

UPDATE

LDS CHURCH EXPRESSES "REGRET"
FOR MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE

THE LDS CHURCH ISSUED A STATEMENT EXPRESSING "profound regret" for the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the 1857 episode in which Mormon settlers in southern Utah killed some 120 California-bound emigrants.



Elder Henry B. Eyring speaks at a memorial service for the 150th anniversary of the Mountain Meadow Massacre

"We express profound regret for the massacre carried out in this valley 150 years ago today and for the undue and untold suffering experienced by the victims then and by their relatives to the present time," said Apostle Henry B. Eyring, speaking on behalf of the First Presidency during a memorial service held on the sesquicentennial anniversary of the massacre. The event was held at the massacre site,

which is owned by the LDS Church and located some 35 miles west of Cedar City, Utah, near present-day Enterprise. The service was part of a series of events held by three organizations that reunited descendants of the families massacred there on 11 September.

"A separate expression of regret is owed to the Paiute people who have unjustly borne for too long the principal blame for what occurred during the massacre," Eyring added. "Although the extent of their involvement is disputed, it is believed they would not have participated without the direction and stimulus provided by local Church leaders and members."

The statement does not include the word "apology" nor ask for forgiveness. While Richard E. Turley, managing director of Family and Church History, told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that the statement was meant to be an apology, an Associated Press story claimed that "church leaders were adamant that the statement should not be construed as an apology."

"We don't use the word 'apology,'" Church spokesman Mark Tuttle told AP reporter Paul Foy. "We used 'profound regret.'"

According to the statement, "the responsibility for the massacre lies with local leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the regions near Mountain Meadows who also held civic and military positions and with members of the Church acting under their direction."

"I don't think shoving it off on local [Mormon] leadership is

an apology," historian Will Bagley told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "Did you hear an 'I'm sorry?'" Bagley has argued in his book *Blood of the Prophets* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2002) that Brigham Young lied about the massacre for twenty years and refused to go after the Mormon perpetrators.

Descendants of the massacre victims likewise recognized that the First Presidency statement had stopped short of an apology. Patty Norris, president of the Mountain Meadows Massacre Descendants group, called the statement an "almost apology."

"Simply saying 'I'm sorry' would go a long way," said Priscilla Dickson, a descendant of the Tackett family, which was among the emigrants.

This latest statement on the massacre echoed language used by President Gordon B. Hinckley nearly a decade ago. During the 1999 dedication of a new monument at the massacre site, President Hinckley said: "We express our regrets over what happened there, and we all need to put this behind us."

As Scrutiny Intensifies, Descendants Request Control of Site

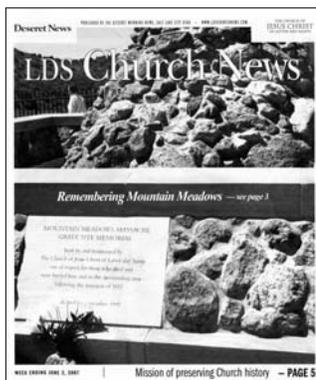
THE STATEMENT OF REGRET COMES AT A TIME OF intense media attention around the massacre and all things Mormon. Released in late August and using the massacre as historical background, the film *September Dawn* offers a hostile, disparaging view of Latter-day Saints, who are depicted as bloodthirsty, fanatical, and conspiratorial. Although much more balanced in tone, the four-hour PBS documentary *The Mormons*, released last April, also focused attention on the massacre, to which it dedicated an entire segment.

Ten days before the anniversary, two of the three existing groups of massacre descendants announced publicly their desire for the LDS Church to allow either federal control or private trusteeship of the site. Phil Bolinger and Scott Fancher of the Mountain Meadows Monument Foundation first delivered this request to Church Historian Marlin K. Jensen last April, but President Hinckley turned it down.

"It's not right for the people who had complicity [in] the killings to be the grave owners," Bolinger complained to the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "I asked [Jensen], 'How do you think the Kennedy family would feel if the Lee Harvey Oswald family had control of the Kennedy tomb?'"

The foundation is also considering asking the Church to remove from its records of vicarious temple ordinances the names of all massacre victims and survivors. Elder Jensen told the *Deseret Morning News* that the only such request he knows of to date was made by Scott Fancher to have two or three names removed, which request was granted. Jensen added that such requests are considered on an individual basis and "under appropriate circumstances, we do grant requests to the extent that we no longer display those records in our public database. We have no way, as a church, of undoing ordinances that have been performed."

The Church Tells Its Side of the Story



The Church News features Mountain Meadows Massacre Anniversary on its 2 June cover

primary sources. Since then, Turley has appeared in numerous forums reaffirming that their “marching orders” are to tell the whole truth and to “present the evidence as we find it—honestly, openly and candidly.”

The book, which places the blame for the massacre on local LDS leaders rather than on Brigham Young, will be released

IN 2001, RICHARD TURLEY, managing director of the Church’s Family and Church History Department, teamed up with Glen Leonard, director of the Museum of Church History and Art, and Ronald Walker, a professor of history at BYU’s Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS History, to write a book about the massacre. They reportedly worked on the project under the direction of the First Presidency and had unrestricted access to LDS-owned manuscripts and pri-

mary sources. Since then, Turley has appeared in numerous forums reaffirming that their “marching orders” are to tell the whole truth and to “present the evidence as we find it—honestly, openly and candidly.”

later this year by Oxford University Press. Although in 2002 it was announced that the title would be *Tragedy at Mountain Meadows*, in the end, a less euphemistic title was chosen: *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*.

In a reversal of the silence that has prevailed in official LDS publications for many years, shortly after the broadcast of PBS’s *The Mormons*, articles about the 1857 killings appeared in *The Church News*, *Ensign*, and on the official LDS website, LDS.ORG. In an unprecedented move, the *Church News* made Mountain Meadows Massacre its 2 June cover story. The two-page article is accompanied by a sidebar defending why Brigham Young could not have ordered the massacre.

The *Ensign* article, written by Turley, implies that Brigham Young and other leaders did not conspire to hide any of the facts after the massacre because “their understanding of the extent of the settlers’ involvement and the terrible details of the crime came incrementally over time.” The article briefly mentions that “in 1870 [Church leaders] excommunicated Isaac Haight and John D. Lee” but does not explain why it took twelve years to discipline the men. Nor does the article mention that Lee was later executed in what has been widely regarded as an “official sacrifice”—as Mormon historian Juanita Brooks put it—so that the charges against all other organizers and participants would be dropped.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?—PAST LDS STATEMENTS ABOUT THE MASSACRE

Below are samples of statements about the Mountain Meadows Massacre published in official LDS publications or delivered by Church leaders.

“Leading spirits among the white settlers . . . determined upon the destruction of the emigrants. . . . The conception was diabolical; the execution of it horrible; and the responsibility for both must rest upon those men who conceived and executed it; . . . not with [the Indians].

B.H. ROBERTS, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1930

“The most horrible and shocking crime ever perpetrated within the border of [Utah], . . . it was the deed of enraged Indians aided by a number of white men, who took vengeance into their hands for wrongs committed by a few of the emigrants.”

JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH, *Essentials in Church History*, 1950

“The white men at a given signal, fell upon the unarmed emigrant men. At the same time hundreds of Indians, who had laid [sic] in ambush, rushed upon the hapless party. In five minutes the terrible tragedy was enacted.”

WILLIAM EDWIN BERRETT, *The Restored Church*, 1961

In “what may be considered the most unfortunate incident in the history of the LDS Church, . . . a group of Mormon settlers in southern Utah joined with nearby Indians in killing all but some of the youngest members of a group of non-Mormon emigrants en route to California.”

RONALD K. ESPLIN & RICHARD E. TURLEY, JR, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1992

“No one knows fully what happened at Mountain Meadows. I don’t, nor can it be explained, but we express our regrets over what happened there, and we all need to put this behind us. . . . We need to convey a spirit of reconciliation and of peace. We need to eliminate the hatred.”

GORDON B. HINCKLEY, during the dedication of a new monument at Mountain Meadows, 1999

POLYGAMIST LEADER FOUND GUILTY



AP PHOTO / JUD BURKETT, POOL



TRENT NELSON, SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Above: Warren Jeffs, left, and counsel react to the verdicts. Below: Elissa Wall talks to the media after Jeffs was found guilty on two counts of rape as an accomplice.

WARREN S. JEFFS, PRESIDENT of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was found guilty of two counts of being an accomplice to rape in connection with a 2001 ceremony in which he married Elissa Wall, who was 14, and Allen Steed, 19.

Wall's testimony against Jeffs is believed to have been central in obtaining a guilty verdict. "This trial has not been about religion or a vendetta," said Wall after the verdict was read on 25 September. "It was simply about child abuse and preventing further abuse. I hope that all FLDS girls

and women will understand that, no matter what anyone may say, we are created equal."

"You do not have to surrender your rights or your spiritual sovereignty," she added. "I know how hard it is, but please stand up and fight for your voice and power of choice. I will continue to fight for you."

The trial received wide attention from the national media and was aired live on Court TV.

Due to be sentenced on 12 November, Jeffs faces five years to life in prison for each count of rape as an accomplice. Jeffs is likely to go next to Mohave County, Arizona, where he faces more charges related to teen brides. Also, he faces a federal count of flight to avoid prosecution in Utah and is named in several additional lawsuits, including one that alleges misconduct as a trustee for a property trust connected to his church.

The day after the Jeffs verdict was announced, Utah prosecutors charged Steed, Wall's ex-husband, with rape for having sex with Wall against her will. The now 26-year-old truck driver surrendered himself on 3 October, posted \$5,000 bail, and was released the next morning.

ROMNEY'S MORMONISM CONTINUES TO INTRIGUE MEDIA AND PUNDITS

REPORTERS, POLITICAL CAMPAIGNERS, BLOGGERS, and LDS Church public relations staff have been busier than ever as Mitt Romney's U.S. presidential campaign goes into full swing.

"Religion has not played so prominent a role in a U.S. national election since 1960, when John F. Kennedy became the first Catholic to be elected president," wrote Tom Raum for the Associated Press. Yet according to Raum, Kennedy has an advantage over Romney: when Kennedy ran, Catholics made up roughly 28 percent of the U.S. population while Mormons today represent only 2 percent.

"The differences between Kennedy and Romney are in the nose count," says political historian Stephen Hess. "The religion issue may have hurt Kennedy, but it sure helped him at the same time. . . . There is no way that capturing the Mormon vote is going to win Romney anything."

In his campaigning, Romney frequently tells conservative Christians that he shares their values and convictions. "The Bible is for me the word of God," Romney says. "I also believe that Jesus Christ is my savior," he adds, approximating the language evangelicals use to describe their faith. Yet some have noticed Romney's defensiveness, frustration, and even hostility when asked about the specifics of Mormonism.

A much publicized YouTube clip shows Romney engaged in a heated argument with conservative radio reporter Jan Mickelson during an off-the-air commercial break. Though Romney insisted that he was not distancing himself from his faith, Mickelson accused him of trying to "hermetically seal" his religious views away from his political ones. Mickelson further suggests that Romney should say he "made a mistake" by not taking an anti-abortion stance as Massachusetts governor, since a pro-choice position isn't in accordance with LDS theology. In responding to Mickelson, Romney downplayed LDS opposition to abortion and insisted that not all Mormons are pro-life.

"Every Mormon should be pro-life?" Romney countered.

"If that's what your church says," Mickelson answered.

"That's *not* what my church says!" Romney said. "There are leaders of my church who are pro-choice. You're wrong! That's your problem. . . . I understand my faith better than you do."

Romney added later, "I don't like coming on the air and having you go after my church and me. I'm not running as a Mormon, and I get a little tired of coming on a show like yours and having it all about Mormon [sic]. . . . You're trying to tell me that I'm not a faithful Mormon, and I'm not running to talk about Mormonism."

In another example of Romney's growing frustration with the media, Real Clear Politics blogger Mark Davis recently reported that when he asked Romney about the lack

of archaeological support for the Book of Mormon, Romney replied, "I really don't think it's productive for me to say, 'let me tell you about this doctrine or that doctrine.' I'm not a spokesman for my church."

"Senator Kennedy," Romney continued, playing the part of an imaginary reporter posing questions to JFK during his presidential campaign, "Do you really believe that that wafer turns into the body of Christ; do you really believe that? Has there been chemical analysis [done] in the stomachs of people after they've taken communion? These are not questions you ask someone who's running for President."

Some Mormons have voiced offense as what they see as Romney's misleading answers when asked about particulars of Mormonism. A recent *New York Times* story quotes Logan, Utah, radio host Tom Grover saying that some of his listeners were incensed when Romney called polygamy "awful" (see SUNSTONE, June 2007, 74-75). "That really left a bad taste in people's mouths," Grover said. "That's a tough thing for people to hear when their ancestors sacrificed a lot to live that life. They probably wouldn't bring polygamy back, but they honor the place of it in church history."

Rivals Attack the Church, Apologize

AS ROMNEY'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE GOP NOMINATION gains momentum, three of his rivals were discovered using religion to dissuade Republicans from voting for the Mormon candidate. In mid-June, an aide to GOP candidate Sam Brownback was reprimanded for sending an email to Iowa Republican leaders in which she stated that Mormons are not Christian. "Theologically, the only thing Christianity and the LDS church [have] in common is the name of Jesus Christ, and the LDS Jesus is not the same Jesus of the Christian faith," wrote Emma Nemecek, the Brownback campaign's southeastern Iowa field director. "The LDS church has never been accepted by the Christian Council of Churches." Brownback apologized to Romney for the email.

John McCain's campaign has also been accused of derogatory and inaccurate comments about the LDS faith. According to the *Boston Globe*, Chad Workman, chair of McCain's campaign in Warren County, Iowa, told a group of Republican voters that the LDS Church helped fund Hamas terrorists and compared the Church's treatment of women to that of the Taliban. One 22 June, the LDS Church issued a statement explaining that it does send money to an Islamic charity but strictly for humanitarian purposes and through reputable organizations. McCain later apologized for the accusation.

In a third incident, a staffer for GOP contender Rudy Giuliani provided bloggers with copies of a *Salt Lake Tribune* story about the White Horse Prophecy, according to which, in the last days, the U.S. Constitution will be hanging by a thread and Mormons will save it. Giuliani senior advisor Tony Carbonetti called the email "not acceptable" and apologized to Romney.

The LDS Campaign for a Positive Image

AS STORIES ABOUT THE LDS church continue to appear, the LDS Church has mounted its own campaign to educate the media about polygamy, to give its own version of the events surrounding the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and to capitalize on what LDS Public Affairs calls an "astounding increase of visibility."

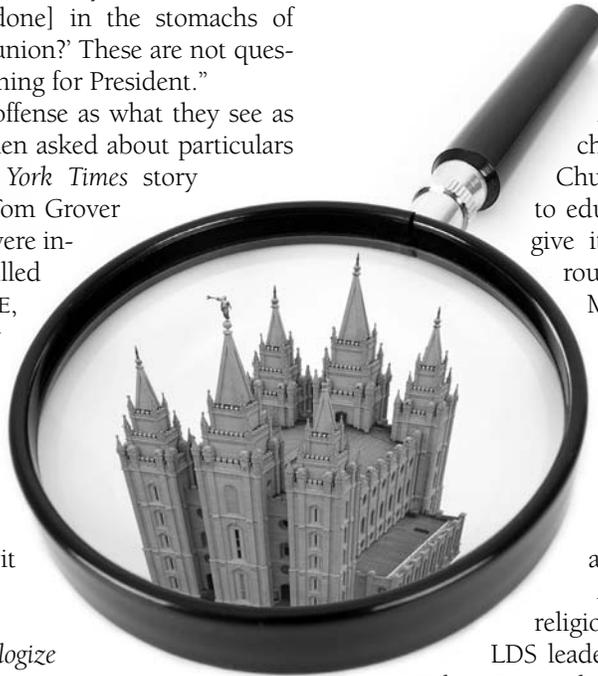
"Public Affairs staff have walked a narrow but very distinct line," reads a 26 July release, "unwilling to discuss political issues but very willing to talk to the news media and others about the Church itself."

According to professor of American religious history Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, LDS leaders know that Romney's bid for the White House has ramifications for the Church. "A

Romney presidency is not simply a vehicle for one man's political aspirations," she wrote in the 21 August issue of *The Christian Century*. "It is the opportunity to have 'a Mormon in the White House.' The LDS Church, anxious to represent itself positively, has capitalized on the media attention to try to dispel old myths and to garner positive attention."

According to the department's own statement, LDS Public Affairs is "breaking the Church's messages down to their simplest form" and trying to educate reporters on four specific points: First, that Mormons are Christian. Second, that there are significant differences between Mormonism and historical Christianity. Third, that the Book of Mormon provides a deeper understanding about the meaning of life. Fourth, that reporters are encouraged to visit church services and "witness firsthand the effect of faith in individual lives."

Despite the Public Affairs department's attempts to make LDS positions more understandable, Maffly-Kipp doubts that either the Church or the Romney campaign will succeed in demystifying Mormons for the general public. "Even if Romney were to explain his religious beliefs at length," she writes, "I doubt that most people would feel more at ease. It is hard to imagine anything Romney says on the subject would be taken at face value by the many Americans already predisposed to be suspicious of the LDS Church."



People

Deceased. President JAMES E. FAUST, 87, second counselor in the First Presidency, of “causes incident to age.” Following six years of service as an Assistant to the Twelve and member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, Faust was ordained an apostle in October 1978, serving in the Quorum of the Twelve until his call to the First Presidency in March 1995.

Born in Delta, Utah, Faust served as an LDS missionary to Brazil, 1939–42, and as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He attended the University of Utah, where he eventually earned a law degree, a career he practiced until his appointment as a general authority in 1972. During his career, Faust, a Democrat, served terms as a member of the Utah Legislature and president of the Utah Bar Association, and was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights.

A high school and college runner, Faust’s physical mobility had been limited the last few years of his life, leaving him to deliver conference talks and other remarks while seated. He is survived by his wife, Ruth, five children, twenty-five grandchildren, and twenty-eight great-grandchildren.



Deceased. J.D. WILLIAMS, 81, longtime political science professor at the University of Utah. Williams wrote articles for *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue* about the intersection between the LDS Church and the state, ran political campaigns for Lowell Bennion in 1964 and 1972, and later ran unsuccessfully as a Democrat for the U.S. Senate. In a 1967 *Time* article, Williams called the now-defunct ban on blacks holding the priesthood “unchristian.” In 1983, when a number of LDS scholars were interviewed by their bishops, he called the proceedings “an inquisition.” After the September Six excommunications of 1993, Williams helped organize the Olive Branch, a group that gathered signatures for a statement calling for reconciliation, which ran in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. The J.D. Williams Scholarship Fund has been established in his honor at the University of Utah Development Office.

Appointed. STEVEN C. WHEELWRIGHT, 63, as president of BYU-Hawaii. A former Harvard business professor, Wheelwright has worked extensively with another Harvard business school alumnus, Kim Clark, who is the president of BYU-Idaho. The two men have written several books together, and Wheelwright was a member of Harvard’s faculty when Clark was admitted to Harvard.



NEW TEMPLE RECOMMENDS TO INCLUDE BAR CODES

WILL BAR CODE SCANNERS SOON BECOME THE NEW “all-seeing eyes” of Mormonism? Bishops and stake presidencies are now busy re-interviewing all temple recommend holders so they can replace their current recommends with barcoded I.D.s that will be scanned at the door. LDS temples are now equipped with scanners, and within a few months, the Church plans to announce that the non-barcoded recommends will no longer be accepted for entry.

According to an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the new measure is being taken for security reasons, because fake temple recommends are being created with tools as simple as a computer and color laser printer. Typing the word “temple recommend” in Google Images pulls up seven images of temple recommends, including four showing the design currently in use. Even though current recommends include a small print disclaimer according to which the recommend “remains the property of the Church, is not transferable, and must be surrendered on demand,” cases of abuse have occurred.

Additionally, the new technology will allow the Church to create statistics for temple attendance by ward, stake, or any other demographic. This aspect of the new technology has led some members to express concerns about how their personal information might be used. Will bishops know the names of those in their congregations who are—and are not—regular temple attendees?

This is not the first time temple recommends have included electronic encoding: During the 1980s, recommends featured a magnetic strip containing a patron’s personal information. Recommends were tied to a temple’s “T.R.S.” (Temple Recording System) and were swiped when patrons entered any temple or participated in an endowment session. In the early 1990s, the TRS was simplified and the magnetic strips phased out as the computer systems they required were too sophisticated to maintain in Third World countries.



“I hear you also get a discount at Deseret Book”

JEANNETTE ATWOOD

CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS CALL OF ONE-MILLIONTH MISSIONARY

WITHOUT ATTEMPTING THE IMPOSSIBLE TASK OF DETERMINING HIS OR HER NAME, ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD of the Quorum of the Twelve announced that the Church has called its one-millionth missionary. The missionary program that started 177 years ago, when Joseph Smith's brother Samuel left on a mission with a few copies of the Book of Mormon in a knapsack, today reaches 145 countries, teaches Mormon tenets in 164 languages, and deploys some 53,000 full-time volunteers.

"There's been an explosion of young men, young women serving in their own countries," Elder Ballard said at a 25 June press conference held at the Provo Missionary Training Center. "They can teach the gospel in their own language and own culture, and it's made a tremendous difference."

The press conference showcased the diversity of individuals called today as missionaries. They included a couple from Kenya called to preside over a mission in Nigeria; a pair of young sister missionaries, one from South Korea and one from Mexico, serving on Temple Square in downtown Salt Lake City; a couple from Utah serving a humanitarian mission that takes them all over the world helping to provide clean water to communities; and a pair of young men, one from Brazil and one from Idaho, who just entered the Missionary Training Center in preparation to serve in Japan.

"This is a success story," says John-Charles Duffy, who has written for SUNSTONE on the evolution of the missionary discussions (see September 2005 issue: 28–46). "The size of the LDS missionary program is a testament to the idealism of church members and their spirit of volunteerism—their willingness to offer their time, money, and energy. Missionaries' willingness to serve is indispensable for church growth, and the experience can transform the lives of the missionaries themselves."



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY HUGO OLAZ

A . . . SISTER?!

PRES. HINCKLEY CELEBRATES 97TH BIRTHDAY, VISITS NEW BUILDING

PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY CELEBRATED HIS 97th birthday by visiting Brigham Young University and helping dedicate a building named after him. Finished in record time, sixty days ahead of schedule, the Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center began construction twelve months ago, when President Hinckley celebrated his 96th birthday at the groundbreaking ceremony.

"This is a very large building to carry the name of a small man," Hinckley said of the \$35 million edifice. "As I creak into old age with . . . a pacemaker and hearing aids, I sit back and think of days gone by."

The dedicatory prayer was offered by Pres. Hinckley's son, Richard G. Hinckley of the Quorum of the Seventy.

According to BYU associate advancement vice president John Lewis, contractors worked at a frantic pace because "everyone recognized how much they wanted President Hinckley to see the building." Although the effort was never announced publicly, crews worked six-day weeks to reach their goal.

President Hinckley donated one of the hammers he owns,



President Hinckley good-naturedly pats a bust of himself in the main entrance of BYU's new Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center

inscribed with the initials G.H., to be placed in a fifty-year time capsule.

"Will you be there [when they open the capsule in fifty years]?" President Hinckley quipped to BYU President Cecil O. Samuelson.

"That'll be up to you!" Samuelson replied.