

NEWSLETTER
SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MORMON LIFE

Volume 1, Number 2

23 November 1979

1979 Annual Meeting

The 1979 annual meeting was held in Boston in conjunction with the American Sociological Association with eleven in attendance. A highlight of the meeting was getting to know Dr. Nels Anderson. It was suggested that our next meeting, which will be in New York, might feature an oral interview with him.

As specified in the constitution, with those in attendance constituting the required quorum for this first meeting; an election of officers for next year was held. It was unanimously agreed that the temporary officers should serve for one more year. These are:

President: Glenn M. Vernon, University of Utah
Vice-President: Armand Mauss, Washington State University
Secretary-Treasurer: Marie Cornwall, University of Minnesota
Board Members: Joan Menke, University of California at Los Angeles
Arland Thornton, University of Michigan.

The constitution also specifies that nomination for officers for the subsequent year (1980-81) should be invited from those in attendance and subsequently from the membership, with the nomination period closing at the end of December. Nominations received during the meeting were:

President: Armand Mauss, Washington State
James Duke, BYU
Secretary-Treasurer: Julie Wolfe-Potrusky, University of Utah
Board Member: Chad Richardson, Pan American University

Nominations are hereby invited from any member of the Society for any of the offices. The attached roster identifies the current members. A nominating form is attached at the end of this newsletter.

Two original papers were presented. One by Kay Gillespie of Weber State College and one by Dean Louder and Jerald R. Izatt of Universite Laval in Quebec. Arland Thornton of the University of Michigan, reviewed and discussed a recently published article by Jon P. Alston and David Johnson (Texas A & M University): "A Cross Cultural Analysis of Mormon Missionary Success." Abstracts of the Gillespie and the Louder-Izatt papers are included herewith.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Future meetings held in conjunction with the American Sociological Association meetings will be as follows: 1980 New York, 1981 Toronto 1982 San Francisco.

PACIFIC SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, The PSA meeting will be in San Francisco, April 9 - 12 at the Sheraton Palace. Armand Mauss is chairing a regular PSA session on the Sociology of Mormonism. Those interested in participating on the program should contact him at Washington State.

Also our Society will hold an evening meeting (not a part of the official PSA program) on Friday, April 11th from 5:30 - 6:30, at the convention hotel.

Members are invited to make suggestions as to what type of program would be most interesting and helpful for them. Send to Glenn M. Vernon, University of Utah.

WESTERN SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION. WSSA meetings in Albuquerque, New Mexico April 24-26 will include an official section on the Sociology of Mormonism. Wilford E. Smith, BYU is chairing the session. The deadline for submitting papers was November 15th. All are invited to attend.

POSSIBLE SPRING MEETING IN SALT LAKE CITY AREA. If there is sufficient interest in doing so, a spring meeting could be set up to provide an opportunity for interested members to get together. We can do whatever we want to do. We could have a paper-presenting meeting, a meeting exploring some particular issue such as what is happening to Mormonism as the internationalization thereof is taking place. Could be a social event. The group need not be large. Anyone interested, in this possibility is invited to let Glenn M. Vernon know of this interest and to suggest the type of program desired.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

A. Craig Lundahl, Western New Mexico University, presented a paper on Near Death Experiences of Mormons at the October meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in San Antonio.

B. Our Secretary-Treasurer, Marie Cornwall, has entered the Ph.D. program in Sociology at the University of Minnesota. We wish her well.

C. A journal, Measuring Mormonism, edited by Glenn M. Vernon has been published yearly since 1974. The 1979 issue includes the following articles:

A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Mormon Missionary Success Jon P. Alston
David Johnson

The Religiosity of 'Mormon Academicians

Granger C. Peck

Utah's Liberal Drug Politics:
Mormons, Morality & Marihuana

John F. Galliher
Linda Basilick

Research Note:

Don B. Center

Copies are available for \$2.00. Copies of vols. 1, 2, and 4 are also available.

D. New members to our society are welcome'.

As set forth in the constitution, membership is open to persons having a scholarly interest in Mormon Life who concur in the purpose of the organization, i.e. to foster and promote the scholarly study of the social, cultural and religious institutions and behavior of Mormons as a people. Annual dues are \$2.00

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE 1979 ANNUAL MEETING IN BOSTON

QUACKERY AND MORMONISM: A LATTER DAY DILEMMA

L. Kay Gillespie, Weber State College

Mormonism and medicine have had an interesting relationship since the early history of the church. Statements by early church leaders, statements by present leaders and the use of church doctrines to support various foams of unconventional practices in health care have all combined to create confusion in the minds of many members of the church. This confusion is a product of several dilemmas regarding Mormonism and health related matters. These include:

1. Which model of health is to be used and sanctioned by the LDS Church in keeping with its role as a world-wide church?
2. In lieu of direct revelation, how are conflicting statements by church leaders to be interpreted and resolved?
3. What is to be the membership status of unconventional health practitioners in various states and countries who violate the standards of established medicine?
4. What is God's plan for health care--natural health foods? Medicine? How much technology is of God and how much from Man?

Peripheral Mormondom: The Frenetic Frontier

Jerald R. Izatt and Dean R. Louder Universite Laval, Quebec 10

A conceptual framework called the center periphery dichotomy is employed to organize a collection of observations and experiences regarding the rapid and persistent expansion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints outward from its traditional hearth area. The central thesis is that a center, rich in resources and population, exercises dominion over a marginal periphery which seeks to become central. It is argued that policies and programmes of the church often exacerbate the problems incident to growth on the periphery, contributing to a climate of hardship, stress, fear, and anxiety which largely vitiates peripheral members' ability to respond to the demands for adjustment made of them. 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 necessarily originate outside the group. Latter-Day Saints residing on the periphery bear a disproportionate share of burdens created by the institution itself.

In conclusion and in the interest of stimulating discussion, the authors venture a few suggestions as to possible future courses of action whose nature reveals that unusual and daring initiatives are required to cope with the problems described and discussed.

Suggestions for future meetings and activities of the SOCIETY

NOMINATIONS for Officers for 1980-81.

President

Vice President

Secretary-Treasurer

Board Members (two will be elected)

Nominations are open through December, 1979. A mail voting will be conducted in January, of all official members at that time.

Send Nominations to Glenn M. Vernon, Dept. of Sociology, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112.