

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dialogue Reconsidered

I received a letter in the mail recently soliciting donations for the support of your journal. It included a well-written message from Hardy Redd and Levi Peterson to which I would like to refer. The first line of their letter read, “Who would have thought it possible—a serious scholarly journal responsibly examining religious faith and practice from a *friendly* yet independent point of view?” (emphasis mine).

I was a regular subscriber to *Dialogue* for many years—up until eight or nine years ago. It then achieved for me what I understood to be the fundamental goal of the publication, which was to provide thoughtful, sincere submissions that “enlightened our minds, encouraged our spirits and blessed [me] in both [my] individual and institutional faith,” to again quote from the Redd-Peterson letter. I found that the majority of the articles accomplished that goal, and I also decided that, as long as at least some of the articles were friendly and positive, I would happily overlook the other half.

But over a period of two or three years, I sensed a subtle movement of the tone of the articles from “friendly” to cynical/critical. I would open some issues and not find a single article that I felt “enlightened my mind” or strengthened my faith. And I ultimately decided that the publication was no longer worth my time.

Through the years, I have saved numerous *Dialogue* articles that I knew I would want to refer to again and again.

They were articles that “spoke” to me in special ways and, indeed, strengthened my faith and resolve to draw closer to my Heavenly Father. They were articles that I knew would never be published in the official Church magazines but that were, nevertheless, uplifting and supportive of the cornerstones of my faith, which are the existence of a loving Heavenly Father, the life and mission of the Savior, Jesus Christ, the restoration of the gospel of the Jesus Christ in our time through a newly called prophet of God, the veracity of the Book of Mormon as scripture, and the heavenly mission of the Church in our day accompanied by the priesthood of God.

I can be accurately described as a fairly “party-line” member of the Church. But I looked forward to receiving *Dialogue* when I perceived it as “friendly.”

I’m going to resubscribe now after these many years. You will receive my subscription in the mail in the next several weeks. And I will send along some additional money to further support your efforts. But it will only be for one year—just enough time to discover if things have changed in the last several years since I stopped receiving your journal.

I don’t send this letter in a threatening spirit, but rather to confirm to you that there are members of the Church who are very interested in receiving a *Dialogue* that is challenging yet *friendly* and that if the publication will focus on enlightening our minds and encouraging our spirits in a way