

DIALOGUE'S COMING OF AGE

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT begins both its twentieth volume and its twenty-first year with the publication of this issue. Launched in 1966 as a daring and earnest effort to transform the serious conversation of Mormonism from monologue to dialogue, the journal has thrived for two decades because of the energy and imagination of its writers and contributors. Charter subscribers or others who are fortunate enough to possess a complete set of *DIALOGUES* will count seventy-four issues on their bookshelf, packed with nearly a thousand articles on almost every element of the Mormon experience.

Seasoned scholars and sprightly newcomers have offered their perspectives on every issue that has faced or does face the Church, and virtually all significant scholarly books concerning the Latter-day Saints in the last generation have been reviewed in *DIALOGUE's* pages. And, in a culture that attempts to control its art and creative writing, the pages of *DIALOGUE* have been graced with the free and penetrating expression of Mormonism's finest minds. For quality, permanence, and continuity, *DIALOGUE* has no rival as a repository of contemporary thought about Mormonism and as a forum for continuing discussion. Indeed, it contains both an enduring printed record of Mormon thought and an enduring living tradition of intellectual freedom.

With Volume 20, No. 1, we begin a year-long celebration of *DIALOGUE*, past and future. Some articles will reflect searchingly on the origins and growth of *DIALOGUE*, as the editors of each of the four eras write about the ideas, values, and experiences that have made the concept of dialogue/*DIALOGUE* most salient to them. Eugene England begins with his vision as the founder

of *DIALOGUE* and he will be followed in the three subsequent issues by Robert Rees, Mary Bradford, and us. Toward the end of the year, we will publish a history of *DIALOGUE* by Wesley Johnson, a historian who was also co-founder of *DIALOGUE* at Stanford University in 1966 and served as interim editor in 1970. Brief commentaries by *DIALOGUE* readers, from charter subscribers to newcomers, will be sprinkled throughout the four issues of Volume 20.

But our twentieth-anniversary celebration will be far more than a reminiscence of things past. In this issue, for example, Armand Mauss, John Tarjan, and Marti Esplin present the results of the recent survey of *DIALOGUE* readers and discuss the “*DIALOGUE* phenomenon” — documenting the existence of a significant group of Latter-day Saints who are both highly committed and sturdily independent. The number and spirit of such people is enough to provide both comfort and courage to our readers, and perhaps some reflection among our critics.

Looking at our past and present provides strength and stability, but all that has gone before is merely prelude to the future. The heart of our twentieth anniversary volume, therefore, will be vintage, ongoing *DIALOGUE*, with a flare for the substance and style that has become the journal’s hallmark. With only modest diversions, therefore, our most significant commemoration will take the form of a renewed effort to publish the finest articles, fiction, poetry, and art available in and around the Mormon community in 1987. Join us in celebrating two decades of *DIALOGUE*.

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Editors