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# Mormon Studies Newsletter

at Claremont Graduate University



Claremont

GRADUATE UNIVERSITY



## Comings and Goings

Patrick Q. Mason

Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies



My family and I recently returned from a five-month sojourn in Timisoara, Romania. I was there as a Fulbright Scholar, teaching courses in American Studies at the West University of Timisoara and conducting research on Romanian Mormonism. It was a rich experience, though it also made us grateful for many things we take for granted here at home. (Still, as great as Claremont is, we miss having a gelato shop in walking distance.)

Why Romania? I'm writing a college textbook about Mormonism, including a chapter on international Mormonism. I wanted a case study where Mormonism is truly tiny, and operates in a very different cultural and historical context than the United States. With its dual Orthodox heritage and communist history, and with only a few hundred active Latter-day Saints in the entire country, Romania certainly fits the bill. Together with one of CGU's doctoral students, Lincoln Hale, who served his LDS mission in Romania, I conducted interviews with church members throughout western Romania. It was an honor to have them share their stories with us.

I haven't been the only CGU scholar traveling to far-flung places gathering research. Taunalyn Rutherford (PhD candidate) has been interviewing Mormons in India; Caroline Kline (PhD candidate) has been conducting oral histories of Mormon women in Mexico, Botswana, and South Africa; and Elisa Pulido (newly minted PhD) just completed a dissertation on the Mexican Mormon leader-turned-dissident Margarito Bautista. One of the widely recognized tasks for the next generation of Mormon Studies will be for our scholarship to catch up to the globalization of the religion. As you can see, Claremont Mormon Studies is leading the charge.

Not all comings and goings include getting your passport stamped and suffering jetlag. In recent months we have celebrated the graduation of a number of our outstanding Mormon Studies students: Richard Livingston (PhD), Elisa Pulido (PhD), Courtney Rabada (MA), and Jeff Turner (MA). Congratulations to each of them—onward and upward! They pass the torch to this year's new class of master's and doctoral students, an impressive group who will no doubt make their mark as they move through their studies.

I'm also very pleased to announce that in Fall 2015 the Mormon Studies program at CGU will host Spencer Fluhrman, associate professor of history at Brigham Young University and editor of the *Mormon Studies Review*, as a visiting professor. He will be teaching courses on "American Religious Liberalism" and "Mormonism in Transition, 1880-1930." Professor Fluhrman and I have known each other since our undergraduate days at BYU, and our careers have taken eerily similar trajectories. He is an outstanding scholar and teacher, without a doubt one of the leading voices today in Mormon Studies. Thanks, as always, to the Mormon Studies Council and CGU's Religion Department for facilitating Professor Fluhrman's visiting appointment, which will be tremendously enriching to our students and our broader community.

Finally, let me mention the Mormon Studies public events that we have scheduled for this academic year—be sure to get them on your calendar! This fall we will host a two-part series on "Mormonism and Race." On Thursday, September 10, we will be fortunate to hear from Paul Reeve, associate professor of history at the University of Utah and author of the important new book, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness*. Professor Reeve will speak on "Race and the Making of a Mormon-Indian Body." Then on Thursday, November 12, we will have a panel of speakers addressing "Race in Contemporary Mormonism." Tentatively scheduled to appear are Ignacio Garcia, professor of history at Brigham Young University and author of the new memoir *Chicano While Mormon; Tamu Smith*, co-author of *Diary of Two Mad Black Mormons*; and Russell Stevenson, author of the award-winning book *For the Cause of Righteousness: A Global History of Blacks and Mormonism, 1830-2013*. Also, stay tuned for a possible event in December dedicated to the issue of faith crisis in contemporary Mormonism.

In addition, be sure to save the dates of March 25-26, 2016, when we will host a conference asking the question, "What does it mean to be religious and free in the 21st century?" Our keynote speakers (subject to change based on availability) are Elder Dallin H. Oaks, member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Dr. Katrina Lantos-Swett, chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom; and Judge Thomas B. Griffith, member of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington DC. The conference will also feature a distinguished group of scholars reflecting on religious freedom in the United States and abroad. I'm pleased that CGU Mormon Studies can host conversations like this about relevant and important topics.

In short, we've been busy! If promoting a deeper understanding of Mormonism is something that you care about, please join us at our public events, and consider adding us to the list of charitable causes that you support. Though we usually don't charge admission, hosting public lectures and conferences is not free. Even more importantly, quality graduate education is expensive, and we want to recruit and support the best Mormon Studies students in the world. With your continued support, Claremont Mormon Studies will have even more comings and goings to report as we continue to build our successful legacy.

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Craig Nelson, *Editor-in-Chief*

*This is a periodic publication of the Howard W. Hunter Foundation, R. Randall Huff, Chairman, and the Claremont Mormon Studies Council, Stephen L. Bradford, Chairman.*

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# The “What” and “Why” of Mormon Studies

at Claremont Graduate University

by Members of the Howard W. Hunter Foundation  
and the Claremont Mormon Studies Council

Ever since 2004, when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints authorized Claremont Graduate University (CGU) to name its newly established Mormon Studies chair in honor of President Howard W. Hunter, we have frequently been asked a series of “what” and “why” questions, including: What is Mormon Studies? Why is it important to the Church, its members and society at large? Why should I support Mormon Studies at CGU?

Here are some answers :

## 1. What is Mormon Studies?

Mormon Studies is the academic study of Mormonism. Mormon Studies is interdisciplinary. It examines Mormonism from various viewpoints, employing traditional scholarly disciplines such as history, literature, philosophy, political science, sociology, theology, and women’s studies.

Mormon Studies has traditionally focused on the experience of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in North America. However, Mormon Studies includes not just the LDS Church, but all branches of Mormonism that derived from Joseph Smith’s teachings. Furthermore, Mormon Studies is beginning to adopt a more global perspective in view of the fact that over half of all Mormons live outside of the United States.

Because Mormon Studies is based on an academic approach, its focus is educational, not devotional. The devotional aspect of Mormonism is left to the LDS Church and other organized religious branches of Mormonism. As a result, most Mormon Studies scholars, acting as such, do not usually take positions for or against particular faith claims. Mormon Studies scholars do not speak for or on behalf of the Church, its leadership, or its members. They do not establish Church doctrine, though they may study and reflect upon it. Mormon Studies is interested in understanding Mormonism as an important religious tradition, not in establishing its “truth” or “falsity.”

## 2. Why is Mormon Studies important?

Mormon Studies is important for at least three reasons. First, Mormon Studies seeks to enhance understanding of Mormonism. Half of the people surveyed by the Pew Research Center in 2012 knew “not very much” or “nothing” about Mormons. As a result, 62% of them thought their religion and Mormonism were “very different” and only 52% believed Mormons are Christians in spite of the Church’s full name. In recent years the LDS Church has recognized the importance of increased public understanding about the religion, separate from the explicit proselytizing activities that the Church engages in. The work of scholars, some of whom are LDS and others are not, is part of this effort toward greater understanding. These academic scholars often have more credibility in the secular world, especially with other scholars and the media, than do ecclesiastical leaders or Church Public Affairs spokespersons.

Second, Mormons need friends as much as they need converts. Only 53% of those surveyed by Pew Research reported a favorable opinion of Mormons. While increasing the number of baptized members often measures the success of the Church, Mormons cannot rely solely on their own members to look after their interests and reputation. Friends of Mormonism can do much to

foster more constructive dialogue and collegial interaction between Latter-day Saints and others. Richard Mouw, an unlikely Mormon apologist as former president of Fuller Theological Seminary, had engaged in dialogue with LDS scholars for a decade when he affirmed, after a fellow evangelical attacked Mitt Romney’s faith: “I do accept many of my Mormon friends as genuine followers of the Jesus whom I worship as the divine Savior.”

Third, it is time for Mormon scholars and other scholars of Mormonism to make greater contributions to society generally by tapping more deeply into the theological, social, philosophical, and historical roots of the religion. The first century of Mormonism was all about survival. The second century focused on growth and stabilization. As we approach Mormonism’s third century, this American religious movement should seek to contribute more to the worldwide dialogue about the great issues of the day, such as the moral and ethical dilemmas arising from religious persecution, sectarian strife, terrorism, and warfare. Prominent research universities are often the places where these crucial discussions take place with sustained, rigorous analysis.

## 3. Why should I support Mormon Studies at Claremont?

The Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies at CGU is uniquely positioned for maximum impact. The significance of the Hunter Chair was highlighted when Richard Bushman, the award-winning historian from Columbia University, was the first to fill the position. The current Hunter Chair, Patrick Mason, received his PhD from the University of Notre Dame and has become widely recognized as a leading scholarly expert on Mormonism; he recently returned to CGU after a semester as a prestigious Fulbright Scholar in Romania.

Claremont makes sense as the place where Mormon Studies was successfully incubated, developed, and then propagated to other prestigious research universities. CGU’s position in southern California offers enough geographic distance to provide the aura of independence and objectivity to curious members of the media and the academy, while also situating it in one of the largest concentrations of Latter-day Saints outside Utah. CGU is part of a renowned collection of separate but cross-pollinating colleges and universities, widely recognized as the American version of the Oxford or Cambridge models. In addition to CGU, the other Claremont colleges in the same geographic vicinity include Claremont McKenna College, Pomona College, Harvey Mudd College, Scripps College, and Pitzer College.

While Brigham Young University and the LDS Church’s Institute program do tremendous work in educating young Latter-day Saints about their religion, the Church has made the conscious decision not to sponsor graduate studies in religion at BYU (with a few limited exceptions). Thus, for students interested in pursuing graduate studies in Mormonism and comparative religion, CGU is poised to complete the job that BYU and other universities have begun.

In short, CGU’s Mormon Studies program is the leader in this emerging field of study. As a university entirely dedicated to graduate education, CGU focuses exclusively on training and awarding graduate degrees to its students so they are ready immediately to make their mark in the academy and beyond. Given its high visibility, the “Claremont experiment” offers an important test of the viability of Mormon Studies. It is crucial that the Mormon Studies program at CGU continues to succeed, particularly in attracting the very brightest and most talented students who will make the maximum impact in the world. To bring those students to CGU, we need to provide fellowship packages competitive with other elite institutions.

We believe these are the reasons why Mormon Studies matters, and why you should include the Howard W. Hunter Foundation and CGU Mormon Studies within your circle of worthy causes to support.

# Focus on Students

## Past and Present

### Tanner Fellowship

For the past two summers, the Mormon Studies Council has been able to fund dissertation fellowships in partnership with the Tanner Humanities Center at the University of Utah, where CGU students writing dissertations on Mormon topics can spend two months with offices and other facilities near various important archives in and around Salt Lake City. Thanks to an extra donation from outside the Council, we were able to fund two such fellowships during the summer of 2015. One went to Taunalyn Rutherford and the other to Christopher Smith. Their reports follow.

#### Taunalyn Rutherford

It was a great honor and an enormous help to receive the CGU-Tanner Fellowship. During my months at the Tanner Center, I finally made it past “writers block” to writing several chapters of my dissertation, thanks to the support of the generous donors who contributed to making this fellowship possible. In addition to enjoying a spacious office (with a window!) at the University of Utah’s Tanner Humanities Center, I was able to interact with the friendly and helpful faculty and staff and feel at home with the vast resources available at the University of Utah. Since I currently live in Salt Lake and didn’t need housing, I was able to use the stipend funds to cover the costs of transcribing the numerous oral history interviews that I collected on my last trip to India and to help cover some of the costs of another research trip to India in October. I was also able to take some time off from my adjunct teaching appointment at BYU to focus on dissertation work. I look forward to doing some follow-up interviews with members and associates of the LDS Church in Delhi, Hyderabad and Goa while I revise and improve the content of my dissertation: “Conceptualizing Global Religions: An Investigation of Mormonism in India.” Once again, the resources available through the CGU Mormon Studies program have blessed and allowed me to not only see graduation in sight but also make a lasting contribution to the field of Mormon Studies.

#### Christopher Smith

This summer I was privileged to receive the CGU-Tanner Fellowship, which included an office at the University of Utah and a \$5000 stipend. With the university’s convenient library resources at my fingertips, I made significant progress on my dissertation titled “Playing Lamanite: Mormon Radicalism and Racial Masquerade in the Era of Indian Removal.” I spent the summer working on a lengthy chapter on early Mormon bandits and paramilitaries who disguised themselves as Indians both to evoke scriptural prophecies and to deflect blame for their actions. By the end of the summer I successfully moved this chapter from conception to completion of a solid draft. In addition to the University library, I also utilized the Utah State Historical Society archives to find important territorial court and militia records.

Living near the center of the Mormon Studies world was also helpful for career development purposes. I presented to a packed auditorium of 350 people at the Sunstone Symposium, appeared in several podcast episodes, and am scheduled to appear on Van Hale’s radio show to discuss my dissertation work. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of the Mormon Studies Council, so I am deeply grateful for their contributions. It was a highly enjoyable as well as productive summer.



“Pioneer” LDS members from Rajahmundry



“Pioneer” LDS members from Hyderabad



Delhi 3rd Branch Relief Society



# Claremont Mormon Studies— My Epilogue

By Jon England

It has been one year since I set off on my own, leaving the comfort of the CGU community, with a little bit of scrip and even less of a purse, to see how I could function as a student of Mormon Studies in the world of academic historians. Upon leaving CGU, I felt mentally prepared for my sojourn into the wilderness of PhD work. Dr. Mason had run me through the gauntlet of several course papers, presentations, and an epic master's thesis, and although I came out of those intense two years of academic training battered and bruised, I believed I was well equipped to take on new challenges at a new university.

The transition from CGU's well-manicured lawns and the free pizza at the end of every semester to the desolate expanse of Arizona State University during my first year of PhD coursework was not without its challenges, but it was not excessively difficult either. My time at CGU prepared me more than I could have hoped for what I encountered at ASU. When I first began my coursework I felt that the most difficult question I had would be how I would incorporate Mormon Studies into a new environment that wasn't known for its contributions to Mormon-related research. In my first semester, however, I had an opportunity that I thought was perfect to introduce a Mormon topic that could have relevancy to the broader historical field. I proposed a Mormon view of the landscape of southwestern Utah for my first writing and research seminar, and I could not have been more pleased with the result. Not only was my professor excited to see what I could come up with, but also the entire class found the topic interesting and enlightening. I attribute their acceptance of the topic not only to the growing interest and relevancy of Mormon topics, but also to my training at CGU, where Professor Mason repeatedly emphasized to me the importance of making my research relevant to non-Mormon communities. I'm sure my repeated attempts to do so left him discouraged and afraid for my future and the well-being of my family, but I believe something stuck. My dissertation committee has been very supportive, and has encouraged me to pick a Mormon topic. The field of Mormon Studies seems to attract quite a bit of interest from the broader academic world.

The Mormon Studies community at CGU introduced me to the scholarly world in a way that prepared me to engage with the broader academic historical community. I look back at my time there with great fondness and gratitude.

## The Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association (CMSSA) Officers for 2015-16:



**Shelby Hamm**  
President



**Randy Powell**  
Vice-President

# I Think I Can, I Think I Can...

By Alan Clark, CMSSA President 2013-14

I have spent the last year away from Claremont.

During that time, I have juggled my time, trying to take care of my family, prepare for qualifying exams, complete research for my PhD dissertation, and stay motivated in general. The balance is difficult, and I believe it foreshadows the struggle we will all face as we transition from students to professionals. Maintaining focus on exams and dissertation, to whatever extent that is possible for each person, is the most important thing I have learned about life after classwork. Of course, while the experience will be different for every student, here are some things I have found helpful for me to continue making progress toward completing my degree.



*Alan Clark, wife, Meagan Clark, and three of their children, Taylor, Parker, and Conrad*

Over the past year, I have tried to focus my academic activities on events, which furthered my dissertation research or preparation for exams. This meant cutting back on conference proposals as I tried to pound out my reading lists. This also meant seeking out particular seminars and conferences, which offered opportunities to explore topics around my dissertation interests. In June and July of 2015, I visited seven more Pentecostal congregations in Utah to collect more interviews of pastors and histories of local churches. A Friedman Grant from CGU made the trip possible, and it helped me to reorganize my dissertation proposal by restructuring my chapter outlines.

I then participated in the Wheatley Summer Seminar, offered by BYU's Wheatley Institute. Terry Givens led a group of twelve students, including fellow CGU alumni Jon England, Rachel Hunt Steenblik, and Randy Powell, as we discussed Mormon theology and the public square. The seminar helped me to develop my personal understanding of the narrative in American religion, as I tried to make sense of the books I have been reading. Identifying narratives in American religion and learning to critique them is invaluable for exams and for crafting my own personal place in the academic world.

Between the mountains of books and the helter-skelter dissertation research, my family and I moved to Arizona and continued our family obligations. Have I met every goal I made for myself toward finishing my degree? No, I haven't. But by keeping my family first, we have made the necessary decisions which allow me to provide for my family's needs and remain excited and motivated about my exams and research. A dissertation loses its value if you come to dread and despise the completion of it. So seek the balance necessary to fan the flame that brought you into the academic world in the first place, while not suffocating that flame by allowing your anxiety over exams and dissertation to depress your personal life. Balancing the demands of a healthy, happy life and a rigorous career is an age-old dilemma. Hopefully we can all embrace the subtle art of juggling, even if we are not pursuing a degree in the lucrative field of "circus studies."

# My Experience— Claremont and the Summer After

By Jeff Turner, CMSSA President, 2014-15

I remember two years ago when I moved to Southern California to attend CGU. It was a time of mystery, anxiety, excitement, and being busy. I was then living in rural Washington State, which was a different world than Claremont. I remembered my studies in philosophy at Washington State University with fondness and thought that I would apply philosophy to the study of Mormonism at CGU. Two years later, I find myself in a different place and situation than I imagined in the past. I will begin classes at the University of Utah for a PhD in US History this fall—far from the world of philosophy. I find myself wondering how I got here.

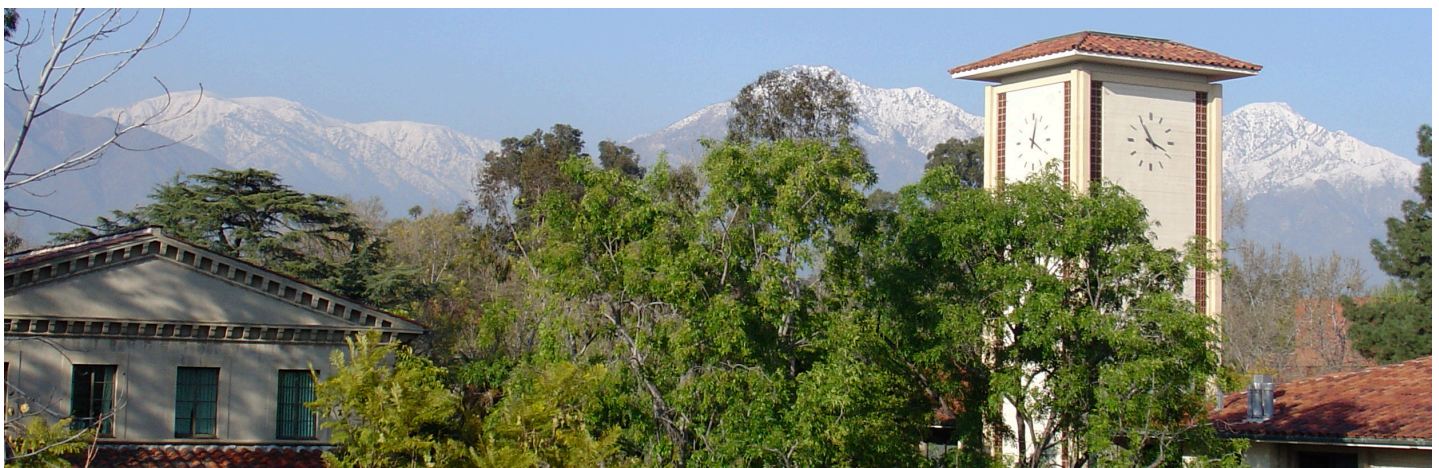
Claremont was an instrumental two years for my growth as a person and as, hopefully, a future scholar. The small community, close-knit group of students, and guidance by Professor Mason characterized my experience there. For two years, we met for weekly lunches to discuss and critique one another's papers and discuss the field and future of Mormon Studies. Some of my fondest memories and most helpful feedback came from these sessions. More importantly, the meetings facilitated friendships that I hope will continue throughout my academic career. I think that this small, collaborative community atmosphere carried over into the classroom, as well. Classes at CGU were small (5-10 students – I think my biggest class had 13) and discussion driven. I remember one of my favorite discussions came from my first Mormon Studies class. The nine or ten of us had read John Brooke's *Refiner's Fire*, an important-but-controversial book that gained attention from a wide audience of historians. The class keyed in on the contested parts of the book, and was having a difficult time seeing the book's important contribution, which meant that Professor Mason had to play the devil's advocate, but he wasn't alone. That particular week we were joined by Distinguished Professor of Religion Laurie Maffly-Kipp, who is one of the brightest scholars of American Religion and Mormonism. Maffly-Kipp and Mason presented salient counterpoints to our own complaints of the book, and drilled the book's successes into our minds. It was the "devil's advocate duo" challenging the students, and, in the small and collaborative setting, the result was one of the most fruitful discussions that I've ever had. I was reminded of that discussion again



*Jeff and his wife, Lexie, skipped CGU's graduation to visit Europe instead.*

this summer at the annual Mormon History Association meeting, where it was announced that Laurie Maffly-Kipp would be the next Association's president, and where there was a stimulating session reviewing and discussing the same book that we discussed two years earlier in Claremont. In my mind, it's undeniable that Claremont has an influence on Mormon Studies and is one of the leaders in shaping the field.

The goal of CGU's Mormon Studies program, and indeed Mormon Studies as a whole, is much broader than its own internal importance: the vision for Mormon Studies is its continued relevance in the academy and in public awareness. For students, this is the lifeblood of our success because it translates into placements and jobs. Being a Master's student at CGU, I was worried about placement into a PhD program, and with the newness of Mormon Studies I was (and still am) worried about getting a job after a doctoral degree. Since the success of Mormon Studies will be measured partly by the success of its students and scholars, I find myself unable to resist measuring my own situation. So when I sit here now, reminiscing about CGU and wondering how I got to where I am now, I interpret my situation as one of success and as a microcosm of the Mormon Studies experience. Mormon Studies will go out from Claremont and continue to gain relevance in the academy and to grow in public awareness.





# Oral Histories in Africa

By Caroline Kline

Last June, CGU professors, students and alumnae spearheaded a project that took 15 researchers to Botswana. Our purpose was to conduct oral history interviews with Batswana women of various religious traditions. I had the privilege of taking part in this research project, entitled “Gender, Narrative, and Religious Practice in Southern Africa,” and I spent two and a half weeks exploring Botswana and talking to Batswana women about their lives. As a PhD candidate in religion at CGU, this research project was an exciting opportunity for me to gather data for my dissertation, which will focus in part on Mormon women in the global south and their navigation of race and gender constructs. My trip was funded by BYU’s Religious Education Dissertation Grant Program.



*Caroline with husband, Michael McBride, and their children, Evan, Anthony, and Alexandra.*

Oral histories provide individuals – particularly individuals whose thoughts, ideas, and perspectives are not typically represented in conventional archives – an opportunity to assess their own agency in relation to family expectations, cultural norms and religious authority. Through oral histories with over 80 women from various religious traditions, including LDS, Pentecostal, Catholic, mainline Protestant, and Muslim, our team of researchers explored questions surrounding the factors that compelled women to initiate, maintain or cut off ties to various religions traditions. We also explored the challenges these women navigated in their lives, as well as how they approached issues of gender within their particular faith traditions.



*Caroline with Sister Mogkare in Molepolole*

I primarily interviewed Mormon women during my time in Botswana. It became clear that Mormonism in some ways meshed well with prevailing cultural attitudes, while in other ways Mormonism was in tension with the culture and expectations of the Botswana people. For example, the Mormon focus on family resonated well with many female converts to the church, who loved the idea of being eternally tied to their families and having their roles as mothers sacralized and praised for its importance. This focus on family was appealing to women raised in this communally-minded society that emphasizes

family obligations and expectations. Additionally, the Mormon focus on family history and temple work resonated with traditional attitudes toward the importance of ancestors. Thus Mormonism’s rhetoric about family felt right and natural to many female converts to the church in Botswana.

Simultaneously, however, women who converted to the church experienced tension as they navigated between church expectations and societal expectations. The topic of marriage highlights some of this tension. In Botswana, it is quite common for women and men to form families without being married. Part of this is due to the fact that marriages in Botswana are extremely expensive. Not only does the expected celebration cost many months’ worth of salary, but bride prices or dowries are also often expected. Thus couples often live together, have children, and then marry when they have enough money to carry out the expected rituals and obligations. The Church’s emphasis on the law of chastity puts some women in difficult positions. Some broke off relationships with the fathers of their children in order to comply with the law of chastity. Others mentioned non-LDS family members pressuring single women to have children out of wedlock, since adult children are seen as beneficial as one ages. Thus while conversion to the church brought many wonderful things into women’s lives – including community, knowledge of God’s love for them, and ideas about eternal family relationships – inevitably moments of difficulty arose as they negotiated between their new church and their surrounding culture.

During the next few months, I will be transcribing these interviews and writing my dissertation. All interviews will be housed in Special Collections at the Honnold Library at CGU for future scholars to utilize. These interviews will be a treasure trove to future scholars interested in the lived experiences and perspectives of Mormon women in the twenty-first century.



# My Experience as a Mormon Studies Student at Claremont Graduate University

Elisa Pulido

Getting a PhD at Claremont Graduate University was a life-changing experience for me. My thought about what religion is and how it influences the world has certainly changed over the course of my studies and the writing of my dissertation. I entered the program with the idea that religions are rather static institutions that promote eternal verities derived from their various theologies. Having graduated as a religious historian, I now understand that religions are dynamic, organic institutions that change over time, albeit sometimes slowly.

About five years before I came to Claremont, I had earned an MFA at a well-known art school. In general, art schools encourage experimentation, innovation, and explosive, sometimes brash challenges to established norms. To be sure, they are exciting places to study, but when I came to Claremont the atmosphere, though exciting, was more respectful toward religion. At Claremont we were, of course, encouraged to do innovative research, which was intended to challenge previously held ideas about the world's religions. Nevertheless, as members of different faith communities were represented among the student body and the faculty, our questions about religion tended to be much less derisive than comments that were made about religion at the art school I had attended. It was an exhilarating kind of dialog that modeled, at least for me, how the world's religions could co-exist and respect each other.

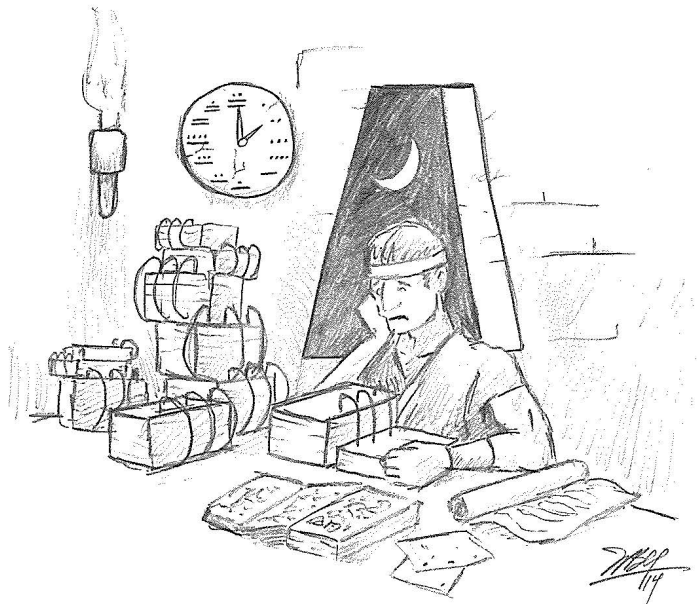
Another advantage of being a part of Mormon Studies at Claremont, was the weekly and sometimes daily interaction I had with other Mormon students, who had various majors. When we met together in Mormon Studies classes or seminars, for example, students of Philosophy, the New Testament, Hebrew Bible, American Religions,

Women's Studies, and the History of Christianity all offered interesting views of Mormon Studies based on current research from other fields within religious studies.

Association with the fine chairs of the Mormon Studies program was also a great perk. Two very capable chairs have directed the program at CGU since its inception: Richard Bushman and Patrick Mason. It was a privilege to be mentored by both of these fine scholars. Richard was an exceptional mentor, assessing the abilities and the needs of individual students. Patrick Mason followed seamlessly in his footsteps, gathering those of us who did our coursework with Richard under his wing, and encouraging us to continue on in the pursuit of our degrees. Richard has continued to participate, along with Patrick, as a dissertation committee member for many students.

The Mormon Studies program has continued to provide new helps to graduate students, including the CGU-Tanner Humanities Center Summer Dissertation Fellowships in Mormon Studies. Unfortunately, teaching experience for graduate students at CGU is hard to come by, and may adversely influence the ability of students from Claremont to find teaching jobs. So far, the Mormon Council and the Howard W. Hunter Chairs have been very resourceful at finding solutions for students, and, I have no doubt, that together with students in the program, viable options for teaching experience will soon be found.

I have missed Claremont tremendously and will continue to miss the Mormon Studies program. It will be hard to replace the thrill of heady, animated discussions in Mormon Studies classes at CGU. Hopefully, many of us will be able to find teaching jobs, so that we can recreate something of the atmosphere we enjoyed at Claremont in another institution.



*Mormon studies.*



# Lectures/Conferences

## Neylan McBaine Lectures on Gender in the Church

January 15, 2015

By Bryan Cottle, CMSSA Vice-President, 2011-12

Neylan McBaine presented a lecture at CGU entitled “From Football to Primary Songs: Gender in the Church Today.” In the lecture McBaine attempted to strike a more moderate tone on gender equality in the LDS Church than the partisans in the fight for or against the Ordain Women movement.

Many LDS women today feel caught between the divergent expectations of American culture and their LDS communities; some feel institutionally underutilized, even second-class. McBaine proposed that ordinary church members could alleviate some of the tensions these women experience. Further, she argued that these feelings can be constructively addressed on the local level without any shift in LDS institutional policy (e. g., giving women the priesthood). Such actions would help make LDS women feel more valued in the community.

To prove her point, McBaine shared a story. One Sunday, the men in her ward’s Elders Quorum participated in a discussion about “Patriarchy Bingo,” an Ordain Women icebreaker game. Each square in the game revealed a symptom that some women experience growing up in a patriarchal society, such as the following: honoring only male LDS leaders; finding oneself obligated to turn to men for most or all spiritual guidance; witnessing men being told to prepare for temple marriage and a career, and women only for marriage; and watching their brothers get ordained at age 12. McBaine learned that this Elders Quorum discussion, far from being contentious, was fruitful. Her home teacher reported, “We realized that only one of the symptoms in the game was a direct result of women not having the priesthood authority; the rest are things we can control with what we have.”

The story indicates that the vast majority of tensions women experience in church are created by cultural and traditional practices, not by anything Mormons would consider doctrine. “We on the ground, and in the pews,” McBaine explained, “have more control over the message that we send our women than we have been claiming.”

She highlighted the LDS teaching that servants in Christ’s church must be anxiously engaged in good causes without explicit divine commands; therefore, Mormons can try new things to help engage women who feel marginalized in the church. Local leaders can rely on personal revelation, using the *Handbook of Instructions* only as their starting point. McBaine asked, “Are we being ambitious enough in the way that we are envisioning what the Lord’s institution might look like? Are we being ambitious enough in the way we are challenging ourselves to be stewards of our brothers and sisters?” Latter-day Saints must acknowledge that many of their female members are struggling; in a spirit of compassion and stewardship, they must do more within the Church to build Zion with those who struggle.

If you missed the lecture, you can watch it online at [claremontmormonstudies.org](http://claremontmormonstudies.org) under the “events” section. To learn more about Neylan McBaine’s approach to gender in the LDS Church, you can read more in her book, *Women at Church: Magnifying LDS Women’s Local Impact*, published by Greg Kofford Books.

## The 2015 Spring Student Conference

Community, Authority, and Identity

By Jeff Turner, CMSSA President 2014-15

Organizing a conference is a terrifying thing, as Matt Pitts and I found out this past year. Since Professor Patrick Mason spent the semester in Romania on a Fulbright scholarship, Matt and I felt the pressure of making sure that things ran smoothly with our advisor and mentor a continent away. In spite of the pressure, the conference was a total success.

During the planning stages, we decided that the theme of the conference should be a “hot topic” but also sufficiently broad to provide room for a diversity of paper proposals from a variety of disciplines and universities. We came up with “Community, Authority, and Identity” as the conference theme, and ended up with sessions on Mormonism in the digital age, ritual in the nineteenth century, and the role of Mormon history in Mormon identity, to name a few. Videos of the presentations are now available on the Claremont Mormon Studies YouTube channel where anyone can watch and listen to the presentations after-the-fact. I’ve even had a handful of interested people ask me about how the conference went within the past few months. In the Mormon Studies world, the annual conference has helped solidify Claremont as a prime hub of quality and cutting-edge scholarship.

In my own interest, and in the interest of CGU’s Mormon Studies students, the conference provided an opportunity for us to meet and network with new graduate students and early-career professors who specialize in Mormon topics. Presenters ranged from Master’s students like Justin Bray at the University of Utah, to PhD students like Rosemary Avance and Saskia Thielens in fields such as Communications and American Studies, to early career scholars like Brigham Young University Religion professor J.B. Haws and Church History Library historian Steven Harper. We scheduled short breaks between sessions so that presenters and students could interact with one another as future colleagues. The pizza lunch on Saturday also helped foster this kind of interaction.



Keynote speaker, Spencer Fluhrman, BYU Historian.

We were lucky to host Brigham Young University Historian Spencer Fluhrman as our keynote speaker. His address was entitled, “Secrets and the Making of American Mormonism,” and suggested that a political ritual has been taking place throughout Mormonism’s history. American non-Mormons would repeatedly *reveal* the secrets of Mormonism while Mormons would repeatedly try to *normalize* their perceived weirdness. Fluhrman’s address and subsequent question

*continued on page 10*

and answer session was a great example of the appeal of Mormon Studies to a non-academic audience. Mormons and non-Mormons could relate their own personal experiences dealing with Mormonism.

The conference was funded by the Howard W. Hunter Foundation and the Mormon Studies Council, which reimbursed graduate students for travel expenses, provided food and logistics for the event, and allowed Spencer Fluhman, the keynote speaker, an introduction to CGU, as he will be teaching here this fall during his sabbatical. Overall, the conference presented Mormon Studies to a variety of audiences and helped solidify CGU's status as a center for Mormon Studies. Hopefully the biennial student conference continues to be a staple for the program in years to come.

## (Re)Visions: Revelation and Rewriting among American Visionaries

January 4, 2015

Dr. David F. Holland

By Randy Powell, CMSSA Vice-President 2015-16

Dr. David F. Holland, by his own admission, is not exclusively focused on Mormon Studies in his academic research, although much of his work addresses issues in Mormonism. He has written extensively on American Religious history including his recent, and acclaimed book, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America*. Holland, after working for several years at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, joined the faculty at the Harvard Divinity School in 2013. His recent interests include Seventh-day Adventism and Christian Science. In his address at CGU Holland described how the founders of these two movements, Mary Baker-Eddy and Ellen White, revised their revelations and how such revisions have a “particular resonance for Mormon Studies” as even Joseph Smith continually revised his revelations to better express the Divine.

As Holland notes, these three visionaries all “offered to the world, newly inspired writings” to capture the mind of God. Referring to his first book, *Sacred Borders*, Holland discussed the debate that has surrounded scripture for centuries, whether it finished and closed or unfinished and expanding. To illustrate, Holland turned to Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic work *The Scarlet Letter*. In Holland's reading, the protagonist, Hester Prynne, and her child, Pearl, become a metaphor for revelation and how some in America feared the advent of further revelation from God, while others did not. Just as Prynne raised her unruly child, so someone in the future would do the same when revelation came to humanity once more.

Mary Baker Eddy saw something of herself in the *Scarlet Letter* as she was “a woman of revelation” and Ellen White viewed herself in a similar framework. As Holland noted both created new works thought to be scripture, but more than merely produce them they “with varying degrees of comfort, repeatedly revised their own inspired texts over the

course of their career.” Though in many ways these two women were viewed as passive recipients of the divine word, they were also very much involved in forming the texts through their periodical and numerous revisions

Looking to Eddy's *Science and Health With a Key to the Scriptures* and White's *The Great Controversy*, which were revised constantly through many editions, Holland noted how these alterations affected those reading them. Some, such as Mark Twain “could not conceive of an imperfect inspiration” as Holland put it, which was certainly the case for most Americans in the nineteenth century. While Twain criticized Eddy for making numerous revisions to her revelations, her followers celebrated these corrections as they felt each new edition brought more truth and resembled the method of compiling the *Bible*. White revised more cautiously, but most of her followers still recognized that her writings, although imperfect were still authoritative. These two women “proved tireless nurturers of the revelations God had given them” and this invariably changed the way people viewed them.

What Professor Holland effectively showed in his presentation is that religious studies and history outside of an exclusively Mormon context can shed light on issues in Mormon Studies. Revelation is an enormous part of Mormonism and by looking at how other divines treated their revelations, illuminates how Joseph Smith himself viewed revelation. Similar to Eddy and White, inspiration was never perfect and involved a communal process. Smith had given authorization to many people to participate in revising his revelations. Holland suggests that our growing understanding how Smith received and revised revelations will change how we read and understand them.



Dr. David Holland



Dr. Holland speaking at CGU about visionaries.



## “Reading the *Book of Mormon*”

June 6, 2015  
Dr. Robert Rees

The *Book of Mormon* was named by the Library of Congress as one of the one hundred “Books That Shaped America.” Since 1830, 150,000,000 copies of it have been published making it the sixth most published book in history. While it has been popular since 1830 for critics to debunk or diminish the *Book of Mormon*, it has stood the test of time.



Dr. Robert Rees at CGU

Recently, two non-Mormon critics praised the *Book of Mormon*. In his *The Lost Book of Mormon*, Avi Steinberg, a “fascinated nonbeliever,” “nominates the Mormon scripture as a Great American Novel, or, failing that, as a priceless artifact . . . that deserves our attention.” In a review of Steinberg’s book in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Peter Manseau says the *Book of Mormon* is “without a doubt one of the most remarkable books ever written.” And in a recent interview in the *New York Times*, the author Freeman Dyson, when asked, “What books might we be surprised to find on your bookshelf?” replied, “*The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. I treasure it because . . . [it] tells a dramatic story in a fine biblical style. The reader has to wait with growing tension almost until the end of the story to reach the final climax, when Jesus arrives in America and founds his second kingdom here.” Literary critic and *Book of Mormon*

scholar Bob Rees discussed some of the stylistic complexities of the *Book of Mormon*, shedding new light on the oft-debated question of how such a remarkable literary creation emerged from nineteenth-century America.

Robert A. Rees teaches Mormon Studies at Graduate Theological Union and Religious Studies at UC Berkeley. He is the editor of *Why I Stay: The Challenges of Discipleship for Contemporary Mormons* and the co-editor of *The Reader’s Book of Mormon*, both published by Signature Press.



CGU students asking questions after Dr. Rees’ presentation

## milestones

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In progress

**\$3,000,000** for the Robert L. Millet and Joseph & Marilyn Bentley student fellowship funds

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Reinforced ties with the University of Utah Mormon Studies program through an annual CGU-Tanner Humanities Center Dissertation Fellowship

## Recent accomplishments of Patrick Mason, Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies:

Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Professor, University of the West, Timisoara, Romania

Authored *Planted: Belief and Belonging in an Age of Doubt*, Deseret Book



Published in *Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding*; *Journal of Mormon History*; *Mormon Studies Review*; *Religion and American Culture*; *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*; and *Journal of Church and State*

Multiple media appearances, including Today Show (NBC), Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, *Salt Lake Tribune*, KUER (Salt Lake City), *Deseret News*, and KPCC (Los Angeles)

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