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READERS' FORUM

BIPARTISANSHIP

THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN Bruce Jorgensen and Richard Cracroft on Mormon literature and between David Wright and William Hamblin (SUNSTONE 16:3) on Book of Mormon origins are excellent illustrations of what SUNSTONE and other independent Mormon publications should aggressively seek: articulate authors who represent traditional/faith-filled (dare I say orthodox?) points of view in addition to the typical heterodoxical, skeptical perspectives I am now accustomed to reading in the magazine. Often it is hard to find the diversity of perspectives (not topics) cherished by readers and editors, sometimes at the expense of everything else. Hence, I am saddened by the apparent pressure many BYU faculty members are under to not write for SUNSTONE or participate in its symposiums. These important voices need to be included for balance and robustness.

There are many other thoughtful Latter-day Saints (including BYU faculty) who are reluctant to publish in SUNSTONE or present at its symposiums because they don't want to be associated with a particular image that SUNSTONE has, whether justified or not, of being unnecessarily cynical, faithless, and arrogant, of stirring the kettle for the sake of stirring (being unable to discern that some things taste better when left to simmer or that stirring a particular spice may make the stew hard to swallow). There is also a kind of self-absorbed intellectualism that often accompanies that image that is a bit much for me. I have been to several symposiums where patently unbelieving and arrogant presenters, respondents, or audience members have belittled the orthodox faith of others on groundless reasons, masked as intellectual privilege or "honesty."

No wonder there are those who have written for SUNSTONE or presented at its symposiums, and now choose not to do so—and that decision is made easier with the admonitions of Church leaders. Alas, the alternate voice at times seems much more monolithic than diverse, much more dogmatic than genuinely interested in balance. I would argue that the "Mormon intellectual community" goes far beyond those who belong to the SUNSTONE -Dialogue society and who present every year at the symposium. That society is not the LDS intellectual community. It appears that SUN-

STONE has gotten itself into a vicious circle: it is harder for SUNSTONE to attract more orthodox writers because it does not publish the writings of the more orthodox. (Of course, it is not at all this simple; the orthodox/unorthodox dichotomy is misleading.)

I would hate to see SUNSTONE, a magazine I have subscribed to since my mission and which has deeply inspired and enlightened me at times, become solely the champion of skepticism and doubt (two approaches I am, in principle, not opposed to) and leave other equally legitimate voices to publications such as F.A.R.M.S. or *BYU Studies*. Perhaps this division of perspectives and belief is inevitable, but I think SUNSTONE (or any LDS publication) would be the worse for it. Faithfulness and scholarship are not on opposite ends of the same continuum. If one of SUNSTONE's aspirations is to be the *Atlantic* of Mormon belief and culture, it will need to do a better job of being perspective-bipartisan. The latest issue is a good start.

JONATHAN THOMAS
Chicago, IL

OFFICIAL APOSTACY

I HAVE irregularly read SUNSTONE since I was ten (my father subscribed for its interesting intellectual insights). I have learned to love and need SUNSTONE. It provides a soul-searching avenue where my own questions are addressed. While sometimes cynical and depressing, SUNSTONE is often my only connection to people with opinions like my own. I have many questions; sometimes I feel like I am "falling away" from the true orthodoxy. Reading SUNSTONE provides affirmation that I'm okay, that my questions are valid, and that there are others on my side.

However, I do have some questions: What is SUNSTONE's official policy on the Mother in Heaven doctrine, homosexuality, gender-inclusive language, feminism, the Church, and abortion? I want to find out whether SUNSTONE really is an "apostate" magazine.

HEATHER MCGRAW
San Diego, CA

Editor's Reply:

SUNSTONE's policy is to not advocate positions on issues, but, over time, to feature a wide variety of reflections by Latter-day Saints. I know faithful members who have prayerfully and thoughtfully arrived at dramatically opposing views on each issue

above, and I consider none of them apostates. However, we have of necessity adopted an editing style guide, which touches on two of the items. In contrast to the Church's practice, SUNSTONE capitalizes Mother in Heaven as well as Father in Heaven, since she is also deity, however one defines her role and status, or possible sister wives. We also unapologetically revise all manuscripts to be gender inclusive, believing that since men and women are all alike unto God (2 Nephi 26:33) such rewriting is an act of worship—helping make God's will done on earth as it is in heaven. But we will gladly feature articles or letters that disagree with these conventions.

SIZE IS UNIMPORTANT

MARTHA S. BRADLEY seems to be unduly concerned that the LDS ward meetinghouse functions mostly on the earthly level ("The Mormon Steeple: A Symbol of What?" SUNSTONE 16:3). She divorces "community, social, and administrative life" from the list of functions appropriate to a house of God, yet never quite establishes just what function(s) a church ought to serve. Mormonism has always embraced a world view of an ultimate sameness of nature between earth and heaven. What causes either of them to become spiritualized, rather than base, is not material content or outward shine, but the

qualities of attitude with which we approach them. It is true, in a certain sense, that a spiritual perspective is superior to a worldly one, but it is false that Mormonism ideally ought to disassociate its "religious" functioning from the social or the administrative. All are one holistic activity.

Bradley's concern is justified by the approach she takes to Mormon architecture, but she takes a narrow, and non-Mormonesque, perspective. Any sound eye can agree that the Mormon steeple is not a Gothic structure. But one is hard-pressed to conclude that, therefore, Mormon buildings are *not* designed to tell us about God. They tell us more about the Mormon God, and godliness, than she sees.

A small steeple, rather than a grand-scale construction, reminiscent, as Bradley notes, of the Tower of Babel, ought to represent the moderation, or reverent reserve, that Mormons are expected to display outwardly. Although we should not keep our spiritual lights hidden, neither are we to flaunt them, allowing facade to replace true content. The lack of a steeple altogether may represent the unique Mormon perspective, that earth and heaven are one. Plain, "light pole" steeples—more logos than steeples, as Bradley rightly contends—indicate the plain and humble ideal of Mormonism. As a logo, such a steeple might say, "Here is a church into which you are accepted without needing to impress us

with false appearances, for neither do we seek to (deceive or to) impress you."

Bradley's approach is narrow in its singular focus on steeples and meetinghouses in Mormon architecture. What of temples? Isn't it sensible that the ward meetinghouse be given less architectural emphasis than the temple? The temple is where we truly expect to meet God. *There* is his home. *There* is the crossroads between heaven and earth. Even in our simplest temples this is represented.

A meetinghouse is God's house only inasmuch as it is the house in which his people gather for *their* functions, as they work out the godly potential inherent in them. Only the chapel reflects the nature of the temple, and it is only in the interior design of this part of the building that Mormonism ought to express its total religious sentiment in aesthetic symbol for public appreciation. The temple may express this both inwardly and outwardly, just as God's presence cannot be hid by virtue of his absolute integrity and unlimitable glory. But we are not so perfect; and the building in which we perform the activities for the sake of the earth-bound church displays our nature. This is what Bradley said, but with disapproval; I, on the other hand, approve. We need no special costumes to set us apart, and neither do our buildings.

MICHAEL H. CLIFTON
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada





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SWEET PARTNERS

SISTER AILEEN CLYDE of the Relief Society General Presidency spoke of a "priesthood partnership we so value in our Church and in our homes" when welcoming Presidents Hinckley, Monson, and Hunter to the September 1992 general women's meeting. (The "priesthood partnership" clause was deleted from the *Ensign* version of the speech. [SUNSTONE16:1]).

With her thoughtful language, she reflected the gospel principle of the partnership between women and men that is vital to God's eternal plan. As Latter-day Saints, we should all strive to do this.

Husbands and wives should refer to each other with the utmost respect. A Church member, referring to his or her spouse as "my sweetheart" from the pulpit implies more a feeling of possession than of partnership. "Spouse" or "marriage partner" sounds more like a team, working together toward common goals. "Marriage partner" is closer to the true state of things than even "wife."

If a husband introduces himself as Brother So-and-So, it is demeaning if he then introduces his spouse by her first name: "Hello, I am Brother Staples, and this is Candy." Imagine how a man would feel if his spouse said: "Hello, I am the Relief Society president, Sister Staples, and this is my husband, Hank." Better would be: "Hello, we are the Staples; My name is Hank, and this is Candy." These alternatives stress equality by giving both the same amount of respect.

Referring to grown women as girls is a habit that many people fall into without realizing the implications. The females in the Church are women. Unless we wish to give the impression that LDS men have fifteen-year-old wives, we should maintain an equality of vocabulary. Fortunately, the practice of calling each other Sister and Brother gives us a ready-made alternative.

Since the recent insistence on titles at general conference, Relief Society and Primary presidents should be referred to as President rather than Sister, just as the bishop is called Bishop rather than Brother during his tenure.

Language affects the way we perceive and treat people. By using language that stresses mutual respect and equality, women and men in the Church can come closer to the gospel ideal of a true partnership.

DEBORAH MAYHEW
Paramus, NJ

CURB YOUR DOGMA

DURING MY ARMY basic training "block of instruction" on race relations, the drill sergeant asked for a show of hands from all those who felt themselves to be free of prejudice. I was the only trainee not to raise his hand. It occurred to me that I was in some, perhaps subtle, way warped by racial prejudice. Almost immediately I was attacked by a black soldier who wanted to know why I wasn't raising my hand.

The incident caused me to reflect: In the process of overthrowing biases or dogmas, we all too often become unwittingly dogmatic and narrow-minded in our prosecution of dogmatism and narrow-mindedness. The soldier who attacked me no doubt felt he was fighting racial prejudice. But is an animosity toward people who are racially prejudiced any better than an animosity toward people with a different color of skin? It may seem nobler because it attacks a manifest evil, but in the process of winning that battle it legitimizes and establishes a higher-order evil that may well go undetected for decades.

Of course we should fight against dogmatism and evil, but not in a way that replaces dogmas with higher-order dogmas that pass judgment on dogmas. Often, these higher dogmas push all the right buttons and tickle our ears, but pushed to the limit they turn out to be just as divisive and exclusionary as the dogmas they seek to destroy. For example, a statement was distributed at work advocating free speech and respect for the opinions of others. I was comfortable with it until asked to indicate in writing whether I agreed. What if I were to disagree and express a belief that not all opinions should be respected? Would that opinion be respected, or would my disagreement become grounds for abrogating the statement's ideals? No matter how high-



minded or well-intentioned formulas of proper thought and behavior may be, every orthodoxy spawns its own heterodoxy.

It is always a temptation to reach for an orthodoxy that will bring lasting social change, but that is not the way of Christ. He directs us to produce social change through love rather than prescriptions of behavior. This may sound hopelessly idealistic, but that is only because most of us are so married to our dogmas that we cannot see beyond them.

Christian love works so well as a motivator of social change because it is quicksand to prejudice and prejudice-driven arguments. Dogma, hate, and prejudice all find their black hole in love; through love they are funneled out of the universe. Orthodoxies, on the other hand, attempt to squash prejudice out of existence; but if we are to trust our best science, nothing can be squashed out of existence. Like a viral strain that always finds a way to overcome new antibiotics, prejudice is resilient and endlessly inventive.

The most beautiful thing about Christian love is that it cannot be turned into an orthodoxy and be enforced. The Christian gospel reduces to the two great commandments of love, but those commandments, unlike all others, are divine boomerangs that foil the human tendency to see others as the primary source of evil. We may reject our neighbor for not loving us, but then we are guilty of the same sin. As long as love does not prevail among us, everyone is obligated to cross-examine him or herself. Christian love means sharing everything, even the blame. Thus it becomes impossible to permanently scapegoat others, for if we take the commandment of love seriously, the sins we project onto others invariably return to ourselves. Like Christ, each of us becomes a collection point of sin, an opening through which evil is channeled out of the universe.

Thanks to the logician Kurt Gödel, we have learned that "truth transcends theoremhood" (Douglas Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* [New York: Vintage Books, 1980], 86), that every correct description of the world is incorrect in that it is always incomplete. Our understanding of truth is of finite length, but truth is infinitely long. This insight has spiritual as well as physical application: the gospel transcends the prescriptions, sanctions, and orthodoxies that well-meaning people coax out of it. Any finite prescription or code will be incomplete, will fail to take the full (infinite) measure of human diversity, and—if adhered to tenaciously—will ultimately prove to be counterproductive. In commanding us to love each other without condition or reservation, Christ

has given us a way to short-circuit the human tendency to fight dogmas with dogmas.

DAVID GRANDY
Laie, HI

CANDID EXAMINATIONS

RECENTLY I had a bit of a go through electronic billboard with Utah Missions (UMI) and its publication, the *Evangel*. They made these remarks:

Dr. Don Christensen, an official spokesman for the LDS church in Las Vegas says, "The church teaches tolerance and stands against brutality. We have always taught tolerance of different religions and races."

The second claim concerns the LDS church's alleged stand against brutality and violence. Has the Mormon church always been opposed to violence and brutality? A quick look at history would say no. In a sermon delivered July 4, 1838 at Far West, Missouri, Sidney Rigdon, a counselor in the First Presidency, in speaking of the tension between the people of Missouri and the Mormons of that day said: "...

it shall be between us and them a war of extermination; for we will follow them until the last drop of blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us; for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses and their families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed." (History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, volume 2, p. 165, 1951). It was October 1838, after Rigdon's sermon that Missouri Governor, Lilburn Boggs, sought to drive the Mormons from his state.

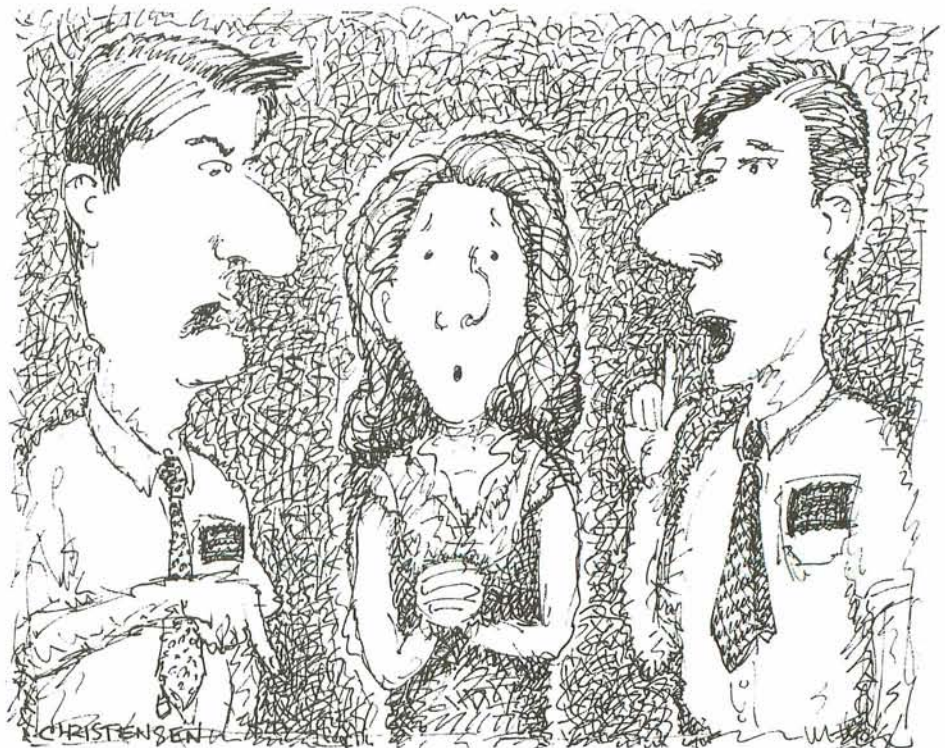
This was at least the third time UMI made this claim. I responded:

I would like you to notice the creative use of the ellipse at the beginning of the quoted material.

May I set this sermon in more proper perspective? It is undeniable that the rhetoric was strong and, perhaps, politically incorrect. It should also be noted that the actions described here were never put into effect.

At this time the "Mormons" had endured many persecutions. They had been burned out of house,

GOOD MISSIONARY/BAD MISSIONARY



"Aren't you worried about going to hell?"

"Only do what you believe."

home and cities across the country. They had been tarred, feathered, murdered, burned, and pillaged. It was July 4th, and most of the sermon was based on a very patriotic theme of sustaining the United States and the rights, including the rights of self defense and religious freedom. Emotions were high as they always are in speeches like this of "God, Country and Family." It is also true that the speech was well prepared in advance so this utterance was not a spur of the moment thing.

But starting after the ellipse, as UMI has, it sounds like a declaration of war against their neighbors. But may I share with you the part that UMI has seen fit to keep from your consideration? Having suffered all of the persecutions, mobbings and attacks on the Mormons, Sidney Rigdon states:

"But from this day and this hour we will suffer it no more. We take God and all the holy angels to witness, this day, that we warn all men, in the name of Jesus Christ to come upon us no more for ever, for from this hour we will bear it no more; our rights shall no more be trampled on with impunity; the man, or the set of men who attempt it, do it at the expense of their lives. And that mob that comes on us to disturb us, it shall be between us and them a war of extermination. . . ."

At this point we join the part offered by UMI. It was not a declaration of offensive warfare, as they would have you believe. It was a statement that if the mobs came again, the Saints would feel justified in defending themselves and, if need be to quell the threat, to go beyond pure defense. Nowhere was this a call to action against the

peoples of the area except those who would be parts of lawless mobs and then only because the government had been reluctant to offer common protection to the Mormons.

In my latest issue of SUNSTONE(March 1993) D. Michael Quinn states:

Official LDS history presents the Missouri persecutions of 1838 as the acts of irrational anti-Christ. Traditional Mormon Historians fail to note that Mormon bloc-voting overpowered the non-Mormons politically, and that Joseph Smith published Sidney Rigdon's sermon that dared the mobs to attack the Mormon community. The pamphlet even threatened Missourians with "a war of extermination . . . for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families. . . ." Governor Boggs was not the first to use the word "extermination."

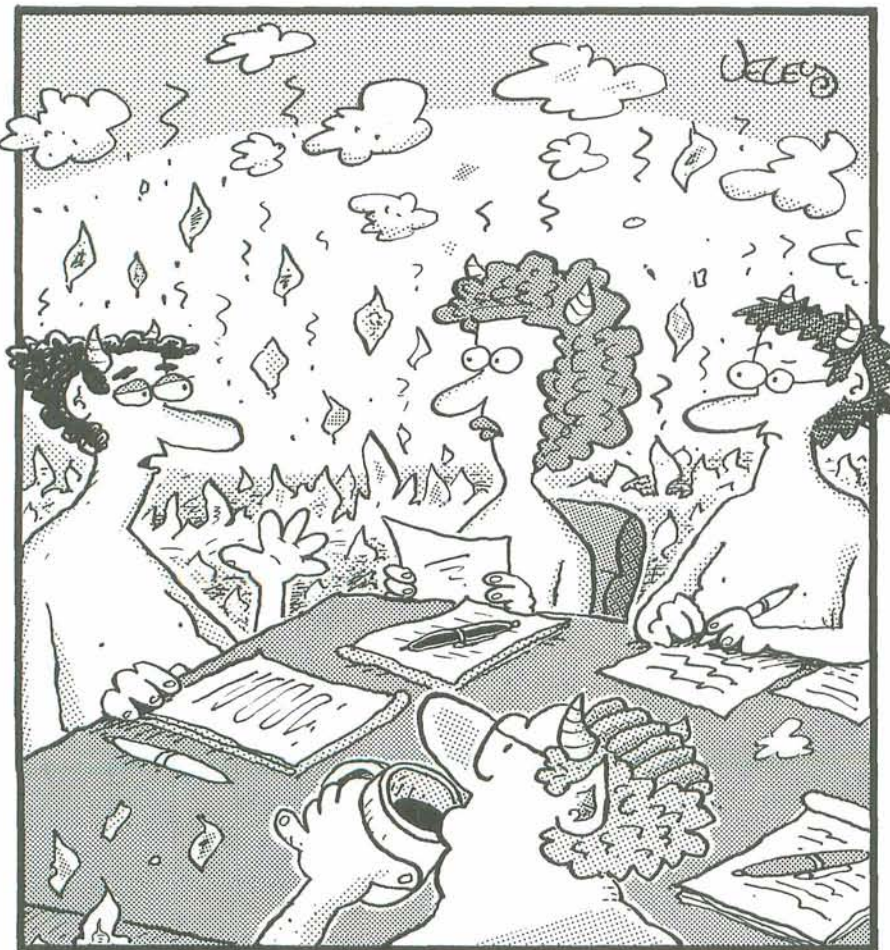
Quinn is so interested in breaking with official LDS history that he, too, through creative use of ellipses makes a point that just is not there. Quinn's paragraph seems to indicate that the Church somehow merited persecutions and a governmental "extermination order" because it had political numbers or made polemic statements filled with more bluster and hyperbole than force. I understand why UMI appreciates his writings so much. It can take its shots at the Church and still maintain its position of only quoting "Mormon sources."

CHARLES F. MARSTON JR.
Odgen, UT

Michael Quinn replies:

The point of my brief quote from Rigdon's sermon and the point of Marston's extended quote are the same: Rigdon publicly warned the Missourians that "it shall be between us and them a war of extermination" if they attacked the Mormons. It's irrelevant for Marston to claim that Rigdon's sermon made threats which "were never put into effect" and were "more bluster and hyperbole than force. . . ." Here was a Mormon provocation or "dare ya" which Missouri mobs were quite willing to respond to. Governor Boggs had the power to make Rigdon's threat of "extermination" into a reality.

Early Mormon leaders did not agree with Marston's "more proper perspective" on Rigdon's sermon. Jedediah M. Grant, in *A Collection of Facts Relative to the Course Taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon, In the States of Ohio, Missouri, Illinois and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia:



"Sorry to interrupt, Phil, but I've got the sneaking suspicion we're not all singing from the same hymnal. So to speak."

Brown, Bicking & Guilbert, 1844, 11-12), quoted three paragraphs from Rigdon's Fourth of July sermon, including the one about a "war of extermination." Grant then said: "The foregoing extract from his oration, as anticipated by the judicious, was the main auxiliary that fanned into a flame the burning wrath of the mobocratic portion of the Missourians. They now had an excuse, their former threats were renewed, and soon executed. . . ." Also, Nauvoo's *Times and Seasons* printed Brigham Young's statement: "Elder Rigdon was the prime causer of our troubles in Missouri by his fourth of July oration" (5 [1 October 1844]: 667). By the attack-the-messenger logic of Marston's final para-

graphs, Jedediah Grant and Brigham Young were also giving "aid and succor to the enemies of the church" and claiming that the Mormons "merited persecutions."

The actions of early Mormons invited trouble more than once, but that does not justify murderous mobs. However, Grant and Young failed to note that Joseph Smith printed Rigdon's sermon as a pamphlet and recommended it in the Church's Missouri periodical *Elder's Journal*. The Prophet therefore shares the blame which Brigham Young and his future counselor Jedediah M. Grant charged to Rigdon.

It's common to ignore, or deny, or explain away, or present only part of the uncomfort-

able evidence from the Mormon past. That's one approach of faith and love for Mormonism. Another approach of faith and love is that candid examinations of Mormon history will avoid unrealistic expectations which create greater disillusionment than simply acknowledging the evidence. I've always chosen the second approach.

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OF GOOD REPORT

ORTHODOXY VS. CHARISMA

HOW THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH LOST THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

THE REASONS for the severance [of the charisms—gifts of the Spirit—from Christian initiations are] multiple. Among them was the acceptance of infant baptism as a norm. In a church which has infant baptism, there is more chance of the charism imparted at baptism going unused. Another reason was the growth of Montanism [a movement to regain to the primitive spirit of the early church, especially "prophesyings"]. The general acceptability of the charism in the life of the early church was one of the reasons why Montanism spread so easily. Among its adherents were some of the most serious-minded persons. But the excesses, either real or implied, brought disrepute on the Montanists. By proximity, the prophetic charisms themselves became suspect. . . . Thus they could no longer be promoted within the context of the Christian initiation, as they had been. . . .

But the tradition in which the charisms were part of Christian initiation left some footprints. For Chrysostom [d. A.D. 407] the prophetic charisms were no longer a part of the living experience of the Church. In this respect Chrysostom recognized that the church of his day was a church of tokens. In fact, Chrysostom still recognized that in the apostolic age of the paradigm for Christian initiation included the manifestation of the charisms. Such an admission . . . involved him in strategic retreats and strained adjustments. In order to keep the apostolic substance he felt compelled to see the charisms actualized in the church of his time. To accomplish this he internalized and spiritualized some of the charisms. . . . Of the gift of tongues with unutterable groanings, Chrysostom said that this is what the deacon does in the liturgy when he intercedes for the people. If one gives alms, one is exercising the gift of healing. If one marches oneself not to theaters but to church, one has cured the lame. Paul's doctrine is hardly recognizable here. . . .

The Syrian monastic tradition clung to the charisms as founded in initiation, but it was as a rock in the midst of a torrent that was flowing past it. Even in that tradition the charisms were actualized only in a few, as a sign of holiness. The greater the charism, the

greater the holiness. The stage was set for the prevailing assumption of later centuries that the prophetic charisms were not given to the entire church, but were extraordinary gifts marking the sanctity of individuals.

Our reference to the decline of the prophetic charisms has been chiefly from the liturgical point of view, i.e., how the charisms gradually disappeared from the catechesis and practice of Christian initiation. But there were other factors in this decline, and among them it is common to list as chief the closure of the canon, leading to a dispensationalist view, the solidification of hierarchical power, or, as D. E. Aune has expressed it, "the earlier role of the prophets as articulators of the norms, values, and decisions of the invisible head of the church was taken over by the visible figures of the teacher, preacher, theologian, and church leader." . . .

This development does not, of course, exclude the possibility, even the likelihood, that those chosen and appointed to these offices were those in whom prophetic gifts had in some way been manifested. This can be detected already in New Testament times in the transition from the charism to the more institutionalized office of prophet. But it becomes clear in Ignatius of Antioch, a bishop who considered himself to have the gift of prophecy and actually exercised it in a dispute with a troublesome element of the church in Philadelphia. . . .

Thus it would be an over-simplification of the process to say that bishops were struggling to assert their power over the manifestation of prophecy in the community. Such was not the case in the earlier period at least. Rather, as other authors have pointed out, the primary cause of the decline of the prophetic gifts was the struggle for orthodoxy and only consequentially to the clarification of hierarchical power in order to deal with false prophecy and teaching. M

K. McDONNELL & G. T. MONTAGUE
in *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 328-31
Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991

Submissions of interesting quotes for this department are welcome.