

 Claremont Graduate University

Mormon Studies Newsletter

WINTER 2017 | Volume 8



Are We
Religious
and Free
in the 21st
Century?

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Soaring to New Heights



It's hard to believe, but it has been five years since I became the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University. My time here has been something of a blur, but when I slow down and focus on the students, classes, and events of the past five years, I'm truly honored to be part of this remarkable community.

Mormon Studies at CGU offers the largest, most robust graduate-level Mormon Studies experience in the world. I typically teach one Mormon Studies graduate seminar per semester—examples include “Introduction to Mormonism” (for non-LDS students), “Approaches to Mormonism” (a “greatest hits” of scholarship on Mormonism), “Gendering Mormonism,” “The Mormon Theological Tradition,” “Mormonism and Politics,” and “Modern Mormonism” (or, as we like to say, “clean-shaven Mormonism”). The classes include students from a variety of academic disciplines and religious backgrounds, which makes for lively conversations. In every class, we pursue a deeper and richer understanding of Mormon history, theology, and culture. We examine Mormonism with the same rigor and respect as we do the other great religious traditions or any other aspect of human endeavor.

Our students are the lifeblood of—and the reason for—what we do. The Mormon Studies Council remains committed to raising funds to help support their education with graduate fellowships. Because the financial return on investment for a student of religion is not the same as someone going to law school or medical school, we have an obligation to support our future scholars so that they can pursue their education, for the good of the community, without taking on a massive burden of debt. Please consider joining our generous donors in supporting student fellowships through the Howard W. Hunter Foundation or directly to the university.

I am also pleased to announce the beginning of a campaign to endow a Center for Global Mormon Studies at CGU. Despite decades of high-quality research in Mormon Studies, there is very little systematic knowledge about the religion in its global contexts. This visionary new initiative will sponsor original research on Mormons and Mormonism outside the United States, and thus give voice to Latter-day Saints in all their rich international diversity. We will also consider how Mormonism engages with and can address the major global issues of the 21st century including religious freedom, secularization, interreligious dialogue, gender equality, and religious peacebuilding. We will sponsor a number of innovative programs, including training workshops and conferences in locations around the globe.

Claremont Graduate University continues to lead the way in Mormon Studies, and with your support we will attract and train the very brightest students, and prepare them to understand and make an impact on a world that grows smaller by the day.

Patrick Q. Mason
Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies
Chair, Religion Department

MAKING HISTORY:
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich
discusses her new book
A House Full of Females:
Plural Marriage and
Women's Rights in Early
Mormonism, 1835-1870 at
CGU as part of a Mormon
Studies speaker series.

Events at CGU

Pulitzer Prize-winning Author's Visit Marks a High Point in a Busy Season

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich Showcases Her New Book *A House Full of Females*

Long ago, in 1976, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Laurel Thatcher Ulrich observed in a scholarly article that “well-behaved women seldom make history.”

The Idaho native and Harvard professor later received the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1991 for *A Midwife's Tale*, which describes the inspiring life of a courageous Maine housewife and midwife in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. That midwife's story might never have been told if her descendants hadn't kept her diary.

The Mormon Studies speaker series includes a visit by Ulrich to the campus of Claremont Graduate University on February 16, 2017. The event was planned as part of her book tour to promote her much-anticipated new book *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835-1870*.

Her new book, Ulrich explained in an interview with the *Harvard Gazette*, originated in her desire to consider her own Mormon heritage by looking back at stories of early Mormon feminism.

Other Major Events and Highlights

Another signature event was the March 2016 conference, “Religious Freedom in the 21st Century” (see feature in this issue), and the university also has welcomed a number of other distinguished speakers as part of its ongoing Mormon Studies event series.

In fall 2015 the campus welcomed **Paul Reeve**, Professor of History at the University of Utah and author of the groundbreaking new book, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness*. Our examination of race and Mormonism continued later in the fall with a panel discussion featuring **Ignacio Garcia**, the Lemuel H. Redd Jr. Professor of Western American History at Brigham Young University and author of the memoir, *Chicano While Mormon: Activism, War, and Keeping the Faith*; the popular speaker and writer **Tamu Smith**, co-author of *Diary of Two Mad Black Mormons*; and the historian **Russell Stevenson**, author of the award-winning *For the Cause of Righteousness: A Global History of Blacks and Mormonism, 1830-2013*.

The spring 2016 season also included a launch for **Patrick Mason's** new book,

Planted: Belief and Belonging in an Age of Doubt, featuring insightful comments by **Fiona Givens**, co-author of *The God Who Weeps and The Crucible of Doubt*; and **Brad Tharpe**, former Protestant chaplain at the Claremont Colleges. The academic year closed with a brilliant lecture on the Book of Mormon by **Jared Hickman**, a professor at Johns Hopkins University and a rising star in the field of American literature.

Along with Ulrich's visit, our 2016-17 academic year also includes a lecture from Pentecostal theologian **John Christopher Thomas**, author of *A Pentecostal Reads the Book of Mormon* (November 10); and the annual conference of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology in March. Philosophy, Pentecostalism, and polygamy—there's never a dull moment! ●

In case you missed them, most of our past events, including many from the foundational years of Mormon Studies at CGU, are available for viewing at claremontmormonstudies.org/calendar/.

“Religious freedom is not just the concern of religious persons. Others have a strong interest in religious freedom because it is necessary for peace and stability in our pluralistic world. The protection of conscience is a vital ingredient for stability because it helps people from a wide spectrum of beliefs feel assured that their deepest concerns and values are respected and protected.”

Elder Dallin Oaks



A MATTER OF LIBERTY: CGU's Patrick Mason (right) in conversation with Elder Dallin Oaks.

Religious, Free, and Civil

A major conference on religious liberty features keynote remarks by Elder Dallin Oaks and others.

What does it mean to be religious and free in the 21st century? That was the question animating two days of lively conversation during the *Religious Freedom in the 21st Century* conference at Claremont Graduate University on March 25-26, 2016. Featuring a distinguished international lineup of intellectually diverse scholars and other experts, the conference reflected on the many complexities of religious freedom in our modern world, both in the United States and abroad.

The three keynote speakers were Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a distinguished jurist, and a long-time advocate for religious freedom; Katrina Lantos Swett, commissioner on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and president of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice; and Thomas B. Griffith, a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Washington D.C. Circuit.

Other conference highlights included a roundtable discussion on religious freedom in contemporary America—featuring the never-before-seen grouping of an LDS legal scholar and historian, senior counsel of the American Humanist Association, a retired pastor from the LGBT-friendly Metropolitan Community Church, and a conservative Catholic political scientist. In an era in which civil discourse among disagreeing parties seems to be a forgotten art, this panel modeled how thoughtful people may offer strongly divergent views while maintaining respect for other perspectives. The university was also fortunate to have the panel moderated by Doug Fabrizio of KUER's RadioWest.

The conference was a prime example of how Mormon Studies at CGU can convene brilliant thinkers from across the religious and ideological spectrum to tackle issues of major concern to all of us. We are grateful to all of our donors who make such impactful events possible, especially the Drs. Oi-Lin and Tei-Fu Chen Family and the Howard W. Hunter Foundation. ●



STRONG BONDS (top): Elder Oaks and fellow guests enjoyed a reception and dinner at the CGU President's House.

OPPOSING VIEWS (bottom): Religious freedom in contemporary America was civilly discussed, and debated, during a roundtable discussion.

To listen to the panel visit radiowest.kuer.org/post/religious-freedom-contemporary-america.

For a full transcript of Elder Oaks' remarks, visit mormonnewsroom.org and search under "Elder Oaks"

Mormon Studies at CGU

How did Mormon Studies Take Root at Claremont Graduate University? It Started with a Broken Ankle

More than 16 years ago, Professor Karen Torjesen, who was then leading Claremont Graduate University's Religion Department, decided to run a marathon...and broke her ankle while training.

That injury not only set back her marathon plans, it affected her work, too. She needed help, and first-year doctoral student Amy Hoyt stepped forward and answered the call to become Torjesen's assistant.

Not long after, in 2001, the Religion Department became the School of Religion with Torjesen as its Dean. She held a meeting with the School's

students and discussed how the School would be autonomous, both academically and financially. There were seven councils connected with the School that promoted comparative studies of Catholic, Coptic, Indic, Islamic, Jewish, Protestant, and Zoroastrian spiritual and religious traditions.

During one of those meetings with Dean Torjesen, Hoyt said she had a revelation. "I realized that all we Mormons needed was money and we could be part of this new vision at the School."

Hoyt believed that establishing Mormon Studies at CGU would address

a serious problem—a lack of accurate, accessible, available information about Mormonism that could help inform perceptions of both scholars and the general public. Hoyt and Torjesen discussed how the academic study of Mormonism might be developed. An early idea to create a Council on Religions of the American West quickly changed to the creation of a Mormon Studies Council. Hoyt recruited her father, a prominent Mormon leader in California, to serve as the council's first chairperson, with responsibilities that included cultivating contacts and beginning to raise funds.



Alumni Profile Amy Hoyt Strikes a Balance Between Family Life and Social Justice

LIVING IN ELK GROVE, CALIFORNIA, Amy Hoyt serves as a Visiting Professor at University of the Pacific, where she teaches religious studies and ethics, along with juggling a busy household and her involvement with her community and church. How does she strike a balance? By keeping a positive, determined attitude that she hopes to pass on to her children.

Holder of a PhD in Women's Studies in Religion from Claremont Graduate University, Hoyt has five children, including a set of 3-year-old boy/girl twins, who all have varying abilities that have taught her to appreciate and work on behalf of children who are deaf, blind, or cognitively unique in some way. With her husband, she has researched the abilities of these unique children, including learning American Sign Language to better communicate with their youngest son. This summer, Hoyt traveled to South Africa and Rwanda to do research and lead a group of scholars on a project examining the role that religion plays in helping women reconcile after national conflicts.

As a testament to her accomplishments, Hoyt was chosen this year by the national nonprofit American Mothers to represent the state of California as Mother of the Year for 2016. In this role, Hoyt serves as an ambassador for mothers across the country. For this busy mother-scholar-teacher, her selection came at an unexpected moment.

"The organization called me while I was driving the twins to school back in February," she said. "I didn't recognize the phone number so I was like, 'Can I call you back in 10 minutes after I drop the kids off?' When I did, it was a very sweet surprise." ●

As interest grew, the Mormon Studies Council expanded to include prominent California Latter-day Saints such as Keith Atkinson, executive director of the LDS Church's public affairs in the region, and Clay Smith, a superior court judge. By 2002 the council had decided to actively pursue Mormon Studies along with an endowed chair. It was a bold vision, as this would establish the first academic Mormon Studies outside Utah.

A PIONEERING VISION

CGU's efforts were made possible by the council and its chair, Joseph I. Bentley, who was then serving as the LDS Church's Director of Public Affairs in Orange County. Early on, the council desired to name the program in honor of Howard W. Hunter, a Pasadena attorney and church leader who went on to become the fourteenth president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 2004, both the Hunter family and the First Presidency of the LDS Church granted permission to use Howard W. Hunter's name. The Howard W. Hunter Foundation was established to raise funds for an endowed chair, and an endowment goal of \$6 million was established. Efforts were successful enough to establish the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies in 2008. Richard Bushman served as the first occupant of the chair from 2008-2011; then Patrick Mason became the next and current Hunter Chair.

Under Professor Mason's leadership, the program's many efforts—classes, conferences, special events, and publications—fulfill Amy Hoyt's vision though there remains a vital need to strengthen public understanding about Mormonism in the United States and internationally; something that Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University is poised to address.

One can only wonder what might have happened if Dean Torjesen never decided to train for a marathon. ●

New in Bookstores

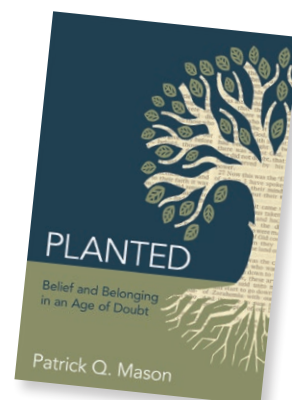
Planted

Belief and Belonging in an Age of Doubt

Patrick Q. Mason

Deseret Book/Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

Though *Planted* addresses questions of faith and doubt specific to members of the LDS Church, this book is also a timely reminder of the difficult position that all believers occupy in the modern age. Building on the Gospel Topics essays on the LDS Church's website, Mason offers a series of reflective essays on secularism, church history, controversy, and what it means to belong to a religious community in our age of secularism. Rather than flee from doubt or treat it as a sign of weakness, he offers an ennobling, empowering understanding of doubt "as a common part of the mortal experience that should, like all things, be treated with charity and ultimately consecrated to God."



Out of Obscurity

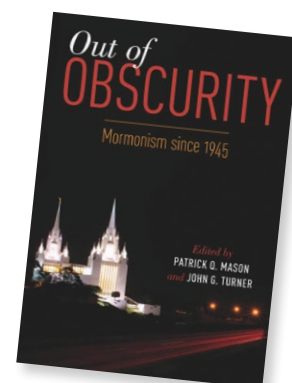
Mormonism since 1945

Edited by Patrick Q. Mason and John G. Turner

Oxford University Press

The "obscurity" in the title of this book refers to the fact that scholars have devoted little time—and the general public understands very little—about the history and identity of the LDS Church in the last half of the 20th century. How is the LDS Church doing in foreign countries? What is the modern Mormon business ethic based upon? How have cultural movements—feminism especially—affected traditional views of husbands and wives?

And what's with all the Mormon blogs? A vast gap in public knowledge and scholarly studies may exist between Mormon early history and the present day, but Mason and Turner have responded with this fascinating selection of essays by acclaimed scholars.

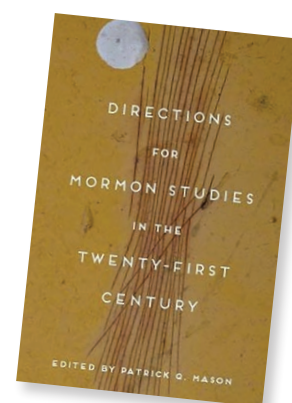


Directions for Mormon Studies in the Twenty-First Century

Edited by Patrick Q. Mason

University of Utah Press

Directions for Mormon Studies in the Twenty-First Century is pretty much true to what its title advertises—a collection of essays building on the foundation of recent Mormon Studies scholarship to assess where this relatively new field of study will go, and what it means for Mormonism's future. Here you'll find leading scholarly voices on topics such as the internationalization of Mormonism in places as diverse as Japan and Africa; the complicated history of Mormonism and race; the powerful appeal of autobiography and memoir for Mormon writers; and much more. Should we think about Mormons as an ethnic group? Is there such a thing as "gospel culture," and is Mormonism a "world religion?" A collection of leading scholars, some senior and others up-and-coming, answer these questions (and many others) and set a research agenda for the next generation and beyond. ●



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We extend our deepest gratitude to the generous donors without whose contributions there would be no Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University. You are the pioneers of Mormon Studies in the academic world. We love our extraordinary major donors, and we are also deeply touched by the many who give "the widow's mite" for this great cause. Each one of you is valued and appreciated! To donate, visit claremontmormonstudies.org/ and click on the "Donate" link, or send your check payable to Howard Hunter Foundation to Jane Bradford, 3570 Landfair Road, Pasadena, CA 91107. Thank you!

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