

SUNSTONE

Founded in 1974
SCOTT KENNEY 1975-1978
ALLEN D. ROBERTS 1978-1980
PEGGY FLETCHER 1978-1986
DANIEL H. RECTOR 1986-1991

Editor and Publisher
ELBERT EUGENE PECK

Associate Editors
MARTI DICKEY ESPLIN
BRYAN WATERMAN
Production Manager
MARGERIE MULLIN

Business Manager
KIMBERLY KOLAN

Administrative Assistant
CAROL QUIST

Advisory Editorial Board

PATRICK BAGLEY, BRIAN BEAN, T. E. BEHREND
M. SHAYNE BELL, poetry; JAY S. BYBEE
DENNIS CLARK, poetry reviews; CONNIE DISNEY
MICHAEL HARWARD, ERIC JONES, book reviews
DANIEL MARYON, fiction; MARK D. THOMAS
LYNNE KANAVAL WHITESIDES

Contributing Columnists

ORSON SCOTT CARD, DORICE WILLIAMS ELLIOTT
MICHAEL HICKS, DAVID KNOWLTON, TOM LEFLER
MARYBETH RAYNES, PETER SORENSON

Cartoonists

CALVIN GRONDAHL, PAT BAGLEY
KIRK ANDERSON, MATT CHATTERLY, CHRIS CHECKETTS
KENT CHRISTENSEN, JENNIFER ENGLAND
DANNA JACQUES, GEOFF JONES
STEVE KROPP, LEGUME, CARL McBRAYER, ROBERT MURRAY
P. S. MUELLER, BRUCE READE, BRAD VELEY
RYAN S. WAYMENT

Volunteers

LUCY BRAND, SUSAN COX, FLINT ESQUERRA
BARBARA HAUGSOEN, STEVE MAYFIELD, EVELYN SANDBERG
HARLEY SANDBERG, HEIDI SORENSON, JAN STUCKI
ROBERT VERNON, CONNIE WALTON, SCOTT WILSON
JEANNE WINDER

U.S. Correspondents

STAN CHRISTENSEN, Cambridge, Ma.
NANCY HARWARD, Newark, De.
RENEE CARLSON, Potomac, Md.
ALICE ALLRED POTTMYER, Arlington, Va.
NEAL & REBECCA CHANDLER, Shaker Heights, Oh.
JONATHAN & COLLEEN THOMAS, Chicago, Il.
MILES SPENCER KIMBALL, Ann Arbor, Mi.
KARL SANDBERG, St. Paul, Mn.
JOHN DURHAM PETERS, Iowa City, Ia.
LIONEL GRADY, Cedar City, Ut.; RON PRIDDIS, Salt Lake City, Ut.
JOHN COX, Auburn, Ca.; ERIN SILVA, San Diego, Ca.
JOHN & JANET TARJAN, Bakersfield, Ca.
IRENE BATES, Pacific Palisades, Ca.

International Correspondents

MARJORIE NEWTON, Australia; WILFRIED DECOO, Belgium
HARTMUT WEISSMANN, France
PAUL CARPENTER, JAMES FIELD
WERNER HOCK, DIETRICH KEMPSKI, Germany
SHUNICHI KUWAHATA, Japan
IAN BARBER, New Zealand; CHRIS SEXTON, United Kingdom

THE SUNSTONE FOUNDATION

Board of Trustees

J. BONNER RITCHIE, chair; KENT FROGLEY, vice chair
ROBYN KNIBBE, GLEN LAMBERT
MARY ANN MORGAN, LOUIS MOENCH
DANIEL H. RECTOR, ELBERT EUGENE PECK

Executive Director
ELBERT EUGENE PECK

Development Board

JEROLD KINDRED, chair; RONALD L. MOLEN, vice chair
BLAINE CARLTON, ROBYN KNIBBE, DANIEL H. RECTOR
MARGARET REISER, NICHOLAS SMITH
MARSHA S. STEWART, MARK J. WILLIAMS

Symposium Chairs

MOLLY BENNION, Seattle
GREG CAMPBELL, Salt Lake City
DON & LUCINDA GUSTAVSON, Boston
REBECCA & KIRK LINFORD, Chicago

National Advisory Board

ALAN ACKROYD, MOLLY BENNION
KATHERINE BOSWELL, BELLAMY BROWN
TONY & ANN CANNON, COLE CAPENER, STEPHEN C. CLARK
DOUGLAS CONDIE, D. JAMES CROFT, ROBERT FILLERUP
MARK GUSTAVSON, JEFFREY R. HARDYMAN, GREG KOFFORD
FARRELL LINES, BRIAN C. McGAVIN, PATRICK McKENZIE
GRANT OSBORN, RICHARD SHERLOCK, GEORGE D. SMITH JR.
RICHARD SOUTHWICK, LORIE WINDER STROMBERG
NOLA W. WALLACE, DENNIS & CARLAN YOUNGSTETER

READERS' FORUM

SUFFERING THE WICKED

WHEN TAKING UP the task of judging the Brethren or lesser members of the Church, there are four basic principles I use:

First, all sin. While God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, he is able to use men and women in spite of their sins. However, no one should be fooled into believing that a particular package of sins is more acceptable than another.

Second, if God can turn the works of evil people to do his will, then he should also be able to turn the acts of his servants to bring about his will. The Old Testament reveals numerous examples of God working with prophets and judges with gross sins.

Third, in taking offense with those God calls to leadership or whom God accepts into his church, one is taking offense at God's decisions and choices and rejecting his servants. Since God counsels us to be patient and to avoid taking offense, we are left without excuse when our actions reject God.

Fourth, God is greater than the world. Either God rules or anything can be had for money. If God rules, he can author our salvation, work perfect judgment, and "judge between me and thee." If money and the world rule, then we all die and our judgments are futile as well as puerile.

It is easy to find fault with the weak and foolish. God has promised us leaders who are not from the wise and the learned, but who are of the same flesh and weaknesses as we are. Given that our leaders live up to those descriptions, will we still look to the author and finisher of our faith? Will the weak things become strong unto us, or will the servants of Christ turn into stumbling blocks and rocks of offense? Titus 1:15 warns how our judgments reflect back on us.

As Peter said, "We must bear wicked men with patience, brethren, knowing that God who could easily wipe them out, suffers them to carry on to the appointed day in which the deeds of all shall be judged. Wherefore should we not then suffer whom God suffers?" (in *Clementine Recognitions* III, 49).

STEPHEN R. MARSH
Wichita Falls, TX

HONEST ACCOUNTS

A FEW MONTHS ago, President Gordon B. Hinckley came to a multiregional conference in Lansing, Michigan. In the Sat-

urday afternoon leadership meeting he took questions. Being in attendance as an assistant ward clerk, I stood quivering in my shoes to ask: "Why don't the general authorities today speak openly about their remarkable spiritual experiences in the way that Joseph did?"

President Hinckley answered my question at length, saying that the Church leaders do have many important spiritual experiences. He mentioned revelations on family home evening, extending the priesthood to all worthy men, and instituting the new budget policy. He pointed to the tremendous growth of the Church, suggesting that it would not have been possible without divine guidance. What he did not do, which I hungered for, was give a description of what it was like to receive those revelations on matters of Church administration. If accounts of angels are now too sacred to reveal, then I would like to hear of a burning in the bosom in response to the Spirit. If their experiences as general authorities are to be kept secret, then I would like to hear, in their own words, in full honesty, how they gained a testimony when young and kept it through the inevitable vicissitudes of life. Such honest, unvarnished, personal testimonies in conference talks strengthen our faith more than doctrinal restatements or second-hand anecdotes.

With some exceptions, it seems that modern Church leaders make no direct public claim to spiritual gifts other than enhanced judgment in Church administration. There is a great enough dearth of accounts of spiritual manifestations among recent Church leaders that several of my Mormon friends have been led to wonder whether the general authorities have any. Believing our leaders have many spiritual manifestations even now, I found myself asking why they are so reticent about the spiritual experiences they do have.

One of my friends pointed out that the precedent set by Joseph Smith was to talk openly about at least a subset of his spiritual experiences. Though he did not speak much of the First Vision until many years afterward, he spoke early and often of the visits of the Angel Moroni. Joseph Smith let neither fear of a disbelieving world—already stocked with hostile journalists—nor a view of the inhabitants of the United States as swine to be kept from pearls prevent his proclamations of the truth of the divine and angelic restoration of the gospel.

Several possible explanations for the current reticence about spiritual experiences

come to mind. Perhaps the decline of the nineteenth-century "magic world view," written about by D. Michael Quinn, has made it uncomfortable to speak publicly of powerful spiritual experiences. Perhaps the tendency to portray general authorities as superhuman has made them ashamed of seemingly small but powerful experiences. Perhaps God restrains them from sharing things because we are not ready for more. Perhaps the decline in accounts of spiritual experiences from our leaders is largely accidental. Since new general authorities follow the teaching and preaching style of those more senior, a gradual drift away from speaking about spiritual experiences and toward an emphasis on rational understanding and harmonization of existing scripture, nudged along, perhaps, by sociological forces about which we can only guess, took place without anyone intending such a shift to occur.

In my own ward, I have seen the power of honest accounts of the spiritual experiences, growth, and troubles in individuals' lives. Inspired in part by Orson Scott Card's notion of a Speaker for the Dead who gives an honest account of someone's life as that life appeared to the one who lived it, sharing honest accounts of our own spiritual lives

while we are still alive can increase the depth of spirituality and community in our wards and stakes. "Pillars of My Faith" at Sunstone symposiums encourages such honest spiritual autobiographies, but there is time for only a few to participate directly in such a large gathering. Testimony meetings give the opportunity for such sharing, but only if we take that opportunity and push back the boundaries of what people feel comfortable in saying in those meetings to allow the telling of the difficult spiritual experiences that almost always stand in counterpoint to positive spiritual experiences.

I recently taught Helaman chapters 4 and 5 in the gospel doctrine class. In Helaman 4 we read of pride, riches, oppression of the poor, "making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and revelation," and various other crimes causing the Nephites to be "left in their own strength" (4:12, 13) and so to a great defeat at the hands of the Lamanites. In Helaman 5, we read of fire encircling the formerly wicked but repentant Lamanites and the sharing of that remarkable experience converting so many Lamanites that they returned the land they had conquered to the Nephites. We discussed "the spirit of prophecy and revela-

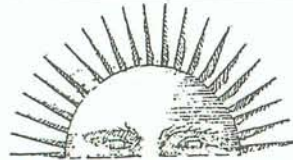
tion," and while various members of the class shared their spiritual experiences, I had a small spiritual experience myself. It occurred to me as a flash of insight and seemed emphasized to me by the Spirit, that when it speaks of "making a mock of that which was sacred" (4:9), the verse can be likened unto us as a warning against making light of each other's spiritual experiences. It can often be appropriate to soberly discuss the boundary between natural and divine in someone else's experience, but we should never ridicule an experience so close to someone else's heart. Only if we respect and honor one another's spiritual experiences, as honestly told in human weakness, will we feel fully free to share those experiences with each other.

MILES SPENCER KIMBALL
Ann Arbor, MI

WHAT IS MAN?

I WAS SURPRISED at the space allotted David Knowlton's jejune and aphotic "On Mormon Masculinity" (SUNSTONE 16:2). Consisting of unsupported assumptions, mushy logic, and fashionable platitudes, it is typical of contemporary social science discourse. Its fear-of-women, fear-of-sex clichés





SUNSTONE

IS AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS

DESERET BOOK STORES

- Cache Valley Mall
- Community Shopping Center
- Cottonwood Mall
- Fashion Place Mall
- Layton Hills Mall
- Ogden City Mall
- South Towne Mall
- University Mall
- Valley Fair Mall
- ZCMI Mall

SEAGULL BOOK & TAPE

- 1720 S. Redwood Road
Salt Lake City, UT
- 5730 S. Redwood Road
Salt Lake City, UT
- 1629 W. 90 S.
West Jordan, UT
- 2144 Washington Blvd.
Ogden, UT
- 2146 N. Main #528
Layton, UT
- 2255 N. University Pkwy #2
Provo, UT
- 110 Mesa Drive
Mesa, AZ
- 10714 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA
- 427 Preston Valley Center
Dallas, TX

KENSINGTON, MD

This is the Place
10405 Montgomery Ave.

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

LDS Chapter & Verse
3560 Austine Bluffs Pkwy, Ste. 183

LOGAN

USU Bookstore

SALT LAKE CITY

- Benchmark Books
331 S. Rio Grande, Ste. 300
- Hayat's Magazine & Gifts
236 S. Main

Sam Weller's Zion Bookstore
254 S. Main

PROVO

- BYU Bookstore
- Valley Book Center
52 W. Center
- Walt West Books
728 West Columbia Ln.

ST. GEORGE

Dixie College Bookstore

TEMPE, AZ.

Books, Etc.
901 S. Mill Ave

were almost unbearable, its preening fillips at Church culture embarrassingly trite, and its trendy nostrums for Mormon male angst devoid of substance.

Torn between the Church's emphasis on sexual restraint and American culture's emphasis on sexual performance, the traditional Mormon male is, in Knowlton's view, a bag of pathologies. Knowlton is not surprised, therefore, to find anecdotal evidence of fear of physical contact between the sexes and sexual dysfunction in marriage among Mormons. In fact, Knowlton finds pretty much whatever he is looking for; thus, for instance, "it should not surprise us" that the Church office building is, in fact, a phallic symbol representing male dominance. From the outset we are expected to take as axiomatic the view that masculinity has little biological basis, but is, rather, dependent upon the public display of masculine acts: "One is only as much a man as one's last male act."

May the merciful heavens save us from that which follows: "Women also represent to men their own potential impotency . . . as exacerbated by their attempts to repress and control their libidos. Simply put," gushes Knowlton, "Mormon women represent to Mormon men a threat of emasculation." Moreover, Mormonism's lack of emphasis on the doctrine of a Heavenly Mother is due, not to a lack of scriptural information, but "because she implies a threat . . . to the individual Mormon male's sense of self as man." What is more, "Mormonism is a religion obsessed with masculinity." Proof of this may be found in the Church's "attempts to socialize its youth into the yoke of priesthood. . . ."

What would our expositor have us do for this writhing, groping creature, the naked Mormon male, so depicted in illustrations that accompany the article? "We should reconsider masculinity using the textured advances of feminist theory to explore the nuances of gender," says Knowlton. Risking knee injury with such politically correct genuflections, this smarm of psychobabble and feminist theory will likely offend even those males who have already received the enlight-

enment of said theory, for it suggests that men are, or ought to be, a bunch of submissive lapdogs waiting for Mormon feminists to descend upon them en masse to correct their gender disfigurements.

Nevertheless, I personally tingle as I await my own eminent reconfiguration.

THOMAS J. QUINLAN
Salt Lake City

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

EGAD, I AM bothered, boggled, and bewildered, and worse, apparently, teetering on the verge of apostasy because of my paper presented at the 1992 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, "The Second Coming? Wait a Second. What Day and What Hour?" In it I quoted from the *History of the Church*, where on 14 February 1835 Joseph Smith exhorted the members of Zion's Camp to "go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, for the coming of the Lord—even fifty-six years should wind up the scene." On that day Lyman E. Johnson and Heber C. Kimball were promised that they should witness the Second Coming. The next day Orson Hyde, David W. Patton, William McLellin, John F. Boynton, and William Smith were all assured that they would live "until the Lord comes" (DHC 2:181-91).

I pointed out that the Second Coming had been expected ever since the First Coming. The New Testament wasn't written until some seventy years after the death of Jesus, because he was expected to return any day.

Little did I realize the danger of such statements until the *Salt Lake Tribune* published a chilling article on 2 December 1992 headlined, "Mormons' End-of-World Talk Could End LDS Membership." Ronald Garff, who had been selling tapes called "Today through Armageddon," was warned by Church authorities in Salt Lake to cease and desist or face excommunication. Avraham Gileadi also faced the axe for his writings and lectures on the subject. Several people have already been consigned to the buffetings of Satan for latter-day talk.

Pontius' Puddle



My paper stated that the Nauvoo Temple was believed to be more than the house of the Lord; it was to be his actual residence at the Second Coming.

"The history of the Mormons since Nauvoo has been a veritable litany of signs that the Advent was near," I said. "As I write this, just two weeks ago the priesthood lesson was devoted to a discussion of the many signs of the Last Judgment which already have come to pass, and the very few remaining." However, if the Brethren have had later and different information, so be it, and let me repent fast.

If we can no longer believe or talk about such things while remaining in good standing, vital changes are essential in order to conform to the new policy. First, we should immediately recall the seven volumes of the *History of the Church*, which are rife with predictions of the imminent Advent. Second, the name of the Church is an anachronism. If we are no longer the Latter-day Saints, here are some suggestions to update our name in accordance with the new policy: Former-day Saints (were first); Former-Latter-day Saints; Present-day Saints; Ladder-day Saints (upward and onward); Everlasting Saints (not to be confused with Everlast boxing gloves, though we are smiting Satan hip and thigh).

SAMUEL W. TAYLOR
Redwood City, CA

FUNDAMENTALS

RECENTLY I READ "Changed Faces: The Official LDS Position on Polygamy, 1890-1990" by Martha Bradley (SUNSTONE 14:1). One year ago my husband, our eldest daughter, and I were rebaptized. We recommitted ourselves to the Church—as Fundamentalists. Since then, two more of our children have done the same.

I want to correct Bradley's erroneous conclusion that polygamy is on its way to becoming a "curious historical relic." The doctrine is alive and flourishing.

The Church has been successful in convincing people that fundamentalists are a wild-eyed, weirdly dressed, fanatical fringe group. We are Latter-day Saints who love the Church, sustain the prophet, as far as he sustains the Lord's commandments, and follow the teachings of the Prophet Joseph.

Our group includes a registered nurse, two teachers, a college sports coach, a dental assistant, a construction engineer, a rancher, a legal secretary, two military members, and a physicist. We are intelligent, articulate members of society. Most importantly, we are or were all active, temple-going, tithe-paying

members of the Church who read and prayed for light and truth, and got it!

ARCHER and SANDRA FORD
Azalea, OR

REDEMPTION POLITICS

I WAS STRUCK by Gerry Ensely's letter that posed the rhetorical question about "why, if traditional Christianity is correct, God doesn't simply forgive sin in the first place without the ritual immorality of punishing a totally innocent third party in the process" (SUNSTONE 16:3).

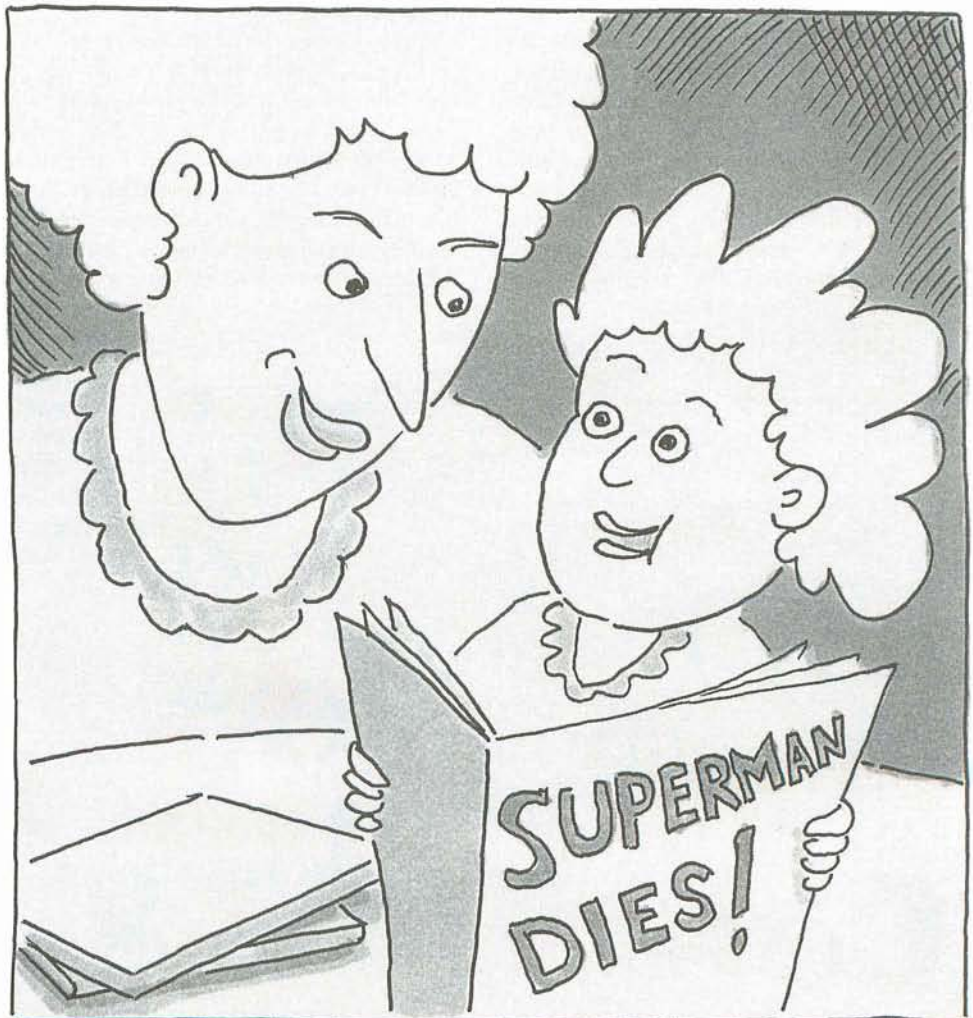
While Ireneaus, as quoted by Ensely, comes closer than apostate Christianity to a reasoned response, I was disappointed that there was no citation of President John Taylor's *Mediation and Atonement*, which formulates in somewhat poetic, but persuasively argued terms, a more complete Restoration view of why Jesus had to die.

President Taylor, heroically anticipating the contributions of Heisenberg's Uncer-

tainty Principle, contemporary Chaos Theory, and Bell's Theorem, saw reality as probabilistic, i.e. choice determined, rather than based on Newtonian determinism, which still rules some backwaters of science (primarily the social sciences).

Taylor drew upon the peculiarly Mormon notion of a finite God existing in the same universe with other uncreated intelligences of Nature—stars, mountains, seas, and gardens—which were organized into higher forms by him. In their more evolved states these intelligences may become human and creatures. These intelligences are coeval with God, not his creations ("Man also was in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth was not created or made, neither indeed can be" [D&C 93:29]). God is thus the Great Catalyst, speeding up the evolution of natural processes rather than causing them. The great purpose of creation: "Men [in the form of highly organized intelligence] are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

Taylor went on to argue that Nature,



"Mommy, can we get Superman baptized for the dead?"

which following the initial creative act had been in full harmony with God's will and purposes, reverted to quasi-chaos when Adam and Eve, God's elect children, deliberately broke his law. By this act, death—chaos in slow process—came into the world, requiring a voluntary act by one "like unto God," willing to sacrifice himself, though himself without sin, to redeem his sinful brothers and sisters.

Only thus could the rebellious Intelligent Matter of Nature be persuaded to trust God once again, realigning itself with his purposes—the rebellious elements of which post-Adamic man now consists agreeing with man's imperfect spirit to permit a glorious resurrection.

Thus, viewed in John Taylor's terms, Jesus did not die to satisfy an arbitrary concept of justice, but as a calculated and unavoidable strategy of remediation, bringing rebellious nature back into a compact with God and his fallen children, as outlined above. Compare this to the traditional story of the politics behind the War in Heaven.

Projected into the experience of the material world, redemption is thus seen as more politics, albeit a curiously Mormon materialist, quasi-pantheistic politics, than as primitive magic, or even the doctrinal "mystery" acceptable to traditional Protestant or Catholic theology.

While some may argue that there's more poetry than mathematics in President Taylor's formulation, it is nevertheless miles

ahead of Irenaeus in giving intellectual content to the Atonement, and light years ahead of traditional Christianity.

D. B. TIMMINS

BOB JONES OF THE WEST

AS A FORMER non-Catholic student at the University of Notre Dame and a recent non-Mormon student at Brigham Young University, I read your report "BYU Memo Highlights Academic Freedom Issue" (SUNSTONE 16:1) with great interest.

To compare the two schools, as the *BYU Daily Universe* and many within the LDS community do, is problematic when all that is compared are the similarities. The differences must also be noted. On the surface, the two institutions do bear certain similarities—both are in the mainstream of current academia. Both have acquired outside accreditation with its mandate for academic freedom. However, BYU, unlike ND, is outside current mainline academic practice with respect to its Religious Education faculty and its position on academic freedom.

BYU is different. I learned this rapidly and with great surprise. It was hard for me to conceive that any university would take such things as hair length and the length of shorts as serious issues of academic quality. At Notre Dame I was never required to sign a form abrogating certain of my rights of freedom of speech and expression. Rather, the freedom to choose was left to individual stu-

dents. At ND, freedom of speech was taken seriously. Mario Cuomo, the Catholic governor of New York, spoke on campus and defended his pro-choice stance, a position at odds with the Catholic hierarchy and ND president Father Theodore Hesbergh. Catholic theologian and controversial critic Hans Küng had earlier spoken on campus. These occurrences are akin to BYU inviting Mormon scholar Sterling McMurrin to speak on why he doesn't think there were gold plates.

Most impressive was the religious diversity of the Notre Dame faculty. Despite having a student population that was over 90 percent Catholic, ND had a varied faculty throughout all of its colleges, including theology. For instance, Stanley Hauerwas, a major Methodist theologian, and John Howard Yoder, a Mennonite theologian, were both on the divinity faculty. Such a state of affairs reflects a religious university strong in its faith and trusting of its students to intelligently and faithfully deal with all issues relevant to a Catholic faith.

On the other hand, BYU wants simultaneously to inculcate the doctrines of the "one true Church" thereby limiting freedom of speech, while also being a university of outstanding academic qualities—the "Harvard of the West"—with the necessity to be an arena of open intellectual inquiry. Mormon culture and society is caught simultaneously between the Charybdis of Mormon distinctiveness and the siren of worldly secularization. These currents lead to the controversies over issues of what to teach and how to teach it.

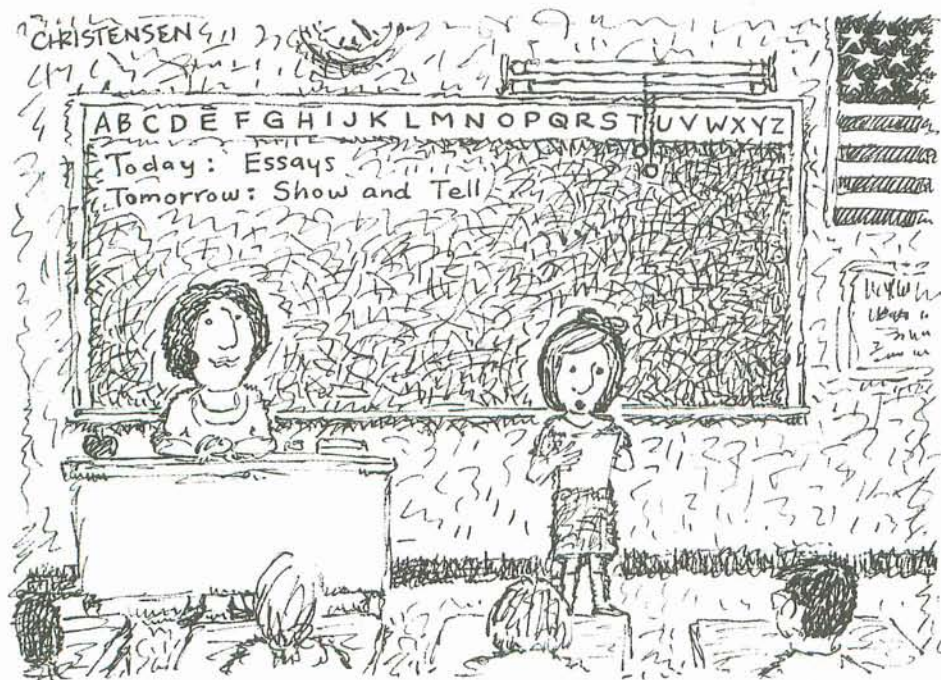
Perhaps the most tragic aspect of this controversy is the effect it has had and will have on the quality of academic programs at BYU.

What BYU is, what its mission is, is unclear. It is incumbent on a university that purports to be a religious institution to make clear its mission. Does BYU want to be a university like Notre Dame, a religious university able to accept accreditation from secular organizations and still remain faithful to its religious roots and to freedom of speech and freedom of expression? Or does it wish to reject accreditation and stress that it is like Bob Jones—a school for a specific body of saints that expects obedience to its dogmas? The choice must be made, and made in an honest, straightforward, and clear way.

RON G. HELFRICH
Provo, UT

THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND SCHOOL

QUESTIONING IS A legitimate tool of academia, but it is not necessarily a legiti-



"Have you ever wondered, where did I come from? why am I here? and where am I going after this life is over?"

mate tool of religion. When the resurrected Christ came to the Americas, he chastised the Saints for their debate on baptism. He gave them the manner that they should baptize and then told them to cease their disputations concerning the points of his doctrine.

Religious questioning is not detrimental if it is tempered with "not my will but thine." But when questioning leads to criticism, it is often followed by apostasy.

The Lord has said that his thoughts are not our thoughts and his ways are not our ways. Questioning and criticism are academic tools, but they are not the Lord's way. If the Lord is upset with a doctrine or practice, he will change it through his prophets, not through his scholars.

One of the differences between a university and a church is the acceptance or rejection of questioning and criticism. To a university, questioning and criticism are fundamental rights; to religion, such scrutiny is discouraged.

Many people see BYU professors as quasi-general authorities. BYU should be run like a university rather than an arm of the Church. Give BYU professors academic freedom; give the Church allegiance; but give up the concept that BYU is the Lord's university.

GEORGE FAIRBANKS
Mesquite, TX

A 24-HOUR SEMINARY

SCOTT ABBOTT seems to be confused and conflicted about an important concept in his essay "One Lord, One Faith, Two Universities: Tensions between 'Religion' and 'Thought' at BYU" (SUNSTONE 16:3). The concept is "exclusion." Generally in this essay where he defends the importance of reason and the intellect, Abbott condemns exclusionary thought and practices, specifically criticizing leaders of the Church or BYU. He asks why the BYU board of trustees has the need to "assert exclusive control" over school policy (emphasis added here and below). He also fears that the word Mormon will "evoke bigotry, exclusion, narrowness, and sectarianism in nonmembers' minds."

However, in other places Abbott seems fond of exclusivity. In the first paragraph, he tells his readers about his tenure "at an exclusive university" in Tennessee where he taught before coming to the Y. (He also mentions Princeton three times in quick succession to make sure we don't miss the time he spent there.) And in explaining his current pride about being on the Y's faculty, he tells us that some of the Y's "most exclusive scholarships" are now going to women.

How do we make sense of Abbott's contradictory use of this concept? Is he for exclusion or not? Although Abbott professes to be against exclusionary thought and practices in general, he appears to like being part of exclusive groups on a personal level. If he's part of an exclusionary group, he supports exclusion; if he's not, he's opposed to it.

I appreciate Abbott's defense of intellect and rationality and their importance to religious faith. I decided not to accept a scholarship to BYU back in 1962 because I was afraid the Y would be like seminary, twenty-four hours a day. But although I chose not to attend the Y, I've always respected the fact that it is a school with a difference. And I admire and appreciate Church authorities—whether in Provo, Salt Lake, or wherever—who try to help us find the balance between faith and reason. Finding this balance necessarily requires discriminating, even exclusionary, thought and practices. We make choices every day about how we lead our lives and what thoughts we think. We necessarily must exclude some activities and some thoughts. Even if it were good to do so, there simply isn't time enough to do or think everything, and I appreciate the Church's guidance in these matters.

Rather than condemn our leaders as flawed and inadequate, as Abbott does, they should be applauded for attempting to do something that many universities hold in contempt. Despite his varied educational experiences, Abbott seems surprisingly paro-

chial, even naive, about American education today. Most universities don't even try to reconcile faith and reason. Faith is not invited on campus, but is told to stay far away. I have two children attending colleges in the East and Midwest, and I've decided that twenty-four-hour-a-day seminary is much preferable to the twenty-four-hour "sex, drugs, and rock and roll" scene on many campuses. Sadly for the nation, many students are demoralized at college, in all senses of the word, before they begin their adult lives.

CATHERINE HAMMON SUNDWALL
Silver Spring, MD

IS WRIGHT WRONG?

DAVID P. WRIGHT'S article ("Historical Criticism: A Necessary Element in the Search for Religious Truth," SUNSTONE 16:3) in Old Testament studies illustrates the heavy price paid by self-absorbed intellectual provincialism in religious life. He writes with self-righteous indignation, as though he himself discovered all of the main scholarly achievements of Old Testament scholarship over the past two hundred years. Without the self-celebratory "I," he could not have written a line about what are, in fact, perfectly standard and broadly accepted positions in that field. But he does not merely reinvent the wheel. In his remarkable exemplification of the costs of ego-centrism in scholarship—which by definition demands humility to learn both from



© LORNE HOLMAN
8904.04

"... I... I think of all the Ffrenssh ch-chocolates, I like the ones in the sh-shhhiny foil the best... (hic)."

others and from one's own limitations and mistakes—he ignores the vast literature of theology devoted to the very problem that concerns him. That Van Harvey's classic *The Historian and the Believer*, in print for decades now, might have helped him in his perfectly reasonable reflections on the conflict between theological truth and historical fact, Wright seems simply not to know. His article is merely naive.

JACOB NEUSNER
Tampa, FL

THE WRIGHT DIRECTION

I CAN ATTEST to the process of conversion David P. Wright mentions.

I joined the Church in my mid-teens. It appealed to a nascent conservatism that also led me to volunteer as a precinct worker for Barry Goldwater's presidential candidacy. In my subsequent studies of the scriptures and Church history, my natural inclination was toward the traditionalist view. My conversion to the historical-critical orientation was tortuous and painful. I resisted stoutly for some time. But, slowly, I was forced to admit that the evidence was overwhelmingly on the side of the critical approach.

The critical mode is considered humanistic and those who adhere to it are presumed to be liberals. But, it doesn't have to be that way. It is not necessarily the road to alienation, inactivity, and apostasy. My outlook remains conservative. I'm still a Republican Party activist. In the Church, I would be

considered mainstream. I taught early-morning seminary for fifteen years. I have served in four bishoprics and have filled two missions. My wife doesn't work out of the home, and I have four over-achieving children. My eldest son is on a mission in France. I have a testimony. I have spiritual experiences. I get answers to my prayers.

There is no reason why the traditionalist view should prevail in the Church. It is a mistake that it does. Our objective is to find the truth, yet LDS biblical scholarship is essentially stuck in the nineteenth century. The Prophet Joseph recognized there were problems with the Bible. We should be confronting those problems with the best scholarly tools available to us.

No one expects our scientists to do their research using century-old methods, yet we expect our biblical scholars to work under just such a restraint. Wright's article was a good step in the right direction. I hope to see more scholars explore other critical studies.

MICHAEL RAYBACK
Boulder, CO

MODEST PROPOSALS

I HAVE BEEN a SUNSTONE reader for several years and compliment your generally good scholarship and interesting articles. However, a recent issue (16:3), illustrated two small but pervasive problems.

PROBLEM 1—SOLUTIONS. I enjoyed the fine and fascinating analysis by Martha Bradley, "The Mormon Steeple: A Symbol of

What?" Her article, though, is an example of what I often find in SUNSTONE articles: superb analysis; weak solutions. In her case, the solutions are not just weak, they are non-existent. Her thesis was beautifully developed and documented. Indeed, the Mormon steeple is void of any symbolic worship value. But what's the answer? Does she have an idea for a new steeple that could embody and perhaps refocus the Mormon chapel as a House of God and not a "house of community, social, and administrative life"? Can such a design meet the difficult resource allocation decisions that *must* happen in a growing global church where the tradeoffs are not carpet versus steeple, but education versus missionary work versus non-U.S. development where needs are four walls and a roof?

As a leader in a Fortune 10 company, I have come to appreciate that there are many who can analyze a problem and tell me the four thousand things wrong. But few can perform the analysis and with vision carve out meaningful and lasting solutions. Sadly, academia has the same problem. This is an area where SUNSTONE could improve.

Other articles in the same issue perform just as badly. Paul Pollei's "The Decline of Music in Mormon Culture" is an interesting and accurate portrayal of the state of music in the Church. Suggestions, Paul? Nope. I did count one regarding expanding BYU's annual workshop for Church musicians. A weak solution: how will that reach us out here in Wisconsin and beyond? Proposals, SUNSTONE, please!

On the bright side, Lisa Bolin Hawkins's "Life Is Too Full of Surprises," concerning those dreaded, suspenseful "please call President So-and-So" (where So-and-So is a stake president, bishop, or whatever), is not just good analysis, but offers several insightful and—more importantly—actionable solutions. This is the kind of work in which SUNSTONE should be engaged.

PROBLEM 2—NOTES. Excuse me for being a student of Miss Thistlebottom, but we have to improve the way we use footnotes. The footnote is supposed to provide reference material or slight expansions or refinements in definitions. The way the footnote is used in much of Mormon scholarship, and particularly in SUNSTONE, is unacceptable. Any more it seems that core ideas and evidence are not in the text but in the notes.

Consider David P. Wright's fine paper. There are many poor endnote usages in this paper. The first occurs with endnote 4. The note is hardly referential; worse, it is tediously long. It talks through the problem of

TELESTIAL KINGDOM
(detail)



the "spiritual mode as an avenue of historical understanding"—frankly, a paper within a paper. The note has little to do with Wright's main thesis. It is distracting at best; at worst, it is a private little argument. The bottom line? Fit it into the article or eliminate it.

In note 12, Wright commits another noteworthy sin. The discussion in the text deals with why baptism could not have been a *rite de passage* in the Old Testament. Wright's excellent point is that the historical and textual evidence does not support the traditional Mormon view. However, rather than address the pitfalls of blaming these kinds of things on the lost "plain and precious parts" in the body of his argument—certainly a critical argument to a Mormon audience—Wright relegates it to a short note. As an example of his thesis that critical historical analysis can add value to our understanding of the LDS canon, this seems like a key example that ought to belong in the text.

Perhaps the gravest error of all in Mormon footnoting, and certainly present in Wright's article, is the number and degree of cheap shots that take place in the notes. Do SUNSTONE and Mormon writers have to resort to such cowardly approaches as burying scholarly insults in their endnotes? Consider note 59. In the body of the article Wright is telling us what the Book of Mormon teaches about Native American skin color. The note gives a few scriptural references as a good note should, but then Wright refers to John Sorenson's *Ancient Setting* and informs us that Sorenson's "partially critical attempt" to resolve these issues "cannot be accepted." Wright may be correct but (a) the least he can do is give us the evidence (like we good skeptical SUNSTONE readers are going to take his undocumented opinion for anything!) and (b) please keep the scholarly bickering out of the notes.

Come on, SUNSTONE scholars and editors, give us better writing!

DOW R. WILSON
Elm Grove, WI

ANTI-MORMON AUTHORS

I AM OPEN minded about the Church, and have been a subscriber to SUNSTONE for some time. Although there have been many faith-weakening articles, I have put up with these because of a general interest in the intellectual and practical side of the Church.

However, there are limits to my tolerance, and SUNSTONE has now exceeded them. Your September issue contains a letter by Deborah Austin Stolworthy, that contains comments about Joseph Smith that can only

promote apostasy: "If a man can so lie to and humiliate his 'elect lady' [Emma Smith] what other lies would he tell? . . . Joseph Smith's grand tradition of lying for the Lord has flourished in the Church ever since. . . ." ("Mercy, Mercy," SUNSTONE 16:3).

These comments are not only faith-weakening, they are intended to be faith-destroying. How can anyone who believes as she does continue, or want to continue, to be a member of the Church? If Joseph Smith was nothing but a liar, and if the Church leaders now continue this "grand tradition" of lying, then Joseph Smith was no prophet and neither are they. And this means neither the Book of Mormon nor the Church can be true.

Lest anyone miss this point, it is stated explicitly in David P. Wright's article. Ignoring all the other extremely persuasive evidence for the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon, he cites such things as the supposed division of Isaiah into three authors as proof that the Book of Mormon cannot be true, and invites the reader to share his conclusion that "A critical study of the Book of Mormon, as I have indicated, shows that Joseph Smith was its author."

What is going on here? This is the kind of stuff I would expect to read in avowedly anti-Mormon literature, unabashedly aimed at persuading the reader to leave the Church. Undoubtedly it will be gleefully quoted by them in support of their purpose.

The Brethren really do know what they are talking about. One seriously risks losing his or her testimony by getting mixed up with SUNSTONE. How else can I protest? Please cancel my subscription.

FRANK J. JOHNSON
Potomac, MD

Note: See the Give and Take column on page 11 for further discussion of David Wright's article.

SUNSTONE ENCOURAGES CORRESPONDENCE. ADDRESS LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION TO "READERS' FORUM" (FAX: 801/355-4043). WE EDIT LETTERS FOR CLARITY AND TONE AND CUT THEM FOR SPACE, DUPLICATION, AND VERBOSITY. LETTERS ADDRESSED TO AUTHORS WILL BE FORWARDED UNOPENED TO THEM.

