

LETTERS

Dreaming of Zion

I applaud David Pace's courage in "going public" with his article, "After the Second Fall: A Personal Journey Toward Ethnic Mormonism" (Spring 1998), especially given his illustrious Mormon background.

I was one of those adoring BYU students in the mid-1970s who basked in the charismatic glow of his father. As a "backward" Mormon—I had been converted to Christ at thirteen, and to Mormonism at sixteen—I loved George Pace's emphasis on our personal relationship with the Savior. When he was chastised by the church for teaching such doctrine, I was quite bewildered. When he caved in to "follow the Brethren," I was angry. This was a seminal moment in my own personal journey.

David's choice to resign his church membership raises questions about my own choice to stay in. I wonder if his is the wiser choice. I wonder what he will tell his children. I wonder from which side—in or out—I can best serve the church I love. I wonder if I am doing any good by my years of service on ward and stake councils, where I am generally regarded as a gadfly, but afforded some respect. Am I helping to build Zion or a Tower of Babel?

In a recent conversation with my husband, he asked, "Do you think the church is on target in building a Zion community?" "No, unfortunately not," I replied. "What will it take to change that?" he queried. "Revolution. Revelation. People who see. People who listen. People who love truly."

I can only hope that David is right to leave, as I hope I am right to stay. I can only pray that we visionary revolutionists—all those, both in and

out of the church, who dream of Zion—will pursue the journey with integrity, will see clearly, listen carefully, and love purely. God bless us all.

Lisa Garfield
Tigard, Oregon

Saying No

By the first few paragraphs of "Drinking Blue Milk" (Spring 1998), I was completely captivated by the beautiful, moving, imaginative writing of Tessa Meyer Santiago, and fell instantly in love with her and it—a writing so powerful that when I reached the part of the prolonged emotional rape and its terrible consequences, it ripped my heart apart and made me weep inside. I could not sleep, though forty years as a general practitioner had inured me to tragedy and protected me from too much intense vicarious pain (a doctor can afford only so much empathy drain).

Every young girl should know (if she is at all "good looking") that when her breasts develop and she starts to become a woman with its associated drives and sensations, the male wolves will prowl hungrily around, and some of them may be relatives, whom she would ordinarily trust. This is the dark side of the eons' old mating process of all life on earth (including human life). The emotions and sensory responses are not evil (millennia of clerical warping to the contrary), but were placed there by a benign creator to ensure perpetuity of the species.

A girl should know how to cope with these new (exquisitely exciting) and troubling reactions. She should be prepared to stomp on any unwelcome overture from any source, with

whatever means necessary—an artful dodge, a raised eyebrow, a plea, a gentle “no,” a firm “no,” a threat, a push, a shove, a flight, a scratch, a bite, or even a bullet. Hopefully it can be done gently without alienation or devastation. This may not be easy, for she may find that she emotionally does not want to say “no.” She must, however, control her half of this fierce (hormonally driven) instinct.

Societal mores dictate bounds, forged from long experience, that are both good and bad. Religious bounds, sometimes prurient in their extremes, are designed to impose control through guilt. To learn about ourselves, a certain amount of experimenting with emotions must and should be done by youths, despite the cautions and the inherent dangers.

The actuality of her emotional rape can't be changed, so emotional adjustments to it must and can be made. The terrible “flashbacks” she is experiencing are now damaging (and may destroy) her wonderful marriage, unless they are attenuated. A very good, experienced psychiatrist might help if she could find one and afford it. The catharsis of writing about it may be adequate. I'm sure God understands, and will “forgive” anything needing forgiveness. Many of us will be praying for her.

She should not despair. Feel and share the emotional agony of Joseph Smith in his impassioned prayer in D&C 121. When she overcomes the intrusive devastating memories, Mrs. Santiago will be able (with her beautiful power of expression) to help countless other girls who may find themselves in similar situations. She will “save” herself (salvage her own life) in the process. May God grant her the strength and faith to persevere

and succeed! I look forward to more gifts from her pen.

Lew W. Wallace
San Gabriel, California

Belief in an Amoral System

Michael Zimmerman wrote an excellent piece on the adversarial judicial system institutionalized in this country in the spring 1998 issue. This article was well written and truly defined the ethical and moral dilemma of the legal profession. His understatement about the “public's increasing dislike or distrust of lawyers” was eloquent. He identified two primary reasons for this dislike of the profession: The lawyers' clientele and the morality of obfuscating the truth.

He, like most of his colleagues financially dependent on the system, misses the real reason we dislike lawyers. Lawyers and judges perpetuate a system where lying, deception, withholding vital facts, and the miscarriage of justice are merely “our ethical duty.” I think we dislike the legal profession because it does not rise up and demand a better way. Consider this: a man commits a horrible crime. The legal system commits vast resources protecting this man's “rights” (many of which are just thirty years old) rather than cooperatively finding the truth about the crime and applying the justice (punishment) mandated by our representative elected officials. Mr. Zimmerman documented the reasons this “amoral conduct is so inviting” and rationalized them as lucidly as I have ever read. To exemplify lawyers' behavior by quoting Murray Schwartz—“a lawyer is neither legally, professionally, nor morally ac-

countable for the means used or the ends achieved"—is chilling. He did not mention his firm belief that this system is superior to others. (*Res ipsa loquitur.*) He sees no inherent evil in the system and does not "suggest that the adversary system should be abandoned." I ask why not?

According to Mr. Zimmerman, people dislike lawyers because we don't understand the position lawyers are in when they practice within the adversarial system. I maintain our dislike of lawyers goes much deeper than any misunderstanding of legal ethics. Our distrust has been spawned by the lawyers' misuse of this system. Why haven't lawyers risen up and demanded change to our flawed system? They claim our common heritage (perverted as it has become) is the only fair way and is even the best way to deal with crime and dispute resolution. Does anyone besides lawyers believe this is the best system? Given this belief in an amoral system, is there any wonder why we distrust and dislike lawyers?

Michael R. Warner
Manassas, Virginia

Telling Her Side

Thank you for publishing Sarah L. Smith's essay, "Not Spirit, Not Law," in your spring 1998 issue. It means a great deal that you gave our mother the chance to tell her side of a painful situation that was hard for us to understand. Since the completion of the essay, we have heard of several cases in which inactive or less active parents were allowed to speak at their children's missionary farewells/homecomings.

Although she doesn't share our activity in the church, she has a truly Christlike manner, and has supported and loved us in our missions, callings, meetings, and activities, even when it was difficult for her to do so. And we have tried to support and love her in everything she does. Welcome encouragement has also come from others who have read the article. Again, thank you.

Darrell L. Smith
Danny K. Smith
David J. Smith
Orem, Utah

The Missionary Uniform

In "Tying Flowers into Knots" (Spring 1998), J. Todd Ormsbee states that he had better success handing out copies of the Book of Mormon on Preparation Day in France while wearing jeans and tee shirts than when wearing standard missionary costume. I had a similar experience in California.

In the mid-1950s, I spent two and a half years in Uruguay. In those days we had to wear our suit coats at all times, though it was hot and humid in the summer. We also wore 1930s style fedoras anytime we were outside. We stood out like two sore thumbs. After graduating in 1958 in physics from BYU, I accepted a job at the Naval Ordnance Testing Station in the desert at China Lake, California. The church soon called me to be a district missionary for the Ridgecrest Branch of the California Mission. Our district headquarters was some distance away in Barstow and we rarely saw those leaders.

My companion was a middle-

aged engineer. I was initially shocked to find that he wore Levis and sport shirts on our missionary visits, but I soon eagerly conformed. That first year, working just two evenings a week, more converts accepted the gospel than had in my two and a half years in Uruguay. Then they made us a branch of the stake in Lancaster. The stake mission leaders forced us into compliance using the Missionary Uniform. The stake president also told all men in a stake priesthood meeting that wearing anything other than a pure white shirt to church was verboten. We were unable to convert any of the local Desert Rats the following year. They wanted no part of an organization that wore suits and ties in 115-degree weather.

Jack Lovett
Orem, Utah

Hidden Beauty

Reading Michael Quinn on Mormon Fundamentalists (in the summer 1998 issue) is like reading Robert Thurman on Tibetan Buddhism. One gets the feeling that the author knows a lot about his subject.

I'm not at all surprised that some young Mormons join these groups so they can discuss "deep doctrine," in lieu of the main church's tendency not to discuss doctrine. Where are our "study groups" of yesterday?

Quinn says the young men leave these polygyny groups, leaving more young women for the polygamist men. Why do the boys leave? Quinn doesn't say. Are they being RUN OFF?! And why do the girls stay? Is it that they look forward to being a man's *favorite* sex partner? Quinn's corollary is not surprising—that the women most likely to seek divorce are the first wives.

It must be very sad for a first wife to watch her husband of many years romance a sweet young thing. Maybe in the future he can be stimulated by Viagra instead, and internalize the sentiment of Thomas Hardy:

I see her in an aging shape,
Where beauty used to be;
That her fond phantom
lingers there
Is only known to me.

Joseph Jeppson
Woodside, California