

Newsletter

SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MORMON LIFE

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SSSML LECTURE ANNOUNCED

We are pleased to announce that we are moving ahead in our plans to sponsor a lecture series on the Sociology of Mormonism. The first lecture will be given in March at Brigham Young University. Dr. Tim B. Heaton has been chosen as the lecturer and his topic will be "The Four C's of the Mormon Family." We will announce the lecture date after the first of the year.

As we move ahead to begin plans for another lecture in the Fall of 1986 or the Spring of 1987, you may want to be thinking about a possible lecture topic yourself. Lecturers are chosen on the basis of an abstract or paper dealing with some topic related to the Sociology of Mormonism.

REPORT ON THE 1985 MEETINGS OF SSSR & RRA

The joint annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association took place October 25-27, 1985, at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah, Georgia. Several members of SSSML were active in these meetings as authors of papers, chairpersons of sessions, and the like. These included Jon Alston, Merlin Brinkerhoff, James Duke, Jeffrey Jacob, Barry Johnson, Donald Lindsay, Armand Mauss, James Richardson, Rodney Stark, and O. Kendall White {Glenn Vernon had been scheduled as a convener and a discussant, prior to his untimely demise on October 11th). Some of these scholars, but not all of them, presented work on Mormon topics. There were, however, several interesting papers presented on the Mormons, some of them by SSSML members and some by others (who should, of course, be considered for "fellowshipping" into our organization!). These papers and their authors were:

M. Jean Heriot (UCLA), "Becoming a True' Believer: A Case Study of Mormon Conversion."

O. Kendall White (Washington & Lee University), "Mormonism and the Equal Rights Amendment."

Armand L. Mauss (Washington State University) and M. Gerald Bradford (UC-Santa Barbara), "Mormon Assimilation and Politics: Toward a Theory of Mormon Church

Involvement in National U.S. Politics."

Stan Weed (LDS Church), "Empiricism and Inspiration: The Case of the Mormons." (on doing in-house research).

Anson Shupe (University of Texas-Arlington) and John Heinerman, (Anthropological Research Center, Salt Lake City), "Religious Faith and Victimization: The Case of the Mormons." AND (same authors), "Missionizing and Political Adventurism: The Institutionalization of the Mormon Church in Communist Countries."

In addition to these papers, it should be noted that the conference program carried a prominent ad in the front for a new book just out by Shupe and Heinerman (see above): *The Mormon Empire: An Eye-Opening Report on the Church and Its Political and Financial Agenda*, published late 1985 by Beacon Press of Boston (352 pages, \$19.95). In a distinctly ominous tone, the ad promises that the book ("carefully documented") will reveal the "awesome influence of the Mormon church on American society," given the church's "powerful financial empire," and "distinctly authoritarian ideology," through which the church "has quietly but efficiently sought to extend its economic, political, and theological influence into nearly every sector of American life."

SSSML might also be interested in a new publication offered by the RRA during the meetings: "The 1985-86 Catalogue of Current Religious Research and Researchers" (October, 1985). This publication (compiled from responses elicited from the RRA membership about their own work) describes work under way on Mormon topics by Jean Francois Beranger, of Bordeaux, France ("Mormons in Canada and the U.S."); Jeff Bradshaw, of the University of Washington ("Reciprocity and Social Support among the Mormons"); Marie Cornwall, BYU ("Factors Related to Religious Activity among Mormons both at the Organizational Level and at the Individual Level"); Kristen Goodman, of the LDS Research & Evaluation Office ("LDS Membership Survey and Demographic Study in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the British Isles"); and Armand Mauss, of Washington State University (A. "Mormons and Minorities," and B. "Mormon Assimilation and Resistance Thereto since 1930"). In addition, SSSML members, James Duke and James Richardson are listed for work in progress on religious topics not necessarily related to Mormons.

R.I.P. GLENN M. VERNON

SSSML members who have not already heard will be saddened to learn of the death of Professor Glenn M. Vernon, of the University of Utah, on Friday, October 11, 1985, during a class that he was teaching. He had just completed a chalkboard sketch of the social psychology paradigm which had become his hallmark. The cause of death was a massive heart attack. He was just 65 years old.

There are many who knew Glenn and his work much better than I, and from any such I'm

sure that this Newsletter would welcome a more extensive memorial essay for a future issue. Glenn's former students are found in academic and other professional posts all over the country. In SSSML, we will remember him as our "founding father," since he was the inspiration for several years behind a "mini-movement" to bring together scholars sharing a social science interest in Mormonism. He called together the first organizational meetings, and then served as the first president of our fledgling organization when we finally got started in 1977. For years he produced at his own expense an occasional journal (usually annually) entitled Measuring Mormonism, as well as a large collection of materials intended as a textbook for classes in the sociology of Mormon life. He regularly taught a graduate class in that subject at the University of Utah, probably the only one of its kind in the world, and drew enough criticism from both defenders and detractors of Mormonism to be reassured that the course achieved the kind of scholarly balance that he always aspired to have! Besides his Mormon studies, he had several books and many other publications in the sociology of religion more generally, in social psychology, and, more recently, in the sociology of death and dying (perhaps portentous).

I first encountered Glenn's work in the late 1950s, as a graduate student at Berkeley in the sociology of religion, trying desperately to collect some scholarly literature on the Mormons. I shall never forget the delight with which I encountered Glenn's two articles on Mormon religiosity in the library stacks, published in about 1955, a decade before the work of Glock and Stark on the measurement of religiosity was to have its impact. Glenn's pioneering work convinced me that sociological studies on Mormons not only could be done, but had to be done, and I have benefited enormously in my own work from his example, inspiration, and ideas. He told me barely two years ago that he had no intention of retiring at the "normal" age of 65 and expected to be either at the blackboard or at the typewriter when he finally checked out. He got his way, in that regard, but much too soon. I shall miss him deeply.

-- Armand L. Mauss

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Don't forget that papers or abstracts for the annual meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association are due in early January. Chairing the session on the sociology of religion this time will be SSSML member JAMES T. DUKE. Send your papers or abstracts on Mormon topics to Jim (or contact him at BYU to discuss prospects). If he gets enough, he may be able to form a session devoted entirely to Mormon topics, in addition to one on the sociology of religion. PSA will meet the second weekend of April, 1986, in Denver.

ARMAND MAUSS is returning to Washington State University after a sabbatical leave. He was recently installed as Treasurer of SSSR, and was also an unsuccessful candidate for President in the recent ASR elections. He has completely rewritten his Mormons and Minorities manuscript and expects the book to be published early in 1987.

NEW BYU ANTHROPOLOGY NEWSLETTER

The Museum of Peoples and Cultures and the Department of Anthropology at Brigham Young University have begun publishing a semi-annual newsletter entitled "OF HUMAN INTEREST: The Newsletter of BYU Anthropology and Archaeology." The first newsletter was published in November of each year. The goal of the newsletter is "to provide news about recent research conducted by, or of interest to, members of the broad anthropological community at BYU."

The first issue was devoted primarily to news concerning archeological projects. However, the overall objective is to have "a mix of socio-cultural, physical, linguistic, and archeological news for the interest of all concerned." The newsletter also includes "Person News" section which gives information about current research and other activities of anthropologists and other scholars.

The submission deadline for items to be included in the upcoming May issue is April 11, 1986. The newsletter's editor is Jim Wilde of Cultural Resource Management Services, Museum of Peoples and Cultures. Dale Berge of the Anthropology Department is the Associate editor. Send submissions to:

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