

# CLAREMONT MORMON STUDIES

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2012 ◆ ISSUE NO. 7

## The Expansion of Mormon Studies

BY Patrick Q. Mason

Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies

The Mormon moment may be over, but Mormon studies is alive and well. With the election past us, media and popular attention about Latter-day Saints will wane considerably, but there has never been a more auspicious time for the scholarly study of Mormonism.

The Mormon Studies program at Claremont Graduate University

continues to be a leader in shaping the conversation. We are not alone however. All of us were thrilled to hear the formal announcement of the Richard Lyman Bushman Chair of Mormon Studies at the University of Virginia. Those of us who have worked with Dr. Bushman over the years, whether at Claremont or in other capacities, know how appropriate it is to name this chair after him, given his lifelong dedication to his craft as a historian of early America and as the most prominent scholar of Mormonism in recent years. Richard Bushman is the godfather of the contemporary wave of Mormon studies—not least

because of the work he did here at CGU—and so the honor is well-placed and well-earned.

Beyond honoring a friend and mentor, however, I was also pleased to hear of the Virginia chair because it further legitimizes the scholarly field of Mormon studies. The University of Virginia is one of the country's premier public universities, and its Religious Studies

department is the largest in the nation. We may occasionally engage in a bit of friendly competition for the best students, but that will only further encourage each program to strive to provide the best quality education, funding, and career opportunities for our students. So the more the merrier!

"The more the merrier" is also an apt description of our own program here at CGU this year. We are fortunate to have the largest-ever incoming class of graduate students at CGU who are either LDS or otherwise interested in the study of Mormonism. As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter

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and on our soon-to-be-revamped website, our incoming class is characterized not only by quantity but also tremendous quality. The students come to CGU with a range of personal and educational backgrounds. Their academic interests vary far and wide, from early Christianity to Islam, from twentieth-century Pentecostalism to nineteenth-century Mormon women. I regularly receive queries from potential applicants, so there is every reason to believe that CGU will continue to attract top-notch talent.

I must say I am somewhat relieved that the Mormon moment is now past. It's not healthy for anyone to live under the glare of the 24-hour

# A New Look at Brigham Young

BY Bryan Cottle

President, Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association

In October, Claremont Graduate University was privileged to host John Turner, author of the newest Brigham Young biography, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet*. In his lecture “Brigham Young: A New Look at Mormonism’s Second Prophet,” Turner presented the human side of the Mormon leader, detailing not only his coarse edges but also his genuine concern for his co-religionists. For Turner, the complexity of Brigham Young’s personality was critically shaped by the trauma of a two-year period in Nauvoo.

Before Nauvoo, Young was widely respected. While in England leading missionary work in 1840, Young spoke in tongues, healed the sick and evangelized. Although Young had horrible handwriting, little education, and was not as pronounced a preacher as some of the junior apostles, Young still earned their affection. He was an easy man to like.

All of this changed several years later. The traumatic death of his beloved prophet Joseph Smith

shattered Brigham’s world. He found himself, as president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, unexpectedly thrust into the leadership of the Church during the Church’s succession crisis, and he attempted to rally the Saints around the Apostles and the temple. Young was also forced to lead the Mormon people westward, with hundreds dying on the way.

Throughout the trauma of these events, Young refused to let the Church falter. If he had the inspiration, he pushed it. Strongly. For example, when he saw the need to streamline the Church leadership in 1847, Young pushed to reorganize the First Presidency with himself as President. A few of the Apostles felt that the Quorum of the Twelve should be more like a congress. In response Young declared, “I am the head, you are the belly. Get in the harness or get out of the way.”

Because Brigham Young was determined to take responsibility to protect the Mormon people in any way possible, he continued this rhetoric while establishing the Mormons in Utah. When President Fillmore sent non-Mormon

territorial leaders to Utah, Young made sure that if they didn’t submit to Mormon procedure they would find Utah a difficult place to live. Young even railed against President Buchanan when he sent a third of the United States Army to Utah, believing the Mormons to be in rebellion. Obviously, Brigham Young had changed since his mission days in England.

Turner noted that “the willingness to do nearly anything to protect his Church, himself, and those loyal to him makes Brigham Young somewhat hard to understand, and sometimes hard to stomach given our 21st century standards of morality and sensibilities, and our expectations of how we think a religious leader ought to act.” However, in a thorough evaluation of Young’s life, Turner found that the complexity of the second Mormon prophet stemmed from the Nauvoo trauma. Only through understanding this pivotal time in Young’s life is it possible, as Turner told his audience, to “[understand] Young’s evolution as a leader and ... a great deal about his actions in Utah.”

Turner’s reading strikes a contrast with others’ depictions of Young. Brigham has often been portrayed as a rough and tough oddity, far from the typical clergyman. Yet there was more to Brigham Young than just the rough side; he was a man both capable of love and sharpness and a man who nursed

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[see Young, 7]

## Expansion, *continued from page 1*

news cycle for an extended period of time; we see plenty of evidence of that here in southern California! And religion of all things is stripped of so much of its beauty, its mystery, and its complexity when reduced to soundbites. In general I was pleased with the quality and fairness of reporting on Mormonism that we saw from major media outlets, from newspapers to radio to television. (The internet is another story altogether.)

Having had the opportunity to work with various journalists over the past year and a half, I gained a new appreciation for the profession and its serious practitioners. Oftentimes there is nothing less appetizing than seeing how the sausage is made. In this case, however, time after time I saw how a journalist started from scratch, but by finding the right people to talk to, and then asking the right questions, they were able to put together a story that reported the facts with insight, clarity, and objectivity. Most journalists are not experts on religion, let alone Mormonism, and they are working on tight deadlines, making their work all

the more remarkable. Of course, they sometimes make mistakes, but based on my experience these were usually quite minor. I was never misquoted—an “expert’s” greatest fear—though I often chuckled at some of the utterly unremarkable quotes they sometimes selected from our interviews.

The phone has stopped ringing since Mitt Romney lost the presidential election. I expected this to be the case, and am not sad—as my uber-supportive dean Tammi Schneider quipped, “Maybe now you can get a spare minute to write!” It’s hard to say for sure, but I hope that all the media coverage did some good in terms of public education; that was certainly always my hope when I agreed to do interviews even at inconvenient times.

Obviously, a Mormon in the White House would have provided rich research material for scholars ... and would have made my “Mormonism and Politics” course even more popular than it already is! But on the whole, I think the passing of the media spotlight will ultimately be good for Mormon studies. In the past two years, all

things Mormon have been refracted through Mitt Romney’s historic candidacy, at least in the public eye. Scholarship is never at its best when done in relation to the shifting tides of partisan politics. Most things that are worth researching have nothing to do with contemporary battles over the Electoral College. Rather than being held captive to storylines and research topics that feel the obligation to always reference the Mormon in the Oval Office, Mormon studies can continue to move forward in creative, innovative, methodologically and topically diverse directions.

There has literally never been a better time for Mormon studies. Scholarly output on Mormonism has reached the point that it is virtually impossible to keep up with it all. With our frequent public lectures and other events, and especially the new research being conducted by students, CGU is a big part of the field’s expanding horizons. The sun may be setting on the Mormon moment, but it is rising on a new generation of Mormon studies scholarship, and the best is yet to come. ♦

## Under God, Indivisible?

### *David Campbell on American Religion*

BY Michael Haycock  
*Masters Student in Religion, CGU*

How can Americans be simultaneously religiously devout, diverse, and tolerant? Such was the question Notre Dame political scientist David Campbell posed in his September

13th lecture at CGU. Drawing in part from *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, his seminal study of American religion, Campbell sought to elucidate how religion both divides and unites Americans.

The United States is known as

an exceptionally religious nation. About 40% of our population attends religious services weekly—just above Iran in international rankings. However, this perception masks a rather stark religious divide: nearly half of the population says grace daily, while nearly half never does. Campbell traces this fracture to the events of the past fifty years and the fact that political

[see **Campbell**, 7]

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## New Students Join the Program

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### Alan Clark

Alan has a BA in Philosophy and Political Science from Arizona State University, and a MA in Philosophy and Religious Studies from Brigham Young University, where he was a chaplain candidate. He is now studying History of Christianity and North American Religions at Claremont as a PhD student, and is interested in Pentecostalism, Mormonism, and religious pluralism in the Mountain Western States. Alan served an LDS mission in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil from 2003 to 2005. He and his wife, Megan, have four young children.



### Clayton Christiansen

Clayton graduated with a B.S. in Accounting from BYU and passed the California CPA exam. In 2010 he was hired by the LDS Seminaries and Institutes department as an institute director at the Mt. San Antonio College Institute. He just began his masters in Religious Studies and has a particular interest in Mormon Studies. Clayton served a mission in Ecuador, following which he taught Spanish in the MTC for three years. He and his wife, Kami, have three boys. He is currently serving as bishop of the Yorba Linda 5th ward.



### Jonathan England

Jonathan is from Bountiful, Utah. He has a BA in History, with a minor in Religious Studies from the University of Utah. He is studying the history of American religions, with an emphasis in Mormon history, and the role of pioneers in settling the West. Jonathan served an LDS mission in Bahia Blanca, Argentina from 2005-2007. He and his wife, Alex, have two children.



### Alexandria Griffin

Alexandria is a first-year Women's Studies in Religion MA student. She is from Salt Lake City, Utah and received her BA in Anthropology from the University of Utah. Her research interests include Mormon feminism and how conceptions of Mormon womanhood change as the church expands worldwide.



### Michael Haycock

Michael is from Lima, Ohio. He recently graduated from Yale University with a degree in political science. Discovering, however, that he was interested in how religion influenced politics - and the converse - he is now pursuing a Master's in Religion at Claremont. He is interested in the development and intersections of religious, political, and gender norms through text and practice. He served a mission in Resistencia, Argentina from 2007 to 2009.



### Mason Isom

Mason is from Hau'ula, Hawaii. He has a BA in International Cultural Studies: Cultural Anthropology Certificate in Intercultural Peacebuilding from BYU-Hawaii. He is studying Philosophy of Religion and Theology, and is interested in theologies of reconciliation and the potential for Mormon peacebuilding. Mason served an LDS mission in Florida, Ft. Lauderdale, Spanish Speaking. He and his wife, Darlene, are expecting their first child.



### Chase Kirkham

Chase is a native of Salt Lake City, UT. He recently graduated with an MA in history from Utah State University: his thesis examined Brigham Young's cosmology. He previously graduated with a BA in English and a minor in philosophy from the University of Utah in 2009. Chase is focusing on nineteenth-century American religions and early Christianity at Claremont, with a particular focus on how the concept of time shapes one's religious experience. He served in the Poland Warsaw Mission.



### Andrew Smith

Andrew graduated from BYU with a BA in Middle East Studies, and from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem with an MA in Israeli Studies. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D in the Critical Comparative Scripture program of CGU. His official research interests are Islamic scripture, Hebrew Bible and Temple theology, while unofficially he enjoys Mormon studies. Andrew served an LDS mission in Slovenia. He and his wife, Anayn, have one child, and one on the way.

# STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

## Jacob Baker

- “Heidegger and Wittgenstein: Worldliness and Surveyable Representation in the Architecture of the Ordinary,” Intermountain Philosophy Conference, Brigham Young University, November 2011.
- Published, as Editor, *Mormonism at the Crossroads of Philosophy and Theology: Essays in Honor of David L. Paulsen*, Greg Kofford Books, 2012.
- “Madness in Vision: Knowing As Seeing in Mormonism and the Baroque,” Mormon Scholars in the Humanities Conference, Southern Virginia University, May 2012.
- “Love in a Time of Atheism,” Southwest Seminar in Continental Philosophy, Brigham Young University, June 2012.
- “Theologizing in the Presence of Burning Children: From Theodicy to Lament,” *Sunstone Magazine*, September 2012.
- “Consider the Theologian: A Poor Wayfaring Rube Golbergian Tribute,” Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology, Utah State University, September 2012.
- “Between Pluralism and Identity: Evangelical Sermons After 9/11,” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and Religious Research Association Conference, Phoenix, Arizona, November 2012.

## Shawn Bennion

- California State University, Fullerton, Department of Comparative Religions, Lecturer, January 2011–May 2012.
- “Searching for a Categorical Common Denominator: Conversion, Commitment

and Agency in the Mormon and Jehovah’s Witness Traditions,” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Milwaukee, October 2011.

- Session Convener, “Americans’ Perceptions of Islam in the Post–9/11 Era,” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Phoenix Arizona, November 2012.

## Lisa Clayton

- Director, CGU’s Mormon Women’s Oral History Project.
- “Conversations with God: Personal Revelation and Agency in LDS Women’s Oral Histories,” Mormon History Association, University of Calgary, June–July 2012.

## Bryan Cottle

- As CMSSA Vice-President helped organize “Mormons in the Marketplace,” Biennial Claremont Mormon Studies Conference, CGU, April 2012.
- “The Moroni Principle: The Mormon Quest for Metal Plates during the Cheesman Years,” Mormon Scholars Foundation Summer Symposium, Brigham Young University, 2012.

## Brandon Dabling

- “Mo Money, Mo Problems: Hugh Nibley and the Politics of Divine Economy,” Mormon Studies Conference, CGU, April 2012.

## Loyd Ericson

- “What’s Ragged Should Be Left Ragged: God’s Problem of Evil,” The Society for

Mormon Philosophy and Theology Conference, September 2012.

## Thomas Evans

- “Between Nations, Kindreds, Tongues, and People: Mormonism in the Borderlands, Claremont Mormon Studies Conference, CGU, April 2012.
- “The Mormon Jesus in Mexico: Cultural/Virtual Border Crossing in Latter-day Saint Art,” Mormon History Association, University of Calgary, June–July 2012.

## Deidre Green

- Summer Fellow, St. Olaf College Kierkegaard Library, June–July 2012.
- “Works of Love in a World of Violence: Feminism, Kierkegaard and the Limits of Self Sacrifice,” Dissertation, CGU, 2012.
- “Works of Love in a World of Violence: Feminism, Kierkegaard and the Limits of Self Sacrifice,” Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre International Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 2012.

## Alonzo Huntsman

- “Authority: The Apostle Paul and the Prophet Joseph Smith—A Critical Comparison of Texts and Power in the Generation of Religious Community,” Dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 2012.

## Jacob Rennaker

- “Up, Up, or Away? Exploring Vertical and Horizontal Conceptualizations of Sacred Space in Ezekiel’s Temple,” Society for Biblical Literature Conference, Fall 2011.

- "Revisiting the Forgotten Voices of Weeping in Moses 7: A Comparison with Ancient Texts," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 1:2 (2012).
- "Pedagogical Pop Culture: Using Comic Books to Teach Religion," Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association National Conference, The Boston Marriott Copley Place, April 2012.
- "The Eve of Creation: How Interpreters Viewed the Mother of All Living in Light of the Temple," Society for Biblical Literature Pacific Coast Regional Conference, Santa Clara University, March 2012.
- "Song 13 of the Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice: A Community of 'Adams' returning to Eden," Society for Biblical Literature Pacific Coast Regional Conference, Santa Clara University, March 2012.
- "Glorious Tights: Power in Clothing from Batman to Babylon...and Beyond," Religions in Conversation Conference, CGU, Spring 2012.
- Hugh W. Nibley Fellowship, Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2011–2013.

### Caroline Kline

- Teaching assistant for Patrick Mason's "Gendering Mormonism" class, CGU, Spring 2012.
- "Panel: Challenges Feminist Face in Different Religious Traditions," Sunstone West Symposium CGU, February 2012.
- Teaching assistant for a religion class taught by Rosemary Radford Ruether, CGU, Fall 2012.

### Paul Miller

- "Response to Francis Schussler Fiorenza's 'Faith and Political Engagement in a Pluralistic Environment: Beyond the Idols of the Public Space,'" Issues and Trends in Contemporary Theology Conference, CGU, April 2012.
- "Revelation Theology and Democratic

Discourse: The Ethics of Torture as a Test Case," Dissertation, CGU, July 2012.

### Elizabeth Mott

- As CMSSA President helped organize "Mormons in the Marketplace," Biennial Claremont Mormon Studies Conference, CGU, April 2012.
- "'From Mormon to Yankee': Mormon Women in the Social Order, 1896-1946," Claremont Mormon Studies Conference, CGU, April 2012.
- "Becoming Mormon in America and Abroad: First-generation Female Converts' Adoption of a New Religious Identity in the Twentieth Century," Mormon History Association, University of Calgary, June-July 2012.
- "Exemplification of Islam in the New York Times and the Washington Post after 9/11: Anti-American Muslims Abroad and Patriotic Muslim-Americans at Home," The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Phoenix, Arizona, November 2012.

### Elisa Pulido

- Advanced to PhD candidacy, CGU, 2012.
- "Rabbi Gershom's Ban on Polygamy for German Jews in the 11th Century," Religious Men of the Middle Ages Conference, The University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, England, June 2012.
- "Missionary Involvement in the Resolution of the Third Convention in Mexico," Religion in the Borderlands Conference, El Paso, Texas, July 2012.

### Tamara Wallace Ramirez

- "Labor, Beauty and Sustainable Community: Needlecraft Among Latter-Day Saint Women," Claremont Mormon Studies Conference, CGU, April 2012.
- "Pipe Dreams: The Cultural Narratives Behind Keystone XL," Natures Conference, La Sierra University, Riverside, California, February, 2012.

### Taunalyn Rutherford

- "Relief Society: Perspectives on Daughters in My Kingdom," Mormon History Association, University of Calgary, June-July 2012.

### Daniel Sharp

- "Fourth Century Coptic Scribal Habits in the Gospel of John," Dissertation, CGU, 2012.

### Christopher Smith

- "Book of Mormon Archaeology and the Construction of the 'Lunatic Fringe': Jose Davila, John Brewer, and the Ancient Records of Central Utah," Sunstone West Symposium, CGU, February 2012.
- "B.H. Roberts 1909 General Conference Address on Post-Second Manifesto Polygamy," Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, July 2012.
- "Anti-Islamic Sentiment and Media Framing during the 9/11 Decade," The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and Religious Research Association Conference, Phoenix, Arizona, November 2012.
- Took a job editing at Kofford Books.

### Rachel Hunt Steenblik

- "Panel: Have We Come a Long Way? Reviewing Women and Authority on its Twentieth Anniversary," Sunstone West Symposium, CGU, February 2012.
- "A Mormon Critique of Growing Income Equality in the United States," Claremont Mormon Studies Conference, CGU, April 2012.
- Summer Fellow, St. Olaf College Kierkegaard Library, June-July 2012.
- "What's Regine Got To Do With It?" Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre International Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 2012.

## Campbell, *continued from page 3*

opinions typically have a greater effect on Americans' faith than vice versa. The social turmoil of the 1960s caused the first major sorting between those comfortable and uncomfortable with new sexual mores, the latter finding their ways into more conservative churches and the former finding their way out. The rise of conservative religious activism since the 1980s has caused a second sifting. Over the past twenty years, the number of people who do not openly identify with a religious tradition –sometimes known as the “nones,” or those who answer “none” to a question about their religion– jumped from 11% to 26%. What is more, nowadays one's religiosity is a reliable indicator of one's politics, as the highly religious are more likely to be conservative and the highly

secular are more likely to be liberal, with abortion and gay marriage serving as the wedge issues between the two sides.

It would be erroneous, however, to see this as an unbridgeable chasm between our red and blue neighbors. Perhaps surprisingly, Americans are much more tolerant religiously than politically. 74% of Americans think religious diversity has been beneficial for the nation, and 80% feel that basic truths can be found in many religions. Regarding politics, if one ignores the aforementioned wedge issues, the partisan division between the most and least religious disappears. To account for this, Campbell provides the mechanism for growing religious tolerance, which he calls the “Aunt Sally Principle.” If your Aunt Sally (or any other friend, relative, or neighbor) is generally known to be a good person who also subscribes to an unpopular

faith, your personal relationship will trump prior reservations and your estimation of Aunt Sally's faith in general will increase.

Unfortunately, Campbell pointed out that the Aunt Sally Principle poses several problems for Mormons. First, Mormons are much more socially isolated and smaller in number than, say, Catholics, decreasing the chance that others will establish meaningful and positive relationships with them. Second, a major factor in other religions' social acceptance has been the prevalence of intermarriage; given the doctrinal impetus in Mormonism to marry within the faith, this road to social inclusion is mostly blocked. To truly become accepted in American society, it is likely that Mormons will have to make a conscious effort to reach out to others as friends first and Mormons second. ♦

# The Heart of Claremont's Mormon Studies

BY Rachel Hunt Steenblik  
*Vice President, Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association*

During his own time at Claremont Graduate University, Richard Bushman located “the heart of Mormon studies at Claremont” in “the students that come here, for they are the ones that drive the interest and help to formulate and organize the events.” At this time, Claremont Mormon Studies has a big heart.

Those of us in coursework have been thrilled to be joined by so many new students. They carry with them a well spring of knowledge,

experience, and passion. Many of us have classes together, ranging from Mormonism and Politics, Women in American Religion, Oral History, Augustine, and Zoroastrianism. Many more of us eat lunch together weekly.

In those weekly lunches, we share any announcements pertaining to Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association, as well as papers we have written and presentations we are about to give. In a sense, we

[see **Heart**, 8]

## Young, *continued from page 2*

his wounds as well as his grudges. Turner closed his remarks with an interesting historical note that might resonate with Mormons today: beyond the colonizer and the governor, Brother Brigham was a temple builder. While Joseph Smith built temples one at a time, Young foresaw thousands of temples and plotted several temple sites before his death. The impulse to bind his people together as one reveals that the more spiritual, tender elements of Young's English mission days still remained, though transfigured by the traumatic crucibles of Nauvoo and Utah. In speaking of the politician, we should not forget the prophet; within the priest we should not overlook the man. ♦

## Heart, *continued from page 7*

become one another's first readers and first audience, both offering and receiving feedback. We also brainstorm where presented papers might be published, as we have a larger goal to help each student prepare at least one written work for publication.

On occasion, these gatherings are additionally punctuated by special guests, including David Campbell, John Turner, and Armand Mauss. Each visit was memorable, particularly because the lunch setting opens up a unique opportunity for students to interact with scholars in a more personal and direct way. Campbell told us precisely how he came to co-author his book, *American Grace*, and how he had dreamed of researching the relationship between religion and politics since his undergraduate days at Brigham Young University.

Turner talked to us about his experiences writing on Mormonism as an "outsider," and the three and a half summers he spent in Utah with his family, researching Brigham

Young at the Church History Library, where he was given access to approximately 98% of the archives he requested. Turner also answered our questions about the research process in general. His biggest tip was to write as you go, even if it is no more than a very rough draft. Otherwise, "you end up doing the research twice."

Mauss gave a remarkable lecture entitled, "Founder Biographies as a Form of Scripture: The Case of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet," in conjunction with The Institute for Signifying Scriptures' Brown Bag Lunch Discussions.

Next semester we will be joined by equally fine guests, many of whom will be here specifically to pay tribute to Armand Mauss at Claremont Mormon Studies spring conference, solidifying that Claremont is the place for graduate students and scholars to engage with each other, as they engage with the primary ideas and issues involving Mormonism. I am confident that "the heart of Mormon studies at Claremont" will continue to swell. ♦

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*A joint publication of the*

HOWARD W. HUNTER CHAIR OF MORMON STUDIES

LATTER-DAY SAINT COUNCIL ON MORMON STUDIES

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