

# A PROGRESS REPORT ON DIALOGUE

With *Dialogue* in its sixth year, it seems appropriate to report to you, our faithful readers, on the progress and problems of the journal.

The initial response, demonstrated that *Dialogue* met a real need in Mormon society. Scholarly journals are rarely self-supporting. They are ordinarily subsidized by universities or by professional societies. *Dialogue* has no institutional attachments or subsidies. Yet its subscription list reached 3500 within its first six months and soon rose to above 5000.

Since that time, subscriptions have fluctuated between 5200 and 6400, with over-the-counter sales adding an additional average circulation of 750. Eighty percent of the present subscribers are renewals. Useful comparisons covering somewhat the same markets might be the *Western Humanities Review*, supported by the University of Utah, with approximately 1000 subscribers, the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, organ of the Utah Historical Society, circulating to approximately 2300 members, and *BYU Studies* with approximately 2500 subscribers.

Responsibility for the publication of *Dialogue* has been borne almost entirely by a small group of Mormon faculty and students, all volunteers, at Stanford University. Members of the Board of Editors around the nation have donated their time in evaluating manuscripts, and printing and mailing have been directed by volunteers in Salt Lake City. In fact, for the first three years all efforts were volunteer. Since 1968, some clerical assistance (averaging about \$300 per month) has been purchased at Stanford. No other personnel have been paid, and the income from subscriptions has been expended entirely for printing, mailing, and office supplies.

Until recently the subscription revenue met all costs of publication with a small margin. Then, despite cost cutting efforts, the national inflation pushed costs above current revenues. Because of the almost total dependence on volunteer help, publication gradually fell one issue behind schedule.

Although *Dialogue* has profited from the generous support of an outstanding group of editors, writers, artists, and academicians, it has lacked the advice of experienced business managers. The managing editors were grateful, therefore, when they were recently approached by several individuals of impressive administrative experience in business, government, and universities who were committed to *Dialogue's* objectives and concerned for its future. These men and women have volunteered to serve as a Board of Trustees:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Firm and Position</i>	<i>Church Position</i>
Joseph Black	Executive, Rockefeller Foundation (New York City, N.Y.)	Elders' Quorum Instructor
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Arvo VanAlstyne	Professor of Law University of Utah	Priesthood Instructor (Ex-Stake President)

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G. Wesley Johnson, Jr.	Assistant Professor of African History, Stanford University	Elders' Quorum Instructor
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G. Eugene England, Jr.	Dean of Academic Affairs St. Olaf's College (Northfield, Minn.)	Branch President
Robert A. Rees	Assistant Professor of English, University of California, Los Angeles	Sunday School and Primary Teacher

The first act of the new Board of Trustees was to examine *Dialogue's* financial standing. Discovering that publication and mailing costs were exceeding subscription revenue and that subscription rates had not been increased since 1967, it reluctantly but necessarily directed an increase to \$9 for new subscriptions and \$8 for renewals.

The Trustees are strongly committed to the view that *Dialogue* should meet the market test. That is, if its subscribers are unwilling to pay the full cost, it should not exist. However, there has never been a substantial advertising campaign. Since marginal costs are substantially below average costs, raising the circulation will bring down unit costs. Therefore, the decision has been reached to appoint unofficial *Dialogue* representatives throughout the stakes, wards and missions of the Church, and to undertake a selective mail solicitation. The Trustees have also decided to accelerate the publication schedule to bring the delinquent issue into correspondence with the calendar. Publishing three issues within a short time span will of course result in a temporary situation of costs accumulating more rapidly than revenues.

Once the publication schedule is current and the number of subscriptions raised to 10,000, *Dialogue* will be on a firm financial foundation. A full time business manager, in addition to clerical help, can ease the burden borne so long by the unpaid editors, leaving them to devote full attention to editorial policy and to maintaining and improving the quality of the journal.

Many of you have been approached for funds and assistance in promoting subscriptions. But we have it on the highest authority that we should all "be anxiously engaged in a good work and do many things of our own free will." Even if you have not been personally contacted, therefore, you will hopefully understand that contributions at this time are both needed and appreciated.

The Board of Editors will continue to contribute their time in soliciting, choosing, and editing articles while the Board of Trustees provide financial counsel and policy. With your help, far more people will have access to a journal committed to the exploration of Mormonism's value in a philosophically floundering world.

Garth L. Mangum  
Chairman, Board of Trustees