

NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MORMON LIFE

Volume 3, No. 3

October, 1981

RECENT MEETINGS OF INTEREST

SSSML Annual Meeting

About a score of enthusiastic "Mormon buffs" turned out for the program of our annual meeting on August 23, 1981, in Toronto. After a brief official business meeting, the format became one of "Author Meets Critic." The author in this case was Klaus J. Hansen (Queen's University, Ontario), whose newest book, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, was the main topic for discussion. His critic was Rodney Stark of the University of Washington. The book is a study of what might be called the "domestication" or assimilation of Mormonism into American life after the days of polygamy, the Council of Fifty, and other such "un-American" practices of the Church during the 19th century. Hansen focuses mainly on general cultural assimilation, but he emphasizes particular institutional transformations also in the areas of the economy, politics, marriage and sexuality, race relations, and the management of the trauma of death. Stark was generally appreciative of Hansen's work, but he was critical of a tendency he saw in the book to "explain culture by culture," simply describing the rearrangement of various cultural elements without explaining how these were brought about by the day-to-day activities of people. Stark was critical also of some of Hansen's uses of concepts borrowed from psychology, anthropology, and sociology, cautioning us to avoid the considerable array of "pseudo-science" notions available to the unwary. All in all, it was a stimulating meeting.

Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASR)

Also meeting in Toronto in late August was the ASR, which (among other things) publishes *Sociological Analysis*, one of two or three major journals in the sociology of religion. (Incidentally, SSSML President Armand Mauss was recently elected to the Executive Council of the ASR). Meeting at St. Michael's college on the campus of the University of Toronto, the ASR this year featured a session on Mormonism that had been organized by Jon Alston, of Texas A& M University. Papers were presented by Donald Dyal (also Texas A & M) on the persistence of agrarian values in Mormon culture; by James Duke and Barry Johnson (BYU) on an empirical analysis of well-being and happiness in Mormon families, and an explanation for the same; and by O. Kendall White (Washington & Lee University) on Mormons for ERA as an internal social movement.

Discussant for the three papers was Armand Mauss. The session was crowded with ASR members, most of whom, of course, were not Mormons or even "Mormon buffs," which speaks well for a growing general scholarly interest in the study of Mormon culture.

Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR)

This organization, which publishes the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (perhaps the leading journal in the field); held its annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, between October 28 and November 1, 1981. While it did not feature a special session on Mormon life, there were a few papers presented on Mormon topics and/or by members of our organization: Warner Woodworth and Todd Britsch (BYU) and Taggart Frost (Univ. of Northern Iowa) had a paper entitled, "Attitudinal Dispositions toward Technology and Religiosity;" and Alice Allred Pottmeyer and Hazel Davis Rigby (Mormons for ERA), from the D.C. area, presented "Mormon Women and their Networks and their Dominoes." One session that was a special feature was the one on "Religion in Middletown," out of the large ongoing "Middletown III" project. Howard Bahr and Bruce Chadwick (BYU), who have been closely associated with that project from its inception, had papers on that panel. James Richardson (Univ. of Nevada-Reno), a member of the executive council of SSSML, also had a paper (with colleague Brock Kilbourne) entitled "Violence and New Religions: Historical and Theoretical Analyses."

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF INTEREST

Pacific Sociological Association (PSA)

The PSA will hold its annual 1982 meetings at the downtown Holiday inn, San Diego, California, from April 21 to April 24, 1982. As in previous recent years, it will feature a special session on Mormon life or subculture, which will be organized and chaired by Dr. Rosemary Bahr (Dept. of Sociology, BYU). Anyone contemplating reading a paper at that session should contact Rosemary directly as soon as possible. The deadline for submitting papers will probably be mid-January. Whether you read a paper at the PSA convention or not, you should by all means try to attend. It will be a great opportunity to make contact with various students and scholars on Mormon topics in one of the most pleasant cities in the West!

Western Social Science Association (WSSA)

This organization also usually has a special session on Mormon topics and meets in mid-Spring. The meeting this year will be in Denver from April 21-24. Further information about this meeting and the submission of papers for it can be obtained by contacting our Vice-President, James T. Duke (Dept. of Sociology, BYU). Too bad about the conflict with PA, but go to one or the other!

American Sociological Association

American Sociological Association (ASA), Society for the Study of Social Problems (MP) and the Society for the Sociological Study of Mormon Life (SSSML) will all be meeting-together again 1982, as usual. This year, however, the meetings will occur again in a western city, San Francisco, which we hope will be easier to get to for a lot of our SSSML members. People who are not members of ASA or SSSP may contact Armand Mauss (Dept. of Sociology, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington 99164) for details on exact times and places, but these will occur in early September... The ASA will be meeting in the Hilton Hotel, but the SSSP, and probably our SSSML with it, will be meeting nearby in the Sheraton Palace. Deadlines for submitting papers are usually around January 1st for the ASA and January 15th for the SSSP. Our SSSML program has yet to be planned, and Armand will welcome ideas and suggestions at this time from the membership about what might make for a stimulating program.

CALL FOR MEMBER INPUT INTO THIS NEWSLETTER

It has been gratifying to get some feedback, at least from some of our newest members, about their scholarly interests and activities relating to Mormon matters (see below). However, this Newsletter will be more useful the more of that sharing we can do. We urge you, therefore, to take some time and fill out the sheet herewith attached; not only will you thereby automatically renew your membership in the SSSML, but you will also contribute to the ever-widening grapevine of shared information and interests. ALSO, don't forget the invitation made in the last Newsletter for people to submit (1) abstracts of papers read or published elsewhere, and (2) 500-word "mini-articles" on any work you have done lately on a Mormon-related topic. These kinds of contributions from the membership will help gradually to move this Newsletter in the direction of a journal and to help it meanwhile to fulfill some of a journal's functions, at least minimally.

CALL FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your dues for calendar year 1982 are now payable. We have been forced to raise the dues, although they remain at a modest \$3.00. Payment of these dues will enable you to receive the Newsletters (at least three) for next year and keep you in touch with activities and publications among your colleagues studying Mormon life and culture. We cannot produce these newsletters without your support, so pay up, please, before you forget about it in the upcoming holiday rush!

UPCOMING ELECTION

All of our officers are up for replacement (or perhaps re-election) early in 1982. We will be electing a President-elect and Vice-President (one office), a Secretary-Treasurer, and

three Council Members. In accordance with Article VI of our Constitution, a special elections committee will be appointed (ad hoc) to run this election between January and March 1982, but **NOMINATIONS CAN BE SENT IN STARTING IMMEDIATELY** to our current president (Armand Mauss). The elections committee will announce later when nominations will be closed and also other details about the election. **DON'T WAIT! PARTICIPATE!** (You can even nominate yourself!)

FOCUS ON MEMBERS

The following SSSML members, most of them new to our organization, have sent back letters or the news sheets (attached to the previous Newsletter) giving a run down on their interests and activities. (YOU TOO CAN BE FEATURED IN THESE PAGES by filling out and returning the news sheet attached herewith!).

DAVID G. BROMLEY, Department of Sociology, University of Hartford (West Hartford, Conn. 06117) is interested in the comparative study of religious movements, especially new ones. With Anson Shupe, Dave is the author of a pair of fine recent books on the so-called "Moonies" and their opponents ("Moonies" in America and The New Vigilantes, both Sage Press publications during the last year or so).

MONIQUE CHILDS (4702 Mendoza Ave., San Jose, California 95111) is interested in psychology and the Mormon Church, husband-wife relationships in the church, and the woman's role today.

HAROLD T. CHRISTENSEN (7550 Eads Ave., #204, La Jolla, Calif. 92037) is Professor Emeritus from Purdue University and well known for his series of publications comparing Mormons with others in family and sexual behaviors. He is continuing his studies of family sociology (esp. authority patterns, sex roles, sexual standards, etc.), and of cross-cultural comparisons of premarital sexual behavior. Watch for his latest article to appear in the Jan.-Feb. (1982) issue of Sunstone.

GODFREY J. ELLIS (Dept. of Family Relations and Child Development, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Okla. 74078) has current research projects under-way on family violence and on the impact of TV on family relationships, both in the Mormon setting and otherwise. Some of you may have seen his article in the Feb., 1981, issue of the Ensign. Also, Godfrey is at present in **NEED OF BOTH AUTHORS AND REVIEWERS** for forthcoming sessions he is chairing at meetings of The National Council on Family Relations, Popular Culture Association, and the American Culture Association, **AS WELL AS** for a special June, 1983 issue of the Journal of Family Issues for which he is Guest Editor. Write to him directly with your contribution and proposals.

ERIC FOUCART {500 Emilien, Charlesbourg - Est, P. Q. G2L 1P1, CANADA) is just beginning a study of Mormon branches and members in Quebec. He is stud-

ying in part with Professor Dean Louder, one of our charter members, of the Geography Department at Universite Laval in Quebec City.

KLAUS J. HANSEN (Department of History, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6, CANADA) is interested in the transformation of American culture from 1800 to 1860, and in the transformation of Mormon culture from 1869 to 1930. His groundbreaking study, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (1961), recently reissued, focused largely on the period before Brigham Young's death, and now his new *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981) carries the theme of Mormon assimilation into the 20th century. (This latest book was, of course, the focus of our last annual meeting in Toronto.)

NADINE HANSEN (20571 Scofield Drive, Cupertino, Calif. 95014) is interested in the woman's role in the Mormon Church, and in the various ways of expressing that role. She is concerned especially with that broad middle-ground between the narrow stereotype of the "traditional" Mormon woman, on the one hand, and the conspicuously discontented feminist Mormon woman, on the other. A paper along this line by her is scheduled for publication later this year in an issue of *Dialogue* devoted to the theme of Mormon women.

JERRY C. JOLLEY (Social Science Division, Lewis-Clark State College, Lewis-ton, Idaho 83501) is a 1975 Ph.D. from the University of Utah with broad general interest in the sociology of Mormon life and culture.

JOSEPHINE M. KASTELER (4921 Cottonwood Lane, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117) has interests and research in behavioral changes, social support, health and the family.

CHRISTOPHER PLANT (Dept. of History, Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs, Wyo. 82901) is a recent arrival in the West from Rochester, New York where he is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Rochester and is doing a dissertation based on statistical analyses of Iroquoian census records. He is especially interested in perceptions about Mormons, and discrimination against them, in non-Mormon communities.

MARK SCHUSTER (3950 Catamarca Drive, San Diego, Calif. 92124) is an anthropologist and licensed family therapist practicing in San Diego and anxious to make contacts with others of similar interest and expertise.

MAX E. STANTON (Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences, BYU-Hawaii, Laie,, Hawaii 96762) has been teaching sociology and anthropology at Laie for the past ten years. His Ph.D. dissertation in anthropology at the University of Oregon dealt with the Samoan saints in the Mormon village of Laie.

SHEPHERD BROTHERS: Gary (Dept. of Sociology, Oakland University, Rochester Mich. 48063) and Gordon Dept. of Sociology, University of Central Arkansas, Conway,

Ark. 72032) have a great partnership going. They have recently finished a book manuscript, now under editorial consideration, entitled *A Kingdom Transformed: Rhetorical Patterns in the Institutionalization of Mormonism*. It is a study of the transformation and assimilation of Mormonism, based upon a content analysis over time of the rhetoric used by church leaders in General Conference talks and the like. They welcome contacts and collaborations with others having similar interests and are willing to share their data with people wanting to do smaller focused studies on rhetoric.

NEW PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO SOCIAL SCIENTISTS WATCHING THE MORMON SCENE

Books:

1. Lawrence Foster's *Religion and Sexuality* (Oxford University Press, 1981) and
2. Louis J. Kern's *An Ordered Love* (Univ. of Pittsburg Press, 1981), in an astonishing coincidence, both deal with comparisons of the 19th century Mormons, Oneida Perfectionists, and Shakers; were both published at the same time (within a month of each other); and yet were written totally independently! A review of the two of them will appear soon in *Dialogue* (the authors review each other!) and again next year some time in the *American Journal of Sociology*.
3. Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981) was mentioned above in the reference to Professor Hansen and his work. A review of it will appear soon in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.
4. Mark P. Leone, *The Roots of Modern Mormonism* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), a controversial study by— a solid anthropologist which attributes to modern Mormonism some surprising ironies and anomalies based upon an intensive historical and anthropological study of Mormon settlements along the Little Colorado River in Arizona. This book is reviewed in the latest issue of the *Sunstone Review* (1:2).
5. Peter Bart, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Simon and Schuster, 1981), a novel also reviewed in the same issue of *Sunstone Review* by Herbert Harker, who calls the novel a "soap opera conspiracy? story. Set in December, 1980, its main plot deals with the near take-over of the Mormon Church by a cabal of ambitious and corrupt financiers bent on using it as an instrument for taking over the whole country. Many subplots go on along the margins. Stereotypes and caricatures abound for all of the aspects and varieties of leaders and people in the Church that have appeared over the years in various sensational and anti-Mormon media. The same kind of story and characterizations set among the Jews would have brought howls of protest from the Anti-Defamation League and from liberal politicians and commentators of all kinds! Don't waste your money buying the book, but try to get one from the library, just for laughs.

6. Newell K. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People within Mormonism, 1820-1980* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), due out any moment. This is a convincing study mainly of the internal pressures and changes within the Church that led to the traditional policy of denying the priesthood to blacks (with a brief epilogue bringing us up to 1980); based upon church and other archival materials, press reports across time, and many other sources.

Articles:

1. O. Kendall White, Jr., and Daryl White, "Abandoning an Unpopular Policy: An Analysis of the Decision Granting the Mormon Priesthood to Blacks," *Sociological Analysis* 41:3 (Fall, 1980).
2. Armand L. Mauss, "White on Black among the Mormons: A Critique of White and White," forthcoming also in *Sociological Analysis*, probably 42:4 (Winter, 1981).
3. Armand L. Mauss, "The Fading of the Pharaoh's Curse: The Decline and Fall of the Priesthood Ban against Blacks in the Mormon Church." *Dialogue* XIV:3(Fall, 1981).
4. Howard M. Bahr, "Religious Inter-marriage and Divorce in Utah and the Mountain States." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20:3 (Sept. 1981).
5. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "American-Born Sects: Initial Findings." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20:2 (June, 1981), which features Mormonism prominently along with other "sects."
6. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Sects and Cults." *American Journal of Sociology* 85:1376-95 (1980), which also deals in large part with Mormons.

ALSO, of course, various articles of interest to social scientists in the quarterly *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (P.O. Box 1387, Arlington Va. 22210); *Sunstone* (a bi-monthly magazine on Mormon topics), now in business for six years, and *The Sunstone Review* (a tabloid bi-monthly review of books and activities on the Mormon scene, published on a staggered schedule with the magazine), now just two issues old; both magazine and review available via Box 2272, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110; *Exponent II*, a quarterly tabloid coverage of different ways of being a Mormon woman and of various topics of interest to modern Mormon women (P.O. Box 37, Arlington, Mass. 02174); the *Journal of Mormon History*, an annual now in its eighth year (published by the Mormon History Association, P.O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602); and, of course, *BYU Studies*, also published out of BYU. Anyone hoping to keep up on scholarly developments in the study of Mormon life and culture should have regular access to all these journals.

MORMONISM: TRENDS AND COMPARISONS IN STUDENT ATTITUDES (A mini-article submitted by Richard T. Shaefer)

In his introduction to *Research on Mormonism* 1974, Professor Glenn Vernon correctly notes that Mormonism is a neglected area of research in the social sciences. Among the gaps are measures of Mormon opinion on various political, moral and religious issues. As a result, there is an absence of published reports about what this group believes (as opposed to what it is taught) regarding a variety of questions and topics. There is, however, no lack of commentators who assume to know Mormon opinion on any subject, and are even more than eager to pronounce on what they offer as the Mormon consensus. Our interest in empirically measuring Mormon attitudes grew out of a survey that Professor Richard Poll administered to his mass-attended, history class in 1969. This questionnaire both generated a modest amount of notoriety and produced some very interesting results. It now seemed possible to exact some fairly precise information about what at least one segment of Mormon people, students attending Brigham Young University, felt about a wide range of issues, and to determine changes in these attitudes over time.

The data source for the following descriptive analyses are surveys of the opinions of samples of Brigham Young University (BYU) students in December of 1969 and in December of 1974 (Note: The 1974 data were collected with the assistance of Dr. James B. Allen). The questions posed in 1974 were identical to those asked five years earlier, except for the added items on foreign policy, the pardon of former President Nixon, and the role of women in the church and society. For comparative purposes, virtually the same survey was administered to students enrolled in sociology courses at Western Illinois University (WIU). Western is a state university located in west-central Illinois of approximately 14,000 students, the majority of whom are from the metropolitan Chicago area. Interesting comparisons from the survey can be made between the data collected in 1969 at BYU and that collected in 1974. Distinct attitudinal shifts are immediately perceptible. We have already noted, for instance, how student attitudes have changed towards blacks. This change is not only significant in showing greater racial tolerance, but it is also the only grouping of propositions in which the Mormon youth sampled at BYU have adopted what would be characterized as a more liberal stance in the intervening five years. In all other categories, indeed, on virtually all other questions, a pronounced, and at times a major movement toward what might be termed a conservative posture is observable. Political propositions, where the labels conservative and liberal are most recognizable, and perhaps where they are also most appropriate, have been grouped in one category, and included such questions as whether or not the war in Viet Nam was immoral; whether or not the Book of Mormon opposes welfare measures; whether or not the United States is less virtuous today than it was a century ago; and whether or not capitalism is an economic system that functions best when regulated by the government. In each of the above cases, while Mormon students registered majorities holding conservative opinions in 1969, an even larger percentage were found in the conservative column in 1974.

If you are interested in seeing a copy of the entire paper which describes Mormon/non-Mormon student comparisons on a variety of issues, including religious questions, please write Richard T.Schaefer (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL 61455) requesting a copy.