

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tolerance for "Cultural Mormons"

I appreciate William J. Hamblin's article ("There Really Is a God," 36, no. 4 [Winter 2003]: 79-87), and appreciate *Dialogue's* publishing it. It is useful to see all sides of important issues—in this case, "Is the Book of Mormon authentic history or not?" Dr. Hamblin supports the literal historicity of the book and critiques another's support for a more recent origin.

I would like to comment on Dr. Hamblin's statement: "This is simply more of the same . . . from some cultural Mormons." The word "some" suggests that Dr. Hamblin doesn't himself think this way but that among *some* true believers a "cultural Mormon" is automatically a second-class member, barely to be tolerated and certainly not to be trusted.

One of my favorite scriptures is: "To some it is given to *know* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . . [T]o others it is given to *believe on their words*, that they also might have eternal life *if they continue faithful* (D&C 46:13-14; emphasis mine).

"To know" (to have a testimony) is a wonderful gift, but I take the second half ("continue faithful" to

"have eternal life") to be an equally fine gift.

As a supportive and faithful (but also cultural) Mormon, I would simply ask those of you who have been "given to know" to accept those of us who have not yet received such knowledge but who desire to "continue faithful" in full fellowship in the Church. Those of us who live by faith alone have the same important spiritual, historical, traditional, family, service (and, yes, cultural) ties to the Church as those of true believers. True believers themselves often have strong cultural connections to the Church. That is one of the basic aims of the Church, wouldn't you say?

David G. Pace's essay ("Our Big Fat Temple Weddings: Who's In. Who's Out. And How We Get Together," 36, no. 3 [Fall 2003]: 243-53) cites a statistic from my *Sunstone* column ("Braving the Borderlands," No. 127 [May 2003]: 67-69) as follows: "It may suggest an option for that LDS population, eighty percent by some estimates, which is *excluded from temple worship*" (emphasis mine). The actual *Sunstone* statement was, "Statistics hint that as many as 80 percent of those baptized worldwide either leave the Church, are asked out, or move to