

UPDATE

PRES. HINCKLEY ADDRESSES GENERAL CONFERENCE, "FEELS WELL"



NINE MONTHS AFTER UNDERGOING colon cancer surgery and six months after telling church members, "I am in the sunset of my life," a thin yet strong President Gordon B. Hinckley attended all sessions of October's General Conference and spoke four times.

"Last January I underwent major surgery," said the ninety-six-year-old president. "It was a miserable experience, particularly for one who had never previously been a patient in a hospital." He added that he chose to undergo "further [chemotherapy] treatment" after the surgery, and that his doctors "have called the results miraculous."

"As I said last April, we are in [the Lord's] hands. I feel well; my health is reasonably good. But when it is time for a successor, the transition will be smooth and according to the will of Him whose Church this is. And so, we go forward in faith. . . ."

On 3 November, President Hinckley became the oldest president in the Church's history, surpassing President David O. McKay, who died at age 96 plus 132 days.

"*Equally Yoked.*" During the priesthood session, the prophet touched on familiar themes as he advised young men to dress properly, avoid profanity, and "not partake of pornography," which he says "becomes an addiction of the worst kind."

"The computer is a wonderful instrument when it is properly used," said Hinckley. "But when it is used to deal with pornography or so-called chat rooms or for any other purpose that leads to evil practices or evil thoughts, then there must be self-discipline enough to turn it off."

President Hinckley also expressed "great concern" about a "troubling trend"—the fact that a higher percentage of women than men are enrolling in college. "It is plainly evident from these statistics that young women are exceeding young men in pursuing educational programs," said Hinckley. "And so I say to you young men, rise up and discipline yourself to take advantage of educational opportunities. Do you wish to marry a girl whose education has been far superior to your own? We speak of being 'equally yoked.' That applies, I think, to the matter of education."

The Mormon Alliance, which gathers shortly after each general conference to discuss its messages, commented on President Hinckley's "equally yoked" statement. "I think it's a good thing that the prophet is saying that partners need to be equally yoked," said Janice Allred, an Alliance trustee and author of the 1997 volume *God the Mother*. "However, I do wonder whether he would have made the same statement and have been equally troubled had the number showed that more men than women are getting higher education."

Mormonism and Politics

LDS LEADERS, BYU OFFICIALS ACCUSED OF CAMPAIGNING FOR ROMNEY

A SERIES OF ARTICLES IN THE *BOSTON GLOBE* ACCUSE leaders of the LDS Church and officials at BYU of using those institutions to campaign for presidential hopeful Mitt Romney—a dangerous move that could jeopardize the Church's non-profit status.

In an email obtained by the *Globe*, Don Stirling, a paid consultant for Romney, tells Deseret Book CEO Sheri L. Dew of a 19 September meeting that Romney's son Josh and backer Kem Gardner held with Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland about building a network of Latter-day Saint Romney supporters. "According to Kem, Elder Holland has been designated/assumed the role of coordinating these matters," Stirling wrote to Dew. "Elder Holland surfaced the idea of using BYU Management Society and its locally based organization as a starting point to rally and organize the troops on a grassroots level. Elder Holland subsequently surfaced the idea with President Hinckley and Faust, who voiced no objections."

According to the *Globe*, eight days later, Stirling, Romney's top aide Spencer Zwick, and the governor's brother Scott Romney held a dinner with prominent Mormons to further discuss the effort. One of those invited, Steve Albrecht, is an associate dean of the BYU business school. On 9 October, Albrecht and Ned Hill, the business school dean, used their BYU email address to promote Romney's presidential bid.

"We are writing to you as a friend to see if you have any interest in helping Governor Romney by volunteering to serve as a Community or Neighborhood Chair," reads the email they sent to fifty Management Society members and one hundred members of the National Advisory Council. BYU spokesperson Carri Jenkins later told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that by sending the emails, the deans violated BYU's policy of political neutrality. "Albrecht has acknowledged the error," Jenkins told the *Deseret Morning News*, "and the university took immediate action when we were made aware that the emails had been sent." According to Jenkins, neither Albrecht nor Hill was reprimanded.

On 22 October, Gardner told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that he was "to blame for this whole mess," and denied having told Stirling that Holland had been appointed by the Church to campaign for Romney. "This is so far beyond what actually happened that Elder Holland didn't know what hit him," said Gardner. "I'm terribly embarrassed by it."

Church spokesperson Dale Bills said that "Elder Holland has never discussed with the First Presidency the matter asserted in the Don Stirling e-mail." The Church also issued a

statement according to which “it is completely erroneous to suggest that Elder Holland was either designated or assumed the role of some sort of coordinator for matters associated.” Spokesperson Michael Otterson characterized the 19 September meeting as a “casual visit with no declared agenda” and added that “Holland re-emphasized the church’s political neutrality rules.” According to Otterson, when the topic of using BYU came up, Holland said that “they would have to check with BYU on how the rules applied to these other entities like the management school.”

Deseret Morning News columnist Bruce Wilson, LDS Senator Orrin Hatch, and some of the *Globe’s* readers criticized the *Globe* for the way they handled the story. “When you read the account,” Wilson complains, “you can’t escape the impression that Elder Holland was orchestrating a sinister plot on behalf of the church, despite the fact that Holland emphatically denies it.”

STAKE PRESIDENT BLASTS REID FOR POSITION ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

ACCORDING TO A STORY IN THE *LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL*, a former Nevada stake president sent a blistering letter to Harry Reid in which he accuses the LDS senator of having “defied God” in opposing a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

“You chose your party’s agenda over Nevadans’, over your Prophets’ wishes, and defied God in the process,” wrote James

Howard, who has been recently released after serving for nine years as president of the Las Vegas East Stake. “You have sold out for power and position. . . You fear your party more than God.”

The *Review-Journal* story does not clarify if Howard was Reid’s stake president. Reid has repeatedly stated that he believes that marriage should be between a man and a woman, but that he opposed the constitutional amendment, which he saw as a ploy by the Republicans during an election year. Last February, the LDS Church announced its public support for the amendment (see *SUNSTONE*, April 2006: 74–74).

“Having sold out your Church, your State and possibly your soul for political power, I will have a hard time supporting you or voting for you in the future, should you attempt to hold on to your seat,” Howard wrote to Reid. “Your soul is vacant, and you have lost your moral compass.”

After Reid’s office released the letter, Howard said that the letter was never intended to become public. “This was a personal letter,” Howard said. “I was not speaking for anybody else. I was not speaking for the Church. It was my opinion.”

Reid didn’t respond to Howard’s letter, but following a request from the *Review-Journal*, his office supplied a copy of an earlier letter Reid had sent to Nevada bishops explaining his positions. “I have been shocked and offended at the malice and rancor with which many who disagree with me on this issue have personally attacked me,” the letter read in part. “Frankly, I expect better of my fellow saints who share with me reverence for Jesus’s example of forbearance, patience, and love.”



“We protest this preposterous accusation that the Church is involved in politics.”



“We are representatives of the campaign to elect Mitt Romney. Would you like to know more?”

CARTOONS BY JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPTS BY HUGO OLAIZ

People



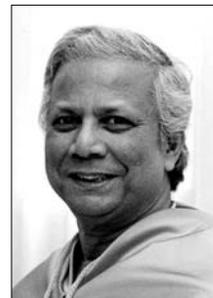
Deceased. Mormonism's most prolific critic, JERALD TANNER, 68, of complications related to Alzheimer's disease. In 1959, Jerald, together with his wife Sandra, left the LDS faith and began publishing materials countering many Church claims, eventually founding the Utah Lighthouse Ministry. In their long career, the Tanners published some forty books, including, in 1964, their major work, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* Despite their reputation as a thorn in the Church's side, some believe that by addressing controversial issues and publishing historical materials, the Tanners have made important contributions to Mormon scholarship. As described by author Lawrence Foster, "in addition to publishing many hard-to-find Mormon historical documents, [the Tanners'] criticisms have highlighted issues that professional Mormon historians, operating from a very different perspective, have also sought to address" (*Dialogue*, Summer 1984, 35). Jerald Tanner was also the first LDS critic to go on record doubting the veracity of Mark Hoffmann's "Salamander Letter."

Deceased. JOHN SKOOR, 23 October, after being struck by a rogue wave and washed out to sea. Skoor, 66, was walking along a Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, beach with his wife, Susan Skoor, and sister, Debbie Fenske, when they were struck by the wave caused by tropical storm Paul. Skoor, of Renton, Washington, was an artist, art instructor, and lay minister in the Community of Christ church. His wife, Susan, who spoke at this year's Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium, is a member of the Community of Christ's council of twelve apostles.



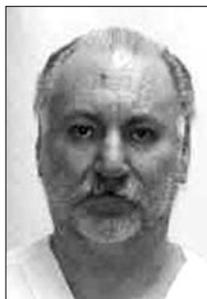
Poised. To serve as Senate Majority Leader, LDS Senator HARRY REID, D-Nev., 67, after the Democrats took control of the Senate in the 7 November election. As majority leader, Reid will be the highest-placed Mormon ever in U.S. government. Reid grew up in a Mormon family in the small mining town of Searchlight, Nevada, and has developed a reputation for his sharp wit and, as Senator Hilary Rodham Clinton calls it, his "spine of steel." As a moderate Democrat, Reid is pro-life, supports the death penalty, and has a mixed record on gun politics. Although he does not support same-sex marriage, he recently voted against a constitutional amendment that would have banned same-sex marriage nationwide. (See related story, page 75).

Awarded. The Nobel Peace Prize, MUHAMMAD YUNUS, 66, a Bangladeshi banker and economist with ties to BYU. The collaboration between Yunus and BYU professor of social entrepreneurship Warner Woodworth led BYU to raise \$8 million and start more than 20 micro-credit organizations, which this year will provide about a million microloans globally. In 1998, BYU honored Yunus with an honorary doctorate of humane letters.



Featured. By the media, BYU-Idaho history professor RYAN CRISP, for banning jeans and T-shirts from his classes. In a tougher standard than the LDS-standards school's dress code, students in Crisp's 200- and 300-level courses must wear "business casual," which includes khaki pants, sweaters, skirts, and collared shirts. Students in his 400-level courses must wear "formal business attire"—suits and ties or dresses. "A university is preparation for the real world," Crisp told the *Post Register*, "to teach students to think and act at a professional level."

Censored. From the *Ensign*, a story penned by OLEG BARABASH, 27. Barabash's article "I Will Never Go to Church Again" appeared in the October 2006 issue of the magazine but was removed from the online version currently posted at www.lds.org after the 27-year-old BYU student pleaded guilty to lewdness involving a twelve-year-old boy. The article and the accompanying illustration were replaced without editorial comment by a testimonial by a different author entitled "Groceries or Tithing." Although it is highly unusual for the *Ensign* to censor articles after publication, Mormon cybersleuths have also noticed that an October 1972 calling for environmental protection, written by feminist and activist Helen Candland Stark and entitled "Another Kind of Tithe," was never included in either the online or CD-ROM editions of the *Ensign*.



Executed. JEFFREY LUNDGREN, 56, on 24 October. Lundgren was a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ) before breaking away in 1987 to start his own group near Kirtland, Ohio. In 1989, following a series of revelations regarding the need to "prune the vineyard" in preparation for the Second Coming, Lundgren killed five

of his followers whom he felt were cooling to the group's beliefs and activities. The victims were Dennis Avery, 49, his wife, Cheryl, 46, and their three daughters, ages 7 to 15. In 1990, when Ohio still performed executions by electricution, Lundgren told the jury "If the world does not end before (my execution), I will be in shock—both in the literal sense and mentally. I expect such events to occur long before the electric chair." Under current Ohio law, Lundgren was put to death by lethal injection.

Victorious. Upon appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, STANLEY M. SHEPP, the right to teach his daughter, Kaylynne, about his fundamentalist Mormon beliefs, which include plural marriage. The 27 September ruling overturned an earlier decision in which Shepp won joint legal custody of Kaylynne, now 13, but was "specifically prohibited while the child is a minor from teaching her about polygamy, plural marriages or multiple wives." Tracey L. Roberts divorced Shepp following his conversion to fundamentalist beliefs after they married, beliefs she did not share. Roberts argued against Shepp's petition to teach their daughter about plural marriage, expressing concern, in the words of the ruling, "that [Shepp] would introduce Kaylynne to men so that she would be ready to engage in polygamy once she reaches the age of thirteen." Her desire is that her daughter not interact with polygamist families or "to be taught polygamy in any way." The supreme court ruling overturned that prohibition, which Shepp fought because "in order for [Kaylynne] to be happy, she has to have choices," and that it is his job as a father "to help her learn about and understand alternatives." Shepp spoke at the 2002 Salt Lake Sunstone about his conversion to fundamentalist Mormon beliefs and his own unique synthesis of doctrines he calls "original Mormonism."



Apologizing. Polygamist ADDAM SWAPP, eighteen years after bombing the Kamas, Utah, stake center, in a dispute that resulted in the death of Utah corrections officer Fred House. "What I did. . . went contrary to the teachings of Jesus," Swapp wrote from his cell in Arizona. "And I am sorry that I have been blind to this fact for so long. And sorry that I did it." Swapp sent copies of the letter to the LDS Church, to the *Park Register* (the Kamas newspaper), and to law enforcement. He sent a separate letter to officer House's family. JOHN TIMOTHY SINGER, a fellow member of the polygamous Singer/Swapp clan, was recently released after being convicted for killing House. The conflict between the government and the group started in 1979 when clan leader John Singer was shot and killed by officers trying to serve a warrant. During a thirteen-day standoff in Marion, Utah, John Timothy fired ten rounds from a 30-caliber rifle, one of which killed House.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, *DIALOGUE*!
From left: Paul Salisbury, Eugene England, G. Wesley Johnson,
Richard L. Bushman

DIALOGUE TURNS FORTY

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT HAS turned forty, and more than three hundred subscribers and supporters gathered 22 September in Salt Lake City to celebrate the milestone. The celebration included perspectives from current and former editors Levi Peterson and Ross Peterson, as well as others in a short documentary film that had been commissioned for the occasion. Founded in Stanford by a group of LDS graduate students and professors, including Eugene England, G. Wesley Johnson, and Frances Menlove, *Dialogue* pioneered the field of Mormon studies.

According to former editor Robert A. Rees, "*Dialogue* is committed to the belief that where people have an opportunity freely to enter into discussion with one another, where ideas can be presented and challenged without fear of reprisals or intimidation, where brothers and sisters as well as friends and neighbors can talk and listen to one another, not only is there a greater opportunity for increased understanding, but also for new discovery. Such dialogue has the possibility of expanding our minds and spirits, of enlightening us."

Once called by *Time* magazine "the first unabashedly high-brow publication in Mormon history," *Dialogue* has helped advance Mormon scholarship by exploring a wealth of topics and ideas dealing with Mormon history, biography, culture, theology, literature, and art. Because of its independence from the LDS Church, *Dialogue* has often advanced discussion on uncomfortable topics such as polygamy, women's status, race issues, and Church positions on homosexuality and gender.

Over the years, some fourteen editors have given their time and talents to the journal. In a recent *Salt Lake Tribune* editorial, former associate editor Gary James Bergera honored the editors, saying that "their contributions, largely unheralded, are a permanent reminder of the value to any organization of independent thought and freedom of expression."

COUNTERPOINT CONFERENCE TACKLES ISSUES OF TODAY'S LDS FAMILIES

WITH THE THEME “MARRIAGE, MOTHERHOOD, AND Mormonism: The Eternal Family in the 21st Century,” the Mormon Women’s Forum held its annual Counterpoint Conference 14 October at the University of Utah. Conference topics ranged from, “How Well Does the LDS Church Support Real Mothers,” to “Can Singles Survive in a Married Church?” to “Is There a Place for our Gay Sisters and Brothers in the Eternal Family” and “Can Eternal Marriage Last?”

Sarah Ray Allred participated in the motherhood panel and discussed her experiences as the mother of a three-year-old and a one-year-old, and the struggle to balance the demands of work, family, and church. After quoting Apostle Neal A. Maxwell, who once equated motherhood with priesthood, Allred said that, in her opinion, it is “parenthood”—not just motherhood—that is valuable.

“In many traditional relationships, more parenting is done by mothers than fathers, but it doesn’t always have to be that way,” said Allred. “Placing rhetorical value on parenthood, by pairing motherhood and fatherhood rather than motherhood



(Left to right) Panelists Ida Smith, Raquel Cook, and Audrey Smith discuss life as single women who remain active in the Church.

and priesthood, would encourage fathers to become active participants in their children’s lives. If fathers were more involved in the day-to-day work of caring for their children, rather than ‘babysitting’ them or occasionally taking them on a date, I believe that fathers will achieve stronger relationships with their children, more possibilities of a Christ-like existence, and a *genuine* appreciation, rather than a *sentimental* appreciation, for the work that mothers do.”

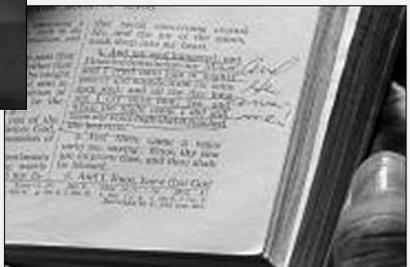
The Eve Award, given annually to a woman of courage and

Solar Flares

If You Could Hie to Graceland. Can an urban legend become a faith-promoting melodrama? Ask Rob Diamond, the director of *Tears of a King* (www.tearsofaking.com), a soon-to-be released film according to which only days before his death, Elvis Presley received the missionary discussions, read the Book of Mormon, and accepted a baptismal challenge.



“I spent many months pouring my soul into the screenplay,” Diamond told the *Deseret Morning News*. “The Book of Mormon changed my life as a



Did Elvis scribble in this Book of Mormon?

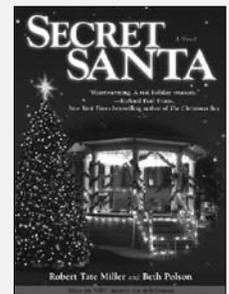
young man, and I believe this movie will help people understand that it did the same for Elvis in the latter days of his life.”

Diamond’s evidence for Presley’s conversion is a copy of the Book of Mormon which, according to Presley fan Cricket Butler, the King studied and marked days before his passing. Butler claims that in August 1977, Presley received the missionaries and even set a baptismal date. Although it is widely known that Presley did receive some of the missionary discussions at the Polynesian Cultural Center in 1966 while shooting *Paradise Hawaiian Style*, no returned missionary can be found to corroborate Butler’s story.

Presley’s copy of the Book of Mormon, now in the LDS Church archives, has never been authenticated, and some experts believe it has tell-tale signs of a fake. According to a KSL television news story, the word “king” is underlined throughout the book, and the bottom of a page about the innocence of children reads, “My daughter Lisa needs this church. She’s nine. Please help her.”

Apparently Lisa Marie didn’t get the message: In the early 1980s, she and her mother Priscilla became Scientologists. As for the King himself, he followed the path of all dead celebrities and was baptized, vicariously, numerous times.

Bad Santa. Deseret Book distributors received an email in late October announcing the recall of *Secret Santa*, a 2003 novel published by Atria Books, a division of Simon & Schuster.



“We are recalling the book *Secret Santa*,” reads the email, “which was recently shipped to you. It is a Distributed Product sale item that somehow missed our usual close scrutiny and has material in it that we would not publish.”

The recall notice circulated on LDS mailing lists and generated an interest that the novel would otherwise not have received. Mormon readers soon found an account of sex outside of marriage: “But I don’t want you to think it was just some cheap, physical thing,’ Ryan said, lowering his eyes. . . . ‘It was so much more. It was more like a . . . Magical. . . Sharing of souls.’” Other readers noted the word “Jeez” and the phrase, “. . . his tie flashing like a strip club.”

vision who has made significant contributions to Mormon women, was given to Gay Blanchard, who was honored as a mother, a wife, and “a woman who has pursued her own personal path of knowledge, spirituality, and beauty through the arts and nature.”

WHO IS THE REAL “LORD OF THE RINGS”?

LAST OCTOBER, THE *SALT LAKE TRIBUNE* PUBLISHED A story honoring the memory of Helen Alldredge who, as a member of the Primary General Board in the 1960s, had been involved in creating the motto, “Choose the Right” and sketched the CTR logo which today adorns millions of rings.

Not so, says Douglas “Cloy” Miles, 90, who says he came up with the idea for the logo. According to Miles, Primary President LaVerne Parmley approached him in 1970 and asked



Douglas Miles



Helen Alldredge

him to come up with a ring. Joel Izatt, 66, confirms that he worked for Miles at the time and designed the logo per Miles's directions. A craftsman employed by Miles made the first ring sample, and Miles was the sole manufacturer and distributor for the first ten years.

But Alldredge and Miles are not the only claimants. As reported in another *Tribune* story, several people claim to have created the motto, the logo, and the ring—a situation that often arises when committees make decisions. For instance, in a 2001 *Deseret News* story, Jerry Johnston said that Norma Nichols, who also served on the Primary board, came up with the motto, and “chaired the committee that invented the ring.”

No one knows exactly how many people claim to be creators of the ring, but Miles says he once spotted on the road a vanity license plate that read, “Father of the CTR Ring.” “I tried to run him down and couldn't follow him,” Miles says, laughing.

According to statistics given in the *Tribune* story, in 2005, the LDS Church distributed some 522,455 new CTR rings in twenty-four languages. That figure doesn't include the thousands more sold by Deseret Book in models that can cost more than \$200.

Sunbursts

A NEW MORMON studies group has just formed: The European Mormon Studies Association” (EMSA). The group is seeking to gather together European scholars interested in studying Mormonism from various perspectives and any other scholars interested in studying the European manifestation of Mormonism. The new association welcomes people regardless of religious affiliation. They hope to hold the first EMSA conference in 2007. To learn more, visit <http://www.euomormonstudies.com>.

CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY has announced that its Provost and Board of Trustees have officially approved the creation of the Howard W. Hunter Chair in Mormon Studies and is beginning its search for a preeminent scholar to occupy the chair. At press time, the position description was still being written. The posting will soon be available at: <http://www.cgu.edu/pages/1825.asp>.

THE UNIVERSITY OF Arkansas, Fort Smith, is sponsoring a conference entitled “Religion and Reaction: The Life, Times, and Legacy of Parley Parker Pratt.” The 21–22 April 2007 conference is timed to commemorate the bicentennial of Pratt's birth and the sesquicentennial of his death in Arkansas. Deadline to submit papers for presentation is 1 January 2007. Visit www.PrattConference.org details.

IRREANTUM MAGAZINE ANNOUNCES it has appointed new co-editors to replace editor Laraine Wilkins, who died tragically (see *SUNSTONE*, September 2006, 77). VALERIE HOLLADAY and SCOTT HATCH will now shepherd the literary journal of the Association for Mormon Letters. Both editors obtained bachelor's and master's degrees from BYU where they took classes in creative writing, and both have experience in editing and publishing.

A NEW PUBLISHER seeks adventurous Mormon readers. Zarahemla Books has announced the publication of its first offering, *Brother Brigham*, a novel by D. Michael Martindale in which “the main character's childhood imaginary friend—none other than Brigham Young himself—comes back in an unexpected way.” According to ZB's founder Christopher Bigelow, the new publisher hopes to serve readers “who want more frankness and edginess without sacrificing their faith.” The publisher has also announced a forthcoming short-story collection, *Long after Dark*, by *SUNSTONE* columnist Todd Robert Petersen, as well as Bigelow's own novel *Kindred Spirits*. For more information, visit www.ZarahemlaBooks.com.

AFFIRMATION: GAY & Lesbian Mormons has produced a CD-ROM containing past issues of *Affinity*, the organization's newsletter that began in 1980. For more information, visit <http://www.affirmation.org/affinitycollection>.