



Spring 2009

Volume 30, Issue 1

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President's Message

Greetings,

This will be my second to last opportunity to write the president's message before the MSSA is turned over to the capable hands of Ryan Cragun, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Tampa. Ryan has been an integral part of the MSSA since he was in graduate school, and will add president of the organization to his continuing (and unheralded) responsibilities as webmaster at the 2009 Business Meeting.

MSSA members submitted a number of sessions to the program chair of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, our "parent" organization. However, the preliminary program is not online yet. This year we are meeting in Denver, which is a short hop for our Western members, and a nice reprieve for those who have had to make cross-continental journeys for our meetings the past two years. We are hoping that you will join us, and that you will take the time to come to the MSSA business meeting to rub shoulders with us. Last year free lunch materialized for those at the business meeting, and I have heard rumors that despite the

recession, this could very well happen again. Bring a friend when you come, and impress them with our magnanimity.

In addition to our annual meeting, MSSA members are active at other conferences. At the beginning of April, the Association of the Study of Religion, Economics and Culture met on the banks of the Potomac across from our nation's capital. The MSSA was well represented, with papers by Michael McBride, Carrie Miles, Ryan Cragun, and yours truly. We are also continuing to have a strong presence at the meetings of the Mormon History Association. This year the MHA meets in Springfield, IL, May 21-24. The preliminary program is online, and features a number of our members as presenters, conveners and discussants. Finally, the Center for Studies on New Religions meets June 10-14 in Salt Lake City. Papers, including at least one by an MSSA member, will be presented in the historic City and County Building on South State Street. Given the location of this year's conference, it is no surprise that there are a number of Mormon-themed sessions.

We know there are others

Future SSSR Meetings:

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 2009 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."

Dues are also payable on the MSSA website via Paypal (which accepts credit cards).

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

who are engaged in scholarly work and attending other conferences, so when you travel to present papers, please send an email and let us know so that we can recognize your work in upcoming newsletters. Likewise, whenever you publish a paper or make the news, please bring it to our attention so that we can sing your praise.

Our organization is in robust health. We have a little money in the bank, and we're excited by some of our new, young, energetic members. However, we can

always use more members. If you have colleagues or students who are interested in the social scientific study of Mormonism, please encourage them to join. Opportunities to meet friends, share ideas, and present and publish your work are all benefits that can accrue to active members of our little band.

I continue to enjoy my time as MSSA president, and I'm glad that the organization is surviving my tenure.

Rick Phillips
University of North Florida

Elections

It's time, once again, to elect the future leadership of the MSSA. The current board received several nominees for each position. We followed up with each of them and they have agreed to run for the following offices:

President (serves as President-Elect for 2 years, President for 2 years, then Immediate Past-President for 2 years):
-Henri Gooren

Treasurer/Secretary (serves for 2 years but can be re-elected indefinitely):
-Michael McBride

Board Members (serve for 2 years):
-Matt Bahr
-Melvyn Hammarberg
-David Knowlton

You can vote for each of these positions at:

http://www.genesoc.com/new_survey/index.php?sid=52582&newtest=Y&lang=en

The board is currently discussing a transition of editorial responsibilities to a new newsletter editor. Once that has been finalized, we will send out a notice to the MSSA membership via email.

**MSSA
Leadership**

**President:
Rick Phillips
(2005-2009)**

**President-
Elect:
Ryan T. Cragun
(2009-2011)**

**Board
Members:
Tim Heaton
(2007-2009)
Henri Gooren
(2007-2009)**

**Treasurer/
Secretary:
Michael
McBride (2007-
present)**

**Newsletter
Editor:
Ryan T. Cragun
(2003-present)**

MSSA @ SSSR

The MSSA is sponsoring one session at the SSSR meetings this year. It was organized by Henri Gooren and will feature several members of the MSSA:

Theorizing the Growth of Mormons, Adventists, and Witnesses

Organizer and convener:
Henri Gooren (Oakland University,
gooren@oakland.edu)

Papers:
Mormons in the ARIS: What Can State Level Data Tell Us about Mormons?
Ryan T. Cragun (University of Tampa,
ryantcragun@gmail.com)
and Rick Phillips (University of North Florida,
rphill965@comcast.net),

Comparing Mormons and Adventists in Latin America
Henri Gooren (Oakland University,
gooren@oakland.edu),

“Supply vs. Demand” or Sociology?: Why Context Matters

Ronald L. Lawson (CUNY, ronaldlawson1@verizon.net); Rick Phillips (University of North Florida, rphill965@comcast.net); and Ryan T. Cragun (University of Tampa, ryantcragun@gmail.com)

In addition to this session, the MSSA will be holding its annual business meeting on the Friday of the conference at noon. The room has yet to be determined, but will be in the SSSR program. We decided last year to try something new for the business meeting - providing food. We ordered in pizza and soft drinks. This makes it easier to attend the business meeting as it occurs over lunch time and between sessions when most members would normally be eating lunch prior to the afternoon sessions. We plan to continue this tradition at this year's meeting. While not necessary, a \$5 contribution toward the pizza when you arrive would be appreciated.

2008 MSSA Business Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the 2008 MSSA Business Meeting are available on the MSSA website:

<http://www.mormonsocialscience.org/node/97>

Book Review: Joseph Smith Jr. Reappraisals After Two Centuries

JOSEPH SMITH JR.
REAPPRAISALS AFTER TWO CENTURES. Edited by Reid Nelson and Terryl L. Givens. Oxford University Press. 2009. 978-0-19-536976-a paper.

Neilson and Givens have brought together a broad range of scholars from a diversity of specializations, each of whom attempts to examine Joseph Smith Jr. in new ways that depart from the “madman or fraud” or apologetic paradigms that obsessed so many writers during most of the twentieth century. The collection of essays is organized into three sections: “American Prophet,” in which the essays examine Joseph Smith in the American context of which he was a part, “Sacred Encounters,” in which the authors examine Joseph Smith’s religion-making imagination, and “Prophetic Legacy,” in which the focus is the global context of Joseph Smith’s prophetic status. The contributors represent a broad range of disciplines: History, Religious Studies, English, Theology and Christian Philosophy, and Humanities. The authors also include both non-LDS and LDS scholars. This has allowed Neilson and Givens to offer a collection that brings new and different perspectives to the concept of prophethood. In the Section on “American Prophet,” Klaus Hansen

discusses Joseph Smith's contributions by comparing him to Samuel Johnson and Abraham Lincoln. He gives consideration to how Joseph Smith’s relationship with his father may have shaped his contributions as a religious innovator. Literary scholar Richard Rust examines the religion-making imagination by means of comparisons between Joseph Smith and Herman Melville, whose work demonstrated an interest in Mormon symbolism. Religious studies scholar Catherine Albanese investigates Joseph Smith in terms of his contributions to metaphysical religion. Historian James Allen compares Joseph Smith’s political views with those of John Calhoun, focusing especially on their views of “states rights.”

In Part II, “Sacred Encounters,” the focus shifts to the religion-making imagination itself. Historian Richard Bushman emphasizes the importance of Joseph Smith’s emphasis on two things: his addition of new sacred words to the theological canon and his innovative approach to creating new sacred spaces. Literary scholar Terryl Givens places Joseph Smith in the context of Romanticism, looking at how he emphasized process over product in collapsing sacred distance, expanding and revisioning scripture, and innovating new doctrines.

Book Review: Reappraisals (continued)

Sociologist, Douglas Davies demonstrates the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to Mormon studies and considers the psychological issue of possible influences of traumas early in Joseph Smith's life on his prophetic experience and on the paradox of the LDS emphasis on both individualism and the necessity of church-administered sacraments. Biblical scholar Margaret Barker and Kevin Christiansen explore the Jewish and LDS temple traditions.

Part III, "Prophetic Legacy," explores the broader, global significance of Joseph Smith's contributions. Religious studies scholar Laurie Maffly-Kipp critiques the polemics of historical studies of Mormonism. She highlights the roles of Mormonism's narrative, its popular manifestations, and its geographical varieties. Christian philosopher Richard Mouw considers how Joseph Smith can be responded to in ways that transcend the simple question of what must be rejected from an Evangelical perspective by considering his intelligibility, sincerity, charismatic force, cognitive complexity, and effectiveness. Historian Reid Neilson probes the accommodation of religious pluralism in the context of Joseph Smith's own statements about the relationships that Mormonism

has to other religions. Finally, archivist David Whittaker brings together an excellent collection of manuscript sources for the study of Joseph Smith.

Evaluating this collection is particularly difficult for me, since the wide variety of approaches are bound to include both perspectives that readers of different backgrounds and interests will applaud and perspectives that may not catch their interest at all. My own feelings are mixed for precisely this reason. On the one hand, this work seems to me to be part of a new wave of scholarship in Mormon studies, a wave that owes much to the work of Jan Shipps and Richard Bushman, and for this reason it is, I think, important for scholars in the area to be aware of. On the other hand, I felt the style of writing in many of the pieces failed to address the broader readership audience that they should be addressing and seemed, rather, to be writing for other scholars within their respective domains, "telegraphing" too frequently by the use of a shared jargon that they do not adequately explain to readers on the outside. I was disappointed at the underrepresentation of scholars from the social sciences, and the tendency of several contributors to dismiss characteristically pre-postmodernist social science

Book Review: Reappraisals (continued)

perspectives as if the more science-oriented approaches have little to offer. Although the collection includes an interesting contribution by one sociologist, the focus of that article is closer to "psychohistory" than it is sociology as usually understood. On the other hand – despite this failure to include a greater space for social science contributions – I was pleased by the inclusion of the insights of scholars of literature and other charismatic historic figures, since there is unquestionably a fuzzy boundary between the religious concept of "prophethood" and the inspiration of symbolic creativity within the arts, and the comparisons made between Joseph Smith and such figures as Nat Turner and Herman Melville. Such comparisons broaden our understanding of the

personalities and charisma of religious genius in worthwhile ways.

In sum, I believe this is a publication with which social scientists such as those within the ranks of the Mormon Social Science Association should be familiar despite my caveat that its contents may be of mixed interest to individual readers.

Reviewed by Richley Crapo,
Utah State University

(NOTE: Oxford University Press was kind enough to up set up a promotion for members of the MSSA for this book. Contact Michael McBride for more information.)

New and Recent Publications

•Stewart, D. G. (2009). LDS Church Growth, Member Activity, and Convert Retention: Review and Analysis, Cumorah Foundation.

•Ostman, K. B. (2008). "A Finnish Mormon Temple or 'America in Karakallio'? The Activation of a Stereotype at an Encounter of Cultures." *British Journal of Mormon Studies* 1(1): 136-152.

•Woods, F. E. (2008). "The Tide of Mormon Migration Flowing Through the Port of

Liverpool, England." *British Journal of Mormon Studies* 1(1): 60-85.

•Phillips, R. (2008). "'De Facto Congregationalism" and Mormon Missionary Outreach: An Ethnographic Case Study." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47(4): 628-643.

•Smith, G. D. (2008). *Nauvoo Polygamy: "... but we called it celestial marriage"*, Signature Books.

•Russell, W. D. (2008). *Homosexual Saints: The*

New and Recent Publications (continued)

Community of Christ
Experience, John Whitmer
Books.

•Nuckolls, C. W. (2008).

"Archaeology, Mormonism,
and the Claims of History."
Marburg Journal of Religion
13(1).

•Morehead, J. W. (2008).

"Latter-day Saints, Ritual,
Pilgrimage, and Cultural
Symbolics: Neglected
Sources for Understanding
and Engagement." Sacred
Tribes Journal 3(1): 59-71.

•Kear, W. N. (2008). "An LDS
Soundworld for the Twenty-
first Century: A Thesis
Revisited." British Journal of
Mormon Studies 1(1):
86-97.

•Farmer, J. (2008). On Zion's
Mount: Mormons, Indians,
and the American Landscape.
Cambridge, MA, Harvard

University Press.

•Bartholomew, R. E. (2008).
"The Patterns of Missionary
Work and Emigration in
Nineteenth Century
Buckinghamshire, England."
British Journal of Mormon
Studies 1(1): 98-135.

•Smith, C., M. Emerson, et al.
(2008). Passing the Plate:
Why American Christians
Don't Give Away More
Money, Oxford University
Press.

•Morrison, E. (2009).

"Conservative Churches and
Fertility Innovation: A
Cultural-Ecological Approach
to the Second Demographic
Transition among Nonblacks
in the United States." Journal
for the Scientific Study of
Religion 48(1): 103-120.

News

Mellon Foundation Emeritus
Fellowship

Jan Shippo is the recipient of
a prestigious Mellon
Foundation Emeritus
Fellowship. It will provide
support for needed research
in the archives in Utah (Salt
Lake City, Logan, and Provo)
and in the archives of the
Community of Christ in
Independence. This will
permit her to finish a book
that she has been working on
for years, the working title of
which is Being Mormon: The
Latter-day Saints Since World
War II. The fellowship lasts
for two years.

Mormon Studies Fellowship
at the University of Utah
The Tanner Humanities
Center is pleased to
announce it has been
awarded a grant from the
George S. and Dolores Doré
Eccles Foundation for
\$36,000 to establish the
Eccles Fellowship in Mormon
Studies. The award has been
designated to support two
doctoral students in
researching and writing their
dissertations (\$18,000
stipend for each), one in
2009 and one in 2010. This
fellowship targets Ph.D.
candidates across the United
States and the world who are
researching the Church of

For additional information,
contact:
Mormon Social Science Association
c/o Michael McBride
7 Frost St.
Irvine, CA 92617
Email: mcbride@uci.edu



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 online at:

www.mormonsocialscience.org

News (continued)

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Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, its members, and Mormon culture in the fields of History, Anthropology, Sociology, Education, Economics, Business, Political Science, Religion, or Literature. Through publications, work in the classroom, and in public forums, these future academics, writers, and teachers will have an impact on the study of Mormonism and on students and the general population.

For application forms and requirements please visit <http://www.thc.utah.edu>

Call for Articles

The editors of Sacred Tribes Journal are planning a special themed issue devoted to Mormonism and evangelicalism that will involve dialogical approaches to theology, and perhaps apologetic approaches. A collection of evangelical and Mormon scholars will be put together and submissions will be reviewed by representatives of the other religious

community so that a response can be offered.

Abstracts can be sent for review to John Morehead (johnwmorehead@msn.com). The deadline for submissions is June 2009 with a target date of January 2010 for the completion of manuscripts. If you are interested in submitting an article for consideration, please see the guidelines for contributors

http://www.sacredtribesjournal.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=29.

CESNUR Conference in SLC

The 2009 International Conference sponsored by CESNUR on Mainstreaming and Marginalization of Religious Movements will take place June 10-14, 2009, at the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. The program is available online:

http://www.cesnur.org/2009/slc_prg.htm