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President's Message

Greetings!

We are looking forward to the annual meeting of the Mormon Social Science Association next month. As usual, we will meet in conjunction with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association. This year, the meetings are October 17-19 at the Seelbach Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky. A glance at the preliminary program (online at the SSSR website) shows that there are a wide variety of Mormon themed sessions and individual papers on the subject of Mormonism. At this meeting we will also present our biennial Vernon Lecture. The lecture will be delivered by Gary Shepherd, professor of sociology at Oakland University, and Gordon Shepherd, professor of sociology at the University of Central Arkansas. The lecture is entitled, "Latter-day Revelation: Prophetic Religion in the Family International and the LDS Church." I was fortunate enough to get a sneak peek at a draft of the lecture, and it is a treatise that transcends the study of Mormonism to make some important theoretical points about the transmission and codification of divine communication. We're

looking forward to the presentation.

In addition to our annual meeting, we also sponsored a session at the 2008 Mormon History Association Conference in Sacramento, California this spring. Our session was entitled, "Gathered in Zion and Scattered Abroad: How Social Context Affects Latter-day Saint Religious Vitality." The session looked at Mormon identity in Utah, and speculated on circumstances that might spark a revival of Mormonism in Europe—an area of the church that has suffered from relatively slow growth rates.

There are other opportunities for MSSA members to present their scholarship. The 2009 meetings of the Mormon History Association will be held in Springfield, IL, this year. The deadline for submissions is October 1. In addition, CESNUR, the Center for Studies of New Religions will hold its annual meeting in Salt Lake City on June 10 through June 14. The Salt Lake City location makes this conference ideal for MSSA members to showcase their work. The deadline for papers is January 23, 2009, and you can learn more online

at www.cesnur.org.

We are happy to report that our little scholarly society is in good financial health. This is due in part from royalties that have been donated by the editors of Revisiting Thomas F. O'Dea's The Mormons. We thank Mike McBride for keeping our books in good order. I invite you to join us at the MSSA business meeting in Louisville, where we can discuss what he want to do with all of our fabulous wealth.

Finally, I want to ask each of you to think about recruitment. We are badly in need of an infusion of fresh blood. If you have students or colleagues that might be interested in joining our ranks, please direct them to our website, or pass along a copy of this newsletter. The website is quickly emerging as an important clearinghouse for working papers and rare works in the sociology of Mormonism. If you haven't visited the site lately, I invite you to take a look.

I look forward to seeing you in Louisville.

Rick Phillips
University of North Florida

Hilltop Dialogues: Elite Entertainment Theory and the Sharing of Sacred Space at the Kirtland Temple

Introduction

The small town of Kirtland, Ohio, located about thirty miles east of Cleveland, nurtures an extremely unique, yet relatively little-known piece of history among its gently rolling hills and its two traffic lights: the

Kirtland Temple. The building itself is not obscure; in a town as small as Kirtland, it is impossible to miss the 115-foot, bright white building featured prominently on top of a hill and alongside a busy state route (see Image 1). For many peo-

ple, the Kirtland Temple, if known at all, is nothing more than an old church. Yet forty thousand individuals travel to the Temple each year, many of them drawn to the Temple seeking a profound religious

(Continued on page 2)

Future SSSR Meetings:

**2008: October 17-19,
Louisville, Kentucky**
**2009: October 23-25,
Denver, Colorado**
**2010: October 29-31
Baltimore, Maryland**

Future MHA Meetings:

**2009: May 21-24,
Springfield, IL**
**2010: May 27-30,
Independence, MO**
**2011: May, St.
George, UT**

Please send your dues for 2008 to Michael McBride, 7 Frost Street; Irvine, CA 92617. Dues are \$10.00 annually. Checks should be made payable to "Mormon Social Science Association" or "MSSA."

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If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, and don't already, save the MSSA some money by sending your email address to: mcbride@uci.edu

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

experience. The Kirtland Temple is described as a beautiful structure, a curiosity, a unique juxtaposition of historical interest and religious meaning, and even a pilgrimage site. Indeed, this structure embodies much more than its stucco façade might suggest. What, exactly, is this place?

In this study, I use survey and interview data to view the Kirtland Temple and its visitors through two theoretical lenses. The stark differences between the expectations of the majority of the visitors to the Kirtland Temple and the historical perspective taken by

Community of Christ Temple interpreters expose the Kirtland Temple as a type of "contested space." Furthermore, the Kirtland Temple's status as a National Historic Landmark as well as a structure with immense spiritual and religious meaning for many of its visitors raises intriguing questions about Pierre Bourdieu's theory of museum visiting as a type of "elite entertainment." Does this theory also apply to a historical museum such as the Kirtland Temple that also doubles as a sort of "shrine" for religious pilgrims? Careful study of Kirtland Temple visitors and their responses to surveys and interviews help to explore these questions.

History

The Kirtland Temple stands as the footprint of a religious

movement that began in New York and today has splintered into over two hundred different denominations.¹ In the early 1800s, a young man named Joseph Smith sought spiritual guidance as he attempted to develop his own religious identity. Through a series of spiritual experiences, Smith moved towards the organization of a new faith that he believed would offer a clearer and fuller perspective on Christianity. In 1829, he published the Book of Mormon, a text he taught had divine origins and contained important spiritual teachings. Smith formally organized a

as he interpreted them. As part of this "Restoration movement," Smith and the members of the church were called by God to build a temple to not only provide a practical meeting space for the church members in Kirtland but, more importantly, to serve as a place where church members would come to receive immense spiritual blessings and be "endowed with power from on high."³

Construction of the Kirtland Temple began in 1833 and demanded extensive donations of time and labor from the

members of the growing church community. Completed in 1836, the Temple was used for worship and education until internal and external dissent prompted by an endeavor to open a church-affiliated bank and other negative forces in the community resulted in the abandonment of

Kirtland by faithful and disenfranchised church members alike.⁴ The Kirtland Temple still stands in remarkable condition with many of the original wooden features and glass windows intact.

Modern Considerations

The church community that built the Kirtland Temple in the 1830s has not survived to the present day as one large religious movement. Instead, disagreements about doctrine and practices have resulted in many



Figure 1. The Kirtland Temple (photo courtesy of Ryan T. Cragun).

church in 1830. Leading his fledgling church, he endeavored to restore the original aspects of Christianity as he interpreted them in the Old and New Testaments.

As the movement grew, the church moved its headquarters from New York to Kirtland, Ohio. The move resulted from a combination of discord in New York and the sudden conversion of a large congregation in Kirtland by one of the missionaries Smith had sent to the West.² In Kirtland, Smith continued his emphasis on restoring the original church and gospel

(Continued on page 3)

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Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

splinter groups. Today, there are about two hundred denominations that have roots in Kirtland history but greatly differ in theology and customs.¹ The Community of Christ, with about 250,000 members throughout the world, is one of these groups. Today, the Community of Christ owns and maintains the Kirtland Temple.

The largest of the denominations is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints or Mormon Church (hereafter referred to as the LDS church). The majority of the visitors to the Kirtland Temple are members of this church. The Community of Christ strives to present the history of the Temple from a purely historical perspective so that it will be accessible to all visitors, no matter their religious affiliation.⁵ This a-religious, primarily historical approach of the Community of Christ does not, however, align perfectly with the intentions of the majority of the visitors. As will be illustrated below, many LDS visitors come to the Temple seeking a spiritual experience and a connection with both the individuals who built the Temple in the 1830s and the spiritual visions and experiences that were recorded to have taken place inside the Temple. Because of these distinct ex-

pectations, the Kirtland Temple has become a contested religious site: tension is often felt between LDS visitors who expect a faith-affirming interpretation of the Kirtland Temple while on tour and Community of Christ tour guides who try to present a strictly factual history of Kirtland. This makes the Kirtland Temple a fascinating place to explore contested history and the importance of place.

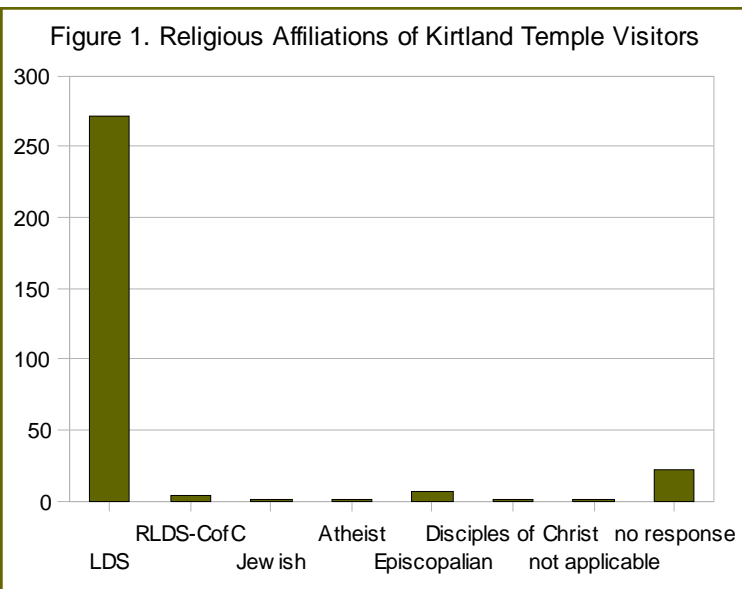
Theoretical Perspective
Museums are often seen as a type of elite entertainment, a

As part of this research, Bourdieu introduced the concept of “cultural capital,” which he saw as a tangible, interchangeable resource like economic capital or access to wealth and money. According to Bourdieu, a person’s cultural capital refers to his or her knowledge of elite culture, such as names of classical artists, works of art, or classical literature. He saw that the elite class possessed the most cultural capital in his native French society, capital which then became concentrated in the upper class

as parents passed along their knowledge of elite culture to their children. Bourdieu argued that people with a high level of cultural capital have an advantage in society.

One way in which this

cultural capital is both gained and expressed is in museum attendance. Bourdieu examined museums, especially art museums, as a form of elite entertainment that individuals with a high level of cultural capital frequent more often than those with less cultural capital. Individuals who have been raised in families with high levels of cultural capital are taught the proper way to move through museums. Specific behaviors, such as quiet contemplation of



(Continued on page 4)

“Seeing the light through the windows on the second floor and just imagining the Prophet Joseph Smith and some of his experiences ... -Interview 16

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

museum labels and works of art or deliberate movement through exhibits, are not automatically inherent in individuals who were not exposed to museums as children. Because of this, individuals with low cultural capital often perceive museums as imposing and threatening.

In his work *Distinction*, Bourdieu examines the types of visitors who visit art museums and concludes that the elite class is highly overrepresented in this type of museum. However, I was interested in the visitor composition of other types of museums, especially museums that appeal to specific cultural or religious groups. Does a historical and religious site like the

Kirtland Temple still only attract visitors from the higher social classes of society?

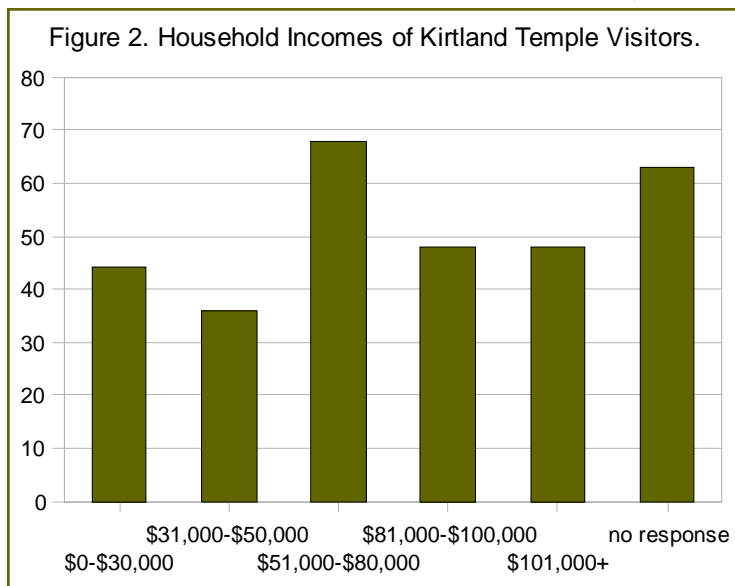
Because of the competing claims to its interpretation and care, the Kirtland Temple can also be considered from the theoretical viewpoint of contested space. Karen J. Wendt asserts that a certain site or structure is only considered sacred because of its meaning in a social context.⁷ This meaning becomes even more complex when multiple groups with distinct belief structures claim the space as sacred, transform-

ing it into contested space. Since both contestation and sacredness exist only within social environments, these categories are fluid rather than static and are constantly shifting as the surrounding context changes. Historian David Howlett notes that the Kirtland Temple, too, has “continuously been appropriated and ‘reconstructed’ within the cosmologies of divergent groups of Mormon pilgrims” since its completion in 1836.⁸

In their study of contested

interactions between groups at the Kirtland Temple. David Howlett addresses this very point in his study contrasting experiences and belief systems of three groups that consider the Kirtland Temple to be sacred (LDS, Community of Christ, and Restoration churches). He concludes that “pilgrims and interpreters [at the Kirtland Temple] actually have constructed not a singular sacred site, but multiple “temples” at Kirtland that subsequently shape, transform, and justify their particular group commitment.”⁸

Another important characteristic for groups confronted with contested space as explained in Morrissey and Gaffikin is that “the normal gravitational pull in such contexts is towards separatism and division.”¹⁰ Al-



though LDS and Community of Christ churches are not confined to a single city and do not physically confront each other daily like the conflicting groups in Belfast, it has been my observation that the two churches do tend to distance themselves from each other due to disagreements in doctrine and theology and there is normally little interaction between members. It is only within contested spaces such as church history sites that the two groups “confront” one another and

space in Belfast, Northern Ireland, researchers Mike Morrissey and Frank Gaffikin comment on the behaviors and strategies of the groups involved in the contestation of space. They note that “competing culture groups strengthen and legitimize themselves and their efforts through the development of adaptive spatial practices.”⁹ Although the violent situation in Belfast is drastically different than the tranquil atmosphere in Kirtland, Ohio, these assertions about contested space still apply to

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“My favorite aspect of the Kirtland Temple experience was learning about what happened there, and then trying to picture in my mind what it would have been like; what I might have thought and done if I was one of the people who lived at that time and got to attend the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.”
-Interview 10

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

must decide how to interact with individuals who, on one hand, share a common history and a common desire to preserve historic structures; and on the other hand, have a different and foreign theology or practice. What distinguishes the Kirtland Temple from other contested spaces is that, although each group preserves its own interpretation of the Temple, interactions between groups are not dominated by narrow-minded views and heated dialogues.

Methods

I employed two data collection techniques. My main research method was a survey, available to all visitors at the end of the Kirtland Temple tour. There were two ver-

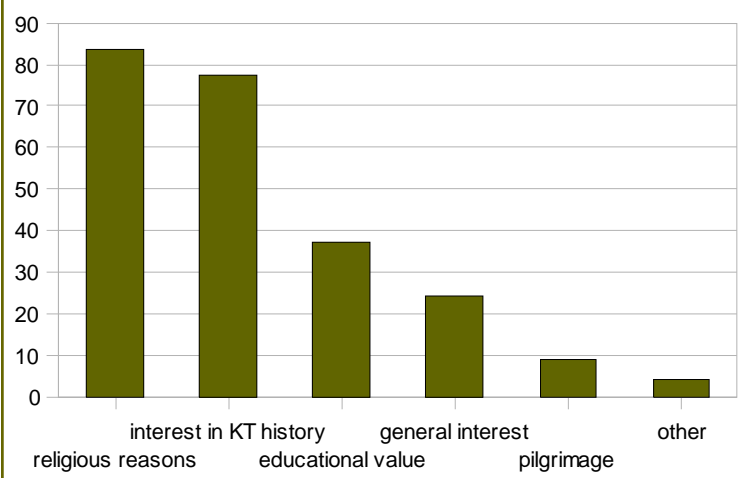
sions of this survey. The first was a pilot survey made available to both visitors and Kirtland Temple staff with the intent of identifying and modifying any unclear or confusing questions for the final survey. I placed fifty copies of the pilot survey in the Kirtland Temple on June 14. By June 21, one week later, all copies had been returned.

After making a few changes to the pilot survey, I printed the final survey and placed copies in the Temple. With permission from the Kirtland Temple site

coordinator, I offered a 10% discount on museum store purchases to visitors who submitted a completed survey. This discount was thought to both encourage the completion of surveys and additional store purchases. The final survey ran for five weeks, from July 4 to August 9.¹¹ Out of the 400 surveys printed, I received 322 completed surveys. These numbers create the impression that the surveys enjoyed a very high response rate. However, though most of the surveys were returned, when contrasted with

visitors came to the Kirtland Temple by asking “Why did you visit today? (Check all that apply).” Response options included: “Interest in the history of Kirtland Temple,” “General Interest in historic sites and museums,” “Religious reasons,” “Pilgrimage,”¹⁴ “Educational value for family or group,” and “Other” (write-in). I also asked two questions to decipher the museum visiting habits of Kirtland Temple visitors and determine whether income level had an influence on the frequency of museum

Figure 3. Reasons for Visiting Kirtland Temple for LDS (%).



visits or the types of museums visited. The survey included the question “About how many times a year do you visit museums?” with the following response options: “Four or more times a year,”

the number of visitors per day who completed a survey, only an average of 5.4 % of daily visitors filled out a survey.¹²

The survey covered topics ranging from general visitor demographics to overall impressions of the visit.¹³ The demographics category consisted of an open-ended question which asked the respondent’s religious affiliation and a multiple-option question which asked the approximate level of his or her annual household income.

I attempted to get a better understanding of the reasons

“One to three times a year,” and “Almost never.” I also asked, “Which types of museums do you more frequently visit?” with possible responses “Latter Day Saint historical sites,” “Other historical sites,” “Science museums,” “Children’s museums,” “Art museums,” “History museums,” and “Other” (write-in).

The survey also included the question “If affiliated with an LDS tradition, how important is the Kirtland Temple to your personal religious identity?”

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“These people have been wanting to visit the Kirtland Temple for years, decades. They have grown up hearing the stories of sacrifice. They considered the Pentecostal manifestations to be real. For so many, the history is family history. It is a spiritual journey to return. It allows them to reconnect, feel like a spiritual connection to their past. To their family’s past or to the collective church’s past.”

-Interview 1

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

with possible responses “Very important,” “Somewhat important,” “Not important,” and “N/A.”

To see which parts of the Visitor Center were being used most frequently, I included a survey question which asked visitors to indicate if they had visited the Mercantile (Museum Store), the museum (and how much time was spent there), or had watched the introductory video.

Finally, I wanted to know if visitors came away from the Kirtland Temple with a positive experience

that met their expectations.

The survey asked: “Did your visit today meet your expectations?” with boxes available for “Yes” and “No.” I also asked visitors to rate their experiences with different aspects of the Kirtland Temple site

by using a rating system from 1 to 5, with one indicating “Low Quality” and 5 indicating “High Quality.” Visitors provided a rating for the “Kirtland Temple walking tour,” “Kirtland Temple staff,” “Museum,” and “Overall experience.”

I also conducted interviews with individuals who visited the Kirtland Temple. Instead of conducting these interviews on-site, which ran the risk of disturbing possible personal religious experiences, I decided to provide Interview Request

Sheets alongside the surveys which would be available in the foyer of the Temple and accessible to visitors after the tour.

These slips of paper briefly stated my interest in speaking further with visitors and provided room for visitors to give their contact information and to indicate a convenient time to conduct the interview. I placed the Interview Request Sheets in the Temple on July 22. By August 9, when I removed the surveys and Request Sheets, I had received 25 responses.

The percentage of visitors who provided their contact informa-

tion helped facilitate my data collection by mentioning my research at the end of all tours and directing visitors to the surveys and Interview Request forms available in the foyer of the Temple.

I also spent time observing visitor patterns in the visitor center and museum in order to gain a better understanding of visitor flow, popular exhibits, and other considerations. Since much of this data is not applicable to my central research question, I have omitted discussion of this facet of my research

from this paper

Results

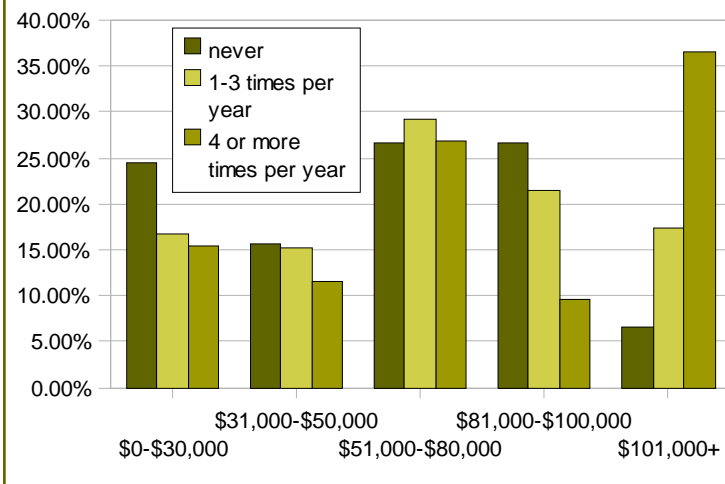
Out of the sample of 322, 284 respondents were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or 88% of the sample. Seven percent did not

provide a religious affiliation.¹⁶ Only 5% of my sample was comprised of individuals who came from other religious denominations. I received surveys from six Episcopalians,¹⁷ three Community of Christ members, one RLDS member,¹⁸ one Jewish individual married to an LDS member, one Disciple of Christ, and one atheist (see Figure 1).

I used the survey question about annual household income to serve as the indicator of social class for this study.¹⁹ All income brackets received a

(Continued on page 7)

Figure 4. Frequency of Museum Visits by Income (%).



tion for an interview was much lower than the percentage of visitors who filled out a survey. An average of 1.2% of visitors filled out an Interview Request Sheet per day.

Of the 25 responses, 10 provided an email address only, 11 provided both an email address and a phone number, and 4 provided a phone number only. I conducted eight interviews over the phone and received nine responses through email (out of 15 email requests).¹⁵ The Kirtland Temple staff

“This is like a Mecca journey for them [visitors to the Temple] . . . Some people have been waiting for years to visit these sacred locations. Their hearts are pounding when they walk in the doors of the Kirtland Temple...”
-Interview 1

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

fairly even number of responses, although the higher income brackets were slightly overrepresented (see Figure 2). The largest group was the mid-range income bracket of \$51,000 to \$80,000, with 28% of the responses. Also, if the two higher-range categories are combined, it is evident that 40% of visitors to the Kirtland Temple have annual incomes of more than \$81,000. This is a larger percentage than the percentage of visitors with incomes of \$31,000 or less. From these results, it would seem that Bourdieu was

right even for religiously oriented museums: there is an overrepresentation of the elite among museum visitors.

The “average” or “typical” response for an LDS visitor when it came to motivations for visiting the Kirtland Temple was actually a combination of three reasons:

“Interest in the history of Kirtland Temple,” “Religious reasons,” and “Educational value for family or group.” The category “Religious reasons” received the most responses, 236 (see Figure 3). Visitors from religious denominations that have no connection to the history of the church community in Kirtland did not indicate that they came to the Kirtland Temple because of “Religious reasons.” The most common response for these individuals was “An interest in the history

of Kirtland Temple,” with six responses. The categories “Educational value for family or group” and “General interest in historic sites and museums” both received five responses.

Forty-eight percent of Kirtland Temple visitors visit museums “One to three times per year.” Twenty percent of respondents visit museums “Four or more times a year” or “Almost never.” I broke these responses down by income, and I found that people with annual incomes above \$101,000 were the most likely to visit museums more

ject.

In order to determine whether income influenced the types of museums an individual most frequently visits, I calculated the percentage of respondents for each type of museum per income bracket. There was no pattern when the responses were broken down by income. The percentages were about the same for all income brackets for each type of museum (data not shown).

Among LDS respondents, 79% indicated that the Kirtland Temple

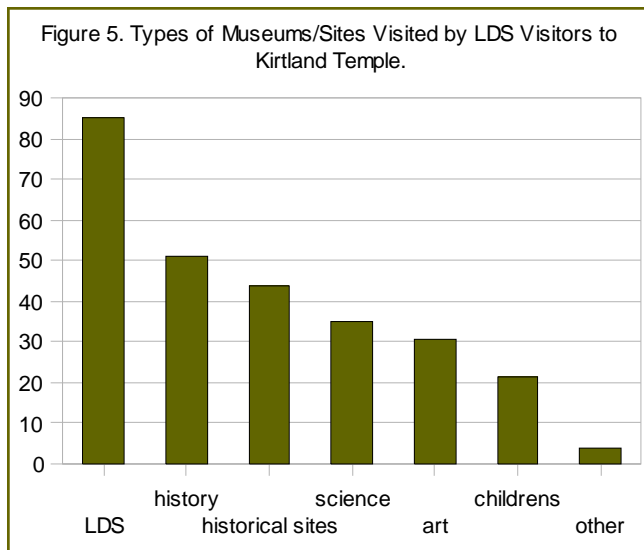
was “Very important” to their religious identities. Twenty-three percent said that it was “Somewhat important,” 1.5% said it was “Not important,” and 0.3% indicated that the question was “N/A.”

Generally, individuals who did not check that they frequently visited Latter Day Saint historical sites appeared more likely

to say that the Kirtland Temple was only “Somewhat important” to their religious identities. However, the relationship was not statistically significant.

As for other religious denominations, only Community of Christ and RLDS respondents indicated that the Kirtland Temple was “Very important” to their religious identities. This makes sense because these denominations share the Kirtland Temple history and embrace it as part of their religious heritage.

(Continued on page 8)



than four times per year (see Figure 4), supporting Bourdieu's assertion that elite individuals more frequently visit museums (chi-square = 17.777; $p < .05$).

As for which types of museums guests most frequently visit, I did not have a large enough sample to draw any conclusions for non-LDS individuals. However, among the LDS, LDS historical sites were by far the most common (see Figure 5). History is important to LDS individuals, as indicated by the fact that the top three types of museums all dealt with this sub-

“These landmarks are actually spiritual landmarks. A tour of visiting historic landmarks becomes a journey of spiritual landmarks. They go home not just with photos and memories but with a desire to improve their lives. They want to read the Book of Mormon more, and to be better people. . . We want to follow the Lord with the same conviction that the early Latter Day Saints did. . . I would say that the largest part of a church history tour is that people make improvements to their spiritual life.”
-Interview 1

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

Ninety-five percent of LDS respondents indicated that their visit met their expectations. Only 5% said that it did not. All of the respondents from other religious denominations indicated that their expectations were met.

The ratings for the “Kirtland Temple walking tour,” “Kirtland Temple staff,” and “Overall experience,” were very positive, with many 5s and few 1s and 2s. The ratings for “Kirtland Temple staff” were even more positive (see Figure 7). The museum received the lowest ratings. Many people simply left

this category blank because they did not visit the museum. The ratings the museum did get, though, were much lower than the other categories. Often an individual would give everything a 5 except for the museum. Apparently, something about the museum is not appealing to visitors. Perhaps the museum is completely overshadowed by the Temple itself. Also, the larger, self-contained museum is a new feature to the Visitor Center and guests may have been unaccustomed to the idea. Unfortunately, I did not receive much feedback about the museum from interviews or comments on surveys so these reasons are speculative.

Through interviews with LDS individuals who had recently toured the Temple, I gained a better understanding of the

immense spiritual importance the Kirtland Temple holds for LDS visitors, the reasons they come to the site, the connection they feel to the history of the church, and what they remember most about their experience. Many LDS visitors emphasized the importance of being in the same space where significant events occurred and where historical church leaders stood. One visitor told me that his/her favorite experience at the Temple was:

Seeing the light through the windows on the second floor and just imagining the

modern LDS church doctrine and belief system. The individual quoted above actively imagines him or herself participating in the events that were held at the Kirtland Temple. This person goes beyond an interest in mere historical facts and projects his or her own identity, thoughts, and actions into the past. This quote demonstrates the sentiment common to many LDS visitors that the history of the Kirtland Temple has a direct link to the experiences of modern LDS visitors.

The following quote further emphasizes the “closeness” to

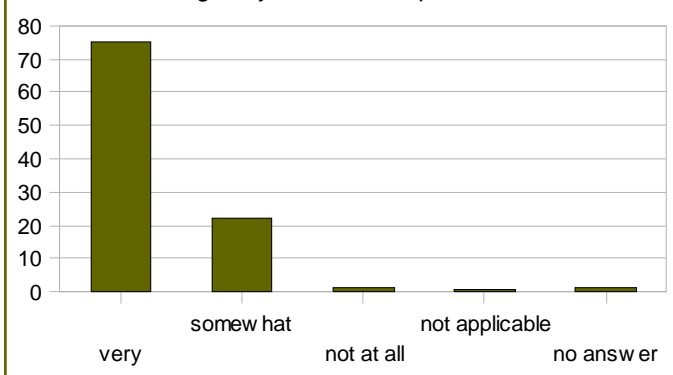
1800’s Kirtland residents that many LDS visitors feel today:

These people have been wanting to visit the Kirtland Temple for years, decades. They have grown up hearing the stories of sacrifice. They considered the Pente-

costal manifestations to be real. For so many, the history is family history. It is a spiritual journey to return. It allows them to reconnect, feel like a spiritual connection to their past. To their family’s past or to the collective church’s past.²²

Another important theme that arose in the interviews beyond the personal connection to Kirtland Temple history is the sheer significance of the site to visitors’ personal faith and religious life. Many see a visit to the Kirtland Temple as an opportunity to strengthen or reaf-

Figure 6. Importance of Kirtland Temple to Personal Religiosity for LDS Respondents.



Prophet Joseph Smith and some of his experiences ... feeling the Spirit.²⁰

Another explained that

My favorite aspect of the Kirtland Temple experience was learning about what happened there, and then trying to picture in my mind what it would have been like; what I might have thought and done if I was one of the people who lived at that time and got to attend the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.²¹

There is a very real connection between the historical events of Kirtland in the 1830s and the

(Continued on page 9)

“The temple itself was just amazing. The building is gorgeous and beautiful and has a great spirit about it. I don’t care which religion you are, if you were there you could not deny there was a God.”

-Interview 3

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

firm their belief. This religious journey is comparable to a pilgrimage. One visitor makes this connection:

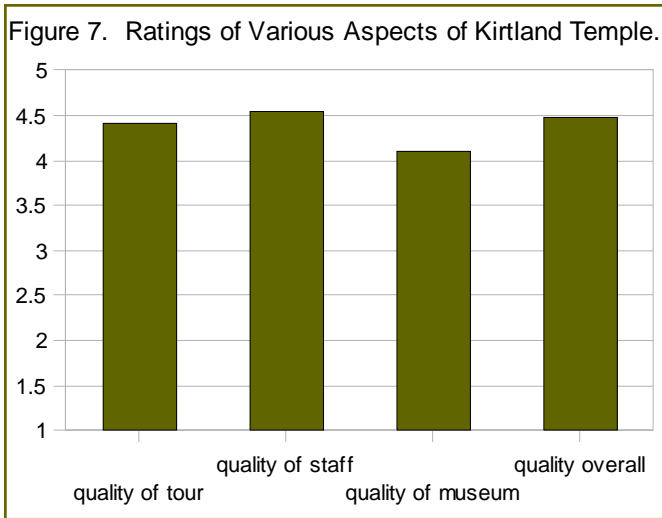
This is like a Mecca journey for them [visitors to the Temple] . . .Some people have been waiting for years to visit these sacred locations. Their hearts are pounding when they walk in the doors of the Kirtland Temple. . .These landmarks are actually spiritual landmarks. A tour of visiting historic landmarks becomes a journey of spiritual landmarks. They go home not just with photos and memories but with a desire to improve their lives. They want to read the Book of Mormon more, and to be better people. . .We want to follow the Lord with the same conviction that the early Latter Day Saints did. . .I would say that the largest part of a church history tour is that people make improvements to their spiritual life.²³

One visitor provided a poignant reaction to the Temple and explained how a visit to the site has the potential to influence the spiritual beliefs of any visitor:

The temple itself was just amazing. The building is gorgeous and beautiful and has a great spirit about it. I don’t care which religion you are, if you were there you could not deny there was a God.²⁴

I also observed that LDS visitors pick up on the different approaches to church history sites taken by the LDS church and the Community of Christ church and are often disappointed by these differences. The Kirtland Temple is not the only historic site that is related to the church community of the 1830s and 40s founded by Joseph Smith. There are other sites in Illinois and New York. Many of these sites are owned and operated by the LDS church and are approached as opportunities to strengthen the faith of LDS visitors by presenting the history along with tour guides’ personal religious testimonies

At Historic Kirtland²⁵. . .how do I say it. . .it was presented in a ‘this is the way it is’ way. At the Temple, they kept clarifying things, they kept saying things like ‘the movement at the time,’ as if they were trying to distance themselves from the people or the philosophy. Historic Kirtland embraces it as part of their heritage and is proud of it. I didn’t get that at the Temple. It felt like a separate group of people, trying not be connected with the history. . . Almost like they were an unconnected group of people giving tours. I liked the feeling at Historic Kirtland



better. It was a good experience at both, the Temple, but the fact that they were trying to distance themselves gave it a little bit of a cold feeling.²⁶
Some LDS individuals understand this difference before arriving at the Kirtland Temple, and therefore are not surprised:

and references to scripture. When LDS visitors come to the Kirtland Temple, they expect their experience to mirror their experiences at historic sites owned by the LDS church. When they realize that interpreters at the Kirtland Temple lead tours by presenting the Temple purely as a historic site, they are often surprised by the absence of faith-affirming spiritual references. This visitor emphasized the difference between LDS and Community of Christ historic sites:

My experience in the Kirtland Temple was not a spiritual experience, but then I knew it would not be. The other visits have always had a spiritual feeling to them.²⁷

However, many LDS visitors express a desire for a tour more conducive to spiritual experiences. This visitor points out that the tight schedule of Kirtland Temple tours and the limited opportunities for silent

(Continued on page 10)

“At Historic Kirtland25. . .how do I say it. . .it was presented in a ‘this is the way it is’ way. At the Temple, they kept clarifying things, they kept saying things like ‘the movement at the time,’ as if they were trying to distance themselves from the people or the philosophy. Historic Kirtland embraces it as part of their heritage and is proud of it. I didn’t get that at the Temple. It felt like a separate group of people, trying not be connected with the history. . . Almost like they were an unconnected group of people giving tours. I liked the feeling at Historic Kirtland better. It was a good experience at both, the Temple, but the fact that they were trying to distance themselves gave it a little bit of a cold feeling.”

-Interview 8

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

meditation inside the building make it difficult to focus on the site’s spiritual meaning:

What we sometimes regret is that there aren’t moments for peaceful meditation in the Temple. . .The time in the Temple is always filled with information, no feeling for worship.²⁸

The limited time for spiritual reflection and the emphasis on history as described in the past three quotes are specific sources of contestation at the Kirtland Temple. Although both Community of Christ and LDS members make efforts to successfully navigate the shared space, differences in their theologies and perspectives also cause tension and discomfort.

Discussion

The Kirtland Temple is a fascinating case study of religious zeal, contention between differing religious movements, and the unique combination of historical site or museum and a spiritual landmark that is extremely important to many individuals. The study and observation of how all of these aspects of the site interact yield illuminating insights and a better understanding of religious pilgrimage and museum visiting, as well as an exploration of the issues raised by distinct strategies for interpreting the Kirtland Temple.

Demographic information about the religious affiliation and income level of visitors showed that, per Bourdieu’s theory, higher-class individuals make up a large proportion of visitors to the Kirtland Temple Historic Site. However, the difference between the number of high-income and low-income visitors

is not as great as might be expected in a secular art museum, for example. Further affirming this theory, the survey results also show that individuals with higher incomes are more likely to visit museums multiple times per year. However, there is not a statistically significant difference when Kirtland Temple visitors’ income level and their preferences for museum type are compared.

Even if the Kirtland Temple cannot entirely escape the influences of cultural capital, it does attract a range of visitors from various faiths and income levels. Individuals with little museum experience as well as visitors spouting long lists of art, history, and science museums flock to the Temple. The religious draw of the Kirtland Temple may actually moderate the site’s draw on elite individuals, countering Bourdieu’s assertion and resulting in a historical site with the potential to reach visitors from distinct social classes.

Questions from interviews and the survey which were meant to capture the motivations and expectations of Kirtland Temple visitors demonstrated that the majority of visitors are LDS and many of them see the Kirtland Temple as very important to their religious identity. They come to the Temple mostly for religious reasons or an interest in the history of the Temple. Quotes from interviews expand on these survey results, offering first-hand perspectives on two important themes for LDS visitors: the personal connection to history as well as the stark differences between Community of Christ and LDS site interpretations. Many LDS visitors find

the Kirtland Temple tour lacking because of its focus on history rather than on spiritual and religious content. These distinct groups with two very different notions of how the Temple should be interpreted transform the Kirtland Temple into contested space.

Specific aspects of the Kirtland Temple experience (walking tour, staff, museum) received high ratings, although the museum received the lowest ratings of the group. Overall, the majority of visitors indicated that their expectations for the visit were met and gave their entire experience a high rating (average of 4.48 out of 5).

Although many LDS visitors do feel that the Kirtland Temple does not provide adequate spiritual content, the survey results show that the great majority have a positive experience at the site; 95% of the visitors indicated that their expectations were met and many interviewees shared extremely positive descriptions of their visit to the Temple. If the Kirtland Temple is viewed as an example of contested space, it cannot be understood as a place of irreconcilable conflict or tension. Both the Community of Christ and the LDS Church highly value the structure, its history, and its modern religious significance. In my experience as a tour guide at Kirtland Temple, tense tours and fiery religious debates are rare. Rather, the “sacredness” of the Kirtland Temple as understood by both groups aids in creating an atmosphere of respect and a celebration of a shared history. Doctrinal differences between the Community of Christ and

(Continued on page 11)

“My experience in the Kirtland Temple was not a spiritual experience, but then I knew it would not be. The other visits have always had a spiritual feeling to them.”

-Interview 12

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

LDS churches can limit interactions among members.²⁹ However, the Kirtland Temple offers an opportunity for Community of Christ and LDS members as well as individuals of other faiths to interact with each other and learn about the history of this impressive and significant white structure atop a hill.

Limitations

There were various limitations to my research. One major challenge was working around the logistics of the Kirtland Temple Visitor Center and the setup and organization of the tours. Many visitors do not have excess time to spend and are usually in a hurry to leave directly after the tour, which finishes inside the Temple building. Because of these considerations, the survey was fairly simple and short and was readily available immediately after the tour while the guests were still in the Temple.

The interview portion of my research also proved challenging. In an effort to conduct interviews about a potentially emotional and personally significant topic in the most respectful way possible, I decided to conduct telephone interviews that were not recorded. When individuals could not be contacted by phone, I sent them emails that included the interview questions. While conducting the phone interviews, I transcribed the conversation on my computer. Using this transcription method made it difficult to capture all of the information from each interview.

Also, I was unable to collect responses from many non-LDS visitors. Possible future research which includes the off-

season (non-summer months) may provide additional information from a more diverse sample.

Rene Romig, Rice University
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References and Notes

- 1 Bringhurst, Newell G., and John C. Hamer. 2007. *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism*. John Whitmer Books.
- 2 A quote from an unsigned letter gives yet another explanation for the move to Ohio. The letter describes a sermon given by Sidney Rigdon “denouncing dreadful vengeance on the whole state of New York and recommending to all such as wished to flee from the ‘wrath to come’ to follow him. . . a few miles west of Painesville, Ohio. . .” (Unsigned, Letter to the Editor, *Palmyra Reflector* 2, no. 12, (Feb. 1, 1831), *Uncle Dale’s Readings in Early Mormon History*, www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/NY/wayn1830.htm#020131.) For references concerning conversions in Kirtland, see the *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, pg 48.
- 3 *Community of Christ Doctrine and Covenants* 38:7c; *LDS Doctrine and Covenants* 38:33.
- 4 Joseph Smith writes of his flight from Kirtland in *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, 1978, pg 1. Milton V. Backman, Jr. explores some of the local conditions that led to an exodus from Kirtland, including political, religious, and economic forces in his book, *The Heavens Resound*, Deseret Book Com-
- pany, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1983, chapter 17, pgs. 310-341. The subsequent chapter details the organization of Kirtland Camp in 1838, in which the majority of the church members left Kirtland bound for Far West, Missouri.
- 5 The site administration continually emphasized this approach to tours throughout my time as a tour guide at the Kirtland Temple.
- 6 Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean Claude Passeron, (1990) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Sage Publications Inc.
- 7 Karen J. Wendt, “Contested Temple Space and Visionary Kingdom Space in Mark 11-12.” *Biblical Interpretations*, Vol. 15 (2007), pg. 323
- 8 David Howlett, “Pilgrimage at Kirtland Temple: Contestation and Cooperation among Mormon Denominations,” Unpublished manuscript.,pg. 1
- 9 D. Keirseey and J. Gatrell, “Ideology on the walls: Contested Space in Planned Urban Areas in Northern Ireland.” Working paper, unpublished. Cited in, Mike Morrissey and Frank Gaffikin, “Planning for Peace in Contested Space,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, December 2006, Vol. 30.4, pg. 875
- 10 Mike Morrissey and Frank Gaffikin, “Planning for Peace in Contested Space,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, December 2006, Vol. 30.4, pg. 889
- 11 The month of July is typically the busiest month for the Kirtland Temple historic site, so the

(Continued on page 12)

“What we sometimes regret is that there aren’t moments for peaceful meditation in the Temple. . .The time in the Temple is always filled with information, no feeling for worship.”

-Interview 1

Hilltop Dialogues (continued)

surveys reached a large number of visitors. One drawback to this range of dates is that the month of July also draws a disproportionate percentage of LDS members. As a result, visitors from other religious denominations are underrepresented. This limitation is reflected in the results of my surveys.

12 I attempted to keep detailed records of how many surveys I picked up each day. However, there are a few instances in which I only have the number of surveys that I received over a range of days (July 4-9, July 11-12, July 13-15, August 3-5). I subtracted the number of guests (visitors who did not go on tour) from each daily total since these individuals would not have had access to the survey. Also, many of the days that have very large visitor counts were made up of multiple bus tours. The logistics of these large groups make it difficult for anyone in the group to fill out a survey because there is not enough room in the foyer of the Temple and because the groups are usually on a strict schedule. When I figured the average percentage of visitors who filled out surveys, I divided by the number of ranges I have recorded, not the number of days the survey was available.

13 A copy of the survey can be found on the MSSA website here:

www.mormonsocialscience.org/files/finalsurvey.pdf.

14 A conversation with a Mormon history scholar, David Howlett, revealed that LDS members tend to shy away from the word ‘pilgrimage’ because of its associations with Catholicism. In my pilot survey, I had one category of “Religious rea-

sons/Pilgrimage” and received very few surveys that indicated this category. I noticed that those with lower incomes tended to check the box more often than those with higher incomes, although this observation may not be accurate since it was part of my pilot survey and I had a fairly small respondent pool. In my final survey, I separated the one category into two separate categories: “Religious reasons” and “Pilgrimage.” I received 33 surveys that checked “Pilgrimage,” but I did not find any pattern among the respondents when broken down by income. I hope to pursue this further as I continue my research.

15 If the visitor only provided an email address, I sent an email with the interview questions. If the visitor provided both an email and a phone number, I first attempted to contact them by phone. If unable to contact them after a few attempts, I sent an email request.

16 In the following charts, statistics and percentages which have to do with religious affiliation, I have simply omitted the respondents who did not write a religious affiliation.

17 The large number of Episcopalian responses came from an Episcopal group that was visiting sites from other religions as part of a class. I took this group on a tour through the Temple.

18 The acronym RLDS can refer to the Community of Christ (which was called the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints until a name change in 2001) or to a group that split from the Community of Christ in the 1980s commonly referred to as

“Restorationists.” To eliminate guessing, I simply categorized this response as “RLDS.”

19 Upon reflection, I realized that I should have either included or substituted the income question for a question about educational level since many articles specify that educational level is the best predictor for types of museums an individual will visit.

20 Interview #16 (e-mail)

21 Interview #10 (e-mail)

22 Interview #1 (phone) This individual leads annual tours to the Kirtland Temple.

23 Interview #1 (phone)

24 Interview #3 (phone)

25 Historic Kirtland is another historic site in Kirtland, Ohio, that relates to the church community in the 1830s. It has some original buildings from the time such as a general store and an inn. It is owned and operated by the LDS church.

26 Interview #8 (phone)

27 Interview #12 (e-mail)

28 Interview #1 (phone)

29 Personal observation.

SSSR Sessions on Mormonism

A-3 Mormon Language and Text: Approaches from Anthropology and Semiotics

Organizer and Convener
David C. Knowlton, Utah Valley University, knowltda@uvsc.edu

Same Yet Not the Same: Mormonism via Korean, Bosco Bae, University of Utah

"Christianity of a More Tangible Nature": Public Testimony Bearing and the Creation of a Community in the Mormon Village of Rexburg, Idaho, 1883-86, Brad Kramer, University of Michigan

Correlation and the Historical Posture of Mormon modernity", Daymon M Smith, University of Alabama Birmingham

An Anchor for Stormy Seas: Semiotics and the Creation of Everyday Mormon Religiosity, David Clark Knowlton, Utah Valley College

B-6 Authors Meet Critics: Revisiting Thomas F. O'Dea's The Mormons: Contemporary Perspectives

Organizer and Convener:
Rick Phillips, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of North Florida

Panelists:
Gordon Shepherd, Professor of Sociology, University of Central Arkansas
Henri Gooren, Oakland University
David C. Knowlton, Utah Valley State College

Response
Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffmann and Tim B. Heaton, Brigham Young University

Friday, 12:00-1:00 MSSA Meeting

C-5 Vernon Lecture

Latter-day Revelation: Prophetic Religion in the LDS Church and The Family International.
Gordon Sheperd, Sociology, U of Central AK
Gary Shepherd, Oakland U.

D-4 Religious Markets, Prosperity, and Demography: Religion in Latin America

Mormonism Comes to Santo Domingo: Among Missionaries and Converts, Gayle Lasater, University of Florida

The Religious Demography of Mexico, Tim Heaton, Brigham Young University, Lynn England, Utah Valley University

E-8 Mormonism and Theory: Critical Reflections on Armand Mauss' Work and a Change of Generation in Mormon Studies

Organizer and Convener
David C. Knowlton, Utah Valley University

All Lehi's Children: Armand Mauss and the Colonial Construction of Native American Mormon Identities
Jordan Haug, Utah Valley University

The Angel, the Beehive, the

Sexual Revolution, and the Rise of Fundamentalism
Aaron Parry, University of Utah

Latter-day Saint Disaffiliation: An Empirical Investigation
Jason Singh, The University of Durham

Moving Targets: Mormon Retrenchment Toward the "New Mainstream"
Ryan Cragun, University of Tampa

Respondent Comments:
Armand L. Mauss

F-4 The Raid on the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saint Community in Texas: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Organizers and Conveners
James T., Richardson, University of Nevada, Reno, Stuart Wright, Lamar University

Repeat of History: The Raid on the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saint Community of El Dorado, Martha Bradley, University of Utah

Mormon Polygamy: Then and Now, Michael W Homer, Attorney at Law

Rescuing Children? Government Raids on Doukhobors (1953), Twelve Tribes (1984), Nuwaubians (2002), and the Texas FLDS: Expectations and Aftermaths., Susan J. Palmer, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec

(Continued on page 14)

SSSR Sessions on Mormonism (continued)

Deconstructing Official Rationales for the State Raid on FLDS
Stuart A. Wright, Lamar University

Respondent Comments
Armand L. Mauss

The Courts Finally Speak in Texas: An Analysis of the Appeal Court Opinions Concerning the FLDS Children, James T. Richardson, University of Nevada, Reno

I-10 Family, Religion and Politics in the LDS Church

Convener: Lynita K. Newswander, Virginia Tech

Engagement, Endogamy, and Eternity: LDS Courtship, Amy Moff Hudec, Boston University

Consultant
Tamatha L. Schreinert, J.D., National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Reno, NV

Governing Bodies: A Political Study of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Church of Christ, Scientist, Lynita K. Newswander, Virginia Tech

H-4 The Rise of the LDS Church Considered as a Successful Revitalization Movement

Convener
Melvyn Hammarberg, University of Pennsylvania

A Self-Determination Study of two intense training programs: Missionary Training Center and ROTC Field Training Compared, Robert Carlisle, Indiana State University, Patrick R. Bennett, Indiana State University
Scott C. Bates, Utah State University

Sect and Church meet Illegibility and States of Exception through a reading of Armand L. Mauss' Work On Mormonism, David Clark Knowlton, Utah Valley University

Envisioning Parenthood: Narratives in Religion and Family
Amy Moff Hudec, Boston University, Kevin Taylor, Boston University

Mormons and/as "Others": From Assimilation to Globalization, Sarah Busse Spencer, The College of New Jersey

News**Website for Mormon Conferences**

A new website with a calendar tracking conferences with presentations on Mormonism has recently been developed. You can find the site here:

www.mormonconferences.org/

Call for Papers

Reconciliations and Reformulations: A Conference for LDS Graduate Students in Religious Studies, Harvard University, February 20-21, 2009

Many Latter-day Saints experience their scholarship and their religion as clashing cultures, each with its competing values

a Dream" (1 Nephi 3:2): Dreams Used as Revelation by Latter-day Saints and their Leaders.

Organizer and Convener
Mary Jane Woodger, Brigham Young University

Dreams as Revelation, Craig Manscill, Brigham Young University

Dreams of the Presidents of the Church, Megan Perkins, Brigham Young University

Understanding Dreams: Analysis, Meaning, and Interpretations, Mary Jane Woodger, Brigham Young University

J-10 Young Adults and Religious Coping

Happiness in Religious College Students
Ronald Miller, Brigham Young University – Hawaii, Cecilia Cowden, Brigham Young University – Hawaii, Cecilia Yiu, Brigham Young University - Hawaii

and contradictory conclusions. Religious studies students especially struggle to reconcile their faith and the knowledge they acquire in graduate school.

Kathleen Flake (Vanderbilt) will deliver a keynote address the evening of February 20.

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News (continued)

We invite paper proposals from graduate students in religious studies and other related fields in the following four categories:

- I. Gender and Sexuality
- II. Scripture
- III. Pluralism
- IV. The Place of Religious Scholarship in the Church

Panelist papers or presentations should last approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Short proposals (no more than 250 words) should be submitted via the conference website:

(www.faihandknowledge.org) by October 1, 2008. Presenters will be notified by December 1, 2008. Conference participants will be eligible to apply for financial assistance with travel and lodging expenses.

For more information see:

www.faihandknowledge.org/

Call for Papers

Life, the Universe, & Everything XXVII: The Marion K. "Doc" Smith Symposium on Science Fiction and Fantasy will be held February 19-21, 2009, on the Provo, Utah, campus of Brigham Young University.

We are especially interested in papers in the following areas:

- Literary criticism/analysis of sf&f and related literature (medieval, renaissance, mythology, magic realism, etc.)
- Science and technology (especially new or unusual)
- Analysis of sf&f relating to poetry and/or theatre
- Mormon culture, literature, and society in relation to sf&f

- Serious analysis of sf&f in cinema, television, radio, and other media

Submit full papers for consideration to LTU&E--Academics, 4153 JFSB, Provo, UT 84602 or email electronic submissions as RTF files to academics@ltue.org. Include name, phone number, street address, and email address on cover sheet. Papers submitted without contact information will not be considered. Student papers welcome. Please see <http://ltue.byu.edu> or <http://www.ltue.org> for more information about the symposium.

Papers must be submitted no later than November 15, 2008.

Accepted papers may be published in the Proceedings volume at a later date.

Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association

The 2008-09 school year marks the official inauguration of the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies and its associated program in the School of Religion at the Claremont Graduate University. The new Chair is held by Richard L. Bushman, who will be joined by Claudia L. Bushman and Armand L. Mauss (both in adjunct roles) as a teaching team. Courses during the coming year will include The Mormon Theological Tradition, Mormonism through Women's Eyes, Women's Religious Autobiography in America, and Mormons in Historical and Sociological Perspectives. Under the auspices of the Hunter Chair, several major lectures will be presented during the school year by (respectively) Ronald W. Walker of BYU, Richard Mouw of the Fuller Theo-

logical Seminary, Marlin Jensen, Church Historian, David Hall of the Harvard Divinity School, and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich of Harvard University. See the Mormon Studies website at www.cgu.edu or at rsc.cgu.edu/cmssa/.

Armand Mauss Lecture

The University of Wyoming will commemorate the 30th anniversary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' "Official Declaration-2" on Friday, Sept. 26 with a lecture by Armand L. Mauss, professor emeritus of sociology and religious studies at Washington State University and visiting scholar at Claremont Graduate University's School of Religion. The lecture begins at 7 p.m. inside the College of Agriculture auditorium. For more information, see here: <http://www.uwyo.edu/news/showrelease.asp?id=25103>

Fourteenth Annual Leonard Arrington Lecture

September 25th, 7:00pm, Logan Tabernacle

With the approaching close of the sesquicentennial commemoration of the Utah War of 1857-1858, the question arises as to whether there is anything more to be said on the subject. The purpose of this lecture is to probe the future direction of Utah War studies and to address what more needs to be done and what is likely to come from this research. This discussion springs from the lecturer's half-century immersion in the field and that of his peers – both university-based scholars and independent historians – laboring in the same vineyard. In the course of

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The Mormon Social Science Association (MSSA) exists for the purpose of promoting and sharing the scholarly study of Mormon life. Any person with an interest in the study of the social, cultural, or religious life of Mormons is eligible to join. MSSA provides contact and association among researchers and educators working in both academic and applied settings. It is interdisciplinary and international in scope and purpose. The association participates in the annual joint meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) and the Religious Research Association (RRA). MSSA also publishes and distributes a semi-annual newsletter to its members.

Visit us at:

www.mormonsocialscience.org

News (continued)

this exploration the lecture seeks to use the Utah War example as a means of shedding light on the process by which history is written and periodically re-interpreted. William P. MacKinnon of Santa Barbara, California, is an independent historian, management consultant, and former General Motors Vice-President. A widely recognized authority on the Utah War, he has recorded the colorful saga of Utah's long territorial period and the U.S. Army's western campaigns. The lecture is free and open to the public. All college students are invited to participate in a writing competition in conjunction with this lecture.

For more information, see:

<http://library.usu.edu/Specol/pamphlets.html>

Recent Publications

Bahr, Howard M. 2008. "Finding Oneself Among the Saints: Thomas F. O'Dea, Mor-

mon Intellectuals, and the Future of Mormon Orthodoxy." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47:463-484.

Bringhurst, Newell G., and Craig L. Foster. 2008. *The Mormon Quest for the Presidency*. John Whitmer Books.

Foster, Craig L. 2008. *A Different God?: Mitt Romney, the Religious Right, and the Mormon Question*. Greg Kofford Books.

Upcoming Publications

"Seeking a 'Second Harvest' : Controlling the Costs of Latter-day Saint Membership in Europe" by Armand Mauss in the Winter issue of *Dialogue*

"Fighting Over "Mormon": Media Coverage of the FLDS and LDS" by Ryan T. Cragun and Michael Nielsen in a future issue of *Dialogue*

Modern Polygamy in the United States: Historical, Cultural, and Legal Issues Surrounding the Raid on the FLDS in Texas, edited by

Cardell K. Jacobson, Department of Sociology, Brigham Young University, with Lara S. Burton, Brigham Young University

Suggested books for Mormon Scholars and Libraries

http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?lay-out=talkbackCommentsFull&talk_back_header_id=6551783&articleid=CA6590468