

## LETTERS

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### *Brought Tears*

The other day I had a telephone call from a friend who is a paraplegic, a victim of multiple sclerosis for over twenty years, and a bright, intelligent graduate of Stanford University.

A convert, my friend was first drawn to the Church when she watched a televised College Bowl contest featuring a team of BYU students. As a young mother tied to her home in El Centro, California, she was thrilled by these students' obvious zest for learning. Later, in San Diego, a young friend invited her to church. Again she was impressed. And when the missionaries taught her about life-long learning and eternal progression, she was touched. She had long believed in these principles and in many other aspects of the Mormon faith. So she was baptized in 1964.

My friend has been homebound for several years now. The Relief Society sisters are her good friends, and she loves the people who visit from her ward. But she has been disappointed of late at the discouragement of intellectual pursuits in the Church and at attempts to control the minds of Church members. When she telephoned me she had just read Jack Newell's essay (Spring 1986). The relief she felt had brought tears because the essay so beautifully echoed her own thoughts and brought hope and comfort, as well as the assurance that this was still the church she had joined.

Irene Bates  
Pacific Palisades, California

### *Relief Society Lessons*

I'd like to tell you how grateful I am for publishing *DIALOGUE*. Articles where

members dare to have other opinions than their leaders make me realize that I do have the right for personal thought and revelation. Others about women's role in our church helped me to get rid of this second-class feeling which I always had in church and which really made me feel uncomfortable. These articles supported me in my effort to put my feelings into words.

I often wonder how other sisters implement their knowledge in their day to day life, especially during Relief Society on Sunday mornings.

Do they enjoy the lessons? Of course I realize that individual reactions to the lessons seem to vary with the ability of the teacher. But it's not only a matter of teaching skills, but also of the content, of the way goals are set. Since I am sometimes dissatisfied with both the content and the way goals are set and taught, I would like to share my thoughts with other *DIALOGUE* readers. I would be glad to get responses.

Contemplating the goals of the Relief Society lessons, I dare to say that often I don't have to be taught or reminded to reach them, because I already have. I often feel that I don't learn anything during the lessons. Members have advised me to support my teacher through participation. I have come to realize that the sisters may listen to my comments but often don't understand. It is like talking about algebra with first graders.

I hope I will not be misunderstood. As a returned missionary, I really do know the plan of salvation, as it is taught in those lessons. I'd classify this as a goal for first graders, a goal which is important to reach, but we can't sit in elementary school forever. A class full of people knowing the plan of salvation doesn't make any progress

by talking it over and over again. They could use their time more wisely in discussing specific aspects in groups. Classes designed for new converts could let them receive necessary basic knowledge.

In both cases it would be important to encourage teachers to react to specific needs by using interest-oriented methods like small discussion groups. Members could help each other more easily to ponder over something, before receiving a personal revelation. This plan can help keep all members interested while avoiding a repetition of lessons with the same content. People have to stretch! Psychologists talk about the dangers of undercharging intellectually. This also undercuts the motivation to reach out and learn more.

Sister Joanne B. Doxey mentioned in the March 1985 *Ensign*, "Lessons need to be adapted to the needs of sisters in various cultures" (p. 13). Besides the fact that hardly anyone knows this quotation, most teachers feel insecure in changing lessons. How important it is to do exactly this, shows in the following example: In Germany, our first graders start school in summer. During fall we had a lesson in mother education talking about ways to prepare our children for this big step in their life. The lesson not only did not relate to our country's school year, but we had *only two mothers* sitting there. And their oldest children were three! Although some may have enjoyed the lesson, I doubt that they learned anything.

In cases like this, the needs of the sisters are obviously not met. Teachers have to face the challenge of creating a whole lesson of their own without the help of a guide, since the Relief Society manual has only one goal per lesson. The material should offer suggestions so that the teacher is not left to do it all by herself under the guidance of the Spirit, since most sisters will have problems in "studying it out."

Some mothers have a lot of problems with their children but are never encouraged to talk about it during the lessons. The teachers have to "get through" the manual, as they say. They don't realize

and haven't learned that the pupil should be the center of the lesson, not the subject matter. I don't blame them. They just don't know it, and there is nothing in the lessons that teaches them that fact. The result is that sisters feel bored with mother education. They could discuss their problems during the week but they don't have time to meet and distances are often great.

Since the Relief Society manual is supposed to be a guide, it could suggest a few goals for each lesson. It should stress more clearly that it is to be used only as a guide and should be adapted to individual needs. Building discussion groups would also help each sister to decide where to invest her time wisely. In doing so, sisters would grow in real unity. They would not just sit all together in one classroom *but experience real progress*. I am looking forward to responses.

Susanne Werner  
Ostfildern, West Germany

### *Animal Sacrifice?*

Melodie Moench Charles (Fall 1985) seems to assume that the practice of animal sacrifice will be instituted again in the future and she quotes Doctrine and Covenants 13:1 and 128:24. These scriptures indicate "an offering in righteousness" but do not specify that it shall be by "the shedding of blood." Alma 34:13-14 emphasizes the end of blood sacrifice: "Therefore it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice, and then shall there be, or it is expedient there should be, a stop to the shedding of blood; then shall the law of Moses be fulfilled; yea, it shall be all fulfilled, every jot and tittle, and none shall have passed away. And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written, "The offering of sacrifices as a generally practiced ordinance of the Gospel ended with the sacrifice of Christ; the sacrament became the newly established ordinance

which served the same purpose that sacrifice had heretofore served" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 665). Elder McConkie further states, "To complete the restoration of all things, apparently on a one time basis, sacrifice will again be offered in this dispensation."

To the Nephites the resurrected Savior said, "I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings. And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (3 Ne. 9:18-20).

Wallace E. Broberg, Sr.  
Murray, Utah

### *Charles Replies*

Broberg is correct in claiming that scriptures I cited in the Doctrine and Covenants do not explicitly indicate that the offering will be a blood sacrifice. He is also correct in noting that the Book of Mormon records Jesus as saying that he wanted no more animal sacrifice but instead wanted broken hearts and contrite spirits (3 Ne. 9). Furthermore, both Amulek (Alma 34) and the author of Hebrews say that Christ's expiation ended all sacrifice. However, Joseph Smith said that those who assert "that Sacrifice was entirely done away when the great sacrifice was offered up . . . are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges and authority of the priesthood, or with the prophets. . . . These sacrifices as well as every ordinance belonging to the priesthood will when the temple of the Lord shall be built and the sons of Levi be purified be fully restored and attended to then" (Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* [Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980], pp. 42-44).

Joseph Fielding Smith in *Doctrines of Salvation* 3:94 says: "It will be necessary

therefore for the sons of Levi, who offered the blood sacrifices anciently in Israel, to offer such a sacrifice again to round out and complete this ordinance in this dispensation. Sacrifice by the shedding of blood was instituted in the days of Adam and of necessity will be have to be restored."

Under "sacrifices" Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966) includes the quote from Joseph Smith and refers the reader to Joseph F. Smith's statement, adding, "To complete the restoration of all things, apparently on a one-time basis, sacrifices will again be offered in this dispensation." The most recent Gospel Doctrine manual for the Old Testament (sometime between 1981-1983) taught that animal sacrifices would again be the practiced, and used this statement from Joseph Fielding Smith to support that claim.

My obligation in my paper was to interpret the D&C text fairly. I think that I did so, but I will admit that the scriptural texts on this subject do not explicitly identify the offering as animal sacrifice, and they are ambiguous. However, since Joseph Smith who, on some level authored those scriptural texts, taught that the sacrifice was the same sacrifice offered by the ancients, I feel secure in my interpretation.

I am supposing that Broberg's concern is with Mormon theology. Clearly, some in a position to determine what Mormon theology is have determined that blood sacrifice is among the necessary ancient practices to be restored (temporarily) in the last days.

However distasteful, illogical, unnecessary, or theologically incorrect it might seem for Mormonism to include animal sacrifices at some future time, I am not the author of the idea.

Melodie Moench Charles  
Brookline, Massachusetts

### *Applaud Courage*

Before the final flicker of life is extinguished from our planet, I want to express appreciation for L. Jackson Newell's

essay, "To Marshal the Forces of Reason" (Spring 1986).

I support his thesis and admire his perception and loyalty to true principles. And I applaud his courage. I read the article, first silently, then aloud to my husband who is visually impaired because of extensive brain surgery. When I came to that beautiful letter in the addendum written by President George Albert Smith to Rev. Raymond Cope in 1945, I was so choked with emotion that I could no longer read aloud. I always sensed a loving generosity of spirit in the administrations of both George Albert Smith and David O. McKay, a spirit which I no longer feel in the Church. This seems to me to be a departure from the basic teachings of Jesus Christ, which is both frightening and also very sad.

My husband and I are long-time subscribers — since the inaugural year of 1966. We thank the editors and staff for your good work on *DIALOGUE* which helps keep us in the Church.

Ann B. Fletcher  
Pullman, Washington

### *Still in the Crucible*

As a quasi-nonparticipating member of the Church who has not yet emerged from the crucible of doubt, I was deeply moved by Richard Cummings's essay, "Out of the Crucible: The Testimony of a Liberal" (Summer 1986). I was stunned by how closely it parallels my own experience. (Where has this article *been* when I've needed it during the past two years?)

Though I've been slowly disengaging from the Church in some ways, I feel an inner conviction that I am moving in the right direction. Untested faith will be undermined eventually, and the pain and loneliness I feel as I analyze and agonize over my "cherished beliefs" have been mitigated by reading this wonderful essay. I, too, am developing a hard core of limited but tested beliefs — my own "15 percent testimony"? — but no longer as the eternally cheerful, omniobedient, aggressive sheep I

once was. It is comforting to read the eloquent words of a fellow member who is honestly struggling to deal with doubts and seemingly insoluble paradoxical religious problems.

Wasn't it God who said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9)? Was he perhaps hinting that we would have a difficult time figuring out just what the gospel means and how we fit into this strange church made of pure brilliant eternal principles mixed with some ridiculous, some beautiful human ideas — all put into practice by a group of evolving, imperfect creatures?

Mary Blanchard  
Sacramento, California

### *Paternalistic Attitudes*

I was pleased to receive the issue on Mormons and Native Americans (Winter 1985). I commend you for tackling this long overlooked issue.

Despite the Book of Mormon prophecies and the importance of these people, Mormons have, in my opinion, added substantially to the difficult plight of native Americans, often without realizing it. It is time to take a long hard look at our paternalistic attitudes and allow these people to seek their spiritual potential without our telling them what it is. One seldom finds a white Mormon with more spiritual insight than Dan George or Lacey Harris.

True religion is based on spiritual principles, not cultural ideas and values. Christ was not a white middle-class Anglo-Saxon. The problems faced by native peoples of the Americas, both today and in the past, are largely created and perpetuated by our own materialistic attitudes.

I wondered about several native American issues that were not addressed. First, you had nothing concerning the native peoples of Central and South America. Since many BYU "experts" in Book of Mormon

archeology, if there is such a thing, seem to believe that Book of Mormon lands are in Central America, I found the obvious lack of any material on this area rather interesting. Can I assume that the editors of *DIALOGUE* do not hold these same views? I have found it confusing that Mormon scholars have put so much emphasis on the Tehuantepec thesis while referring to all native Americans from high-plains Sioux to the Fuegians as Lamanites. Many North American natives have few genetic or linguistic ties to Central America.

Second, I would like to have seen some mention of the Foundation for Indian Development, which is devoted to Indians in Central America. This foundation has taught the principles of cooperation, desire for education, and increased health consciousness without destroying the native culture and ideas—in my mind, teaching *true* principles of the gospel without forced cultural molding. The native peoples now run the program themselves. This program is clearly one of the most successful self-help programs in Central America, in spite of a lack of support from, and in many cases direct opposition by, the Church.

The third area is the current Navajo relocation conflict in Arizona. Because of PL 93-531 some 3,000 Navajos will have to leave their sacred land on Big Mountain and move into government-subsidized housing in reservation border towns. The government will be transforming the self-sufficient into welfare dependents. The Native Peoples Support Network, working toward repeal of the law, several books, Big Mountain Legal Defense Fund, and the recent recipient of the Academy Award for Best Documentary (*Broken Rainbow*) all implicate the Mormon Church and Mormon lawyer John Boyden as significant players in this controversy. Have our attitudes towards native Americans in fact added fuel to this issue?

May we all continue to seek love and cooperation with these people that have so much to offer us.

Clayton W. Cook  
Rohnert Park, California

### *An Ahmadi View*

Garth Jones' article on the Ahmadis of Islam (Summer 1986) points up some similarities between the experience of that group of Moslems and the LDS Church. You might be interested in how the Ahmadis view the Mormons.

Just a few years ago I somehow got on the mailing list for the European edition of *The Review of Religions*, an Ahmadi publication in English. Most articles are explanations of the Ahmadi version of Islamic doctrines. But since the publication has a missionary purpose, it frequently seeks to undercut one of the unique claims of Christianity by teaching that Christ survived the crucifixion and died many years later in Pakistan. In the July 1985 issue (vol. 80 no. 7, p. 24) an article by Mushtaq Ahmad Bajwa on "The Mormon Church" considered whether Joseph Smith can be considered a true prophet.

Half of the eleven-page article consists of quotations or paraphrases from Joseph Smith's 1842 accounts of the First Vision, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the establishment of the Church. Then one paragraph describes the martyrdom and the exodus. The last half of the article evaluates Mormon doctrine as a test of Joseph Smith's prophetic role.

Bajwa first implies that Joseph's concept of God results from a human effort to create a logical theology. He sees the doctrine that the Father and Jesus are separate as "a reaction against the unnatural dogma of the trinity" (p. 30). And he dismisses belief in a preexistence of human spirits as "close to the Hindu Doctrine" (p. 30).

Bajwa then distinguishes between Prophets like Abraham and Moses, who receive revelation for the whole community of believers and pious men and women who receive visions or revelations for themselves or a limited group (prophets). For example, he urges that the "prophetesses" in the Bible are spiritual-minded women with an important but limited role; they do not fit the Muslim definition of Prophet.

Bajwa says, concerning the importance Mormons place on prophets, that "Mor-

mon theology is based mostly on Ephesians, which is one of those Epistles about the authenticity of which great doubt has been expressed by the scholars" (p. 31). Further, even if Ephesians is genuine, the "prophets" there characterized as part of the church organization are merely local in their role, not universal like Abraham or Moses (or Mohammed). Successors to Joseph Smith, though called prophets by Mormons, are merely officials in the Church organization, as evidenced by the fact that David O. McKay, the president when Bajwa first studied the Church, made no direct claim to revelation (p. 33).

Just as those the Mormons call *saints* are only ordinary believers, not persons of special piety, so Mormon *prophets* after Joseph Smith are just church officials, not true Prophets.

Joseph Smith, however, must be judged by a different standard than the later presidents, because he claimed to receive direct revelation for all humankind just as Abraham and Moses did. Consequently he must be either a true Prophet or a false one. Bajwa argues that because Joseph Smith established plural marriage by "revelation" and the Church afterward abandoned it, the Church itself has by that act branded Joseph Smith a false prophet whose word failed.

While we are accustomed to critique by other Christians, Bajwa's article provides a different Muslim perspective on our beliefs.

Edward L. Kimball  
Provo, Utah

### *Facile Assumptions*

In an otherwise fine and persuasive article, "Scriptural Precedents for Priesthood," *DIALOGUE* 18 (Fall 1985), Melodie Moench Charles seems in passing, at least, to have lapsed into an old racist interpretation of the Pearl of Great Price which continues to do much harm in the Church. I refer to the facile assumptions (pp. 17-19) that (1) the passages about the descendants of Cain (or Canaan) in Moses 5-7

have anything to do with priesthood bestowal or denial, an issue nowhere mentioned in those chapters; (2) that the same passages have any necessary relationship to the lineage of the pharaohs denied the priesthood in Abraham 1; or (3) that any of those passages refer to today's African or Afro-American blacks.

While such interpretations did become conventional in Mormon culture through the personal (non-canonical) writings of Brigham Young, the J. F. Smiths, and Bruce R. McConkie, their fallacies were made apparent at least twenty years ago (see, for example, my own Winter 1967 *DIALOGUE* article), and they were effectively discarded by official Church statements in late 1969 (*DIALOGUE*, Winter 1969, pp. 102-3), and again in early 1978 (*DIALOGUE*, Fall 1981, p. 42, n99), even before the actual change in policy toward blacks. It is both ironic and tragic that these "scriptural explanations" for the erstwhile priesthood denial still circulate.

In recent months, I have interviewed black LDS members about their experiences in the Church (before and after the June 1978 revelation); and some of them have needlessly suffered great pain at being informed by their white LDS "friends" (and even bishops!) that, although the Lord has relented and given them the priesthood, they are still descendants of Cain with all the negative connotations implied thereby! Though we may be some time in purging such folklore from Mormon culture more generally, we should not have to endure it on the pages of *DIALOGUE*!

I was struck by the parallels to all of this in my reading of some of the excellent articles in the rich and memorable "Lamanite" issue (Winter 1985). On pp. 29-31 of that issue, Eugene England (with his usual rational and rhetorical power), effectively destroys the conventional racist mythology around the term "Lamanite," just as Lacey Harris's poignant personal essay (especially p. 147) drives home the spiritual, emotional, and social damage done by that mythology to LDS Indians. Racist myths die hard, and it is good to see

DIALOGUE on the cutting edge of their dismemberment.

Armand Mauss  
Pullman, Washington

*Charles: Not Facile*

I concede that my words in three sentences were not well-chosen and did not always convey my meaning, but I protest the accusation that my use of these portions of the Pearl of Great Price was based on "facile assumptions."

I was not addressing the issue of whether these scriptures could *fairly* be used to support the modern Mormon denial of priesthood to blacks. I used them only to show (1) that persons allowed to hold priesthood changed from one circumstance to another, and (2) that the Church and some of its members had both considered such cases as precedent and had also rejected them as precedent. Whether the lineage of American or African blacks literally has anything to do with Ham, Cain, or Canaan, was irrelevant to my argument.

No protest was raised when Tony Hutchinson made the same points: "Black males, after all, were given the priesthood in 1978 in the face of Book of Abraham texts ostensibly far more prohibitive than any texts in our scriptures that might conceivably be used to argue against the ordination of women" (DIALOGUE, Winter 1981, p. 70). Mauss himself has called the book of Abraham "the only scriptural precedent for priesthood denial" and said that it "contained the only passage in all of Mormon scripture relating explicitly to a lineage denied access to the priesthood" (DIALOGUE, Autumn 1981, pp. 17-18). Even though my ill-chosen words might have suggested otherwise, I meant no more than this.

I used Moses 7:8 and 22 to show that the Pearl of Great Price claims that the children of Canaan and the seed of Cain were black. I should not have mentioned Cain, for the Pearl of Great Price says nothing about the denial of priesthood to

him or his descendants. Denial of the priesthood is mentioned only in the context of Pharaoh. The Pearl of Great Price clearly says that the Canaanites were black (Moses 7:8), that Pharaoh was a Canaanite<sup>1</sup> and a descendant of Ham (Abr. 1:21 may describe either two lines or one line of descent), and that Pharaoh was denied the right of priesthood because of his lineage (Abr. 1:26-27).

Though Abraham 1:27 is ambiguous, a perfectly reasonable interpretation of it — and the one I used — was this: Pharaoh was denied the priesthood because of his [Canaanite] lineage. The Pharaohs tried to claim that [in spite of this Canaanite lineage] they were entitled to the priesthood because they were descended from Noah through Ham; but this claim was false, for Ham and his descendants were denied the priesthood as well. This does not indicate that Pharaoh's lineage was denied priesthood *because* of their black skin, but rather that they were denied the priesthood, *and* some of them probably had black skin. Though there is no demonstrable link between modern American or African blacks to this pharaoh, Mormons have traditionally assumed that there was.

I disagree with Mauss's claim that a racist interpretation of these parts of the Pearl of Great Price is no longer either tenable or necessary. Defining "racist" as being characterized by "the notion that one's own ethnic stock is superior" (American Heritage Dictionary), I believe that parts of the Pearl of Great Price are racist and that to interpret them as racist is to interpret them correctly. Moses 7:7 says that "a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people," i.e., because the children of Canaan had a blackness come upon them, everyone else despised them. In spite

<sup>1</sup> The cross references in the 1981 edition of the Book of Abraham cite Moses 7:8, linking the Canaanites of Pharaoh's ancestry with the dark-skinned Canaanites rather than with the Canaanites who are the descendants of Ham's son Canaan, who is never mentioned in the Pearl of Great Price.

of being a righteous and wise ruler, Pharaoh could not hold the priesthood because of his lineage (Abr. 1:26–27).

Other scriptures contain racism as well. The Book of Mormon links the Lamanites' dark skins with their being a dark, loathsome, filthy people, full of idleness, abominations, mischief, and subtlety (1 Ne. 12:23, 2 Ne. 5:21–24; Morm. 5:15). It is only in exclusively Mormon scriptures that righteousness and skin color are linked, or that God shows his displeasure with a people by darkening the color of their skin.

The racism in the Old and New Testament has nothing to do with skin color (see, for example, Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible 3:246 and Jacob A. Dyer, *The Ethiopian in the Bible* [New York: Vantage Press, 1974]), but it is racism nonetheless. That the Israelites thought they were superior to all other peoples is obvious to anyone who has read the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 7:6–8 Moses explains to Israel that it is not God's chosen nation because of any particular merit on its part. Amos, speaking for God, had to remind the Israelites that they were no more to him than the Ethiopians and that he had liberated the Philistines and the Syrians, just as he had liberated them (Amos 9:7). The New Testament portrays Jesus as being unwilling to help the Canaanite woman who beseeches him, because his mission is only to Israel, and "it is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs" (Matt. 15:22–26). His Good Samaritan parable would be far less effective if his Israelite audience did not feel superior to Samaritans.

These scriptures all tell about and reflect the attitudes of cultures that were matter-of-factly, unashamedly racist. Only relatively recently has racism become socially and religiously unacceptable. I feel we would be wrong to let racist attitudes and practices in our scripture justify racist attitudes and practices in our Church or our individual lives; but although we are very uncomfortable with racism in our scriptures, denying its presence is neither honest nor useful. I am certain that Mauss and I agree that racism has no place in

Mormon culture or theology and should be fought whenever it appears.

Melodie Moench Charles  
Aurora, Colorado

### *Valuable Bumping*

I read with interest L. Jackson Newell's essay, "To Marshal the Forces of Reason" (Spring 1986).

I also joined the Church some twenty-five years ago, primarily because of its honest seeking after knowledge from all sources and its faith in human integrity to discern the truth.

In succeeding years, I suffered the disappointment of being released from teaching Sunday School because I suggested that James E. Talmage's *Articles of Faith* footnotes on God's absolute foreknowledge of all human events might be incorrect, given Joseph Smith's King Follett discourse.

It is somewhat ironic that perceptive LDS members, cognizant of the eternal value of independent thinking, are sometimes forced by unwitting group nonthink (sociological corporate loyalty) to distance themselves from the group in order to maintain individual integrity—an integrity extolled by the corporation itself as the essence of Mormonism.

I, too, was dismayed at the explicit censorship of Elder Poelman's brilliant conference talk and the price paid by Carlisle Hunsaker for his essay which, in my opinion, is the single best essay (replacing Frances Menlove's "The Challenge of Honesty," DIALOGUE 1:1) ever written in Mormondom.

Salvation is individual, not corporate. The corporation exists to assist the individual. When the corporate church chooses to frustrate rather than assist the individual's search for truth, that corporation may properly be ignored (in this aspect) as simply another bump on the road of experience.

The corporate danger (self-seduction) confuses truth with power—power to express one's views and power to enforce them. Leaders sometimes forget that there



"must needs be *opposition* in all things," not because of inherent evil from the "fallenness" of humanity, but rather because of inherent individuality in each uncreated human soul. Opposition is necessary because each person is an inalienable irreducible entity. Ignorant individuals "bump into" (oppose) intelligent individuals and learn from them (and vice-versa). This opposition is not at all evil but can mistakenly be so perceived if corporate leaders value loyalty above truth.

For those of us chronically tired of "bumping" into Church leadership, yet who know the gospel to be true, we thankfully turn to *DIALOGUE* and *Sunstone*, where intellectual bumping is encouraged.

Gerry L. Ensley  
Los Alamitos, California

### *Flattering the Deceivers*

Thanks for the inspirational and deeply moving essay by L. Jackson Newell, "An Echo from the Foothills: To Marshal the Forces of Reason" (Spring 1986). I too am a "convert," though my Mormon roots go back to the 1850s. As a teenager, I carefully disassembled the religion, compared it with other existing religious philosophies, decided that its principles were true, and concluded that the LDS Church could do more for me thousands of miles away than any other system of belief next door. I am still of that persuasion.

President David O. McKay taught us missionaries that "to be trusted is a greater tribute than to be loved." To deceive — no matter what the rationale — is still dishonesty, and is one of Satan's way of "flattering" the deceivers to destroy them, telling them "behold, this is no harm" . . . that "it is no sin to lie" if done for a righteous (sic!) cause.

In my opinion, the anonymous Church authorities who used their power to force a counterfeit version of Elder Poelman's October 1984 conference speech to be produced (and dispensed to the Church members as the genuine original) may claim justification for their action by saying they

"didn't want the remarks to be misinterpreted by apostate groups," but what they really accomplished was to tell the discerning members of the Church that the authorities are not to be trusted.

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood. . . ."

Lew W. Wallace  
San Gabriel, California

### *Marvelous Meg*

Thank you for publishing Margaret Rampton Munk's article, "Service under Stress" (Summer 1986). I reread Meg's article after reading her obituary and cried. She was a classmate in French at the University of Utah and I so admired her.

Marvelous Meg — always prepared, organized, quiet, poised, intelligent, alert, and happy. Meg's children will cherish her living legacy in *DIALOGUE*, a printed part of her life to emulate. Margaret's sharp honesty and candid humor will nourish their lives and ours.

Diane Nielson Weilenmann  
Salt Lake City, Utah

### *Scientifically Illiterate*

Richard Smith's evocative discussion ("Science: A Part of or Apart from Mormonism," Spring 1986) of the widespread denigration of science by many of the recent and present Church hierarchy was most timely.

I share his dismay and his northern Utah background. In 1949 I chose as my seminary valedictory at Box Elder High, "The Harmony between Science and Religion." Although some might find that title an oxymoron in today's Mormon climate, I was able to draw heavily upon Dr. Widtsoe and other respected Mormon scientists to buttress my address. I suspect such a topic today would be discouraged by the seminary principal.

I am saddened when scientifically illiterate Church leaders belittle scientific achievements which enhance our knowl-

edge of the cosmos and its contents. President Joseph Fielding Smith was a fine scripturalist but his scientific training and understanding were rudimentary, to say the least. When *Man: His Origin and Destiny* appeared with its contention that the earth and its inhabitants were just 6,000 years old, I was struck by the similarities with Galileo's religious contemporaries who insisted that the sun revolved around the earth.

It is puzzling when leaders who boast of the Church's superb satellite communication system which can transmit conferences simultaneously to two-thirds of the membership are sometimes the same leaders who berate those scientists whose very discoveries of complex physical principles have made such transmission possible.

Like Brother Richard Smith, I firmly believe that our scientific discoveries, particularly those of the physical and natural sciences, make the Creator more awesome as we uncover the intricacies of the universe. I vividly recall a medical meeting where Henry Eyring was our guest speaker. He began his address, "Now if God were a physical chemist — and since he authored the laws, I like to think he obeys them — then here is how life on this earth could have been created. Once every two billion

years or so, the situation would be right. The right temperature, the proper mix of elements, etc. . . . Of course, if special creation occurred, then all bets are off."

It would be reassuring if at least some of our present leaders could emulate Brigham Young's acceptance of the scientific method. Perhaps the ascension to apostleship of Russell Nelson, a trained scientist, can begin to restore a measure of balance to our fundamentalist leadership.

C. Basil Williams  
Ogden, Utah

#### HUMOR CONFERENCE

Proposals for papers on international humor are due before 15 January 1987 for the International Humor Conference of World Humor and Irony Membership (WHIM). One page abstracts and a \$50 conference fee should be sent to Don L. F. Nilsen, English Department, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287. The international humor conference will be held 1-5 April 1987 in the Memorial Union of ASU, Tempe, Arizona.