



CORNUCOPIA

SUNSTONE invites short musings: chatty reports, cultural trend sightings, theological meditations. All lovely things of good report, please share them. Send submissions to: <SunstoneED@aol.com>

Lighter Minds

MY NEW CHURCH “QUIET BOOK” IS A PALM PILOT

The following column appeared in the Salt Lake Tribune on 1 June 2002. It is reprinted here with permission.

REMEMBER THE “QUIET BOOKS” YOUR MOM GAVE you in church? They were big and floppy and made out of cloth. They contained simple tasks to keep small minds occupied during the crushing boredom of a sermon.

The one my mom made had a boot to lace up, some plastic animals to load into an ark, and a clown with pockets to button. There may have even been a whale with a cloth belly to hold a plastic Jonah.

My personal favorite page was an elephant with a hole in his face to poke a finger through for a trunk, whereupon Jumbo would go on a rampage and jab my little sister in the eye.

Probably what I liked most about quiet books was that they didn't hurt as much as a hymnal when I got whacked with them.

Quiet books changed with age. Eventually we graduated to small puzzles, coloring books and storybooks. The point was to keep kids quiet so that one adult could talk while the rest tried to fall asleep with their eyes open.

My parents drew the line at comic books in church. As far as they were concerned, it was unseemly for the Holy Ghost to compete so openly with *Casper the Friendly Ghost*.

I was still using quiet books as a teenager, only by then they were novels. Evil though it may have been, *Huckleberry Finn* stood a better chance of keeping me reverent in church than did the high council.

Later, out of deference to my wife, I would sometimes put the dust jackets of church books over the novels. Turns out that James Michener novels and church books were about the same size.

OK, as an adult, I should be paying attention in church. The theory is that I should get something out of each and every talk and lesson. It's not like I am still a kid with a microsecond attention span.

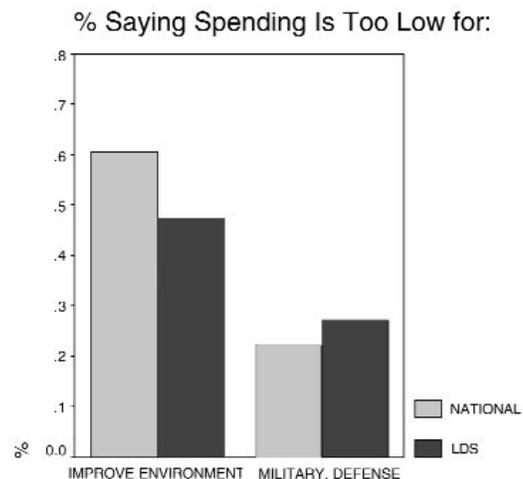
It's a nice thought but possibly a dangerous one. Sometimes it's better when people like me *don't* pay attention. You don't want us noticing the new Melchizedek Priesthood Quiet Book, namely Palm Pilots.

Although women carry Palm Pilots too, it's mostly men you see tinkering with them in church. Women are usually busy sorting kids.

Peculiar People

LDS PREFER DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

MORMONS ARE MORE FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE than the nation on some issues but more liberal on others. In the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center on an annual or biannual basis between 1972 and 2000, 61 percent of U.S. respondents, compared to 48 percent of Mormons, think the government is spending too little on improving the environment. In contrast, 22 percent of citizens, compared to 27 percent of Mormons surveyed believe the U.S. is spending too little on the military, armaments, and defense.



A couple of weeks ago, the priesthood lesson hadn't even reached the narcolepsy stage when I noticed the Palm Pilots coming out. While the instructor went on about something, half the class sat quietly pecking at their electronic marvels.



The nice thing about these sophisticated quiet books is that the users seem to be reflecting on something important, even though it might not be anything more spiritual than making an elephant trunk with a finger.

But it worked. With the exception of a couple of critical-error beeps, they were quiet.

They certainly didn't pay attention enough to steer the lesson off into a harangue against the New World Order.

Please do not send me angry letters about how it's possible to have the entire LDS standard works on your Palm Pilot and so that's what I was seeing: people studying their scriptures. Psalm Pilots, as it were.

Maybe, but I'm pretty sure that the standard works do not include the game of Hearts, pictures of kids, wireless Internet access, box scores, and the latest John Grisham novel.

That was the selling point for me. I went out and bought my own Palm Pilot. In fact, I'm in Sunday school right now using it to write this column.

Twenty Years Ago in Sunstone

“TO LOVE MORE NEARLY AS WE PRAY”

The following is excerpted from an essay by John Sillito in the January–April 1983 issue of SUNSTONE.

OCCASIONALLY I ATTEND SERVICES AT FIRST Unitarian Church in Salt Lake City. . . . The minister there, Richard Henry, is one of the most thoughtful, well-read, and insightful observers I am aware of. I know I can count on coming away from one of Henry's soft-spoken sermons with new ideas, fresh perspectives, and stimulating personal challenges. On a recent Sunday, I was not disappointed.

As the concluding part of his sermon, Henry offered a meditation that . . . expressed a number of thoughts that were floating in my subconscious but which I had never integrated mentally or expressed verbally.

At one point, Henry prayed that all of us might have the good sense to “save us from going around the world to find what is all the time at our own door.” How often, I thought, do I become so engrossed in what is happening in the world at

large that I lose sight of my own thoughts and feelings, the relationships I have with family and friends; or, simply forget the little joys and satisfactions that are as much a part of daily life as are the too frequently remembered distractions and frustrations.

How often, I mused, do I fill my cup spiritually, emotionally, and practically from the reservoir of support and concern I find in the people closest to me. And, to continue the metaphor, how often do I carry water back in the jar of daily experiences to replenish that reservoir? And more than that, do I adequately appreciate the love and support I have come to expect from those people who form my community? . . .

In concluding his meditation, Henry offered a word of caution that we refrain from trying to help others in such a way that inhibits or weakens their own independence:

Deliver us from having a conscience without sympathy, a conviction without tenderness, and a critical spirit without imagination. Forbid that we walk among men with the strength which only makes others conscious of their feeble knees, that we clothe ourselves in the virtue which only makes others conceal their stains, or that we carry our light only to blind others on the way and cause them to stumble. . . .

The previous night, I had seen the movie *Gandhi*, and that experience, perhaps, gave Henry's meditation a particular resonance. . . . For me, the message of Gandhi can be expressed in several general concepts. One is that we can make love triumph over hate and good over evil. Another is that we need to simplify our lives and realize that consumption, possession, and wealth are not as important to our well-being as we think. And the Gandhian approach emphasizes that we must realize the need to live not only more simply but more in balance and harmony with nature.

But, the central theme of the teachings of Gandhi is the power of non-violence. In one moving scene, row after row of unarmed Indians march into the raised clubs of British soldiers. As each row is beaten brutally, another confronts the soldiers. Ultimately, the Indian forbearance shamed the British and helped to bring an end to their rule.

Today, the Gandhian view that nonviolence, not massive weapons and military power, will make us secure is rejected by those in political power. And yet, as we invest so much of our resources in armaments, perhaps we should reflect on the words of Gandhi: “Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapons of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.”

In the Articles of Faith, Joseph Smith wrote that if there is “anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.” On a Saturday night and a Sunday morning I gleaned some new understandings—from a contemporary Unitarian writer and from the film portrayal of a Hindu religious leader. It was a fresh look at an old paradox—how do we nourish ourselves and still reach out to nurture others? Perhaps a beginning to understanding that paradox lies in Henry's concluding words. Grant us, he prayed, that we might have the ability and strength to “love more nearly as we pray.”

Margin Notes

Sunday School

DIFFERENT WELLS,
DIFFERENT WATERS

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)

IN GENESIS THERE ARE TWO IMPORTANT STORIES OF women meeting men at wells, the story of Rebekah, who meets the servant of her future husband Isaac at a well (Gen. 24) and the story of Rachel, who meets Jacob at a well (Gen. 29). The New Testament parallel is the story of the Samaritan woman who meets Jesus at Jacob’s well near the town of Sychar and is offered living water.

The beginning of Rebekah’s story is similar to that of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at Jacob’s well. Jesus asks for a drink just as Isaac’s servant did, but the woman’s answer shows an important deviation from Rebekah’s story—she expresses surprise that Jesus, a Jew, would ask for water from her, a Samaritan. For early Christians familiar with the well stories from Genesis, the implication is clear—Isaac’s servant travelled long distances to find a woman of the correct lineage suitable for marriage to Isaac, but Jesus is deliberately communicating with a woman of the wrong lineage. Early Christians would have surely recognized the implications of this change to the archetypal story—Jesus came to all people, not just to the Jews.

The parallels continue. When asked for water, Rebekah generously draws water for Isaac’s servant and his camels and is rewarded with gold bracelets and earrings. Far from eagerly drawing water, the Samaritan woman is intrigued that Jesus would ask her for water at all and even more so when he tells her that she should be requesting living water from him. She asks if Jesus, who has nothing to draw water with, has special powers and is somehow greater than their father Jacob who drank from the well (thus obliquely referring back to the well stories in Genesis). The woman has drawn no water for Jesus—she has not really earned a gift as Rebekah did, but Jesus offers her a gift anyway, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again,” he tells her, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” In their discussion of Jesus’ special kind of water, the ordinary water is forgotten. In these stories, both men offer gifts to the women, but Jesus’ spiritual gift of living water is infinitely more valuable than the servant’s concrete gift of gold jewelry. And since Jesus has received no ordinary water from the woman, his is a gift of grace.

It is also interesting that the Samaritan woman and Jesus discuss marriage, since in Rebekah’s story, marriage is the express purpose of the servant’s journey. For early Christians, the thought of a marriage in the offing would immediately leap to the minds of early Christians hearing the woman at the well story. The Samaritan woman is not, however, a good candidate for marriage. Far from being pure and known by no man like comely Rebekah, the Samaritan woman—to quote a kindly old gentleman from my Sunday school class—is “experienced.” In fact, she is living in sin. Jesus draws this confession from the woman by telling her to “call her husband and come hither.” When she says she has no husband, Jesus’ response is masterful, at once a rebuke and an indication of his divine powers; he nevertheless does not condemn her, nor does he withdraw his offer of living water. He says, “Thou has well said, I have no husband: For thou hast

Far from being pure and known by no man like Rebekah, the Samaritan woman Jesus meets at Jacob’s well is “experienced.” And because Jesus receives no water from her, his gift is a gift of grace.

had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”

A short theological discussion between Jesus and the woman follows, in which she indicates that in spite of her impure life, she is a woman of faith: “I know that Messias cometh which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.” At this point, Jesus reveals to her what he tells with certainty to no other person: “I that speak unto thee am he.” In every other reference to the possibility that he is the Messiah found in the Gospels, Jesus speaks more obscurely; only to the sinful Samaritan woman does he baldly reveal his true identity. Being Samaritan and despised by Jews, she is not expecting a political Messiah who will free the Jews, but one who will reveal all things. Jesus does not exactly reveal all things to her, but he gives her a glimpse and an invitation by offering her living water. She proves her worthiness of his proffered gift by rushing off to tell of her marvelous encounter to the people of nearby Sychar, people who must have been surprised at the transformation of a woman doubtless notorious in their community, and they consequently follow to hear Jesus’ message. In her rush to spread the good news, the woman leaves behind her water jar. She has entirely forgotten her physical thirst.

Special Supplement

Rebekah and Rachel both encountered men at wells who were able to make them Biblical matriarchs and mothers of nations. They have been honored throughout the ages as few women will ever be. The impure Samaritan woman who encountered a stranger at Jacob's well nevertheless received a more valuable heritage—one available to all women and men who believe and have faith.

MERINA SMITH
La Mesa, California

Rest of the Story

MATTHEW'S MOSAIC

MANY CHRISTIANS, INCLUDING MOST Latter-day Saints, believe the birth narratives of Jesus found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to be literal history. Although the accounts are often contradictory, Christians have managed to amalgamate them into what we hold to be a historical recounting of Jesus's birth. But are these events truly historical, or do the various tellings also suggest theological intent? Let's look at Matthew's writings.

Scholars have long recognized that whenever possible, the author of Matthew paints Jesus in Mosaic colors;

By having Jesus quote scriptures in the temptation narrative that his contemporaries would immediately recognize as words of Moses, Matthew effectively depicts Jesus as God's perfect son, the one who succeeds in the exact ways the entire house of Israel failed.

Matthew wanted his audience to see Jesus as a modern Moses and deliverer of the house of Israel. For example, whereas Luke depicts Jesus's teachings of the Beatitudes and the higher laws of God as occurring on the "plain" (Luke 6:17), Matthew sets the delivery of the "law" on the "mountain" (Matthew 5-7) as a parallel to Moses and Mount Sinai. Another example is the account of the "temptation" in which Matthew expands on Mark's two-verse description. Whereas Mark simply has Jesus in the wilderness "forty days," Matthew has Jesus fasting for "forty days and forty nights" mirroring Moses's forty-day-and-night experience with God (Mark 1:13, Matthew 4:2, Exodus 34:28). Further, in his responses to each of Satan's temptations, Matthew depicts Jesus as quoting Bible

verses attributed to Moses (Deut. 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13). Also, Jesus's three temptations correspond to Israel's three temptations and failures in the wilderness: manna (bread), the waters at Massah (tempting God to demonstrate his powers), and the golden calf (worshipping false gods). By using these passages, which his contemporaries would immediately recognize, Matthew effectively depicts Jesus as God's perfect son, the one who succeeds in the exact ways the entire house of Israel failed.

Mosaic colors are even more vividly shown in Matthew's birth narrative. In Matthew, we read that Herod sought to destroy Jesus, so Joseph took the baby and mother and "went away" (Matthew 2:13-14). In Exodus, we read that Pharaoh sought to destroy Moses, so Moses "went away" (Exodus 2:15; the verb "went away" is the same in both Matthew and the Greek translation of this verse in the Old Testament). Herod decrees that all boys under age two in Bethlehem are to be massacred (Matt. 2:16) just as Pharaoh commanded that every male born to the Hebrews be cast into the Nile. (The verb "do away with" used in Greek Exodus 2:15 appears in Matthew 2:16 where Herod "does away with" the boys.) Herod dies, just as Pharaoh died (Ex. 2:23; Matt. 2:19). Following Herod's death, the angel of the Lord told Joseph in Egypt, "Go back to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead" (Matt. 2:19-20), echoing the words of God to Moses in Midian: "Return to Egypt, for all those who were seeking your life are dead" (Ex. 4:19). That Matthew uses the plural "those" suggests he is quoting from Exodus. Matthew has Joseph take mother and child and return to Israel just as Moses took his wife and children and returned to Egypt (Matt. 2:21; Ex. 4:20).

The Jewish historian Josephus adds a parallel not found in the Old Testament account but nevertheless of interest to our Matthew story. He records that Pharaoh's "sacred scribes" warned him of the birth of the Hebrew deliverer, but the Pharaoh's plan to assure the death of the promised child was frustrated because God appeared in a dream to Moses's father, Amram, and told him of Pharaoh's plan. His child,

Amram was told, would be saved to "deliver the Hebrew race from their bondage in Egypt." And like Moses, Jesus "will save his people from their sins" (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II:9, 205-37).

When reading the Gospel of Matthew and the other three Gospels, we should be aware that, just as today, ancient writers overlaid purported historical events with theological formulations. Our understanding of the life and role of Jesus Christ is enhanced, and our faith much more centered, when we understand that the birth narratives, as well as other major events such as the temptation, transfiguration, and many miracles show evidence of theological construction.

BRIAN H. STUY
Lehi, Utah

Mormon Media ImageCAN YOU HOLD
YOUR ARSENIC?

MANY REAL MORMON POLYGAMISTS ARE ALIVE and well in Southern Utah, but a fictional one has been murdered—first on Broadway, and now on film. The musical *Chicago*, recently released as a movie, includes a darkly humorous musical number in which six incarcerated women explain what led them to kill their respective husbands. “I met Ezekiel Young from Salt Lake City about two years ago, and he told me he was single,” complains Annie, one of the women. “But not only was he married—oh, no, he had six wives. One of those Mormons.” So, in revenge for his deception, Annie poisons Ezekiel. “You know,” she reflects, “some guys just can’t hold their arsenic.”

Righteous DominionLOOKING AT A HEART,
NOT A HABIT

I HAVE SPENT MOST OF MY ADULT CHURCH LIFE slipping into the overflow part of the chapel with my family and having little to no contact with any of our bishops. Other than the fifteen minutes during tithing settlement each December, bishop interactions have been limited to the prescribed handshake and toothy smiles—“How are you, Sister Adair?”—as our paths crossed for two seconds in some hallway.

We’ve had none of the emotional, moral, financial, family, or spiritual problems that sometimes catapult people into a bishop’s office. We’ve had twenty-five years of relative anonymity—except for one bishop, Bishop Rawlings. He got to know my family and me. He learned what was going on in our lives by asking about school and work and goals and family. He shared jokes with us and made us laugh. He even told jokes over the pulpit! But I loved him most because of a conversation we had early one summer evening.

As part of a complete reorganization in the program, my husband Morgan had just been released as a counselor in the Sunday School presidency. Between us, we joked that the change had really come because he had grown his hair long and worn it in a ponytail to church—a definite eyebrow-raiser in our conservative Utah County town. Out taking a walk soon afterward, I happened past the bishop’s home and saw him out on his front lawn. Stopping to chat, I told him Morgan and I “knew” why Morgan had been released. Bishop Rawlings laughed hard and said, “If I’d wanted Morgan to be in the Sunday School, it would have taken more than a ponytail to stop me.” Then he asked if I knew Gordon, the second counselor in the new Sunday School presidency. When I said no, he told me it was probably because Gordon had not been to

church in more than twenty years. He said when he had made the call, Gordon had sputtered and protested, “But Bishop, I smoke!” Bishop Rawlings, who had also gotten to know Gordon and understood what a good person he was, simply replied, “Well, don’t light up on the stand.”

And Gordon accepted.

MARTA ADAIR
London, Utah

To protect their anonymity, the names of the bishop and new Sunday School counselor in the above story have been changed.

COLUMN DESCRIPTION: “Righteous Dominion” is a short column dedicated to the good men and women in the Church who maintain their influence “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned, by kindness, and pure knowledge . . . without hypocrisy, and without guile” (D&C 121:41-42), and for whom people are more important than programs. Please email your reflections on a leader who has touched your life to: <StewartSLC@aol.com>.

—ALAN AND VICKIE EASTMAN (*column editors*)

Costly Apparel

MARKETING THE MIRACLE

AS JANA RIESS NOTED IN HER STUDY OF MORMON kitsch (SUNSTONE, June 1999), Mormon entrepreneurs targeting this brave new LDS market have been multiplying like . . . well, like Mormons.

A recent Internet search has turned up, for instance, The Knee Short Clothing Company <www.kneeshorts.com>. Without once mentioning the words LDS or *garment*, this Utah-based company sells over the Internet longer-than-usual shorts that modestly cover garment lines at the knee.

Our search also led to the discovery of Mission Gear <www.mission-gear.com>. Mission Gear targets missionaries, selling “white dress shirts that feature a revolutionary new technology that renders them wrinkle-free and stain repellent.” Mission Gear also sells “P-Day wear”—that is, T-shirts that allow missionaries to *work* even when not *working*. “Ask me about NEPHI,” reads one of their T-shirts.

Encountering these websites has led us to musings of our own. What LDS-targeted products might we see marketed in the future?

THE COCA-COLA PATCH: Are you trying to kick the nasty cola-drinking habit? The Cola-Cola patch uses transdermal technology to deliver small amounts of caffeine and sugar directly into your bloodstream. Available in Classic, Cherry, and Vanilla flavors. A prescription-strength version, called the Java Patch, will soon be available for *Latte-day Saints*, Starbucks Sisters, and Jack Mormons.

CANES EL PRESIDENTE: This accessory will give you the ultimate patriarchal look. Made entirely of local genuine walnut, *Canes El Presidente* can help you not only find your balance if you suffer from vertigo but also entertain crowds as you take mock swings at your entourage.

THE MARK HOFFMAN CHEMISTRY KIT: Especially designed for kids ages 8 to 12, this kit will let your children to try their own hand at producing priceless Mormon documents. The set comes complete with ink, gum arabic, quills, and a handy microscope that allows children to see the “alligating” effect forming right before their eyes.



Mission Gear sells “P-Day wear” that includes T-shirts with messages such as: “Ask me about NEPHI” (pictured left), “I am a child of God. Do you know who your Father is?” and, in text surrounding a Mesoamerican-looking engraving, “Roughly translated it says, ‘Have you read the Book of Mormon yet?’”

The company boasts that each of its T-shirts is “treated with the Quan-Tex treatment. That means that service projects won’t leave their mark on your T-shirts, just on your spirit.” Pretty fetchin’ cool, elder.

JOE “MISSIONAIRE” BOXERS: Providing all the advantages of RM status but none of the faithfulness required to earn it, these long, 100% white cotton boxers will help prospective missionaries get the attention of attractive coeds at BYU dances when the ladies look for signs of seams near the knee. Instructions recommend you burn them after you are finally forced to reveal to your date that you’re just an 18-year-old freshman.

ENSTONE: Finally a publication that can be safely displayed on your coffee table even when your home teachers come by. *Sunsign* combines the cover of the *Ensign* with the contents of *SUNSTONE*. And, in August, don’t miss the special, um, “General Conference” issue!

WORD BAZAAR

AFRICA RESEARCH PROJECT

Darron Smith, Cardell Jacobsen, Newell Bringhurst

Seeking to better understand The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a dynamic, ever-expanding, international, multiracial movement, a team of researchers hopes to conduct oral interviews of black, African Latter-day Saints in Ghana and South Africa. The Utah Valley State College department of integrated studies has agreed to provide some of monetary and administrative assistance toward the project’s proposed \$12,656 budget, yet this project needs more funding. Please send queries about project specifics or donations to: Attn: Darron Smith, The Africa Project, UVSC Foundations, 800 West University Parkway #111, Orem, UT 84058-0999.

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