

SSSML Newsletter

SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MORMON LIFE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May I take this opportunity to thank Armand Mauss for going the extra mile in gathering news for our Newsletter. May I also thank David Buerger for putting our last Newsletter into such a high quality format. If any of you have news for the next edition of the paper, please send it to Armand Mauss, P.O. Box 2061 C.S., Pullman, WA 99165.

Enclosed with the present mailing is an application for membership form. Please give it to someone who could benefit from affiliating with SSSML. Also, note your own dues status, and bring it up to date. Dues are only \$3.00 a year, but if we all paid we could provide more services.

Finally, may I thank the Sociology Department of BYU for bearing the expense of sending this Newsletter to members. They bend over backwards to help us be an important force in improving and broadening scientific study of Mormon life.

ATTENTION: IMPORTANT CONFERENCES DEAD AHEAD!

Two upcoming conferences described in our last Newsletter (8:2 & 3) are now very close. The annual meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA) are now right on top of us, and the special Canadian conference ("The Mormon Presence in Canada") is barely a month away. The rich program being offered at the Canadian conference, outlined in the last Newsletter, is laid out in full detail in the attachments to this Newsletter. Please take careful note and try to make it.

As for the PSA conference, the usual breadth of topics in religion and other fields will be there at the meetings during April 8-11 at the Hilton Hotel in Eugene, Oregon. In particular, PSA feature again this year a session on Mormon Life and Culture, with papers from SSSML members and others, as follows:

- "Mormon Polygyny in the 19th Century: A Comparative and Theoretical Analysis," by Gary J. Wyatt, Washington State University.
- "Coping With Social Change in Rural Mormon Communities," by Ted C. Smith, University of Utah.

- "Social-Psychological Factors Affecting Cancer Incidence in Mormons and Non-Mormons," by Robert M. Gray & David Justice, University of Utah.

The Discussant will be Stephen J. Bahr of Brigham Young University.

LATER MEETINGS AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASR) The "official" annual meeting of SSSML has always taken place in August in conjunction with the gatherings at that time of year of the various national associations of sociologists, such as the American Sociological Association and related organizations. In recent years, however; SSSML has been especially favored in begin included as one of the sessions at the Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASR), one of those related organizations. This year, the ASR/SSSML sessions will be held in Chicago during August 14-16. The SSSML session for ASR is being organized and chaired by Professor Larry Young, Department of Sociology, BYU. The formal deadline for proposing papers to Larry has passed, but it might still be possible for new papers to be accommodated if you can make immediate telephone contact with Larry at BYU, or else directly with the general ASR Program Chairman, Dr. William H. Swatos, 1500 7th Avenue, Silvis, IL 61282.

Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (ASR) and Religious Research Association (RRA)

As usual, these two organizations will meet jointly in mid-Fall. SSSML members are active in both organizations and both encourage submissions of papers on Mormon topics for their annual meetings. Formal deadlines for proposing papers have now gone by as well, but again, late offerings can perhaps be accommodated if immediate contact is made

with the respective program chairs: Professor Ellen Umansky, Department of Religion, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322 (for SSSR) and Professor Ralph W. Hood, Jr., Department of Psychology, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, TN 37403 (for RRA). The joint annual meetings will take place at the Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky, October 30–November 1, 1987.

Sunstone Symposia

As indicated in the last Newsletter, the annual Sunstone Symposium held in recent years during August in Salt Lake City has begun to proliferate: In addition to the general symposium in August, there are now regional Sunstone Symposia in the Washington, D.C., area in May, and alternating between the San Francisco Bay area and Los Angeles in January or February. Information on all of these can be obtained via the new address for Sunstone: 331 South Rio Grande, Suite B-30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101 (Phone: 801-355-5926). Ask for Elbert Peck, the new Editor of Sunstone magazine. The program is just now being put together for the next Salt Lake City symposium, so those having papers to offer or propose should make immediate contact with Sunstone. Hurry!.

PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS RECENTLY HELD

The annual (joint) meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and of the Religious Research Association were held during November 13-16, 1986, in Washington, D.C. Following are some abstracts of papers presented at those meetings that might be of interest to SSSML members. For more information or copies of the papers, please contact the authors directly.

- "Making Believe: Religious Proselytism and the Issue of Paternalism," by Margaret P. Baffin, University of Utah. This paper considers the ethical issues raised by intrusive and non-intrusive proselyting activities in a variety of religious groups, including Catholics, Mormons, Christian fundamentalists, the

"new religions," and others. It takes intrusive proselytism to raise issues in paternalism concerning the degree to which the violation of ordinary moral norms (e.g. against coercion and fraud) may be justified in the interests of the individual for whose sake the paternalistic intervention is made. How great an invasion of the individual's liberty and privacy is warranted, this paper asks, when his or her faith and consequent salvation are allegedly at stake, but when only the paternalizer, not the paternalizee, accepts these claims? The answers supplied by various religious groups range from "almost none" to "as much as necessary." It is the ethical background of these answers which this paper will examine.

- "Theology and Denominational Affiliation: Influences on Personality Theory and Data," by Richard N. Williams and Wayne J. Hintze, Brigham Young University. Differing theologies produce differing psychologies and views of what constitutes mental health or dysfunction. Similarly, empirical personality research and the construction of personality measures cannot validly proceed without due consideration of the theological differences present in various denominational groups and their impact on the constructs being considered. This paper considers empirical evidence of differing norms on personality scales displayed by members of the Mormon church that reflect an understanding of personality implicit in Mormon theology. In addition, data from a recent empirical study which classified traditional religious belief in the paranormal are re-examined. These two examples form the basis for a discussion of what the relation is between theology and personality research, and what it could be.
- "Cultural Crises and the Emergence of

Mormon Neo-Orthodox Theology," by O. Kendall White, Jr., Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA 24450.

This paper has two basic objectives: (1) to describe Mormon neo-orthodox theology, and (2) to account for its origins in terms of Mormonism's accommodation to American culture and encounter with modernity during the post World War II ear. While traditional Mormon thought enjoys a marked affinity with Protestant liberalism through its conception of a finite God, affirmation of ;lie fundamental goodness of human nature, and doctrine of salvation by merit, Mormon neo-orthodox theology embraces the basic tenants of Reformation theology and Protestant neo-orthodoxy with its proclamation of the sovereignty of God, depravity of human nature, and centrality of grace. Mormon neoorthodoxy, which is largely a product of scholars affiliated with the Brigham Young University, emerged during a period of significant reintegration of Mormons into the national society. Consequently, the general problems associated with the secularization of society and culture appeared among the Latter-day Saints. Traditional Mormon theology, which so profoundly expressed the optimism of 19th century liberalism, rendered the Mormon community especially vulnerable to the erosion of belief and threat to the status of religion associated with modern secularization. In response, Mormon neoorthodox theology emphasizes human irrationality and endorses an authoritarianism that insulates adherents from modern cultural influences.

In addition to the above three papers on Mormon topics, Larry Young of BYU presented a paper entitled "Organizational Sagas in Protestant Fundamentalism Colleges: A Critique of Sociological Theories of Culture? In this paper, Larry extends some of Burton Clark's ideas about "organizational sagas" to colleges. He focuses especially on the concept of "cultural capital," and

religion as a producer of the same, arguing that a broader application of that concept can be integrated into existing theories of culture in such a way as to sensitize the social theorists to aspects of the symbolic or cultural side of social reality that are in danger of being ignored or trivialized.

The annual joint meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in Atlanta during November 22-25, 1986, featured for the first time a session (or "Consultation," as they called it) on "The Study of the Latter-day Saints." Organized and chaired by Gordon C. Thomasson (Anthropology, BYU), the main theme of this session was "Reflections on the Mormon 'Canon' and the Study of 'Other' Religious Traditions." Presentations were made by both LDS and other scholars, including W. D. Davies of Duke University; M. Gerald Bradford, of the University of California—Santa Barbara; and, from BYU, Kent P. Jackson, John W. Welch, David J. Whittaker, and Truman G. Madsen. For more information on this and possibly future AAR sessions on Mormon studies, contact Gordon Thomasson.

The first Sunstone Symposium West was held on January 30-31, 1987, at the Berkeley (California) Marina Marriott. Building on a constituency that had already been meeting for some time as the "Bay Colloquium," this first Bay Area Sunstone Symposium unexpectedly overflowed with an attendance over three hundred persons. A plenary session on the first night featured Linda Sillitoe and Allen Roberts on the topic, "At the Epicenter: The Cultural and Historical Implications of the Salt Lake City Bombings Cases," a foretaste of the definitive book they are co-authoring on the subject. A later plenary session featured Jan Shippo on "Correlation and the Ecclesiastical Power Structure in Modern Mormonism."

Among other sessions of potential interest to social scientists were a paper by David John Buerger on the evolution of the Mormon temple

endowment; Newell Bringhurst on the early life of Fawn Brodie (he is doing her biography); Carrie Miles and Laurence Iannaccone on the church's response to changing women's roles, 1940-1980; papers by Michael Collings and Benjamin Urrutia on LDS science fiction; and panel discussions on the church and homosexuality, on medical ethics, on striving for satisfying male-female relationships in a patriarchal culture, and on current trends in Book of Mormon/Meso-American studies. For a fuller outline of the program, and for possible access to copies of papers, inquire of Lorie Winder Stromberg (Program Chair for the Symposium), 9028 Hargis Street, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

On March 12-13, 1987, the annual University Women's Conference was held at BYU. Participants and presenters included many men and women, some prominent as church leaders, but most prominent as scholars and professionals. The topics on which panels were presented included religion and the family; female life passages; parenting; agency and human development; managing resources; LDS women's history; and excellence and creativity. Concurrently a somewhat smaller conference was held on "Aging and the Family." For more information on this and future women's conferences, contact this year's committee chair, Dr. Mary E. Stovall, Director, Women's Research Institute, BYU.

The Annual SSSML Lecture

The most recent scholarly event of likely interest to SSSML members was this year's special SSSML lecture, the second in a series started last Spring with Tim Heaton's lecture. This year's lectureship, co-sponsored by SSSML and by BYU's Department of Sociology and Redd Center for Western Studies, was originally awarded to Marie Cornwall. However, Marie is in England doing a church-sponsored study of activity and inactivity among members. Thus, the award went instead to Professor Darwin Thomas, Department of Sociology, BYU. An abstract of this lecture appears below. For more information, contact Darwin directly. Deadline for proposals for the

1988 Lectureship is September 1, 1987. Proposals should go to SSSML president, Professor Wilford Smith, 1177 Ash Avenue, Provo, UT 84604.

- Darwin Thomas Lecture: The third annual lecture co-sponsored by SSSML and the Charles Redd Center was delivered at BYU on March 24th by Dr. Darwin L. Thomas. His lecture was primarily a report of research dealing with who goes on LDS missions. It was based on a query of 766 Deacons, Teachers, and Priests in 1981 of their intentions and expectations about going on missions when they came of age. In 1986, these same men were asked if they had been on a mission. Darwin also attempted to determine who or what had been most influential in building their religious commitments. The responses were compiled into four categories: (1) those who said they would not or probably would not go on a mission; (2) those who said they were not sure; (3) those who said they probably would go; and (4) those who said they definitely would go on a mission. Of the 45% who said they were not likely to go on a mission, 5% did go. Of the group who said they were not sure (25% of the total), 30% went on a mission. Of the 10% who said they probably would go, 75% did go; and virtually all (90%) of the 20% who said they definitely would serve a mission actually went. These findings suggest that missionary service by Aaronic Priesthood holders can be fairly well-predicted by their stated attitudes expressed in their early years. Church programs did not play a significant role in strengthening the religiosity of those queried. Family influence was the most important factor for the youngest; relationships with adult advisors were close behind. As the boys moved from Deacon age to Priest age, the

influence of adult advisors became stronger and family influence declined, although both remained strong in all three age groups.

The report also suggested that much of the credit afforded President Spencer W. Kimball for raising the total number of missionaries in service probably is over emphasized—during the years of his administration, a baby-boom cohort of youth widely broadened the pool of prospective missionaries. Furthermore, the eligible age to serve a mission was decreased from 20 to 19 for young men. Other issues concerned the reduction of a missionary's term of service from two years to 18 months, as well as the increase of older couples entering missionary service. Since 1960, the percentage of young men going on missions has changed very little. Thomas also noted that church population did not reach 1,000,000 until 1945. Since then, church population has doubled every fifteen years.

ABOUT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ...

SSSML members might be interested in the work of other scholarly organizations and disciplines working in Mormon studies. For example, you can keep up on developments in anthropology and archaeology by subscribing to the newsletter *Of Human Interest*, published periodically by the BYU Museum of Peoples and Cultures. For more information, contact Jim Wilde, Editor, OHI, 105 Allen Hall, BYU, Provo, UT 84602.

There also is the *Utah Folklife Newsletter* published quarterly by the Folklore Society of Utah (and affiliated organizations), 617 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84102. This is quite a full newsletter featuring not only major events but also reviews of literature and projects on Mormon and/or western folklore, folkart, and folklife.

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon

Studies (FARMS), P.O. Box 7113, University Station, Provo, UT 84602, publishes a quarterly newsletter called Insights, which keeps readers abreast of the latest discoveries of interest to Mormons in ancient literature, scripture, and archaeology.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

NEW BOOKS

- William G. Dyer and Phillip R. Kunz, *Effective Mormon Families* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986) is a study of what does seem to work in LDS families, in contrast to so much of the literature emphasizing the problematic aspects of Mormon families. The book is based in large part on extensive survey data from both questionnaires and interviews.
- Scott G. Kenney (ed.), *Memories and Reflections: The Autobiography of E. E. Ericksen* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987). Those who have read Ericksen's pioneering work from the 1920s, *The Social and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life*, will look forward to the insights to be found in this new biography.

See also the previous issue of this Newsletter for recent books.

ARTICLES

- Tim B. Heaton, "Sociodemographic Characteristics of Religious Groups in Canada," *Sociological Analysis* 47: 1 (Spring 1986). Includes much on the small Mormon minority in Canada.
- Gary Shepherd and Gordon Shepherd, "Modes of Rhetoric in the Individual Assessment of Mormonism," *Sociological Analysis* 47: 2 (Summer 1986).
- Kristen L. Goodman and Tim B. Heaton, "LDS Church Members in the U.S. and Canada: A Demographic Profile,"

AMCAP Journal 12: 1 (1986).

- Merlin B. Brinkerhoff and Marlene M. Mackie, "The Applicability of Social Distance for Religious Research—An Exploration," *Review of Religious Research* 28: 2 (Dec. 1986). Includes a large Mormon sample.
- O. Kendall White, Jr., "A Review and Commentary on the Prospects of a Mormon/New Christian Right Coalition," *Review of Religious Research* 28: 2 (Dec. 1986). This is a commentary on an article in the same journal a year previously by Shupe & Heinerman. Another (more critical) commentary is soon forthcoming by Brinkerhoff, Mackie, & Jacob, also in RRR.

The Winter 1986 issue of *Dialogue* (19: 4) contains two important articles on treasure-seeking and magic in the cultural milieu of early Mormonism (one by Alan Taylor and one by Ronald Walker).

In the same issue, there is a panel discussion on the implications of the Hofmann case for the discoveries and uses of historical documents.

In the most recent issue of *Dialogue* (20: 1, Spring 1987) there is a revealing article by Armand Mauss, John Tarjan, and Marti Esplin on the characteristics of *Dialogue* subscribers, based on an extensive survey. The same issue contains a fascinating and heavy article by Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," involving a social-psychological/cultural analysis of Joseph Smith's revelations in general and his production of the Book of Mormon in particular.

FINALLY ...

We haven't collected any membership dues now for more than a year, and WE NEED YOUR DUES IN ORDER TO STAY IN OPERATION. Due to an oversight, the reminders that were supposed to have accompanied the last issue of this Newsletter were left out. This time, once again, we are asking all

readers to LOCATE AND TAKE NOTE OF
YOUR INDIVIDUAL DUES NOTICE
accompanying this Newsletter. Nearly everyone
owes for 1987, and the majority of members owe
for 1986 as well. Some owe for 1985 and earlier.
Please determine what you owe (O\$3.00 per
year) and SEND THE REQUISITE AMOUNT
to Professor Wilford E. Smith, President,
SSSML, 1177 Ash Avenue, Provo, UT 84604.
Make checks out to SSSML or to the Society for

the Sociological Study of Mormon Life. Hurry and
thanks!

ACCORDING TO OUR RECORDS YOUR DUES
HAVE BEEN PAID THROUGH WE HOPE
YOU WILL FEEL GOOD ABOUT PAYING
THEM, AT \$3.00 PER
YEAR FOR WE NEED AND WANT YOU
WITH US.