

able and read them over the next several months. My enthusiasm has been dampened, however, by a gradual realization: the dichotomy between “iron rods” and “tiahonas” is not simply a difference of style, but a fundamental difference in substance—whom we rely on to discern truth.

A dialogue-oriented person believes that the purest source of truth is the Holy Spirit speaking peace and logic to the soul. Such individuals therefore give the highest credibility to those truths personally known through testimony; all else has yet to be proved and is fair game for inquiry.

Latter-day Saint doctrine, however, ultimately requires a belief that the highest source of truth is those in authority.

The only proper objects of inquiry, then, are things produced outside their purview. From this perspective, all of our dialogue, unfortunately, is perceived as “counseling the Brethren” or “steadying the ark.”

Of course, most of us believe this dichotomy is not fundamental, merely stylistic, and that in time we will all grow toward a unity of the faith. Our hope springs (nearly) eternal on that point, in fact. Of late, however, I have begun to fear that the difference will not be reconciled, only minimized. I may never feel true unity with the body of the Saints.

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