
FROM THE EDITOR

ENLARGING THE SUNSTONE TENT

By Elbert Eugene Peck

WITH THE PUBLICATION in this issue of *Burdens of Earth*, Susan Howe's excellent play about the Prophet in Liberty Jail, SUNSTONE revives a tradition that began with its very first issue. During the early years the magazine periodically featured plays by Mormon authors, beginning with Robert Elliott's missionary drama *Fires of the Mind*, and later Orson Scott Card and Robert Stoddard's musical *Father, Mother, Mother, and Mom*. Because of their length, plays are a neglected written form in LDS publications, which makes their life after production quite ephemeral. Short stories, poetry, and personal essays all are regularly given space; yet plays, although they are often as long as a small book, usually cannot command the audience necessary to be printed separately, as Mormon novels are. Of course, some plays have been published as books. Four of Thomas F. Rogers's plays, including *Huebner*, were collected into the inexpensively printed *God's Fools* which won the Association for Mormon Letters 1983 drama prize.

I believe that Mormonism "will yet have its Shakespeares and Miltons," as Orson F. Whitney prophesied and Spencer W. Kimball reaffirmed, but Shakespeare could not write without an audience. The Sunstone Foundation does not produce plays, but it can reproduce them for the reading audience. SUNSTONE will publish plays as often as merit and space dictate—perhaps one a year. I encourage our readers to support this important area of Mormon arts by investing the time to read this play.

In addition to reviving an old tradition,

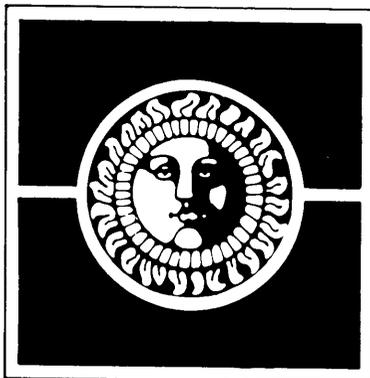
SUNSTONE is starting some new ones for which we solicit submissions.

We hope to cultivate in Mormonism the Christian tradition of writing prayers for meditation by including prayers—we plan to call them psalms—in the magazine. These contemplative poems and prose addressed to God may

express awe and adoration, doubt and faith, blessing and thanksgiving, dedication and obedience, suffering and protection, guidance and acceptance, and penitence. This project excites me for several reasons: It encourages the mystical side of religion in our behaviorally oriented church; it provides a forum for members in the LDS scholarly community to

share their spiritual feelings; it makes poetry, which I feel has become too esoteric for the common reader, more accessible by dealing with fundamental religious issues of concern to everyone. I hope more than just "poets" attempt to explore this art form.

SUNSTONE began with an emphasis on being a forum for the young LDS scholar—the student voice. With the pursuit for professionalism and the aging of its authors, although it still has a flavor of the younger academics, to a large degree it has lost its student participation. We are instituting a "From the Campus" column for LDS students to explore issues affecting their college experience. Topics could include "The Effect of the University on My Faith," "Careerism and the LDS Student," "The Strengths and Failures of the LDS Institute System," "Sex and the Mormon College Student," and "Fashion and the LDS Image: Would BYU Students be Modest Without the Dress Code?"



"In the Household of Faith" is another column we are inaugurating with guest authors. It features essays by and about the experience of members who are not part of the mainstream white middle-class majority in the American Church. Essayists could include blacks, Cambodians and other U.S. ethnic minorities, artists, socialists, the physically handicapped, blue-collar workers in a white collar ward, etc. By sharing the perspectives of these members I hope that we will become more sensitive to the burdens of membership and can act so that some Saints will no longer feel that they are strangers and foreigners in the household of God.

"Voice from Abroad" is a SUNSTONE column that has appeared occasionally in the magazine for some years and which we wish to give new emphasis. It provides a forum for Saints overseas to share their perspective on the international church. Topics may include Church programs, missionary work, the struggle with their own culture, etc.

Finally, we plan to create a column where guest authors discuss the dynamics of serving in a particular Church calling. The calling may have a humorous incongruity with the person's profession, or may simply may be one in which the individual gained great insight from serving in the Church.

These new and revived features are efforts on our part to expand the perspectives and participants in the magazine. Since all are short column-length articles (except the plays) and will not necessarily be included in each issue, they will not pre-empt the current columnists nor the longer feature articles on history, theology and contemporary issues, but will enlarge the diversity in the magazine.

SUNSTONE is now in a position, editorially and in producing the magazine, where it can move forward in new areas while maintaining our established traditions. In 1987 we produced the same number of issues—six—as in each of the previous two years (although this issue was mailed in 1988); however, we expect to increase the number of issues in the 1988 volume so that it will take less than two years to complete the twelve issue subscription cycle. Our goal this year is to produce eight issues, one every six or seven weeks.

I expect that these additions will enlarge SUNSTONE's role as a place where people from all perspectives share their scholarship and faith.