God's concern for man and men's relationship to God. History, then, becomes a vehicle by which you teach. . . .

What I've done is combined events to illustrate a point. . . . The events were real. The combining of the stories seemed justifiable in terms of illustrating the point. . . . I don't think members are particularly looking at the recreation of history as they are the point you're teaching. Then the combining of events is simply a vehicle to do that. . . .

I don't know what there is, really, personally, to challenge [about my stories]. I was there. I did these things, and I'm giving you a first-hand observation of what I experienced. . . .

The [Harold Brown] incident as I describe it was one Harold and I had repeatedly about our feelings and what would be our situation if we were to go home after and that [dying] happened to one of us. . . .

Harold Brown and I got acquainted at Camp Pickett, Virginia, and he and I were, I guess, the two youngest as far as I could tell, in the whole company. Most of the guys were in their late twenties or thirties. And I thought they were Civil War vets. We were nineteen at the time. He was a little Southern Baptist, and I was a Western Mormon, and our ideals and standards were quite similar. So we grew very close and stayed together and took leave together. Finally, when we worked our way into Hawaii, and events led to battle, we tried to stay fairly close, became extremely good friends. He and I shared a lot about the future. What do you do when you get home? What about this, and what about that? And we talked about the awful state of war and why young kids like us who have no grudge against the world have to go out there and kill people. I wanted to go home and play ball and get married. And he wanted to do similar things in his career. So we were very close—often shared a foxhole together. . . .

There's this close relationship, friend to friend. Later, on Okinawa, we're separated for several reasons. Our forces are depleted and sometimes we can't always share the same foxhole. I am assigned a fellow by the name of Ralph Cocroft, who is . . . a good guy, but a little uncouth and crude. And one night, about the second week in '45, in Okinawa, he gets hit with a mortar shell. I'm the last person that's with him. And he dies.

Now I come home many months later, talking to kids in a teaching situation, no idea trying to make something out of nothing, simply combining two events. I had this happen, I don't know, a number of times where you're with a person at a point of death or serious injury where it takes on a whole new flavor. So what I did was take Harold Brown's relationship and combine it with Ralph Cocroft's dying. The point is not trying to skew history but to teach a point to kids. . . . There are two friends out there who share ideals and feelings and concerns. And people do die, and so that's what happened. . . .

I was trying to get [across] a point about how people feel, because that's the way Harold and I felt about it. . . . We even said, "If something happens, tell my family this." That's not a fabrication. Those are conversations we had. And if we ever have a chance, let's both of us tell the kids of America what war is really like. . . .

The Harold Brown event is real. The Ralph Cocroft event is real. At the time I was sharing that, I had no intent to deceive anyone. It was just to share a feeling and to teach a point. . . . When I first told the story, he [Brown] was such a close, dear, personal friend, that the impact of his personality, his commitment to the country and to his church and to his family gave that a real impetus. . . . I just took Ralph Cocroft, who did die, paid the price, and Harold's statement and put them together.

I think the whole issue here is a combining of two events to illustrate a real concern I had as a young soldier. . . . There's a difference, I think, between creating an event and combining one. Combining events I've done. Purposely to mislead, no. My motives are pure and innocent—to teach a principle. I think if you take thirty of my books and go through them line by line, you'll find that's the whole point of my writing. . . .

I think the point I want you to understand is that there is no intent to deceive. These are events that occurred in my life. Then they're true. In two or three cases, as we've talked, we combined events or changed names to protect the innocent. I think that's very important.





*I think Paul Dunn has learned  
from what has happened.*

## HONESTY AND MOTIVE

By Richard Eyre

SOMETIMES A SITUATION CAN BE SO OVER-analyzed that we lose sight of its essence. The three most important facts relative to Elder Paul Dunn's situation are each very simple and very clear:

1. Elder Paul Dunn exaggerated some of his war and baseball stories. He should not have done so.

2. Elder Dunn has spent a lifetime serving and helping other people—not only through large speeches or best-selling books but through long, caring, and often thankless personal-

counseling.

3. Few of us have never exaggerated, and none of us know completely another person's innermost motives. So while we may conclude that certain acts are wrong, we should not make personal judgments.

Dishonesty in any and all of its forms is wrong. *How* wrong it is may depend on motive. Motives are hard to judge—even in ourselves—let alone in others. But one who is dishonest with motives to tear down and destroy must be more culpable because of those dark motives.

I have known Paul Dunn for a long time, and I believe his core motives have always been to teach and motivate—particularly young people. He has found, over the years, that his genuine background as a ballplayer and soldier reaches youth. He began telling his experiences (as a fairly young man himself) and in some but certainly not all cases exaggerated or combined stories. This was wrong, but it is interesting to note that Elder Dunn is rarely the hero in his stories—more often he is the observer who learns a principle and passes it on to his listeners.

Now, if we were to judge, which we should not, we might ask questions about the motives of anyone who pursues a long-term vendetta, trying to destroy the life work and reputation of other persons by implying that their hearts are dark and selfish.

Paul Dunn is not a man without faults; nor am I; nor are you. I think he has learned from what has happened and has tried not to blame or judge his accusers. May we also learn but not judge.

*RICHARD EYRE is a close friend of Paul Dunn and has been a frequent co-author with him.*



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*Sometimes the truth is boring.*

# SALTING THE TRUTH

*By Kent Frogley*

Truth: An ingenious compound of desirability and appearance.—Ambrose Bierce<sup>1</sup>

I never lie. But the truth can be made up, if you know how.—Lily Tomlin

WHEN I WAS YOUNG I THOUGHT TRUTH WAS just getting the facts straight. Now I'm not so sure. Is truth subjective or objective? There is talk of orthodoxy versus revelatory truths. Perhaps truth is contextual. In some circles people discuss the historicity of the Book of Mormon or debate the actuality of Old Testament stories. Objective history is pitted against faith-promoting history. Everybody has their own spin on truth. Perhaps truth is a little more elusive than I first thought. So in connection to Paul Dunn, it's hard for me to fault him for embellishing his war stories and his baseball stories and whatever other stories he has used to inspire adolescents over the course of the past three decades. His motives were well-intentioned, but we deserve better. Nietzsche said, "It's a terrible thing to die of thirst upon the ocean but there are still those amongst us who would salt the truth."<sup>2</sup>

My experience with Paul Dunn and his stories took place during my adolescence. And Elder Dunn designed his stories primarily for young adults. I thought then that adults had a tendency to sugar-coat things for teenagers. I wasn't sure if they were trying to postpone some of the grimmer realities of growing up or whether they just wanted one last shot at molding us for the better. I'm sure that could explain some of Dunn's motives--young people need to believe in something. His stories may have persuaded some people to go on missions who otherwise wouldn't. Maybe some people stayed in the Church who were slipping out. Or maybe someone was inspired to stretch and achieve something he or she might have thought unachievable. I don't know. One never knows with teenagers how they're going to turn out. Adolescence is hard. And it's not the best place for our spiritual development to

stop. We have to grow up, spiritually as well as physically.

I remember my spiritual adolescence. I heard many of the Paul Dunn stories during the years I attended seminary. At that time in my life, I was, like many of my peers, developing my belief system about how God is and how he interacts with his children. To me, the Paul Dunn stories were inspiring and sent a powerful message that if I could live as worthily as Paul Dunn, I, too, could be miraculously protected from harm. God would intervene in the physical events of the universe to protect me. If I courageously stood up for my beliefs in the face of outright confrontation from the Sergeant Izzos of my world, I could convert those who mocked me. Those things sounded pretty neat. What a great church where things like that would happen to people who were truly righteous.

Well, as I grew older I made a discovery. Those kinds of things didn't happen to me. I thought it was because I wasn't really worthy of that kind of intervention from God. It never occurred to me that maybe it was because a part of my belief system was based on stories that had been made up, that Paul Dunn had decided what was true about how God would interact with us and then created events, presented as facts, that supported those beliefs. We didn't do that in our church. That was how doctrines became twisted and is what eventually led to the Great Apostasy. Or so that's what I had been told and what I had taught as a missionary.

When I first heard that the Paul Dunn stories weren't true I couldn't believe it. These stories sounded too good not to be true. I had the opportunity to examine Lynn Packer's research before it was published in the *Arizona Republic* and realized the stories weren't true. I felt betrayed. I wondered what the other hundreds of thousands who had heard Dunn's stories would feel if they knew.

The reaction from the general Church membership after the story broke has been interesting, as far as I've been able to assess. Some people tried to defend Paul Dunn's behavior. Many have reacted with anger. But most have shrugged their shoulders and gone on. They're busy raising families and making a living and getting their Sunday School lessons ready. Paul Dunn is a blip on their spiritual peripheral vision. Maybe that is as it should be. Sometimes too much can be made of another person's weakness or lack of judgment. But I think damage has been done. Paul Dunn has compromised the believability of all stories and events spoken from the pulpit. When I hear a story now, I wonder what little detail was omitted or what little twist was inserted so that the story would work just a little bit better, be a little more faith promoting. Now, I am left to wonder, where does faith balance a healthy skepticism? How much should I question? More than once I've heard someone respond to a conference talk with, "I hope he's not Paul Dunning me."

I understand how stories can be used as object lessons. I don't have difficulty with the use of fiction as a tool to teach or exemplify principles or concepts. Jesus used parables. But the difference with Paul Dunn was that his stories were presented as true events. And perhaps the most annoying dimension of the tales was Elder Dunn's starring role as hero. Add the

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royalties that Elder Dunn has received from book and tape sales of those talks, and his rather opulent home, and the comparisons of Dunn to the T.V. evangelist scandals seem less outrageous. I think Paul Dunn's place at the center of the stories, however, is most symptomatic of the proclivity we have to sell ourselves rather than own ourselves. A scrubbed image is always favored over a scuffed reality, even though ultimately that reality is where the real power lies. For me, Joseph Smith became a real person and true visionary after I read the somewhat unflattering portrait in *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*.<sup>3</sup> The antiseptic prophet of my Sunday School lessons finally became a human being.

The response from the institutional Church was as dismaying as the Paul Dunn revelations themselves. We continually pay tribute to the principles of truth and integrity and honesty. But how strong is our commitment if the risk is institutional embarrassment? When I contrast the treatment of George P. Lee who, regardless of your view of his statements, was at least being honest, and compare that with Paul Dunn's shift to emeritus G.A. status (a move the Church denies was connected to the Lynn Packer stories), I wonder if individual personalities are placed above the principles which provide the foundation of our belief system. Paul Dunn lies on behalf of the Church for thirty years, but they were faith-promoting lies, and he's okay. George Lee says, "I've got to be honest about what I believe; I'm not in total agreement," and he's out. The distinction between the heretical statements of Lee and the prevarications of Dunn is small: Both are ultimately incorrect. I don't understand why Paul Dunn was emeritized and George Lee is out on his ear, but I am not surprised by the difference in the way the two were treated. Only one of them understood the Church culture and knew that as long as things look right you are fairly safe. Paul Dunn kept his spiritual hair above his ears; George Lee let his grow over his collar.

We value obedience over honesty, and we really prefer that things look good more than that they be good. It was not necessary to publicly humiliate Paul Dunn, but the Church's silence about his stories spoke loudly. It implied a tolerance or consent of Elder Dunn's actions. And it implies a timidity in dealing with problems within the inner circle where, if anything, a more vigorous standard could be expected. A public statement by the Church directly addressing Lynn Packer's allegations should have been made. The tepid public statement the Church made was worse than no statement at all.

In the midst of the Paul Dunn controversy I had a discussion with a friend from New York who works for a Wall Street law firm. He thought that there was nothing wrong with Paul Dunn doing what he did when his motives and audience are considered. "He was trying to build people's faith. And he was speaking mostly to teenagers." My reaction was, "What's wrong with telling them the truth?" He replied, "In this case the truth didn't seem to be good enough." Well, sometimes the truth is boring. That's life.

I can only guess what Paul Dunn's motivations were. But Paul Dunn's stories involving God's intervention in his life are apocryphal. His stories, because he was a general authority,

represented the Church as a whole. When we allow apocrypha to be preached over the pulpit and enter into the belief system of the Church our belief system becomes based on apocrypha. It alters that belief system. And our perceptions about God and Christ are revised to accommodate the apocryphal perceptions. Truth is ultimately obscured, and individuals find themselves astray.

If we are committed to speaking the truth, it must be without hesitation and without regard to position, influence, tenure, or the public relations fallout. Maybe I'm being too idealistic. Perhaps I'm holding Elder Dunn to an adolescent standard, the standard that Paul Dunn talked about in his stories—doing what's right regardless of the consequences. Maybe I need to be more cognizant of consequences or maybe just more forgiving. I'm reminded of the words of Paul Tillich: "The character of human life, like the character of the human condition, like the character of all life, is ambiguity: the inseparable mixture of good and evil, the true and false, the creative and destructive forces—both individual and social."<sup>4</sup> Ultimately Elder Dunn's stories and Lynn Packer's exposé may have done us a service by confronting us with that struggle—the struggle that persuades us to a greater, more realistic and mature understanding of God and his ways for us. Or the struggle abandoned that leaves us behind in an adolescent, sentimental spiritual view, characterized by the wishful thinking embodied in Paul Dunn's stories.

## NOTES

1. Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 136.
2. Frederic Nietzsche, *Good and Evil*, translated by Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1966), 88.
3. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (New York: Doubleday, 1984).
4. Paul Tillich, *Time*, May 17, 1963.



*As Mormons, let's not be afraid  
to speak openly and frankly.*

# THE UNINTENTIONAL LESSONS OF PAUL H. DUNN

*By Roger D. Plothow*

SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH IN JUNE 1844, JOSEPH Smith ordered the seizure of the press used to publish the first and only edition of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which was harshly critical of some of the Prophet's theology.

There are times, no doubt, when modern Church leaders would like to pursue the same approach in media relations. For the sake of its own membership, if nothing else, the modern Church must be more sophisticated. There are a number of good P.R. reasons for Church officials to deal openly and frankly with the media, but I'd like to focus on one that is easy to overlook: the relationship between the Church and the general membership *through* the media.

The emphasis of the Church's Public Affairs Department is to disseminate information about the Church to the world—the non-Mormon world. What seems to be forgotten is that the millions of Church members, especially the North American Saints, also are consumers of the same information in the mainstream media. The Paul Dunn episode illustrates this point.

The Sunday morning the Associated Press wire story on Elder Dunn appeared in my newspaper in Idaho Falls, I scrapped my prepared lesson for the elders quorum and opened the meeting to a free discussion of how quorum members felt about the revelations. I was stunned by the response. There was some sentiment that the fault lay with the *Arizona Republic* for publishing the story; there was also some anger, but more sympathy, directed toward Elder Dunn. But the greatest bitterness was reserved for Church officials who had done nothing about the situation, even though they surely

knew—or at least must have suspected—that many of those stories were, at best, only partially factual. The brethren in that elders quorum were not “lunatic liberals”—they weren't even intellectuals in the traditional sense. They were sincere, hurting members who had questions that no one could answer about Church issues they learned from the newspaper instead of the Church. One of the most critical is now a high councilor of my stake. Another elder was especially disturbed and uttered a thought I'm sure many have thought from time to time but few have had the courage to verbalize: “What if we die and find out that we've been wrong?” His question was provoked not by Elder Dunn's mistake but by the Church's inaction and perhaps coverup.

The Dunn episode is an opportunity for Church leaders to review their policies on dealing with the mass media *and* their own membership.

Sometimes, the Public Affairs Department can simply be too slick for its own good and end up inflicting guilt on members through the idealized images of the Church it portrays. But what Church members are hungering for is more genuine openness and honest portrayals, not over-simplified commercials. And, curiously, many of us will believe more what we read in the media about the Church than what we read in Church publications. Hence, the importance of using the media to communicate to the members. This is not a sign of mistrust, it's a sign of intense interest. The recent *Arizona Republic* series on Church finances—the latest in a number of attempts by journalists to determine the wealth of the Church—ran for four days in most newspapers in the American West. While I suspect it was of some passing interest to many non-Mormons, it was of deep interest to Mormons. It seems to me that we are at a crossroads in the relationship between Church leadership and the general membership, and the public media is increasingly the mediator in the relationship.

Shortly after the story on Elder Dunn broke, I wrote a long letter to Don LeFevre, media relations director for the Church. In part, I said, “at the very least, it would seem in the Church's best interest to have divulged that some information in Elder Dunn's books and tapes . . . is untrue.” I pleaded for the Church to be more forthcoming and straightforward in its relationship to the press. Brother LeFevre wrote a gracious reply, stating that he was in “full agreement” with the points I made in my letter and that my philosophy was much like his.

I hope Brother LeFevre has some influence in the Church Office Building. The Church can no longer afford to be selectively isolationist in regards to information. The Church is big news, and getting bigger—not just in Utah and Idaho, but wherever it is organized. It will be getting more and more attention. Church leaders needn't see this as a threat. To oversimplify, journalists are just looking for a story, and too often the story becomes the Church's attempts to hide or distort information. Of course, this affects how members view their Church. This is not a wise policy and will only cause more problems.

Of course, the Church has no obligation to comply with

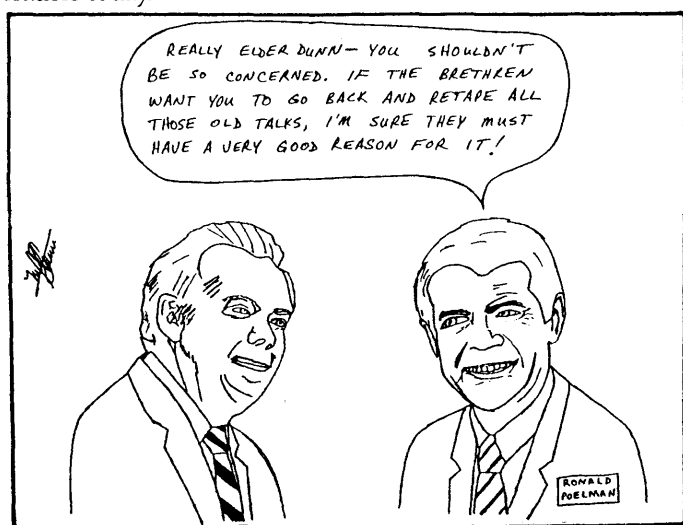
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every request for information. Sometimes information is sought for solely pejorative reasons and, if released, no doubt would harm the Church or its members. But Church officials too often show an almost paranoid reluctance to share any information, even with their own members.

As Mormons, let's not be afraid to speak openly and frankly. Let's be forthright as we confront questions. When we err, let's admit it. We've been disingenuous with each other, and with outsiders, for far too long. We speak in corporate metaphors and trite cultural colloquialisms. We are ashamed to admit that we're less than perfect. Perhaps we fear giving our detractors material, afraid they'll use our honesty against us. Let them. Reasonable people won't be affected. Besides, detractors will do their work one way or another.

Some of the most poignant modern scriptures are those in which the Prophet Joseph is publicly chastened by God for his errors. These strengthen my conviction of the Prophet's mission. He made mistakes. He needed to repent. He was mortal, fallible. Yet, consider what he accomplished. Surely we shouldn't expect more of our mortal selves and our fallible leaders today.



"It's the Tribune. They want to know if it's true we're keeping the Paul H. Dunn baseball cards in the First Presidency Vault."

*For many good story tellers, the points made in stories are far more important than specific details of the stories themselves.*

## THE SPINNERS OF TALES

By William A. Wilson

THOUGH PERSONALLY TROUBLED BY THE RECENT revelations about the narratives Elder Paul H. Dunn has made part of his storytelling repertoire, I have resisted writing this piece. I have done so because I have been taught well from boyhood on to respect Church leaders and to avoid public comment on their activities, even should I occasionally disagree with them. I do not intend to break that pattern here. I will write not as a critic but as a folklorist whose study of storytelling in general may help us see Elder Dunn's storytelling in broader perspective. I will leave to others the tasks of vindication or condemnation.

Elder Dunn insists that he has combined events from a variety of personal experiences and has further elaborated and embellished these events to make moral and theological points and to capture audience interest. That he believes he could change the truth in order to teach the truth may strike many of us as incredibly naive. But since I have not yet been blessed with the ability to see into another person's heart, I will accept at face value Elder Dunn's own explanations of his actions: "The combining of stories seems justifiable in terms of illustrating a point. My motives are pure and innocent." That statement, however naive, bothers me considerably less than does some journalists' gleefully ruthless exposé of Elder Dunn's storytelling methods. When error must be brought to light and human frailty corrected, surely there must be charitable ways of achieving these ends.

Elder Dunn compares his stories to parables. Such a comparison breaks apart when one realizes that parables are usually narratives we tell about other people and that we acknowledge to be "just stories," whereas personal narratives are accounts we tell of our own experiences and that we usually

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claim to be true. When we try to get hold of this slippery thing we call "truth," we should pay attention to at least three points.

First, we must understand that the past is never fully recoverable—either by sober historians or by common people recounting events from their own lives. Any attempt to reconstruct that past will be governed by what the person doing the reconstruction considers important and will of necessity require highlighting some details, leaving some in shadow, and dropping some completely—otherwise, the telling of the event would take as long as the event itself. Some may argue that we alter the past only by adding details, but we alter it also when we leave some out. And an altered past is not the true past; it is in the final analysis a fiction, something that is never fully the same as the reality it attempts to represent.

Second, when we tell stories of the past we do not add or drop details in a random fashion. We remember and recount the past in terms meaningful to us in the present. And this would hold true not just of Elder Dunn but also of those people Lynn Packer and the *Arizona Republic* interviewed about Dunn's past. Some time ago, when plans were still abroad to publish the sesquicentennial history of the Church, a research assistant working on the northern European volume interviewed me about my experiences in Finland. I answered his questions as honestly as I could, received a transcription of the interview a few weeks later, then filed it away and forgot about it. I chanced upon the transcript well over a decade later, sat down to read it, and found myself in immediate disagreement with the words appearing on the pages before me. In fact, I became angry with the misguided speaker of those words until I remembered that I was the speaker. Why this reaction? Because I was no longer the person I had been at the time of the interview. I was now remembering details of my experiences in Finland quite differently, in terms meaningful to me in the present moment.

This point is significant enough to add further emphasis. Because of this tendency of storytellers to recast former times to meet current needs, many scholars, in the absence of strong corroborative evidence, seek in stories not reflections of the past but projections of the storytellers' values, ideas, and personalities. And they view the telling of stories not as a means of keeping the past alive, but as an ever-recurring human authority by which individuals, once again, make fiction of the past in order to negotiate their way through the present.

Third, and perhaps most important, for many good storytellers, the points made in stories or the influences exerted on audiences are far more important than specific details of the stories themselves. Some individuals change stories, as Elder Dunn suggests, to meet the needs of listeners. I once told an anecdote about Jesse Evans Smith to a friend. That same evening he and I attended the same social gathering and he, having completely forgotten the source of his story, told it again, though in much more elaborate and embellished detail—he is a much better storyteller than I am. Challenged, he would insist that his story carried the essence if not the appearance of my account. He might also protest that he was

simply responding to the demands of his audience. And he would be correct. Anyone who tells the same story to different audiences soon learns to "adjust" the story to match the personalities of the listeners. Indeed, some years ago one of my students, who had served as Elder Dunn's assistant in the mission field and had heard him speak many times, observed that Elder Dunn never told the same story twice the same way. I have repeated this student's account many times in subsequent classes—not to discredit Elder Dunn in any way, but rather to call attention to the fact that any oral narrative is finally the joint creation of both teller and audience, as both respond dynamically to each other.

Other individuals change stories, as Elder Dunn also suggests, to put across points important to them. I frequently tell a story about how my father once caught me smoking and how he, in his kind and gentle way, led me from the pathway of sin. After reading about Elder Dunn's troubles, I asked myself, "Did that smoking story really happen the way you tell it, or have you embellished it to make an effective point?" I have to answer that I really don't know. I think I am telling the truth, but cannot say absolutely that I am. As a collector of stories, I have heard too many other people relate accounts which they have believed to be true but which have proved not to be. I do know that what is most important for me as I relate this story is the point I want to make—that my father's love brought me back into the fold.

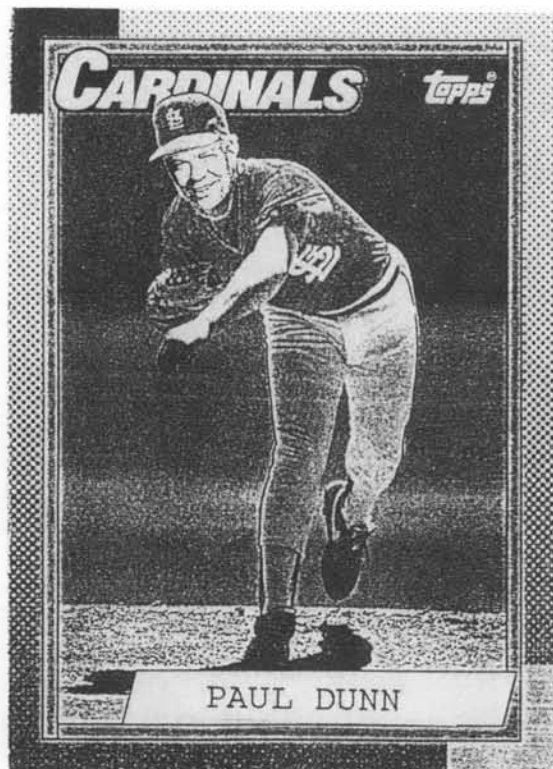
But, some would argue, there is a huge difference between not remembering exactly the events of one's past and consciously altering those events. Perhaps so. But, once again, good storytellers frequently draw on the skimpiest of details to develop full-blown stories. I recently heard a scholar who studies personal narratives tell how she had listened all her life to her grandmother tell that at one time the head of their family had been killed by lightning and that the women in the family had carried on without him. The scholar finally investigated the story, found it to be false, and then told her grandmother the real facts. The grandmother thanked her granddaughter for this information and then went on telling the story as she had always done, pointing out that her family was comprised of strong women and that the story, as she told it, illustrated this fact. Clearly, for her the point made by her story was far more important than the accuracy of the narrative itself. And so it is with many spinners of tales.

WHAT are we to make of all this? Does the end justify the means? In the service of a lofty goal, should one distort what one understands to be the truth? Of course not. This is not a defense of anyone; it is a plea for understanding. In the instance of Elder Dunn's storytelling, I am merely suggesting that the issue is much more complex than most journalists would have us believe and that there might be cause to cast our cynicism aside for a moment and pay some heed to Elder Dunn's own explanation of his storytelling, an explanation that does make sense when viewed from the broader perspective I have outlined here. And if we will take seriously his statement that his stories have merely been vehicles for the expression of



larger points, there might also be cause to remember some of those points, to remember that Elder Dunn has sought always to lift flagging spirits, to strengthen faith, and to convince the weary that persistence in the line of duty would eventually carry the day. Such remembering might make us a little less willing to discount a life of service dedicated to the promulgation of these ideals.

Above all, I would suggest that we respond to the current furor with sympathy and Christian charity, remembering all the while that many of us may have reconstructed our own pasts in ways that will not bear close scrutiny.



*Even if there is no absolute truth in autobiography, there is still relative truth.*

## FICTION AND FACT IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By Robert F. Sayre

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES ARE FICTIONS.

This discovery, or perhaps I should say theory, is one of the most exciting developments of the last twenty-five or thirty years in the reading and writing of autobiography. According to his theory, the autobiographer is not a changeless monolith but a living person whose self-image changes over time and in relation to the events described and audiences addressed. Thus, as I argued nearly thirty years ago in *The Examined Self*, the three main parts of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (the first written in England in 1771, the second in Paris in 1784, and the third in Philadelphia in 1788) reveal noticeably different men. The first Franklin was earnest, writing prudential advice to his son (who, however, was forty years old and governor of New Jersey, and so presumably beyond needing such advice). The second was more playful, playing the naive seeker of moral perfection. And the last was an elderly patriot, advising young Americans on civic improvements.

More recent theories of autobiography have argued for an even more radical reading of it—consistent with modern arguments for the fictionality of all knowledge. Autobiography is a text, a made thing, not "truth." It is a representation of reality, not reality itself. It is a fabric of words making up an account of a life and the world the writer lived in, not the life and world themselves.

Another, related development is the recognition that autobiographies have also served their writers as means of composing selves, of even inventing or helping them to invent new identities. Before writing *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Scott Momaday was a young professor of English who apparently

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knew little of his Kiowa ancestry. In taking the journey and doing the reading, research, and remembering recorded in it, however, he developed that ancestry into a living heritage. As he said later, in his second autobiographical book *The Names*, he “imagined” who he was.

In this context, we could say that Paul H. Dunn also imagined who he was—he composed a romantic and inspiring new identity for himself as a former big league baseball player and war hero. Moreover, telling these stories and repeating them to rapt audiences, made him a hero—or at least did temporarily—making him admired by a generation of Mormon youth and eventually a leader of the Church. Similarly, Momaday’s *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, along with his poems and his novel *The House Made of Dawn*, made him a leader in the revival of American Indian literature and highly sought-after teacher and lecturer.

So what is the difference?


The word *fiction* is derived from the Latin *fictus*, past participle of *ingere*, “to shape, fashion, feign.” *Fact* is derived from *factus*, past participle of *facere*, to make or do. Thus, facts are based on or describe what was done, on deeds, on information that is presented as reliable. Fictions are things not done but created, made up rather than made, and yet often fairly presented as still possible, resembling facts. So, both fact and fiction make or shape us and our worlds; but a difference is that fictions *feign*—pretend, intentionally deceive—whereas facts (usually) can be verified and do not try to deceive. The sophisticated user of facts knows, of course, that they not only can deceive and distort reality but inevitably do. They are selected in place of other facts and are placed in more or less convincing stories and accounts. This is what the modern deconstructionist argument is all about: that all facts are fictions, attempts to teach us. But there is still a difference, a very important difference, between the factual fact and the fictional “fact.” One represents a deed; the other is a pretended deed.

Thus, there is also a very important difference between Benjamin Franklin’s or Scott Momaday’s autobiographies and Paul Dunn’s. None are absolute truth. But an autobiography based upon facts and on deeds done is still closer to truth than one which is feigned, which is based on imagined deed presented as if they had been done. The one attempts relative truth; the other lies.

Thus the argument that all autobiographies are fictions is not a defense of Paul Dunn. Even if there is no absolute truth in autobiography, there is still relative truth, and relative truth is very important. As Clifford Goertz has said, to think it isn’t is like thinking that because absolute antisepsis is unattainable, surgical operations may as well be performed in sewers. We have a right to hold autobiographers accountable, as we have a right to expect surgeons to scrub thoroughly and use sterile instruments. Autobiographers who feign to have been big league ballplayers and war heroes are impostors.

As for Paul Dunn’s defense that his lies were told in the interests of truth, of teaching and inspiration, I think of the tricky old Episcopal clergyman and hagiographer, Mason

Locke Weems, who made up the spurious tale of George Washington and the cherry tree. This lie was supposedly justified because it taught children to tell the truth! And if biographers can lie in the interests of teaching, why can’t autobiographers?

The answer, as Dunn shows, is that they can . . . and do. But that does not make Washington a precedent for Dunn. Washington did not tell the tale about himself. Dunn is simply a modern-day Parson Weems. 

## IS PAUL DUNN ANY GOOD IN THE CHURCH TODAY

(To the tune of “Have I Done Any Good in the World Today?”)

Is Paul Dunn any good in the Church today?  
Has he said anything that’s true?  
Were his stories, so wise, just a tissue of lies?  
Was he ever in World War II?  
These questions are haunting the young and the old,  
Who purchased all his cassette tapes.  
Some folks think we should cast blame; while others proclaim,  
To chide him is just sour grapes.

Chorus:

Says Paul Dunn, “I’ve done nothing wrong,  
My motives are spotless I know.”  
He continues to speak now,  
And though sales are weak now,  
His income continues to grow.

Is Paul Dunn any good in the Church today?  
Did he ever play major league ball?  
Were his tales about jocks from the school of hard knocks?  
Or just fantasies after all?  
His publishers tell us that we should not scold  
Old Paul for the things he professed.  
All his yarns, they insist, are like parables, told  
And sold so that we would be blest.

Chorus

Is Paul Dunn any good in the Church today?  
Will his words still enlighten the youth?  
His supporters confess that the answer is, Yes,  
If kids will take light without truth.  
The leaders admonish that we should forgive  
And willingly wipe his slate blank.  
But this is a commandment that’s so hard to live  
While he’s putting cash in the bank.

Chorus

—PAUL TOSCANO

*How much latitude is covered by purity of intent?*

# TRUTH, FACTS, AND PERSONAL ANECDOTES

*By Richard D. Poll*

BEING OLD ENOUGH TO TELL STORIES FOR THE edification of grandchildren, I testify to the almost irresistible temptation to improve on a good story. Each time I recall my boyhood in the Great Depression or my service in the Great War, the tale is a little different. Why? Partly because the stimulus is different, partly because the audience is different, and partly because my memory of the event(s) has been reshaped by previous tellings and the responses they produced. Had I more grandchildren close at hand, or had I been a pulpit teacher rather than a classroom teacher for forty years, I might also have responded to the temptation to reshape the past for the sake of new anecdotal material. I have not found myself under that necessity, but in scores of classes I have endorsed the words of Chief Justice John Marshall in the famous *McCulloch vs. Maryland* decision: "Let the end be legitimate, . . . and all means which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited, . . . are constitutional."

How far the end of giving memorable and motivating moral counsel legitimizes the embellishing, even the fabricating, of first-person anecdotes, I am not the one to judge. Is it morally wrong to embellish a fact-based story by changing details? Is it morally unacceptable if the changes go beyond adjectives and adverbs into nouns and verbs? Is it morally reprehensible if fiction is presented as fact? Is it morally sinful if the fiction not only enhances the message but the image of the messenger? How much latitude is covered by purity of intent? I do not know, nor do I have a strong opinion.

What I do know is that many of the most effective tellers of first-person stories *do* embellish and fabricate. Without going into American and world history, where the name of the tellers of didactic personal tales is legion, I will mention three great

LDS leaders and then expand a little on a fourth.

I BELIEVE that not all of the engaging stories about Bishop Thomas S. Monson and his central-city ward, or Mission President Thomas S. Monson and his missionaries, happened just as Elder and President Monson has described them. It is even possible that some of them happened in another ward, or another mission, or even to another Church leader. President Monson makes the stories work for him, and congregations listen and are moved.

I doubt that all of the Polynesian miracles reported by Elder Matthew Cowley happened just as he described them. I believe in a God of miracles, and I loved to hear Elder Cowley tell the stories that endeared him to the Church. My skepticism stems from the dearth of corroborative evidence about happenings so remarkable that they ought to have produced more evidence accessible to historians and others who subsequently sought it.

Having given some attention to the life of Elder Henry D. Moyle, who was *not* a storyteller, I will mention only one incident that illustrates our general susceptibility to fudging the facts for the truth's sake. In his vigorous efforts to motivate and discipline the missionary effort, Elder Moyle warned missionaries against requesting to cut their mission short by a few weeks or months for educational or other reasons. This is good counsel, but when he used his own mission in pre-World War II Germany to make the point, he embellished away the fact that the last seven months of that mission were spent as a student at the University of Freiberg.

HAVING also looked rather closely at the life of Elder Hugh B. Brown, who was one of the *great* Mormon storytellers, I found him also to be very human in this respect. Factual flaws can be found in three of his personal anecdotes that are classics, still enjoyed in firesides sixteen years after his death.

"Almost a Millionaire" is about his call to be an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve, and how he had to leave a prosperous Canadian oil business to accept it. It is a wonderful story, moving to hear. The factual weakness in it is peripheral to the story, but not trivial. Oil eventually made millionaires in Alberta, Canada, but the company that sent Hugh B. Brown there in 1950 still faced uncertain prospects when he received the call from President David O. McKay three years later. President Brown always wanted to be rich, and it may be that the wish became father of the thought as he used his own experience to dramatize the importance, and sacrifice, of accepting Church assignments.

"Father, Are You There?" is the fascinating story of young Hugh Brown's encounter with a group of earnest truth-seekers when he came to Cambridge, England, late in 1904 as a green and unaccompanied missionary. According to Brown, there were no Mormons within many miles and posters threatened violence to missionaries, but with fear and faith Elder Brown accepted their invitation to "be our minister" and soon baptized all seventeen members of the small congregation.

Lacking access to a journal covering the first year of his mission, Eugene Campbell and I simply incorporated the later

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reminiscent account in our published biography, *Hugh B. Brown: His Life and Thought*. But we were struck by the fact that there were Mormons in some nearby towns, and that the *Millennial Star* for 1904-05 contains no mention of mob threats in the area or of this remarkable group conversion. The *Star* does present two items that clearly relate to the story. The first is a 20 March 1905 report from Elders Hugh B. Brown and Wilford West, then laboring together in Cambridge:

... we are pleased to report that prospects are very encouraging at present in this part of the vineyard. We believe that during the few years in which there have been no Elders in Cambridge, the people have had time to prepare their minds, and ripen for the harvest, and although some are blind with prejudice, there are many who are anxiously investigating the truth. We have many honest-hearted friends here, four of whom have very kindly offered their homes for us to hold meetings in, which we gladly accepted. We believe good results will follow, as immediately [sic] after our second meeting we had three applications for baptism. Many attentive listeners attend our meetings, and last Sunday evening we were pleased with the presence of a local preacher, who seemed very impressed with the way the gospel was explained. After asking a few questions at the close of the meeting, he said he had a hall which he would place at our disposal to hold meetings in at any time we chose. This will be much more convenient for our rapidly increasing attendance.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent to Elder Brown's transfer to Ipswich, the *Star* reported that a branch was organized in Cambridge on 7 December 1905. It had seventeen members<sup>2</sup>—the same unchanging number of the earnest group he converted in his evolving faith-promoting narrative.

"God Is the Gardener" is perhaps President Brown's most famous and inspiring story of all. Here is the way I handled it in a recently published essay:

Many of you have heard the story of Hugh Brown and the currant bush. In summary, it tells how Brown, as an officer in the Canadian Army in the World War I, took a contingent of troops to England, expecting to lead them into combat and anticipating a promotion in rank. At a critical point he was called in for an interview. His superior officer, a general, fussed and stalled and then was called away, giving Brown opportunity to glance at the papers on the desk. On his service record, in very legible letters, was written, "This man is a Mormon." Denied the appointment, Major Brown was inclined to be resentful. Then he recalled the currant bush complaining of being pruned too short, and his response: "You've been cut back so that you can get the growth that you're intended for."

It's a wonderful story. The problem with it is that, on the basis of the documents as I read them, it is not quite true. Hugh B. Brown was a good and very popular officer, and he *did* go overseas expecting advancement. But when he got to England, he discovered what the history

of that war clearly establishes—that more enlisted men than field grade officers were being killed in France. By 1917 recruits were going to the front as replacements, not as new combat units, and there was no place for all of the officers who had trained them. The journal of Major Brown's aide suggests that personal favoritism was behind the selection of one of the other contenders for advancement; it also reports, however, that Brown was never granted the interview he requested. He returned to Canada, and as the soldiers he took over began to die, some Albertans made snide comments about "slackers."


He wrote in his journal then:

"I spent most of . . . May at home visiting family and friends and learned by bitter experience of being misjudged, for some who had appeared to be my friends were most harsh in their criticism of my returning home, thinking I came on account of my fear of the battle line. But God knows I did not have any choosing and that I tried to do my duty and play the game."

In such circumstances, one can imagine the parable of the currant bush beginning to take shape. From the time it first appeared in print in 1939 until President Brown's death 36 years later, it evolved further, as such tales do. President Brown was a story teller *par excellence*, and he knew what good story tellers know—that you use what works with the crowd. It may be that he came in time to believe the mythologized version of the event, in which case there would have been no conscious dishonesty in telling it.<sup>3</sup>

OF the phenomenon that links these stories with many of Elder Paul H. Dunn's, I once wrote:

The creation of historical myths—idealized versions of important past experiences—is an inevitable process which contributes to the pursuit of righteousness to the extent that it provides role models and motivating traditions which are consistent with truth. Historians with their documents, contribute to the pursuit of righteousness when they check the myth-making capability to generate and perpetuate untruth and half-truth and to sanctify unrighteousness.<sup>4</sup>

We should be very cautious in judging anyone who embellishes or fabricates personal anecdotes for noble purposes because, as Walt Kelly's cartoon hero, Pogo, once noted, "We have met the enemy, he is us." 

## NOTES

1. *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, 23 March 1905, 186-87.

2. *Ibid.*, 4 January 1906, 11.

3. Richard D. Poll, "The Challenge of Living with Change," *History and Faith: Reflections of a Mormon Historian* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 125-27.

4. Poll, 123-24.

*Fabrications can function as structured pathways to spirituality.*

## TRUTH AND TRANSCENDENCE

*By Lawrence A. Young*

ELDER PAUL H. DUNN UTILIZED FABRICATIONS IN constructing his charisma and reputation. Intentional or not, his fabrications brought both enhanced income and status. Nevertheless, his fabrications served as a structured pathway to religious commitment and experience for many people. As I reflect upon the messages in the Paul Dunn incident, I am unable to leave this central fact—fabrications can function as structured pathways to spirituality within religious communities.

Elder Dunn's fabrications illustrate at least two aspects of the relationship between religious experience and religious myth. First, the symbols and stories which lead to religious experience need not be factually correct. Second, the symbols and stories can be dispensed by someone who knows that "fact" or "truth" is being misrepresented by the symbols and stories.

Nevertheless, even though symbols and stories can function as living myth without being historically grounded, that does not justify the knowing use of fabrications to bring about religious commitment and experience in other people. Justifying the means by the perceived ends ignores the integrated totality of Christian life by trivializing moral and ethical teachings. When we emphasize the production of religious commitment and experience as the ultimate religious goods to be produced in a religious community, we invite leaders to manipulate rather than authentically interact with members.

Elder Dunn rationalizes his behavior with this "ends justify the means" logic. While he has expressed sorrow and pain over the embarrassment he caused the Church, he never publicly acknowledged any wrong-doing. Instead, he likens his behavior to the parables of Jesus. Upon reflection, however, his long-standing use of fabrications seems to have at least as much in common with religious ministries of recently fallen televangelists as it does with Jesus' use of parables.

Elder Dunn is correct that storytelling can be an effective

teaching method, and that the power of the story can be enhanced by fictionalizing it. Garrison Keillor of Lake Wobegon fame is an example of an effective storyteller who mixes reality and fiction. However, unlike Dunn, Keillor always acknowledges what he is doing, and his charisma and standing do not depend on others believing he is something other than what he is. In the process, Keillor is never forced to compromise moral and ethical principles in order to teach us morality and ethics. The same cannot be said of Dunn's storytelling.

Elder Dunn's fabrications also illustrate that just because religious commitment and experience exist within an individual or community, that does not establish the ultimate truth of the symbols and stories used to produce that religious commitment and experience. If we equate religious commitment and experience with the acquisition of religious truth, we are entering suspect terrain unless we limit our notion of truth to something other than the ultimate factual grounding of the symbols and stories which produced the religious commitment and experience.

Typically, the sense of ultimacy associated with religious experience leads one to conclude that the symbols and stories which produced the experience should also be assigned the status of ultimacy. However, if we are willing to accept that the religious experiences produced by Elder Dunn's storytelling were not fraudulent experiences, then we must also acknowledge that the ability of symbols and stories to function as structured pathways to the beyond has little to do with the historical accuracy of the symbols and stories or the basic honesty of the storyteller. Of course, this relationship between religious experience and myth (i.e., symbols and stories) has interesting implications for how exclusive we can be in judging the authenticity of other faith communities.




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Finally, we cannot confront the Paul Dunn case without admitting that we are all sinners. This event illustrates the humanness of all. Even our religious leaders can be driven by mixed motives and need moral and spiritual development. We are reminded that principles of moral and ethical behavior, as well as trust in internal spiritual experience, provide a more certain foundation for religious belief than reliance on the infallibility of leaders.

The humanness of all is reason enough to pray for our leaders. They are placed in a position of tremendous pressure and the constant onslaught of responsibilities leaves little time for critical reflection.

It is only within this context of compassion and concern that I feel comfortable asking the following questions:

- Is it an act of concern and loyalty or an act of heresy to be troubled by Elder Dunn's apparent lack of recognition concerning the moral and ethical shortcomings of his behavior?
- Is the perception that the Church has expended more public effort on damage control than in addressing the moral, ethical, and spiritual implications of Elder Dunn's behavior a correct assessment of the institutional Church's behavior? If it is, should we be troubled by this behavior on the part of the institutional Church?
- Is Elder Dunn's focus on the ends justifying the means a unique case in Mormon history or does it illustrate a general lack of moral and ethical development in Mormon doctrine and theology? For example, does Dunn's behavior differ qualitatively from the Post-Manifesto behavior of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century leaders who publicly misrepresented the Church's position on the practice of polygamy?

The important lesson of the Paul Dunn case has relatively little to do with the gossip surrounding specific aspects of his fabrications. Suffice it to say that one of the most charismatic and visible Church leaders of the 1960s and 1970s was less than honest in his dealings with Church members. Nevertheless, his storytelling functioned to create commitment and religious experience. The recent revelations concerning Paul Dunn's misrepresentations over the past several decades illustrate the rather loose connection between moral and ethical principles and the possibility of religious experience. If individuals believe in the legitimacy of a particular pathway to religious experience, the moral and ethical soundness of the origin of that pathway is not a critical factor in determining whether a breakthrough to the beyond is produced. 

## PASSAGE

### *To Isaac and Jon, at the Farewell*

If we were tribesmen, I would sit you by the fire  
And tell you stories from communal memory:  
Clan mothers that bore our clever race,  
Pride of walking upright among the beasts,  
War clubs and boats with names, journeys  
Made into empty heavens, sometimes over water,  
Sometimes over land, always with risk.  
The other men would join us to act out  
Dramas of the sun and moon, hunting and planting.  
As we watched the embers, we would speak to you  
Of sacred things, of those who wrestled gods  
And won a lasting place for us on earth.  
Our scars would show you how much pain to bear.  
We would rehearse the changing leaves and tell  
How death makes life again, and we would place  
Words in the sacred parts of memory, so one day  
You could restore life, though you would die.  
You would understand belonging, not only  
To the clan, and to all that walked erect,  
But to all that shared life's spirit.  
Very late, while the women and children slept,  
We would chant together, our clear high strains  
Calling up the happy times of plenty,  
Arrival at old havens after fearful journey,  
Safety at night among the cooking fires.  
And we would wail long and forlorn for children  
Slain at the side of streams by fang or claw,  
For cold and empty fire pits that mark  
Where our own people fought and killed each other,  
For gods we do not fully understand,  
For all desire that cannot be fulfilled  
Yet will not go away by day or night.  
Later, you would lie awake, wanting  
To have your story told by distant firesides,  
Though the wood they burn is growing green,  
And your story not yet lived.

Here in the chapel, I am desperate.  
I lack scars, fear fabrics, measure  
Tales by the truths I know, and clock time.  
Yet down this polished wood I want to flow  
All that ancient fathers felt, all their  
Sons drank in from ritual and story.  
I know whose hand you want to feel,  
But I can only give this charge and blessing:  
Strong one of tomorrow, our priest to be,  
You rode upon our backs; and now we count  
On you to show we are worth saving.  
When our tongues grow feeble and we limp  
With age, we will record your deeds. Walk steady,  
And tell our story clear before your kind.

—DAVID PAXMAN