

Letters to the Editor

Juanita Brooks

It is rare to find absolute integrity, complete honesty, and a firm testimony in a Mormon historian dedicated to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Such a one is Juanita Brooks, the historian's historian of our culture. I was most happy to see the recognition given her in your last issue.

I was well acquainted with Ettie Lee, granddaughter of John D. Lee, and she told me that she offered to subsidize Juanita Brooks during the writing of *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, but Mrs. Brooks refused, not wanting to be beholden. Subsequently, when Mrs. Brooks was working (in secret) on *John Doyle Lee—Zealot—Pioneer Builder—Scapegoat*, Ettie Lee feared she might not be able to finish it without help, and offered a monthly salary to enable the author to devote full time to the project. Again Juanita Brooks refused. However, to help research, Ettie Lee hired a member of her family to work at the Church Historian's Office for three years. Mrs. Brooks spent twelve years writing the book, which certainly must be considered a classic of Mormon biography.

One of our most cherished myths, born of our persecution complex, is that anyone who writes an "unfriendly" book is selling out for gold. ("Unfriendly" translates to anything not done in the idiom of a missionary tract.) I have encountered this: the curled lip, and "I suppose it made you a lot of money." Saints firmly believe that New York editors beg for "anti-Mormon" books, and that anyone selling out for gold is assured of \$1-million—not a cent more nor less. As the interview disclosed, Mrs. Brooks made very little from *Mountain Meadows*—I would estimate about 5¢ an hour for the time expended. When her *John Doyle Lee* appeared, I interested a Hollywood producer in the subject as a documentary. He authorized me to offer \$5,000 for motion picture rights. But Mrs. Brooks replied that she didn't own any rights to the book; she'd had to give up everything to get it published. So much for selling out for gold. (The producer dropped the project.) Incidentally, no New York editor has ever asked me for an "anti-Mormon" book, nor has any writer of my acquaintance been asked for this. Quite the contrary; New York would love to supply the Mormon market, but finds it impossible.

So why write about Mountain Meadows

and John D. Lee, if you don't make money and will be branded an apostate? You do it for the same reason you climb the mountain, because it's there. Truth is its own reason for telling. The truth about Mountain Meadows had never been told, and the longer you keep the lid on a mess, the worse it smells. The book is the definitive answer to wild Gentile claims. It, and the biography of Lee, correct a grave injustice done one man saddled with the blame. John D. Lee did not help plan the massacre. He simply obeyed orders, along with some fifty-five other obedient Mormon men of the vicinity.

Incidentally, the two books were an important factor in the restoration of John D. Lee to his former priesthood and blessings. This culminated a struggle that lasted more than a hundred years by the Lee family for justice.

Samuel W. Taylor
Redwood City, California

freedom's just another word . . .

I was appalled to read in the July 18 issue of *Africa News* that a group of singers from my alma mater, Brigham Young University, had toured South Africa and Rhodesia in support of the white supremacist South African military.

The group, known as "The Sounds of Freedom," changed their name to "The Brigham Young University Sounds" because (according to *Africa News*) "it was feared that the word 'freedom' might be offensive [to whites], since it is normally associated with the struggle for black majority rule."

The group performed with the South African Defense Forces Band and proceeds from the concerts benefitted the South African Border Relief Fund and the Rhodesian Terrorist Victims' Relief Fund. According to *Africa News*, "Both funds were set up by whites to support military efforts against African [black] guerrilla movements seeking majority rule."

At a time when so many Mormons are struggling with the Church's policy on priesthood and blacks and are attempting to build bridges of understanding between the Church and the black community, how could the BYU administration and the Board of Trustees (assuming they knew of it) be so insensitive as to approve this tour of BYU and (unofficially) Church representatives?

One can only assume that BYU officials were manipulated into sending the group

(the tour was arranged by a Mormon South African businessman) or that they endorse the apartheid policies of the South African and Rhodesian governments. If the former, then an official statement of apology to the South African guerrillas and explanation to Mormons are in order; if the latter . . . well, we're in deeper trouble than we realize.

Joseph Smith
San Francisco

sunstone

Your readers may be interested in a new journal organized and operated by LDS students and young adults. *Sunstone*, a forum for discussion of Mormon experience, scholarship, issues, and art, will be published four times during the school year, beginning this spring.

The most frequently asked question is, given *Dialogue*, why *Sunstone*? To provide an opportunity for young people and older amateurs to express their views and meet their peers in an atmosphere more compatible with their informal lifestyle and more conducive to their participation—an arena for lively discussion with high student, rather than professional, academic and literary standards. Geared more specifically to the interests and expressions of students and young adults, *Sunstone* sees itself more as a companion than a competitor of *Dialogue*.

To that end, *Sunstone* will publish a wide variety of Mormon-related articles and essays.

Experience—Gospel living in a secular society, the status of single persons in the Church, the early years of marriage and family life, humor, what it means to be “an inactive,” etc.

Scholarship—Church history and doctrine, contemporary American theological thought, philosophy, social and physical sciences, etc.

Issues—the Gospel and social responsibility, Mormonism and world hunger, the Church and non-American cultures (and American sub-cultures), ecology, politics, etc.

Art—photographic essays, illustrations, design, “high art,” music in worship and entertainment, drama, poetry and fiction-writing, book reviews, etc.

Space will also be set aside for questions for your Gospel answers, brief notices to contact researches in similar fields, supplemental material for Gospel Doctrine classes, reports on youth activity from overseas correspondents, and a grab bag of other miscellany.

Organizing committees have been formed to raise funds and manuscripts at the U of U, BYU, USU, Weber State, Stanford, and Berkeley. Others are in process, and we are

actively searching for committed youth in other areas who wish to be involved.

To raise seed money, *Sunstone* has published a Mormon history calendar using photos of pioneers and early Church leaders, Temple Square under construction, polygamists in prison, and old lithographs, and including important dates in Mormon history. They are available for \$6.

Inquiries, contributions, manuscripts, calendar orders, names of potential subscribers and authors, and/or an encouraging word are earnestly solicited. Write *Sunstone*, Box 4200, Berkeley, Ca. 94704.

Scott Kenney, Editor
Berkeley, California

antidote for ennui

After more than fifty years of cultural-habitual-family tied association with the Church, your articles come as a refreshing breeze from over the great waters. Our home teacher recently commented, on seeing an issue of *Dialogue* on my desk, that the Church was not warm to intellectual probing and discussion. I agreed, observing that complete faith and obedience were the requirements constantly stressed and certainly, I added, this type of structure and government is not new to the human race.

I do not regard your work as destructive—on the contrary, it would seem the cloying sweetness of expensive media releases needs some offset, if for no other reason than to relieve the situation from boredom.

May you last, as you say, “until the Millennium!”

Floyd C. Miles
San Diego, California

the poor ye have always among ye

Based on the table provided for the computation of subscription rates, I should come through with a check for about \$2.30! “Being poor is no disgrace, but it’s no great honor either,” as has been wisely observed.

I shall “request renewal at \$10” as the envelope allows, for I must confess to being one for whom “\$20 . . . poses an extreme hardship.”

I initially subscribed to *Dialogue* while on my mission, and had hoped, once returned to the academic world, to be able to monetarily express my gratitude for the many hours of stimulation provided by your journal; but as you might imagine, I jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

Maybe, if you are indeed “publishing . . . until the Millennium,” I’ll be able to express my appreciation with something more than a letter.

Douglas F. Bennett
Salt Lake City, Utah

a bargain

The letters to the editor alone are worth the price of subscription.

Ruth A. Iverson
Brigham City, Utah

a long standing affair

As a long-time *Dialogue* subscriber and supporter, may I commend you on the outstanding recent issue on science and religion. The back cover of the issue was the highlight of my entire week, and the mere thought of it was enough to elevate me from the drudgery of dishes, diapers, or dirty floors and transport me either into contemplation or half audible chuckles.

I found the dialogues with various scientists to be of special interest, and, as usual, I found Douglas Thayer's story exceptional. All together a fine issue, surpassed only by the special women's issue, which remains my favorite.

If I can be of any help or assistance to you with *Dialogue*, please feel free to contact me. I love you dearly, and it has been a long-standing affair!

Lou Ann Dickson
Tempe, Arizona

the loneliness of the long-distance thinker

I am depressed by those genial mentalities who believe that they should develop their talents and abilities but then look with suspicion upon the machinations of their own minds, as if they would lead them astray against their will. I believe that some avoid thinking and searching out the truth out of an irrational fear that if they do so the truth they now clutch within their grasps will prove untrue. It is strange that man, who will stretch his grasp for spirituality to the stars (albeit sometimes on time-worn platitudes, the yearning is still there), will yet shrink within himself lest his thoughts should grope beyond the familiar; as if he could kill reason without injuring perfection!

I have never found a shortage of ideas to explore or new (which is to say, unknown to me) truths to discover. Only the seekers are in short supply. The full impact of the loneliness of my search never struck me until I recently read my first issue of *Dialogue*. When this gift subscription expires you can be certain I will renew.

David M. Sorensen
Hopkinsville, Kentucky

symposium on mormons and the west

On November 13 and 14, 1975, an interdisciplinary symposium on the Mormon Role in the Settlement of the West will be

held at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, as a part of the Centennial observance of the University and under the auspices of the Department of Geography and the College of Social Sciences. Abstracts of papers on topics relating to the Mormon role in the settlement in the West are invited. The following list should be viewed as illustrative of the types of topics rather than exhaustive:

Settlement (including immigrants, expansion, settlement type, architectural styles, etc.)

Economic Impact (including agriculture, industry, mining, etc.)

Exploration and Geographic Knowledge
Development of Transport (railroads, overland routes, etc.)

Diffusion of Technology (irrigation, etc.)

Papers accepted will be published in either the *BYU Studies* or in a volume entitled, *The Mormon Role in the Settlement of the West*. Those interested in either presenting a paper or attending the symposium should contact:

Richard H. Jackson
Department of Geography
167 HGB
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah 84602

The deadline for abstracts of proposed papers is May 1, 1975. Abstracts should be no longer than one double-spaced page of typescript. Information on housing and the program will be sent in May to participants and others who have indicated an interest in attending.

science and religion

Thanks for another superb issue of *Dialogue*. The issue on Science and religion was most timely. One would wish that every teacher from the Mormon ranks would read it and come to mental grips with the problem of what constitutes the basics of our religion and what should be left to scientific study. I find it quite disheartening to observe what is often fed to our young people as religion and doctrine—ideas presumably to save their faith in God and His Church. Why should many teachers of Mormonism feel so insecure in the principles of Mormonism that they reach out and grasp any hair-brained idea or fantasy under the sun to "prove" Mormonism is true? Must we close and seal the minds of our people to protect them from having to come to mental grips with realities?

Yes, I have a knot in my stomach! I have seen too many minds closed by well-meaning teachers who thought they were saviours of the cause. You see, I am a geology teacher and too often have the opportunity to observe these mind sets in action.

I enjoyed very much the articles by Rich-

ard Hagland, Duane Jeffrey, et al.; however, their very scholarly presentations cause me to wonder where I missed the boat. I have never been aware of any conflict between science and religion. I always thought that religion, dealt with "Who did the job and why," while science dealt with the physical world and "what has happened, and how." I didn't know they were the same subject! But, it's my mother's fault! She taught me to not blame religion for everything religionists thought or did, and not to blame science for everything scientists thought or did. I guess I am just naive. I still can't attribute differences of opinion as differences between science and religion. For heaven's sake, let us not blame science and religion for the stupidities of human beings! They only demonstrate conflicts between egos, not of subjects.

Laurence C. Cooper
Southern Utah State College
Cedar City

Diminishing eye power at 81 has delayed my reading of the recent issue on science and religion. The planning of the discussions was superb, and the contributions of generally high-level quality. I congratulate you. I must say, however, that Hugh Nibley's attempt to overwhelm us with his scholarship succeeded in my case. I was unable to face the reading of 13½ pages of footnotes in addition to the 9½-page article.

I was especially delighted with the visit-by-proxy-with my long-time friend, Henry Eyring. It served to recall another such visit some thirty years ago, when, surprisingly, we found ourselves on the train from Chicago to Minneapolis. He was on his way from Princeton to give a lecture at the University of Minnesota; I, on my way home from a meeting in Chicago.

Our common "universe of discourse," naturally, was science and religion. Inevitably, I asked about Einstein. "He's in a fog," said Henry. Indeed, as I recall it now, about the only person in the "clear" was President Heber J. Grant. Henry had no doubt that President Grant was in direct communication with Heaven. About science: "It's a game; just a game." Henry has an amiable way of provoking one to think. I had always thought that man's scientific endeavors were part of his drive toward the ultimate goal of perfection. I am sure Henry believes that also.

A remarkable person, Henry. His reputation as a scientist and churchman is such that he can dispute the word of an apostle that the world is a few thousand years old, and maintain it to be between four and five billion years. He can do this in his charming

manner and get away with it. "May his tribe increase."

Now, may I add my two-cents worth (inflation value, of course) on the main theme? I believe that the conflict between science and dogmatic theology is inevitable, because many dubious principles become imbedded in dogma, and from the standpoint of theology are not to be altered. Historically the classic example is geocentrism.

The hardy souls who challenged that dogma, and who failed to recant, were treated with fire and the rack. There are plenty of other dubious notions in the Scriptures. While deviants and critics are not treated today as violently as formerly, they *are* still "treated."

Science has no messianic quality, but it is a method of finding truth. The scientists can test by experimentation the validity of his hypotheses. In religion we formulate our hypotheses but have no corresponding method of testing. Man seems to be the only creature who realizes that he will die. Yet he has refused to accept the finality of the grave. Instead, he hypothecates the duality of body and spirit, and ascribes immortality to the latter. Furthermore, he hypothesizes God, heaven, hell, the Millennium, and so on. None of these lend themselves to any known test such as we carry out in science. The hypotheses become accepted as fact. Many persons testify that they "know," but others are not able to verify their knowledge, as can be done in science.

Henry Eyring has achieved a comfortable and satisfactory accommodation to and resolution of the conflict. His example will be helpful to many, many others. Still others will have to struggle to find their own solution, if possible, and at the very least, learn to live with the dilemma.

Lowry Nelson
Provo, Utah

thomas f. o'dea

Professor Thomas F. O'Dea died at his home in Santa Barbara, California on November 12, 1974. With his passing the Church has lost a true friend and a dedicated student and critic of Mormonism.

Professor O'Dea had studied the history and contemporary sociological development of the Church for well over twenty years. His interest began after World War II when he joined with other scholars in a project entitled, "The Comparative Study of Values in Five Cultures" sponsored by the Laboratory of Social Relations at Harvard University. The project studied the religious influences on five different cultures—Zuni, Navajo, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Mormon—all located in one geographical area in northern New Mexico. O'Dea was assigned to study the Mormons. Out of this

grew his continuing interest in the religion of the Latter-day Saints. Leonard Arrington has said of O'Dea's writings, especially his dissertation on Mormon values and his major book, *The Mormons*, that "The articles and books published from his research, offer unquestionably the best 'outside' view of Mormon thought and practice now available."

O'Dea's writings have often been controversial and his conclusions have at times sparked heated debates. But few would deny that he has brought one distinctive quality to his studies of Mormonism—an abiding sensitivity to the religious dimensions of life and a determination to view and attempt to understand the phenomenon of Mormonism as first and foremost a religious movement. This above all else will insure a meaningfulness to his studies and elevates him above the rank and file of Mormon critics.

It is obviously difficult to sum up the scope and depth of this man's interests as well as to convey something of his personality. What I consider to be an insightful attempt was made by Professor Robert Michaelsen, of the Department of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, who was a long time friend and colleague of O'Dea. I have permission to quote from Michaelsen's remarks delivered at O'Dea's funeral.

For his colleagues and myself I speak chiefly of the quality of Tom O'Dea's mind. Those of us who knew him well never ceased to be amazed at the breadth of his learning, the brilliance of his insights, the sharpness of his analytical powers. He had a special capacity to see polarities in human experience, including his own, and to hold these polarities in creative tension: sacred and secular, conservation and breakthrough, tradition and change, individual and community, reason and faith, alienation and reconciliation. So he wrote with such keen perception, such accuracy and delicacy of sources of strain and conflict in Mormonism that one Mormon reviewer called his book—*The Mormons*—the "best account and interpretation" yet produced. Thus, in his *Sociology of Religion*, he dealt sensitively with the ambiguities, conflicts, and dilemmas of religion. So also he wrote two slim but major volumes—*American Catholic Dilemma* and *The Catholic Crisis*—in which he penetrated quickly and deeply into tensions, problems and promises within Catholicism. And in one of his more recent works he described our current human situation as one which "harbors within itself both great promise and great threat" (*Alienation, Atheism and the Religious Crisis*, 8).

As he described polarities so he lived himself as a scholar in creative tension between distance and involvement, critical analysis and prophetic utterance. Never conventional, frequently controversial, a man of passion, fierce pride, and firm convictions, yet he had a capacity to change, a keen ability to absorb new knowledge, and a mature appreciation of and commitment to the spiritual life. In a "Concluding Unscientific Postscript" to one of his books he wrote:

To rediscover the relevance of his heritage, man must achieve authentic transcendence and genuine community. Institutionalized religion must contribute to this goal to the best of its capacity. To be relevant today, religion must translate into a contemporary idiom the "foolishness of the cross." By synthesizing joy and tragedy in a new way, man could become at home in his world, even while remaining forever a sojourner and a pilgrim in the midst of his fondest, this-worldly achievement and values. Religion must nourish and sustain an interiority that makes external relationship and accomplishment possible. But this interiority must never lose itself in its products; it must be able to find its own way among the many ways it creates in the world. To be relevant today, religion must support those human aspirations that cry for fulfillment in terms of the modern technological capacity. It must become relevant to the effort toward a more abundant life for man. It must teach not only the appropriateness of justice, wisdom, fortitude, and courage, but it must also bear witness to a faith, hope, and charity rendered relevant to the new world man has made and the new man whose promise it contains. Institutionalized religion and institutionalized learning must strive to beget honesty and transmit seriousness in facing problems, eschewing fixated ideologies and petty interests. Then, spirit and reason will find their own embodiment, for one may still hope that the spirit bloweth where it listeth. Let men learn, in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, to become recipients out of humility and to be grateful for being allowed to listen, observe, and understand. (Alienation, Atheism and the Religious Crisis, p. 188-189).

We are grateful for having had him in our midst. He lived, he loved, and, in deep and penetrating ways, he understood. We are the better for it.

M. G. Bradford
Department of Religious Studies
University of California
Santa Barbara