

with respect to its righteousness. The person who refuses to inform himself and act is surely as guilty as the person who drops the napalm. If what I see as the intellectual renaissance in the Church is to have any deep and enduring meaning, we must as individuals and as a people begin to take a stand (or at least begin a dialogue) on the crucial issues in this century of war where the love of men has waxed cold.

## A DEFENSIVE ROLE AT SCHOOL

*Joan Pearson*

*Joan Pearson is a sophomore at Stanford University, presently at the campus in Florence, Italy; the following note is expanded from a talk she gave (at the close of her freshman year) in the Stanford Ward, where she has been teaching in the women's Relief Society.*

I will not hesitate to say that before I entered Stanford University, I heard the Stanford Student Ward described as dangerous and heretical, and I was told to protect myself. I think that my superiors over-emphasized the fact that I simply had to remain active in the face of the intellectuality of the Stanford Ward and in spite of the ideas in Western Civ. In other words, I was told to play a defensive role at the University. And, unfortunately, I think I have played such a role.

In general, I have found that students at Stanford may play one of three negative roles regarding their faith. First, some students seize the opportunity to gain secular knowledge to the exclusion of all spiritual knowledge. Second, some students take such a strong defensive attitude towards the gospel that they resist the influence of valuable secular philosophies and knowledge. They often protect themselves at the expense of their own eternal progression and of their ability to influence others. Third (and this is the category into which I have fallen), the defensive attitude results not in excluding either secular or spiritual knowledge, but in isolating the two. As a consequence, I am not equipped to make any practical use of either my knowledge of God or my knowledge of men, because I do not see this knowledge in its true, integrated perspective.

As I look back on my so-called achievement this year, I have further discovered that because of my defensive attitude my only accomplishment has been to hold to the level of those who have earned all their individual awards. As far as the Word of Wisdom and my attendance record is concerned I suppose I have maintained the status quo, and I feel very complacent when someone from my home ward asks me if at Stanford I still go to church and I am able to answer "yes." And I feel complacent when I think of all the *knowledge* I have gained this year, both at school and at the Institute. But I feel sick when I ask myself what I have done with this knowledge, because the answer is "practically nothing." I have thought about why I have failed, and I think I have come up with a reason which is at least a partial solution.

A classic example of this failure (to integrate and relate my secular knowledge to my religious knowledge) occurred in my physical and historical geology courses. The material taught in these classes *seemingly* contradicts our scriptures

on the creation of the earth and man. I was actually afraid to investigate further and compare my secular and spiritual knowledge on this subject for fear that my complacent, problem-free attitude toward the Church would be disrupted. So I did not even attempt to reconcile the apparent differences. Instead, I isolated the two views, and any knowledge I had, whether secular or spiritual, was therefore worthless. I think the reason I failed to integrate this knowledge is that I failed to realize just how well the two types of knowledge can relate and how they must relate if we are going to live in a secular world and at the same time spread our spiritual beliefs. I am convinced that if we have the realization that the two types of knowledge are necessary to each other, then there will be no reason to become inactive for fear that the Church is going to hinder our intellectual experience. Neither will there be a reason to build up a defensive attitude for fear that the intellectual experience is going to hinder or undermine our faith and testimony.

The scriptures are very explicit regarding the necessity of gaining knowledge. We know that the glory of God is intelligence, and that it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance. We usually interpret these scriptures in terms of spiritual knowledge only, and I think this is a mistake. For in the Doctrine and Covenants 88:78,79 we read:

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand; Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home; things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms. . . .

And in 93:53 the Lord clearly instructs us to “obtain a knowledge of history and of countries, of kingdoms, of the laws of God and Man, and all this for the salvation of Zion.” We are therefore responsible not only for spiritual knowledge but for secular knowledge as well. We are commanded to learn not only of God’s laws, but also of man’s. We are commanded to learn not only of those things which are in heaven, but also of those things which are on earth.

When I read the words “the wars and perplexities of nations” I think of a seminar at the last undergraduate hostel, held by the bishopric for the Stanford Ward. One discussion centered on whether or not the Church leaders and members have a responsibility towards the more secular aspects of the world, such as the war in Viet Nam. I think these scriptures from the Doctrine and Covenants clearly state just exactly what our responsibility is—to be aware not only of God and his doctrines, but of other peoples and nations and wars as well.

In the Doctrine and Covenants 88:80 the Lord explicitly tells us the reason for gaining this knowledge: “That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.”

We have to remember that our religious mission takes place in a secular world, and for this reason we have to gain both types of knowledge. But in order for our knowledge to have any meaning we must integrate it. The scriptures can and should provide us with an insight and a basis from which to interpret our secular knowledge. For example, a Mormon student in Western Civ can have a tremendous advantage because he has a basis or starting point from which to compare and evaluate the philosophies of Plato, Luther, Marx, or whatever. But on the other hand, we cannot hope to succeed in a university if we rely solely on the scriptures, because then there is no way to communicate with those who do not believe the scriptures or interpret them as we do. For example, we cannot hope to explain our concept of God to a professor if we do not have some understanding of his concept at the same time. Words such as "personal," which we take for granted in describing our God, often have a very different meaning to a non-member. We must therefore study others' terminology and concepts as well as our own. While we believe this to be God's true Church, our relationships with non-members must induce a give and take process.

If we are able to realize the necessity and compatibility of both secular and spiritual knowledge, there will be no need to exclude the gospel from our intellectual life or to exclude our intellectual life from the gospel. Indeed, there will be no reason to protect ourselves by playing a defensive role in gaining knowledge. The result of such an attitude can only be a more workable, meaningful religion.



## COMING SOON IN DIALOGUE:

George Boyd, Rodney Turner, and David Yarn on the Mormon concept of man.

Kenneth Davies, "The Accommodation of Mormonism and Politico-Economic Reality."

Lowell M. Durham, "Is There a Mormon Music?"

Ray Hillam, John Sorenson, and Eugene England on the moral and political consequences of the war in Viet Nam.

Keith Huntress, "Governor Thomas Ford and the Murderers of Joseph Smith."

William E. Hartman, "Achieving Sexual Harmony in L.D.S. Marriage."

David Bitton on biographies of Melvin J. Ballard and B. H. Roberts.

Louis Midgley on Erich Fromm's *You Shall be as Gods*.

Helen Hinckley Jones on recent Mormon novels.

Sterling M. McMurrin on B. H. Roberts.

Poetry by Sylvia Ruth and Kathleen Edvalson.

Fiction by Robert Christmas.

## NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

### BACK ISSUES

A limited number of Vol. I, No. 1 (reprints), No. 3, and Vol. II, Nos. 1 (Spring) and 2 (Summer) are available at \$2.50. Vol. I, numbers 2 and 4, are sold out, but those interested should write (send no money) so that we can reserve copies in case there is a reprinting. A very limited number of bound copies of volume one (all four issues in 1966) are available at \$20.00.

### DIALOGUE FOR CHRISTMAS

You can introduce your friends to *Dialogue* at a special savings in effect until Christmas. One gift subscription sent at the regular rate (\$7.00) allows you to send any additional number at the special rate of \$6.00. Use the enclosed self-mailing envelope to order your Christmas gift subscriptions early. A gift announcement card will be sent in your name.

