

SECOND GENERATION DIALOGUE

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO when *Dialogue* was conceived and brought forth at Stanford University by Eugene England, Wesley Johnson and a host of faithful members at the Stanford University Branch and excited volunteers from Utah and elsewhere, they were only part of the intellectual ferment of the sixties. "An idea whose time had come," this scholarly work of artistic expertise made the spring of 1966 come alive with the possibilities of *Dialogue*. England, in his introduction to the first issue describes his dialogue as a natural outgrowth of faith: "The very principles I accept as definitive of my life warn me to be continually open to the revelation of new possibilities for my life from both God and man. My faith encourages my curiosity and awe; it thrusts me into a relationship with all the creation."

But students grow up, and sometimes they lose their student excitement. When contemplating the complacent seventies, many products of the sixties wondered if the urgency of the intellectual quest would be repeated in the rising generation of Mormondom. There was little reassurance to be found in the findings of opinion surveys conducted at such barometers as BYU, findings that pointed to a stultifying homogeneity and desire for the status quo. *Dialogue* was accused of being a monologue; *Sunstone* attempted to create an entirely new student journal; student journals at universities, at BYU, fell upon hard times. Voices recommending open inquiry in the spirit of faith were growing weaker.

As the seventies drew to a close, however, thoughtful, well-researched, even award-winning essays began appearing with happy regularity in journals, magazines, even newspapers. *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, *BYU Studies* gained new life, much of it from the energy of vibrant student voices. An independent, issue-oriented student newspaper, *The Seventh East Press*, heralded a new day.

To bring greater attention to these encouraging developments, we asked Gary Bergera, who as an undergraduate at BYU won a Mormon History Best Article Award for 1980, to develop an issue largely devoted to the work of young scholars. As will be seen, the results of his efforts are reassuring indeed. Not only are these scholars unafraid to face the most challenging theological issues of our time, but they are also willing to do the homework that leads to insightful and readable works.

Several of our authors have been represented in *The Seventh East Press*—Bergera, Buerger, Ostler, Keller. They are joined by Ann Edwards-Cannon, also of BYU, and Tony Hutchinson, a Mormon graduate student at Catholic University.

Two other contributions round out this issue: James Christensen, who embodies youth in his fantasy art, and Jan Shipps, the distinguished historian whose perceptive studies of Mormon history have led her to share her generous life with us.

—The Editors