



Photography by Steve Mayfield



# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

2002 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium  
7–10 August, Salt Lake Sheraton City Centre Hotel

*This year's Salt Lake Symposium was a fantastic success. Attendance was up again from the previous year. A record number of people (more than 240) participated on the program, giving papers, speaking on panels, or moderating discussions. We had another successful art sale and auction. The symposium came in under budget and has already begun to turn a profit with tape, book, and shirt orders still coming in. This was the first year for Sunstone Workshops. Sixty-five people attended one or both sessions and enjoyed intensive instruction and interaction with leading teachers and professionals.*

*Next year's symposium and workshops will be held 13–16 August 2003. Plan now to attend!*

1—Phyllis Nibley receives a bouquet and rousing round of applause.

2—Banquet toastmaster, Peter Sorensen, performs one of his many impressions.

3—Richard Dutcher finds something to smile about.

4—Linda Sillitoe shares her experiences at a writing workshop.

5—Will Bagley analyzes new records that have come to light about the Mountain Meadows Massacre in the past fifty years.

6—James W. Fowler leads a workshop discussion of the "stages of faith."

7—Lynn Hodge can't wait for the next session to begin.

8—Scot Denhalter introduces panel members about to review the book *Blood of the Prophets*.

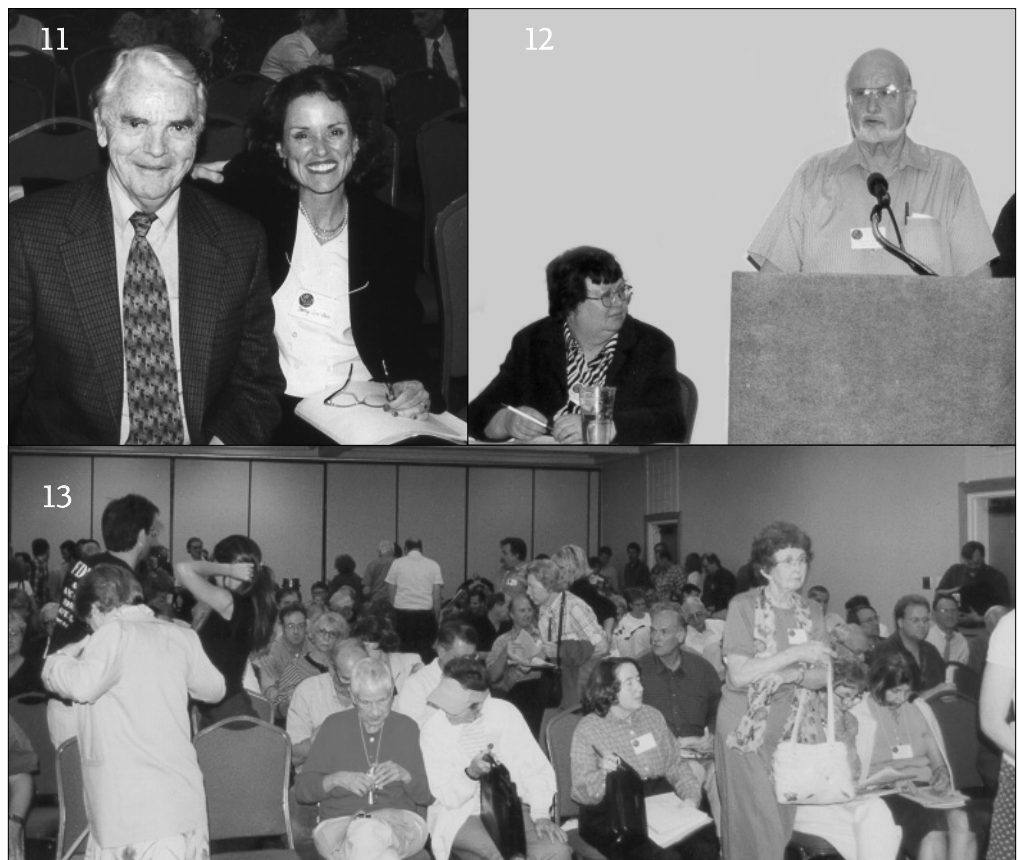
9—Devery Anderson, Gary Bergera, and Bill Russell chat before their panel discussion of Glen Leonard's new book about Nauvoo.

10—LDS collectors swap book tales (which are far more exaggerated than fish stories) during a break in their workshop.

11—Sarah Barringer Gordon and friend/mentor Davis Bitton reunite before Gordon's Thursday night plenary address.

12—Lavina Fielding Anderson listens as Armand Mauss responds to her paper on the Church and its scholars.

13—Audience members rush to get to the next session!





## SYMPOSIUM EXCERPTS

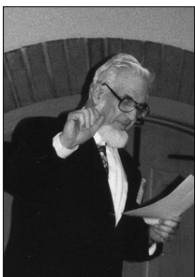
THE title of the video, *An American Prophet*, itself I find perplexing. Half of the title is most certainly accurate and descriptive. The other half is debatable, even puzzling. I think there's no doubt, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, the question is, "Was he an American?"

Speaking as a historian, I see no reason to question Joseph Smith as prophet. If anyone in American history or world history, for that matter, was a prophet, Joseph seems to have qualified. America has had more than its share of prophets, people who have had divine knowledge revealed to them. Anne Hutchinson in the first generation and continuing down through Jemima Wilkinson of the Shakers and Nat Turner, the prophetic black revolutionary. John Brown, Ellen White of the Seventh-Day Adventists, and into the twentieth century with Martin Luther King. And among all of these, every prophetic voice you can assemble, Joseph Smith certainly stands out. In fact, I think he stands with the prophets of all time. Mohammed, Isaiah, Moses, for the extent and the radical nature of his revelations. Are there any figures in world history that are more prophetic than Joseph Smith?

—RICHARD L. BUSHMAN

*Telling the Joseph Smith Story: Five Biographers Reflect—#371*

THERE is the generation-skipping theory. That generations take turns being in and out of advocating for women in the Church. I have here a picture of my grandmother . . . the last autonomous general Primary president in the Church. She was a career woman in a Church that didn't accept careers for women. Along with her talented and dedicated board, she built a pediatric hospital, managed the organizational budget, put out a monthly magazine, wrote manuals, designed programs, commissioned music and paintings, and traveled the world to organize and train the troops. During the 60s, she saw it all taken away. . . . Her organization was stripped of women's power. . . .



Ardean Watts!

My mother, equally talented and energetic, chose to spend her energies outside the Church in community service, primarily in the Arts. At one point, she said she didn't see any point in giving to an organization in which



Members of the Nibley family pose together following the banquet roast of Hugh Nibley.

she didn't at least have the chance to be the president. She was out.

Enter me, a true-blue Mormon growing up, and one of those who jumped into feminism as an adult. I am in. I have dedicated myself to change from within, and along with others from this generation, I've been hurt and exhausted by the effort. My own daughter, Megan, the next generation, has left the Church entirely. She is out. Those who are her own age who have remained in the Church seem mostly unaware of feminist ideas and appear to accept the world as it has been explained to them. The generation below me is lost to either indifference or alienation.

This brings me to Elizabeth. My two-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter, who bears the name I always wanted and who is being raised in the Church. She's in. After she grows up, and my generation and those in the present hierarchy are gone from the stage, will she and her cohorts discover what their grandmothers wrote and did, and finally have the energy for another try at claiming their priesthood? Given a kinder religious climate, and the tools their foremothers have left for them, maybe they'll succeed where we failed. That's my best hope for the present. So God bless Lizzy. And God bless us all.

—VICKIE STEWART EASTMAN

*Our Greatest Challenge: Why Women's Priesthood Needs to Be Recognized in the LDS Church Today—#161*

LEONARD [Arrington] realized that institutions have certain rules and ways of protecting themselves and procedures of operation. Leonard was a fairly anti-institutional person in lots of ways. I don't think it's impossible that Leonard at some point said, "Well, we did agree on this, but I think that was unreasonable for them to expect us to agree on this in this kind of way; therefore I'm going to put it over in this box, and

maybe they won't find it, and it will be available to researchers someday. I really think it's possible that he might have done that. And I'm speaking as one who honors and loves Leonard and his name and legacy as much as anybody I know. So I think there's that slight qualification that Leonard as an anti-institutional person sometimes felt that institutions have rules that are obstructing what the main purpose of the game is, which is to understand the human past in all its dimensions.

—DEAN L. MAY

*Reflections on Who Owns a People's History: The Controversy over the Leonard J. Arrington Collection—#331*  
(Made in response to a comment that Leonard Arrington would have never knowingly broken an agreement with the Church.)

SINCE 1992, the level of authoritarianism in the Church has increased dramatically. I don't even know how to measure it. . . . Now, the Relief Society manual is the same as a Priesthood quorum manual. The only voice we hear in our lessons is male—that of a Church president. This leads to truly bizarre episodes in which the woman teacher can read a passage addressed to "You brethren" to a roomful of sisters and no one raises an eyebrow. . . . Now, the visiting teaching message consists exclusively of quotations from the scriptures and General Authorities (very rarely there's a quotation from the Relief Society general president). . . . The "follow the prophet" drum-roll has increased to a deafening decibel level. . . . Obedience to the prophet has been equated with obedience to God. Junior apostles and Seventies have urged that obedience is even more valuable when it seems to make no sense and when the person being obeyed has no particular expertise in the subject upon which he is requiring obedience.

—LAVINA FIELDING ANDERSON

*The Church and Its Scholars: Ten Years After—#261*





## SYMPOSIUM GOSSIP



COOL, RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS. Auteur Richard Dutcher apparently took a vow of silence before attending the symposium; he politely refused to answer any questions about his highly anticipated movie on Joseph Smith. But in a panel session, he revealed that in one scene, we are going to see Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum wearing nineteenth-century sunglasses. Even though Dutcher showed the audience a replica of the spectacles, his tone was such that many believed he was putting them on.

THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL. Neither the “Iced Tea” label nor the Starbucks-brand cups stopped symposium-goers from trying the beverage urns placed in the back of each room. Most attendees were relieved (and a few, disappointed?) when they pulled the valves and discovered the urns were full of iced . . . water.

[LAVINA’S chronology] was a little like bringing home a sack of sour lemons from the citrus section of the grocery store without having noticed any sweet oranges in the bins. Not that there would be any difficulty in finding sour lemons. I have lived long enough to have tasted a great many lemons in the Church myself—and perhaps even to have served some. If I had kept track, I could perhaps match Lavina’s account lemon for lemon. But why should we be surprised at all the lemons? The Lord himself is quoted as warning that almost all of us have a tendency to exercise unrighteous dominion. This could be as true of some feminists and intellectuals among us as some of our leaders. . . .

It is not my place to tell Lavina or anyone else how to respond to their treatment in the Church. But my preference is to step back from the trees of my own feelings and experiences and try for a more detached view of the forest. . . . The LDS Church is not a democracy. So why should anyone expect it to operate as though it were. It is, however, a fully voluntary organization. If the time ever comes when I feel that it has lost its divine mandate, or that its policies and teachings do

more harm than good, I will simply walk quietly away.

—ARMAND L. MAUSS

*The Church and Its Scholars: Ten Years After—#261*



IN my presidential address to the Mormon History Association, I said that Mormon trails for me were like a linear temple. Here was the past and the power of place and the spirit of locale. And I was never happier than when I was up on some promontory and could look farther and see less than anyplace else. It was so easy to get away from the hand of man. Things looked a lot like I presume they did when my great-great grandfather went back on the Mormon trail.

—STANLEY B. KIMBALL

*Interview—Stanley B. Kimball: A Joyful Life—#252*



GROWING up [in Mormon Utah], we did typical young guy things. . . . I remember once some guys and I found a dirty magazine. . . . Yup, me and some guys, looking through a dirty magazine. That’s a pretty typical young guy thing, right? Right? [Audience member responds “yes”.] *I was just kidding, you sicko!* Yep, you come out to Sunstone, you let your guard down, don’t ya?! Sit on the front row, drinking Dr. Pepper—shameless!

I actually did look at a dirty magazine once. I was down in the basement, hiding behind a thousand pounds of wheat. Dad, came around the corner—I dropped the *National Geographic* and screamed!

—BENGT WASHBURN

*Comedy—Musings of a Small-Town Mormon Man Gone Slightly Awry—#342*



BUT why should we be worried? It’s inconceivable that anything like Mountain Meadows could

happen today. . . . Mountain Meadows occurred in unusual circumstances. In extreme situations, people commit acts of surprising courage or cowardice.

Consider what happened to a young man named Mike. Mike had a buddy named Ron who called him “Mike the Mormon.” Ron described Mike like this: “Mike was an intensely religious Mormon guy. He’d also been the state wrestling champ in his high school weight class . . . and had gone onto a full scholarship at BYU and then was drafted. He was 19; he was pure. He didn’t cuss, discuss women, lie, cheat, steal, or speak badly of anyone. He wasn’t sanctimonious about it. He was just determinedly innocent. People hated him for his purity and the fact that he seemed determined to convert every soul he met to the buoyant white optimism of the church of the Latter-day Saints.”

Ron and Mike the Mormon became friends while going through basic training . . . and [remained so through] their tour of duty in Viet Nam. It was wartime, just as it was in Utah in 1857. And, as in 1857 Utah, it wasn’t always clear who the enemy was. Ron and Mike were assigned to separate units for a few months, and when they met again, Ron had already heard rumors about what Mike had been through. Ron asked a few questions. Mike started telling a story much like that awful tale of blood that John D. Lee reported to Brigham Young. . . . And soon, everyone heard Mike’s story that on March 16, 1968, Mike’s unit murdered five hundred unarmed men women and children at My Lai.

—MORGAN ADAIR

*Author Meets Critics: Blood of the Prophets:*

*Brigham Young and the Mountain Meadows Massacre—#271*



[PRESIDENT Hinckley] spoke with the Newell’s and, referring to their work with *Dialogue*, he said, “Thanks so much for all the good that you do.” Six days later, he followed up his conversation with a personal note expressing the same feelings: that *Dialogue*’s presence is a sign of Mormonism’s strength. . . . It’s ironic because the Church presents itself as the world’s only true religion. This is God’s church and kingdom, and because of that, the Church can hold up under any scrutiny. However, the Church seems to believe that in theory only. *Dialogue*, however, has put that to the test and has shown that the Church can withstand difficult questions and can be studied. *Dialogue* has shown that this is a culture that can be taken seriously.

—DEVERY S. ANDERSON

*Dialogue: Thirty-Six Years in the Kingdom—#361*



A panel sponsored by the Mormon Women’s Forum examines how race affects identity in the Church and the community.