

Newsletter

SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MORMON LIFE (SSSML)

Vol. 6, no. 3

September, 1984

FIRST NEWSLETTER FROM NEW EDITOR

We will all miss Armand Mauss. He wanted me to get this letter out in July, but illness, work, vacation, and various other happenings interfered. I will try and do better in the future. However, in order to do better I need to know what is going on. A newsletter without news would seem to be a very brief affair, to say the least. So keep those cards and letters coming in. My address is 880 SWKT, Department of Sociology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 84602. Of course, if you prefer to send information through the officers, I am sure they will get it to me. Thank you for your assistance.

Evan T. Peterson

1984-1986 SSSML ELECTIONS

Marie Cornwall, who has served the past two years as President-elect, now assumes the title of President for two years. The results of the latest election are in and the President-elect is Wilford E. Smith who has just returned from his three years as a Mission President. The Secretary-Treasurer is, once again, Rosemary Bahr. Finally, the Council Members are Merlin Brinkerhoff, Joseph Olsen, and Jon Alston.

FALL ISSUE OF REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

This Fall's issue of the Review of Religious Research (Vol. 26, No.1) is devoted almost entirely to articles collected and sponsored by SSSML. It is paid for by money raised through SSSML, through BYU's Institute for Family and Demographic Research, and through the Department of Sociology at BYU. This issue contains the following articles:

Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith"

Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, "Mormonism in Secular Society: Changing Patterns in Official Ecclesiastical Rhetoric"

Stan L. Albrecht and Tim B. Heaton, "Secularization, Higher Education, and Religiosity"

James T. Duke and Barry L. Johnson, "Spiritual Well-Being and the Consequential

Dimension of Religiosity"

Armand L. Mauss and Jeffrey R. Franks, "Comprehensive Bibliography of Social Science Literature on the Mormons"

SSSML members made generous contributions totalling almost \$1000 towards the publication of this issue. A special thanks to Rodney Stark who made a significant donation. The SSSML organization paid an additional \$600 towards the publication. This money has accumulated over the years as members have paid their yearly membership dues. Unfortunately our funds are now depleted almost entirely. We need to begin collecting 1985 membership dues to sustain the publication of this newsletter and to continue our efforts to support research on Mormon life. Please send in your \$3 membership dues and fill out the attached membership form.

FUTURE ANNUAL MEETINGS

Theodore Long, representing the Association for the Sociology of Religion, made a proposal to the SSSML that we hold our annual meetings in conjunction with that association every year. Since their meetings are always held just prior to the American Sociological Association meetings, and this seems a good time for our own meetings, we have tentatively accepted their offer. However, we would like SSSML members to make suggestions to the officers as to the best time and place for our annual meetings.

As you remember, prior to this year we held our annual meetings in conjunction with the Society for the Study of Social Problems, which also meets just prior to the ASA meetings. Meeting with other sociologists of religion seems to us more natural and suitable to our interests. It also attracts the interest of other people to our meetings and should increase the visibility of studies of Mormon life.

CALL FOR PAPERS

SSSML is now sponsoring joint sessions with PSA, ASR and as part of the Sunstone Symposium. This means there will be several opportunities to present your research on Mormon life. We want to encourage you to keep this in mind as you proceed with your scholarly work.

SUMMARIES OF PAPERS GIVEN AT THE SSSML ANNUAL MEETING IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Phillip R. Kunz, Sociology, Brigham Young University, "Religion and Suicide: A Record Linkage Study":

Using data obtained from computerized death certificates for Utah in 1980 and from obituaries published in the local newspapers, we matched obituaries for 136 of the 196 suicides specified in the death certificates. Only two of the obituaries listed suicide as the cause of death: the rest either did not list the cause of death or indicated that it was an accident rather than a suicide. Of all the suicides listed in the obituaries, 51% were either listed as Mormon or it was inferred from the place of funeral or other information. That would be under the proportion of Mormons in the State. There was no unusual age distribution of the Mormon suicides supporting any particular stress the Mormons place upon their youth.

Merlin B. Brinkerhoff and Marlene M. Mackie, Sociology, University of Calgary, "Love Thy Neighbor, Marry Thy Neighbor? Religious Social Distance and University Students":

Brinkerhoff and Mackie made a study of 938 students in four colleges (BYU, U. of Nebraska, U. of Calgary, and Alberta Bible College) in 1983. Their dependent variable was "religious social distance", a modification of the Bogardus social distance scale. Moonies and Hare Krishnas were accorded the greatest social distance, and Catholics were the denomination most accepted, with Mormons in the intermediate range. Fundamentalist groups were least tolerant of Mormons, but Mormons were most tolerant of Moonies and Jews. People with no religious affiliation were also quite intolerant, especially of Moonies. Mormons were regarded as most acceptable by Mainline Protestants and least acceptable by conservative Protestants. Generally, Mormons were more accepting of other denominations than these denominations were of Mormons. Mormon acceptance of other denominations did not extend to marriage, however, and Mormons were least likely to be favorable to religious intermarriage. Religious attitudes were more important than background factors in explaining religious social distance, and fundamentalists were least tolerant. Persons with good grades were more tolerant than poorer students.

Gisela Demharter, Ph.D candidate, Sociology, University of Munich, "Values Among Mormon Mothers and Their Teenage Daughters":

Demharter interviewed both mothers and daughters in Calgary and Cardston, Alberta, Canada concerning their values. All families were active church members. She found the most strongly held values were concerned with (a) a strong family, (b) personal growth, (c) sharing, (d) service, and (e) preparedness. Daughters were more traditional than their mothers in both Calgary and Cardston, which Demharter attributed to the influence of Church programs on the daughters. Church members in Cardston held more traditional sex role attitudes than those in Calgary, and the difference between Church doctrine and mother's values was greater in Calgary than in Cardston. Families with a convert mother and a born in the Church father were most orthodox, and families with a convert father and a born in the Church mother were least orthodox. Demharter's analysis is not finished, so she regarded her findings as preliminary and tentative.

Gordon Shepherd, Sociology, University of Central Arkansas, and Gary Shepherd,

Sociology, Oakland University, "Modes of Ecclesiastic Rhetoric: Exposition and Admonition of Belief at General Conference of the LDS Church":

The Shepherd brothers have recently published a book on General Conference addresses (A Kingdom Transformed, SLC: U. of Utah Press, 1984), in which they have analyzed 600 addresses given over the past 150 years. In this paper, they investigated a further question: the style or type of address. They first distinguished two types of rhetoric: (1) exposition, which includes explanation, repudication, justification, and narration; and (2) admonition, which includes prescription, proscription, and chastisement.

About 85-90% of talks were expository, and explanation was by far the most important form of exposition, with narration a distant second. Only modest changes have taken place between generations, with the second generation (1860-1889) most devoted to defensive rhetoric (justification and repudication). With the encroachment of secular values in the past thirty years, there has been an increase in repudiation.

In those talks devoted to admonition, most statements (about 75%) were prescriptive (positive) in nature. Over time, there has been a significant decline in chastisement. Men are more likely to be chastized and women are more likely to be negatively admonished (which is less direct and emotional than chastisement).

Howard M. Bahr and Stan L. Albrecht, Sociology, BYU, "Dynamics of Defection from Mormonism":

This paper discusses the processes of disaffiliation from Mormonism and the current religious views of 30 former Mormons who roughly represent a cross-section of former Mormons in Utah. The data are from in-depth interviews in which respondents told of their present convictions, of changes in their personal religious beliefs and involvements and of how they were treated by family members, friends, neighbors, and church leaders as they came to occupy religious identities that were ambiguous or threatening in a predominantly Mormon milieu. There were several themes that occurred over and over:

1. There is a perceived unwillingness, especially at leadership levels, to confront errors, ambiguities, problems, issues, mistakes--to admit them, and then deal with them openly and honestly.
2. There is a perceived subordination of women, a Church belief that only marriage makes a woman whole, and there is stigmatization of divorced and single persons.
3. The Church is seen as a church whose membership, with the possible exception of some returned missionaries, is largely illiterate in the Bible.
4. The Church is seen as an organization which equates goodness with participation and membership; it stereotypes and labels rather than looking at an individual's particular qualifications.

5. There are reports of shunning, of social isolation of the minority--that is, non-LDS--children, of nonmembers who are disturbed when Mormon children won't play with their children, or make fun of them.
6. The lay leadership is sometimes inept, unskilled, uncomprehending and insensitive, especially (a) in dealing with violated expectations, such as a young person not wanting to go on a mission, a couple wanting only one child, someone wanting his or her name taken off Church rolls, or wanting to marry a nonmembers; and (b) in recognizing and reacting to a "cry for help".
7. Many of the respondents commented on the difference between Salt Lake City or Utah Mormons and Mormons who lived in other places where they were in the minority.
8. In various subtle and not so subtle ways Mormons are taught that they're better than others: we have the only true way, we have Priesthood in our homes, we have the true gift of the Holy Ghost.
9. A major point that seems to be very hard for Mormons to understand is that people in other faiths can have spiritual experiences which are as true to them as are LDS testimonies to the Mormons.
10. As a people, Mormons take themselves too seriously. They lack a sense of humor.
11. The theme that the Church won't let its members think for themselves was voiced by several former Mormons.
12. Much of the teaching and preaching that takes place in LDS meetings is seen as irrelevant or shallow, not involved with the real problems of life.

Marie Cornwall, Sociology, BYU, "The Social and Normative Bases of Religion":

This paper presents a theoretical framework for understanding, the influence of religious socialization and personal community relations on the development of religious belief, commitment, and behavior.

It has been proposed that levels of personal religiosity are influenced by the social and normative bases of religion. The social bases of religion are the processes by which individuals develop and maintain a set of religious beliefs. Understanding the social bases of religion requires attention to religious socialization within the family, the religious institution, and among peers. Individuals maintain religious belief and commitment by building personal communities and by discussing their religious beliefs with others who are most likely to believe as they believe. Therefore, people with a high level of religious belief and commitment are more likely to develop friendships with members of the same religious group than with marginal or outgroup members.

The normative bases of religion are the processes by which individuals are encouraged to behave consistent with their world view. Religious behavior does not always follow directly from being "a believer". Rather, interaction with others of the same religious group provides the impetus for religious constancy. Two basic characteristics of personal communities influence religious behavior: (1) the number of ingroup, marginal group, and outgroup ties, and (2) the strength of these ties.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

STAN L. ALBRECHT has recently been appointed Chairman of the Department of Sociology at BYU. Congratulations are in order for both the Department and for Stan, who is one of the proudest products of the sociology doctoral program at Washington State University.

ARMAND MAUSS will be spending a sabbatical year (calendar year 1985) at the University of California/Santa Barbara finishing a long delayed book on Mormons and minorities and starting a new book on the Mormon struggle to maintain peculiarity in the face of assimilation.

DAVID M. WALDEN, a free-lance researcher and writer, of Provo, is simultaneously at work on a variety of fascinating research topics, including Mormons and Indians, Mormonism in Micronesia, the evolution/creationism controversy, and various family and local histories--including the history of Provo's non-Mormon churches.

C. LEROY ANDERSON, Department of Sociology, University of Montana, is presently studying attitudes toward dependence upon Public Assistance of Mormons and other groups.

JOHN R. POTTENGER, Department of Political Science, California State University/Long Beach, is currently writing on Liberation Theology. He is active in the Society for the Study of Mormon Theology and presented a paper on the "problem of evil and free will" at Sunstone this summer.

L. KAY GILLESPIE, Department of Sociology, Weber State College, is presently studying death row inmates at the Utah State Prison and the execution of Joe Hill.

SIEGFRIED ANDREE, a graduate student in American studies in West Germany, is studying pioneer settlements in Utah from 1847 to 1869 featuring all kinds of factors including proselyting, agriculture, the role of the church in colonization, ethnic groups within the first and second generation Utah Mormons, Mormon-Indian relations, and role of Mormon Utah in the plans of the U.S. government, etc.

MARIE CORNWALL, SSSML President, will be half-time faculty with the Department

of Sociology at Brigham Young University this next year. She also continues her work with the Correlation Evaluation Department at LDS Church headquarters.

NEW BOOKS

The last Newsletter listed several new books and articles to come out on Mormons in 1983 and 1984. Not included there, but of potential interest to SSSML members are three new books due out in late 1984 or early 1985.

Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*. University of Illinois press.

Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young*. Alfred Knof Company. The title is not certain yet, but the manuscript is in production and will constitute the truly definitive scholarly biography of Brigham Young.

Linda K. Newell and Valeen T. Avery, *Emma*, Doubleday Company. This work is now in galleys. Again, the title is not certain; it will be a definitive, scholarly biography of Emma Smith.

ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Sunstone Theological Symposium The Sunstone meetings were held August 22 through the 25 at the Sheraton Hotel in Salt Lake City. SSSML sponsored one session where three good papers were presented:

Marjorie D. Conder, (University of Utah, Sociology Department) "Mormon Women and World War II as seen through the pages of *The Relief Society Magazine*"

Glenn M. Vernon, (University of Utah, Sociology Department) "All or Nothing: The Mormon Novice"

Thomas W. Zane and Shirley S. Ricks, (Brigham Young University) "The Effects of Religious Affiliation and Attendance on Illicit Sexual Behavior"

Many other papers were also given which may be of particular note to social scientists, including the following:

John Sorenson, (Brigham Young University) "Secrecy and Secret Societies: A Valid Book of Mormon Warning about our Times"

Joseph Bentley, (University of Utah) "We Believe Easily What we hope for Earnestly: the Psychological Dimensions of Belief, Faith, and Testimony in the LDS Tradition"

Louis Moench, (University of Utah) "Mormonism and Psychopathology"

Barbara Wheeler, (Brigham Young University) "Your Children are not Your Children: the Generational Value Struggle"

Marvin Rytting, (Indiana University-Purdue University) "A Radical Pro-Family Perspective"

Clark Graves, (University of Utah) "The Law Shall go Forth Out of Zion"

William O. Wilson, (Indiana University) "The Seriousness of Mormon Humor"

Eugene Shoemaker, (University of Southern California at Los Angeles) "Human Sexuality in Mormonism: Reflections From the Bishop's Couch: An Essay in Understanding"

Scott D. Miller, (University of Utah) "Coming of Age in Mormondom: A Look at the LDS Mission Experience as a Rite of Passage"

Patrick McKenzie, (University of Washington) "Enlarging the Mormon Umbrella: Toward Resolving the LDS Intellectuals' Dilemma"

Mormon History Association held their annual meeting May 10-13. Armand Mauss gives us the following report:

"Of necessity this will be a superficial and selective review of some of the papers and events during the 1984 annual meetings of the MHA, held this year on the BYU campus in Provo. In deciding what to include here, I am guided mostly by my own interests, both personal and sociological, hoping that there may be enough congruence between these interests and those of my readers to make this review worthwhile.

"The conference opened with a large plenary session on the first night featuring two very interesting presentations. The first of these was an illustrated lecture by Jan Shipps (Indiana University) on changing attitudes and images mutually between Mormons and non-Mormons, based on her content analysis of certain key publications during the 19th and 20th centuries. Briefly, public images of Mormons got gradually better after 1900 until about 1960, when a decline began to set in. Also, contemporary negative attitudes toward Mormons tend to be based mainly on secular grounds (e.g. Mormon social and political conservatism), whereas 19th century dislikes were more likely to focus on theological differences. From the Mormon side, changing attitudes seem to be tied up with shifting definitions attached to the notion of "gentile" (from one connoting "enemy" in the 19th century to one connoting "potential convert" in the 20th).

"After Jan's presentation, there was an interesting panel, representing both LDS and

RLDS viewpoints, on the recent decision by the RLDS to bestow the priesthood upon women, a policy change that has been 'in the works,' as it turns out, for more than a decade. The RLDS panel members dealt mainly with what implications they see for their church from this rather fundamental policy change, including some problems of adjustment. The LDS response, provided mainly by Jill Mulvay Derr, dealt in large part with the precedents and traditions long present in the Mormon tradition that might facilitate an expansion of power and leadership roles for LDS women in the near future, leading perhaps eventually to the priesthood itself.

"An issue that was not on the program as such, but which was discussed in three or four different sessions during the weekend, was the long-standing controversy over 'faithful history.' When a Mormon historian or social scientist makes use of a 'naturalistic' or 'scientific' perspective in research and writing, does that mean that he or she is automatically ruling out the role of the divine or supernatural in the lives of the subjects? If so, doesn't that kind of work (intentionally or not) undermine the truth-claims of Mormons, by definition, and thereby weaken the commitment and testimonies of students and other readers? My own answer to both questions, of course, is a resounding NO!, and so, I have always thought, would be the answer of the overwhelming majority of the MHA members and scholars. Nevertheless, that controversy emerged, in one way or another, several times, perhaps because of the location of this year's MHA conference and the attendance of some local participants who don't normally attend.

"Polygamy continues to fascinate scholars of things Mormon, and this year, it seemed to me, there were more papers on that subject than in previous years. Among the most valuable was one by Lowell C. Bennion ('Young Ben') on the geography of 19th century polygamy in Utah, based upon data from the 1880 Federal Census, which permitted the linking of wives and children in various locations with each other and with husbands who were sometimes 'on the move.' His careful calculations permitted Bennion to conclude that polygamy was actually more extensive in those days than anyone has heretofore estimated: an average of from 1/4 to 1/3 of the entire population (not households) was living in polygamy (depending on the town), with the range running from 6% to 66%. In a discussion of this paper afterward, Lawrence Foster made the interesting observation that polygamy's formative impact on 19th century Utah culture, no matter how large the minority practicing it, was comparable to that which slavery had on the ante-bellum South, even though only a minority of households there held slaves.

"Other papers and topics of potential interest to social scientists included: (1) Emma Smith and her emerging 'rehabilitation' in Mormon history, after more than a century of ill treatment at the hands of early Utah spokesmen and writers; (2) early Mormon relations with various Indian tribes and nations; (3) changing structure and functions of Mormon temples and other buildings; (4) the crisis at Kirtland, both with respect to Mormon/Gentile conflicts there and to the large-scale defections that occurred there; (5) recent archaeological work and artifacts at early Mormon (not Book of Mormon sites) in New York, Ohio, and Utah; (6) changes and continuities in the Relief Society heritage from Nauvoo to 1921; (7) the evolution of important Mormon institutions like 'relief

programs (welfare) and the 'juvenilization' (my word) of the Aaronic priesthood; (8) the involvement of the church hierarchy with large business corporations; and (9) changing Mormon relationships with the law and the courts.

"If anyone is interested in seeing the entire printed program, please write me c/o Box 2061 C.S., Pullman, WA 99163, and I will send you a Xerox copy of the same, so that perhaps you can write directly to the authors for copies of papers that interest you. Incidentally, next year's meetings of the Mormon History Association will take place in Independence, Missouri, May 2-5, 1985. In 1986 or 1987, plans are being made for MHA to meet in England! More information about this organization can be obtained by writing the MHA Secretary-Treasurer, Jessie L. Embry, Box 7010 University Station, Provo, Utah 84602. Annual dues = \$7.50."

Conference on Demographic Studies A first-ever conference of Demographic studies of Mormon populations held at BYU May 9th brought together more than 35 scholars from three Utah universities and five other states and Canada to discuss their compilations and uses of materials dealing with Mormons. Funded by the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, the program was headed by Tim Heaton of BYU's Family and Demographic Research Institute, aided by Robert Kenzer of the Department of History and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History. Geraldine Mineau, University of Utah Department of Human Genetics, also participated in the planning. Papers presented included ones by Lee L. Bean (University of Utah), Clayne Pope (Economics, BYU), William Stinner (Utah State University), Tim Heaton, Donald Snow (Mathematics, BYU), and Susan Easton (Religious Education, BYU).

The 12th Annual Family and Demographic Research Institute Conference as held at BYU 7-8 March. Some of the papers presented were:

Stan Weed (LDS Church Correlation/Evaluation Department), "Value Acquisitions and Religious Socialization among LDS Adolescent Males"

Arland Thornton (University of Michigan), keynote address, "Family and Religion in a Changing World"

Tim B. Heaton (Family and Demographic Research Institute, BYU) and Kristen L. Goodman (LDS Church Correlation/Evaluation Department), "Demographic Aspects of Family Formation: A Comparison of Mormon, Catholic, and Protestant"

Howard Bahr (Sociology, BYU), keynote address, "A Comparison of Religiosity in Middle-American and Mormon Families"

The Society for the Study of Mormon Theology as reported by Armand Mauss, met in late April, 1984. A series of lectures by Anthony Hutchinson and others were given on the following topics: Historical-Critical approaches to LDS scripture texts; Eschatology in the

Gospel of John; women and the priesthood; and Prophetic inspiration and imagination. More information about this program and organization can be obtained by writing SSMT, PO Box 6855, Huntington Beach, CA 92615. Their bulletin, Theologia, was published this summer. Membership in SSMT is \$3.50 for one year.

At the annual conference of the Mormon Pacific Historical Society at Laie, Hawaii, 3 March, R. Lanier Britsch (History, BYU), gave a paper, "On the Pacific Frontiers: Recent Church Growth in the Non-Polynesian Areas."

LDS Gerontologists held their second annual meeting in Salt Lake City on April 6. The following papers were presented:

Dale Lund, (College of Nursing, University of Utah) "A Longitudinal Study of Bereavement among the Elderly"

Roy Van Orman, (Weber State College) "Standard Topics for Baccalaureate Gerontology: A Nationwide Study of Agency and Campus Needs"

Robert C. Myers, (Wichita State University) "The Roles of Senior Adults on Prime Time Television"

Mary Ann Johnson, (College of Nursing, University of Utah) "Family Involvement with Care of the Elderly"

Richard Connelly, (University of Utah) "Older Caregiver's Needs and Competencies: The need for Intervention"

Josephine Kasteler, (University of Utah) "Activity Level, Financial Stress and Health During Retirement"

BYU Management Society held a meeting September 16, 1984 in Washington D.C., the theme of which was "Why Celebrate the Constitution?" The speakers were Orrin Hatch, Rex Lee, and Mark Cannon. They plan to have their first leadership workshop on October 13. The all-day session will focus on "Effective Priority Management". The discussion leader is Kent Lloyd. During the past two years quarterly seminars have been supported by hundreds of people. Speakers at these seminars have included: a cabinet member, advisors to the presidents, senators, congress-men, a governor, a federal judge, leaders in industry, educators, authors, et al.

ALL SSSML MEMBERS: Please cut apart the two applications below and give each to a prospective new member!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL

SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MORMON LIFE

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Areas of interest in Mormon Studies:

Dues Enclosed: \$ (0 \$3.00 per calendar year)

PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN TO: Rosemary Bahr, Secretary-Treasurer, SSSML, c/o Department of Sociology; Brigham Young, University; Provo, Utah 04602

MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWAL

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