

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

women's issues

Please do something on the naughty women's movement. We need more discussion of *issues* rather than warmed-over historical Ph.D. dissertations.

E. Michael Southwick
Bujumbura, Dept. of State

Note: We are planning an anniversary issue of the "pink" women's issue in 1981. Meanwhile, see Dixie Snow Huefner (Volume XI, Number 1) and Susan Taylor Hansen (Volume XII, Number 2). We are also planning articles on the Sonia Johnson controversy.

I would like to thank *Dialogue* for publishing Susan Taylor Hansen's well written discussion of the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA is an issue which is in need of some honest, open discussion within the Church, and I appreciate your willingness to present in such a forthright manner, a viewpoint which has thus far been ignored by the Church media.

Nadine R. Hansen
Cupertino, California

Susan Taylor Hansen's attempt to help reduce "astonishing ignorance of the basic legal questions involved" in the ERA debate was most welcome, but I found that her essay also caused me to experience some degree of frustration. As a long time board member of my community's League of Women Voters, I have been exposed to many sensible reasons for supporting passage of an ERA. I have also studied (*pondered* might be a better word) statements from the First Presidency and the Relief Society General Board, and have found them to be limited in helping me evaluate this complex issue, at least on an intellectual level. Making a decision on a spiritual level may well be another matter entirely—perhaps spiritual confirmation of the Church's position is a challenge which must be taken seriously by all members. The many ambiguities one encounters when studying arguments from both sides may make such confirmation our only recourse, but I am nonetheless more comfortable when

decisions confirmed spiritually are to some degree supported by the rational.

I have been looking for information that would paint a clearer picture. I would certainly enjoy being able to more sensibly articulate reasons to *not* support ERA passage, in the face of generally sensible pro-ERA argument. Thus I was tantalized by Ms. Hansen's statement that "certainly there are many worthy arguments against the ERA," and by her reference to "meaningful discussion of any underlying moral issues." My frustration stems from her decision to leave these areas dangling. I would be personally delighted to find a more complete discussion of such "worthy arguments," and would particularly enjoy an expanded treatment of the underlying moral issues which are apparently perceived by our church leaders.

Helen Holmes Duncan
Danbury, Connecticut

As I reviewed your recent *Dialogue* reviewing some historical facets of the Negro and the priesthood, I wanted to know if you have published or will publish any research on the issue of women receiving the priesthood within the Church. It is not clear to me whether the issue of women not holding the priesthood is a policy issue or a doctrinal issue. If it is doctrinal, I would be interested in finding out whether or not it is an irrevocable doctrine or whether the Church would consider giving women the priesthood.

Robert F. Bohn
Provo, Utah

I don't favor the ERA as presently constituted. Through the fourteenth and the recent interpretations of the fifth amendments we have enough constitutional guarantees to enforce equality if the will is there to do it. I feel bad that so much energy is being expended in counterproductive measures like the boycott of conventions in states that have not passed ERA—putting supporters and opponents alike in economic jeopardy. I fear that ERA supporters want to be

"dead right" and that passing ERA has become the all consuming ego-involved commitment. I think the commitment ought to be equality and justice.

Mary Jane Heatherington
Lawrence, Kansas

mcmurrin on snell

I have read with much interest and appreciation the excellent article on "The Snell Controversy" by Professor Sherlock (*Dialogue*, Vol. XII, No. 1). The problems generated by Snell's attempt to raise the level of biblical scholarship in the Church Education System deserve to be known by all who are interested in the intellectual life of the Church. Heber Snell was a biblical scholar of very high order and a person of authentic religious piety. Moreover, he was genuinely devoted to the Church. The memory of him as a great man and as a teacher and scholar should be kept alive.

I have only two problems with Professor Sherlock's article on Snell. First, he has written as if Snell were almost forgotten by the time he died in 1973. Actually, after his retirement Snell taught for a number of years in the Extension Division of the University of Utah under the auspices of the Department of Philosophy. His classes were held in Salt Lake City and in several other places. He had numerous students and was widely known and highly respected at the time of his death. Of course, when a man lives to the age of ninety, most of his old friends are already gone, but the memory of Snell and his work is very much alive today.

My second concern with the article is that information on the most interesting things relating to Snell's controversy was apparently not known to Mr. Sherlock. I refer, for instance, to a long session in the early fifties which Snell had with Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith relative to the book on the Old Testament. Apostle Harold B. Lee and I were present as witnesses and participated in the discussion. Mrs. Snell was also present. In some ways, this discussion was the climax of the Snell controversy, but other things of major importance came later.

My point in mentioning what I consider to be the incompleteness of Sherlock's article is simply that I hope that he may be interested in writing a sequel to it and that *Dialogue* may be interested in publishing a second article that would complete the picture.

Sterling M. McMurrin
Salt Lake City, Utah

Note: *Dialogue* is willing.

eureka!

A week ago, I happened across some bound volumes of past issues of your publication in the library at Kansas State University. Of all places in the Universe, I thought it curious to find such a publication here, where the Gentile/Mormon ratio is about 700 to 1. I just had to take a peek!

In twenty minutes of casual browsing through your efforts of the past ten years, I found answers and insights to issues that had quietly captured my thoughts in the five years since my conversion. Things I had never been able to discuss in a meaningful way with anyone. Until now. Your title, *Dialogue*, has a special meaning for me. Your journal is a way of seeing my own thoughts reflected and responded to. I'm sure you realize the importance of the service you provide. I'm grateful to have discovered it.

Please accept my check for the next four issues of your journal. I'm looking forward to receiving my first one, but the time will go quickly. After all, I've got ten years' worth of them to catch up on before then! Keep up the excellent work.

Russell William Hultgren
Manhattan, Kansas

orchids

I have in front of me a copy of the "white Dialogue." The cover reversal was classic. *Dialogue* has special meaning to me.

Nick Eastmond
Logan, Utah

Your life-line continues as the cream-on-the cake, the ribbon-on-the-hat, the elixir of mind progress.

Marc Sessions
Los Angeles, California

onions

After reading the two latest issues of *Dialogue*, it seems fairly apparent to me that there isn't a place in it for material which is a product of personal, individual thought, study and spiritual searching, which is intended to stand on its own merit, the burden of proof resting in the heart and mind of the reader.

Your format is limited pretty much to material which is well documented and cross-referenced, and which is written by qualified persons. This attitude patronizes intellectual snobbery, but it stifles free creative thought. People who really had new ideas were always rejected by their societies as heretics. In our society it is popular to wear the trappings of a thinker, but it is really not popular to think—and "God" is a particularly unpopular subject to think about.

It also seems that the purpose of *Dialogue* is to raise questions, but not to seek resolutions. I am convinced that there *are* answers to the big, basic questions of life, and that finding them is a step ahead of intellectualizing about them.

The incredible arrogance of the Mormon "intellectual" community continues to appall me! The pattern seems to be to take a controversial subject, flash out a number of statistics, references, assumptions and "facts," put together by *fallen* and imperfect men (and/or women), and then challenge *God* (or whoever they are worshipping in his stead) to fit *their* conclusions into *his* picture. It is almost as if their creed were "As man is, God may become—if he gets enough college degrees and does enough research."

Two examples: Duane E. Jeffery's article on "Intersexes in Humans," and S. Scott Zimmerman's book review on "Human Cloning." Jeffery poses questions about the sex of the spirit which inhabits a body of undetermined or mixed sex, as if God were on the spot to adapt his purposes to fit fallen mankind's jumbled up genetic mistakes. Zimmerman wonders how God will manage to find a spirit which will fit the marvel of a scientifically cloned human being. Has it not occurred to him that each one of us comes

to earth with a spiritual entity which is not necessarily harmonious with our genetic entity? And that even if scientists could put together a human clone, its unique spirit would prevent it from being an authentic carbon copy? Men can't outwit God.

It is quite obvious that with all their learning, the authors have not understood very much about God—not even that *he* was not created in our carnal image, but that we once were created in his divine image. We have since fallen into mortality and are subject to forces—unlike God. Even with all the wisdom of men, we cannot overcome these forces. We need a savior! In trying to adjust their interpretations of the gospel plan to fit scientific research, the Mormon intellectuals seem to have missed the most pertinent fact—that God and his Son have figured out and accomplished the atoning sacrifice. The Almighty God is not bound by the limits of our puny experiments! He is GOD!! And we need him. If the scientists will not put God into their formulas, then please let them leave him out of their speculations.

Gay N. Blanchard
Salt Lake City, Utah

culture conclave

Brigham Young University's Departments of Anthropology and Archaeology, Art History, English, Geography, History, the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies and Department of Conferences and Workshops will hold a symposium, "A Mosaic of Mormon Culture," to commemorate the Sesquicentennial. The symposium will be held October 2 and 3, 1980 at BYU.

The symposium will deal with Mormon culture in its broadest aspects—the beliefs, social forms, and material traits of life and thought that are characteristic among members of the Church in any nation, which distinguish them from those who are not LDS.

For more information about the symposium, contact the Charles Redd Center at Brigham Young University.

Thomas Alexander
Provo, Utah