

## LETTERS

### *European Mormons and Napoleon Mormons*

Due to my interest in religion I'm in the habit of browsing periodicals of various faiths. This has greatly broadened my perspectives as I do pastoral counseling as a Christian. It was thus I came upon the winter 2005 issue of *Dialogue*.

The first article to catch my eye was Walter E. A. van Beek's ("Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An 'Afro-European' View on Religious Colonization" 38, no. 4 [Winter 2005]: 3-36). He articulates well the concerns and realities of Americanisms in Mormon culture abroad. This and the next two articles expressed my dismay over past missionary efforts that all too often wiped out indigenous beauty and customs, imposing Western ways. (Devyn M. Smith, "The Diverse Sheep of Israel: Should the Shepherds Resemble Their Flocks?" 38, no. 4 [Winter 2005]: 56-74; R. John Williams, "A Marvelous Work and a Possession: Book of Mormon Historicity as Postcolonialism" 38, no. 4 [Winter 2005]: 37-55.)

But I was delightfully impressed with the "Personal Voice" of Cetti Cherniak ("Napoleon Dynamite, Priesthood Skills, and the Eschatology of the Non-Rational: A Nonwarranted Physiotheologic Analysis," 38, no. 4 [Winter 2005]: 129-140). I am most often surrounded by ultra-rational and highly intellectual publications with very little balance. Such is not the case here. "Napoleon Dynamite" is an excellent foray into theologizing our pop culture! First,

the idea of right brain/left brain approaches is absolutely correct as a means of evaluating our theological approach, worship styles, importance of ritual and symbol, etc. In our area I see many churches bringing back rituals thrown out by the Reformation.

Jesus taught most frequently with stories and parables. It was a pleasure to see intelligent and playful comparisons of characters in a movie and everyday happenings to theological concepts and symbols, e.g., Pedro as Peter. I giggled, I agreed, questioned, pondered, and even argued with the author as I read it. I have rarely been so engaged by a piece. Indeed, can it be an accident that Mexicans and African Americans are moving into Utah and Idaho? Any good theology engages the participants, enticing them to stretch and grow. Ms. Cherniak is profound and proficient, with a delightful, humorous style, too.

I am impressed with the overall quality and broad scope of *Dialogue*, but in all honesty, "Napoleon Dynamite" is a dynamite piece. Bravo! Keep it up.

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### *Napoleon Is Dynamite*

I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the most recent issue. The "Mormon Europeans" piece was smart and insightful (Walter E. A. van Beek, "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An 'Afro-European' View on Religious Colonization" 38, no. 4