

Letters to the Editor

continuing dialogue on mormonism's negro doctrine

The following are representative of the responses we received to the discussion of Mormonism's Negro doctrine in the last issue. One more extended response is included in Notes and Comments.

Greatly pleased with the last issue. Lester Bush's article on the blacks and the priesthood was by far the most enlightening piece I have read to date. It arrived very conveniently three days before a planned discussion of the subject in my Elders quorum lesson. My only problem came when one of the members of the quorum questioned the validity of my source, since *Dialogue* is not an "official Church publication." I am saddened that many members of the Church still consider this excellent forum for dialogue on the many issues that confront the Church as a subversive publication. My feelings echo those of David Robins in his letter (Spring, 1973) concerning the social acceptability of *Dialogue*. I do hope this can be rectified without damaging or watering down the present quality of *Dialogue*.

Roger V. Stevenson
Ashland, Oregon

I can't resist the latest flier on current subject matter (the Spring 1973 issue), so am saving grocery money and will enclose a money order for a subscription whenever I reach the \$10 mark. I can rationalize the Book of Mormon's rather 19th century Presbyterian language to my non-member friends and myself, but never have come to a way to even *discuss* the Negro issue.

I'm off to another macaroni casserole.

Mrs. Douglas H. Fraser
Sierra Madre, California

If I were asked to summarize the last issue of *Dialogue* featuring a history of Church Members' attitudes towards blacks, it would run about as follows:

The Prophet Joseph appears to have given reluctant approval, *ex post facto*, to an

expedient decision by the Missouri brethren (the Prophet was then living in Ohio) to withhold the priesthood from slaves and possibly all blacks in that state "for a time" because of local tensions. Further—as the question had been raised, and national as well as Church members' feelings were inflamed on all questions of race—the brethren, once reunited in Nauvoo and subsequently in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, were unwilling to come to grips with the "Negro problem." So, in the absence of *positive* direction, a negative rationale developed.

Existing *practice* was rationalized and mythologized into a pseudo-doctrine. Although it has been generally assumed that the prophets of the Church, in sequence, have not received any revelation countermanning current Church practices and beliefs with respect to blacks, the issue is much more significant. It appears that none of the prophets have received *any* revelation explaining or supporting the "doctrine" and have interpreted this silence as the Lord's acquiescence. In short, the Church position reflects a general ignorance of and lack of concern with the subject and is distinctly a negative rather than a positive stance.

Has *Dialogue* received any substantive rebuttal to any of this? Have the editors been excommunicated? Has general apathy among Church members verified the assessment? Is this the end of the discussion?

Carlos Whiting
Silver Spring, Maryland

- 1) No.
- 2) No.
- 3) Yes.
- 4) We hope not.—Ed.

I would like to add an "Amen!" to all the expressions of gratitude voiced by readers which were published in the most recent issue. Whatever you do, don't stop publishing! If you're really in trouble financially, let it be known. I can increase my bi-monthly contribution if

necessary. However, you need to let us know your needs first.

Once again, let me say how grateful I am for *Dialogue* and how much of an aid it is to me personally in living the admonitions contained in D&C 88 and the Thirteenth Article of Faith. The most recent issue with its article on the history of the Negro policy of the Church and commentaries thereon is indeed an answer to prayers I've offered to the Lord now for the better part of fifteen years.

Kent Olson
Red Bank, New Jersey

I want to thank you for the article on blacks and the priesthood by Lester Bush published in your last issue. His historical perspective was helpful and the questions he posed very provoking. It struck me as odd, therefore, that not one of the individuals called upon to respond to the article addressed himself to those questions.

Dr. Nibley's response was perhaps the most disappointing, probably because I've always generally admired both his scholarship and his logical thinking. It was disappointing to find him ignoring the question where his scholarship could do us the most service—the validity of the claim that Negro people are descended from Ham—and presenting a rationale for current Church policy that can only be characterized as strange. Somewhere between his reading of Kipling and his perusal of an old anti-women's suffrage tract, he has latched onto the idea that the priesthood is such an "onerous burden" that it may be better if a person never receives it. This is certainly an aspect of the priesthood that no one ever discussed with me prior to any of my ordinations. Instead, my leaders have always focused to the blessings of the priesthood such as ministering to my family, preaching the gospel, and receiving the blessing of the temple. I wonder if Dr. Nibley is willing to lay these down along with the onerous (white man's?) burden. In view of his other convictions, I also wonder if he will be backing Senator Brooke or Representative Chisholm for President in 1976.

Dr. England's response was nearly as disappointing. He began by stipulating that there was no valid rationalization for our present practice—that it was indefensible, our cross to bear. (Missionaries have heard similar responses from investigators who were confronted with their church's untenable view of the Godhead. They say it is illogical but they accept it anyway.) He then proceeds to provide yet another rationalization—his own! His is interesting in that it reverses the criticism often leveled at the Church—that we blame our prejudice and discrimination on God. Dr.

England proposes that God can justifiably blame us for His failure to end prejudice within the Church. I find this unsettling, to say the least.

Those who support current Church policy say the Lord has been silent. For myself, I believe He has spoken often and we have disregarded it. For example: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him" (Acts 10: 34-35); "We believe that man will be punished for his own sins and not for Adam's transgressions" (Second Article of Faith); "He denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female, . . . and all are alike unto God" (2 Nephi 26: 33); "Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature . . ." (D & C 68: 8).

The Lord's will seems clear. When will we implement it?

Jim Despain
Salt Lake City, Utah

Enclosed is \$10.00 to cover the cost of one year's subscription. Though I had requested cancellation, my first copy came anyway and I read it. So of course I should pay.

Further, Hugh Nibley's response elevated the value of the issue considerably.

Ralph Finlayson
Walnut Creek, California

Thank heavens for Brother Nibley! He's answered the critics of the Church once again in his masterful response to Lester Bush.

Mary Fielding
Salt Lake City, Utah

In his response to Lester Bush's article on Mormonism's Negro doctrine, Hugh Nibley says that Bush's study seems "strangely irrelevant the more one reads it." I wonder if Nibley would place his own scholarly studies in the same category. Both are irrelevant only if one considers that the search for historical truth has nothing to do with the search for spiritual knowledge. And if the excellent and extensive work of Bush is irrelevant to our understanding of the Negro question then the thousands of words Nibley has written about the Book of Abraham are irrelevant to our understanding of the Egyptian problem.

Nibley's statement contains some of the best things he has written (especially the personal insights) as well as some of the most absurd. I will comment on only a few of his points.

1) Nibley says that while the leaders of the Church have not understood why the Lord placed limitations on the Negro, they have

nevertheless produced various explanations for these limitations. It isn't clear if Nibley thinks these "various explanations" are correct, but he has misread Bush if he concludes that the brethren have always felt that the limitations were right. As Bush demonstrates, there has been a good deal of debate and controversy in the councils of the Church on this matter, with some general authorities questioning the validity of the doctrine.

2) Nibley quotes President Joseph Fielding Smith to the effect that members of the Church are bound to accept the teachings of the general authorities "unless they can discover in them some conflict with the revelations and commandments the Lord has given." As Eugene England's article points out, the Church's Negro doctrine is in conflict with the teachings of Christ as contained in ancient and modern scripture. Like England, I am appalled by the treatment of blacks as less than human and less than full brothers in Christ that one sees in the history of our Church. How can Brigham Young's racism be acceptable in the context of the Christian ethic?

Nibley is right when he says that we should consult our feelings as well as our reason. My reason has an easier time with the Negro doctrine than my feelings do. And that is why my "noble feelings and impulses" are not at rest over this matter, for in my heart of hearts I cannot accept the Negro as an inferior child of God, which is, for all of the Church's and Nibley's rhetoric, what he is considered in Mormonism. When black sisters are instructed to sit in the back of a chapel to keep from offending white sisters it is clear they are not considered equal.

3) Citing C. S. Lewis, Nibley suggests that "it is the very contrariness and even absurdity of the Christian teachings that provide . . . the highest proof of their divinity." While some of the teachings of Christ seem absurd to the world, they don't seem absurd to those who accept them. The idea of turning the other cheek may seem like madness to the world, but not to me, for I have tried it. The Gospel has its own logic, and for me the Negro doctrine does not fit that logic. It is absurd to the world *and* to me.

4) Nibley says that the leaders of the Church are embarrassed by the Church's doctrine on blacks and "refuse to put their own opinions forth as revelation" on it. Although they are certain that it is right, he says, "none claims to give definitive rational or scriptural justification for it." Again, I wonder if Nibley and I read the same article. Bush demonstrates that while some of the brethren have been puzzled or embarrassed by the doctrine, most have not, and many explanations, especially since Brigham Young's time, have been put forth as definitive rational and scriptural justifications for it.

5) I find my greatest agreement and disagreement with Nibley when he gets into a discussion as to what the priesthood really is. Nibley is right in suggesting that most priesthood bearers do not understand the conditions by which they retain priesthood power, but he is clearly engaging in sophistry when he says that "withholding the priesthood is supposed to be an unkind act because it deprives a fellow-man of a thing of social value, a measure of status and dignity in the Church." That isn't why I want the Negro to hold the priesthood: I want him to enjoy its *blessings*, not its social status. I want him to know the joy of taking one of his children into the waters of baptism, or laying his hands on the head of his son to confer the priesthood, or feel the healing power surge through him as he heals the sick, or feel the sweetness that comes from being washed and anointed in the house of the Lord. Maybe for Nibley the priesthood is only "'an onerous burden,' a load to be borne, work to be done and nothing more," for which one receives glory hereafter, but for me it is also a great gift that bestows *present* joy and even glory—if one does not seek for it. Nibley asks, "What is so bad about serving, in the light of the Gospel?" Nothing. But serving *with* the priesthood and with the favor of the Church and in a context where one is accepted in full fellowship is different from simply serving and being thought of as someone who must serve to fulfill a curse.

Nibley's argument reaches the height of absurdity when he says, "If we really took the Lord's teachings seriously, we would be envious of the Negroes." Perhaps that's the kind of thinking that comes from being at B.Y.U. and only reading about blacks in the newspaper. I grew up close to a ghetto in New York City, and there is no way that I would ever want to change places with *any* Negro I have ever known, in the context of the world or the gospel. Perhaps it is a sign of my weak faith, but I find it difficult enough to live the gospel as a middle-class, white American priesthood holder. Without the priesthood and without the fellowship of my fellow saints, I am not sure that I would have the strength to endure.

I suppose the Negro problem (a misnomer, since it is really a *white* problem) would be easier for me to take if I could see some cognizance on the Church's behalf that there is no connection between the doctrine (for reasons known only to God the Negro cannot hold the priesthood) and the ethic of Christ (we must treat all men as our brothers). I can accept the fact that the Lord may have His reasons for withholding the priesthood from blacks that we cannot understand, but I cannot accept as His will the fact that the Church is so silent on the problems of racial inequality or that it seems so willing to tolerate racism

among its members. That racism is no figment of my imagination; it is well documented. There are official proclamations from time to time about equality, but there is very little that is concrete that filters down through the priesthood and Sunday School lessons that instructs us to accept blacks as equal human beings.

I appreciate Nibley's testimony of the doctrine. Unfortunately I don't share it, although it is not for want of trying. Therefore, as he suggests, this matter continues to be a test of my faith, hope and charity—my faith in those I sustain as prophets, seers and revelators, my hope for my black brothers and sisters, and my charity for my fellow saints.

Seymour Smith
New York City

What a sneaky way to push me into subscribing again to *Dialogue*! I am glad, though, for I have missed it, and have meant to subscribe again. Besides missing it, I would feel terrible if the magazine did not survive, and I had not done my small share in supporting it. In addition, I have a beloved son-in-law who recently gently chided me because I had supported another magazine I wanted to see survive, and had not subscribed to *Dialogue*.

Some time ago, while I was still working, a customer found out that I was a Mormon, and asked me about the attitude of the Mormons on the Negro question. When I tried to explain, I found myself in tears. I was embarrassed at the time, but have decided, in retrospect, that evidence that a Mormon really cared about this problem to some extent changed this particular person's attitude about Mormons themselves.

Please send the most recent issue as soon as possible. I will look forward to having *Dialogue* again.

Rebecca J. Welker
Estacada, Oregon

Lester E. Bush's article, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," is excellent. It seems to me that the Negro Doctrine is the most difficult problem facing the Church today. Dr. Bush's article should help us understand how the problem has developed.

Members of the Reorganized Church like to point out that there are black men in its priesthood. However, we Reorganites tend to overlook that we deny a much larger segment of the human race the opportunity to hold the priesthood. I see no difference between denying the priesthood to women and denying it to blacks. Both practices seem absurd today.

William D. Russell
Graceland College
Lamoni, Iowa

Mr. Russell was co-editor of *COURAGE* (an independent RLDS quarterly) until it ceased publication this year.—Ed.

by study and by faith

Since *Dialogue* is the Cream of Mormon expression, it is to be hoped that your forward comment in the Letters to Editor department of the last issue (Spring, 1973) is not an indication that *Dialogue* is going to be watered down until it is socially acceptable to the many LDS who are satisfied with the skim milk diet usually found in controlled Mormon publications.

God does not require us to place blind faith in anything so fragile that it could be shattered by study and dialogue, for God repeatedly placed "study" before "faith": "seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88: 118). God commanded, "Study and learn and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues and people" (D&C 90: 15). When the Prophet Joseph dedicated the Kirtland temple, he reaffirmed the revelation from D&C 88 quoted above.

Our search for truth and wisdom is not limited to the reading of the scriptures, or Church controlled publications.

God's revelations to diligently seek wisdom by study and faith agrees with Paul's admonition to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

Our 13th Article of Faith states that "we believe in being honest and true"; that we follow the admonitions of Paul; and that "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."

We cannot be "honest and true" unless we accept truth, wherever it is found, which includes *Dialogue*; and we can not be "honest and true" unless we denounce error, even when it is found in official Mormon publications.

If *Dialogue* would like a factual study pointing out some of the errors that are blindly accepted by unquestioning LDS readers simply because they appear in Mormon publications I will be glad to prepare it.

Since the intent and purpose of *Dialogue* is in harmony with the revelations of God, and our 13th Article of Faith, every LDS should appreciate the chance to "study" the much needed articles found in *Dialogue*.

Lucille Young Hyler
Sepulveda, California

another stress point in mormon family culture

I read with enjoyment Harold T. Christensen's article on the stress points in Mormon family culture. It is always nice to see agreement with one's opinions (particularly Brother Christensen's sections on guilt-laden premarital sexuality, overemphasis upon authoritarian control, and youthful marriages), especially considering the number of times in the past few years I have been told by local Church leaders in various areas that such opinions are totally invalid, the Mormon milieu provides only positive pressures. I had not previously considered the two additional points made by Brother Christensen, a pattern of terminal petting and an unrealistic approach to family size, but in looking back over Church members I have seen in my role as a professional counselor, I can only wonder now why I had not.

In addition, however, I would like to suggest another great contributor to stress in Mormon family culture, the prominent goal of temple marriage. Rather than being considered a goal among many goals leading to the Celestial Kingdom, temple marriage seems to be a terminal goal for many. Parents judge their success by whether or not their children marry in the temple—MIA teachers continually stress the goal of a temple marriage rather than realistically emphasizing the many problems and adjustments that come after marriage, even a temple marriage. It should come as no surprise to us then when, after achieving this goal of temple marriage newly married couples and many not so newly married feel cheated or let down when they discover that they are still only human—that they do have problems and disagreements that have to be worked out—that a temple marriage doesn't carry a guarantee of immediate and eternal bliss and harmony in the home. This attitude is also evident in the advice given by some bishops to those couples not married in the temple (often those converted to the Church after marriage) who are having marital problems, i.e., to "get things in order so you can go to the temple." Yet by getting things in order the bishops don't refer to getting family problems resolved *per se* but to meeting the check points of a temple recommend such as word of wisdom, tithing, etc. Presumably (and couples I have counseled counted heavily on this presumption) marital happiness would come automatically after the temple sealing. But the same spirit doth possess the body, etc. and a temple sealing of an already disharmonious marriage often provides additional stress to the marriage.

This goal is analogous to the "Prince Charming found her and they lived happily ever after" concept promulgated for so long in book and song, but the goal of temple marriage is much more overtly preached and be-

comes a concrete promise to many Mormons.

The other side of the picture—the couple who have not been married or sealed in the temple—is also under a peculiar stress because of this goal. Since they have not achieved the goal then they just aren't as successful as those who have reached it—they just can't expect to have as happy or as successful a marriage—and often rather than the couple then working together in a positive manner to obtain a temple sealing of their marriage, they think of themselves as losers from the beginning. And here we have a handy rationale to cover any problems that may arise in marriage.

This then appears to me to be another stress on Mormon families that needn't be there. If we emphasize the ultimate goal of the Celestial Kingdom and include temple marriage as one of the many steps toward that goal, we are less apt to build unwarranted expectations and beliefs—and hence stress on the Mormon family.

Linda Q. Jones
Norman, Oklahoma

mormons' home companion

Need *Dialogue* so! It seems to arrive just when my husband and I feel most alone in the Church. Would so love to support you with more than our subscription. Promise to as soon as I finish law school.

Molly Bennion
Houston, Texas

proverbs 21:9

The following was received in response to Victor Cline's note on women in the Winter 1972 issue. Cline, who fears that this dialogue may go on at least till the millennium, offers a response.

Dear Victor:

Is it really clear to you that God is male? I find that fascinating. As I understand Mormon doctrine, nobody gets there alone. Both male and female are told they may achieve Godhood, but only together. Two become one in mind, in spirit, and in flesh. We may talk about "male domination of the Church" or the "strong position of the male gender" on Earth, but I would be somewhat more cautious about assuming such a condition in the Heavens. Joseph Smith had some things to say about those who confuse the priesthood with domination and power.

As for the assumption that Eve's curse dooms women to an eternally subservient role, I would call your attention to the atonement. I see no more reason to assume she is consigned to eternal subjection than that Adam

is cursed with eternal sweat. Even on earth she is told to obey her husband *as he obeys the Lord*, a commandment that calls for spiritual, intellectual, and moral vigilance by both. Because her obedience is conditional, it checks rather than licenses his authority.

I find it interesting that Mormons who deny traditional interpretations of the Fall so readily accept traditional interpretations of Eve. If you read on to Moses 5, you discover Adam and Eve rejoicing in their transgression. Though Adam apparently officiates in offering the ritual sacrifice, Eve participates in receiving revelation (verse 4) and in expounding doctrine (verses 11, 12). I have often been tempted to read her reaction in verse 11 as gladness not only in the doctrine but in Adam's having finally caught on, but that may be going too far.

On a more immediate level, anybody who has ever worked on an MIA activity committee knows that men do not dominate the Church. The priesthood is as likely a spur to lethargy as a badge of superiority—a conclusion supported by your reference to all those sad women whose husbands won't "honor their priesthood." Because we don't know why men were given the calling to preside, I don't think it any more reasonable to assume they deserved it than that they needed it.

It is refreshing that you didn't bring up the priesthood-motherhood dichotomy, which does get tedious, especially when embellished with unestablished corollaries about the nature of men and women. There is something to be said for this concept, however. Women will probably continue to have babies, just as men will undoubtedly continue to hold the priesthood. But for either to assume he can exercise his calling without significant input from the other is folly. Men may try unisex leadership ("dominating the Church") but I doubt if they do it with God's blessing.

You ask whether Christ or "former leadership, tradition and 19th-century mores" are responsible for women's position in the Church. It seems to me that any thoughtful Mormon recognizes that the Church is *both* of God and of men. It is sometimes very difficult to determine where one leaves off and the other begins. I offer my interpretations of Mormon theology not because they are better than yours, but because they are different. I suggest that the so-called "secondary position of women" might be added to the "questionable" rather than the "clear and apparent" category in your concept of Mormonism. Perhaps what we need is less theorizing and more experimenting. And perhaps more listening as well.

I am surprised that you have heard "little in the way of discontent about women's role in the Church." (Don't you read *Dialogue*?) I am even more surprised that you would say

this (of Karen Smith's letter to Victor Cline, Winter 1972) to an intelligent and sincere woman who is obviously discontented herself. Whether or not you meant it, this is just another way of saying, "If these things bother you, you are not normal." I would like to tell Karen that the things that bother her bother me and many of the active, committed Mormon women I know. The problem is not theology so much as confident male explanations of theology. Nobody I know is campaigning to be Bishop. That's not the issue. All we want is a recognition that our role—however defined by scripture—has plenty of room to stretch and to grow.

Men's role, too, needs letting out at the seams. I certainly agree with you that our "youngsters get an overdose of females" and not just in the public schools. How about in Junior Sunday School, Primary, ward nurseries, and in many homes on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights? There is nothing in the New Testament to suggest Christ felt it beneath his dignity to jog babies on his knee or tell stories to little children. Or that there were more important callings for him elsewhere. A few priesthood bearers I know have discovered this. Many have not.

I am interested in your statement that women's manuscripts must compete on the "open market" just like men's. I am sure the openness in that statement was unintentional. It is not so much that women lack the ability to write on Church subjects as that they lack the motivation and the experience. Those women who acquire the credentials valued in the "open market" sometimes get noticed. Not so for those who devote themselves primarily to home, family, and Church auxiliaries. When it comes to commissioning articles or choosing authors of lesson manuals, it seems to me the Church is as impressed with academic titles as anyone else. Perhaps I'm wrong.

I am told the *Ensign* is trying to find women to write on doctrinal subjects. I hope they do. I know at least one editor of *Dialogue* who would like to see more manuscripts on every subject by women. I hope more and more sisters will try, that they will not be discouraged if they are not immediately accepted, that they will have the courage and imagination to discover their own strength. I don't think God places any limit on the potential of women, even if some of His servants do. And I don't mind calling him "Him." I can't imagine our Heavenly Father or Mother worrying themselves about who gets credit for what.

Sincerely,
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich
Durham, New Hampshire

Victor Cline responds

Dear Laurel:

I somehow have a sneaking suspicion that no matter how I respond to your letter that my male gender dooms me to the category or stereotype of being a "male chauvinist _____" (I'll let you supply the last word, there are plenty of pithy ones around). I suspect that if my name were Victoria (rather than Victor) my comments about feminine liberation, women's role, etc. might be perceived somewhat differently by some.

But since the purpose of *Dialogue* is dialogue, for a stimulating exchange of ideas, biases and points of view—I'll throw caution to the winds and respond as honestly and genuinely as I know how.

First, I must confess that I am in almost total sympathy with the points you raise. Your letter seems to me to represent a healthy, thoughtful response to the whole essence of women's role not only in our Church but in Western culture.

As a therapist who works with many women and troubled families I see too many homemakers and mothers with profound feelings of lack of self-worth who all too frequently are self-deprecating and who do not love themselves. And while one sees this in males too, it occurs much less frequently and with less intensity than in females. This creates a variety of serious problems not only for these particular women with a lot of intra-psychic pain, but also for those who live with them and love them. This distresses me. And somehow it has to change. I'm not so sure that men are to blame.

I am personally very rejecting and concerned about those voices in the women's movement who have little use for children, who project the view that children are nuisances and a major barrier in one's path toward fulfillment in the larger world outside one's home. The function of child rearing is denigrated and regarded as basically burdensome, noncreative, etc. Those women who choose the role of mother and homemaker are made to feel guilty, stupid, unsophisticated and being "out of it." Some recent research in this area that I have been involved in suggests that at least part of this vision comes from the lesbian element in women's liberation. And I think it would be extremely unfortunate if their hidden agendas and distorted perceptions of the female role were bought by the majority of their heterosexual sisters. Lest I be misunderstood on this issue, I'm personally all for the development of women's creative capacities, work skills, ego strength, role diversity—but not at the sacrifice of involvement in full family relationships.

Bernice Lott in the July 1973 issue of the *American Psychologist* summarizes very well

the anti-child movement in women's liberation with "horror story after horror story" as she quotes the liberated sisters who debunk the motherhood myth, the agony of having children and who perceive giving birth as a "bad trip." Lott powerfully documents the present strong cultural bias rejecting child rearing. She suggests that childbearing and rearing are now, in our literature and culture, consistently undervalued and held in generally low esteem. It is as though since men don't do it, it can't be important. Mother's Day is derided and laughed at by many of the "liberated sisters." Women who stay home and raise good families and transmit the culture to their offspring are considered next to imbeciles, unemployable and stupid. I personally think this attitude is tragic and unfortunate. I hope the coming generation of LDS women don't get brainwashed by these messages or think that a career will give them total emotional fulfillment. If they do they will be selling their souls (or psyches) for a mess of pottage. What I am suggesting, Laurel, is that women *can* have it both ways if they wish: raise a family *and* develop their creative and work talents in a vast variety of ways. But women can never reach their greatest fulfillment (nor man either, as you suggest) alone. And with regard to ultimate priorities, I hope that the healthy LDS woman puts family before career . . . though with some women both are possible.

Victor

giving eve's ego a boost

Re: your multilogue on woman's role in the Church and the dialogue between Victor Cline and Marvin Rytting on the dangers of romance developing between a priesthood leader and the person (presumably female) seeking his counsel:

I am a sexist. I think men should not deliver babies, unless they show early in life a marked talent for it. They will never experience labor pains and have no vested interest in preventing or alleviating same.

I further think men should not counsel women, certainly not in private. How would the elders like to have to go to the Relief Society President to confess a sin, discuss their moral worthiness to enter the temple, or get help with a delicate problem? Consider, then, the good woman with such a need. She may be shy, embarrassed, hypersensitive about her motives and the way she is received. But she has no alternative, faced with a dearth of female priesthood counselors.

Why not designate women to counsel the women and let the men counsel their own? This will not only give Eve's ego a boost and solve Dr. Cline's problem, but it will save the stakes much time, as the sisters can coun-

sel one another over the dishes, ironing, diapers, etc.

Becky Cornwall
Exeter, New Hampshire

P.S. Considering all you've had to say about women in the Church, I would be interested to know why there are so few women on your Board of Directors and Board of Editors.

See the inside front cover and Notes on Contributors.—Ed.

an entmoot point

I should have known better than to write of Hobbits trusting only to my memory: there are just too many Tolkien nuts like me around. Ben Urrutia, one of the sharpest of them, points out to me that it is Pippin, not Sam, who is with Merry during the Entmoot, and also that Tolkien always writes Middle-earth, not Middle Earth.

My thanks to Ben, my apologies to Tolkien buffs, and good moots to all readers of *Dialogue*.

Marden J. Clark
Provo, Utah

will the real quetzalcoatl please rise?

Enclosed are my 145 pesos for a subscription to *Dialogue*, and (in case no one else has called attention to it) a correction to Dee F. Green's iconoclastic remarks about Quetzalcoatl in the Spring 1972 issue.

The Quetzalcoatl he refers to, born about 800 A.D., was a culture hero. There is another Quetzalcoatl (the son of the first divine couple, Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl) the god of air and life, who took part in the creation of the world. This legend dates back several centuries before Christ, and is very firmly established.

These two characters are frequently confused with one another. In several Meso-American cults the high priests took the name of Quetzalcoatl, which also adds to the confusion. The Quetzalcoatl to which Mr. Green refers was a high priest.

I hope this will restore the good name of Quetzacoatl, for although he may not be Jesus Christ, he certainly had many admirable qualities and was not guilty of the infractions of which he stands accused in the article "Recent Scholarship on the New World Archaeology."

Ano Pratt de Perez
Mexico City

keeping up with the youngs and kimballs

I was impressed the first time Kenneth W. Godfrey repented of his statement that President John Taylor "In the last year of his life, while still on the underground . . . married at

least six additional wives . . ." ("The Coming of The Manifesto," *Dialogue*, Autumn, 1970).

So you can imagine my interest when Brother Godfrey published his second retraction in your magazine (Spring, 1972). Can I be forgiven for suspecting that he is protesting too much?

An examination of his article in which his original statement appeared reveals meticulous scholarship, with every statement documented except one. In the above quotation, he even has a footnote defining the term "underground." And yet he gives no source whatsoever for his statement that John Taylor took six wives in the last year of his life.

To me it seems quite obvious that Brother Godfrey is caught in a trap familiar to LDS scholars: he has quoted from a source which he dare not reveal.

However, wouldn't it seem reasonable, when and if he repents once more, that he add a few details of what isn't so—at least the names of the girls?

Samuel W. Taylor
Redwood City, California

P.S. For his and your information, latest count on John Taylor's wives is seventeen. Never again will I feel inferior to the Youngs and Kimballs.

whitewashing the Tribune

I read with considerable interest the review of "The First Hundred Years: A History of the Salt Lake Tribune" by Jean B. White (Summer, 1972). Upon that recommendation, I purchased the book and was sadly disappointed.

While Ms. White assured me that "those who felt this book might be a 'house history' whitewashing the *Tribune* were mistaken," as I got further and further into the book, it was apparent that "whitewash" was precisely the right word. Considering the wealth of "color" available to Mr. Malmquist on his subject, his book is indeed bland fare.

The book started well enough, using all the polite terms for the New movement, and the later editors of the *Tribune*, but it soon sank in an overwhelming pile of apologies. Reaching the death of Brigham Young by page 44, the reader is left to ponder how judiciously the editor selected his excerpts. Nowhere is mentioned the journalistic field-day that grew out of the Lee trial or the McKean trials.

It is apparent that Malmquist wanted to gloss over the early, and most stimulating, era of the *Tribune* to get his teeth sunk firmly into its present mediocrity. Among the other valuable historical events not covered was the Red Hot address, perhaps the most telling of all the *Tribune's* yellow-journalistic attempts.

Finally the book flounders and falls in the author's personal reminiscences. A whole

chapter is devoted to the Silver Queen of Utah, a story more suited to a Juanita Brooks episode than a critical history of a major newspaper. Amidst all this tear-jerking memorabilia, Malmquist settles the Mormon-Gentile conflict, buries wonderful Senator Kerns and puts the *Tribune* into the Newspaper Agency Corporation.

Amidst this plethora of nostalgia, I asked myself, "How could someone, when dealing with a topic as vital and exciting as the *Tribune*, fail to write a book equally as vital and exciting?" Perhaps the answer to this question, is the answer to a lot of failures in Mormon historical literature: people are afraid to re-expose old battles or conflicts. I'm sure I speak for those who favored the *Tribune's* position, as well as those who opposed it when I say that the whole story needed to be told. All the rivalry and vitriol of that era needs to be presented if we are to understand the pressures and problems of that critical time. Within the context of Malmquist's book, the issues of polygamy and Church political control look like a tempest in a teapot.

It's time Mormon historians started to demand a level of excellence in their writing, if they hope to make a valid contribution to American history.

Steven K. Bergstrom
St. Paul, Minnesota

P.S. The review of Mark McKiernan's "Sidney Rigdon" in the same issue shows that some reviews are attempting to expose shoddy scholarship among Mormon historians.

Joseph Smith's theological descendants

It is most heartening to find a journal of contrary, or at least independent, thinking being published in the ranks of Joseph Smith's theological descendants.

As a continually questioning Unitarian I value and commend your effort to give responsible witness through *Dialogue*. Please count me as a subscriber.

If available, I would like to obtain a copy of the issue containing Mr. Hill's review of Fawn Brodie's revised biography of Joseph Smith, which book introduced me to Mormonism as a fascinating American phenomenon.

R. C. Gagen, Jr.
Hinsdale, Illinois

not all sweetness and light

In recent correspondence you asked if subscribers to *Dialogue* would express their feelings about the future of this journal. I am no prophet, but I do feel that this journal has a definite place in Mormonism. Admittedly, a few of your writers and authors are sarcastic, disrespectful, stupid, asinine and intolerant,

which makes it difficult for some Church people to digest. Most opposition to your journal seems to come from those souls who do not understand that to analyze and evaluate the affairs of men calls for attitudes that sometimes do not reflect sweetness and light. Rather, just the opposite. But that in no way decreases the need for this fine journal.

When *Dialogue* first appeared, I was very pleased that an independent journal for the Mormon community was to be available. My pleasure after receiving all volumes of *Dialogue* has not decreased. This experience is typical of many people I know, who want the channels of Mormon dialogue to increase, not decrease, enlarge not shrivel.

I urge your editors to give consideration to two areas of Mormon thought. First, science and its impact in the Mormon community. Second, I urge the development of a series of articles about Mormon philosophy. Perhaps an article on W. H. Chamberlain, perhaps our first true philosopher, would be a good beginning point.

Enclosed is a renewal slip for my subscription. Please send me more envelopes so that I can give some gift subscriptions.

Gordon L. Wright
Austin, Texas

See the announcement of the special science issue on the inside back cover.—Ed.

they that build the house . . .

If there is a serious threat of *Dialogue's* demise, permit me to suggest that the relatively small group of regular subscribers might be glad to be assessed a specified amount (such as one additional subscription fee) in order to ensure the journal's survival—much as they permit themselves to be assessed a given amount for the ward building fund. Many of us are poor, but maybe there is a brighter immediate future for *Dialogue* in our loyalty than in efforts to increase the readership among the anti-intellectual majority. Moreover, I personally suspect that the desire to increase the base of support could lead to unfortunate consequences in editorial policy.

Robert Ellis Dye
Saint Paul, Minnesota

muckraking among the mormons

The interview with Jack Anderson in the Spring 1973 issue prompts me to take a few shots at the mass media. Anderson isn't responsible for the entire media, but his thinking goes along with the pack. Anderson's weakest argument is his defense of the right of the Chicago *Tribune* to publish the fact that we had broken the Japanese secret code

during World War II. Had this secret been maintained, the Japanese would have sustained continuous military defeats (like Midway) and the war would have been shortened considerably, thus preserving many American and Japanese lives. When one compares their right to publish national security matters with my right (as a G.I.) to *live*, I think I could bear with suppressing the news temporarily!

The profit motive involved in news gathering and reporting needs to be scrutinized the same as in big business. In the past decade, the news media have treated public demonstrations which violated the law as if they were some great moral crusade. By giving favorable publicity to these movements in their early stages, they snowballed out of proportion and backfired, culminating in the election of Richard Nixon and leaving the country in its most polarized position since the Civil War. (Hardly the intended goal.) No doubt the mass media profited in their stories by stereotyping hippies, protestors, young people, Blacks, Chicanos, Mormons, etc. In the later stages of these movements, the media showed their real results in burning cities, explosions, the generation battle, etc. They profited both in *starting* the snowball and then later, in reporting its melting. I never heard Walter Cronkite say, "We'll now turn to the *crime news* with Eric Sevareid reporting on the destruction of government property at *Berkeley*" (People's Park).

It has become more and more obvious in past years that *planned* news leaks from politicians of all shades have prostituted the position of the mass media complex. In deep resentment, they now strike back at Richard Nixon through Watergate. In my opinion, the Democratic Committee at Watergate should be held to the same degree of accountability in public disclosure as Jack Anderson would hold the government and Church leaders. (He indicated that Church leaders should divulge all income and spending, apostles' business salaries, etc.) Every Democrat should always know what goes on in those smoke filled rooms. There should be no information which may need stealing! The business transacted at Watergate should be as open as a school board meeting. In Watergate, the press has made "a mountain out of a molehill" but the sting of being used requires retaliation.

Of course Nixon incited the radicals during his campaign! I was in San Jose during the key incident and there were others too. But it was the gullible Mass Media Complex that

made it into a big story, thus profiting more dollars. They could have ignored these incidents as not being newsworthy. Again, the sting of being used cuts painfully deep but the dollars come in on reporting the stories.

The Mass Media Complex either opposes restraints for national security purposes or else they want to play God in deciding what news does threaten the nation. They all agree with Jack Anderson that a man's sex escapades should not be eligible for reporting. Not true in England. If a politician can't be honest with his wife, how can he be honest with his constituents who are 3000 miles away?

The Mass Media Complex attack on B.Y.U. students did have favorable results for us. In seeing our own culture unfairly attacked, my own teen-aged youngsters rejected all the mores and life styles of their liberal colleagues. This included drugs, free sex, hatred toward their parents, nihilism as well as undemocratic means of bringing about change. To our surprise, we were better off in the end! Jack Anderson and I agree that Church officials do manipulate the members and that they are truly *inspired* with the authority of God, Amen.

J. Darwin Baxter
Fremont, Calif.

P.S. Other publications won't print my term, "Mass Media Complex." Let's see if you will.

Fools rush in.—Ed.

Do more of the down to earth muckraking like the very interesting opinions of Jack Anderson and renew my subscription for a year.

Dr. Donald Freeman
Fresno, California

discovering dialogue

I ran across the Autumn-Winter 1971 issue of *Dialogue* and was unable to put it down until I had read it from cover to cover and some articles three or four times. I hope that the journal is still in existence so I can become a subscriber.

Joe J. Potect
El Paso, Texas