

Letters to the Editors

The texture studies in this section are by Gordon Peery.

The letters in this issue reflect accurately the relative quantity of letters received on the different subjects as well as the various points of view.

Dear Sirs:

I am much interested in the cover of the Spring, 1968, *Dialogue*. It is challenging and provocative, as though it carries a hidden meaning. I had some difficulty in the Desert Alphabet bit, until I discovered that it was upside-down and I was going at it backwards. It is, of course, the title, *Dialogue*.

The three buildings, the people singly and in groups, the cannon and its three balls, all have their place in our history. What impressed me was the large, heavy word *MORMON* on the front cover, with the tiny, thin, almost microscopic word *THOUGHT* underneath it. Is Miss Thompson trying to say to us that the magazine is heavy on *MORMON* and light on *THOUGHT*?

Juanita Brooks
St. George, Utah

Dear Sirs:

Greatly concerned over a devastating American tragedy, President Johnson proclaimed Sunday, April 7, a national day of mourning, dedicated to religious services and prayers for peace. Nationwide, prescheduled programs and events were cancelled to report and televise our nation extending empathy to a persecuted minority group, whose Christian leader had been murdered; and sympathy to the bereaved family of Dr. Martin Luther King. Our nation united in prayers for peace, for Christian brotherhood, and wisdom to save our country from riots, arson, plunder, and more deaths.

That is, all except the Mormons.

As usual, the Mormons had a prearranged two-hour world-wide coverage for morning conference. A grieving, frightened world heard our Mormon leaders, in both opening and closing prayers, pray for our Mormon leaders, our Mormon membership, our Mormon missionaries; and the safety of Mormons returning to the Salt Lake Tabernacle for afternoon conference.

Our leaders usually pray for peace and brotherhood. But not April the seventh. The Presidential proclamation was completely ignored. On a world-wide hook-up there was no Mormon sympathy extended to the bereaved King family; there was no Mormon offer of Christian brotherhood and understanding; there was no Mormon prayer for national and world peace. But alas! We met our national crisis by telling the world all problems could be solved by keeping the Word of Wisdom.

Isn't it time we got off the milk diet and sank our teeth into hard core racial problems, and assumed our portion of guilt for the existing racial war?

Lucille Young Hyler
San Jose, Calif.

Dear Sirs:

. . . The absence of any reference or allusion to Dr. King during the Sunday broadcast of General Conference, while the remainder of the nation remembered the man and mourned the loss of a great humanitarian, was damning. The least one could infer from this conspicuous omission is that the Church is extremely provincial and anti-ecumenical. The most one could infer is (1) the Church is not concerned with human (civil) rights, (2) a Negro "Ghandi" cannot be recognized as such by Mormon

leaders, and (3) there is a racial gulf between Mormonism and Negroes that transcends theological finery. . . .

Had Martin Luther King, a truly great modern disciple of Christ, not been "cursed" by the Church, then perhaps he would have been remembered before the world by one of the Conference speakers.

Roger Knight
Santa Barbara, Calif.

2. Too much time and attention were being devoted to Dr. King by other churches, and our Church was right in remaining steadfast in its devotion to correctness of theological precept and practice rather than diverting its energies to racial inequality and social injustice and other matters not properly the concern of organized religion.

3. Bluntly, though Dr. King professed nonviolence, violence always followed him. We cannot excuse his encouragement of disobedience to laws which he thought unjust and unconstitutional. In our ordered society, no individual or group has the right on grounds of conscience or religious belief to advocate even peaceful defiance of any law whether that law requires segregation of races or limits the number of wives a man may marry.

4. Finally, it simply may not have occurred to anyone to mention the death of Dr. King. After all, the martyrdom of a 39-year-old zealot leader of a fanatic minority is of no more moment today than it was in 1844.

Owen Olpin
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Sirs:

In the morning session of General Conference in Salt Lake City on April 7th, there was no mention of the murder on the preceding Thursday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. On that same Sunday morning, sermons in many other churches were dedicated to the memory of Dr. King.

There may have been listeners who expected something would be said of Dr. King who were puzzled or even troubled when nothing was said. My purpose in writing is to attempt to answer any such listeners. I have not consulted with the General Authorities, and of course the answers I give are entirely unofficial. There may be other answers which have not occurred to me.

I submit that the silence of the General Authorities on the murder of Dr. King was proper for the following reasons:

1. Only a minuscule percentage of the members of the Church are Negroes, and it would have been inappropriate to use valuable time on matters of so little interest to the great majority of the listeners. If mention of Dr. King was appropriate at all, it should not have usurped the time of the one Conference session that was broadcast nationally and internationally on radio and television.

Dear Sirs:

President McKay's plea for faith in the living Christ to solve the problems of society was an inspiring highlight of the April General Conference. Disappointingly, however, Conference speakers avoided directing their moral suasion specifically toward resolving the big social problems of urban America.

Coming as it did on the week-end designated by Presidential proclamation for national mourning over the tragedy in Memphis, the Conference may have been the only nationally broadcast religious service in which fitting tribute was not paid to the Christian leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. My own family watched Conference and listened to the Priesthood session hoping for a note of consolation only to find none.

Undoubtedly racism and slavery were common in the days of Abraham and Moses, but they are alien to the gospel of Jesus. It is regrettable to the point of tragedy that we have permitted the ancient writings of the Pearl of Great Price to prevail over the



more enlightened teachings of the Book of Mormon and the New Testament.

As a bishop and former member of the Sunday School General Board who has followed with enthusiasm and respect the great growth in size and influence of the Church under President McKay's direction, I hope his achievements may be crowned with the manifesto ending racial discrimination as an official policy of the Church.

No action could be more meaningful in demonstrating the majesty and spirit of the living gospel in our time.

Wayne M. Carle
Columbus, Ohio

For the information of readers who may not otherwise be informed, it should be noted that President Hugh B. Brown opened the first session of General Conference on Friday, April 5, 1968, with the following remarks:

"At this time we express deep sorrow and shock at the news of the passing of a man, Martin Luther King, who dedicated his life to what he believed to be the welfare of his people. It is a shocking thing that in this age such a thing could happen. We pray God's blessing upon his family, his friends, and those associated with him."

President James O. Mason, of the Atlanta Stake Presidency attended the funeral of Dr. King and when he was unable to deliver the following message from President Brown to the King family, sent it by telegraph:

"The leaders and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints wish to express to the wife, friends and associates of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., our profound sense of shock and grief. We join hands with all those who see in his death a need for recommitment to all those just principles in which we all believe." [Ed.]

Dear Sirs:

The final authority involved in ordinations in the Aaronic Priesthood is no higher than a ward bishop. This means that any restrictions God may wish to impose on such ordinations must be communicated unmistak-

ably to every bishop. So, if it is God's will that Negroes not be ordained (and I concede that God can make such a rule if He chooses), it is imperative that bishops be so instructed. And, considering the admitted importance of order in the Church ("My house is a house of order"), we should expect that these instructions would be very explicit, to include a definition of what a Negro is and the criteria by which their identity is to be determined. Such specifications, though, are not presented, even in the most logical place for such — that section of the Aaronic Priesthood-Youth Handbook entitled, "Worthiness and Age Are Prerequisites to Ordination." Nor is the subject of Negroes mentioned anywhere in the Handbook.

If bishops are not explicitly instructed in this matter, why is it then that no Negro has been ordained for such a long time? I think the explanation may lie in the power of tradition — not just a tradition that Negroes shall be denied the priesthood, but a tradition that the word of General Authorities is the word of God. We have the recorded words of several General Authorities from Brigham Young on that this practice is in accordance with the will of God. Without exception, though, none of these declarations establishes the practice as being God's will; they merely infer that at some time in the dim past the practice was estab-



lished by someone who had the authority to do so. What I have said holds, also, for the First Presidency on the Negro Question, dated August 17, 1951, which says, in part: "It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord . . . that negroes may become members of the church but that they are not

entitled to the priesthood at the present time." Since the "direct commandment from the Lord" alluded to has not been documented, all that can be established with certainty from the cited Statement is that the First Presidency, at that time, sincerely believed that God had made such a revelation. Is it possible that God would permit the First Presidency to make such a statement if it were not true? I think such is possible, and this calls forth the re-examination I alluded to earlier.

In his article, Mr. Mauss stated that "the integrity of the principle of continuous revelation must be maintained." Most members of the Church would emphatically agree. I object on one point, though, and that is with the inclusion of the word *continuous*. Revelations between God and man, as communications between men, are discrete, not continuous. The ninth Article of Faith reads: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." This neither states nor implies anything regarding the frequency, regularity, or duration of revelations. The statement is true whether revelations are received on an average of once every hundred years or whether they are received every hour on the hour.

I can believe that God deliberately avoids anything akin to continuous revelation — even frequent revelations. He has sent us, His children, to this life so that we might grow personally through personal experience. I believe that God trusts us. He trusts us not that we will never err, but that somehow we will make a success of life, in spite of our mistakes, or perhaps better said, because of our mistakes. With a similar faith, I think, we watch our own young children go off to school alone. Were we to go with them and counsel them as they do their schoolwork and take their examinations, they would, no doubt, receive excellent grades. But we don't do that; we allow them to have this experience alone. Yes, we help them out occasionally, but we are wary lest we foster an overdependence which could limit our children's capacity to grow.

The Church is avoiding what could be a golden opportunity to make a significant contribution toward the universal accept-

ance of Negroes by our society. There are examples of Mormons who have made significant individual contributions in this area, but even the greatest of these contributions is negligible compared to what could be accomplished through the united efforts of the membership of so respected an organization as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But any overt effort the Church might make in that direction today would surely be regarded as hypocritical.

When will Negro members be ordained to the priesthood? I think the answer is in the hands — and hearts — of the membership of the Church. The pioneers on this frontier will be Mormon men and women who have taken to heart the Savior's injunction to love their neighbors as themselves; their leader will be a bishop whose courage to face social pressures will be comparable to the physical courage inherent in the Mormon exodus of the past century.

Harold W. Simons

Mission Hills, California

Dear Sirs:

The article by Mr. Armand L. Mauss in the Winter, 1968, issue of *Dialogue* is almost irrelevant, inconsequential, and quite immaterial in the present social, political, economic and religious setting of America and the world. It presents nothing new, really. The studies or feelings of certain groups; the T.V. or radio interviews shed little or no additional light on the problem, nor do they point with surety to a solution of the Negro question in the Mormon Church.

The references to statements of past Church leaders or the warmed over feelings of early Church members of a hundred years ago, more or less, befog the issue today. We live in a different world of thought and action, of belief and opinion, especially in this important area of human relationships. Knowledge and information have largely replaced superstition, ignorance and fear.

Mr. Mauss's article does not take this into consideration. He seems to follow the time-worn excuse: "now is not the time" or "when God wants the Negro to receive the Priesthood, He will reveal it to our President." And so, Mr. Mauss offers nothing new and certainly he does not give any greater

hope now than before that the "curse" will be taken away.

We cannot follow Mr. Mauss's argument that the guarantees provided by the Constitution to all citizens of the United States of America in political and civil affairs; equal citizenship; equal opportunities, and "with liberty and justice for all" in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, do not apply to spiritual and religious freedom and opportunity in a Church. Especially so when that Church receives its very freedom to worship under the guarantees of that same Constitution. Consistency where art thou?

In another indefensible statement Mr. Mauss seems to justify the withholding of the Priesthood from the Negro by saying that Mormon women do not hold it either. Mr. Mauss knows very well that worthy Mormon women go to the temple, do work for the dead, marry their husbands, receive their endowments and participate in all ceremonies which promise exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom in the resurrection. No Negro man or woman can even be baptized in the temple, let alone participate in the saving and exalting rites and ceremonies that lead to the highest degree in the Celestial Glory.

We are glad that Mr. Mauss "feels uncomfortable" with the present dogma and practice, but we do question his statement that his commitment to the religion (LDS) "is much too broadly based to become disaffected over what is, after all, a peripheral problem by comparison with the more fundamental tenets of the faith." Please reconsider, Mr. Mauss, "for the worth of souls, each individual soul (person) is great in the sight of God." The worth and dignity of each one cannot be measured. When the happiness and progress and eternal salvation of not one but millions of souls is denied along with the privileges and opportunities that all other men are invited to enjoy here and now, and on such tenuous and uncertain grounds, your "peripheral" excuse becomes the very center of the entire problem.

We wonder, bringing the case on a person to person basis, what Mr. Mauss would say or how he would feel if he were a Negro and were "spiritually taxed" without any knowledge of the "taxation" and without his being really represented by anyone of his choice. Perhaps he would wonder just

what kind of a "deal" he had become party to without his consent.

Perhaps Elbert Hubbard's paraphrasing of the Golden Rule says it clearly: "Do unto others as though you were the others." This statement may be the best answer to those who support the dogma and practice of discrimination.

It is better to err on the side of charity than to stubbornly resist change when it harms, hurts, and does damage to a Church, a Nation, and a World crying for help, love, and understanding.



Mr. Mauss's statement: "Get off our backs," causes us to ponder the question: What if the forces that brought about the freedom of the Negro over 100 years ago had ceased their agitation, had "gotten off the backs" of the slave-holders? Many of these same slave-holders believed that God had cursed the black people and that they were created to be servants to the white man forever. Even Brigham Young, during the Civil War, said "Will the present conflict free the slaves? No!" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, p. 250). Of course, he was wrong.

We hope and believe the leaders of the LDS Church have enough revelation now to dissolve the dogma and practice against the Negro. We hope and believe they "want to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly" with God and their fellow men. We believe and hope that they will show their desires by emancipating the Negro and by liberating him from the spiritual jail in which, we believe, he has been incarcerated so unjustly for so long.

John W. Fitzgerald
LaMar Petersen
Holladay, Utah

Dear Sirs:

I am willing to accept Armand L. Mauss's report of his findings in the *Dialogue* article. . . . However, I regard the social manifestations of the doctrine as irrelevant to the central issue. . . .

What really troubles so many people like Stewart Udall is the ecclesiastical second-class citizenship which the doctrine assigns the Negro — a much more serious matter than the denial of civil rights.

Dr. Mauss and others decry the open, public discussion and criticism of the policy. I do not agree with this point of view. Mormons are told that revelations come through and as a result of the prayers of the people. While it may not correspond to the conventional concept of prayer, I would argue that sincere discussion of such issues constitutes a form of "prayer," and one that rests on the conviction that God can see and read as well as hear.

Lowry Nelson
Coral Gables, Fla.

Dear Sirs:

I was deeply touched by Armand Mauss's moving plea to our critics to "get off our backs!" It is most unfair of them, merely because we claim to be the true church of Christ to expect us to "Go . . . into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

How prejudiced of them to expect us to recognize the universality of the gospel of Christ, a mere "peripheral problem" in any case, merely because we claim to be led by men who are living apostles and prophets in the same sense as he who said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

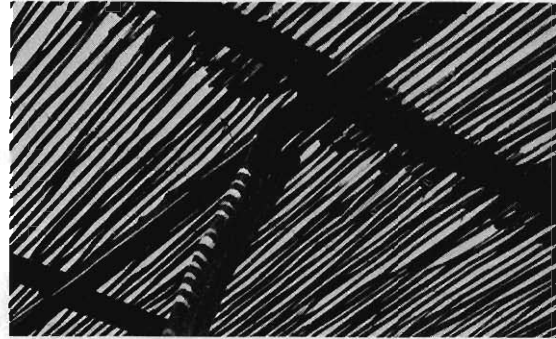
How short-sighted of the N.A.A.C.P. not to have recognized that merely because we treat the Negro as a second class citizen in the Kingdom of God, that it doesn't necessarily mean that we think that they are not as good as anyone else. Particularly so, when one of our leaders, "has gone to some length," way back in 1965 to point out that the Church does not believe in denying civil rights to any person on grounds of race or color.

How can they doubt the love of the members of the Church for the Negro in the light of the fact that two Mormons, Karl Keller and Governor Romney, have participated in some civil rights marches?

Armand Mauss has proven that we are no more racially prejudiced than the rest. Merely because we claim to be His church, "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world," doesn't mean that we are supposed to be better than anyone else.

Christ said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Maybe if our critics knew about our good health and educational achievements, they would be more impressed and would stop persecuting us.

Joseph C. Smith
Vancouver, B. C.



Dear Sirs:

Armand L. Mauss attempts to show the tenuousness of the scriptural evidence connecting the curse placed upon Cain with a black skin and a black skin with ineligibility to hold the Priesthood. He may well be right in all of his allegations, but we must always remember that the prophets are not limited in their understanding of God's economy to just what they can wring out of an obscure passage here or there. Since we believe in continuous revelation and a progressive unfolding of God's secrets, we are not book-bound like other sectarians. We could think as we do without benefit of any written scripture. The fact that a given scripture or couplet of scriptures does not prove conclusively that there is a connection between Cain's curse, a black skin, and a proscription against bestowal of the Priesthood, is almost beside the point. If it is the consensus of the presiding prophets of God that these bits and snatches of scripture do bear on

the reason why we withhold the Priesthood from the Negroes, then perhaps we should take their word for it.

In like manner, it is not our prerogative to lambaste the authorities, as some have done, for permitting the Fiji Islanders (who look Negroid) to hold the Priesthood while we withhold it from African Negroids. After all, the prophets may have more insight into racial makeup and "spiritual genetics" than our wisest anthropologists do. Why else would missionaries have been sent to the wild and woolly islands of Polynesia so early in the Church's history? Who but a prophet would have known that there was an Israelitish element in these South Sea peoples?

I was also a bit miffed by Brother Mauss's mild castigation of John Stewart's and John Lund's mini-books about Mormonism and the Negro. True, there is always the danger that anything written by any Mormon, as well as many things written by our detractors, will be taken as Church doctrine when, in fact, it is more or less private opinion. Nevertheless, I see no irreparable harm in speculating about the possible reasons for our Church's practice of denying the Priesthood to Negroes. (It is human nature to seek justification for puzzling edicts.) All such speculation must, however, be prefaced by a strong and sincere disclaimer of official sanction. Since this is a very touchy subject and one where little has been revealed, it is not only possible but likely that "reasonable men may reasonably disagree" as to the divinity of the practice without relegating each other to the bottomless pit for holding an opposite view.

If there were those in the pre-existence who forfeited their right to hold the Priesthood when they came to Earth, what more convenient vehicle could the Lord utilize to carry out His purposes with regard to these self-limited spirits than the vehicle of race? After all, race is a biological reality. No amount of sophistry bemoaning the "myth of race" can erase this reality. It is just as logical to believe that God would send the self-limited spirits to Earth through one lineage as it is to believe that He would send those fore-ordained to hold the Priesthood to Earth through another lineage. Do we not believe that the lineal descendants of Israel have a positive obligation to hold and

honor the Priesthood in order to be a blessing to all other peoples? In between the two extremes are the Gentiles, who may be adopted into the House of Israel and thereby qualify for the Priesthood. These doctrines may not appeal to the modern secular mind. But when has the Kingdom of God, with its admittedly elitist overtones, ever made sense to the worldly wise?

Lehi's teaching that "there must needs be an opposition in all things" might have bearing on the plight of the Negro race vis-a-vis the Priesthood. When one starts thinking about this principle of opposition one is struck by the fact that it is virtually impossible to think of anything which does not have a contradictory counterpart: night and day, good and bad, rich and poor, healthy and ill, smart and dumb, up and down, in and out, yes and no, and so forth.

Whatever prompted the Lord to make us so unequal? Is it not that we would not learn to appreciate and use fully our faculties if it never occurred to us what it would be like to be without them? If all men could see, would we not take sight for granted and learn very little about sight? The same query applies to hearing. If all women could have children, one of the surpassing challenges of medical science would be obviated. Finally, if all men could hold the Priesthood, could we truly appreciate what it would be like to be without this gift?

It is, of course, risky and somewhat fallacious to compare physical and spiritual handicaps. My main point is, however, that life is a great laboratory and there must necessarily be a full spectrum of human conditions and aptitudes, an opposition in all things.

Charles L. Sellers
Salisbury, N. C.

Dear Sirs:

Armand L. Mauss's "Faith and Folklore" thesis suggests a dichotomy unacceptable to me, and one which I hope *Dialogue's* readers will not fail to note: The principle of continued revelation is here being brought into inexorable conflict with the L.D.S. Standard Works.

I have to wonder whether or not the words "Standard Works" should not be substituted for "Bible" in the oft-cited passage in 2nd Nephi ("... A Bible! A Bible! We

have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible") when a Latter-day Saint suggests that, while a Prophet has the *right* to give authoritative and binding interpretations of the Standard Works, yet these interpretations are by definition "Folklore" if they fail to meet an undefined standard which itself would inevitably involve *interpretation!* Almost as if the Standard Works exist in a sort of vacuum devoid of the need for explanation, a self-explanatory all-sufficient deposit of the faith whose interpretation even by the Prophet binds no one unless ratified "in formal and unanimous concert" with his Counsellors or the Twelve. In footnote 18 Dr. Mauss refers to the widely-published "subjective test" offered by President J. Reuben Clark in 1954 as a determinant for inspired interpretations: The body of the Saints will know when the Prophet is "moved upon by the Holy Ghost" only when they themselves are so moved upon. While Mauss admits this test represents "helpful counsel," his "folklore" premise clearly suggests that neither the prophets nor the body of the saints *have* ever been so moved upon as regards the oft-repeated and widely-accepted interpretations which he regards as "popular myths."



Having admitted that formal pronouncements of the First Presidency *are* regarded as official doctrine, Mauss rejects as "folklore" any scriptural interpretation "which ties denial of priesthood to skin color." Yet in their formal statement on the Negro Question (which Mauss cites in footnote 3) the First Presidency, in 1951, apparently made *that very connection* by citing President Brigham Young's statement tying "the curse of a skin of blackness" to rejection of the priesthood and the law of God; then

further declaring that only when that curse is removed will those so cursed possess the priesthood.

One probably need not inquire of Brother Mauss's judgment of other statements by President Young touching upon the "official doctrine" question: In October Conference, 1897, President Woodruff quoted the Prophet as having laid each of the Standard Works upon the pulpit during an earlier conference and declaring:

There is the written word of God to us. . . . And now, when compared to living oracles, those books are nothing to me; those books do not convey the word of God direct to us now, as do the words of a Prophet . . . in our day and generation. I would rather have living oracles than all the writing in the books.

That President Young would not shrink from J. Reuben Clark's "subjective" test seems implicit in his later remark:

In my doctrinal teachings I have taught many things not written in any book, ancient or modern; and yet, notwithstanding the many things I have told the people, I have never looked into the Bible, Book of Mormon, or the Doctrine & Covenants . . . to see whether they agreed with them or not. When I have spoken by the power of God and the Holy Ghost, it is truth, it is scripture, and I have no fears but that it will agree with all that has been revealed in every particular. (*Deseret News*, June 6, 1877)

As for his statement (p. 27) that no scriptural grounds exist for supposing "that the 'curse' or 'mark' should apply to any of Cain's descendants," the reader is referred to verse 30 of Genesis 9 in the Inspired Version: "And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant, and a *veil of darkness shall cover him*, that he shall be known among all men."

While many a Latter-day Saint, both layman and sociologist, may heartily agree with Mauss's objective and provocative approach; in view of the Ninth Article of Faith it is hoped they will not fail to see the inexorable conclusion to which his "folklore" premise leads.

Robert M. Frame
Camarillo, California

Armand L. Mauss replies to the above letters:

As I expected, my article has been criticized from two sides: because I refused to elevate all apostolic speculations to scripture (Frame and Sellers), and because I refused to join the clamor demanding that the prophets get an immediate revelation to bring the church "up to date" on the Negro issue (Nelson, Simons, Fitzgerald and Peterson). I shall reply first to the former.

I can understand why many church members try to undergird cherished myths and "explanations" with "authoritative" statements, however tenuous these may be (as Sellers remarks, "It is human nature to seek justification for puzzling edicts"). However, I am arguing for a kind of "law of parsimony" in determining what is of scriptural or canonical stature and what is not; i.e. if it is not in one of the four Standard Works, then it seems to me that the burden of proof is upon the person who claims that a certain doctrine is the revealed work of God. I know, of course, that there are doctrines and practices binding upon the Church which are not found in the Standard Works, but I am not always sure what these are, and I am not willing to accept the judgment of Sunday School teachers (or even Stake Presidents) as to what extra-scriptural dicta I must regard as the word of God. In footnote eighteen I suggested that *one* criterion that would impress me (but *not* necessarily the *only* one) would be a statement from the First Presidency speaking "in formal and unanimous concert." For that matter, I think highly enough of the integrity, caution, and humility of our prophets and apostles that *if any one of them* who has spoken or written on the role of the Negro *would declare that his views were received by revelation* from the Lord, then I would accept those views as true doctrines; but I think it is significant that none of these brethren has so declared, or even implied. I suspect, indeed, that they are *far more* cautious about the prophetic authenticity of what they say than are the Saints at large.

And why should it be otherwise? One has only to consider the numerous instances of conflict and contradiction between the private opinions of the Presiding Brethren to realize how ridiculous it is to insist that

everything any of them ever says in a discourse or treatise must be regarded as a prophetic utterance. Historian Richard Poll of Brigham Young University has cited, for example, the differences of opinion between President McKay and President Smith on the process of creation (*Dialogue*, Winter, 1967, p. 111), and between Heber J. Grant and Reed Smoot on the League of Nations (*Dialogue*, Winter, 1967, p. 111). Are we all to accept the political opinions of Elder



Benson, or of President Brown? If John A. Widtsoe writes a book saying that drinking chocolate is a violation of the Word of Wisdom, must we all abstain from chocolate? And even on the so-called "Negro issue," one can scarcely speak of a "consensus of the presiding prophets of God," as Sellers has done, for only a handful of them, in all of Church history, have ever spoken on the issue at all; and President McKay, who has given us the longest single statement on the matter, manages to discuss it for some 1500 words without ever once mentioning Cain, Ham, black skins, marks, or curses (Llewelyn McKay's *Home Memories*, pp. 226-231).

The references I have cited in footnote eighteen place Sellers and Frame in a logical dilemma. Doctrine and Covenants 68:4, in adding the qualifying phrase, "when moved upon by the Holy Ghost," clearly implies that a prophet may speak sometimes when he is *not* so moved (the same qualifying phrase is found in Frame's quotation from Brigham Young); furthermore, the Prophet Joseph Smith himself is quoted as saying that a prophet does not always speak as a prophet, a contention put forth at some length by J. Reuben Clark in my citation. Now Frame and Sellers either accept all the

public pronouncements of the prophets as true doctrine, or they do not. If they do not, then they agree with me; on the other hand, if they do, then they must also accept the pronouncements of the Prophets Joseph Smith and J. Reuben Clark, who say that *a prophet does not always speak as a prophet*, and thus they still have to agree with me.

To Frame I might say two additional things: (1) In the 1951 letter of the First Presidency to which you refer, I do not find in the reference from Brigham Young the explicit tie which you seem to see between skin color and denial of the priesthood *today*; furthermore, it is not clear to me whether the First Presidency is endorsing the literal phraseology of Brigham Young (which would see to fly in the face of the second Article of Faith), or whether they are concerned with showing the historical background of "the operation of the principle," as they say. (2) In your "proof-text" quotation of the phrase *veil of darkness* from Genesis 30:9 of the Inspired Version, you are simply snatching a scriptural straw (without establishing any connection between Cain and Canaan) and giving it an interpretation based upon an *a priori* conception. Such logic would require us also to read Isaiah 60:2 ("darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people") as a prophecy that the skins of all men would someday be turned black.

Now for a few words to the other group of my critics. The reformer in our society often demands the conformity of each and every person, each and every social institution to a particular notion of what is Right or Historically Necessary at a certain point in time. Those who raise any doubts about the cogency or justice of any one of the reformer's demands (though they may accept his ultimate goals) are likely to be dealt with caustically as hypocrites (Smith's letter), or find their evidence dismissed as "irrelevant, inconsequential, and quite immaterial in the present . . . setting of America and the world" (Fitzgerald and Petersen). . . . Convinced that God's will and the scriptures are on his side, the reformer insists that we not only sympathize with his basic philosophical premise, but also agree to every specific policy change he proposes, for all "barriers" to Progress must be struck down immediately; nor is any

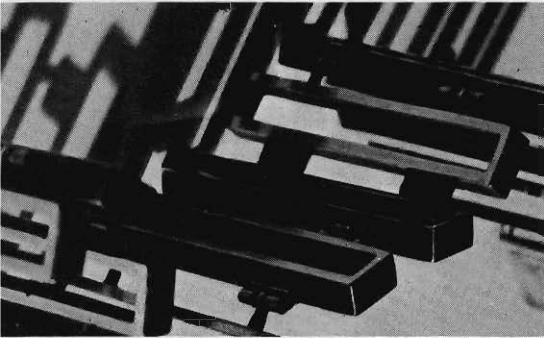
private organization like a church exempt from his zeal. There is a special paradox in all this for the *Mormon* reformer, who is presumably committed to a belief in the authenticity of the modern prophets; for although he has no hesitation whatever in assuring the prophets that *they* have lost touch with God's will in the matter of the Negroes, he apparently entertains few doubts about *his own* rapport with God on this matter, thus arrogating to himself a prophetic insight which he denies even to the prophets. Or, in the spirit of Smith's letter, one might say, "How narrow and old-fashioned of the prophets not to have recognized that in the modern world they should look to the NAACP and to liberal academicians for guidance in such ecclesiastical questions as who gets the priesthood. Surely the prophets should have figured out that 'preach the gospel to every creature' means preach it to everyone *right now*; and that 'he that . . . worketh righteousness is accepted with Him' *must* mean that all good men and women should be given the priesthood. It is neither my intention nor my place to "justify" or "excuse" any official "dogma and practice" which to Fitzgerald and Petersen may seem "indefensible"; my purpose in referring to the parallel practice of denying the priesthood to women was only to show that such a practice is no more "defensible" from a secular point of view than the one under criticism, though the critics, curiously, have shown no outrage about *that*.

In response to Nelson, I would say two things: (1) It is true that from a sociological point of view, the Negro's standing in the LDS Church is that of a "second-class citizen" (a point made also by Fitzgerald and Petersen), but the difficult question here is whether the *sociological* point of view is the *Lord's* point of view; and in trying to understand the Lord's own moral framework (which must be regarded as independent of that of any mortal time or place), why should we rely on sociologists rather than prophets? (2) I would hope that the very appearance of my article, particularly my statements about the "communication gap," would convince you that I am *not* among those who "decry the open, public discussion" of the Negro issue; what I *do* decry is the tendency of Mormon liberals to tie

the church problem to the civil rights problem, and thus make things worse for the Church than necessary.

Simons seems to have suggested a different connotation for the phrase "continuous revelation" from that which it has in the Church generally; and his rather engaging alternate solution to the problem of ordaining Negroes, through the existing "mechanics of priesthood ordination," is an approach which we shall be watching for him to try when he becomes a bishop. But let me warn that not all "instructions" are in the *Handbook* (which does not, by the way, explicitly exclude women from the priesthood either).

Armand L. Mauss
Utah State University
Logan, Utah



Letters received too late for reply from Mr. Mauss:

Dear Sirs:

We felt sorry for Mr. Mauss in the 1967 Winter *Dialogue* as he attempted to rationalize his biases and "make us feel a little less uncomfortable" about his Mormon Negro problem. In place of proving his contrary views he dismisses scriptural inferences by name calling: "fundamentalist, unfortunate, folklore, private or non-prophetic, orthodox, dubious, speculative, far-fetched, extra-scriptural, extra-doctrinal, superstition and bigotry." Those supporting his views are called "thoughtful," "equalitarian," "thinking," etc. When he finally discovers a TRUE verse (President Brown's statement) he calls it "unequivocal, clear, fundamental and elementary."

How could Mr. Mauss even pretend to discuss the subject of "civil rights" and seg-

regation without rationalizing the human rights to property that they destroy and without referring to Alma 3:4-19? The dark skin (v. 6) was a curse by God (v. 8) that their seed might be distinguished (discriminated) that they might not mix (integrate) (v. 8). Separation (segregation) should be forever except they repent (v. 14). Every man that is cursed brings upon himself his own condemnation (v. 19).

Cursed be he that mixeth (integrates) (2 Nephi 5:23). The black skin made them loathsome (inferior in looks) (v. 22). A white skin is delightful (v. 21). Other areas of inferiority were idleness, mischievousness and subtleness (cunning, insidious and treacherous beyond skin depth) (v. 24) as compared with industriousness of the good guys (v. 17).

Some repented and their skin became white again (3 Nephi 2:15). Now in the name of scholarship, how could Mr. Mauss discuss "civil rights" and color segregation and avoid these two dozen verses in the Book of Mormon?

Thus, at least three evils of the so-called "civil rights" movement come to light. (1) The violation of basic human rights — a portion of property rights. The non-owner has no rights on the property of an owner. The owner can never take away rights of an intruder by refusing sale or rental because the non-owner never had any rights on another's land to begin with. (2) The execution of "civil rights" by force, the principle of the Devil. And (3) the violation of God's purpose of making color differences for discrimination to promote segregation. In opposition to God, Satan's forces are trying to color and race mix by forcing social mixing in housing and in business.

Three positions are noted: (1) compulsory integration (RFK, LBJ, Satan, etc.), (2) segregation promoted by threat of a curse (God), and (3) individual freedom to choose segregation or integration in any situation (Goldwater, Wallace, etc.). Where do you stand?

And in further contrast to Mr. Mauss, we would hope that there would be a great deal of carry over of the good example set in modern Church policy and in the revelations and the word of God into the every day "civil" life of the average Mormon. Mr. Mauss' three ward data base is challenged

in a related subject by our own three ward "sample": Canoga Park Ward, Canoga Park Stake is about 75% Republican, Northridge 2nd Ward, Reseda Stake 75%, and Media Branch, Philadelphia Stake 65%. We remember an Elders Quorum party in 1964 where we discussed how many dollars, hours and books (*None Dare Call It Treason* and *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*) we had each donated to Goldwater's cause. Contrast this spirit with the percentage of 1964 LBJ stickers in Catholic, Lutheran and Unitarian parking lots of corresponding cultural level. The difference between the influence of the Church of the Lamb of God and the Churches of the Devil is evident.

Unless the entire color, race, lineage and property rights question is opened up for discussion along with the many verses by the Prophets as they were inspired by the Creator of color and race, your "dialogue" will degenerate to a narrow monologue of one-sided bias and speculation.

Robert L. Hamson
Gloria V. Hamson
Malvern, Pa.

Dear Sirs:

Rather than be forced to the conclusion that Mormons are no worse off than their Protestant neighbors, which, without too much provocation could develop into a new criterion for righteousness, I'd prefer to see Mormons, with their ready access to the will of God, mend the attitudes that have for so long robbed black people of justice and dignity. Mormons in the East Bay Area may be no more guilty than their neighbors, but it's a shoo-in that the "Negro Policy" does not minimize prejudice. In the South, where I had a chance to observe for six years, prejudice is less subtle than it is in the Bay Area. One man, currently in the Bishopric of a large, middle-class ward, rather looked for approval after telling me of placing a loaded shotgun in each bedroom of his house and instructing his sons and wife to "shoot to kill any nigger" setting foot on his property.

I agree with Mauss that as long as Church policy fails to off-set the total impact of Mormonism, faithful Mormons have no choice but to remain true to their faith. But I, and thousands of others, hope to

see this particular policy repealed . . . and, speaking for myself, my hope is not directed *against* the Church but *toward* providing that setting wherein all humans, with equal opportunity, may strive for self respect, pride and the optimism reserved for men, all of whom, Mormons believe, are the spiritual offspring of God.

Val Woodward
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Sirs:

Mauss insists that "no matter how much racism you think you see in Utah, you can't be sure it has anything to do with Mormonism." What Mauss seems to imply is that since the roots of the prejudice are not theological the Mormon church and the Mormon people are therefore absolved from any guilt in its continuance, and have no significant responsibility to help cut the loathsome cancer from our midst. It is a happy rationalization which he offers us, but not very satisfactory.

Can Mr. Mauss show any substantial evidence that our bishops, stake presidents and general authorities have made any concerted effort to fight the race hatred that breeds among us? Are there not sins of omission as well as commission for which we are morally responsible? I suspect that those who have been critical of the Church will conclude that there are and that brother Mauss's argument will not serve to brighten the Mormon image abroad on this urgent issue.

Marvin S. Hill
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

Dear Sirs:

By the adoption of his Iron Rod — Liahona dichotomy, I think Richard Poll ("What the Church Means to People Like Me," Winter, 1967) was led into inevitable errors of magnitude. The most serious of these was the imposition of his dichotomy upon the scripture in such a way as to blur the scriptural metaphor and disrupt the harmony therein.

The Iron Rod and the Liahona are *not* dichotomous symbols. They are, in fact, representations to the mind of the selfsame spiritual reality. Poll has stated that the

Iron Rod and the Liahona are both "approaches to the word of God and to the Kingdom of God." He asserts further that they are different approaches in character. And from these two assumptions he draws his dichotomy of the Church members. However, these symbols are not, in fact, approaches to the word of God, but rather, both the Iron Rod and the Liahona are the word of God (symbolically represented) which leads to the Kingdom of God — a very significant distinction. Nephi states:

And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life. (1 Ne. 11:25; see also 1 Ne. 15:23-24).

Likewise, Alma explains to Helaman that the Liahona is a representation of the "word of Christ":

. . . these things are not without a shadow; for as our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass (now these things were temporal) they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual. For behold, it is as easy to give heed to the word of Christ, which will point to you a straight course to eternal bliss, as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass, which would point unto them a straight course to the promised land. And now I say, is there not a type in this thing? (Alma 37:43-45)

It is evident that the "word of God" and the "word of Christ" are identical. Therefore, the symbols of the Iron Rod and Liahona represent the same thing: the "word of God."

This leads to the inquiry, What is the "word of God" represented by these two symbols? Consulting the 84th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read that "the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ." The "word of God" and the "word of the Lord" are identical. The "word of the Lord" is the "Spirit of Jesus Christ." Therefore, "the word of God" is the "Spirit of Jesus Christ." Further, consulting Moroni 10 we find that the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the Spirit of revelation: "And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ" (Moroni 10:8-16). Therefore, the word of God, as represented by the Iron Rod and the Liahona,

is the Spirit of revelation. No dichotomy can be made. By using both symbols in harmony, one sees more clearly into the selfsame Spirit of Christ. Thus all of the distinctions made by Poll between the Iron Rod and the Liahona are spurious and imposed upon the scripture. The scripture permits of no such distinctions as the Liahona being by contrast to the Iron Rod "no infallible deline-



ator of their course." Alma tells us that the Liahona indeed "would point to you a straight course to eternal bliss" and do it "surely" (Al. 37:40-5). One is as sure as the other. In either symbol, it is those who do not heed who are lost and wandering from the goal. Summarily, there is no principle associated with one that is not just as associated with the other, since they are both a type of that same Spirit.

The true meaning and significance, then, of Poll's article is what is left after the dichotomy is removed — as it must be. What remains is Poll's "concept of the relation of man to the 'word of God.'" It is an inescapable conclusion to me that Poll has in his life taken the values in the Church — of being reminded that his influence matters, being given guidelines for the use of freedom, and of belonging to a folk and/or tradition — to have ascendancy over that which is typified by the Iron Rod and Liahona — the spirit of revelation. He indicates that he finds the Spirit to be largely inaccessible, and concludes that it *should* be inaccessible, for various reasons enumerated in his article. He fears he may lose his freedom if he has the Iron Rod always in his grasp. He fears that he may lose his faith if he exerts it enough to ask God to "break the causal chain" and then God chooses not to. He thinks that prayer is

"rarely for miracles, or even for new answers," but more for an aid to reflection. He interprets much of what is seen by some as miracle to be "coincidence, or psychosomatic manifestation, or inaccurately remembered or reported events." He wonders about the adequacy of the Standard Works, Latter-day prophets, and the Spirit as sources. He sees God as in "apparent remoteness from many aspects of the human predicament — my predicament." All of which, he says, leaves him with a "somewhat tenuous connection with the Holy Spirit." I believe him, and I'm sympathetic to the fact that we have people among us who have those kinds of statements to make. However, I am not sympathetic nor am I satisfied with Poll's solutions to the situation.

Is the answer to say, "It doesn't work very well for me, therefore my position must have other values of equal worth"? Is the answer to a tenuous relationship with the Spirit to set up a dichotomy, and dignify that position with a label? Is it the answer to suppose that one's being "in that classification" may have something to do with the pre-existence? Is the answer to a tenuous relationship to the Spirit to question the sources of the Spirit? Or to say that that's the way God is? Is this a position to be accepted as it is, or as "the way it is," or are we deceiving ourselves by doing so? Every man must judge for himself, of course. I think it will help to judge in the light of Joseph's teachings on man's relation to the word of God — the Spirit of revelation:

Every man lives for himself . . . but he can never come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, unless he becomes as a little child, and is taught by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, we

again say, search the revelations of God; study the prophecies, and rejoice that God grants unto the world Seers and Prophets. They are they who say the mysteries of godliness . . . And, fellow sojourners upon earth, it is your privilege to purify yourselves and come up to the same glory, and see for yourselves, and know for yourselves. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 12-13)

Are any of Poll's solutions to a tenuous relationship with the Spirit calculated to satisfy this marvelous capacity within us; or to provide for us this opportunity to be taught by the Spirit; or to see for ourselves? Or shall we take Joseph's solution, and purify ourselves?

Edward J. McCormack
Brigham Young University

Dear Sirs:

Surely *Dialogue* is getting hard up for material; otherwise, a publication dedicated to Mormon culture and the relevance of religion to secular life should not have wanted to get involved in a discussion on sexual behavior. (Letter, Paul F. Moore, Spring, 1968.) Mormons, particularly, have shied away from such subjects in the interest of character and morality, feeling that the least said on the matter the better.

Surely *Dialogue* would not want to broadcast to teenagers the conclusions of Mr. Moore on his quote from the professionals in the field of Behavioral Sciences. Regardless of their findings I feel we should leave the discussions on this subject in the hands of the Parent-Teachers' Assn.; and as for that issue of *Dialogue*, at least, let us thank Heaven it is not a preferred paper-back for teenagers.

J. W. (Bill) Christensen
Provo, Utah

