

# MORMON SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Michael E. Nielsen, Editor

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## President's Message

I have spent the last four months in Salt Lake City on a sabbatical leave from my usual university duties in Michigan. Non-academic friends and relatives in Salt Lake tend to shake their heads and roll their eyes after politely inquiring just exactly what it is I'm doing out here, and if I'm actually getting paid while doing it. I've had such a great time, in fact, that I am occasionally tempted to feel a twinge of guilt over the amount of fun I've been able to mix in with my research activities. But the refreshment of mind and spirit I have experienced quickly squelches any such spasms of conscience.

In addition to enhancing my exploration of the issue of intellectual dissent within Mormonism, one of the benefits of being in Salt Lake is proximity to a group of core MSSSA members who have been exceedingly helpful in providing support and guidance of my fledgling efforts to fulfill the duties of MSSSA president. Kudos are particularly due to Lynne Payne (MSSA Secretary-Treasurer) and Perry Cuningham (past MSSA President). And Mike Nielsen (MSSA President-Elect), while far removed from Salt Lake City, cannot be patted on the back enough for his constancy and competence in editing this newsletter so well for so many issues now.

The tentative MSSA lineup of sessions at the SSSR November meetings in Montreal has very promising feel to it at this point:

(1) The Glen Vernon Lecture will be given by Warner Woodworth (Professor of Organizational

Behavior at BYU);

(2) a "Mormons in Canada" session is still under construction at the time of this writing, but hopefully it will include the contributions of Merlin Brinkerhoff (U. Calgary), Dean Lauder (U. Laval, Quebec), Gordon Pollock (U. Halifax), and Ian Wilson (Utah Valley State College);

(3) a "Constructing Mormonism on the Margins" session looks solid, featuring David Knowlton (Tierra Madre), Kendal and Daryl White (Washington and Lee and Spellman College, respectively);

(4) a sort of potpourri of Mormon papers from BYU-Hawaii folks, including Grant Underwood, Ronald Jackson, Diana Mahony, and Max Stanton; and, finally, we will also convene our usual MSSA Business Meeting/Breakfast.

Additional papers that address Mormon topics will undoubtedly be scattered throughout other SSSR sessions. So, check your preliminary SSSR program--when it comes out--for such nuggets, along with our MSSA sessions, and plan on joining us for a stimulating time in Montreal.

## Report from San Diego

Perhaps it was the beautiful location, but I'm inclined to think that it was the stimulating lineup of papers. Whatever the reason, the MSSA meetings in San Diego were jumping with excitement. Why, even the MSSA business meeting was bursting at the seams with its record crowd. Throughout the conference, research on Mormonism was thoroughly represented and was recognized for its high quality. Most notably, the student research competition was won by Rick Phillips for "Religious Market Share and Mormon Church Activity: Testing a 'Supply-side' Theory of Religious Mobilization." MSSA sponsored several paper sessions, the highlight of which was the session honoring Harold Christensen. Because of its special importance, the tribute to Dr. Christensen's

work appears at the end of this newsletter. Judge for yourself, and see that the San Diego MSSA meeting was exceptionally good.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SSSR/RRA Meeting

Quebec, Montreal, is the site of the next meeting of the SSSR and RRA. The conference themes reflect an international flavor, and promise a fascinating series of papers and sessions. "Voyager Savants: Following Religions Across Space and Time" is the SSSR theme, and the RRA will focus on "Reaching Across Boundaries: Religious Research that Makes a Practical Difference." Mark November 6-8 on your calendar, and plan to attend the MSSA sessions held in conjunction with the two larger groups. A full list of the MSSA sessions will appear in the Fall '98 issue.

### Western Canada Conference

The Department of Church History and Doctrine at BYU is organizing a symposium on Mormonism in western Canada. The symposium is scheduled for July 10, 1998, in Cardston, Alberta. Papers will address a variety of issues on Mormon colonization of the area and related topics. For more information, contact Dennis A. Wright at (801) 378-8931; e-mail <dawright@reled.byu.edu>.

### New Monograph Series

The South Florida-Rochester-St. Louis Studies in Religion and the Social Order (Scholars Press) announces a new subseries: Studies of Latter-day Saint Religion. Up to three monograph titles a year—focusing on any aspect of Latter-day Saint religion but particularly how and why it is significant for culture, society, and the scholarly studies of religion generally—will be published in this series. Inquiries or manuscript submissions should be addressed to: Danny L. Jorgensen, Editor, Studies of Latter-day Saint Religion, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida, 4202 East Fowler Avenue, CRP 107, Tampa, FL 33620.

### JWHA Awards

The John Whitmer Historical Association (JWHA) is accepting applications for a promising scholars scholarship/grant awards program. Its purpose is to encourage and support scholarly involvement and participation in the JWHA's central mission—studies of Latter Day Saint religion pertinent especially to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—by promising

scholars and students in the earliest career stage. There are two awards:

1. The Wildermuth Award requires submission of a scholarly product (such as paper, thesis, or dissertation). Two Wildermuth Awards of \$200 each, plus waiver of annual meeting registration fees and a one year JWHA membership, are available. Winning papers must be presented at the JWHA annual meeting and they will be published in the *JWHA Journal* pending any necessary revisions.

2. The Kelley Award requires a one page letter of application that includes the applicant's name, address, and phone number, as well as a concise statement of (a) interest in Latter Day Saint studies and (b) reasons for needing financial assistance. Two Kelly Awards in the amount of \$50 each, plus a waiver of the annual meeting registration fees and a one year JWHA membership, are available. Winners are required to attend the JWHA annual meeting and assist the Executive Secretary with registration and other meeting business as needed.

Applications for these awards should be sent to: Danny L. Jorgensen, Chair, JWHA Scholarship Committee, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida, 4202 East Fowler Avenue, CPR 107, Tampa, FL 33620. Application deadline is May 1, 1998.

### Dues

If your dues are late, you should have received a notice that your membership dues are past due. Please forward a check to Lynn Payne (Research Information Division, 18th Floor, 50 E. North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84150) to stay enrolled.

### Salt Lake Sunstone

Sunstone 1998 seeks your participation at their annual symposium on Mormonism, to be held July 29 - August 1, 1998. For more information, contact The Sunstone Foundation, 343 N. Third West, Salt Lake City UT 84103, or at (801) 355-5926. Sunstone's e-mail address is <SunstoneUT@aol.com>.

### MSSA Brochure

Perry Cunningham is developing an informational brochure to help spread the word about the good things MSSA has to offer. If Perry has asked you to help in that effort by writing a section of the brochure, please send your section to him as soon as you are able. We would like to complete this project and make it available as soon as possible.

### Newsletter Help

Please help us keep this newsletter current by sending Michael Nielsen any relevant

announcements, news items, corrections, or general information that may be of interest to MSSA members. Contact Michael at Department of Psychology, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro GA 30460-8041. Or you may phone: (912) 681-5344, or e-mail <MNIelsen@gasou.edu>.

## MSSA BOARD DIRECTORY

Do you have suggestions for the MSSA? Is there something that we should become involved in? Pass the word on to one of our board members:

Gary Shepherd (President), Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48063; (248) 370-2427; email <shepherd@oakland.edu>.

Larry Young (Past President), Department of Sociology, 800 SWKT, BYU, Provo, UT 84602; (801) 378-2107; email <layoung@fhss.byu.edu>.

Mike Nielsen (President-Elect), Department of Psychology, GSU, Statesboro, GA 30460; (912) 681-5344; email <mnielsen@gasou.edu>.

Lynn Payne (Secretary-Treasurer), 50 E. North Temple, #1864, Salt Lake City, UT 84150; (801) 240-3990; email <paynelr@chq.byu.edu>.

Daryl White (Board Member), Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Spelman College, 350 Spelman Lane SW, Atlanta, GA 30314; (404) 223-7573; email <dwhite@spelman.edu>.

Jesse Embry (Board Member), Charles Redd Center, 4069 HBLL, BYU, Provo, UT 84602; (801) 378-4048; email <JLE3@email.byu.edu>.

Grant Underwood (Board Member), Department of Religion, BYU - Hawaii, Laie, HI 96762-1294; (808) 293-3646; <underwog@byuh.edu>.

## HONORING HAROLD CHRISTENSEN

A highlight of the San Diego conference was the special session honoring Harold Christensen, whose research played a pivotal role in establishing social science as a tool for studying Mormonism. Christensen's scholarship enlivened Brigham Young University and then Purdue University, where he worked until his retirement in 1975. On the cutting edge of sociology throughout his career, he became well-known for his careful scholarship.

What follows here are some of the thoughts shared during the session in honor of Harold Christensen.

*Armand Mauss, Professor of Sociology, Washington State University*

It was in the Bancroft Library at UC-Berkeley in the mid-1950s when, as a beginning graduate student, I first came across the published work on Mormons of Glenn Vernon, and then of Harold Christensen. I can still recall the flush of intellectual excitement. Here was neither the apologetic and polemical literature of Church spokesmen, nor the pejorative and dismissive literature of the non-Mormon intellectual elite; but truly analytical studies with actual data! I doubt that today's young scholars can adequately appreciate how rare were the examples in the professional literature in those days of efforts to analyze things Mormon from a detached, social science perspective.<sup>1</sup> Vernon's published work after the 1950s did not include much more on the Mormons, though he continued active in the sociology of religion and was the founding president of MSSA, under whose auspices we now meet. Harold Christensen, on the other hand, while not identified with the sociology of religion *per se*, published numerous articles on Mormon marriage, family, and sexual attitudes, many of them comparing Mormon with nonMormon data. In this year of Mormon pioneer commemorations, it is fitting that we honor Harold as a pioneer while he is still with us. He is a pioneer not only in the social scientific study of Mormons but also in a couple of other ways. First of all, in the larger history of our discipline, he is an admirable exemplar of that second generation of American sociology that came of age professionally between the two world wars, when there were very few departments of sociology. With his Ph.D. from Wisconsin, one of the major graduate schools of sociology then and now, Harold, like so many of that generation, perforce was part of the movement to establish this new discipline nationwide. In that capacity, Harold chaired the Sociology Department at BYU throughout most of the 1940s, and then in 1947 went on to Purdue to become the founding chairman of the sociology program there (later the Department of Sociology and Anthropology). He retired from Purdue in 1975 after three decades of service there, during which he achieved national visibility in the sociology of the family. He authored one of the major textbooks in that subdiscipline (*Marriage Analysis*), which went through three editions.

Another important respect in which Harold can be considered a pioneer is, I believe, little remembered except to his family and friends, most of

whom he has by now outlived. I refer to his place in the history of Mormon intellectual life. Harold was part of the first generation of Mormon intellectuals of the 20th century, coming of age as Utah Mormonism was torn between the imperative, on the one hand, to join the American mainstream, while, on the other hand, struggling to hold fast to the peculiar and parochial faith of its founders. Mormon scholars and intellectuals of that period probably enjoyed more indulgence and appreciation from Church leaders than they do now (which is not saying a lot); for in those halcyon days leaders and intellectuals alike shared the sanguine assurance that science and scholarship would eventually vindicate Mormonism, that Mormons had nothing to fear from the discovery of truth, from whatever source it might come, or toward whatever destination it might lead. This was the age, after all, when faculty members of the Church Education System were encouraged (sometimes at Church expense) to seek advanced degrees in religion or in the humanities from major universities, and when BYU presidents like Franklin S. Harris were trying to bring intellectual respectability and well-credentialed faculty to that university.

Yet the quest for intellectual respectability, both at BYU and in the Church generally, was always in tension with the strain toward conformity to orthodoxy. When intellectuals seemed to question the conventional wisdom, orthodox or not, they often ran afoul of the more conservative Church leaders, as in the so-called "purge" of 1911 at BYU. Some were sufficiently alienated by these experiences that they left Utah and the Church, comprising the Mormon version of the "lost generation."<sup>2</sup> Others, like Harold, left Utah but not the Church, and there was certainly nothing Posts about him. His Mormon heritage was his Liahona, his compass, wherever he went and whatever he did. He simply decided that he could be a better sociologist, as well as a better sociologist of Mormonism, by getting out from under Church auspices.

Harold had had as full a career in Church service before leaving Utah as some Mormons have in a lifetime.<sup>3</sup> Besides the normal mission which devout young men served around the age of 20, then at least 30 months in duration, Harold found himself as acting Mission President for the Church in New Zealand for an additional year and a half, starting in early 1932. These were early Depression years, when few Mormon families, including Harold's, could afford to keep sons on missions, and fewer still were being sent to distant places like New Zealand. Yet it

never occurred to Harold or his parents to complain about the extension of his mission or to insist on the release to which he was entitled. Instead, he faced the awesome and culturally sensitive responsibility, in remote Maori communities, of identifying and appointing local missionaries and leaders to maintain the waning Mormon presence in New Zealand until reinforcements could be sent. Then, back at BYU, during studies for both the BA and MA degrees, Harold continued in heavy Church service on a stake high council and at the ward level, as well as preparing lesson manuals on family life commissioned by the Church for use in the Relief Society, the MIA, and the Sunday Schools. Meanwhile, in 1935, he married his delightful Alice and they began a family of five wonderful and successful children. When they all departed for Indiana and Purdue University in 1947, they joined a Mormon community there of only half a dozen other families, so that was to be another phase of pioneering.

Others will comment on Harold's contributions at Purdue and in the professional literature of family demography and fertility. I would like to make just a few observations about his contributions to the literature on Mormons in particular. Much of what Harold has written about Mormons is not identified by title as dealing with Mormons *per se* but rather with Utah or with westerners or with rural samples. Such is the case with the first of his articles published in a mainstream sociology journal, namely a 1938 article in *Rural Sociology* taken from his MA thesis at BYU (the first MA degree there in Sociology). The subject was rural-urban differences in the time interval between marriage and the birth of the first child in Utah County. From there Harold, sometimes joined by collaborators, went on to publish a dozen or so studies about norms and attitudes related to sexual behavior. These studies were nearly unique for their time, since there was little encouragement, either in the Church or in the country as a whole, for studies of sexual attitudes or behavior. Perhaps even more remarkable in this day and age was that Harold did his work without the benefit of large government grants!

What made Harold's studies especially valuable were his samples, which were both large and cross-cultural, making possible *comparative* generalizations. He was able to compare Mormon student data from the far west with comparable data from Purdue and from sexually permissive Denmark, the latter data gathered during and after a Fulbright

year there. His findings emphasized the importance of differential cultural definitions of sexual norms and normative transgression, showing empirically that in cultural settings like that of the Mormons sexual behavior was not only very conservative but transgression was fraught with guilt. From that research, Harold derived and advocated a chastity norm based on *rational* considerations rather than on doctrine alone. Other studies provided an empirical basis for predicting family size, for identifying risk factors predictive of divorce, and for vindicating the value of temple marriage. It is somewhat ironic that Church leaders, during Harold's career as even now, have been very wary about sponsoring or even reporting on such studies, despite the obvious support that this work has consistently provided for Church standards and programs.

Beyond his special interest in comparative sex, marriage, and family life, Harold has been a thoughtful observer and investigator of Mormon culture more generally. During his student days at BYU in the 1930s, and again while he was a visiting professor there in the 1960s, he collected data from general student samples on various beliefs and attitudes relating to Church teachings and practices. His colleague Ken Cannon added data from the 1970s. The discovery that during four decades or so student beliefs had become much more conservative does not come as a surprise today to anyone who has followed the history of BYU, but it surely was an unexpected finding in the professional literature when it was published in the 1970s, after the arrival of the Age of Aquarius on the rest of the nation's campuses! I found it also a helpful corroboration for my own "retrenchment" thesis, indeed a partial explanation for that thesis, considering the number of Church leaders and bureaucrats who passed through BYU during those decades after the 1930s. Harold's memoirs, partially published in two *Dialogue* articles (see Note 3 herewith) also provide highly revealing glimpses into the stresses and strains of Mormon intellectual life during the 1930s through the 1960s.

It has been my pleasure to have had a few long visits with Harold and Alice during the past 20 years, and I am truly pleased to be able to join in this fitting tribute to Harold today.

#### Notes

1. For a fuller critique and discussion of the history of social scientific studies of Mormons, see my *Flowers, Weeds, and Thistles: The State of Social Science Literature on the Mormons*, forthcoming in a collection written and edited by James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, and tentatively entitled *Bibliographic Essays in Mormon History* (University of Illinois Press, 1998).

2. See Edward A. Geary, "Mormondom's Lost Generation: The Novelists of the 1940s," *BYU Studies* 18 (Fall, 1977): 89-99

3. What follows is drawn mostly from two articles published by Harold during the past decade in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*: 20(3): 115-28 (Fall, 1987), "Memoirs of a Marginal Man: Reflections of a Mormon Sociologist;" and in 24(3): 69-76 (Fall, 1991), "The New Zealand Mission during the Great Depression: Reflections of a Former Acting President." I have also had several informative conversations with Harold in the years since his retirement from Purdue. For those wishing to know more about Harold's career and reflections, his papers have been deposited in the archives of the Lee Library at BYU

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**Tim Heaton, Professor of Sociology, Brigham Young University**

Beginning in the late 1930s and spanning 4 decades, Harold Christensen has produced a large volume of literature showing significant cross-cultural and temporal variation in attitudes and behaviors regarding one of the most basic social institutions--namely, the family. In the brief space I have, I certainly cannot do justice to the literature in a comprehensive fashion. Rather, I will give an overview of the major sources of information used by Harold Christensen and highlight some of the key insights from his work. Then I give a critical assessment of his contribution to the understanding of cultural values and behavior regarding the formation and legalization of sexual and parental relationships. Finally, I argue for the continuing relevance of his work.

Empirically, two major data sets have provided the main body of evidence that form the basis of his research. The collection of these data sources shows uncommon insight into issues of importance, a commitment to comparative work, careful attention to detail necessary to insure data quality, and ability to network with professionals in different locations. The combined use of the two sources reveals the wisdom of collecting both personal reports of attitudes and behaviors, as well as official records. For the official record, Dr. Christensen painstakingly matched birth, marriage and divorce records for three different locations, and over a long period of time. This data provides a source that is not subject to error from selective reporting, bad memory, or sampling bias. With this data, he was able to examine the interrelatedness of three critical events in the formation and dissolution of families.

The second major source of data is a series of questionnaires administered to college students in three universities representing very different cultural settings. This data makes a nice comparison with records from vital registration. The settings are Utah, the Midwest, and Denmark. It includes attitudes and behaviors. By repeating the survey at several points in time, we can also observe patterns of change.

Numerous articles using part or all of these two major sources of data explore many nuances of the data. Some of the major themes of the analysis are:

A. Well before the currently popular notion of life course analysis emerged, he noted that timing of events is very critical

Timing is as important to fertility research, as is the number of births. Most births occurred about 10 months after marriage, but the time-interval appears to have increased over time. Factors associated with longer first birth intervals include older age at marriage, heterogamy in spouses age and residence, professional occupation, nonrelief workers, and urban residence.

He finds shorter first birth intervals in rural areas, especially among farmers. He speculates that it is because they have less sophisticated sex practices--that is they don't control fertility.

B. He also documented the importance of cultural relativism

He tests the hypothesis of cultural relativism--that premarital sex will be greater in permissive societies, but that the consequences (in terms of forced marriage and divorce) will be greater in more restrictive societies. Illegitimacy and premarital pregnancy are greater in more permissive societies. There is more evidence of rushed marriage in Utah.

Post marital pregnancy reduces the risk of divorce (Utah not included in the table). Timing of pregnancy has a greater effect on divorce in Indiana than in Denmark. Analysis of record linkage data show that (1) shorter first birth intervals lead to higher divorce rate, (2) but premarital conception makes less difference in Denmark (less restrictive) than in Utah (more restrictive) . Note that this research combines the two issues of timing and cultural relativism. Reviews prior studies showing that control over fertility and delayed childbearing reduce the chances of divorce and enhance marital adjustment. The effects of premarital pregnancy on

divorce are greatest in more restrictive cultures (Utah) than less (Denmark).

He uses the model of value-behavior discrepancy to explain this outcome. Survey data shows ranking of value permissiveness across three societies and a consistent male-female difference. Premarital sex shows the same pattern. Danes were much more likely to enjoy 1st sex and did it at an older age, even though they were more liberal in attitudes and behavior. Danes had greater approval than experience, but the other two groups had greater experience than approval. More permissive societies have the least negative effects.

C. Insights into Utah-LDS culture

Based on matched sample of marriage and birth records. One study finds 1- increase in temple marriages. 2- temple marriages have older age at marriage, 3- temple marriers have higher SES, 4- temple marriages much less likely have premarital conception, and are less likely to divorce.

Based on a of 1978 survey, he finds: 1- LDS premarital sex norms are very conservative (both attitudes and behavior). They also report a longer desirable waiting time through the courtship process. 2- Mormon conservatism remains resistant to change. This creates a broader difference between Mormons and others. 3. Mormon deviants pay a higher price—they have a greater value-behavior discrepancy—namely guilt. 4. Religious socialization is the major explanatory variable.

1-Utah has above average divorce rate. Temple marriage divorce is low, but nontemple divorce is very high and more Utah divorces involve children. 2- terminal petting is a result of LDS emphasis on chastity. It can lead to frustration. 3- Young age at marriage in Utah may be a result of the same structure as terminal petting. 4- Sexual guilt. Chastity is gained by teaching that sex is wrong-thus creating guilt. 5-Unplanned parenthood. 6- Authoritarian Family Relationships. "One of the first steps in strengthening the Latter-day Saint family is to realistically recognize the stress points that may be affecting it"

Cross-cultural comparisons indicate 1- Mormons are More conservative. This is the case in both attitudes and behaviors. 2. The value-behavior discrepancy is greater for Mormons. The Intermountain area is more likely to disapprove of and have no sexual experience. This is a consistency that Christensen downplays. They are however more

likely to have sex without approving--but only by a small percent. 3- Negative accompaniments are greater for Mormons. Examples are rebellion, forced marriage, and divorce.

#### D. Importance of change.

Based on college samples in Intermountain, Midwestern and Danish college students, he documents change in attitudes toward censorship, non-virginity, and premarital sex. The study also has premarital sex and ratio of attitudes to beliefs. Finally commitment to sexual partner and feelings of guilt about first sexual experience are included. Comparisons between 1958 and 1968 indicate substantial shifts in permissiveness. Changes in behavior are most common among men and in Denmark. The changes increase the similarity in behavior and attitudes. There was also a decline in guilt. There are also important methodological contributions. 1. Use of simple procedures to show what we now require lots of fancy statistics and a big computer to do. 2. Careful empirical documentation. 3. Tackling issues that may not have been popular with his employer. 4- Matching of values and behavior.

There are some biases in his work. 1. Attitudes come from nonrandom samples of college students. Given costs and access, we can't really fault this method, but there is little attempt to assess biases due to this. There are, however, supporting behavioral data from records—this second source also has some bias due to selective migration. My research suggests that LDS college students might be more orthodox than the average Mormon, but the opposite may be the case for other students. Thus, Christensen's work may overstate the differences between groups. 2. Choice of cultures for comparison. What if the choice had been the Hausa of Nigeria, India, China and Mormons. Mormons would probably show up as the real liberals in sexual behavior.[eg- "Mormon sex norms are among the strictest in the world"] 3. There is a tendency to emphasize the negative--for example with the value discrepancy discussions.

Finally, I would like to argue for the continuing relevance of Harold Christensen's work. First, in the area of sexual behavior I note (1) the continued divergence on attitudes toward premarital sex, (2) LDS conservatism on several issues, and (3) less sexual experience among LDS adolescents. It is clear that Mormons remain distinctive in the U.S..

Second, the behavior-discrepancy problem

may exist in other aspects of our lives. For example, the LDS divorce rate is near the national average. Yet Mormons are less likely to think divorce laws should be relaxed (17 percent of LDS people compared to 28% nationally). It is a little discouraging to note that LDS members who have ever divorced have lower levels of Church attendance. Likewise, LDS women are about as likely to work as the national average, but we believe that it is not good for young children when their mother works. Unlike the case of divorce, however, working women and women who stay home have similar levels of Church attendance. Perhaps the behavior-beliefs discrepancy is more problematic in some areas than in others. One wonders if the behavior discrepancy problem also exists in other conservative and rapidly growing churches.

Third, the cross-cultural approach is even more relevant today, especially for Mormons. We just passed a milestone with over half of the membership residing in other countries. Little is known about social characteristics of Mormons in other countries. Given the location of new growth, however, Denmark is probably not the best location for comparison. We probably seem more liberal or progressive on issues such as divorce compared to many parts of Latin America and Asia.

In sum, it has been rewarding to review Dr. Christensen's work. His careful documentation combined with deep insight has taught me many things about family life in general, and my own culture in particular. His insights of clearly relevant to important changes that are occurring within the family and within the LDS subculture.

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***Jim Davidson, Professor of Sociology, Purdue University***

Harold Christensen became chairman of the sociology section at Purdue University in 1947 and transformed it into a department by 1953. He served as head of the department until 1962, then continued to teach and do research until his retirement in 1975. Harold received an honorary degree from Purdue in 1993.

As a member of Purdue's faculty since 1968, I call your attention to three important contributions Harold made to our department. First, in addition to establishing the department, he played a major role in recruiting a very talented faculty. Walter Hirsch, Robert Eichhorn, and Edward Dager are just a few of

the early and outstanding scholars who laid the foundation for our department and contributed to its stature as a major research center for years to come. We have Harold to thank for attracting and keeping such a fine faculty.

Second, Harold contributed to the intellectual tone of the department in his own personal way. He was on the cutting edge of research in family sociology. His international focus and methodological rigor led to important advances in that field. Those advances gave the department a national reputation in family—a reputation that continues to this day. Harold’s professionalism was evident in the fact that he did not just have a retirement dinner; his retirement became the focal point of an important symposium at which family scholars such as Reuben Hill, Mirra Komarovsky, Ira Reiss, and Alice Rossi examined Harold’s work and its implications for further research in marriage, family, and sex roles. It was a very uplifting experience honoring Harold’s impact on the field.

Finally, Harold brought class to our department. He was a model for young faculty like me who wanted to build careers in sociology. He was someone we could emulate. He worked hard; I (then the youngest member of the department) often saw him (the oldest person in the department) in his office at four or five o’clock in the morning. He also was a caring man who was always concerned about the well-being of others in the department. He invited newcomers like me and my wife Anna into his home and, in a real sense, into his family. We will always be grateful to Harold and Alice for that.

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### ***Response by Harold T. Christensen***

You have greatly honored me here today and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. In responding, let me first provide a brief backdrop to my work. My research and publishing began some sixty years ago, during the late 1930s. After finishing my undergraduate studies in sociology at Brigham Young University, in 1935, I had been appointed Graduate Assistant, to teach half-time while pursuing my Master’s Degree. University President Franklin S. Harris took a personal interest in me and I came to greatly respect him. So quite naturally I consulted him before firming up the selection of a topic for my thesis research. My first serious proposal was to undertake a content analysis of Latter-day Saint interests and values, over time, using the Improvement Era (now called *Ensign*) plus published

General Conference Reports as source materials. But President Harris felt that this might be provocative to the Church Brethren, and so I, respectfully, changed plans. The thesis topic eventually settled upon and, in time, completed (and which I am sure can still be found in the University’s library) was a pioneering study of the time-interval between a couple’s marriage and the birth of their first child.

The method, which I, perhaps immodestly, can claim to have helped develop and to name, became known as “Record Linkage.” It consisted of hand-matching (computers came later) selected sets of records and then making the calculations and comparisons needed. In my own case, it was the official marriage and birth records of Utah County, Utah, for selected years, that were tapped. My primary concerns were, first, the interval between marriage and first birth, and second, cases where my calculations had indicated that conception had occurred prior to marriage. Each of these two independent variables were then analyzed with respect to such factors as age at marriage, occupation of father, and the like. Later in my career, after carrying out additional record-linkage studies, for other years and in other places, I also became interested in how the independent variables (i.e., time-interval and premarital pregnancy patterns) might be related to time trends and to the cross-cultural picture.

My first publications in professional journals appeared in June, 1938, in *Rural Sociology* and in January, 1939, in *The American Journal of Sociology*. The title of this latter was “The Time-Intervale Between Marriage of Parents and the Birth of Their First Child in Utah County, Utah.” Since both of these articles attracted favorable attention, even nationally, I felt that I was on my way. Earlier, there had been ripples of local suspicion and criticism over the implied sexual content of my research. But I had had the open support of my mentor and teacher, Professor John C. Swensen—plus certain others of the faculty—and at least the implicit support of President Harris. And when the publications appeared, that also helped.

I should make it clear at this point that I have been focusing here upon Record Linkage essentially as a convenient sample; my work included the use of questionnaires and occasional interviews as well. And it became extended across several cultures and involved several points in time, for comparative purposes (Mormon versus non-Mormon, for example). Numerous publications resulted



throughout the forties, fifties, sixties, and a few even later.

But I was, and am, well aware of my research limitations; which were frequently alluded to in the publications themselves. You see, realizing that my work was exploring new ground and the samples usually quite small, I was careful to appear tentative. One might say that I was putting it out there, so to speak, and, at least implicitly, inviting others to come aboard.

It is in the very nature of science to have one's work examined critically by others. We get clues from each other. Certainly I hold no grudges against anyone for anything negative that may have been aimed at my work. And, I want you to know also that I hold profound respect for the professional works of the members of this panel.

Again, and finally, thank you, thank you, thank you! I greatly appreciate all of you, those attending, those helping out in one way or another, and most especially members of today's panel. I shall not single out individual names, except one, and will close by identifying that one exception. My good friend Armand Mauss, more than anyone else, I believe, conceptualized the idea of this panel and then saw it through to fruition. For this, Armand, and for your definitive comments on today's panel I thank you deeply.