

# Letters to the Editor

## letters of beliefs

Although I am a charter subscriber, this is my first letter to the Editor. I wonder how many other readers of *Letters of Belief* observed the peculiar lack of specificity with which "L—", the "drifter," defined his new freedom and happiness. For his correspondent the Gospel meant very specific and un-mystical personal blessings and experiences. For him, only imperfect people and an "uninteresting" way of life, which he gladly leaves behind, but for what? And when his specific objections (for example, the Church is "derivative") are flatly met head-on he moves to the easy generality.

In many discussions with friends and acquaintances who have followed L—'s path the same features seem to re-occur. It cannot be coincidence. They scoff at revelation, but have nothing to take its place. They magnify the (often very real) imperfections of Church members and administration, but cannot point out any more perfect system, or better people, on the face of the earth. Their "freedom" from the Gospel is either a license to sin (and Alma told Corianton, and us, just how little that license is worth even on this earth) or an open door to vague and vain empty generalities which profit them nothing. They are not happy and cannot make others happy.

It is a great thing to know not only *what* the light is, but also *where* it is. We have that knowledge. *Dialogue* has done its share in helping all of us appreciate and better use that knowledge when it publishes such an exchange as *Letters of Belief*.

Neil D. Thompson  
New York City

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Those of us who have flirted with humanism and returned to the fold of spirituality can sympathize with "L—" in "Letters of Belief." We can also understand why he doesn't feel what "S—" does. When one becomes inactive, stops praying, no longer reads the scriptures, and stops experiencing the Spirit, the spiritual mind becomes amnesiac. Only when one is in tune with the Spirit do things take on their full meaning and reality. "L—" is happy, he says—but this turns to a pitiable hollowness after a while. Those who think they'll make it in the universe alone are in for bitter disappointment. Maybe it will take a few of Eugene England's Chevrolet experiences—*without* help—to wake

them up. Not just Mormonism but every spiritual path is full of evidence of the great reality—only the blind can't see it. But without light one cannot see, even if one did before.

Scott S. Smith  
Phoenix, Arizona

## hanging by a thread

I appreciate Brother Eugene England's concern about Watergate, but when he writes about Mormons and Watergate as he did, I must strongly object.

According to Brother England, "Mormons, it seems, have always been quite taken with Nixon. . . ." and "we have liked the way he sounded. . . ." Here I must take exception. While many Mormons, including perhaps Brother England, felt that way, he should not include all Mormons. Many of us have never been able to vote for Nixon because he seemed to us selfish, an opportunist, and lacking in commitment to high ideals. Among these people are intelligent and spiritual members of the Church. To us Nixon's abuse of the power of office for his own benefit (and thus to the detriment of others) was simply a continuation, although on a grander scale, of past behavior. Thus Brother England errs when he concludes that all Mormons failed by not responding better than other people, by not speaking out early enough or clearly enough. Many of us tried.

I therefore object to the entire tone of Brother England's article. To suggest that Mormons as a group enthusiastically supported Nixon, were duped and betrayed by him, and should now undergo penitence and an agonizing reappraisal is an absurd oversimplification which offends many of us. I want to go on record as one of the many Mormons who never supported Nixon and who were saddened but not surprised by the events of Watergate. I cannot feel he has betrayed me personally, nor need I wonder how my religious inspiration failed me so utterly in this instance—it didn't.

Grete M. Johnson  
Bloomington, Indiana

## renewal and self-renewal

Here is my \$20 check for another year's subscription to *Dialogue*. I absolutely consume each issue. I am always exposed to so many new viewpoints and opinions. The dialogue carried

on within the journal's pages helps me in my own search for truth and prepares me to discuss many issues. It is very stimulating! The "Letters of Belief" in the Autumn 1974 issue (the most recent one, Mormon Standard Time?) were especially moving. How many of us have gone through similar struggles with friends who become alienated from the Church? Yet somehow the struggle builds my faith; sad and painful experiences often do. I appreciate such articles and all you publish in the journal.

Alan E. Zauche  
Tallahassee, Florida

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I am pleased to renew my subscription to *Dialogue* from the mission field. I want you to know that *Dialogue* has helped me understand many things, including the mission field. Those of us who have been introduced to *Dialogue* wish to thank you for the help that you have given us in understanding, realizing and comprehending that which we have to do.

I am particularly thankful for Brother Carlos Whiting's article, "Some Thoughts on a Rational Approach to Mormonism." I have translated it and am using it with some of our investigators.

Sam A. Kitterman, Jr.  
Herrnstrabe, West Germany

### **"but a very little meat . . ."**

I never cease to be amazed at the anachronistic "progressive" thinking of old-style liberals in science, technology, and world problems. If their arrogant assumptions about how the universe operates don't permanently blind them, perhaps someday they will see things with an open mind and humbly recognize their ignorance. Biologists seem especially prone to this, as the Snows note in their discussion of evolution.

But more to the point, I am surprised that Garth Jones doesn't mention the Word of Wisdom as a partial solution to the world food problem. First of all, coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco all involve crops of no food value when used as they are. But more importantly, the fact that consumption of animal products is ecologically wasteful is now well known. Adoption of a non-meat diet as the scriptures and prophets have advised would solve a great deal of the world food problem. This is now accepted

by every major nutrition and agricultural body—yet resisted or ignored by Mormons. How ironic that we should know a major solution to the food crisis 140 years before the rest of the world, and yet be the last to implement it.

Scott S. Smith  
Phoenix, Arizona

### **truth is reason, truth eternal**

I must say to Teddie Wood Porter—you have spoken the unmentionable but inevitable consequence of exploring the issue of women in the Church. For if we take our musings to their logical, ultimate end, we reach the point of godhood. And if "like-begets-like," then we, as women, shall certainly never become like God the Father. To whom do we turn for our perfected identity? Women in the Church have never had the blessings of a divine being of the same sex as a role model. My first yearnings in this direction occurred during pregnancy. I felt that surely no one could totally understand or explain my deep ongoing feelings like my God-Mother could. Yet, the silent expression of this thought brought visions of patriarchal chastisement. Nevertheless, the questions still remain. I can't help but feel cheated about my lack of knowledge of "Her." I wonder why she isn't allowed to speak, to guide and direct and console her daughters. I can't help but believe that somehow she is different (than male deities), is special, and can offer women something that they cannot get anywhere else. If she is equal in stature and function to God the Father, why is she not taking part in a world and life that for her children is so consequential?

Karen Sorensen Smith  
Fresno, California

### **shocking**

I was shocked to read that Betty Norton was shocked by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's article on women and the priesthood. She says that Sister Ulrich "missed a point" but Sister Norton's letter shows that she missed the point of the article—and badly!

Elaine Young  
Bellevue, Washington