

FROM THE EDITOR

HOPEFUL

By Dan Wotherspoon

SYMPOSIUM NORTHWEST!

THE 2005 SYMPOSIUM NORTHWEST was among the best regional symposiums ever. On 15 October, some sixty attendees were once again welcomed into the home of the Roy and Molly Bennion, where they were treated to a program that led with Margaret Starbird's presentation, "Mary Magdalene: Bride and Beloved. Reclaiming the Sacred Union in Christianity." She was followed by Phil McLemore, who gave a wonderful introduction to the transformative nature of meditation. John Dehlin came next, presenting a whirlwind overview of the emergence of blogs, podcasting, and Wikis in the LDS cyberuniverse and offering an inspiring vision for their future role in Mormon studies.

In the afternoon, Martha Sonntag Bradley drew on material from her new book, *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority & Equal Rights*, in a fascinating paper, "The Right Fight: The LDS Campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment." Bradley was followed by a music-filled, affectionate presentation on "The Vitality of Mormon Hymns" by Tom Pixton of West Linn, Oregon. Moving from podium to piano, and presenting and encouraging the audience to join



with him in a cappella renditions of favorite hymns, Pixton delighted all. His daughter Skye also attended and gave a moving guitar and voice performance.

The day ended with a part-planned, part-spontaneous session, "The Best Idea in Mormonism," that can only be described as a testimony meeting; but one that didn't include a single cliché!

Recordings of the symposium sessions, except for Starbird's, are available for purchase at www.sunstoneonline.com.

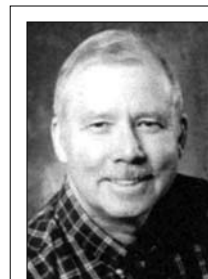
MY DELIGHT OVER my recent trip to attend this year's Symposium Northwest was tempered by sad news I received during the event. Between morning sessions, a shaken, teary-eyed Tom Kimball passed along a message he'd just received that the health of our good friend Bron Ingoldsby had taken a dramatic turn for the worse and that Bron would likely be gone before we would be able to visit him after our trip. His liver cancer, in remission for too short a season, had come back with a vengeance.

Most SUNSTONE readers will not have been lucky enough to know Bron. But you deserve a glimpse, for Bron was one of those Latter-day Saints who managed what many of us are trying to do: comfortably marry our heads and our hearts, without having either feel lessened. And remarkably, Bron managed to do this while teaching in the Marriage,

Family and Human Development departments at LDS schools—first Ricks College (now BYU-Idaho) and, for the past several years, at BYU.

Bron's "vocation"—in both the word's professional sense as well as in the life one is "called to"—was teacher. But his teaching extended far beyond the classroom. His impact at Church schools and among friends wasn't flashy. His way was quiet and unassuming—but courageous.

Perhaps one of the best examples reflecting Bron's way of being in the world was his visible support for the right of Gary Horlacher, one of his graduate students, to remain at BYU while choosing to be open about his homosexuality. The ensuing battle involved four different investigations over two-and-a-half years. Of it, Gary writes: "Bron was there by my side through it all. . . . He was able to tolerate ambiguity and was so effec-



Dr. Bron Ingoldsby

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tive, whether it be interacting with highly religious LDS extremists or militant feminists. He was able to mesh with everyone."

When Gary put the word out that I was planning to write a reflection on Bron and would welcome any remembrances, I immediately received a slate of emails from others of Bron's students. Echoing Gary's sentiments, Brooke Wilkins writes: "I will always remember him as a kind, understanding person who was everyone's friend and never judged anyone." Another student, Princess Caratao, writes: "He was one of the greatest optimists I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. He saw light where there was none."

I FIRST got to know Bron through my friendship with Tom Kimball, whose brother is married to Bron's sister. For years, Tom had spoken of him as this really cool Ricks professor who always comes to Sunstone symposiums, but I didn't catch on to how terrific he really was until he moved from Idaho to take his position at BYU. He quickly became a favorite regular at our "card nights"—so called because a game of Hearts is occasionally involved, but really they are just six or seven friends gathering for a theological free-for-all.

When Bron was diagnosed, his and my friendship deepened, growing in ways that perhaps only can be triggered by the serious matter of dying. Throughout our discussions that ranged from alternate therapies and the mind-body connection to fresh examinations of our beliefs about life after death, Bron's light and courage burned bright. I'm not exactly sure where he and I landed on that subject during what turned out to be our last visit together, but I know that we felt hopeful. But what else could Bron be? It's who he is.

I'll see you again, good friend. ☹

