



From the Chair: Dr. Matthew Bowman

A Bright and Dynamic Future

I'll begin with a line from Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

I am beginning my second year as Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University, and I've often heard Newton's line in my ears as I've clambered onto the shoulders of Patrick Mason and Richard Bushman, my predecessors who are giants indeed. But as I've gotten my feet under me, I can see more clearly the prospects and potential for our program, and I am glad to say that the future looks bright.

I have relied on the counsel of both Dr. Mason and Dr. Bushman and I am grateful for them. I also owe a great deal to my generous colleagues, my engaged and enthusiastic students, and the Mormon Studies Council. These three are the groups who have a

special interest in this Chair: the academics who view me as a colleague, the faith community that has supported Mormon Studies, and the students who are drawn to CGU because of it.

I wanted to come to Claremont Graduate University because it meant a lot to me to hold a post where these three communities overlap. The work academics do is important—what is written in an academic journal in January might be repeated by a politician in July and becomes common knowledge by November. But I believe academics can and should do more to reach people outside the universities. Our students especially are eager to see those bridges being built, and to figure out how to do it themselves. They have a better sense than many of us about what will matter in the future.

All of this is particularly true when it comes to those in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to the other churches in the Restoration tradition Joseph Smith founded. I believe the questions academics ask matter to people of faith, and those who study these traditions likewise can benefit from attentiveness to the living dynamics of their communities. Both the academy and the Church will be stronger for a friendly and robust relationship, and while I occupy this Chair, I hope to give it breath.

Here is an example. The major project to which I am devoting much of my time and resources is the Center for Global Mormon Studies, and in particular an online project we call the **Mormonism and Migration Project**. We are gathering stories told by members of the Church worldwide about how their faith has changed their lives or driven them to move, literally or culturally. We are collecting video, audio, photographs, and documents, and from this great expanse of material we are asking questions. How does the Church look different in Prague or Paraguay than it does in Provo? How do people from different cultures or religious backgrounds find in it different things to value? What does all of this mean for the Church as it continues to expand?

These are questions of interest to academics, who call this process “globalization.” But they also matter to the Church itself. And they fascinate our students, who are delighted for the opportunity to learn skills other than simply reading and writing: Our students are making movies, programming websites, and conducting interviews. I hope, in short, this is a conversation that will cross the borders of the university and open a dialogue in which we will all have something to contribute.

Thank you for your support and your interest. My students and I appreciate your contributions to this important work.



From the Council: Christie Frandsen, Chair

Not everybody gets what they wish for, but I did. From the moment I first heard those soul-stirring stories about the Mormon pioneers, I wanted to be one. And now I am!

As the first woman chair of the Mormon Studies Council at Claremont Graduate University, I feel very much like a modern-day pioneer, forging new paths in this unprecedented time of pandemic challenges, finding more ways to meet the needs of our Mormon Studies students and to reach out in meaningful connections with you, our community of faithful supporters. It is a great honor to work closely with

Dr. Matthew Bowman and the CGU administration as we build on the strengths of the past and explore new directions for the future.

I see the Mormon Studies Council both as a scaffolding and a bridge.

As a scaffolding, we sustain the academic work of Dr. Bowman and his students in the Claremont Mormon Studies program by raising money to provide student stipends, to fund research by the Center for Global Mormonism, and to bring to campus important scholars for guest lectures and conferences. The work of academia has always relied on the support of patrons. Without patronage, the marvelous intellectual and technological progress that blesses our lives every minute of every day would never have happened. The Mormon Studies Council provides that essential patronage, with the help of our growing family of donors.

But the Council is also a bridge connecting the world of academics with the wider community of Latter-day Saints. Sometimes the work and language of scholars seems foreign or irrelevant to our everyday lives and concerns, especially now with so many pressing issues in the world. The job of our Council is to bring scholars and saints together in real, understandable dialogue about things that really matter - things that can both open our minds and touch our hearts, things that can help us navigate a life of faith, hope, and charity in our troubled and often divisive world.

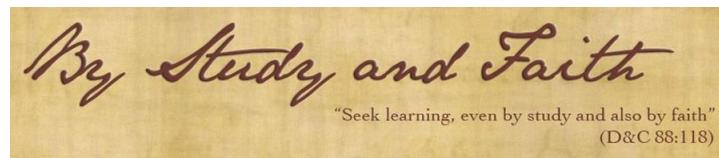
During the past few weeks, the Council has been working hard to renovate the scaffolding and the bridge. The leadership change provided a golden opportunity to look with fresh eyes on our purpose and direction, and we saw relationships we want to strengthen, especially with our wider community of loyal friends and supporters – with you!

We believe we have the ideal way to do that with the inauguration of the Mormon Studies Council virtual fireside series *By Study and Faith*. We are giving you an amazing opportunity to hear from some of the most distinguished Latter-day Saint scholar/disciples,

including Richard Bushman, Judge Thomas Griffith, and Neylan McBaine, speaking about issues that matter deeply to each of us. I urge you to read more about this in the Events section of this newsletter.

I hope you can tell how excited I am about Claremont Mormon Studies, our upcoming firesides, and this unexpected opportunity to lead the Mormon Studies Council in these historic, challenging, sometimes confusing times. The work we are doing can make a difference in the world and can make a difference in your own life.

I invite you to join me in this important cause by attending our events and becoming a donor partner.



The Howard W. Hunter Foundation and Claremont Mormon Studies Council are pleased to announce the inauguration of a virtual fireside series “By Study and Faith,” coming to your home starting September 13 with Richard Bushman.

We envision these evenings as a chance for you to have a more personal connection (via the magic of Zoom) with some of the most distinguished Latter-day Saint disciple/scholars who will address the compelling issues of our time, issues affecting the lives of all of us who are trying to navigate a life of faith, hope, and charity in a troubled and often divisive world.

Our first season includes a deeper look into Joseph Smith and his First Vision, the challenge of maintaining Christlike charity in our polarized nation, the role of women in the Church historically and today, and ways we can look both faithfully and openly at our complicated Church history. These are issues that we all care about and wrestle with, questions that require both study and faith to resolve.

Fall Schedule

September 13, 6:30 pm

Richard Bushman on “Art and Vision: An
Illustrated Lecture on the First Vision”



In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Restoration of the Gospel, Richard Bushman, the pre-eminent scholar of Joseph Smith and first Chair of Mormon Studies at CGU, will share his insights using the art of the First Vision. Dr. Bushman will help us understand what this Vision meant to Joseph, to the religious world, and most importantly, what it can mean to you and me today. There will be a Q&A following his presentation.

October 18, 6:30 pm

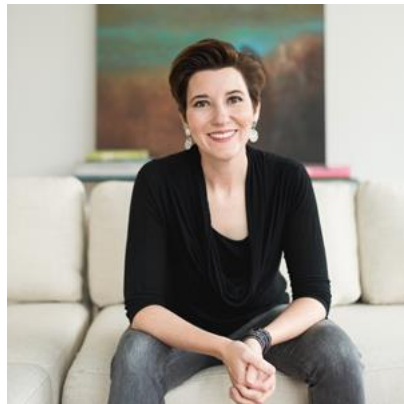
Thomas Griffith on “Civic Charity and the
Constitution”



Latter-day Saints claim a special stewardship for the U. S. Constitution. What does that stewardship look like in a time of political tribalism when the nations' 'bonds of affection' are unraveling? Thomas Griffith, former judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals and former General Counsel for BYU, will address these pressing issues that affect every Latter-day Saint living in America today. His insights will be especially timely as we approach the November Presidential election.

November 8, 6:30 pm

Neylan McBaine on “Thinking Women: LDS Leadership in the National Women’s Movement”



In February 1870, a Utah woman - an LDS woman - became the first American woman to vote under an equal suffrage law. Latter-day Saint women continued to play a vital and pioneering role in the national women's

advocacy efforts of the 19th century. Over the past three years, Neylan McBaine, author and co-founder and CEO of Better Days 2020, has been amplifying this story and seeing the power it has to change our perceptions of ourselves as members of the Church today. With never-before heard stories, complex personalities and dynamics, and larger-than-life characters, McBaine will explore a forgotten and surprising era of our communal history.

Looking Ahead

Look for our email announcement arriving very soon with more details and links. Please join us and invite your friends and family!

How to Connect to the Zoom Webinar:

When: September 13, 2020 6:30 pm Pacific Time

“Art and Vision: An Illustrated Lecture on the First Vision” with Richard Bushman

Click here to access the Zoom Webinar

Passcode: 066883

When: October 18, 2020 6:30 pm Pacific Time

“Civic Charity and the Constitution” with Thomas Griffith

Click here to access the Zoom Webinar

Passcode: 786923

January 2021

“Insights from a Church Historian: Why the Joseph Smith Papers Matter” with Chase Kirkham

February 2021

“Voices from the Past: What We Learn About Faith and History from the Making of *Saints*”

Claremont Mormon Women Oral History Collection

Caroline Kline, Director

In 2009, Claudia Bushman founded the Claremont Mormon Women Oral History Collection with the goal to archive the experiences of everyday Mormon women living in the 20th and 21st centuries. Seeing a lack of contemporary women's voices in materials about the Church, Dr. Bushman knew that an oral history project could begin to fill this gap. Oral history, she understood, is a valuable method for capturing the voices of marginalized groups that historians might overlook.

The collection now has over 200 moving and frank accounts of women's lives from around the world. These oral histories open up new possibilities for understanding women's priorities, concerns, and theological understandings. They also provide insight into the ways Mormonism adapts to different circumstances.

For example, Sofia, a member in Veracruz, Mexico, gives us insight into the ways Mormonism has added meaning and opportunities to women's lives in a Global Southern context. Sofia grew up with a step-father so abusive that at 9 years old she ran away to live with and work for another family. She married at 16, but she unhappily recounted, "My husband drank a lot. He beat me." However, as a young mother, she "found refuge in the gospel," and the Church became her new family.

In the Church, Sofia found personal uplift, literacy, and skills to support herself. Here she describes some of her progression:

I never went to school. I never got an education. I learned to read with the Book of Mormon, with the Bible, reading books, scriptures, and I started writing this way too. I didn't take any classes. I now realize I can stand up and give a talk, give my opinion on certain things, talk and teach when it's expected of me as a leader in Relief Society. That helped me a lot inside and outside of the Church.

Sofia recounted a steady move away from violence and poverty and towards literacy and social mobility. From Relief Society Enrichment meetings, she learned to make pies, which she turned into a small business. Sofia's story reveals how important Relief Society meetings were for several women in this area, who created marketable businesses from skills acquired in church meetings. It also reveals how Relief Society leaders in Veracruz were able to use this US-originated program in ways appropriate to their circumstances, ways that expanded women's self-esteem and financial horizons. Sofia's oral history is one of many that gives new insight into the ways global Saints adopt and adapt Mormonism into their own contexts. Moreover, it stands as one woman's unique, poignant story of finding liberation in her chosen church.

To participate in this oral history project, please contact caroline.kline2@cgu.edu

mormonwomenohp.org

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Rebekah Call



Rebekah Call is a third-year PhD student in the Department of Religion, on the Critical Comparative Scripture track. She is studying for her comprehensive exams.

Here is a conversation she recently had with Matthew Bowman:

MATT: You had a wide range of educational experiences before coming to CGU. Could you say a little about your education and how you found your way here?

REBEKAH: In retrospect, it is easy to see my studies at CGU as a logical step on my educational path. However, it has not always felt that way. I was a singer. At nine months of age, I could recognizably sing solo nearly a dozen church hymns. I grew up in Pocatello, Idaho, in a very musical family. My parents believed in the importance of well-rounded education and encouraged my musical development, enrolling me in lessons in dance, choir, piano, voice, violin, organ, and music composition. I was homeschooled until age 14, at which point I took the ACT and matriculated full-time at Idaho State University and declared myself a music major. I eventually transferred to Brigham Young University, where I continued to be very musically active, but also explored a number of options outside of music. I became ignited.

I found an even deeper passion in linguistics and Hebrew Bible and chose to graduate with a BA in English

Linguistics. Despite my dear love of singing, I turned down a scholarship for a master's program in vocal performance, and instead graduated with an MA in The Bible and Its World from the Rothberg International School of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After finishing the program in Jerusalem, I taught Modern Hebrew at BYU for three years, which awoke my love of teaching. I swore that a master's degree was enough and that I would never get a PhD, but after leaving BYU, it quickly became clear that I love to teach. Teaching and academia were not things I could simply leave behind—they were my calling. So here I am!

MATT: Has your experience at CGU been what you expected? What has been most useful about it to you?

REBEKAH: Since the beginning of my time studying in universities, I have been immersed in the highest quality of education. My experience at CGU has been above and beyond what I expected. I have been so impressed by the caliber of my colleagues. The atmosphere truly encourages intellectual exploration, which has constantly pushed me to stretch and grow. And the faculty have been invaluable, not only in helping me develop the quality of my scholarship, but also in advising, networking, and giving career guidance.

MATT: How have you been able to merge your interests in the Bible and in Mormon studies?

REBEKAH: Right now, the main way that I am merging my interests is through intertextual and comparative examination of LDS texts with the Hebrew Bible. There are some very unexpected and

fruitful thematic intersections, particularly between Book of Mormon passages and the Creation and Eden account in the Bible.



MATT: Tell us about your dissertation. What is important about it, both as scholarship but also to you?

REBEKAH: I feel very strongly that the quiet voices among us need to be heard. The untold stories need to be told. And that includes women's stories. I will be examining *ezer k'negdo* ("help meet") in Genesis 2:18, which refers to Eve. For many, this is a touchstone for understanding gender roles. However, no scholar has ever conducted an intertextual linguistic analysis of each component of the Hebrew. So that will be the aim of my dissertation. For me, this is particularly relevant, as traditional gender roles are being challenged and women are asserting their voice.

My hope is that this study will pave the way for readings of the text that are actually based in the Hebrew, and that allow for healthier representations of gender roles. One reason I think this is so important is that narratives have incredible power: "All people are created equal," "God is a loving

Heavenly Father,” or “Families can be together forever” are examples of narratives that shape and reshape many people’s outlook, reality, and perception. Such narratives can even instigate drastic life changes. I hope that the study of *ezer k’negdo* can provide more than simply new insights on the role of Eve. I believe that it can give an empowering narrative to women and men, enabling them to reshape their outlook and self-perception. I believe this narrative can transform their reality.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Lanny Britsch

Rooted in Mormon Studies

There have been two scholarly decisions in my life that made all the difference. First, was the decision to apply for admission to Claremont Graduate School. Second, was accepting a teaching position at Brigham Young University. My time at Claremont prepared me well to do everything I have done in a scholarly, academic way ever since.

I received my Ph.D. in Asian Studies in 1967. The main focus of my studies was the history of Asian religions and thought. My dissertation was titled “Early Latter-day Saints Missions to South and East Asia.” So, you see, I was into Mormon Studies even before Claremont was blessed to have the Howard W. Hunter Chair and the Mormon Studies Program. I contribute to Mormon Studies for a couple of reasons: First, I feel an obligation to thank CGU for taking good care of me and providing a solid academic background for my life’s work. Second, I have a personal love for President Hunter. I first met him in the spring of 1966 when he interviewed me for my position at BYU. But I really got well acquainted with him in the spring of 1983 when we traveled together for two weeks in the People’s Republic of China. He represented the LDS Church as head of our travel delegation and I was tour manager and cultural adviser for a performance tour of the BYU International Folk Dancers. He was a great man—a

true Saint and a fine gentleman. Claremont is honored to use his name.

Claremont prepared me to teach world religions, Asian thought, and Japanese, Chinese, and Indian history. Over the years at BYU I administered the Asian Studies program from time to time and for six years I was director of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies. For four years I served as Vice President for Academics at BYU-Hawaii. My publications focus on the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Asia and the Pacific. My most recent book is *Moramona: The Mormons in Hawai'i*, published in 2018. Almost all I have done academically involves “Mormon Studies.”

R. Lanier “Lanny” Britsch

Emeritus Professor of History and Asian Studies

Brigham Young University 1966-2002

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