

SUNSTONE

Founded in 1974

SCOTT KENNEY 1975–1978
ALLEN D. ROBERTS 1978–1980
PEGGY FLETCHER 1978–1986
DANIEL H. RECTOR 1986–1991
ELBERT EUGENE PECK 1986–2001

Editor

DAN WOTHERSPOON

Publisher

WILLIAM STANFORD

Associate Editor

CAROL B. QUIST

Managing Editor

JOHN HATCH

Section Editors

MICHAEL AUSTIN, book reviews

PHYLLIS BAKER, fiction contest

SCOT DENHALTER, Cybersaints

HUGO OLAIZ, News/Update

DIXIE PARTRIDGE, poetry

MARY ELLEN ROBERTSON, women's studies

MICHAEL SCHOENFELD, Sunstone Gallery

DARRON SMITH, The Long-Promised Day?

ALISON TAKENAKA, Margin Notes

Editorial Assistants

NATHAN BANG, JOHN-CHARLES DUFFY, REBECCA ENGLAND

ERIC JONES, HUGO OLAIZ, WILLIAM B. QUIST

Contributing Columnists

MICHAEL AUSTIN, D. JEFF BURTON

DIAN SADERUP MONSON, MARYBETH RAYNES, JANA RIESS

Sunstone Photographer and Taping Engineer

STEVE MAYFIELD

Cartoonists

KYLE ANDERSON, PAT BAGLEY, CALVIN GRONDAHL

Much-Appreciated Volunteers

DEVERY ANDERSON, SUSAN ANDERSON, PHYLLIS BAKER

MAXINE HANKS, BARBARA HAUGSOEN, LEANN HILLAM

BEVERLY HOPPE, CHRIS KEMP, CAROLYN LAMBERT

STEVE MAYFIELD, WILLIAM B. QUIST, WILLIAM W. QUIST

COLLIN STANFORD, ROESHARON STANFORD, NICOLE STEVENS

HOLLY WELKER, KATHY WILSON, JAKE ZOLLINGER



THE SUNSTONE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The mission of The Sunstone Education Foundation is to sponsor open forums of Mormon thought and experience. Under the motto, "Faith Seeking Understanding," we examine and express the rich spiritual, intellectual, social, and artistic qualities of Mormon history and contemporary life. We encourage humanitarian service, honest inquiry, and responsible interchange of ideas that is respectful of all people and what they hold sacred.

Executive Director

DAN WOTHERSPOON

Board of Trustees

J. FREDERICK (TOBY) PINGREE, chair

BILL BRADSHAW, D. JEFF BURTON, JULIE K. CURTIS

CHARLOTTE H. ENGLAND, NADINE R. HANSEN,

JORDAN KIMBALL, KIM MCCALL, J. BONNER RITCHIE

MARY ELLEN ROBERTSON, MICHAEL J. STEVENS

EARL M. WUNDERLI

Publisher/Business Manager

WILLIAM STANFORD

Sunstone Mercantile Director

CAROL B. QUIST

Symposium Organizers

MOLLY BENNION, Northwest

KIRK & BECKY LINFORD, JINELLE MONK, Washington, D.C.

KIM MCCALL, RICHARD RANDS, Symposium West

JOHN HATCH, Salt Lake City

National Advisory Board

ALAN ACKROYD, IRENE BATES, MOLLY BENNION

CARLAN BRADSHAW, BELLAMY BROWN, RENEE CARLSON

BLAINE CARLTON, PAUL CARPENTER, DOUGLAS CONDIE

JOHN COX, D. JAMES CROFT, ROBERT FILLERUP

KENT FROGLEY, SHELDON GREAVES, MARK GUSTAVSON

LIONEL GRADY, NANCY HARWARD, DIETRICH KEMPSKI

GREG KOPFORD, SHUNICHI KUWAHATA, GLEN LAMBERT

PATRICK MCKENZIE, CARRIE MILES, RONALD L. MOLEN

MARY ANN MORGAN, MARJORIE NEWTON

ALICE ALLRED POTTMYER, MARGARET REISER

CHRIS SEXTON, RICHARD SHERLOCK, GEORGE D. SMITH, JR.

NICHOLAS SMITH, RICHARD SOUTHWICK

MARSHA S. STEWART, LORIE WINDER STROMBERG

JOHN TARJAN, JANET TARJAN, NOLA W. WALLACE

HARTMUT WEISSMANN, MARK J. WILLIAMS

Y E A , Y E A



N A Y , N A Y

CULTURAL BLINDERS

I APPRECIATE JAY Stirling's enlightened observations about racial and ethnic prejudice in his essay, "Complicity" (SUNSTONE, July 2002). Having spent many of my formative years in a culturally monolithic environment like Stirling's, (the only African-American family in my parents' neighborhood was *Utah Jazz* star, Karl Malone's), I'm impressed by the young author's sensitivity and sophistication regarding racism in the Church. The people of Switzerland will be well served for the next two years by this missionary.

Stirling presents many contemporary manifestations of prejudice and concludes, "Racism in the Church is not a product of doctrine but a product of culture." This begs the question: To what extent are doctrine and culture connected? Nowhere does Stirling mention the prejudicial passages in the scriptures. I find the recurrent racist themes in the Book of Mormon most distressing. I wonder how these passages contribute to racism occurring in Mormon culture.

For instance, why among white-skinned cultures does it seem perfectly reasonable for the Lord to cause a black skin to come upon the Lamanites because of their wickedness (2 Ne. 5:21)? Is the oft-repeated description "dark and loathesome" intended to be figurative? Why would bi-racial offspring of a Nephite and Lamanite be cursed? And a related question: What kind of society deems darker skin a curse anyway? (My spouse, who is of minority race, has joked that my own "white and delightful" skin is prone to sunburn.) But seriously, how will I explain to my future children, who will likely have a darker complexion than mine, the messy implications of the verses that describe how the skin of Lamanites who later joined with the righteous "became white . . . and their young men and their daughters became exceedingly fair" (3 Ne. 2:14–16)?

In fairness, other Book of Mormon passages serve as counters to this question of "cursed skin." In Jacob 3:9, the Lord commands the Nephites to "revile no more against them [the Lamanites] because of the darkness of their skins." And during my own mission experience, I frequently referred to the verse where God "inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female;" (2 Ne. 26:33).

Coming to terms with our biases, whether they be towards those of a different race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or theoretical temperament is liberating even as it is painful. Recognizing some of the cultural and doctrinal sources of these views is painful as well. So I applaud efforts by column editor Darron Smith and others who are attempting to address these challenging issues honestly. By discussing our prejudice, and its sources, we Mormons may evolve into a more peculiar—and less dysfunctional—people.

W. PRESTON LEAR
Winters, California

FORBIDDEN TALENTS

I VERY MUCH enjoyed reading Wayne Schow's essay, "Spiritual Communities and Individual Needs" (SUNSTONE, July 2002). When I consider the words and examples of Jesus in the New Testament, they seem preponderantly sympathetic toward the community side of the continuum Schow describes. Jesus consistently challenged rigid laws, forums, and institutions in order to minister uniquely to individuals of all walks of life and soul states. Schow asks, "Are men and women made for the Church, or is the Church made for men and women?" When I read President Hinckley's message in the September *Ensign* about a Bishop's effort to use the talents of a young man to get him active in the Church, I wondered why no one seems to comment on how many enthusiastic and honorable members are rejected and forbidden to share their talents within the Church!

From my own experiences, I have learned that individual acquisition of knowledge and truth is not to be accepted unless it agrees with the teachings of today's prophets. It is clear that dead prophets can be accused of preaching false doctrines. Does this mean that the teachings of prophets now living will also be fair game when they are dead?

RHODA THURSTON
Hatch, New Mexico

RUTH REVISITED

I N HIS REFLECTIONS on the historicity of the Book of Ruth in the July 2002 SUNSTONE, Brian Stuy suggests that the writer of Ruth meant to subvert Ezra's campaign "to require all men to divorce and expel from their families wives and children who were not pure Israelites" (Ezra 10). The

writer enlists readers sympathy and admiration for widowed Moabitess Ruth and her widowed Israelite mother-in-law Naomi as they try to make a life in Naomi's former hometown.

I think Stuy is right about the value and function of the real or imaginary Ruth, for why else would the writer add all the details we read? Why would Naomi send Ruth into Boaz's bed by night and why would Boaz would let her stay for a while? Are these the noblest professions writers could create for Old Testament women? Then the writer emphasizes how Boaz dutifully pays off a nearer kinsman to wed Ruth. Soon Ruth bears son Obed, clearly not a pure Israelite, and Obed ultimately begets Jesse, who begets the future King David. But Ruth's ancestry is never itemized—only male lineage seems important and recorded. (The recorded lineage of Mary, mortal mother of Christ, is not the maternal one, either.) Since it is fair to conjecture that Boaz, whose lineage *does* rate, could have sired Obed by any woman, Stuy's thesis about the writer choosing Ruth to serve a specific polemical purpose seems quite plausible.

RICKY SHAW
Spokane, Washington

NOT A TYPICAL MORMON

I HAVE JUST finished reading the wonderful tributes to Eugene England in SUNSTONE's January 2002 issue. I knew Gene only briefly and superficially in the late 1970s when he and Charlotte moved into the Kaysville 2nd Ward. The first time he spoke in sacrament meeting, I knew he was not your typical Mormon. His was the first talk in the eight years since I had converted to Mormonism that struck the chords of my intellect. Sacrament meeting talks were generally shallow, superficial, and not very well delivered. Few Mormons plumb the depths of theology and ask the larger questions of faith as I had been taught to do in my liberal Protestant upbringing. Brother England was different. I just didn't know *how* different he was. I left Kaysville and the Church, in 1981, after several years of struggle with the confines of Mormon dogma.

In the mid-1980s, I returned to attend a Sunstone symposium and had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Gene. It was an eye-opening experience. We discussed the Church, how I could not survive spiritually in the confines it placed on individuals, and how he could not only survive but thrive in it. I found it difficult to understand how, given his deep intellect, he could be content, even

happy, within Mormonism's walls. I so admired how he was willing to ask questions and even more willing to accept the answers and not be afraid of the consequences.

After reading this issue detailing the person he had become, I now understand better why he stayed in Mormonism. He brought strength to those who were weakened spiritually by Church authority and dogma; he helped people believe in their own faith and not be afraid to ask questions or explore issues. He gave people who otherwise might have left Mormonism a reason to stay and develop their faith. And he offered me an acceptance, even an understanding, of my own path that had led me out of Mormonism and to a rediscovery of my Christian roots.

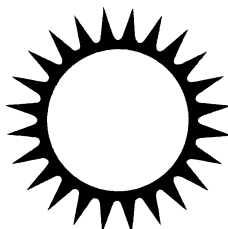
What a wonderful legacy! I am privileged to have known him, even if so briefly. Thank you for doing such a wonderful tribute to this man who truly touched everyone he met.

CLARE GOLDSBERRY
Phoenix, Arizona

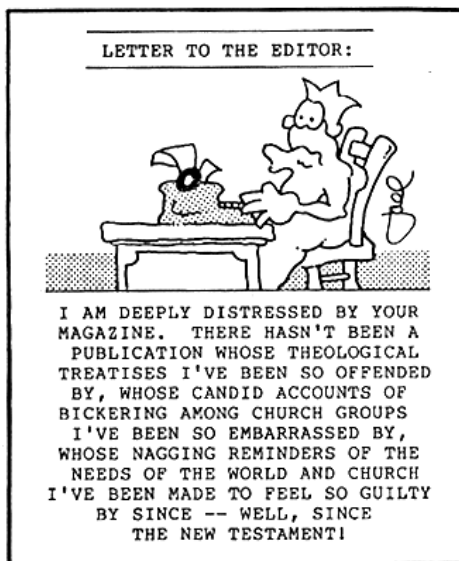
Letters for publication are edited for clarity, tone, and space. Send to <SunstoneUT@aol.com>. Letters to authors are forwarded, unopened.



Visit <www.Sunstoneonline.com> to comment or to read comments by others.



Pontius' Puddle



WORDS OF MORMONS

Can't Find a Book?

These stores specialize in out-of-print and hard-to-find LDS books

BENCHMARK BOOKS

3269 S. Main, Suite. 250
Salt Lake City, UT 84115.
801/486-3111; 800/486-3112 toll free for orders
<<http://www.benchmarkbooks.com>>
email: <benchmarkbooks@mcleodusa.net>
Buy, Sell, Trade

KEN SANDERS RARE BOOKS

268 S. 200 E., Salt Lake City, UT 84111
801/521-3819; fax 801/521-2606
email: <ken@dreamgarden.com>
<<http://www.kensandersbooks.com>>
appraisals, catalog, mail orders
search service, credit cards
10 A.M. - 6 P.M., Monday-Saturday

SAM WELLER'S ZION BOOKSTORE

Thousands of rare and out of print titles on Utah, the Mormons, and the West.

254 S. Main, Salt Lake City, UT 84101
801/328-2586; 800/333-SAMW
email: <books@samwellers.com>
<<http://www.samwellers.com>>

appraisals, catalog, mail orders, special orders
search service, delivery service, credit cards
The largest collection of new, used, and rare LDS titles anywhere.

HELLO!

Sunstone welcomes a new member to its family,
ETHAN JOHN HATCH
son of John and Emily Hatch
born 3 September 2002

