



Mormon Social Science Association

...bringing social science to Mormonism

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MSSA President
Henri Gooren
Oakland University
Rochester, Michigan

President's Message

This is my last editorial as MSSA President; David Knowlton will take over after SSSR in November. I hope to see many MSSA members at the upcoming SSSR meeting in Boston (November 8-11). On Saturday, November 9 from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m. in Session H-9, Harvard University's Laurel Thatcher Ulrich will give the Glenn Vernon Lecture, entitled "A House Full of Females: Faith and Family in Nineteenth-Century Mormon Diaries." She has a forthcoming book with the same title, which should be fascinating. Professor Laurel Thatcher Ulrich is an active feminist, an active Mormon, and a Pulitzer-Award winning author of six books, including one named after the quote from her first scholarly article that made her famous: Well-behaved women seldom make history. You may have seen it on T-shirts. Please attend! It will be very nice to see you all again.

In addition, there are three other Mormon-focused papers at SSSR in Boston:

• **G-9 (Sat., 2-3:30 p.m.):** Adaptation in Religious Traditions with the papers "Spaces Between: Tensions in the Lives of Latter-day Saints" by Amy Moff Hudec and "Understanding Political Diversity" by Laura R. Olson and Marie Cornwall.

• **J-9 (Sun., 9:45-11:15 a.m.):** Denominational Growth and Change with the paper "Comparing and Contrasting the Growth Rates of Mormons, Adventists, and Witnesses in Mexico between 2001 and 2011" by Ronald Lawson.

As usual, the MSSA business meeting will also be on Saturday (probably between noon and 1:30 PM) with pizza and drinks provided. And join us for the traditional MSSA dinner on Saturday night; people usually start gathering near the front desk around 6:30 PM. Feel free to join in, even if you can't make it to the business meeting. We typically recruit some non-MSSA friends as well.

Finally, a word on the venue for this year's SSSR meeting. Boston is, of course, the cradle of the American Revolution of 1776 and full of historical landmarks well-worth visiting: Bunker Hill, Copp's Hill, Old North Church, Paul Revere House, Faneuil Hall, Boston Common... It is also a wonderful, vibrant, and remarkably safe big city. I was there only two weeks ago to drop off my daughter Yazmín, who just started as a freshman at Boston University. The city conquered my heart. I'm sure it will conquer yours too, if you let it.

MSSA Leadership

President

Henri Gooren
(2011-2013)

President-Elect

David Knowlton
(2013-2015)

Board Members

Matt Bahr
(2009-2013)

Michael Nielsen
(2011-2013)

Treasurer/Secretary

Ryan T. Cragun
(2011-present)

Newsletter Co-Editors

Bosco Bae

Rene Romig
(2009-present)

FEATURE ARTICLE**The New Missionary Ages: What are the Implications?****Rob Lively**

Associate Provost and Dean of Academic Services

University of Maine Farmington

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A sister who was at the Provo MTC reported that there was stunned silence among the missionaries-in-training when President Monson announced at General Conference, October 2012, that young men could leave on their mission at the age of 18, but that there was loud cheering, particularly among the sisters, when he said that young women could serve a mission at the age of 19.

I believe these reactions are significant; that while the age changes have important implications for both elders and sisters, I expect sisters will feel the greater impact. The lower age means sisters won't have to deal with competing interests and pressures of school, work, and/or marriage proposals while waiting until they are 21. That wait proved too long for some in the past and they never did serve. Now they can more conveniently pursue school, work, and/or marriage upon their return.

The greater impact on sisters is found in the fact that a greater proportion of young sisters are already volunteering to serve.

Why the age changes? There appear to be many reasons. The Brethren couch it in eschatological terms; that we are living in the End Times and that Christ's return will be hastened if more missionaries are serving throughout the world. The sense that we are living in the End Times is certainly strong in the LDS Church. Many missionaries and church members I have spoken with point to many societal issues that they feel are obvious indicators that we are living in those times. As a lifelong church member said to me: "This gay marriage thing; it's an obvious sign that Jesus is coming again, and soon."

There are practical reasons for lowering the ages. The cohort of young men of eligible age in the USA is declining and there are fewer to draw from. The "raising of the bar" in 2002, when church authorities imposed stricter moral standards of worthiness on potential candidates, also contributed to a decline in the number of missionaries in the field.

Lively: New Missionary Ages continued:

Ponder

There certainly has been a rebound in the number of missionaries applying for, and serving, missions since the age-change. There were 55,410 missionaries serving as of 1 January 2012. (2013 Church Almanac, 5) The number jumped to 65,634 as of General Conference, April 2013. An additional 20,000 + had received their mission calls, but had not yet entered a MTC. (Ensign, July 2013, 9) Mormonnewsroom.org reported that as of August 2013, 75,000 were serving; an all-time high.

<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormon-missionary-life>

The lowered ages are suggested as options, not requirements, and an early question of observers of the mission program was: Will the new age option become the expected norm, for both elders and sisters? That now appears to be the case. The majority of candidates are leaving at the earliest possible date.

The changes have had a significant impact on the organization and structure of the missionary program; some intended, some unintended. There has been a predictable increase in the number of missionary applications, the time spent at the Provo MTC has been shortened to deal with the over-crowding, a new MTC has been opened in Mexico, missions have increased in numbers and in size, and more mission presidents are being called.

What is the effect of shorter stays at the MTC? Greater emphasis is being placed on pre-mission training, including studying Preach My Gospel at earlier ages. Greater attention is also given to formalized in-field training, led by the mission president, APS, and zone leaders.

What impact will the increased numbers have on activity in the field? Certainly they will engage in proselyting activities, but more missionaries will probably be focusing on retention and reactivation. They will most likely be working more closely with the bishops, ward councils, etc., which from the church's perspective is a good thing; it is felt that the more the units and missionary programs become integrated, the more effective the work will be.

How will the age changes affect mission presidents, and what is the effect of having 18 year old males in the field? Quite frankly, I would be nervous if I was called as a mission president (not that I ever would be, being a non-member). The increase in the number of missionaries assigned to a mission (up to 200 in many cases) makes a very difficult job even more difficult; there are more personal needs and issues to deal with, with less time for interviews. And this may be a reflection of my job as an academic dean, but I deal with 18 year old guys all of the time and they do some pretty dumb things. Granted, LDS young men in general are probably better behaved than many first-year college students, but the one year of college many elders previously experienced must have contributed to their maturity and to their adjustment to being away from home. I am sure the Missionary Department will be keeping an eye on discipline problems and on early-returning missionaries.

Lively: New Missionary Ages continued:

The younger elder-age also has implications for elder/sister relations: many sisters I have interviewed have complained about immaturity on the part of some 19 year old elders. Having them come at the age of 18 may only exacerbate the tension.

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I am most interested in the effects of the age-change on sisters, and I see the lowering of the age to 19 as a significant step in the evolution of the role of women in the missionary program. The watchword of church leaders for young women in the LDS Church has been “marriage over mission” and serving a mission wasn’t even on sisters’ radar screens in earlier generations: the feeling was that it was the elders’ responsibility, not theirs’. Up until 1964, sisters had to be 23 before they could serve a mission and the general sense in the church was that a woman who ended up serving a mission was doing so because it was her last resort – that it was proof she couldn’t find a mate. The age of service was changed to 21 in that year, but stereotypical attitudes persisted. A sister I interviewed said that as she was considering serving a mission in the 1970s, that she was strongly advised by her LDS female friends not to serve because if she did, no one would want to marry her upon her return and that she would “die an old maid.” (She went on to serve and she did marry.)

Attitudes began to change regarding sister missionaries in the 1980s, when LDS women became influenced by the personal, educational, and work-related gains of women in the wider American society. Young women would listen to elders at their Homecomings and think, “I want what he has gained from his mission; his faith is stronger, he has matured considerably, he has traveled to parts of the world I didn’t even know existed, and in many cases he has learned a new language.” Sisters wanted the same benefits.

Interest in sisters serving missions became much stronger in the 1990s, particularly at BYU, where the pendulum had swung in the opposite direction: where a stigma was attached to those who did not serve. Sisters experienced pressure from other sisters, elders, bishops, and stake presidents to submit their papers. President Hinckley even felt a need to step in and caution that sisters were not expected to serve a mission, but that it was permissible and desirable to do so as long as they hadn’t received a viable marriage offer. Marriage over mission remained the watchword.

I expect this emphasis, this pressure to serve a mission may once again be felt by sisters. There is a lot of talk about serving a mission among young sisters today, and the proportion of sisters to elders has increased and is expected to continue to do so.

Lively: New Missionary Ages continued:

Another step in the progress of sisters as missionaries came in 2011 when there was a change in the sisters' dress code that allowed them to wear more fashionable and colorful clothing. Prior to then they were required to wear clothes that quite frankly made them look a bit dowdy, to the detriment of their self-image and to the image of the LDS Church. "I would never join the LDS Church if I thought I had to dress like the sisters," reported a non-LDS friend a few years ago. The contrast between pictures of sisters taken at the MTC years ago, with pictures of sisters there today, is quite striking; today they are a sea of bright colors in fashionable clothes, whereas in the past they were not.

oo0oo

What long-term effects will the changes have? Certainly, church authorities hope for more baptisms, a greater retention of members, and the reengagement of lapsed members. I expect another goal of The Brethren is that more missionaries will return from their missions and marry at a younger age. While Latter-day Saints historically have married at ages younger than the general American population, church authorities have recently expressed great concern that young LDS men are not dating and marrying as young as previous generations; that they are postponing marriage. They assure the young men that they can have a successful marriage and they even chide them for waiting. At the 181st Annual General Conference held April, 2011, President Monson questioned why so many young men of marriageable age are delaying marriage. He sees young women wanting to marry and raise a family, but young men are not asking them for their hand. He said these young men are not doing their priesthood duty by not marrying. He appreciates that some may delay because of a concern for finances or of making the wrong choice, but he assured them that frugality and faith will help them through the trials they will face.

He then scolded them: "Perhaps you are having a little too much fun being single, taking extravagant vacations, buying expensive cars and toys, and just generally enjoying the carefree life with your friends. I've encountered groups of you running around together, and I admit that I've wondered why you aren't out with the young ladies." (Ensign, May 2011, 67)

Elders can now leave at 18 and fulfill their missionary obligation by the age of 20, while sisters can leave at 19, pursue their passion to serve a mission, and return home before their 21st birthday. Both can then return to school, to work, and possible marriage. The old myth and goal of "waiting for a missionary" (be it for an elder or a sister), now might actually become a reality in more cases than in the past.

Future SSSR/RRA Meetings

2014

Indianapolis, Indiana
JW Marriott Indianapolis
Oct. 31-Nov. 2

2015

Newport Beach,
California
Newport Beach Marriott
Hotel and Spa
October 23-25

For information about registration for the 2013 SSSR/RRA annual meeting, please visit www.sssrweb.org. Here, you will find details on location, cost, special events, and instructions for registering online.

Each year, the MSSA participates in the SSSR/RRA conference and sponsors various sessions throughout the weekend.

Plan

Upcoming Conferences

OCTOBER

- 31- The Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology: "The Atonement"
Nov. -Orem, Utah
2 -www.smpt.org/conferences.html

NOVEMBER

- 8- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association: "How Does Religion Work?"
10 -Boston, Massachusetts
-www.sssrweb.org
- 23 Sunstone Northwest
-Bellevue, Washington
-www.sunstonemagazine.com/symposium/
- 23- American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting
26 -Baltimore, Maryland
-www.aarweb.org

DECEMBER

- 13- European Mormon Studies Association: "Great Men and Mormonism"
15 -London, England
-<http://euromormonstudies.wordpress.com/>

JANUARY 2014

- 2-5 American Society of Church History Winter Meeting
-Washington, D.C.
-<http://www.churchhistory.org/conferences-meetings/>
- 31- Restoration Studies Symposium/Sunstone Midwest: "Of One Heart and Mind: Common Consent in the Restoration Traditions"
Feb. -Independence, MO
2 -www.sunstonemagazine.com/symposium/
-www.johnwhitmerhistoricalassociation.org/rss

Upcoming Calls for Papers Deadlines

Submit proposals by:

JANUARY 20, 2014

for

American Society of Church History/Ecclesiastical History Society in Britain: "Migration and Mission in Christian History"

to be held April 3-5, 2014
in Oxford, England

The primary theme of the conference is Migration and Mission in Christian History. The program committee invites proposals for individual papers or full sessions on this theme. Papers could examine themes such as: Christianity in migrant communities in the early generations of re-settlement; missionary efforts directed towards non-Christian migrants or those from a different Christian tradition; or the migrations of missionaries themselves.

There will be two deadlines for proposals: 21 October 2013 and 20 January 2014 (12 noon, London time). The earlier deadline will allow the program committee to make decisions by late November/early December 2013, to facilitate the booking of flights. It is possible that, if the program is already quite full, only a limited number of proposals submitted to the second deadline will be accepted.

Please send proposals, by e-mail, to JohnWolffe-PA@open.ac.uk.

For more information, visit: www.churchhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Call_for_Papers-Spring_2014_Meeting.pdf

Because of limited space, this is not an exhaustive list of upcoming conferences and calls for papers. We offer our apologies for any omissions.

More about the MSSA

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 associations among researchers and educators working in both academic and applied settings. It is interdisciplinary and international in scope and purpose. The association participates in annual joint meetings 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.

For additional information, contact: Mormon Social Science Association, c/o Ryan Cragun
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ryantrcragun@gmail.com

Visit us online at:
www.mormonsocialscience.org

New and Recent Publications of Interest

BOOKS

Philip L. Barlow, Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion (Updated edition) (Oxford University Press, June 27, 2013).

Melvyn Hammarberg, The Mormon Quest for Glory: The Religious World of the Latter-Day Saints (Oxford University Press, July 1, 2013).

J. B. Haws, The Mormon Image in the American Mind: Fifty Years of Public Perception (Oxford University Press, November 1, 2013).

Susan McKinnon and Fenella Cannell, Vital Relations: Modernity and the Persistent Life of Kinship (SAR Press, August 30, 2013).

Boyd Jay Peterson, Dead Wood and Rushing Water: Essays on Mormon Faith, Culture, and Family (Greg Kofford Books, October 22, 2013).

Daymon M. Smith, A Cultural History of the Book of Mormon: volume one: setting, a foundation, of stones to stumble over (CreateSpace, July 10, 2013).

Merina Smith, Revelation, Resistance, and Mormon Polygamy: The Introduction and Implementation of the Principle, 1830-1853 (Utah State University Press, June 25, 2013).

Stephen H. Webb, Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn from the Latter-day Saints (Oxford University Press, October 1, 2013).

James F. White and James E. Faulconer (Editors), Common Ground - Different Opinions: Latter-day Saints and Contemporary Issues (Greg Kofford Books, October 8, 2013).

MSSA Website

www.mormonsocialscience.org

The MSSA website is a wonderful resource for students, academics, and anyone interested in the social sciences and Mormonism. You'll find the latest news and announcements about job openings and upcoming conferences, downloadable copies of previous issues of the newsletter, an extensive bibliography, and convenient links to other academic journals and organizations. Also available: contact information, "Ask an Expert" archives, online due-paying, and MSSA leadership information.

We have done our best to include the most relevant recent book and article publications. We apologize if any significant contributions have been overlooked. You're always invited to email any announcements regarding new publications to Rene (reneromig@gmail.com) or Bosco (boscoocsob@gmail.com).

New and Recent Publications of Interest

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Emily Layton, 'FACT Case Studies of Congregations Engaging Young Adults, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Herriman, Utah', <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/faithcommunitiestoday.org/files/Herriman%20Utah%20LDS%20Ward%20Young%20Adult%20Case%20Study.pdf>

Brian Robert Calfano, Amanda Friesen, Paul A. Djupe, 'Mitigating Mormonism: Overcoming Religious Identity Challenges with Targeted Appeals', *PS Political Science and Politics*, Vol 46, Issue 3 (June, 2013): 562-568

BOOK REVIEWS

Ryan T. Cragun, Review of Shifting Borders and a Tattered Passport: Intellectual Journeys of a Mormon Academic by Armand Mauss, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol 74, Issue 2 (2013): 290-291

Jan Shipps, Review of In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death by Samuel Morris Brown, *Journal of American History*, Vol 100, Issue 2 (2013): 509-510

Bulletin Board

...a space for MSSA members to share news, announcements, and other tidbits.

NEWS

'Church Publishes Original Documents of Founder Joseph Smith' (September 4, 2013) www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-publishes-original-documents-joseph-smith

'U. Va. Names Kathleen Flake as First Bushman Chair of Mormon Studies' (September 9, 2013) <http://news.virginia.edu/content/uva-names-kathleen-flake-first-bushman-chair-mormon-studies>

'Interview With Kathleen Flake: Richard L. Bushman Professor of Mormon Studies' (Sept. 6, 2013) www.juvenileinstructor.org/kathleen-flake-richard-l-bushman-professor-of-mormon-studies/

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear MSSA members,

I'm happy to announce the results of the MSSA elections for future president (2015-17) and board members. All three candidates won their elections with no opposition and with Chinese majority percentages. No one wrote in alternative candidates either.

Congratulations to future MSSA president Melvyn Hammarberg!

Congratulations to future board members Rick Phillips and Amy Moff-Hudec!

I look forward to seeing our new officers at SSSR in Boston. And I hope to see many of you there as well.

Best,

Henri Gooren
Soon to be ex-president of the MSSA

To include your own announcement or piece of news in the Bulletin Board, please send an email to Rene (reneromig@gmail.com) or Bosco (boscoocsob@gmail.com).

MSSA Dues

Please send your dues for 2013 to:

Ryan T. Cragun
University of Tampa
401 W Kennedy Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33606

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: ryantcragun@gmail.com