

# CLAREMONT MORMON STUDIES

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010 ♦ ISSUE No. 2

## A Center for Mormon Studies

BY Richard L. Bushman

Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies, Claremont Graduate University

We have used the phrase “a national center for Mormon Studies” since the Claremont program began. Perhaps it seems a little presumptuous considering the scores of scholars all over the world at work on Mormonism, and the much larger accumulation of Mormon scholars in Salt Lake City and Provo. At Claremont we have one full-time faculty member augmented by the capable adjunct teaching of Claudia Bushman and Armand Mauss. Twenty-five students at most are dealing with Mormonism in one form or another compared to hundreds in Utah and elsewhere in the country. And yet we persist in calling ourselves a national center. Why the chutzpah?

Partly it is a frame of mind. We believe that we can deal with the most pressing questions in Mormon Studies here as well as anywhere. As Joseph Smith said, we wish to gather all truth and make it our own. This act of gathering and reflection is the responsibility of the students as much as the faculty’s. We are like a hive of bees gathering in nectar from a wide field to make honey here in our own hive. We think our golden brew can be as succulent and nourishing as honey made anywhere.

But partly it is a matter of fact. Through experience as much as through calculation, we have found that Mormon scholars like to come to Claremont for their conferences. Sunstone West meets here every other year. The Society for Mormon Philosophers and Theologians held their annual conference here last spring and plans to come every third year. The Mormon Scholars in the Humanities will meet here in May for their annual conference, this

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year on the theme of the family in history, literature, and society. In addition we have held our own conference on Mormonism and Politics, Mormonism and Engineering, Mormon Women, and looking ahead to Spring 2010 on the state of Mormon Studies, and in spring 2011 on War and Peace from a Mormon Perspective.

We have probably overdone it in these first two years. We put inordinate strains on the School of Religion staff with our heaped over schedule of lectures and conferences, but the point remains: there is an interest among Mormon scholars nationally in presenting their work at Claremont. I am pleased with this desire to collect here. We want our students to feel that the best that is

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being produced is available to them not only through journals and books but in the persons of the scholars doing the work.

We will not have to continue at this hectic pace in the years to come. The point has been established. This is a place to confer and reflect on the major issues in Mormon Studies. Not only in our imaginations is Claremont a national center; it is now looked on that way around the country. My fondest hope is that this will give our students the courage and ambition to make their own work part of the great surge of ongoing scholarship in this burgeoning field of study. ♦

# Spring 2010 Semester Events

**FEBRUARY 18**

## Grant Hardy

*"The Deep Structure of the Book of Mormon"*

8:00 P.M. at Mudd Auditorium  
Claremont School of Theology

Grant Hardy, Associate Professor of History at the University of North Carolina Asheville, is best known to Mormons for *The Book of Mormon: A Reader's Edition*, but he soon will be better known for his structural analysis of the Book of Mormon coming out with Oxford University Press this year. Hardy explains how the three major historians in the book, Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni constructed their narratives differently, making each of these writers a distinctive presence in the book.



**FEBRUARY 19**

## "The Life and Thought of Joseph Smith"

4:00 P.M. at Albrecht Auditorium  
Claremont Graduate University

JACOB BAKER

*"Friendship is like Welding Iron to Iron": The Sealing Power, the Welding Link, and the Grand Fundamental Principle of Mormonism*

SHAWN BENNION

*Before Nauvoo: Restoring the Ancient Church*

NICK FREDERICK

*Joseph Smith and the Formation of the Prophetic Persona*

DAVID GOLDING

*Sickles, Swords, and Servants: The Foundations of Joseph Smith's Mission Theory*

ELISA PULIDO

*Looking for a Cloud of Light: The Poetics of Prophethood*

CHRISTOPHER SMITH

*The Sacred Savage: American Indians in the Religious Vision of Joseph Smith*

**MARCH 11**

## Daniel C. Peterson

*"The Debate over the Book of Mormon"*

8:00 P.M. at Albrecht Auditorium  
Claremont Graduate University

Daniel Peterson, Professor of Islamic Studies and Arabic at Brigham Young University, is best known in the academic world as an expert on Islam. As editor of the FARMS Review of Books for many years, however, he is well informed on the controversies surrounding the historicity of the Book of Mormon. In his talk, he will report on the debate as it stands right now.



**APRIL 15**

## Martha Bradley Evans

*"The Fundamentalists Today"*

8:00 P.M. at Mudd Auditorium  
Claremont School of Theology

Martha Evans, Professor of Architecture at the University of Utah, also directs the Honors Program. She has written on the Utah controversy over the ERA and a joint biography of four Mormon women entitled *Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier*. She gained insight into Fundamentalist polygamous communities doing research for her book *Kidnapped from that Land: The Government Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists*.



**APRIL 23-24**

## CMSSA Student Conference

*"What is Mormon Studies? Transdisciplinary Inquiries into an Emerging Field"*

Mormonism's complexities suggest how this religious movement likely resists categorization. Is Mormon Studies a viable new field? Is it even a viable conceptual

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option for academic examination? From an academic standpoint, those who study Mormonism will in large part determine what Mormon Studies becomes and how it proceeds. What are the various competing visions for what should be studied and advanced under this rubric? This conference will explore these and other questions through scholar and student presentations. Jan Shippy will offer the keynote address to open the conference and a scholar panel including Brian Birch and Spencer Fluhman will conclude the event.



**MAY 21-22**

## Association of Mormon Scholars in the Humanities Conference

*"The Family and Human Relationships in History,  
Literature, Art, and Philosophy"*

The Association is now soliciting papers for the conference. Every story, it is said, is a family story. Yet in stressing the freedom and self-sufficiency of the individual, modern culture de-emphasizes the degree to which people are born in dependency, of specific parents, and develop in and through relationships with others, most closely in the family. By considering the family, family history, and human relationships, this conference will invite inquiry into changes in the culture of the family over time, inquiries into family memory, depictions of the family and the individual in art and literature, and philosophical investigations of the role of family, friends, and mentors in personal development.



## On the Mormon Trail, June 1848

*A poem by Elisa Pulido  
PhD student in Religions of North America*

She needs a moment alone, away  
from the children, the husband, canvassed wagons,

oxen. Without a good-bye, she vanishes  
into wind-waved prairie. Three days the company

searches every bluff, rise, hole. Could have been a brave,  
who admired her blonde braid, her pale brow.

Maybe a broken leg. A quiet wolf. Perhaps  
she waded out to where tall grass grows overhead,

and lost the horizon. Without chart or compass,  
with no knowledge of the stars, she stumbles on the edge

of the known world, slips over its side. Her husband  
fears she has been bitten by a snake, fears she has fallen

into the netherworld of the plains.  
He would make any bargain and never look back.

For years he sings of her—wandering,  
circled by coyotes, treading tall grass.

*First published in Tor House Newsletter, 2008*

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# Faculty and Students Contribute to Mormon Studies

We asked students and Mormon Studies faculty to provide some details about their recent academic work. Included here are some of their contributions to the field.

## FACULTY

### RICHARD BUSHMAN

“Joseph Smith and the Creation of the Sacred,” in *Joseph Smith Jr.: Reappraisals after Two Centuries*, ed. by Reid L. Neilson and Terryl L. Givens, Oxford University Press, 2009.

“Oliver’s Joseph,” in *Days Never to be Forgotten: Oliver Cowdery*, ed. by Alexander L. Baugh, Religious Studies Center, 2009.

“Mormon History Inside and Out,” American Historical Association, 2009.

“On Being Ill and at Ease in the World,” Society for Mormon Philosophers and Theologians Conference, Claremont Graduate University, 2009.

“Mormon–Catholic Dialogue,” Catholic Theological Society, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2009.

“Eliade’s Return,” *Mormon Review*, 2009.

“Mormonism in Dialogue,” National Student Dialogue Conference, Biola University, 2009.

Organizer and chair of panel, “Mormonism and National Politics,” American Historical Association, 2010.

“Hugh Nibley and Joseph Smith,” Maxwell Institute Lecture, Brigham Young University, 2010.

### ARMAND MAUSS

Commentator on the session “Contemporary Mormon Issues,” 2009 conference of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), Salt Lake City.

“‘Zion is Fled’: Reflections on the Mormon Diaspora of the Mid-Twentieth Century,” Utah Valley University Religious Studies Tenth Annual Mormon Studies Conference, 2009.

“Seeking a ‘Second Harvest’: Controlling the Costs of LDS Membership in Europe,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 2008.

“The Mormon Church and Its Intellectuals: Traditions and Transitions,” *Archivo Teologico Torinese*, 15(2), 2009.

## STUDENTS

### JACOB BAKER

Research Fellowship, Joseph Smith Summer Seminar, Brigham Young University, 2007.

“Evil and Suffering in the Book of Mormon: Alma 14: A Challenge to or an Asset of a Mormon Theodicy?” Presentation to Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association, 2007.

“The Grandest Principle of the Gospel: Christian Nihilism, Sanctified Activism, and Eternal Progression,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 2008.

“The Shadow of the Cathedral: Exposition of Mormon Theology,” *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology*, 2008.

“God With Us’: Panentheism, Pansyntheism, and the Mormon God,” Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology Conference, Claremont Graduate University, 2009.

### LOYD ERICSON

“Eugene England’s Theology of Peace,” American Academy of Religion West, 2009.

“Mary Daly, Mormonism, and the Silent(ced) Mother,” Mormonism Through the Eyes of Women: Envisioning New Spaces for Theology and Practice Conference, Claremont Graduate University, 2009.

“Rethinking the Eternal: D.Z. Phillips, Immortality, and Eternal Life,” Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology Conference, Claremont Graduate University, 2009.

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“The Great Grand Executor: The Development of the Holy Spirit in the Thought of Orson and Parley Pratt,” Parley and Orson Pratt and Nineteenth-Century Mormon Thought Conference, Brigham Young University, 2009.

Research fellowship, Joseph Smith Summer Seminar, Brigham Young University, 2009.

#### DAVID GOLDING

“Missiology, Pluralism, and the Expansion of Mormonism,” Faith and Knowledge Conference, Harvard Divinity School, 2009.

“Discursive Disconnects and Mormon–Evangelical Dialogue,” National Student Dialogue Conference, Biola University, 2009.

#### DEIDRE GREEN

“Selflessness as Sin: Feminist Theology and Latter-day Saint Thought,” Faith and Knowledge Conference, Harvard Divinity School, 2009.

“Should LDS Women Do Theology?” Mormonism Through the Eyes of Women: Envisioning New Spaces for Theology and Practice Conference, Claremont Graduate University, 2009.

“Got Compassion? A Critique of Blake Ostler’s Theory of Atonement,” *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology*, 2008; winner, best article of student competition.

#### RICHARD LIVINGSTON

Research Fellowship, Joseph Smith Summer Seminar, Brigham Young University, 2007.

“Ontotheology and the Boundary Conditions of Inness,” Faith and Knowledge Conference, Harvard Divinity School, 2009.

#### PAUL MILLER

Research Fellowship, Joseph Smith Summer Seminar, Brigham Young University, 2007.

Book review of *Knowing Truth, Doing Good: Engaging in New Testament Ethics* by Russell Pregeant, *Creative Transformation*, vol. 17, 2008.

“Subjectivity and the Sovereignty of God: Engaging with Karl Barth on Revelation Theology,” Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology Conference, Claremont Graduate University, 2009.

“Proselytism,” in *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, edited by Joel B. Green, Baker Academic, 2009.

#### CHRISTOPHER SMITH

“In Defense of a ‘Christian’ Pluralism,” *Journal for the Renewal of Religion and Theology*, 2009.

“The Dependence of Abraham 1:1–3 on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 29 (2009).

“The Myth of the Missing Book of Abraham Papyrus,” Sunstone West Symposium, 2009.

“Sibling Rivalry: Why Mormons and Pentecostals Just Can’t Seem to Get Along,” Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology Conference, Claremont Graduate University, 2009.

“The Myth of the Missing Book of Abraham Papyrus,” Sacramento Sunstone Study Group, 2009.

“Sacred Sci-Fi: The Fiction of Orson Scott Card as Mormon Mythmaking,” Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, 2009.

“Adam, Abraham, and Joseph: The Egyptian Alphabet as a Source for the Book of Abraham,” presentation to the Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association, 2009.

#### JORDAN WATKINS

Research fellowship, Joseph Smith Summer Seminar, Brigham Young University, 2009.

“‘All of One Species’: Parley P. Pratt and the Evolution of Early Mormon Conceptions of Theosis,” Parley and Orson Pratt and Nineteenth-Century Mormon Thought Conference, Brigham Young University, 2009.



# Scholars Lecture on Joseph Smith, American Religion, and Interfaith Dialogue

BY David Golding

President, Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association

Audiences of nearly two-hundred gathered to Claremont Graduate University during the Fall 2009 semester to enjoy lectures presented by Daniel Walker Howe, Father Alexei Smith, Robert L. Millet, and Harry S. Stout. The speakers' topics included Joseph Smith's America, Mormon-Catholic dialogue, and a comparison of Mormonism's founder and Jonathan Edwards.

Pulitzer Prize winning author of *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford University Press, 2008), Daniel Walker Howe, met with Claremont graduate students prior to the evening lecture. Part of his interest in Mormonism, he said, came from his family and childhood environment. Born in Ogden, Utah, he was raised in a family that he described as "part Mormon, part Gentile." He admonished students to always remember the "literate public" in their writing and to avoid overly technical language.

To the evening audience, Howe summed up the religious and industrial atmosphere of Joseph Smith's world with an explanation of his book's title. "What hath God wrought" was the phrase, derived from Numbers 23:23, that Samuel F. B. Morse used as the content of the first telegraph message transmitted from Washington D.C. to Baltimore

in 1844. The period in which Smith was born, raised, and founded a religion experienced significant advancements in technology similar to the Internet revolution of recent times, Howe said. Such advancements affected religious attitudes about the spread of Christianity and the workings of God in American industry.

Father Alexei Smith, who handles interfaith dialogue for the Los Angeles diocese, and Robert L. Millet, Abraham O. Smoot University Professor from Brigham Young University, presented lectures on the current state of Mormon-Catholic dialogue. The two explored the topic of priesthood and the sacraments as understood by Catholics and Mormons, respectively.

Smith emphasized the role of the priest in representing Christ to the people. Through the administration of the sacraments, the grace of God is communicated, in part, as "efficacious symbols" of divine love.

Millet discussed how Mormons claim legitimate authority when performing the sacraments and how such a claim occupies a central location in their understanding and interpretation of the Bible. He also described the role of the sacraments in Mormon soteriology, and why a "legal administrator" is required for such ordinances to be efficacious

before God.

The Fall 2009 Lecture Series concluded with Harry S. Stout of Yale University who is also a member of the National Advisory Board of the Joseph Smith papers and editor-in-chief of the Works of Jonathan Edwards. In his lecture, he compared Joseph Smith and Jonathan Edwards.

Stout felt that the two men were at times polar opposites and in other respects very similar. Edwards prided himself on his English heritage and thought of himself as a colonial Englishman. Smith espoused American values and is known as a builder of a distinctly American Religion. The two had strikingly different lifestyles and skills.

Both, however, saw themselves as builders of a sacred nation. Smith engaged in founding a Zion society; Edwards speculated that the Americas would be the site for Christ's return. Smith and Edwards both actively promoted evangelizing Native Americans, Stout noted.

Stout concluded by describing an effort to build a platform that will combine and make accessible the papers of Edwards, John Wesley, Martin Luther King, and others. He renewed an invitation he had previously extended for the Joseph Smith Papers project to join the consortium. ♦

# Mormon Studies and the “Overflowing Surge”

BY Jacob Baker

Vice-President of the Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association

The Prophet Joseph Smith famously said, “It is my meditation all the day, and more than my meat and drink, to know how I shall make the Saints of God comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge before my mind. Oh! How I would delight to bring before you things which you never thought of! But poverty and the cares of the world prevent” (*History of the Church*, 5:362).

Though poverty might be a problem for those LDS students who come to study religion at Claremont Graduate University, visions of the possibilities and potentialities of Mormonism and Mormon studies surely has not been.

Though I cannot claim, like Joseph, multiple visions from God, his description of the “overflowing surge” is evocative of what I have seen can be done here. It is something that seems to bind us together here as LDS students (and non-LDS students who participate in our Association) engaged in the study of religion.

Many (and probably most) of us have come here as believers of varying degree, but more importantly we come as students eager to understand, dedicated as believers or non-believers to grasping the possibilities

of the religion and culture of which we have a passionate interest. This, I think, can accurately be described as visionary.

Former Danforth Chair in the Philosophy of Religion at the School of Religion, D.Z. Phillips, considered it the task of the intellectual not to be for or against religion, but instead as one of understanding it. I would add that it is critical that a thorough understanding of any religion must include an adequate appreciation of

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the intellectual, theological, and even spiritual possibilities and prospects that such a religion offers through its texts, rituals, and lives of its practitioners.

This task of obtaining a thorough understanding is not always easy to accomplish. But I have been immensely impressed by the students involved in the Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association in the various ways they go about engaging in this intellectual undertaking. I have learned more about my religion and the task of the intellectual, even the believing intellectual, from these students than from anyone or anything else. Indeed, such relationships among the students are a key reason why our student association has been so successful and will likely continue to thrive. ♦

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