

of canonization rather than of translation, Article of Faith 8 notwithstanding. Perhaps we should just accept the Lord's familiarity with uninspired erotic arts and emulate Him.

P.S. to Molly Bennion: How did the Song come to be included in the biblical canon anyway?

James L. Rasmussen
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Sexual Morality Revisited

A recent reading of Wayne Schow's article "Sexual Morality Revisited" (37, no. 3 [Fall 2004]: 114-36) reminded me of why I cancelled my one-year subscription to *Dialogue* some fifteen years ago. I have problems with many of Schow's arguments, but I will mention only two here: Schow didn't do his homework regarding Church doctrine on the subject of sex (indeed, he disregarded the issue almost completely in favor of rehashing antiquated notions), and his arguments regarding the possible permissibility of nonmarital sex bespeak a lack of understanding of scriptural and prophetic teachings.

Regarding the nature of sex, I found it interesting that Schow took no effort to evaluate the statements of Church leaders anywhere in his essay. Indeed, he didn't even reference the Church by name until the very end of the article (134). His only mention of a General Author-

ity statement was apocryphal at best and no citation for it was given (135). Schow obviously has problems with how religion has distorted the message of sex and seems wont to accuse the Church right along with the rest of sectarian Christianity for "distortion" and "repressions" (135, 133). While his perspective may accurately reflect the uninformed sentiments of many Church members during the days of his "childhood and youth" (133) and even some today, a perusal of General Authority statements, both past and present, reveals a comprehensive doctrine of sex that includes the elements of edification, unification, joy, love, and validation. (See Jeffrey R. Holland, *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001], and *A Parent's Guide* [Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 46-49.) I think that if Schow did his homework he would find an LDS view of sex that contains much of the "balance, proportion, and holis[m]" (128) he seeks.

On the subject of nonmarital sex, Schow asserts the existential argument that the outcome of an act determines its morality, not the nature of the act itself; that sexual acts resulting in "positive outcomes" are moral if the contex-

tual and motivational circumstances are right, if everybody feels good, and if nobody gets hurt. But who gets to decide which motives are pure and which outcomes are positive? And who can tell ahead of time what the real outcome of a decision will be, especially when long-term consequences may not be appreciated for weeks or years?

My professional work with hundreds of patients over the past twenty-three years suggests that negative consequences always arise in connection with sexual activity outside marriage. The consequences are frequently long-lasting and multigenerational in nature, are nearly always devastating to innocent spouses and children, and are inevitably destructive to personal integrity and/or the marriage relationship itself. Sexual activity outside marriage cannot be considered acceptable in any circumstance since one cannot accurately predict *a priori* that there will be no negative consequences.

Finally, regardless of what sociological theses might be proffered to the contrary, I believe that the best argument against non-marital sex is that it is always offensive to the Lord. (The scriptural citations are too numerous to mention.) How can the morality of non-marital sex be debated when God has clearly and repeatedly said it is wrong? In this instance, He leaves no wiggle room for personal interpretation, unless one does not believe those scriptural and prophetic pronouncements to be valid. Such an assumption is often the underlying contention in *Dialogue* arguments and is certainly the implied line of reasoning in Schow's article. I think a person will only be confused regarding what is right in sexual areas if he or she chooses to not believe latter-day revelation and prophetic statements.

Stephen Lamb
Salt Lake City, Utah

Writing Awards for 2004

TRADITIONAL DIALOGUE AWARDS

ARTICLE:

Mary Dickson, "Living and Dying with Fallout,"
summer issue, \$300 award

FICTION:

Aaron Orullian, "The Homecoming,"
fall issue, \$300 award

POETRY:

Lisa M. de Rubilar, "Resurrection,"
fall issue, \$150 award

NEW VOICES: AWARDS FOR NEW WRITERS

ARTICLE:

Patrick Q. Mason, "The Possibilities of Mormon Peacebuilding,"
spring issue, \$300 publication award,
\$300 excellence in category award

FICTION:

Laura McCune-Poplin, "Salvation,"
winter issue, \$300 publication award
\$300 excellence in category award

Subscriptions to DIALOGUE:

Thirty-three writers who were twenty-five or younger or who were formally enrolled students submitted manuscripts deemed worthy of review by the editor and therefore qualified for a year's subscription to DIALOGUE.



Anonymous donors have generously provided means for making awards in two large categories, *New Voices: Awards for New Writers* and *Traditional DIALOGUE Awards*. DIALOGUE would welcome five-year pledges from other donors, which would allow us to expand the *Traditional DIALOGUE Awards* by offering awards in specified subject matters such as history (including biography), theology and scripture, social sciences, and issues and essays. To make a pledge or get further information, contact (1) the editor at dialoguemss@aol.com or (425) 898-9562; or (2) the business manager at dialoguejournal@msn.com or (801) 274-8210.