

NEWSLETTER

COMMITTEE ON MORMON SOCIETY AND CULTURE

No. 2, 1977

P.O. Box 7258, Univ. Sta.
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An Announcement and Invitation

An Evaluation Correlation Committee (ECC) has been organized at LDS Church headquarters to oversee all evaluations of Church organizations and programs. Research is already underway on the Young Women's program, the role of the bishop, regional meetings, and the recent TV Special. As part of its efforts, the committee recognizes the need to become aware of research which has already been done and people who can assist when needed in further research efforts.

In the past six months, a number of studies concerning Church populations or Church programs have been "unearthed." For example, some relevant studies evaluating Family Home Evening have turned up, as well as some interesting data on youth programs of the Church. Much of the information being received by the ECC has been unpublished, relatively unknown, or even confidential studies which have been filed away in personal files. Anyone who may have copies of relevant research in their files are asked to share a copy of let the ECC know whom to contact concerning obtaining a copy.

The Committee has also recognized that with a small staff and a potential multitude of projects, there is obviously more to do than presently committed resources permit. One option for solving this problem is to identify resource people who may have some interest, skills, and background related to issues under study. Such resource people can offer helpful perspectives on difficult problems, review proposals and final reports, or be called upon as principal investigators on major research projects. Those who would be interested in getting involved in this kind of work are asked to provide the ECC with some background information indicating what kinds of research they are capable of and interested in doing.

Stan E. Weed, Associate Director of Evaluation and Executive Secretary for the Evaluation Committee, wishes to hear from anyone interested in these activities. Address him at: Correlation Department, 18th Floor
50 East North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

BYU Theses and Dissertations Apparently on the Mormons, 1977

Richard E. Thorne. A study of the relationship of selected values with volunteerism in three northern Utah cities. M.A. Communications.

Jerry D. Lee. A study of the influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina, 1882-1975. M.A. History.

Mark A, Steele. Cultural adjustment of ESL students with the Wasatch Front. M.A. Linguistics.

Laurel H. Roach. Attitudes toward death and dying among the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) children. M.A. CDFR.

Clark V. Johnson. Mormon education in Mexico: the rise of the Sociedad Educativa y Cultural. Ph.D. History.

George W. Pace. The effectiveness of mission presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as measured by six selected criteria. D. of Religious Education. Church History and Doctrine,

Leland Grant Shields. Language challenges facing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in preaching the gospel to every nation. D. of Religious Education. Church History and Doctrine.

Article Planned on Mormons as an Ethnic Group

Dean L. May of the Church Historical Department has agreed to write an article on the Mormons for inclusion in a Harvard volume on American ethnic groups. He invites comment from any CMSC readers on the basis of the following preliminary outline.

I. Mormons are considered here as an ethnic group because their distinctive doctrines have combined with historical circumstance to produce a people whose norms and values have set them apart from other Americans and whose past is clearly identified with a particular geographical area.

II. Origins

- A. Began as a religious movement in Jacksonian America to "restore"
- B. Founding of Church

III. Migrations, in the Midwest

- A. Kirtland
- B. Missouri
- C. Nauvoo
- D. Forced from Nauvoo

IV. Migration to Rocky Mountains, to 1900

- A. Main migration, uniquely, aimed to move out of the U.S.
- B. Organization of overland migration (considerable detail)
- C. Railroad completion eased economics of transporting new immigrants

D. Perpetual Emigrating Fund

V. Arrival in Great Basin and Initial Settlement (subdivisions omitted here)

VI. Mormon Culture

- A. Considerable uniformity; most cultural expression related to church
- B. Emphasis on practical activity, not fine arts
- C. Architecture largely derivative
- D. Weak literature but strong journalistic tradition
- E. Anti-intellectualism/folk expression
- F. Technology always welcomed

VII. Economic Institutions, communitarian flavor continues

- A. Law of Consecration and Stewardship
- B. Coinage, economic planning and promotion
- C. Consecration to cooperation
- D. The United Order
- E. Welfare Program, the fast, food storage

VIII. Mormon ethnic consciousness

- A. Doctrines influencing development of
- B. Religious organization

IX. Education (subdivisions omitted here)

X. Politics (subdivisions omitted here)

XI. Social structure

- A. Primary division socially is between Mormon and Gentile
- B. Social stratification internally is by church office
- C. Ward has since mid-1800s been the fundamental social group

XII. Family and Kinship (subdivisions omitted here)

XIII. Intergroup Relations (subdivisions omitted here)

Key closing point: Mormon accommodation to American society less complete than commonly thought.

XIV. Group Maintenance (subdivisions omitted here)

XV. Ethnic Commitment

Session on Geography of Mormon Culture

As previously announced in the newsletter, a session on this subject was included in the

program of the Association of American Geographers annual meeting held in Salt Lake City. It was organized and chaired by Klaus D. Gurgel, Syracuse University. Several score attendees heard these papers:

S. George Ellsworth (Utah State University). The Expansion of Mormonism: Geographical Considerations. As read the paper was essentially limited to the period from 1830 to 1850. A key point was that the early spread of the Church's message was largely a function of where converts had relatives to whom they in turn could go. Mission work was unplanned and opportunistic, geographically. Planning began after the move to Utah, when personal ties were no longer as adequate guide as earlier. Finally, while Mormonism was a church on the frontier, it was not a frontier church, for most of its members came from the more densely settled areas (shown with maps).

Jerald R. Izatt and Dean R. Louder (Laval U.). The Core-Periphery Dichotomy: Its Meaning for Mormons." Thesis: "Policies and programs of the church, rather than contributing to an immediate solution to problems incident to growth, are exacerbating them by creating on the periphery a climate of hardship, stress, fear, and anxiety. These states of being are not new to Mormonism, but what is new, compared to the church of generations ago, is that they are not generally shared by all and do not originate outside the group. Indeed, Latter-day Saints residing on the periphery bear a disproportionate share of a burden created by the institution itself. (A handout outline and charts accompanied the presentation.)

Gary Brent Peterson (operating through his own company, Photogeographics, in Bountiful, Utah), presenting a slide-tape show entitled "The Mormon Barn." This feature used superb photography, (mainly) appropriate music, and narration by Peterson and informants, as he showed that there is no "Mormon barn," but an interesting variety (even individuality) in the occurrence of this artifact from Lewiston on the north to Fillmore on the south in Utah. This sophisticated piece of art, observation, and analysis deserves many more showings.

A final paper, by D. Brooks Green (graduate student, Syracuse U.), explained the patterning of the "marriage field" for residents of Teton valley, Idaho. A major determinant of the widespread distribution of spouses is attendance of many of the young people of the valley at either Ricks College or BYU. Some 65% of LDS marriages were in a temple.

Headed Toward the Press

Ben Bennion and Merrill Ridd, geographers (currently both are at the University of Utah), are at work planning an atlas of Mormonism to appear in conjunction with the sesquicentennial series on the History of the Latter-day Saints. They are still at a stage where they could benefit from suggestions on what data are worth displaying and how those data may be obtained and shown to best advantage.

A symposium was recently held at BYU on death and associated phenomena, organized by Spencer Palmer under auspices of the Center for Religious Studies of the University. Observations on Mormon ideas relating to death were made by Truman Madsen. A volume will be published including his statements.

The Deseret Language and Linguistics Society recently met in annual sessions and the proceedings will appear in the near future. None of the papers were specifically on "Mormon language" but some LDS slants on aspects of the subject appear here and there. V. Lynn Tyler and James Taylor, at the Language and Intercultural Research Center (240 B-34, BYU) have considered trying to promote, for the next meeting of DLLS, a session in continuance of the 1973 and 1974 Conference on Language of the Mormons. If interested in contributing a paper, contact them.

Davis Bitton, Church Historical Department, has produced a remarkably comprehensive review article on "Mormon Polygamy." He would be willing to share the 29-page typescript with those having research interest in the topic, or contact the CMSC editor who has a copy. Judicious summary and evaluation is given of scores of articles, books and theses on every aspect of the subject, including twentieth century phenomena.

Anthropologist Mark Leone (Univ. of Maryland) now has completed the manuscript of his forthcoming volume (Harvard University Press) on "Mormonism. An Anthropological View of its Development in the United States over the Last One Hundred Years." It combines the material from his field research on the ecology of LDS communities on the Little Colorado with subsequent data and analysis on Mormon life in relation to the larger U.S. society.

The Mormon History Association meeting at Kirtland, Ohio, April 22-24, included the following papers:

Paul L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith's temples: a study in the creation of sacred space," with comment by M. Leone.

Miriam Elizabeth Higdon, "Zion, the New Jerusalem on the American continent: the history of a concept," and Glen M. Leonard "Mormons as Jacksonian Americans," with comment by Chas. Peterson.

Malcolm R. Thorp, "Religious and social backgrounds of Mormon converts in Britain, 1937-1852."

Miscellaneous Publications

Thomas G. Alexander, ed. *Essays on the American West, 1974-1975* (Charles Redd Monographs in Western History No. 6). Provo: BYU Press, 1976. (The Redd Lectures for the academic year.)

Richard H. Jackson. Images of the West: elements of the Mormon landscape. Provo: Richard H. Jackson (Geography Dept., BYU), 1976.

Davis Bitton. Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies. Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1977. 640 p. Listing, description, and abstract or annotation on each autobiographical piece or diary discovered by searching all libraries and archives with a significant collection of Mormon materials. An index by subject is provided.

Francine Bennion, "LDS working mothers," Sunstone, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring, 1977, 6-15. Conclusion: the results for families vary

Davis Bitton, "'These licentious days': dancing among the Mormons," *ibid.*, 16-27.

Peter and Marie Myer, "New directions in Mormon art," *ibid.*, 32-64. This includes many pages of fine color reproductions and extremely valuable information and comment on how things look these days from the perspective of the curator of BYU's collections. This is one of the very few really central pieces on Mormon art.

Gerrit Gong, "Staying cool: five Mormon stances toward scientific controversy," *Century 2*, Vol. 1, No. 7, March 1977, 42-51.

Colin Douglas. "Book review, The philosophical foundations of Mormon artistic mediocrity -- Mormon Arts, Volume One," *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, No. 5, January 1977, 17-30, with Lorin F. Wheelwright, "'Response to the critique," pp. 31-42.

The Mormon Family, Proceedings of the Annual Family Research Conference, Phillip R. Kunz, Editor, Brigham Young University Family Research Institute, 1975, contains a substantial number of papers on this subject. Among them are these:

Stephen J. Bahr and Howard M. Bahr, "Religion and family roles: a comparison of Catholic, Mormon, and Protestant families."

Stan L. Albrecht and C. Bradford Chappell, "Intergenerational contact and alienation in elderly Mormon families."

Spencer J. Condie, "An assessment of role strain within the Mormon family." Evan T. Peterson, "Parental-adolescent relationships in the Mormon family."