



Mormon Social Science Association

...bringing social science to Mormonism

Fall 2011 Newsletter, Volume 31, Issue 2

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President's Message

Greetings Everyone,

As our Fall conference and business meeting approaches, I'm writing to update the MSSA membership on what has been occurring in our organization. The MSSA will be sponsoring two sessions at the upcoming meeting. The full sessions are included in this newsletter, along with another session on Mormonism that we did not organize but looks very interesting. Information on that session is also included in this newsletter.

Our annual Business Meeting is on Saturday, from 12:45-1:45. As has become customary, we will have pizza for everyone to make it easier to attend and still make it to the sessions before and after the meeting. At the Business Meeting there will be a changing of the guard. I will be replaced as President of the MSSA by Henri Gooren. David Knowlton will step in as President-Elect.

Matt Bahr was re-elected as a member of the Board at-large. Joining him will be Michael Nielsen, former President and Newsletter Editor of the MSSA. I will not, however, be leaving the leadership of the organization as I was elected to serve as the Secretary/Treasurer, replacing Michael McBride, who has carefully monitored our finances and helped with numerous aspects of the administration of the MSSA during his tenure.

Since I last wrote to you, things have been relatively quiet. We have fielded just a single "ask an expert" question via the website. We have had several new members join the organization, some of whom will likely be joining us in Milwaukee. Otherwise, not much has happened with our organization, which is somewhat surprising considering the attention that Mormonism has drawn over the last six months thanks to the Presidential race, with two Mormons in the mix, and the success of *The Book of Mormon* musical.

As the primaries near, it would be a good idea to make available the names of any members of the MSSA who would be willing to be contacted by the press to discuss any questions they have about Mitt Romney and Jon Huntsman. If you are interested in talking with the press, please email me to let me know. I will create a page on our website for press inquiries and include your contact information there.

I look forward to seeing all those who are going to attend the meetings in Milwaukee. Until then...

Ryan T. Cragun
University of Tampa

Ponder

"My work is about the beauty, nobility, and majesty of the human spirit..."

Artistic Corner

Your editors see the Artistic Corner as an opportunity to feature a creative response to the very issues that MSSA members often analyze through articles, papers, or books. We hope to include a poem, creative writing piece or artwork in each issue of the newsletter. In this issue, we include an interview with artist and sculptor Nnamdi Okonkwo (mmamdiart.com).

The following interview, by Shelia Cospers, is reprinted courtesy of MormonArtist.net.

Photos reprinted courtesy of Nnamdi Okonkwo unless otherwise noted.



How did you get started with your art?

I have always loved drawing and have always been fascinated by it. However, it took a series of experiences, which I now believe to have been orchestrated to guide and keep me on my destined course, to lead me to the serious pursuit of art.

Without my mother's encouragement and support, it would have been almost impossible for me to get on the path of my artistic career. It was she who persuaded me to take the study of art seriously. My first artistic training was in painting but it was when I discovered sculpture that I felt that a profound connection was made.

What is your work about?

My work is about the beauty, nobility, and majesty of the human spirit, which I express with sculptural forms and elements that, I feel, are befitting such grandiose feelings that arise in my heart in connection to the ability and true potential of man. These feelings and emotions that I am drawn to express, are those which seem to suggest a character that embodies the transcendental powers of the soul over the daily cares and worries of life. For me, human attributes such as love, resolve, serenity, and humility elevate man's soul, and

Nnamdi Okonkwo interview continued:

allow the extraordinary powers of the human spirit to shine through.

You're also a painter, but you've stated you prefer three-dimensional work. Why?

I feel a deep spiritual connection with sculpture. I like the physical nature of the process of making sculpture, and sculpture offers me the opportunity to create art that, because it exists in three dimensions, is corporeal, and can have a life that more easily evokes reality.



"The high and heroic capacity of the human soul is intriguing and fascinating to me."

Nnamdi Okonkwo interview continued:

Tell us about your style.

I was led to my forms and shapes through a strict obedience to my inner artistic voice, rather than to any external influence or contrived notion of reality. Right from the beginning, there was something about volume and mass in sculpture that was compelling and arresting to me. I was easily led to render everything in a scale that was uncommonly outsized and larger than life. For me, it seemed the only natural way to create in three dimensions, so I really cannot completely explain the logic, or understand fully my predisposition to the rotund forms.

But in seeking for the logic behind these forms, it is tempting for me to see these early and still persistent artistic intuitions as a way of expressing the expansive capacity and the largeness of the human soul. Perhaps my sculpted figures are but structures or edifices which must be weighted down, and



which must be large to have the capacity to house the monumental spirit of man. The abundant and expansive forms express an inner opulence and a generosity of spirit. So words like nurture, love, and abundance easily come to mind as one contemplates my work.

How does your work reflect your feelings about the gospel?

I believe that man, as the crowning jewel of God's creation, embodies inherent godlike attributes which can be summoned to the fore to help

overcome the challenges of life. These attributes of man also point back to a reservoir or a matrix from which these attributes originate. For me, that matrix is God, and my expression in sculpture of any human attribute I see as ideal, is an expression of divine character. So my work becomes an avenue for me to seek to capture a little bit of divine grace and perfection as expressed in the life of man. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, once said, "The soul of a man shines out when he faces with composure one heavy mischance after another; not that he does not feel them, but because he is a man of a high and heroic temper." The high and heroic capacity of the human soul is intriguing and fascinating to me.

"Like Picasso, I believe that 'art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.'"

Nnamdi Okonkwo interview continued:

At what point in your evolution as an artist did you decide to make this your livelihood, not just an avocation?

Not only was it not difficult for me to decide to make my living through art, it was also not difficult for me to believe that I would be able to do so. First of all, as far back as I can remember, I have always been keenly aware of the voice within, which I believed and still believe will never lead me astray. And I have been blessed with the courage to obey this voice religiously, even when it appears to be leading me against conventional wisdom and logic. So in a sense, I did not have any choice, since the voice was loud and clear regarding the path I must follow.

Also, because of my spiritual underpinnings, I've always believed that talent is from God, and He that gave the talent, gave it for a reason, and He would also take responsibility for providing the way for that talent to be used to obtain the necessities of life. My own responsibility was therefore to do my very best in honing that talent, and as long as I did my best in the pursuit of my daily bread, He would do the rest.

Such has been my outlook, and it has



proven to be a correct one. It is rather an inspirational philosophy, simple but profound, for what can be better than believing in a divine mandate in one's endeavors? I have learned not to expect an entirely rosy road without thorns, but when the challenges come, because of my perspective I am undaunted, and I don't see the challenges as a sign or reason to doubt the correctness of my chosen field—rather, I see them as opportunities to learn other important lessons of life. Experience has proven and continues to prove to me that this idea that God provides is a true and beautiful philosophy.

Coupled with this mindset is the good fortune I have to be blessed with a wonderful mother and a wonderful wife. These two have uncompromisingly sacrificed and supported me in every way on my artistic journey.

How do you see your work helping build the kingdom?

Just like in any other calling one feels comes from God, I believe mine is given for the benefit and service to others. As I learn to genuinely approach it in this light, and bend my mind away from pride and selfishness, not only do

Nnamdi Okonkwo interview continued:

more opportunities arise for me, but also my mind becomes more enlightened, and I see the way before me a little more clearly. I feel that I, as an artist, am only an instrument in the hands of the real and great creator. Whatever I am able to do with my talent that is good is really that which God allows to be done through me for the edification of his name and the benefit of his children. I find hard work to be indispensable to success. However, I also, through experience, am learning that even though hard work is indispensable to success, yet it is not through hard work alone that success comes. I believe firmly that to do great things with one's talents, one must find a reason and a motivation greater than any selfish interests and wholeheartedly believe in it.

I hope that my work adds beauty and meaning to the world. From my earliest remembrances of my first thoughts about art, I have always felt that there was something noble and inspiring about art, almost as if art has within it the power to lift man's soul beyond the bounds of the physical world into an eternity of peace and joy. Like Picasso, I believe that "art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." And in the same spirit of what Handel was reported to have said, I hope my work not only beautifies the environment, but also in a more personal way reminds and encourages the viewer towards a higher ideal, and offers him solace from the daily cares and worries of life.

MSSA Website

www.mormonsocialscience.org

The MSSA website is a wonderful resource for students, academics, and anyone interested in the social sciences and Mormonism. You'll find the latest news and announcements about job openings and upcoming conferences, downloadable copies of previous issues of the newsletter, an extensive bibliography, and convenient links to other academic journals and organizations. Other features of the website include:

Contact information
Online due-paying

"Ask an Expert" archives
MSSA leadership information

Plan

Upcoming Conferences

The Western History Association conference will feature a session entitled "Mormon Women, Marriage and Identity Across Generations."

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

OCTOBER

- 13-16 Western History Association: "Modern Histories of Ancient Places: The Western History Association, 1961-2011"
-Oakland, California
[-www.westernhistoryassociation.org/conference](http://www.westernhistoryassociation.org/conference)
- 22-23 Sunstone Symposium Northwest
-Bellevue, Washington
[-www.sunstonemagazine.com/symposium](http://www.sunstonemagazine.com/symposium)
- 21-23 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association (see pg 12)
-Milwaukee, Wisconsin
[-www.ssrweb.org/](http://www.ssrweb.org/)

NOVEMBER

- 19-22 American Academy of Religion
-San Francisco, California
[-www.aarweb.org](http://www.aarweb.org)

JANUARY

- 5-8 American Society of Church History Annual Meeting
-Chicago, Illinois
[-www.churchhistory.org/conferences-meetings](http://www.churchhistory.org/conferences-meetings)
- 22-25 Brazilian Mormon Studies Association: "Mormonism and its Relationship With Other Denominations"
-Sao Paulo, Brazil
[-www.brazilianmormonstudies.com/bmsc](http://www.brazilianmormonstudies.com/bmsc)

MARCH

- 2-3 Church History Symposium: "Joseph F. Smith Era"
-Salt Lake City, Utah/Provo, Utah
-Proposals due by October 31
[-http://rsc.byu.edu/symposia](http://rsc.byu.edu/symposia)

Upcoming Calls for Papers Deadlines

Submit proposals by:

OCTOBER 31

for

Church History Symposium: "Joseph F. Smith Era"

to be held March 2-3, 2012

in Salt Lake City, Utah and Provo, Utah

E-mail a one-page proposal summarizing the paper's purpose, themes, and sources, along with a brief vita, to churchhistorysym2012@gmail.com. Authors will be notified of acceptance to present at the symposium by November 18, 2011.

For more information, visit: <http://rsc.byu.edu/symposia>

NOVEMBER 15

for

"The History of Mormonism in Latin America and the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands"

to be held July 28, 2012

in El Paso, Texas

Individual paper proposals should include the presenter's contact information, an abstract of about 200 words, and a one page c.v. Panel proposals should include three individual paper proposals and a lead paragraph describing the panel's scope and purpose. Panel proposals should also designate one presenter as the contact person. All proposals should indicate any audio/visual needs. Papers should be approximately 20 minutes in duration and may be in English or Spanish.

For more information, visit: www.juvenileinstructor.org/MormonExodus2012

MSSA Dues

Please send your dues for 2011 to:

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

Dues are \$10.00 annually. Checks should be made payable to "Mormon Social Science Association" or "MSSA."

Dues are also payable on the MSSA website via Paypal (which accepts credit cards).

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, and don't already, save the MSSA some money by sending your email address to:
mcbride@uci.edu

Upcoming Calls for Papers Deadlines

Submit proposals by:

NOVEMBER 28

for

BYU Religious Studies Symposium

to be held **February 17, 2012**

at **Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah**

Papers must be formatted Chicago style, typed (double-spaced), and 10-12 pages in length (not including endnotes). Please include the following information on a cover page: student's name, major and class, contact information, and a statement that the paper is solely your original and individual work and has not nor will not be submitted for presentation or publication elsewhere. On a separate page at the end of your paper, provide an abstract or summary (150 words or less).

For more information, visit: http://religion.byu.edu/event_single.php?eid=55

FEBRUARY 15, 2012

for

Mormon Scholars in the Humanities: "Economies and Humanities"

to be held **May 18-19, 2012**

at **Southern Virginia University, Buena Vista, Virginia**

We encourage LDS scholars in all fields of the humanities, arts, and history to propose papers or complete panels on the theme. Creative submissions on the theme in story, verse, drama, or visual form are also invited. Submit your proposal, including a 200-word abstract, through the on-line form at mormonscholars.net.

For more information, visit: www.mormonscholars.net

The 2011 SSSR/RRA Annual Meeting

"Religiosity Reconsidered: Challenges and Opportunities for Denominations and Congregations" (SSSR)

"Religion in Unsettled Times" (RRA)

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Hyatt Regency Milwaukee
October 28-30

MSSA Sponsored Sessions

Saturday, October 29, 8:00-9:30 am

Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-day Adventists: Varied Approaches (MSSA)

Room: Milwaukee B

Organizer/Convener: Ryan T. Cragun, University of Tampa
(ryantcragun@gmail.com)

Conversion, Commitment, and Agency in the Mormon and Jehovah's Witness Traditions: The Search for a Common Denominator
Shawn Bennion, Claremont Graduate University
(shawnbennion@hotmail.com)

Reassessing the Size of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses: Testing the Reliability of their Membership Data and Predicting the Trajectories of their Future Global Growth
Ronald Lawson, Queens College, CUNY (ronaldlawson1@verizon.net)
Co-Author: G. Kenneth Xysios, Independent Scholar

Environmental Rhetoric within the Mormon Church
Caitlin McGrath, University of Tampa (cmcgrath@spartans.ut.edu)
Co-Author 1: Greg Cerrato, University of Tampa
Co-Author 2: Ryan T. Cragun, University of Tampa

Called to Serve: Frequency, Types, and Motivations for Prosocial Behavior among Mormons
Ram A. Cnaan, University of Pennsylvania (cnaan@sp2.upenn.edu)
Co-Author 1: Van Evans
Co-Author 2: Daniel W. Curtis, (dacu@sp2.upenn.edu)

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

Future SSSR/RRA Meetings

2012
Phoenix, Arizona
Hyatt Regency Phoenix
November 9-11

For information about registration for the upcoming SSSR/RRA annual meeting, please visit

www.ssrweb.org/meeting-registrationinfo.cfm.

Here, you will find details on location, cost, special events, and instructions for registering online.

The 2011 SSSR/RRA Annual Meeting

Saturday, October 29, 3:45-5:15pm

Authors Meet Critics: Modern Polygamy in the United States, Cardell Jacobson (editor)
Room: Milwaukee B

Organizer/Convener: Ryan T. Cragun, University of Tampa
(ryantcragun@gmail.com)

Critic 1: Rick Phillips, University of North Florida (richardphillips@unf.edu)

Critic 2: John Hoffmann, Brigham Young University
(john_hoffmann@byu.edu)

Critic 3: Stuart Wright, Lamar University (stuartwright@lamar.edu)

Respondent: Cardell Jacobson, Brigham Young University
(cardell_jacobson@byu.edu)

In addition to the above sessions sponsored by the MSSA there are the following sessions and papers that would be of interest to the membership:

Friday, October 28, 1:00-2:30pm

Mormonism: Historic and Modern
Room: Gilpatrick A

Convener: Ryan T. Cragun, University of Tampa
(ryantcragun@gmail.com)

Mapping the Religious Agency of Mormon Women
Laura M. Leming, University of Dayton
(Laura.Leming@notes.udayton.edu)

The Routinization of Charisma: A Social Network Analysis of the Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844
A. Joseph West, University of Arizona (ajwest@email.arizona.edu)
Co-Author: Eric Schoon, University of Arizona

Between Worlds: The LDS Church, A "Peculiar" People, and a Secular Mask
Amy Moff Hudec, Boston University (moff@bu.edu)

MSSA Business Meeting

Saturday, October 29
12:45-1:45pm
Room: Milwaukee B

Pizza and drinks will be available (\$5 contribution to offset the cost would be helpful)

More about the MSSA

The Mormon Social Science Association (MSSA) exists for the purpose of promoting and sharing the scholarly study of Mormon life.

Any person with an interest in the study of the social, cultural, or religious life of Mormons is eligible to join. MSSA provides contact and associations among researchers and educators working in both academic and applied settings. It is interdisciplinary and international in scope and purpose. The association participates in annual joint meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) and the Religious Research Association (RRA). MSSA also publishes and distributes a semi-annual newsletter to its members.

For additional information, contact:
Mormon Social Science Association, c/o Michael McBride
12 Mistral Lane
Irvine, CA 92617
mcbride@uci.edu

Visit us online at:

www.mormonsocialscience.org

New and Recent Publications of Interest

BOOKS

Polly Aird, Jeff Nichols and Will Bagley, *Playing with Shadows: Voices of Dissent in the Mormon West (Kingdom in the West: The Mormons and the American Frontier)* (The Arthur H. Clark Company, December 20, 2011).

Gregory K. Armstrong, Matthew J. Grow and Dennis J. Siler, *Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism* (The Arthur H. Clark Company, December 15, 2011).

Douglas Bell, *Defenders of Faith: The Book of Mormon from a Soldier's Perspective* (Cedar Fort Inc, April 8, 2012).

Matthew Bowman, *American Revelation: The Making of the Mormons* (Random House, January 24, 2012).

Newell G. Bringham and Craig L. Foster, *The Mormon Quest for the Presidency: From Joseph Smith to Mitt Romney and Jon Huntsman* (John Whitmer Books, September 11, 2011).

Samuel Morris Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (Oxford University Press, January 2, 2012).

Nestor Curbelo and Erin Jennings, *The History of the Mormons in Argentina* (Greg Kofford Books, September 8, 2011).

Jerald R. Johansen, *After the Martyrdom* (Cedar Fort Inc, May 8, 2012).

James M. McLachlan and Loyd Ericson, *Discourses in Mormon Theology: Philosophical and Theological Possibilities* (Greg Kofford Books, August 18, 2011).

Carl Mosser and Richard Sherlock, *The Mormon World* (Routledge, May 31, 2012).

Reid Larkin Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair (Religion in America)* (Oxford University Press, December 6, 2011).

Lee Trepanier and Lynita K. Newswander, *LDS in the USA: Mormonism and the Making of American Culture* (Baylor University Press, February 1, 2012).

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

New and Recent Publications of Interest

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Various academic journals deal exclusively with topics relating to Mormonism, and are always good places to look for relevant articles. A partial list of these journals is below.

The individual articles we have selected to highlight here are found in other academic journals that do not limit their inclusions to Mormon-related topics.

James B. Bennett, "Until This Curse of Polygamy Is Wiped Out': Black Methodists, White Mormons, and Constructions of Racial Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer 2011): 167-194.

Matthew Bowman, "Matthew Philip Gill and Joseph Smith: The Dynamics of Mormon Schism," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* Vol. 14, No. 3 (February 2011): 42-63.

Clyde R. Forsberg Jr., "Esotericism and the 'Coded Word' in Mormonism: The Colonial and Racial Schematics of an Old, New Religion," *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2011).

Patrick Q. Mason, "God and the People: Theodemocracy in Nineteenth-Century Mormonism," *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer 2011): 349-375.

Mormon Studies academic journals

- | | |
|---|---|
| -AML Annual | -BYU Studies |
| -Dialogue | -Claremont Journal of Mormon Studies |
| -Element | -FARMS Review |
| -International Journal
of Mormon Studies | -Irreantum |
| -Issues in Religion and
Psychotherapy | -John Whitmer Historical
Association Journal |
| -Journal of Book of
Mormon Studies | -Journal of Mormon History |
| -Mormon Historical Studies | -Mormon Review |
| -Restoration Studies | -Sunstone |

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

Bulletin Board

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

News

FROM CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF RELIGION:

Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies

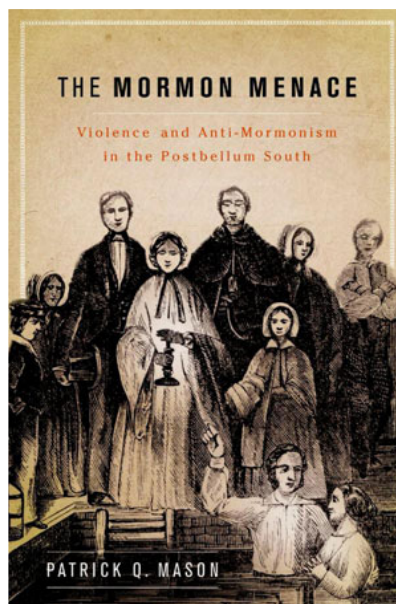
Patrick Q. Mason

Ph.D., History, University of Notre Dame

Patrick Mason became Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University in 2011. His primary training is as an American religious historian, but he also received an MA in international peace studies, with an emphasis in religion, violence, and peacebuilding. After receiving his doctorate he taught US history and religion at the American University in Cairo before returning to Notre Dame to help direct an interdisciplinary research project on modern Catholicism, Islam, and secularism. At CGU he directs the programs in Mormon studies and Religions of North America.

Mason's first book is *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

He is currently working on two related book projects: a volume of collected essays (co-edited with Richard Bushman and David Pulsipher) tentatively titled *War and Peace in Our Time: Mormon Perspectives*; and a book (co-authored with David Pulsipher) exploring a distinctively Mormon theology and ethic of peace.



Bulletin Board

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

News

NEW MSSA Leadership

Effective October 2011 (at
business meeting)

President

Henri Gooren
(2011-2013)

President-Elect

David Knowlton
(2011-2013)

Board Members

Melvyn Hammarberg

Matt Bahr
(2009-2013)

Michael Nielsen
(2011-2013)

Treasurer/Secretary

Ryan Cragun
(2011-present)

Newsletter Co-Editors

Bosco Bae

Rene Romig
(2009-present)

MSSA Dinner

Saturday, October 29
SSSR/RRA Annual Meeting
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Please join other members of
the MSSA for dinner on
Saturday following the day's
proceedings!

Location and time to be
announced. Contact Ryan
Cragun (813-466-4110,
ryanrcragun@gmail.com) for
details.