

*SSSML Newsletter*  
**SOCIETY FOR THE  
 SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF  
 MORMON LIFE**

Vol. 12, Nos. 3-4  
 July & October, 1990

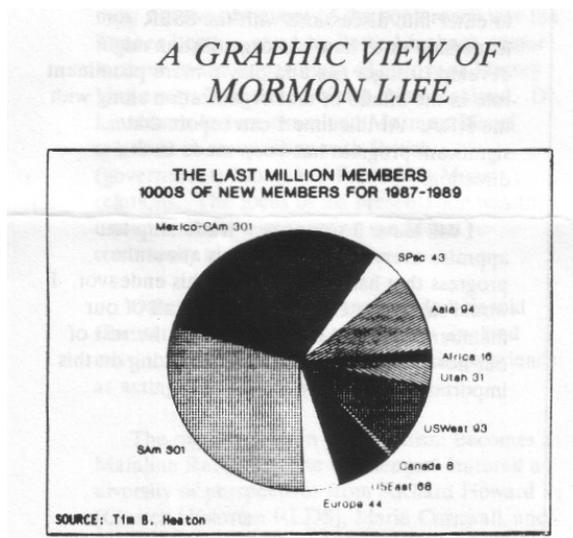
Lawrence A. Young, Editor

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- The meeting will be held in conjunction with the 1990 annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. Plan to meet in the lobby of the Virginia Beach Resort and Conference Center for a short official meeting and then all who are interested will go to dinner.
2. SSSML will supply you with complementary copies of the newsletter if you have colleagues who might be interested in becoming a member. Each complementary copy will include a cover letter describing the activities of SSSML and an invitation to join the Society. Send requests for complimentary copies to:
 

Tim B. Heaton  
 Department of Sociology  
 Brigham Young University  
 Provo, Utah 84602
  3. Included on the last page of the newsletter is an update of your current dues status.
  4. All SSSML members are urged to consider submitting short articles (such as the one by Marie Cornwall in this issue), interesting data or graphs (such as the graph submitted by Tim Heaton in this issue) or news items. Materials should be sent to Lawrence A. Young, Department of Sociology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.
  5. Many SSSML members have written articles for the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, a multivolume encyclopedia being published by the Macmillan



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. The 1990 SSSML business meeting will be Friday, November 9th at 6:30 p.m.

Publishing Company and under the general editorship of Brigham Young University. The completed manuscript is scheduled for submission to Macmillan in December of this year. It should also be noted that at least one SSSML member declined to participate in the project due to the male hegemony in the selection of the original editors and the failure to select any BYU women faculty as editors once women were included among the editors.

### **ANNUAL SSSML LECTURE**

Lee L. Bean and Geraldine P. Mineau will deliver the upcoming Annual SSSML Lecture on Wednesday, February 6, 1991 at Brigham Young University. Bean and Mineau, who are both at the University of Utah, will address the topic, "Demographic Characteristics of Women on the American Frontier." The lecture is tentatively scheduled for 1:30 p.m. with the building and room location to be announced. Bean and Mineau will discuss issues raised in their recent book (co-authored with Douglas L. Anderton), *Fertility Change on the American Frontier: Adaptation and Innovation*.

The lecture which is being co-sponsored by the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University is being held in conjunction with the International Conference on Gender and Family, which is sponsored by the Women's Research Institute at Brigham Young University.

SSSML members are urged to attend the lecture and are invited to make recommendations for future lectures by contacting any of the board members. In past years we have been able to pay a modest honorarium and/or pay transportation costs to BYU.

### **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

[Editor's Note: Don Lindsey completed his

tenure as President in August of 1990.]

It is with mixed feelings that I end my term as President of SSSML and turn my duties over to Tim Heaton and a new slate of able officers. I feel good about a number of the accomplishments SSSML has made the past couple of years. On the other hand, there are always those other things one would like to have achieved, but for some good and some not so good reasons are not realized. Most importantly, however, I believe SSSML is currently in a good position to move forward and strengthen its position and visibility as a professional organization among the larger community of scholars and other people and organizations concerned with the scientific study of religion.

With the splendid help of a number of SSSML members, there was an extraordinary showing of scholarship by those interested in the study of Mormon life at the SSSR annual meeting held in Salt Lake City last year. This impressive display was noted by a number of people outside our limited membership. This, in turn, was instrumental in receiving an invitation to enter into discussions with the SSSR leadership as to how our organization might develop stronger ties and play a more prominent role in the affairs of that organization along with the RRA. At this time I can report that significant progress has been made in this direction.

I will leave it to our new leadership to appraise everyone of the details about the progress that has been made in this endeavor. I would simply note that it behooves all of our membership to get behind Tim and the rest of our newly-elected officers in capitalizing on this important opportunity.

### **NEW SSSML OFFICERS**

The following individuals were recently elected as SSSML officers:

President...Tim B. Heaton, Brigham Young University

Pres.-Elect...O. Kendall White, Washington & Lee Univ.

Sec./Treasurer...Kristen Goodman, Research & Evaluation, LDS Church  
Board Members....Richley Crapo, Utah State University  
Bron Ingoldsby, Ricks College  
Gordon Shepherd, Univ. of Central Arkansas

## RECENT CONFERENCES

1. Marie Cornwall attended the annual meetings of the Mormon History Association, as well as the Canadian Mormon Studies Association sponsored conference on "Mormons in Canada, Local and Comparative Perspectives." She graciously agreed to provide the following summary of the two conferences:

The 1990 Mormon History Association meetings were held in Laie, Hawaii. Perhaps the most noteworthy event of the conference was the Tanner Lecture given by Peter Lineham, senior lecturer in the department of history at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Dr. Lineham's lecture examined Mormon-Moari relations in comparison with British (government)-Moari and Protestant-Moari relations. The focus of his presentation was to understand the responses of the Moari community to Mormonism.

Other noteworthy papers included Harold Christensen's reflections on his New Zealand mission during the depression and his experience as acting mission president.

The plenary session "Mormonism Becomes a Mainline Religion: The Challenges" featured a diversity of perspectives from Richard Howard (Church Historian RLDS), Marie Cornwall, and Marjorie Newton (Bass Hill, NSW, Australia).

Two other papers, both from a social scientific perspective would be of interest to SSSML members:

Ian Barber, "Israel in the Pacific: Ethnic Identity and Cultural Conflict in Maori-Mormon Tradition"

Majorie Newton, "Almost Like Us: The American Socialization of Australian Mormon

Converts in the Twentieth Century"

The Canadian Mormon Studies Association hosted scholars for an interdisciplinary conference and festival in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, June 20-24. The plenary sessions featured Dean May (historian, University of Utah), Marie Cornwall (sociologist, Brigham Young University), Ben Bennion (geographer, Humboldt State University), and John L. Sorenson (anthropologist, Brigham Young University). Each examined community from their own disciplinary perspective. Of particular interest for social scientists were sessions on 1) Canadian Mormon Identity; 2) a session featuring papers about Mormons in New Zealand (Ian G. Barber), Ireland (Claudia W. Harris), and The Netherlands (Walter E. A. van Beek); and 3) a session titled "Perspectives quebecoises et mormones" featuring, among others Dean R. Louder. The conference had a decided and welcomed international flavor. Questions about the proceedings and about future plans for other conferences should be directed to Keith Perry, this years organizer. [Editor's Note: Keith Perry may be contacted at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 3M4 Canada.]

2. Numerous SSSML members participated at the 1990 Sunstone Symposium held in Salt Lake City. SSSML sponsored a session on Saturday, August 25th. Tim B. Heaton, who organized the session has submitted the following summary of the session:

Our session "GLOBALIZATION OF AN AMERICAN CHURCH: MORMONISM IN THE THIRD WORLD" was well attended despite fierce competition from other good sessions. Tim Heaton and Cardell Jacobson talked about racial tension and socioeconomic characteristics of converts in Africa. David Knowlton's paper on Mormonism in Latin America was read by Cardell because David was still in South America. Larry Young then discussed more general issues facing the Church as it expands into other countries. Many in the audience brought up fascinating personal experiences from across the globe.

In fact, we were so impressed by these comments that we are considering possible ways to

build an archive of people's reflections about the encounter between a Utah centered Church and people in very diverse cultural and social settings. If you have any suggestions regarding how such an archive might be created, organized, and preserved please drop us a line.

SSSML members were also active in other sessions, such as the opening plenary session featuring Lynn England and Marie Cornwall. Although we did make a contribution, we could do more. Sunstone has been very accommodating when we have produced sessions in the past. If you have good ideas for sessions we might sponsor, please do not hesitate to make a suggestion.

3. There were no papers dealing directly with Mormon issues at the 1990 annual meetings of the Association for the Sociology of Religion.

### **CONFERENCES IN NEAR FUTURE**

The 1990 annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association will be held November 9-11, 1990 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Several SSSML members will be presenting papers. In addition, the 1990 SSSML business meeting will be held in conjunction with these meetings (see announcement on Page 1 of Newsletter).

### **MINUTES FROM 1990 SSSML BOARD MEETING**

(Recorded by Kristen Goodman, Secretary-Treasurer)

Officers and board members held a business meeting on 24 August 1990 in conjunction with the Sunstone meetings. They discussed changing our dues structure and increasing membership and circulation of the newsletter. They also talked about ways we might strengthen our relationship with SSSR. Suggestions included:

1. Present Mormon-related papers in regular sessions.

2. Sponsor specific sessions and invite others to share papers that explore topics of interest to Mormons and others (such as proselyting).
3. Sponsor a plenary session, perhaps repeating the March SSSML lecture that is usually given at BYU.
4. Provide travel money or an honorarium for special speakers.

Discussion will continue on these topics at the SSSML business meeting to be held in conjunction with SSSR in November.

### **GUEST COLUMN**

[Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the August 1990 issue of Utah Holiday (p. 24) and is reprinted here with the permission of the author.]

### **MORMONISM'S DIFFICULT QUESTION**

by Marie Cornwall

The "women question" will be perhaps the most difficult issue Mormonism will face in the coming decade. Many had hoped that the defeat of the ERA and the apparent decline in the influence of the feminist movement in the United States would reduce existing tensions and pressure for change. But the place of women in Mormonism is a problem that won't go away easily.

The past 18 months has demonstrated the growing tension. First, the creation of the Mormon Women's Forum, designed by Kelly Frame and Karen Case to provide women a chance to talk about their experience in a "non-patriarchal setting." While the group claims it does not take an advocacy position, the topics they have chosen to discuss challenge conventional world views. Edwin Firmage, a University of Utah law professor, then suggested there is no doctrinal basis for the church's stand regarding the ordination of women. Mother Wove the Morning, a one-woman play written and acted by Carol Lynn Pearson played in some theater or another along the Wasatch Front for a good four months during 1990. These events

did not go unnoticed by Mormonism's Utah core. They fueled discussions in wards and neighborhoods along the Wasatch Front about women and the priesthood and about a Heavenly Mother that exists in Mormon doctrine--implicitly if not explicitly.

There are indications of efforts by LDS Church leaders to respond to growing tensions. Recent changes in the temple ceremony suggest a responsiveness to women's concerns. The recently called General Relief Society Presidency consists of women with much more organizational and political savvy than past presidencies. Elaine Jack served most recently in the fairly progressive Young Women's General Presidency. Aileen Clyde, counselor in the presidency, was chair of the Utah Task Force on Gender and Justice which recently produced a candid report of the gender bias of Utah's courts. And Carol Clark left her position as Director of the Women's Business Development to join the new presidency as executive secretary. These are women who have demonstrated their awareness and concern for women's issues.

The strains are primarily a function of changing societal expectations regarding family and gender roles. Major economic and social changes occurred in women's lives during the 20th century. The increased demand for women workers has encouraged women to enter the labor force in record numbers, and the trends are similar for Mormon women. Despite counsel from church leaders to the contrary, more and more Latter-day Saint women are entering the work force. LDS women are as likely to be employed as are other women, although data suggest that many delay entrance into the work force until their youngest child is in school. The patriarchal nature of Mormonism and its emphasis on families as the fundamental organizing principle for establishing righteousness on the earth has made it less amenable to the emerging social order than other religious groups. Despite this, Mormonism continues to be one of the fastest growing religious groups in the world.

Interestingly, international growth may

be one factor which allows Mormonism to resist more changes relative to the status of women. Women's concerns are given much more attention in the United States than in other countries of the world. There is little indication that the traditional view of Mormonism is preventing growth in Asia or Central and South America, areas of rapid growth. Rather, the somewhat kinder and gentler form of patriarchy preached by Mormonism may actually be a positive step forward for many women and men entering its ranks. And, as church leaders are forced to focus attention on the demands of an expanding international church (terrorist attacks in Central America, expulsion from Ghana, and expansion into other African nations) the concerns of women at the core of Mormonism may be given less attention.

Despite the strains around gender issues, most LDS women will remain committed to the gospel and to the church. Among the most ardent of feminist Mormons, one frequently hears the analogy that remaining true to Mormonism is like remaining committed to a marriage that is in trouble. One must work even harder to try to save it. There are, of course, many women who have found it easier to leave the boundaries of Mormonism than to remain confined within it. The great paradox of existing tensions, is that the most vocal of women are frequently those trying to maintain devotion while promoting change. They are not anxious to leave their religious communities.

## **RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

[Editor's Note: Look for this regular feature in the January 1991 issue of the SSSML newsletter.]

## **DUES NOTICE**

Only 50 percent of those receiving the newsletter are current dues-paying members of the Society for the Sociological Study of Mormon Life. We need your dues in order to stay in operation. Each year the society sponsors sessions on Mormon life at Sunstone and other professional meetings, organizes a lecture on an important aspect of

Mormon society, and publishes a newsletter.  
Even though all of these activities receive at least partially support from non-SSSML sources, our ability to support such activities is only possible so long as SSSML members pay their annual dues.

Please determine what you owe (@ \$3.00 per year) and SEND THE REQUISITE AMOUNT to Kristen L. Goodman, Research and Evaluation - 18th Floor, LDS Church Office Building, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150.

ACCORDING TO OUR RECORDS  
YOU HAVE PAID DUES FOR  
THE FOLLOWING YEARS

	YES	NO
1989	X	—
1990	X	—
1991	X	—
1992	X	—