

ting men marry men and women marry women. Or did I miss something?

One other unrelated point: Muhlestein divided children into legitimate and illegitimate varieties. All children are legitimate. Last Sunday I held a baby on my lap whose parents were not married. And a grandmother bottle-fed another baby whose parents were unwed. Both of those children seemed as truly legitimate as the other children in church. We should avoid labeling any child, especially when that label refers to parental activity and/or is derogatory.

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What Is Dialogue's Mission?

I appreciated reading Richard Ward's "Dialogue Reconsidered" letter (*Dialogue* 40, No. 3 [Fall 2007]: v-vi). My guess is that the sentiments Ward expresses are shared by a number of former *Dialogue* readers. Certainly, they are similar to those expressed to me when I was *Dialogue's* editor and in subsequent years as I have had occasion to talk to former subscribers.

What has surprised me with the majority of such expressions is that they seem not to understand the mission of *Dialogue* even though it has been stated clearly in every issue since the second number of volume 1 (Summer 1966): "Dialogue is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of world religious thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic

and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage." Honestly and openly fulfilling this mission invariably means publishing articles and essays (as well as fiction and poetry) that at times are controversial and even potentially disturbing to some readers, not because an editor deliberately chooses this outcome but because he or she cannot avoid it.

Ward makes a distinction between those articles that are acceptable and those that are not by whether they are "friendly" (a term he borrows from the Redd-Peterson solicitation letter). He uses this word five times in his short letter. By "friendly" I assume Ward means affirming, reinforcing, validating, or, as he puts it, "uplifting and supportive of the cornerstones of my faith," which he then goes on to identify as the foundational principles of the Restored Church. The problem that I faced as editor of *Dialogue*, and which I assume has faced all previous and subsequent editors, is that what one person finds "friendly" may in fact be perceived as "unfriendly" by others.

Undoubtedly, some readers of the special issue on blacks and the priesthood (*Dialogue* 8, no. 1) found Lester Bush's profoundly important article "unfriendly" because it challenged long and deeply held beliefs about the inferiority of blacks and about the worthiness of black men to hold the priesthood. Others, who had experienced deep anguish in attempting to reconcile the Church's teaching with what they understood of the teachings of Jesus, may have experienced the article as the first "friendly" article they had read on the subject. Choosing an example