

ness and so has contributed significantly to the building of the restored kingdom of God in these latter days.

DIALOGUE's Valuable Service for LDS Intellectuals

Leonard Arrington

Many of you will find it difficult to understand the enormous importance DIALOGUE had to my generation and to young Latter-day Saint readers at the time of its founding — those between the ages of twenty and forty — who were experiencing the years of learning, of making important decisions, of developing personal philosophies, of forming patterns of life, all away from the center of Zion. In explaining this importance, let me be a little personal.

When I began college in 1935, the Church had only 750,000 members. The Idaho county where I had grown up and attended high school had fewer than 3,000 Latter-day Saints out of a total population of about 30,000. Our own town, Twin Falls, had 12,000 residents and probably not more than 200 Latter-day Saints, nearly all living on farms. Largely settled between 1905 and 1910 by midwestern Protestants, the town was not friendly to the Saints. There were no Mormon school teachers and no seminary. We learned about the gospel primarily in our small Sunday school and sacrament services.

When I was eighteen, I did a courageous (or perhaps foolhardy) thing for a young Latter-day Saint. I went, not to Brigham Young University or Utah State Agricultural College, where most Idaho Latter-day Saints seeking university education enrolled, but to the University of Idaho in Moscow — a university that in those days was not accustomed to accommodating very many Mormons.

But the University of Idaho had one saving grace — the LDS Institute of Religion, with a superb teacher named George Tanner, who had been trained at the University of Chicago Divinity School. As an article I wrote for the Summer 1967 issue of DIALOGUE indicates, the very first LDS Institute of Religion had been established at the University of Idaho in 1926. When they constructed the building, Church authorities were thoughtful enough to include rooms that would house twenty-two men students as well as a chapel, office, recreation room, and classrooms. The institute could thus be a center for teaching religion; for holding church-sponsored dances, parties, Sunday schools, and other activities; and for fellowshiping and personal living. I was lucky enough to be invited to live at the institute. The university gave credit for courses completed in the Old and New Testaments, Life of Christ, Christian History, Life and Letters of Paul, and Comparative Religions. At the same time, Brother Tanner also offered classes in Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Church history. I enrolled in all of them during my four years at the university.

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Brother Tanner, who taught at the Moscow institute for some forty-six years, helped us move from a grade school and high school understanding of Church history and doctrine to a university level. His instruction was fully equal in quality and content to our university courses in the sciences and humanities. His courses helped us to remain loyal and active Church members.

After we graduated, many of us migrated to the Midwest, East, and South, where Latter-day Saints were few and far between. Some married outside the Church and became inactive. How could we keep in touch with Latter-day Saint life and thought? There were a few books intended for educated Latter-day Saints — Widtsoe's *In Search of Truth, A Rational Theology*, and *Evidences and Reconciliations*; several of Lowell Bennion's manuals; and one or two other works intended to reconcile secular learning and Latter-day Saint scholarship. There were a few thoughtful articles in *The Improvement Era*, particularly when Bill Mulder was associate editor; but controversial subjects such as pacifism, polygamy, and the not-always-popular stress given to the Word of Wisdom, were almost universally shunned.

During 1939–43, when I was a graduate student at the University of North Carolina and at North Carolina State University, and in 1943–46 when I served with the armed forces in North Africa and Italy, I kept wishing there was a Latter-day Saint scholarly journal — an outlet for thoughtful articles by Latter-day Saint chemists, physicists, economists, sociologists, historians, lovers of literature, and lovers of art. I had no doubt that Mormonism — the gospel of Jesus Christ — was exalting and that Mormon professionals could demonstrate the superiority of our doctrine and way of life in every aspect of thought.

When I came to Utah with my wife in 1946 at the end of World War II and began researching in the Church Archives, I discussed this need for more articles written by Latter-day Saint scholars with some of my new friends and colleagues: Dick Poll, Gus Larson, George Ellsworth, Gene Campbell, Homer Durham, and others. We took our ideas to general board members of the MIA and Sunday School, all of whom responded, "We'll see what we can do!"

Those of us who had engaged in Mormon studies or who had felt the strong need for a more scholarly discussion of Mormonism thought this influence would continue to emanate from Brigham Young University and from the Institutes of Religion, as it had under the distinguished leadership of Franklin Harris, John A. Widtsoe, Joseph F. Merrill, and Franklin L. West. But in the late 1950s and early 1960s the Church educational system no longer encouraged intellectual pursuits with its earlier enthusiasm. Research and writing on controversial matters, at least, would henceforth have to be done primarily by Latter-day Saint professors and students at non-Church institutions.

Charging into the breach was a group of young Saints at Stanford University, fully aware of the wide support they would have from the rest of the LDS intellectual community. In the spring of 1965 I was returning from a professional convention in the East to Utah State University in Logan, where I was professor of economics, when I happened to sit next to Eugene England who was likewise flying West. He confided to me what he and Wes Johnson and their associates planned to do and asked for my support.

As a faculty member in a university where most professors and students were Latter-day Saints, I was well aware that many had intellectual anxieties. I taught an evening class at the LDS Institute in Logan, had been a high councilor in the Utah State University Stake for many years, and was now a member of the University Stake presidency. I had conducted dozens of interviews with couples getting married, with men about to be ordained elders, and with men and women called to ward and stake positions. So I was well aware of their needs and concerns. When Gene England told me of the plans for a journal, I encouraged him and in particular exhorted him to publish articles on Mormon history. He countered by challenging me to write the lead article for the first issue and to be, along with Lowell Bennion, an advisory editor. When I asked my ecclesiastical superior if that would be consistent with my Church assignment, he suggested I counsel with President Hugh B. Brown. President Brown gave his full approval. “We have nothing to fear in the search for truth,” he said, “the Church will not be damaged by a responsible independent voice.” He thought I was the kind of person who could give good advice.

I will never forget the day the first DIALOGUE arrived at our home in Logan. It was beautiful — more beautiful than any professional journal I had seen. It was well-designed and had wonderful articles — articles of lasting impact. There was Frances Menlove on “The Challenge of Honesty,” Victor Cline on the faith of a psychologist, Mario De Pillis on the quest for religious authority, and Claude Burtenshaw on “The Student: His University and His Church.” From the pulpit, there was a sermon by Truman Madsen on Joseph Smith. A roundtable discussion featured Richard Anderson, Robert McAfee Brown, and David Bennett on Sterling McMurrin’s *Theological Foundations of Mormonism*. There was poetry by Gene England and Stephen Gould and reviews by Mary Bradford, Ed Lyon, John Sorenson, and Laurence Lyon. There was a beautiful cover and layout design by Paul Salisbury and the artwork of Doug Snow. It was a great issue, and I’ve looked forward to every issue since.

I know from personal experience that the journal has benefited my generation and the generation of my students and children. I know for a fact that DIALOGUE has kept many people in the Church and in the culture who might otherwise have dropped out. I have received many letters, even from bishops, stake presidents, and General Authorities, who have expressed their gratitude for DIALOGUE and indicated what it has meant to them or to someone they loved.

I do not agree with every article that has been published in DIALOGUE, nor do I agree with the decision of the editors to publish every article that they have used. But I devoutly believe that the journal serves a worthy purpose. DIALOGUE has helped the spirit of the gospel permeate many circles that otherwise would never have given us the light of day. I say, long live DIALOGUE! Our profound thanks to Gene England, Wes Johnson, Bob Rees, Mary Bradford, and Jack and Linda Newell. Our profound admiration now goes to Ross and Mary Kay Peterson.