

LETTERS

It's a Matter of Opinion

Thanks to Ed Kimball (Summer 1989) for pointing out three errors in our recent *An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown*, edited by Ed Firmage. These have been corrected in the third printing.

Regarding Kimball's objection to "the publisher's advertising methods" — which occupied fully one-third of his book review — let me first point out that the headline of an ad in *Sunstone* magazine (July 1988, p. 4), "For Those Who Want All the Facts," came from a review of *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders*, not *An Abundant Life*, as the asterisk next to the headline made clear. The ad featured three new Signature titles, and the headline recommended breadth in reading, not "tell-all" genre books.

Second, Kimball objects to Signature's two-page press release announcing publication of *An Abundant Life*, which promised readers information on President Brown's "troubled youth and physically abusive father, his courtship and career as a successful lawyer, the devastating death of his oldest son during World War II, and his trying years as a Mormon leader," as well as "his liberal views on birth control, marital sexual relations, divorce, political extremism, science, intellectualism, and race relations." Most reviewers of *An Abundant Life* have recognized that the memoirs in fact treat at length each of these aspects of President Brown's life (see, for example, *L.A. Times*, 3 Dec. 1988; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 Dec. 1988; *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 7 Jan. 1989; *St. George Daily Spectrum*, 26 Nov. 1988; *This People*, Spring 1989). Each subject, at least as President Brown remembered it, was a "major theme," not an "item

mentioned in passing," as Kimball states. President Brown's youth was "troubled" in many ways. Kimball's intimation that this implies moral turpitude is his own interpretation, not ours. Brown's father was physically abusive. According to President Brown: "The first thing I remember from my youth is my father's harsh discipline. Sometimes my older brother Homer James . . . would be slapped to the ground while working on the garden. This also happened to me a few times. My mother's heart would break a little each time it happened. . . . Even up to the time of his death, his awful temper and quick tongue alienated practically all of the members of his family from him" (pp. 1-2).

As to Kimball's comment that President Brown's social views "may have been liberal, but hardly extreme," our press release did not label them "extreme." President Brown's views, however moderate compared to contemporary Church teachings, were heterodox for his time. A few excerpts may help to illustrate this point. On marital sexual relations: "It is a dangerous thing to try to regulate the private lives of husbands and wives or for church leaders to go into the bedroom of a couple who are married and try to dictate what they should or should not do" (p. 119). On the occasional lack of unanimity among Church leaders: "As a General Authority I have been reversed on a number of things and have seen others appointed without the usual procedure" (p. 129). On freedom of thought: "I believe we should doubt some of the things we hear . . . There are altogether too many people in the world who are willing to accept as true whatever is printed in a book or delivered from a pulpit. . . . We

should be dauntless in our pursuit of truth and resist all demands of unthinking conformity" (pp. 135, 138).

Kimball's last comment, that *An Abundant Life* sheds "little light on the workings of the hierarchy during his [President Brown's] tenure," does not seem to be true for most readers. Again, other reviewers, such as John Dart of the *L.A. Times*, John DeVilbiss of the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, and David Bigler of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, have written that *An Abundant Life* contains some of the most helpful discussions of the Mormon hierarchy from an insider's point of view to have ever appeared in print.

Obviously I do not agree with Kimball that our promotional material sensationalized the contents of *An Abundant Life* or the life of President Brown. But in the end, the best judges on this point will be readers of the book themselves.

Gary J. Bergera
Salt Lake City, Utah

A Kinder, Gentler Church

On a recent Sunday, I read Lavina Fielding Anderson's excellent essay on President Ezra Taft Benson's instructions to parents ("A Voice from the Past: The Benson Instructions to Parents," [Winter 1988]). That same day, I watched a televised interview with former President Ronald Reagan, taped just before he left office. I could not help comparing the attitudes and perspectives of these two leaders. It struck me that each, although sincere and well-intentioned, seems to be living in the past — not even the actual, historical past, but some incurably romantic idealization of the past — and therefore can appear to be shockingly insensitive to the present reality of many of those whom he leads.

For example, as Anderson mentioned, President Benson chastised women who are employed in the marketplace rather than the home. What President Benson failed to acknowledge or appreciate is that his own "angel mother" was as much "in the mar-

ketplace" as any modern working woman; it just so happens that in the agrarian society of his boyhood home in southern Idaho, "the marketplace" was the family farm. I am certain his mother did her share of work in that marketplace while his father was fulfilling various Church callings, leaving her and the children to support themselves.

A friend of mine in San Diego is resourceful and fortunate enough to have created for her young son the modern analog of President Benson's boyhood home — an in-house neighborhood preschool where she is able to use and develop her teaching skills while staying at home — but that is rare in the modern marketplace, which is vastly more complex and diverse than the idealized version President Benson remembers. What Anderson's article shows is that many of President Benson's instructions seem at best unhelpful and in some cases harmful to those who sincerely and prayerfully struggle to maintain the ideals of family life in today's reality but reach a different personal resolution than President Benson commends.

President Reagan often showed similar insensitivity and detachment from reality. He was fond of platitudes about freedom, liberty, and human rights, but he seemed ignorant of the emptiness of such platitudes to a growing number of Americans — especially those victimized by a brutal redistribution of scarce resources from domestic social programs to an unprecedented military buildup. He once suggested that the problems of the homeless are of their own choosing. He offered superficial, seductively simple solutions to the crises of drug abuse and AIDS. And he consistently opposed efforts to strengthen civil rights laws to eradicate the lingering stench of racism. Indeed, during the interview I referred to above, President Reagan opined that civil rights leaders intentionally propagate bias and hatred to line their own pockets. He seemed genuinely oblivious to growing economic and social discrimination, recently confirmed in figures compiled by the National Urban League regarding the incidence of unem-

ployment, homelessness, drug abuse, and other social problems among blacks compared to whites, that stand in stark contrast to the bright picture he painted.

President Reagan is gone now, leaving others to deal with the realities he managed to ignore for eight years. Those of us who disagreed with him can dismiss him as sincere and affable but fundamentally misguided and look forward to the “kinder, gentler America” President George Bush has promised. President Benson is not so easily dismissed. The authority of his position compels each of us to seriously consider his counsel. If, as individuals or as families, we reach conclusions that differ from his instructions, then we must live with the consequences.

What about the direction of the Church as an institution? I believe the answer depends to a large extent on whether wide-ranging dialogue about the Church’s direction—the type of dialogue that produces insight and understanding and that sometimes even contributes to change—will continue. I am concerned because I sense a sort of acquiescence, or worse, resignation among many thoughtful, progressive Church leaders. And I fear that, as a result, many of the positive results of past efforts will be undone. Anderson is to be praised for refusing to acquiesce in or become resigned to what she perceives as a backward trend in the Church’s attitude toward women by pointing out some of the differences in substance and in tone between President Spencer W. Kimball’s counsel and President Benson’s instructions. Perhaps Anderson’s example will encourage others to speak out with their own ideas about where we are and where we should be going as a Church.

I suggest that as we look forward to a “kinder, gentler America” under President Bush, we should also hope and work for a kinder, gentler Church, a Church more sensitive to the real struggles its members face. Although recent changes in Church policy on excommunication offer some hope, I am less optimistic than Anderson. But God works in mysterious ways. Within the last few years, he has touched the heart

of a “Godless” nation and raised up a remarkable leader, one who has the rare ability to see beyond both the past and the present toward a future unhindered by the limited and limiting perceptions of the human condition. Ironically, this leader outperformed even Ronald Reagan on the world stage. If Mikhail Gorbachev can emerge from within the stultifying bureaucracy of the Soviet Union to lead it (and perhaps a large part of the world) out of ideological captivity into the next century, then surely the Church can go forward with at least as much reality and vision.

Stephen C. Clark
New York, New York

No Act of Penitence

I received a copy of Levi Peterson’s recent book, *Juanita Brooks—Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988) for Christmas and became quite a hermit over the holidays because I was so caught up in it. Though I grew up as a Utah Mormon, I haven’t considered myself a Latter-day Saint for years. This book was cathartic for me. It made me appreciate the best of my roots: Juanita’s integrity, the community made up of caring people, and the commitment to purpose that are fruits of searching forebears. I applaud Peterson’s work.

I was also caught up in Peterson’s essay “Juanita Brooks, My Subject, My Sister” (*DIALOGUE*, Spring 1989), until it referred to Juanita’s setting the record straight on the Mountain Meadow Massacre as an act of “penitence” (p. 25). This is extremely misleading. According to my dearest aunt, who shared this article with me and was a friend and contemporary of Juanita Brooks, Juanita never was penitent. I don’t intend to split hairs over the meaning of “penitent,” regret for one’s wrong-doing; however, penitence is individual. Juanita’s impetus was a desire to tell the real story—not just feelings of remorse for her ancestors. Calling Juanita’s book an act of penitence muddies one of her greatest achieve-

ments—never compromising, against strong authoritarian threats, the full picture of the Mountain Meadow incident.

I agree with Peterson that penitence is an inherent characteristic of Latter-day Saints. This is no different from Catholics or Jews raised with strong urgings to do what is right while being aware of sins of omission as well as commission. Juanita was probably penitent over little things but not at all penitent about her work to clear the secretive, black cloud that hung over some Mormon history.

Carolyn Platt
Sisters, Oregon

*What's a Rameumpton, Daddy?
(With Apologies to Gregory Bateson)*

"What's a Rameumpton, Daddy?"

"Well, the Book of Mormon says it was a place where the Zoramites stood to worship and pray."

"But my Primary teacher said it was a tower that evil people used."

"I can see how someone could think that. The Book of Mormon says it was 'a place for standing which was high above the head' and only one person at a time could go up there."

"Was it like a speaker's stand in the church?"

"A speaker's stand? You mean a pulpit? Yes, I suppose it was. In fact the word 'Rameumpton' means 'the holy stand.'"

"What's so evil about a holy stand, Daddy?"

"Well, it wasn't the stand that was evil. It was how it was used. The people gathered there in their synagogue . . ."

"What's a synagogue?"

"Just a different word for chapel or church, honey."

"Oh."

"They'd gather in their synagogue one day a week."

"Which day, Daddy?"

"I don't know, honey. It just says 'one day' and that they called the day 'the day of the Lord.'"

"It must have been Sunday."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because Sunday is the Lord's day."

"Well, maybe it was. . . . Anyway they'd gather there and whoever wanted to worship would go and stand on the top of the Rameumpton."

"Could anyone go up there?"

"Well, no, that was part of the problem. Apparently they had to wear the right clothes . . ."

"You mean like us when we wear our Sunday clothes, Daddy?"

"Well, not exactly but in a way yes, I suppose. Some of us might have a hard time accepting certain kinds of clothes or people in sacrament meeting. But we wear our Sunday clothes to help us be reverent, don't we?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"So anyway, where was I?"

"They went to the top of the Rameumpton . . ."

"Yes, they'd go up and worship God by thanking him for making them so special."

"Were they bearing their testimonies?"

"Well, uh, I guess maybe they were in a way, but they weren't true testimonies."

"How come?"

"Because they were too proud."

"What do you mean 'proud,' Daddy?"

"Well, they would talk about how they were 'a chosen and holy people.'"

"My Primary teacher said Mormons are the chosen people and we're a special generation."

"Yes, honey, but that's different."

"How?"

"Because we are."

"Oh."

"Besides, they were very, very proud about how much better they were than everyone else because they didn't believe the 'foolish traditions' of their neighbors."

"What does that mean, Daddy?"

"It means that they believed everyone else was wrong and they alone were right."

"Isn't that what we believe?"

"Yes, but it's different."

"How?"

"Because we *are* right, honey."

"Oh."
 "Everyone would stand and say the same thing . . ."
 "That sounds like testimony meeting to me."
 "Don't be irreverent."
 "Sorry."
 "Then after it was all over they would go home and never speak about God until the next day of the Lord when they'd gather at the holy stand again."
 "Isn't that like us, Daddy?"
 "No honey, we have Family Home Evening."
 "Oh."

Robert Nelson, Jr.
 Fort Dix, New Jersey

An LDS Version of the Bible?

I thoroughly enjoyed Philip L. Barlow's article, "Why the King James Version?: From the Common to the Official Bible" (Spring 1989). Ever since reading J. Reuben Clark, Jr.'s *Why the King James Version*, I have been hoping that someone would shake us and remind us that we are not, after all, Protestants. We Latter-day Saints like to look down our noses at what we feel is the Protestants' unhealthy "bibliolatry," so it is ironic that we have clung to a version of the Bible most of us no longer even understand.

As a Sunday School teacher I used to enjoy teaching my students the true meaning of "help meet," the difference between "charity" and "agape," and how to conjugate Jacobean verbs ("I have, thou hast, he/she/it hath . . ."), and so on. However, I must admit that of late I have grown weary of playing the elocutionist ("No, don't pronounce 'shew' like Ed Sullivan!"). The illicit thrill of uncovering the earthiness of the Hebrews has worn off, and I have become jaded. Someday soon I hope my self-styled amateur specialty of interpreter of the ancient liturgical language of the United Kingdom will be as nostalgic as the trade of the farrier and the alchemy of the tincturer of laudanum.

By the way, amongst all the alternative versions to the Authorized Version which Barlow lists, I failed to see my own personal favorite: the Anchor Bible. While I realize that it is not all that accessible to the average peruser of religious bookstore shelves — perhaps in part because it's not yet completed — I wonder if someday a version of the Bible based on this scholarly yet straightforward translation might not form the basis of a new LDS version of the Bible?

Marc A. Schindler
 Gloucester, Ontario, Canada

Drop on in

On reading Karen Moloney's "Beached on the Wasatch Front" (Summer 1989), I was not only surprised but appalled to learn that she has been considered a second-class Saint because she is a convert. Just what kind of sanctimonious snobbery is this? Converts are the lifeblood of the Church and always have been. To begin with, the entire adult generation of Mormons, including Joseph Smith, were converts. Converts keep us old-line Saints on our toes when we tend to let things slide.

Converts may not have my feeling of heritage, but I have always admired their faith and their zeal; they have been born again, and I've been born but once. I've never had the spiritual ecstasy of conversion; I've never been on the road to Damascus; I am humble in the presence of the chosen who have made the choice.

And I would like to inform Karen that if she's ever out here in the California boon-docks, she should drop in at Redwood City First Ward, where she'll be treated with the respect she merits.

Samuel Taylor
 Redwood City, California

Are We Chosen?

Karen Moloney's incisive essay (Summer 1989) imploring us toward a greater

sense of universal kinship brought to mind two sermons delivered at the University of Utah Institute of Religion during the late 1950s.

The first was given by President David O. McKay as the "spiritual thought" during a prayer meeting held in preparation for an Institute graduation service. It lasted about two minutes and is probably the most deeply moving sermon I've ever heard. President McKay stated that no Latter-day Saint generation seemed more blessed with opportunities than ours; indeed we were a *chosen generation*. He asked a rhetorical question, "Does being chosen mean that we are better than or morally superior to others?" His response: "I believe not."

Next he cited John the Baptist's exhortation to repentance found in JST Matthew 3:36: "Think not to say within yourselves, We are the children of Abraham, and we only have power to bring seed unto our father Abraham; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." President McKay then reread the scripture substituting "members of the Lord's restored church" and "those having pioneer ancestry" for "children of Abraham" and "father Abraham," respectively. The moral challenge penetrated my soul.

He concluded by rephrasing the original question, "Are we chosen?" then answered: "Yes. We are chosen to *serve*."

The second sermon I recall was a fire-side address delivered by Elder Richard L. Evans, at the time an apostle, who tackled the problem of self-righteousness in an explosively humorous way. Stressing that we are prone to draw unwarranted conclusions about our moral worth based on our favorable life circumstances, Elder Evans spoke of two maggots who found themselves on a farmer's shovel coming in from the fields. As the farmer banged his shovel against the porch step, one maggot fell into a crack in the sidewalk while the other landed in a pile of barnyard fertilizer. As the days went on and the first maggot withered away, he asked his rich, fat, sassy friend the secret of

success. The second maggot's response: "Brains and personality."

Touche!

Kent Olson
Louisville, Colorado

Help from the Still, Small Voice

Mark Looy's letter on creationism (Spring 1989) set me thinking. Before I went to BYU and learned about evolution I used to wonder, if the good Lord could create the world and all its creatures, including us, in six days, put the penguin in the ice floes of the Antarctic and the exquisite little bluebird under the eaves of our mountain cabin as the first sign of spring — if he did all that, why would he then create mosquitoes and woodticks or the spider who eats her mate after one enchanted evening?

Mark Looy's letter stimulated me to review a bit on Darwin, and I was pleased to find he had similar thoughts. In a 22 May 1860 letter to Asa Gray he wrote:

There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the *Ichneumonidae* with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. On the other hand, I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe, and especially the nature of man, and to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton. Let each man hope and believe what he can.

So that is what each of us does. Some, like Joseph Smith, think the earth has consciousness, is a part of divinity. In his oration at the funeral of King Follett, 7 April 1844, the Prophet said "create" meant "or-

ganize," that "God had materials to organize the world out of chaos — chaotic matter, which is element, and in which *dwells all the glory*. Element had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed, they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning and can have no end" (HC 6:308–9).

He was right about no end to the planet earth, which will abide, but what about the creatures thereon? Surely the question right now is not whether it took God billions of years or only six days to create us, but rather how much longer are we going to be here? We have created devices that could end it all in six minutes. While waiting for that, what else can we worry about?

Our oceans, which cover 70 percent of the globe, sustain plankton that accounts for a big share of the oxygen we need (which we commonly ascribe to land plants). But pollution in our oceans is threatening the plankton. We have all heard about the alarming destruction of the rain forests of Brazil, but less publicized are the rain forests of our own Pacific Northwest which — on private and government-owned lands — are being clear cut at an unprecedented rate, one out of four logs going to Asia.

The rain forest of Madagascar shelters a greater variety of unique species of flora and fauna than any other part of the world, and it is fast disappearing, now reduced to about 10 percent of its original size. The peasants slash and burn to clear the land to plant their crops; the tiny layer of soil disappears in two or three years, when they move on. Eighty percent of that country's 8000 flowering plants are endemic — that is they exist nowhere else. So are half of the more than 200 bird species, 95 percent of the reptiles (including two-thirds of the chameleons), almost all of the 250 different kinds of frogs, 97 percent of the 3000 varieties of butterflies and moths, and almost all of the native mammals. Obviously, once gone from here these species are gone forever from the face of the earth.

The Samoan rain forests, as reported by Nancy Perkins in *BYU Today* (May 1989), are going fast, and with the forests go the abundant medicinal plants, many not even classified.

The elephants are being exterminated for their ivory to make baubles for affluent women, and with the elephants go the habitat which they create for smaller ungulates who in turn feed the big cats, and we don't know what this does to us.

Indian sacred religious sites are being co-opted by the forest service for roads, taken over by developers, and mined for uranium.

As Geoffrey Sea reported in the 30 April 1989 *San Jose Mercury News*, "Everything seems to be warming up, melting down, breaking apart, or leaking out." Mathew Fox, the out-of-favor Catholic theologian, warned in the March 1987 *New Age Journal*: "The killing of Mother Earth in our time is the *number one* ethical, spiritual, and human issue of our planet. The direction we are heading is not only suicide for our species but ecocide for the rest of the planet. All the decisions that are going to be made in this generation are *going to be irrevocable*" (p. 107).

Many enlightened groups believe they can do something about it, that the mind is far more potent than we imagine. Perhaps a rise in consciousness, spirituality, a belief in the mystical or whatever you want to call it may be able to stop wars, heal bodies and souls, find insights into clean sources of energy, deal with garbage, animal rights, overpopulation, rights of women, and so on.

Mystical experience is no stranger to Latter-day Saints. We are fortunate. The world may be fortunate to have us. It would be hard to find anyone among us who has not had prophetic dreams, been involved in a miracle healing, heard a saving voice, or been tickled with the story of Mary Fielding Smith (widow of Hiram) blessing her exhausted, fallen oxen, which then arose and plodded right along on the road to Zion.

We are in a first-class position to listen to the still, small voice that will alert us to the plight of Mother Earth. We are already programmed to prayer, to faith and hope, and we know the strength of the interconnectedness of people. So we must listen, wait for the light, and then, Saints that we are, we will surely take the right steps to be a saving force.

My husband, Sam, starting off on his mile walk to the shopping center, asked what he should bring back. "Get a melon," I said, having in mind a small cantaloupe. In a while he arrived with a cardboard box containing a large, fat watermelon. "I didn't think I was going to make it," he said cheerfully, "but just as I was about to give up, there was this box that the Three Nephites put there for me."

A mind set like that cannot help but keep us around for a while.

Gay Taylor
Redwood City, California

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More Than Just Ebb and Flow

I have heard young people say, "I want to be different, just like all my friends." That same mixture of motives in the Church as an institution is well described by Armand Mauss's article on assimilation and ambivalence (Spring 1989).

Mauss says, "At any given time, then, a movement is grappling with either of two predicaments [seeking to minimize conflict with others while maintaining distinctiveness]" (p. 32). Conceding that at any moment one or another of the two concerns is dominant, I think it worth emphasizing that a movement is, at *all* times, grappling

with *both* predicaments. As a Church and as individual members we are reminded to be in the world but not of the world.

Fitting evidence together to support a thesis sometimes leads to unintentional distortion. For example, Mauss identifies modernization of the garment earlier in the century as assimilation (reducing distance from the world) (p. 36) but cites further modernization in more recent years (p. 46) as part of a "retrenchment" effort emphasizing the importance of temple work distinctive to Mormonism. He characterizes abandonment of elaborate and publicized missionary farewells as routinizing and universalizing the expectation of a mission call (p. 46), when in reality the change occurred initially to avoid stirring up resentment among non-members whose sons were subject to the draft while missionaries had ministerial draft deferrals. In time the change may have come to exemplify routinization of mission service, but I believe it had other meaning at the outset. In one period, standardizing doctrine signals assimilation (p. 35), and in more recent times it becomes reactionary (pp. 48-49).

Mauss suggests that the Welfare Program in the 1930s and the later focus on Lamanites (p. 43) were assertions of uniqueness, but he does not note the substantial dilution of both programs in recent years. This mixture of effects seems to be true for many changes. For example, the 1978 revelation on priesthood reduced the stress between Mormonism and other faiths, but at the same time it made the differentiating claim of continuing revelation to prophets.

Mauss rightly identifies the ebb and flow of the tide; I mean only to call attention to significant eddies.

Edward L. Kimball
Provo, Utah

The Context Makes the Difference

Sociologists often fear (with good reason!) that their work is so heavy and opaque that no one will read it. It is there-

fore most gratifying to see that my article was read (and carefully) by a colleague so distinguished as Ed Kimball. I appreciated too his having recognized that large-scale theories, like the one I tried to apply, can deal only with the general ebbs and flows of history. He is of course correct that we encounter many eddies along the way, important exceptions to general trends, and that to some extent both the assimilation and the reactionary motifs can be seen at any given point in time. That is why, at the outset, I introduced a general "continuum" between the two poles, rather than a categorical conceptualization.

Ed is correct too that in trying to fit varied data to an *a priori* theory one runs the risk of biased selectivity and distortion. What we observe rarely fits a theory perfectly, even in the physical world; the most we can hope for is the best fit available, which I still claim to have offered. Yet the apparent inconsistencies that Ed finds in my evidence are not necessarily contradictions or distortions in the case I am making. The *meaning* of a single act or development may differ from one social or historical context to another. For example, a polygamous marriage in Utah would represent social conformity in 1860 but social deviance in 1960. Thus, modernizing the temple garment might well have meant something different in the 1920s (when emphasis on temple work was at an all-time low) from its meaning in the more recent context of a strong new program of temple-building and temple work.

The same reasoning would apply to some of the other points Ed raises. Even policy changes (like eliminating elaborate missionary farewells), which may originate for reasons unrelated to the dominant organizational motif and could presumably easily be reversed when the "original" reasons no longer apply, may instead be retained if they fit well with an *emerging* motif. Other policies (such as those dealing with welfare, Lamanites, and blacks), which may eventually be diluted or abandoned for various organizational reasons,

may still make important symbolic "statements" at the time of their initiation or reaffirmation. Again, the specific context is what gives meaning to an act or policy.

Finally, in response to questions from friends, and in retrospective fairness to Ed, I must take this opportunity to emphasize that the "close relative of President Kimball" cited as my informant in Footnote 13 was NOT Ed Kimball. I have since learned, furthermore, that my informant's source was not President Kimball himself but another General Authority.

Armand L. Mauss
Pullman, Washington

A Burning Bosom Isn't Enough

I read with considerable interest Jeffrey C. Jacob's essay in your Summer 1989 issue. It prompts these observations:

His socio-economic analysis of the contemporary [North American] Mormon community is perceptive, and his typology—Scribes and Watchmen—is provocative. I have no objection to being grouped with the former, and I acknowledge that Liahona Saints do not always resist the temptation to be observers rather than fully engaged participants in the efforts to build the Kingdom of God.

His critique of the Liahona-Iron Rod dichotomy is also thoughtful. I take strong exception only to one point. In his effort to sharpen the distinction between the Charismatics—his new category—and Liahonas, he credits "people like me" with little or no faith in the efficacy of prayer and the witness of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, we believe in them, and we derive inspiration and motivation from them. Our questions relate to the dependability of spiritual impressions, without external support, in validating propositional truth.

Jacob seems to say that Charismatics can receive "unmediated spiritual direction" and that they may safely rely on it, without testing it against either reason and experience (the Liahona standard) or tradi-

tion and authority (the Iron Rod standard). As a proposition this is debatable, and as a policy it is potentially disastrous. The amount of damage that has been done—and continues to be done—by people whose burning bosoms tell them that God is directing them is incalculable.

Richard D. Poll
Provo, Utah

Material on Nibley

I am currently compiling materials for a family history on my father-in-law, Hugh Nibley. I am collecting correspondence, memorabilia, stories, anecdotes, and other materials relating to his life. I would also be interested in hearing from those who have been influenced by him in any way. Anyone with information that they would be willing to share with me may reach me at:

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157 Westway Road #201
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Moved by Huebener

Margaret Blair Young ends her moving and well-written personal voice, "Doing Huebener" (Winter 1988), with rather wishful thinking when she states, "How I wish Huebener could be honored here as he is in his homeland. Honored, even, by the Church he loved" (p. 132). Maybe that dream will come true one of these days. I share her husband's feelings about Helmut's death chamber in Berlin. Having lived in Germany for the last twenty-nine years, eleven of those in West Berlin, I believe that the majority of German Latter-day Saints are not aware of Helmut's tragic story; only a few have even heard his name. Except for a brief notice in the *Stern* (Ger-

man edition of the *Ensign*) a few years ago, he is never mentioned in Church circles, classes, or speeches.

Since LDS publications about Huebener have all been in English, German members have never had sources to go to. Gathering information about Huebener and resistance towards the Nazis usually turns out to be difficult, academic work.

I would like to note, however, that after years of preparation, the Berlin government opened a new exhibit last July at the "Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand" (Memorial of German Resistance). A small section is dedicated to "Youth Resistance" and includes a complete board showing Huebener, his friends, two handbills, and background information, including a remark about his Church membership. This exhibit is only half a mile away from the Berlin stake center. I wonder how many Church members will see it.

Tom Roger's play about Huebener was significant and controversial, just as Helmut's life was significant and, for some people in the Church now, even controversial. I commend those courageous writers and actors who dared to be a part of the production. I wonder if I will have the courage to translate the play into German and seek a group of willing members to produce the play. Am I prepared to live with the Damocles sword of censorship over my head?

For now I will continue to tell my four children about those real heroes and examples, take them along to exhibitions, to visit the death chamber in Berlin and other prisons where innocent and brave people perished, to the camps of Bergen-Belsen where Anne Frank spent her last days, and to join a Jewish friend in our Kaddisch-prayer at the graves of those murdered in the Holocaust.

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