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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.

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YEA, YEA



NAY, NAY

PAY ATTENTION TO THE WIRING

...AND CHECK YOUR CONNECTIONS

AS A 48-YEAR-OLD, I loved Tracie Lamb's article, "Wanna Know What Women Want?" in SUNSTONE's issue 157. I have my own career and have raised a large family. What I want is someone all to myself; someone who adores me, who wants to have fun before we have sex.

Lamb is right on about how the *Sex in the City* ethos has hijacked our romantic imaginations. I have said for years that Hollywood's version of intimacy is from a man's point of view. I hate it. I don't want to scratch an itch with another man; I want real intimacy. Glenn Beck would even make my list!

More important, I know men and women are wired differently. We do not approach sex the same way. Each gender has to set aside his or her hunger to see and try to fulfill the other's need. Only then can both be satisfied. Boohoo if some women only want to use a man instead of creating "one" with two.

Kudos to the author!

SHELLY MARTIN
Morgan, Utah

IN RESPONSE TO Tracie Lamb's article "Wanna Know What Women Want?" in issue 157 of SUNSTONE, Stephenie Meyer (and her fans) make a big mistake in equating the obsessive "love" Lamb describes with Mormon values. By linking positive values such as abstinence and fidelity with danger and codependency, Meyer romanticizes a dangerous type of relationship. I would argue that the dangerous obsession of a man mixed with a woman's debilitated self-esteem and belief that her only value is what the man gives her, creates a dynamic that is more dangerous than teenage promiscuity.

We need to be teaching our daughters about their true value and how to develop lasting self-esteem. Once our daughters see the gold in themselves, they will naturally create good values and relationships. We need to see *far fewer* girls and women in relationships with men who exhibit any of the behaviors so blatantly illustrated (and romanticized) by Edward's character.

LAURA BRISCOE LAVOIE
Chicago, Illinois

HONEST JON by Jonathan David Clark



The opening band for the heavenly host.

STEALTH SOUP FOR THE TEENAGE SOUL

I ADMIT THAT I'm not into the *Twilight* series, though I've always admired the book cover designs. However, I found myself more intrigued than I thought I would be by the collection of *Twilight*-themed articles in SUNSTONE's issue 157. I am especially interested in Tyler Chadwick's implication (in "Why *Twilight* Is Good for You: How the Uncanny Can Make Us More Christlike") that *Twilight* could be interpreted as a kind of stealth "For the Strength of Youth" pamphlet. By dressing moral values in "uncanny" vampire clothing, Meyer manages to sneak them through the (usually firmly locked) gates of the teenage mind.

In his book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell argues that teens are more likely to make life choices based on exposure to dramatic, easily romanticized behavior than on the use of logic. Thus, the reason cigarette use remains so consistently high among teens—despite its well-trumpeted health risks is because it has an alluring image.

In the *Twilight* books, Edward and Bella don't actually have sex until after they're married, and these characters are the epitome of dramatic, easily romanticized behavior. It follows then (we hope) that, as *Twilight* catches on, sexual abstinence until marriage will become just as sexy as cigarette use is among our hormone-ridden teenage population. If this is the case, then I'm sure I stand with Young Men and Young Women leaders across the world in saluting Meyer for doing what a thousand and one Standards Nights can only dream of. And making money while she's at it.

RUBEN SWENSON
Orem, Utah

FROM WAL-MART TO UNITED ORDER

I ALWAYS ENJOY reading James Harris's columns on James E. Talmage's life. The article in SUNSTONE 157 ("Beastly Reflections") tickled a little thought I've had in my head for a while.

Talmage reports that many of his brethren thought that labor unions may be a modern manifestation of "secret combinations" or "the mark of the beast;" I used to feel that Wal-Mart sailed under these flags as well—but then the

light of truth filled my mind.

It happened on a day when I saw a Wal-Mart employee waiting in a checkout line, then another eating a sandwich in the in-store Subway shop. I remembered that when I visit my Wal-Mart-employed brother in the Northwest, the great majority of his friends are fellow Wal-Mart employees. He was even trying to date a cashier.

I realized that far from being the devil's kingdom on earth, perhaps Wal-Mart may actually be a prototype for an Orderville-esque United Order.

There is little distinction among employees, all dressed in their blue vests as they move through the acres-large store maintaining order in their various departments. They aren't paid much, but Wal-Mart doesn't charge much for its merchandise either. If the company were willing to provide sleeping quarters in the back, the employees could probably find all the necessities of life right there in the store.

Wal-Mart is certainly trying to take over the world, moving into communities and hiring its workforce from the shops it puts out of business. The stores get larger and

larger, and some are even installing sections for organic food. If events continue this way, it won't be the Kingdom of God but Wal-Mart that covers the earth—everyone a full-time employee. Then all the Church has to do is buy out Wal-Mart and we'll be ready to usher in the Millennium.

Is it any wonder, then, that Wal-Mart spelled backward is Tram-Law? A tram is a train, transporting people down a single track; and in this case, the destination is the "law" of consecration to come.

RON LEAVITT
Albuquerque, New Mexico

VIVA GLENN BECK

I HOPE I don't get lynched on the way out of the magazine today, but I gotta say, I'm glad Glenn Beck is a Mormon.

After returning from my mission, I worked in construction with a guy who listened to conservative talk shows all day long. I was innocent in those days and was quite captivated by Rush Limbaugh's aggressive rhetoric and sense of mission. But then I made the mistake of taking a philosophy class, and suddenly Rush didn't seem so right. We'll he was definitely *right*, just not right. Ever since, I've been leery of people who think they're too right . . . er, correct: righteousness turns me off as much as lefteousness does.

I agree with the commentators critical of Beck, cited in "Mormonism and the 'Glenn Beck' Phenomenon," (SUNSTONE 157). He really isn't helping the Church's image much, and a lot of what he says goes against my understanding of Church teachings. However, I think Beck's extreme-right ethos has laid the groundwork for left-leaning Mormon figures to take the stage.

In his book *The Angel and the Beehive*, Armand Mauss points out that the Church has always been in the process of finding its balance, leaning alternately in liberal and conservative directions. Beck has brought such a significant weight to the right side of the Church's balance that I think everyone will be relieved if we can get some weight on the left. There may be room now for a Mormon commentator to go public with stronger left-wing politics than ever before and still find an accepting—even welcoming—church.

Or perhaps Beck was sent to us to balance out Harry Reid?

MARSHYLL WELLS
Omaha, Nebraska

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