



From the Chair: Dr. Matthew Bowman

One of the lovely things about working at Claremont Graduate University is their generous sabbatical policy. Every seventh semester, I — and other professors here — are freed from teaching responsibilities to pursue research and other activities. This fall semester, 2022, I am enjoying a sabbatical in Salt Lake City, where I am working on future research projects.

But I am not working only on my own projects in Utah. I have stopped in periodically at the Museum of Mexican Mormon History in Provo, Utah. The Gomez family, Church members who have spent the last thirty years building a remarkable collection of documents and art and artifacts documenting the history of the Church in Mexico, stored in their museum right across the street from Brigham Young University. Our program has been building a relationship with the museum over the last several years.

Over the 2021-2022 school year, the Gomezes donated a vast array of materials to the Mormon Studies program at Claremont Graduate University, most from the first half-century of the Church in Mexico. Lined end to end, the boxes holding the material are nearly ninety feet long. They are stored in the archives and special collections at the Claremont Colleges library. The collection is named The Fernando R. and Enriqueta Gomez Mormon Mexican History Collection, and is open to researchers.

Much of the material has also been digitized, and can be viewed at the [Claremont Colleges Digital Library](#). You can see dozens of photographs, programs of meetings from the 1910s and 1920s, life histories and letters. This collection is the largest array of materials on the history of the Church in Mexico outside Church archives in Salt Lake City, and I am incredibly honored to host it here.

We have not simply filed this material away in the archives. Over the summer of 2022, Dr. Daniel Ramirez, who teaches Latino religion here at CGU; Caroline Kline, Associate Director of the Center for Global Mormon Studies; and I led a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute on Mormonism in Mexico. Funding for this institute required us to file an application with the NEH and succeed in a competitive application process, and our Institute was the first NEH event held on CGU campus in more than two decades. We brought together sixteen scholars from across the United States, including LDS and non-LDS scholars specializing in Mormonism or interested in learning more. It was a tremendous learning and networking event, and on the day the Gomezes visited to describe their collection they received a standing ovation.

We are continuing our work with the museum. We currently have a student working as an intern for the museum in cooperation with CGU's museum studies program, and we hope for more opportunities that benefit both the museum and our CGU students.

The variety of opportunities this partnership has opened is helping accomplish the work I hope to do as the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies. It opens new and exciting possibilities for students to broaden their skills and professional opportunities. It has attracted the attention and inspired the excitement of academics beyond Mormon studies. And finally, it contributes to the building of the faith community in the ways I hope our program at CGU will accomplish: by broadening the Saints' knowledge of the Church as a global community.

Increasingly, the interests and projects of our students focus on the Church outside the United States. We have admitted four new students to the program this fall, and I'm delighted that three of them are interested in studying the Church outside the United States. I'm also thrilled they are excited about using the Gomez materials.

These accomplishments this year have had a tremendous impact on our program. The Gomez gift has only added to our program's prestige as a center for the study of global Mormonism, and our future looks bright. When I return from sabbatical, I will be delighted to meet our new students in person and introduce them to the collection personally.

Matthew Bowman
Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies
Associate Professor of History and Religion
Claremont Graduate University



From the Council Chair: Christie Frandsen

In 2002, a handful of visionaries from Southern California conceived the idea of establishing a Mormon Studies program at Claremont Graduate University. Universities around the world had long been offering academic studies of every major world religion, taught by adherents of those religions. It was high time for Latter-day Saints to take our place with the other world religions, worthy of serious research and academic consideration.

Now, twenty years later, our seat at the academic table is secure and has given us a strong and respected voice in the religious conversations that are shaping our world. Our reputation as the preeminent Mormon Studies program in the country is flourishing under the brilliant, tireless leadership of Dr. Matthew Bowman and the on-going support of our growing family of benefactors and friends. I am so grateful for you and would like to let you know of some of the great things that happened this year!

2022 was the year we took a big leap forward in becoming a true Center of Global Mormon Studies with the acquisition of the Gomez Collection of priceless documents chronicling the history of the Church in Mexico. With my own family roots in the Mormon Colonies in Mexico, it was personally thrilling for me to meet Fernando and Enriqueta Gomez and to hear of the miracles involved in the discovery and preservation of these documents and artifacts. If you haven't heard the story yet, please read about it on our [Mormonism and Migration](#) project web page. We are also in the

process of digitizing the entire collection, making it accessible to scholars and interested people wherever they are. [Take a look](#) at what we have so far. This collection is a treasure trove of the yet-to-be-told history of the Church in Mexico and will provide primary source material for years of research, scholarly articles, seminars, doctoral dissertations, and books that will inspire members of the Church around the world and draw us all closer as brothers and sisters in the family of God.

2022 was also the year we finally resumed in-person meetings, including our annual Spring Conference, this time with the theme: “A Multiplicity of Scripture.” A gathering of scholars from a variety of religious traditions in the United States and a full house of attendees spent a beautiful April Saturday exploring the concept of sacred texts and how they are transmitted and received. It was exhilarating and inspiring to witness the collegiality of these scholars from different faith traditions, listening and learning from each other with respect and even some “holy envy” of the unique Latter-day Saint scripture cannon. These annual conferences, as well as presentations by the occasional guest scholars Dr. Bowman invites to campus, are free to the public — what an incredible opportunity! I urge those of you who live in the area to attend as often as you are able. I would love to see you at the next one. For those who live too far away to attend in person, the recordings are available [online](#).

Our popular “By Study and Faith” virtual firesides continued this year with three fantastic presentations featuring the diverse and insightful voices of Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Rosalynde Frandsen Welch with a retrospective on our year of Church History, Tammi Schneider and Joe Spencer discussing the Hebrew Bible, and our most recent fireside honoring the life and work of Kate Holbrook. These firesides are one of our most important ways of connecting the community of Church members with the best work of our LDS scholars so that all of us can be edified, inspired and lifted together. We record each one, and they are all worth listening to! If you missed any of them, you can find them [on our website](#).

Finally, we welcomed four new students to campus this fall, each one with impressive qualifications and wonderful promise of future greatness as scholars and teachers and writers and emissaries of our faith. These students are the most important products of our program, and as they succeed, so will our program grow and flourish and fulfill the mission of our founders: to spread the correct understanding and appreciation of our religion and our history throughout the world and to become a powerful influence for truth and good on the world stage of religious studies. This is a cause worth supporting. And we need every bit of support we can get! Every donation, no matter how large or small, is appreciated and carefully used, I promise you. Please donate today and as often as you can. [It's easy!](#)

One last request: we are always eager to expand our reach to everyone in our community who might be interested in the work we are doing. You can probably think of a dozen friends right now who love exploring issues in Mormon Studies and the global Church. Please, before you forget, invite them to sign up on our email list to keep them informed of upcoming events:

<https://mormonstudies.cgu.edu/events/> How wonderful it would be if we could double the size of our CGU Mormon Studies family during this anniversary year!

I am honored to be a part of the great work that started twenty years ago by our inspired and determined founders who saw the potential of a Mormon Studies program at CGU. I think all of us can see even more clearly now the profound need for greater understanding and cooperation in this world of ours. The work Dr. Bowman and his students are doing at CGU will not solve all the world's problems, but I truly and deeply believe it will help. How wonderful it is to be a part of bringing truth and understanding to this world. Please join me!

Christie Frandsen

Chair, Mormon Studies Council

Vice-Chair, Howard W. Hunter Foundation



Student Spotlight: Ben Spackman

Ben Spackman is a PhD candidate in the History of Christianity and Religions in North America track in the Department of Religion at Claremont Graduate University. He is currently the 2022-2023 Mormon Studies Fellow at the Tanner Humanities Center at the University of Utah.

You've had a remarkable educational career. Can you say a little bit about what brought you to CGU, and what you were looking for when you came here?

I had doctoral-level training in ancient Near East and Semitics and some science as well. I came to realize that the questions I really wanted to work on involved the collision of science (understood broadly), religion, and Biblical interpretation in the 20th century. There were discoveries like Ugarit and maturing Egyptology and Assyriology on the one hand, and plate tectonics, DNA, and the modern evolutionary synthesis on the other, all contributing to socio-cultural conflict. I'm particularly interested in the way these things created fundamentalism and creationist/evolution conflict. To work on those questions well, I needed to add training in American religious history. I knew Claremont offered a PhD in that area, and it didn't hurt that my wife had landed a postdoc nearby. My secondary exam was in Reformation, and my tertiary History of Science, with Richard Olson, who passed away recently.

What do you think the value of Mormon Studies is for the Church, as well as for academia? What can each gain from it?

For the Church, I think there is some respectability that comes with being seen as a legitimate and heightened subject of academic discourse; the establishment of various chairs of Mormon Studies around the country is proof of that. Of course, the cost of that respectability is increased visibility and academic scrutiny, which the Church might consider unfavorable for some reason. For academics, Mormon Studies opens up new and undiscovered territory wherein lots of topics simply have little written on them; there are new comparisons, new angles and insights, new interactions to look at. I believe there is a significant amount of low-hanging academic fruit, so to speak, and my dissertation research reflects that. There are a number of archival sources I've used which I don't think have ever been looked at, and certainly not from my angle.

Tell us about your dissertation. What's important about it, both perhaps for scholars but also to you personally?

In the most general terms, I'm examining how competing constructions of "science" and "expertise" contributed to religious opposition to evolution. (Understanding the contested historical claims and constructions of "science" and "expertise" also seems particularly relevant in a pandemic that saw significant opposition to vaccines!) The particular instantiation of the question I examine is Latter-day Saints and biological evolution in the twentieth century. How did this religious community — with a religious mandate for education — move from a position of "wary openness" to evolution in the first half of the century to "semi-officially opposed" and perhaps fundamentalist-adjacent in the latter half? And this in spite of sponsoring a large university (BYU) with well-regarded science programs that taught evolution? While the literature on this topic is

vast, Latter-day Saints are both understudied in this regard and offer a distinct example because of the unique structures and paradoxes of the Church, i.e. a strongly centralized prophetic hierarchy of non-career laypeople; an open and expanded canon; a 19th-century fundamentalist intellectual inheritance matched with a strong bent towards education and scholarship; Catholic structures with Protestant impulses. Terryl Givens has explored these paradoxes. For myself, I'm very public-facing; I try to do a good bit of public speaking and popular writing because it has real impact. Researching this history and presenting it to the public reduces conflict between science and religion, both real and perceived. It has the effect of decreasing religiously-motivated suspicion towards science in general (i.e. vaccines); it also undermines simplistic or false dichotomies of the past, some of which remain very strong in American culture, such as the "warfare" or "conflict hypothesis." People of faith (particularly Latter-day Saints, in this case) do not have to choose between faith and evolution.

Tell us a bit about your current work. What are you doing right now, every day?

I am the Mormon Studies Fellow at the University of Utah for 2022-3. I try to get into my office early (I have an office!), review my main historical timeline (roughly 200 pages) and relevant archival documents to the event or period I'm covering. Then I write for a few hours. I take a 2-hour break and hit the University gym to run, swim, bike, and lift — I like to do the occasional triathlon or half-marathon when uninjured — and eat lunch. Then it's back to the office for more writing, editing, and review. I walk between campus buildings mumbling Spanish alongside Duolingo and Rosetta Stone in my headphones.



**Donor Spotlight:
Jonathan Beutler**

Our donors are the lifeblood of the Mormon Studies program at CGU. We quite literally would not exist without them! Jonathan Beutler has been one of our most loyal and generous benefactors from our earliest years. He has a fascinating story which we want to share with you.

Tell us about your background, education, career, interests, and family.

Most of my professional life has been focused within the fascinating realm of diplomacy, public policy, and government affairs; however, I sometimes identify more as a humanities dilettante, having studied multiple languages and literary traditions and worked on a handful of translation endeavors. These two major passions of mine drove me to earn two master's degrees: in Public Policy (from UCLA) and in Spanish Literature (from the University of Barcelona). In addition, the field of Mormon Studies has long been a serious interest of mine. I served a Latter-day Saint mission in São Paulo and graduated from BYU, where I met my wife, Sunny. Local public service continues to be an important part of my life, as I currently serve as a Los Angeles County Library Commissioner. Having worked and studied on four continents, Sunny, our children, and I are now happy to make our home in the South Bay region.

How did you first become interested in Mormon Studies?

When I was an adolescent, my great aunt Marian was the first person to introduce me to Sunstone and Dialogue, which exposed me to this alluring field of Mormon Studies. These experiences fomented my precocious interest in Latter-day Saint history, theology, and culture, and have driven me to stay engaged in this field throughout my adult life. In terms of my involvement with CGU, our family first became acquainted with Mormon Studies at CGU through several early leaders of the Howard W. Hunter Foundation, including Maurice Lam, Randy Huff, John Dalton, Joseph Bentley, as well as the iconic Drs. Bushman themselves. More recently, I was recruited to serve on the Mormon Studies Council by then-Chair Stephen Bradford, which turned out to be a terrific experience that taught me a great deal as I served alongside bright minds like Armand Mauss. My involvement with CGU has been very edifying and I am so grateful for the opportunity.

What do you appreciate about the Mormon Studies program at Claremont Graduate University?

I absolutely love the way that Claremont Graduate University and its administration have been so supportive of the Mormon Studies program, treating it as a vital component of the university's mission. Over the years I have seen just how important this program is to the university; CGU officials take great pride in being home to this

amazing initiative. At CGU the study of Mormonism as a global faith tradition is taken very seriously and in a deeply respectful way. At Claremont I have found a place where academic scrutiny and devotional practice coexist in a beautiful way that, I believe, doesn't happen at many other places. In my experience as a former member of the Mormon Studies Council, the interreligious dialogue that takes place at Claremont is a wonderful byproduct of the incredibly dedicated way that the university incorporates religious studies into its curriculum. I especially appreciate the annual conference and other special programming that offer unique opportunities to learn and understand. Through CGU's rigorous academic study of Mormonism and Latter-day Saints (through the lens of various disciplines), the religion itself is becoming more understood and celebrated by those outside the tradition. The Mormon Studies program thus advances the further awareness of the religion, its tenets, and its contributions to the wider society.

CGU has played a central role in facilitating so much important bridge-building between ecclesiastical leaders, the academic community, and the general public. I would add that, above all, one of my favorite things about CGU is that it's a crossroads unlike anywhere else; a first-rate mixture of people converge there to discuss and learn together in a civil and reverential manner — all under the umbrella of exploring the richness of the Latter-day Saint experience. I am profoundly grateful for my involvement with CGU and I look forward to seeing all the wonderful things that take place through this program in the future.

What would you say to someone who is uncertain about the value of donating to the CGU Mormon Studies program?

Among the countless other worthy causes that one could choose to support, CGU's program stands tall as a unique convergence of religious devotion and study within the context of a world-class secular university. The program is time-tested with an excellent track record of enriching the global understanding of the Latter-day Saint faith both within and outside the Latter-day Saint community. For me and our extended family, our involvement with CGU has been tremendously beneficial. Supporting a program that so diligently and graciously explores matters of faith has been a source of great pride and gratitude for us.

Having served on the Council, I can testify to the great care with which the Council puts every single contributed dollar to good use, meticulously evaluating expenditures to ensure the greatest impact toward the program's important objectives.

For faithful Latter-day Saints, as well as scholars of religion and others, the elevation of Mormon Studies as a legitimate, serious

academic field of study is a huge benefit. The collaboration that exists between CGU's program and Church leaders of all levels benefits everyone involved, as well as the wider community. I am constantly impressed by the environment of respect and engagement that has been created at CGU, and I would invite anyone with any level of interest to explore getting engaged more seriously. Getting involved with this program is beneficial not only to scholarship recipients and researchers, but there is also great value for the benefactors taking part in this very relevant and rewarding cause.



New Council Member: Maclane Heward

We are delighted to introduce you to the newest member of the CGU Mormon Studies Council, Dr. Maclane Heward. This is an historic milestone for the Council: Maclane was one of our very own students in the Mormon Studies program, and now returns to join the Council in support of future students.

Maclane attended CGU from 2013 to 2019, graduating with a PhD in the History of Christianity and Religions of North America. He taught for two years at BYU where he received top marks from his students and is currently teaching courses in the doctrinal and historical development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the Utah Valley Institute of Religion. He brings to the Council a wealth of fresh ideas, invaluable connections to the LDS academic community in Utah, and a deep loyalty and gratitude for CGU Mormon Studies.

You will soon be able to read more about Dr. Heward on the [Council page](#) of our website. But we want you to get to know him a little more personally, and so here is Dr. Maclane Heward, in his own words:

I was nervous to open the letter — more than perhaps any other letter I had opened since getting a mission call to serve as a missionary for

the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I was nervous because I knew that, like a mission call, the contents of this letter would change me. I recognized the flame in the corner of the envelope, and as I read the designated sender, I knew that this was my acceptance or rejection letter from Claremont Graduate University. My acceptance, however, was just one step in getting to Southern California; I then began the process of receiving approval from my employer, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to allow me a 1 year leave-without-pay to complete my coursework. This process of receiving approval from my employer took some time, and it seemed that the longer I waited to give official acceptance to CGU, the more swag they sent me. On the back of the shirt that I received was a quotation that has caused a great deal of consideration for me. It quoted Muriel Rukeyser, the American poet and activist, and simply stated, “I am in the world to change the world.”

Claremont has definitely changed my world and opened wide the doors of opportunity. From firesides to podcasts to publications and interfaith dialogues, I can honestly say that being connected with Claremont has brought opportunities to me that I had never imagined. I recently completed a chapter in an interfaith dialogue book with David Howlett, a scholar of the Community of Christ. Our assigned task was to write about how our different faith traditions viewed the concept of Zion. As I launched into the literature, a few phrases from the writings of Terryl Givens jumped off the page at me. He explained that “the forging of this community (Zion) was [Joseph’s] true prophetic task,” and that “Enoch was a role model to inspire (Joseph) and a blueprint to direct him.” Joseph’s task was to create a group of people that were engaged in the worship of God in a way that invited deity to dwell within their community. Joseph Smith, Edward Partridge and others arrived at Independence, Missouri to dedicate the land of Zion in the summer of 1831. At the sight of Independence, Partridge felt as though this place was not “Zion.” Perhaps there were better places that they had passed on their journey or perhaps Independence did not look like Partridge had imagined God’s holy city to be. Partridge was rebuked in a revelation given to Joseph for his “unbelief and blindness of heart.” He was then instructed that “men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them...” (D&C 58:14-15, 26-28). Partridge was told that *he would need to build Zion*. He would need to be in the world to change the world; he would need to be a force for good in building community. We are all in the world — it is our own choice as to how we will change it.



New Podcast: *This Global Latter-day Life* with Caroline Kline

The Center for Global Mormon Studies recently launched a new podcast, *This Global Latter-day Life*. Join host Caroline Kline, Associate Director of the Center for Global Mormon Studies, to hear about the perspectives and life stories of Latter-day Saints from places like Botswana, Mexico, the Caribbean, and other countries around the world. Based on oral histories from CGU's Mormon oral history collections, each episode tackles issues like race, gender, culture, and identity. Caroline is joined by scholars and other community members who offer insights and explore questions raised by these global Latter-day Saints' experiences.

Find *This Global Latter-day Life* on the [CGU website](#), as well as Spotify, Stitcher, Google Podcasts, and other podcast apps.

Support the Mormon Studies Program at CGU!

Your generous contributions make a significant difference for the students, faculty, and programs that help us expand the world's understanding of Mormonism. We greatly appreciate your support.

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