

## mail from our readers

Editor:

Thank you for the issue of *Sunstone* that you recently sent to me. I had not heard of the magazine before, but found it to be very interesting. I personally regret the role our magazine had in publicizing the hoary charges about Spalding and the Book of Mormon as recently revived by the Christian Research Institute.

I would like to take strong exception to Merrill's assertion on p. 29 that "the animosity of . . . evangelicals toward Mormonism stems from the LDS missionary program. Evangelicals believe missionaries should only be sent to pagans or the unreligious . . ." Evangelicals disagree with Mormonism on several key doctrinal matters. The "gospel" of evangelicals is different in a number of respects from the "gospel" that Mormons proclaim. Evangelicals do not object to Mormons using legitimate means to share what they believe to be true. Indeed Evangelicals are often under attack themselves for seeking to convert adherents of other religions and other branches of Christianity. Like Mormons, convinced Evangelicals are not happy just to see that other folk are "religious" or "moral." This distinguishes them from not only humanism but from much of professing religiosity, Christian and otherwise. It would be more accurate to say that "liberal" or "ecumenical" Christians object to both Evangelicalism and Mormonism because both groups have aggressive missionary programs seeking to convert people who are adherents of each other's faith, of other faiths, and the supposedly secular folk.

Donald Tinder,  
Associate Editor  
*Christianity Today*

Editor:

I have just this day been informed of your magazine *Sunstone* by a member of my ward. I have not yet seen a copy but from what he told me I am quite in-

terested in receiving it as I feel it will help me become more informed as to many issues before us which I am extremely opposed to.

I attended the National Women's Conference in Houston and was appalled at what happened there and have vowed to do all I can to oppose most of the issues passed there and the manner in which they were passed.

I am interested in any magazine I can obtain, literature and letters to help me keep up on current issues, and any suggestions on how to take a stand and be heard.

I have been working with many friends at Church and we are all becoming involved. Perhaps your magazine could be helpful to all of us.

Mrs. Betty North  
Raytown, Missouri

Editor:

It was a shock, but much more than just that—almost a revelation—to open my latest copy of *Sunstone* and to find solicitations for Noah's Ark food distributorships, along with the comment that current distributors are earning from \$20,000 to \$50,000 per year. And what could have been next to that ad but one for Neo Life high protein diets practically promising the user that after trying it he will be able to run and not be weary, walk and not faint. The usual scriptures on cassette ads were there, too. One wonders when testimonies as well will be bought and sold by mail order.

*Sunstone*—this once noble venture, at one time worth standing long hours in the cold rain selling Mormon History Calendars for—seems to be dying a lingering spiritual death. The culprits are, I suppose, those of us who wouldn't or couldn't contribute more than the few dollars for student subscriptions. Now we receive the just retribution for our sins of omitting (checks).

Don't bother sending me more copies of the religious cassette ads, the Beautiful Face and Figure ads, the Noah's Ark ads, the Seagull Books ads, or the BYU Press ads. The offal of such seedy parasites on our common spiritual heritage already finds its way into my house. It is time to move on again.

Scott Calder  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Editor:

I love it. Thanks so much for merging *The New Messenger and Advocate* with *Sunstone*. I feel you've founded a beautifully balanced publication in the process that will provide your readers with a flow of LDS news, art and scholarship which neatly supplements the official Church publications.

Stay close to the Gospel principles in tone and substance and I believe you will hit the 10,000 mark in circulation soon. Thank you for Scott Kenney's well-written essay on biblical criticism. As the only LDS student at Yale Divinity School, I've found the prophet's exhortations to seek truth out diligently to be scholastically liberating and spiritually reinforcing in the area of biblical criticism. The more I study the style and meaning of biblical records, the more my faith and understanding of our Latter-day scriptures and the teachings of the Restored Gospel are expanded.

Annette Marie Lantos  
New Haven, Conn.

Gentle Persons:

A few months ago I received a plea to help save *Sunstone*. I proudly brought out my back issues and went out selling subscriptions (fairly successfully, I might add). I was delighted with the announcement in the summer issue that the bills were now paid and that publication would continue through next year. I was thrilled a few weeks ago when I received notification that *Sunstone* would become a bimonthly journal. Now, having received the November-December issue, I feel totally betrayed. I am ashamed that I sold my friends subscriptions to that *magazine* by showing them a quality *journal*.

Granted, I was apprehensive when the announcement came of a format change for the summer issue, but I was completely won over. The quality was still high and the "feel" was the same as the bookshelf format. The last issue was a different story: the cheapness, lack of quality, and general selection of articles and columns leave me empty. I feel outraged. There are two more issues before my subscription expires. If there is not a return to the quality of articles and, hopefully, physical materials and appearance, I will not be able to renew my subscription.

May I make the following suggestions:

*The New Messenger & Advocate* was designed for a completely different audience than *Sunstone*. Perhaps it deserves to be saved, but not by sacrificing the *journal* for the *magazine*.

Omit "KEEPAPITCHININ." A journal is not a newspaper or a community calendar. I would encourage articles stemming from the findings or presentations at these meetings—but announcements? No.

Omit "Media Image." Again, why reprint old newspaper articles? That's not journal material.

Omit "Movies." We're up to our necks in movie reviews. A "Mormon point of view" is not significantly different enough to warrant permanent journal space for such a time value item. I mean, even in one year, who cares? There could be many great articles about movies (and other popular culture events and items) from a Mormon viewpoint—but not merely a guide to what's playing.

Omit "Saints in the News." We get enough of that in the *Ensign*, *New Era*, *Church News* and *BYU Today*.

Compare the quality of parts one and two of "Early Mormon Photographers." I hope you feel ashamed.

Please try to keep the advertisements from looking like rejects from *BYU Today*. For a less offensive approach merely look at your last issue.

A *journal* carries mostly material that has no time value. The reader usually wants to keep it and refer back to it time and time again. A *magazine* is filled with time value material. The reader flips through selecting the items that interest, and then throws it away. There is

no reason to keep it. Consequently, the journal is made from high quality materials; so it retains a good look through the years. The magazine is made from cheap materials. There is no need to try for longevity; it is made to be thrown away.

I subscribed to a journal, not a magazine. I want to keep the journal. I sincerely hope that reader outrage is enough to force the change back. The magazine simply does not appeal.

Jerry Argetsinger  
Rochester, New  
York

Editor:

I have generally been very pleased with *Sunstone* during the year or so since I first read an issue. At times the articles have been somewhat lacking in polish, but I suppose that is due to the lack of experience of some of the authors, or perhaps even the copy editors. But the ideas expressed have been interesting and the journal has been lively. I think *Sunstone*, as it was before the recent merger with *The New Messenger & Advocate*, met an otherwise unfulfilled need as a place where young authors could try their wings. *Dialogue* and *BYU Studies* are too locked in to the Mormon intellectual establishment to be able to fill this role.

Unfortunately, the first issue of *Sunstone* following the merger seems to be a sign that you have opted to be a news magazine rather than a proving ground for young Mormon scholars. It would perhaps have been more appropriate to have given the new publication the title *New Messenger & Ad-*

*vocate* rather than *Sunstone*. The merger was hardly a 50-50 one. Contrast, for instance, the length of Slaughter and Dixon's recent article with the length of their first one. That would seem to indicate to me that non-current events pieces will be receiving less attention and less space.

I realize that we Mormon historians may expect too much history in a journal devoted to Mormon experience, and I also realize that my personal preference for essays over news is no more virtuous or valid than the opposite view. But I am willing to financially support, through subscribing to, a journal offering a chance for development and exchange of ideas, whereas my personal tastes and my financial limitations mean that in the future I will read *Sunstone* in a library reading room rather than subscribing to it.

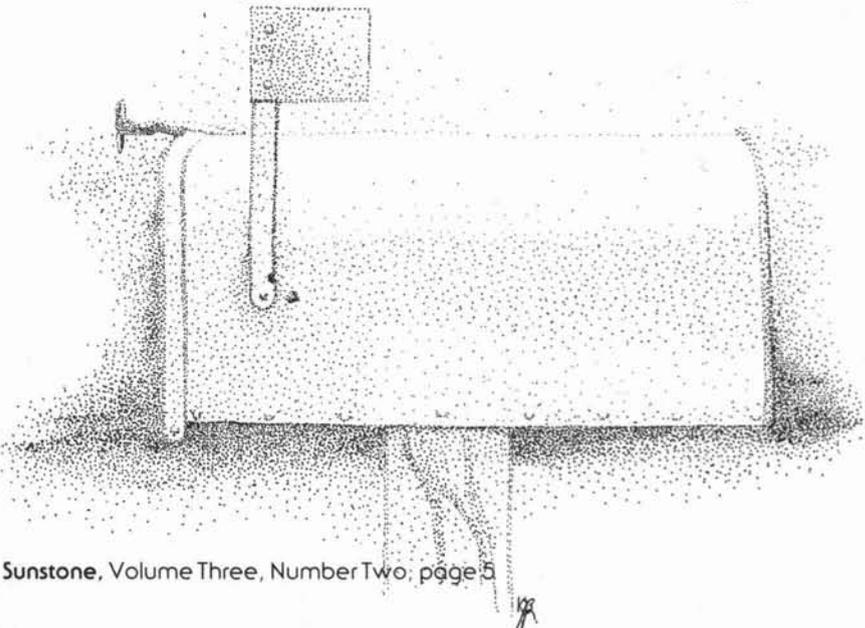
Gordon Irving  
Bountiful, Utah

Editor:

Barely able to keep my head above the deluge of reading available to (incumbent upon?) thinking Latter-day Saints, I for one was delighted to hear of the merger of *The New Messenger & Advocate* and *Sunstone*. Since I am only two months married myself I am beginning to understand that a successful union comes with time and not without conflict. But as a subscriber I am feeling the sting of accommodation.

For two years now I have enjoyed *Sunstone's* variety of literature, art and scholarly articles, and I am frankly disappointed that the November-December 1977 *Sunstone* contained only one substantial scholarly article, one poem, one story and one drawing that was not illustration. While I enjoyed the update on Mormons and the law, Mormons in the media, Mormon professional organizations, Mormon families and Saints in the news, it seemed that these news capsules took more than their share of the magazine. I wondered why all appeared in one issue, rather than being spread out among two or three issues.

I would like to see *Sunstone* continue as an outlet for scholars, writers, and artists. News and *Readers' Digest*-type reporting I do not mind reading in the library, but I will continue to subscribe to a journal with material of



ongoing worth.

Certainly early marital problems do not sound the death knell for what still promises to be a good marriage. Enclosed is the cost of one subscription—my vote of confidence in the new team.

Jill Mulvay Derr  
Alpine, Utah

Editor:

After I ran through a mental debate about subscribing to *The New Messenger & Advocate* and left the matter unsettled, the arrival of the November-December issue of *Sunstone* announcing the merger of the two made the decision for me.

As a possible contributor to "The Family Report" section of the magazine, you might be interested in knowing about a newly formed organization, The American Family Society. K. Wayne Scott, president, is a member of the Rock Creek Ward, Washington, D.C. Stake, and is endeavoring to build a nationwide sharing of good family programs and resources. Membership is open to all who are interested—or should be interested—in strengthening family life in this nation.

Looking forward to receiving the January-February issue.

Sue Forlines  
Rockville, Maryland

Editor:

Who'd of ever thought a boy from down home would put out one book of stories, much less two. And fine stories too. I just read one of them while I was waiting for the bread to raise this morning. That boy does have a knack for puttin' his finger right on the pulse of the people I'd say. I mean when he was a-talkin' about Carvel and DeVor and Roy Dell and Valene I almost could of believed he was talkin' about the Sorensens and the Hatfields down through the block. And talk about memories. I just about could smell Christmas, and got kinda anxious to get things all fixed up for it when I got to that one story. And later he even made me remember the tinker toys I got for my tenth birthday. I mean it's been a long time since I heard anybody talk about tinker toys. Funny he should remember little things like that.

Oh I don't want you to think the book is surfacy for all that describin'.

Oh no. My land, he gets right to the heart of things. It just about tears you up when the teacher's trying to decide if he should give old Sariah Euphelda Mangum Pedersen a passin' grade or not. I mean everybody's got standards and all, and then again they have to deal with real down-to-earth human beings too. That's touchy. You always feel like, though, that that teacher doesn't ever really get to understand things. You need to read it. Don Marshall says things a lot better than I ever could.

My favorite a all the stories was "The Wheelbarrow." Why, I just guess there must be lots of people who feel kinda strangled by everything, kinda feeling somethin' wonderful is inside, and feeling like it's gonna get doubted, and they won't ever get to really be alive like they want to be. Oh yeah. I know that feelin'. That's the feelin' that keeps some kids from gettin' married, fearin' that somebody'll come along like that and smother 'em. But the story ends up so good. I mean you just know when Theron's daughter (Theron's the main one of the story) asks for some whip cream too, that she's gonna understand, that they're gonna be able to keep each other alive. Yeah, that was a nice story.

You should read that book. It's a good one. But you know, I got to thinkin' afterwards about all them people in the stories. They didn't seem to have very much to 'em. I mean Delora Bertelsen up the street, she kinda looks at everything like she was a newborn baby and like everything is always wonderful and new to her. She just takes one look at you and you feel like she sees your whole heart and loves you anyway. I wonder why he didn't write about her?

S. P.  
Provo, Utah

Editor:

I finally got to the bottom of a huge stack of mail and found your *Messenger & Advocate*. What a surprise! I read the whole issue and am excited with its possibilities for use in my seminary class. I'm going to use Douglas Alder's article right away.

I'm looking forward to your next issue. I'm sorry it's just bimonthly!

Sylvia Jutla  
Fortuna, California

Editor:

Regarding your miniscule review of the recent film, *Bobby Deerfield*, I'm sure Mr. Stanley Kramer will be surprised over the credit of the direction of a film he had no connection with.

Please give the deserved credit to Mr. Sydney Pollack (*Jeremiah Johnson*, *Three Days of the Condor*, *The Way We Were*).

Pamela Bennett  
Provo, Utah

Readers should also note that the November-December Film Guide erroneously listed Peach Dragon instead of Pete's Dragon.

Editor:

I object to the movie review of *Oh, God!* While I haven't seen this movie, it is not one I would attend or encourage my children to attend. I have seen the TV ads and that is enough to convince me that such superficial treatment and disrespectful language regarding Deity is unfit for Mormon viewing. I object to the reviewer's implying that "most Mormons understand God" as being "a little amusing." While I believe the sentiments of the hymn "God Moves In a Mysterious Way": "Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust him for his grace; Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face," and I enjoy the thought that "When Jesus shows his smiling face, there is sunshine in my soul," still I hardly think we can refer to God as "amusing." I am afraid that this frequent use of his name and ignoble characterization, if not downright sacrilegious, at least is in poor taste.

I cannot seem to find the scripture which states (paraphrased), "Be not hasty to approach God, for God is in heaven and thou art on earth." Perhaps Miss Fletcher has forgotten the fate of those who failed to approach Him with proper respect in the Old Testament times. Even the Priesthood's name was changed to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name.

I guess what I am really saying is that I don't think this is really suitable film material—not a subject to "laugh about."

Charlene M. Horsley  
Worland, Wyoming