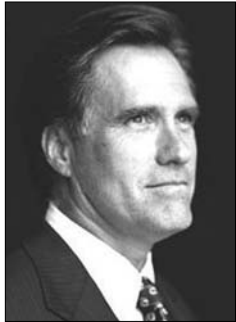


UPDATE

MEDIA FOCUS ON ROMNEY'S FAITH—AND UNDERWEAR



WWW.ONTHEISSUES.ORG/GOVERNORROMNEY.JPG

FROM WHITE UNDERGARMENTS TO the White Horse prophecy, the media continue to scrutinize the more esoteric aspects of Mitt Romney's faith and to ask what impact these could have on his potential run for the White House.

Several media outlets have focused on the fact that the Massachusetts governor wears LDS garments. "Do you wear the temple garments?" Sridhar Pappu asked Mitt Romney for a

September 2005 *Atlantic Monthly* article. "I'll just say those sorts of thing I'll keep private," Romney answered.

"It is a weird religion thing," radio host Michael Graham told MSNBC's Tucker Carlson on 27 November, referring to LDS garments. "It doesn't say Hanes until Jesus says it says Hanes—I don't really get the whole deal, but it won't be a problem to Mitt Romney because of who Mitt Romney is."

Graham argued that despite his Mormonism, Romney can do well even in South Carolina "because he does not send out [a] freaky religion vibe." "Mitt Romney looks like a president," said Graham. "He's central casting. He sounds like a president. He's great on television. And other than a very technical theological debate inside evangelical Christianity, [Mormonism] does not present a problem."

In connection with a story about Mitt Romney, political commentator Andrew Sullivan posted on his blog a picture of a couple wearing garments. When some of his readers complained that the picture was "sacrilegious and offensive," Sullivan replied in a 24 November blog entry: "My policy on this site is to publish reality, within certain boundaries of religious respect. If I can publish a cartoon of Muhammad, I can sure publish tasteful pictures of Mormon underwear."

"Is the Republican party too bigoted to select a Mormon as its presidential candidate?" asks reporter Justin Webb in a recent piece for the BBC. "Until recently I would have said it probably was. But what I have learned about Mormons and what seems to be happening in America, leads me to wonder whether their time has come."

In his report, Webb educates readers on Mormon beliefs about the last days, when "Jesus will return and set up his kingdom in Jackson County, Missouri." "I am not suggesting a U.S. Second Coming is imminent and there are plenty of Americans who will continue to resist the theological eccentricities of this Church," Webb adds. "However, I would be tempted to sell my Starbucks shares if I had any—2007 will not be the Year of the

Hot Drink in a nation where Mormons are on the rise."

A 3 November *Wall Street Journal* story speculated about Romney in relation to the so-called "White Horse Prophecy," according to which "the Mormon people, symbolized by a white horse, [will] ride in and save the republic from collapsing." Even though the article quotes BYU professor Susan Easton Black pronouncing the prophecy a fake, the *Journal* asserts that the prophecy continues to inspire Mormons to run for office. "Would Mormons see a Romney White House as a White Horse?" the story asks.

While everybody agrees that Romney's faith could be a deterrent, that doesn't mean he couldn't still be the choice of the Religious Right. In late October, Romney invited to his home fifteen of the country's leading evangelicals, including Jerry Falwell, Franklin Graham, and Richard Land.

Richard Lee, a Baptist minister from Cumming, Georgia, asked Romney about his belief in Jesus. "When I say Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, I realize that means something different to you than it means to me," Romney admitted, as reported by Jonathan Darnen in the 25 December *Newsweek*. "But [Romney] urged them to remember their shared beliefs: the faith that Christ was born of a virgin, was crucified and rose after three days."

At least some evangelicals are convinced. One blog, EVANGELICALSFORMITT.ORG, which draws about 5,000 readers a day, highlights the similarities between Romney's stated positions and the site creators' own beliefs. "[Romney]'s not just a candidate evangelicals can support—he is the best choice for people of faith," reads the blog. "That's why we launched a grassroots effort earlier this year that helped earn him a terrific victory at the first presidential straw poll, and that's why we're starting this website."

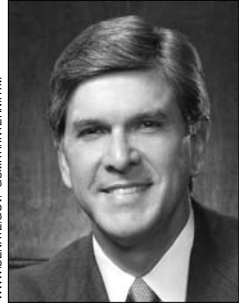


JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY HUGO OLAIZ AND JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

Thank you, Senator, for your response to the conflict in Iraq. Governor Romney, the next question is for you: "What can you tell us about your underwear?"

Support for Romney, who is expected to announce his run for the White House in early January, may be growing among evangelicals, but it is slipping among the general population. A November poll concluded that about 43 percent of Americans now say they would *not* vote for a Mormon president. That number represents a 6 percent increase from a similar poll conducted in June (see SUNSTONE, September 2006: 73).

LDS SENATOR GRABS NATIONAL ATTENTION



WWW.SENATE.GOV/GSMITH/INTERV1.HTM

LDS SENATOR GORDON SMITH, R-Ore., grabbed national attention on 7 December when he broke with the Bush administration over the war in Iraq and gave an emotional speech on the Senate floor, calling for a U.S. pullout.

"I, for one, am at the end of my rope when it comes to supporting a policy that has our soldiers patrolling the same streets in the same way, being blown up by the same bombs day after day," he said. "That is absurd. It may even be criminal. I cannot support that anymore."

Asked by ABC correspondent George Stephanopoulos what triggered his speech, Smith answered, "Waking up the other morning and turning on the news and hearing that yet another ten of our soldiers died the same way that several thousand have—to roadside bombs. I went from steamed to boiled, and I felt I had to speak out because if we're going to be there, let's win. If we're not, let's at least fight the war on terror in a way that makes sense."

Although he represents Oregon, Smith has also been featured prominently in the Utah media in connection with a book he recently wrote to raise awareness about suicide and mental health issues. On 23 October, Smith spoke at Utah Valley State College about suicide awareness and prevention on college campuses, a topic the senator knows all too well. His remarks were highly personal as he recounted the story of his son, Garrett Smith, who committed suicide while attending UVSC in September 2003.

The senator has sponsored legislation to create the The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, authorizing \$82 million for three-year grants to help states, tribes, colleges, and universities fund development and expansion of early intervention, suicide prevention, and mental health services to children and young adults. The act was signed into law in 2004. "I will admit that I did not fully appreciate how lethal mental illnesses can be until our family tragedy befell us," Senator Smith said in a 10 September interview with *The Oregonian*. "But having experienced that, I take from that sorrow a sense of determination to help others. That's the way I find new meaning in the life of my son."

Utah leads the nation in suicides among men aged 15 to 24. According to the American Association of Suicidology, Utah also has the 11th highest suicide rate—14.3 deaths per 100,000 people—in the nation across all age groups.

JEFFS ORDERED TO STAND TRIAL



WWW.CANADA.COM/VANCOUVER/SUN

ON 23 APRIL 2007, WARREN JEFFS, PRESIDENT OF THE Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, will face his accuser on trial. Fifth District judge James L. Shumaker ordered Jeffs, who was captured last August, to stand trial on two counts of rape as accomplice for his role in forcing a fourteen-year-old girl to marry and have sex with an older cousin.

The woman, known as Jane Doe IV, testified that Jeffs married her to her cousin, who later forced himself on her. She said that when she asked Jeffs to release her from her marriage, he told her to give herself "mind, body, and soul" to her husband and to have children with him.

"This was the darkest time of my entire life," the woman said in court, "one of the most painful things I've ever been through."

Jeffs's attorney, Walter Bugden, contended that Jeffs was merely offering counsel to a troubled couple as any spiritual leader would. "Officiating at a wedding does not put Mr. Jeffs on notice that unconsented sex is or was going to be happening," said Bugden. "Does a priest, a rabbi, or a marriage counselor subject himself to a charge of accomplice to rape anytime he or she counsels a married couple having domestic problems to make their marriage work? Does a Mormon bishop become an accomplice to rape when he suggests that a couple think about having children?"

Jane Doe IV has filed a multimillion dollar civil lawsuit against Jeffs, the FLDS Church, and the United Effort Plan Trust, the church's financial arm.

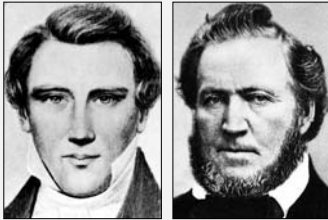
THE RAPE CHARGES against Jeffs are part of a larger investigation into the FLDS Church, which is suspected of welfare fraud, child rape, and criminal dealings in connection with the \$110-million United Effort Plan.

On 7 December, the *Salt Lake Tribune* published a letter that had been seized by federal authorities. The letter, written by Colorado City marshal Fred Barlow Jeffs and addressed to Warren Jeffs, implies that the marshal remained loyal to the fugitive leader, knew of his whereabouts, and asked him for directives.

"I rejoice at the peace that comes over me when I follow the directives that you have sent to me through Uncle William,"

People

Hired. Controversial commentator GLENN BECK, 42, by CNN's *Headline News*. Beck, who converted to Mormonism in 1999, gained notoriety as a radio host for his outrageous comments, which include calling Katrina refugees seen on TV and the father of a terrorist victim "scumbag," advocating that the Middle East be nuked, praying for the gruesome death of U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich, and fantasizing about strangling political activist Michael Moore to death.



Ranked. Among the most influential Americans, JOSEPH SMITH and BRIGHAM YOUNG, in the December issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. The article, which featured the nation's 100 most influential individuals, ranked Joseph

Smith 52nd and Brigham Young 74th. Abraham Lincoln was ranked number 1. Other religious leaders on the list include Martin Luther King (8), Mary Baker Eddy (86), Jonathan Edwards (90), and Lyman Beecher (91).

Suing. Brigham Young University, for \$1 billion. BYU claims Pfizer Inc. defrauded BYU professor DANIEL SIMMONS out of his research on the COX-2 enzyme, a key component of "super-aspirins" such as Celebrex. Pfizer says BYU was fully

paid under a research grant agreement. Simmons says he wants to receive proper credit for his work.



Ordered. To stand trial, JULIA REDD, 58, and LEMUEL HARDISON REDD, 61, on charges of kidnapping their daughter Julianna Myers the day before her temple wedding. A BYU student, Myers testified



in court that her parents believed her fiancé was "evil and abusive" for buying her a gold band instead of a diamond ring. The day before the wedding, instead of taking her to a Deseret Clothing store as planned,

they took her to Grand Junction, Colorado, reportedly against her will.

Working. For family-friendly movies, LDS filmmaker KIETH MERRILL through the newly formed Audience Alliance Motion Picture Studios. The group will produce feel-good movies based on Christian values. Merrill, the Alliance's Chief Creative Officer, says the organization will allow "every moviegoer and member of the general audience to become directly involved in changing the way movies are made."



the marshal wrote. "I and all the other officers have expressed our desire to stand with you and the priesthood. I fill [sic] that without the priesthood, I am nothing."

On 6 December, the Utah Peace Officers Standards and Training Council put the entire Hildale/Colorado City Town Marshal's Office under investigation. "We feel like the police department is Warren Jeffs's private goon squad on taxpayer dollars," lawyer Zachary Shields told the council.

Last year, the council decertified Hildale Town Marshal Sam Roundy because he is a polygamist. The Washington County Sheriff's office has said it can cover Hildale but expressed concern that residents may be reluctant to report crimes to outsiders.

THE WEEK BEFORE Jeffs was ordered to stand trial, fundamentalist Mormon Winston Blackmore appeared on CNN's *Larry King Live*, presenting a kinder, gentler, brand of fundamentalism. An independent polygamist from Bountiful, Canada, Blackmore is believed to have more than twenty wives and more than eighty children.

In stark contrast to the secretive style of Jeffs's FLDS Church, Blackmore invited a CNN crew to his home and offered a rare peek into his family life. During the one-hour in-

terview with King, Blackmore praised deceased FLDS leader Rulon Jeffs, said that the LDS Church is "doing a great missionary job," and explained that he has "no problem" with gay marriage.

Although overall the interview showed polygamy in a good light, Blackmore admitted that he married a woman who was at the time under sixteen—a crime that could land him in prison. Blackmore said that the Royal Mounted Police, Canada's equivalent to the FBI, has interviewed him and his wives about the age at which they married and first had sex.

ON A LIGHTER note, the arrest of Jeffs and his current consignment to the Purgatory Correctional Facility in Hurricane, Utah, has led to a renewed focus on polygamy as an opportunity for entrepreneurs. New T-shirts and other products are appearing bearing messages such as: "I've Been in Purgatory," "Jeffs is Jailed/We Got Our Man," "Honk If You're Living the Principle," "1 + 1 + 1 . . . Polygamath," "Monogamy is for Ugly People," and "Polygamy Saved My Marriage." One shirt with the caption, "Saturday at the Wal-Mart," shows a cutout man with three women. Many of these Jeffs- and polygamy-themed products are available online through CAFEPRESS.COM.

GAY-SPONSORED EXHIBIT REACHES OUT TO POLYGAMOUS FAMILIES

A UTAH-BASED GAY ORGANIZATION IS LOOKING FOR families of all shapes and sizes, including polygamous families, to be photographed and interviewed as part of an upcoming exhibit. Sponsored by the Utah Pride Center and titled "Families ... It's All Relative," the exhibit premieres 14 February at the Salt Lake City Library.

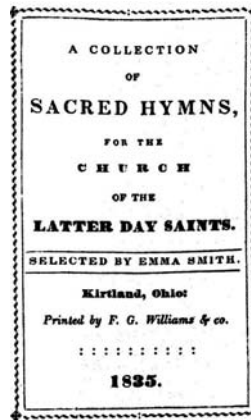
"It's just to show there are different types of families that maybe aren't traditional families, but that are maybe just as much a family," Nathan Meason of the Pride Center told the *Deseret Morning News*. "We want to give people this idea that there are these alternative families in Utah."

The number of people living in polygamous families in Utah is estimated to be as many as 50,000. Will some of those families accept the invitation?

"It's a possibility," said Mary Batchelor, co-founder of the polygamy advocacy group Principle Voices. "There are some

very open-minded polygamists who would find [it] broad-minded of the gay and lesbian community to include them."

1835 HYMNAL FETCHES BIG BUCKS



A RARE HYMNAL, THE FIRST ONE produced by "the Church of Latter Day Saints," as it was then called, was sold for a whopping \$273,600 at Christie's Auction House in New York.

According to the auctioneers, the 1835 hymnal, in mint condition, is one of three confirmed to exist. The identities of the seller and buyer were not disclosed.

The hymnal was compiled by Emma Smith, who was commanded in a July 1830 revelation "to make a selection of sacred hymns" (D&C 25:11).

DESERET BOOK BUYS TWO MORE COMPETITORS

FOLLOWING MONTHS OF DISPUTES OVER MERCHANDISING AND MARKETING, ON 28 DECEMBER, DESERET Book announced its acquisition of two top competitors, Covenant Communications and its sister company Seagull Book & Tape. In July 2006, Deseret Book threatened to pull its products from Seagull's twenty-six stores over complaints that Seagull didn't follow merchandising and promotional agreements with the publisher. With the purchase, Deseret Book acquires its major competitor in both LDS publishing and retail sales.

According to Deseret Book president and CEO Sheri Dew, the two companies will move forward independently, the purchase notwithstanding, honoring existing author contracts and keeping the same management personnel. Dew also said she doesn't expect any Seagull stores to close. "We are not going to merge retailers; we are not going to merge publishers." Honoring the unique strengths of Covenant as a publisher and of Seagull as a retailer, Dew continued: "Why would we buy them, only to change them and have them be us? For those who like Seagull, I'm happy to reassure them that Seagull will be Seagull, and that's just how it is. . . . We're certain that there's a place in the market for both, and that they'll do both very well."

Despite Dew's reassurances, some observers lament what they see as Deseret Book's monopoly over the LDS book market and predict that as inventory systems and decision-making merge, fewer authors will get published, the number of titles will decrease, and stores will close.

"When Deseret Book purchased Bookcraft nearly a decade ago, I editorialized . . . that the purchase was a bad move," wrote independent publisher Kent Larsen on MotleyVision.org, a blog dedicated to Mormon arts and culture. "Subsequent events showed that I was right, as Deseret Book reduced the size of its list of titles published and had its first layoffs."

"No one is in a position to take the place of the Seagull Book stores that will close and try to compete with Deseret Book," he added. "I'm afraid that this means the LDS market is worse off for this merger. And I don't really see that Deseret Book gains much as a result."

In addition to this latest acquisition and the 1999 purchase of Bookcraft mentioned above, in the past two years, Deseret Book has also purchased competitors Excel Entertainment and LDS Living.

For more conversation on this topic, visit MORMONSTORIES.ORG, which features a podcast discussing this newest Deseret Book acquisition.



—“My, what big teeth you have!”
—“The better to CORRELATE you with, my dear!”

GWEN YULL. BASED ON CONCEPT BY NICK LITERSKI AND HUGO OLAZ

Solar flare

Putting the Keg in Eggnog. At least no one can say BYU students aren't resourceful. On 17 December, three students from the stone-cold sober college organized an off-campus "kegnog" party where the only party animals were fish (real ones) and the eggnog wasn't even spiked.

"The closest thing to debauchery at Sunday's kegnogger was the football game on television. . . , the straddle-jump hug one young woman gave a man, and the fish feeding," the *Deseret Morning News* reported. "At 9 p.m., two women, using their bare hands, dropped three goldfish one at a time into a huge fish tank. Dozens of partygoers cheered as a lionfish, a sop fish, and a squirrel fish successfully hunted the prey."

"Bare hands"? "Straddle-jump hug"? Somebody better call the Honor Code Office right away.

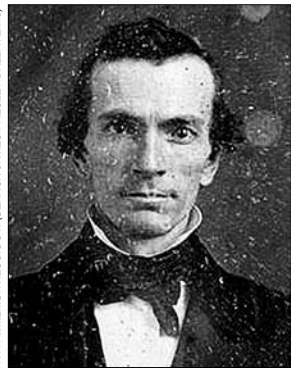


JASON OLSON, DESERET MORNING NEWS

Publication was delayed while the 1833 Book of Commandments was printed. A mob then destroyed the printing office, and the hymnal was again postponed while the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants was printed.

The 1833 Book of Commandments is believed to be the rarest of LDS books, with one copy selling for \$500,000 and another for \$350,000. The 1830 Palmyra edition of the Book of Mormon, the most sought-after LDS book, currently sells for about \$90,000.

DAGUERREOTYPE FOUND—IS IT OLIVER COWDERY?



HTTP://MEMORY.LOC.GOV, (SEARCH JAMES PRESLEY BALL ITEM 6)

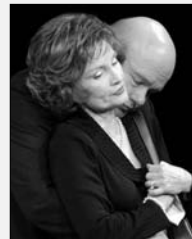
A RECENTLY DISCOVERED daguerreotype (an early form of photography) could be the image of Oliver Cowdery, "second elder of [the] church" and one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. The image, officially titled "Unidentified man, half-length portrait, with arm resting on table with tablecloth" is part of the digital collection of the Library of Congress.

On 6 February, Patrick A. Bishop, a CES employee, was using the Library of Congress website to research 1840 clothing styles when he found the daguerreotype, which Bishop immediately recognized as Oliver Cowdery. Bishop told the *LDS Church News* that there is a 95-percent certainty that the daguerreotype is indeed of Oliver. A grid comparison with a Cowdery engraving made from another daguerreotype matches the location and shape of the facial features with exactness.

The daguerreotype was made by J. P. Ball, who in 1845 opened shop in Cincinnati and in 1846 traveled around Ohio as an itinerant photographer. Cowdery lived at the time in Tiffin, Ohio, 180 miles north of Cincinnati, and he could have traveled to Cincinnati because of his involvement in politics.

In the mid-1990s, Ron Romig, head archivist for the Community of Christ, revealed the existence of a daguerreotype believed to be an image of Joseph Smith.

Sunbursts



CAROL LYNN PEARSON'S new play, *Facing East*, is going on tour. Dealing with a Mormon couple's grief over the suicide of their gay son, the play will have a May-June run at New York's off-Broadway Atlantic Stage 2 theatre and an August run in San Francisco's Theatre Rhinoceros. More details will

be posted soon at PLANBTHEATERCOMPANY.ORG.

A CONFERENCE FOR LDS graduate students at divinity schools or who are in religious studies programs will be held 16–17 February at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut. The conference, "Faith and Knowledge: Latter-day Saints in Religious Studies" will feature discussions of the role of LDS scholars in the academy as well as other topics related to Mormon theology and scholarship. Several panels are scheduled, and Richard L. Bushman and Terry Givens will be featured speakers. For more information, visit FAITHANDKNOWLEDGE.ORG.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY of Religion has just approved a new program unit on Mormon studies to begin at its November 2007 annual meeting in San Diego, California. The Mormon Studies Consultation will sponsor or co-sponsor one to two sessions at each annual meeting for at least the next three years. For information about the consultation and to receive the initial call for papers, contact Dan Wotherspoon at DAN@SUNSTONEONLINE.COM.

MORMON STORIES PODCAST has resumed after a several-month hiatus. MormonStories, the 800-pound gorilla of LDS-themed podcasts hosted by John P. Dehlin, averaged nearly 3,000 listeners at its height. The first podcast in the re-launch is a discussion of Deseret Book's recent acquisition of its major publishing and retailing competitor (see story, page 77). To subscribe to the free podcast, visit MORMONSTORIES.ORG

BYU LEERY ABOUT SCREENING “STATES OF GRACE”

RICHARD DUTCHER'S FILM, *STATES OF GRACE*, IS GETTING the cold shoulder where he might have least expected it: his alma mater, Brigham Young University. In a 13 November *BYU News Net* editorial, BYU student Julie Espinosa said she approached five professors or club presidents with a proposal to host a free on-campus screening and discussion of *States of Grace*. Despite the fact that only one had seen the film, all five declined.

In her commentary, Espinosa quotes Brigham Young, who said that the Saints should study not only good and its effects,



MAIN STREET MOVIE COMPANY

but also evil and its consequences. “Why is it, then, that at Brother Brigham’s namesake university, we often avoid works of art that challenge a cotton-candy worldview and show instead dramatic, cosmic struggles of good versus evil?”

Media watch

THE PASSION OF MORMON

MORMONS HAVE BEEN BATTLING BRAVELY ON THE blogosphere since the release of *Apocalypto*, Mel Gibson’s gory epic set in a pre-Columbian Mayan world. And even though the movie is rated R for violence and nudity, some Latter-day Saints have succumbed to the temptation to see it. While many non-Mormons may wonder if Gibson has created an accurate depiction of the crumbling Mayan civilization, some LDS wonder if the director of *The Passion of the Christ* has created a faith-promoting film around some of the themes and narratives of the Book of Mormon.

“The movie is very very gritty,” wrote a blogger at FairLDS.org. “It shows the depravity of Lamanite society, post-[Book of Mormon]. Mormon and Moroni were not joking around.” A thread at MillennialStar.com starts by asking those who saw the movie “how it affected how you visualize the Book of Mormon” but the thread quickly turns into a long debate about the merits of showing violence in movies.

Outside the Mormon blogosphere, some Latter-day Saints used *Apocalypto*-related forums to bear their testimonies—a

move that invited harsh criticism. At YouTube.com, an apparently LDS blogger wrote that “the young man in the clip with the pregnant wife is one of the last good people descended from Nephi the son of Lehi told in the Book of Mormon.” To this, another blogger replied, “Wow, I had no idea the calendar turned back to [the] 16th century, when the Catholic Church elaborated the ridiculous theory you are talking of. The theory of the lost tribe of Israel was a Catholic patch to justify the obvious challenge that the existence of the New World presented to Judeo-Christian mythology. By the way, this theory has been widely discredited by anyone that was born with a brain in the 20th century.”

A FAIR blogger wrote that he actually ran into Gibson in Mexico while the director was wrapping up shooting for the film and asked him if he had shot in Cerro Vigia, Book of Mormon scholar John L. Sorenson’s proposed site for Ramah Cumorah. Blissfully unaware of Sorenson’s limited geography model, Gibson reportedly replied that Cerro Vigia “wasn’t in the story” and that he “hadn’t been able to do any touristy stuff because ‘it has been crazy around here.’”

JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPTS BY HUGO OLAIZ AND JOHN CHARLES DUFFY



That was NOTHING like “The Testaments!”

