

THE 2025 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

IN HONOR OF SIDNEY B. SPERRY

Joseph Smith as a Visionary: Applications and Implications of Revelatory Visions and Visitations in the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History

Call for Proposals

In 2020, in conjunction with the 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith's First Vision, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles issued a new proclamation to the Church and to the world. After declaring their witness of the truth of the Father and the Son's initial appearance to the Prophet Joseph, they [OR the apostles] stated: "We affirm that under the direction of the Father and the Son, heavenly messengers came to instruct Joseph and re-establish the Church of Jesus Christ. The resurrected John the Baptist restored the authority to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins. Three of the original twelve Apostles—Peter, James, and John—restored the apostleship and keys of priesthood authority. Others came as well, including Elijah, who restored the authority to join families together forever in eternal relationships that transcend death."

Joseph Smith did not simply proclaim that he had a different understanding of Christian religion; key to his teachings and the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ were the numerous angelic visitations through which important keys and teachings were delivered to Joseph and the Church. Indeed, this Symposium will take place just over 200 years after the angel Moroni first visited Joseph, told him God had a work for him to do, and informed him of the existence of a sacred record buried nearby.

In addition to heavenly visitations, Joseph also had incredible visions of the future, the resurrection, and the final judgment. Some of Joseph's many visitations and visions would eventually be canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants, such as Doctrine and Covenants 13 or Doctrine and Covenants 137. One of these visions (Doctrine and Covenants 76) was so spectacular, it came to be known simply as "The Vision." Other visitations and visions are less well known, but still testify to Joseph's prophetic gifts and calling.

The 2025 Religious Education Symposium, which will take place in January of 2025, will focus on these miraculous visitations and revelatory visions of the Prophet Joseph Smith. We invite papers that explore these experiences, their implications for Latter-day Saint doctrine, and their potential application to modern Saints and even the broader world. Papers with a clear relation to this theme will also be considered.

Proposals should take the form of an abstract (of no more than 300 words) containing all of the following: (1) the main thesis of your paper/presentation, (2) a brief outline of the components supporting your main thesis, (3) a summary of your methodology as well as the primary and secondary sources you will consult as evidence and support, and (4) a brief statement concerning how your study will make a significant contribution to previous scholarship on a topic related to Joseph Smith's visitations and visions (academic, Latter-day Saint, or both). It should be noted that, given the topic, it is anticipated that multiple proposals may overlap. Generally, only one proposal on a specific topic will be chosen for possible inclusion in the volume. Prospective authors may want to take this into consideration when selecting their proposal topic.

Following the abstract, please include a short, separate statement (50-75 words), outlining your background, qualifications, and any previous research or writing you have already completed on the subject of your proposal. Please include the following information in the heading of your proposal: name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and a working title for your paper. Proposals must be submitted electronically, as an attached Word or PDF document, to Beverly Yellowhorse at beverly_yellowhorse@byu.edu on or before **February 1, 2023**.

Each submitter will be notified of his or her proposal's status by **March 1, 2023**. Those whose proposals are accepted for possible presentation at the symposium and consideration for inclusion in the symposium publication (released prior to the conference) must submit final papers, ranging between 15 to 20 pages in length (double-spaced) by **September 1, 2023**. All papers will be reviewed by the Religious Education Symposium Committee and those being considered for inclusion in the volume will receive additional blind peer review by two reviewers. Based upon review, papers will be accepted for publication, accepted with revisions, or rejected. Proposals and papers must be consistent with the doctrines and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Questions can be addressed to members of the 2025 Religious Education Symposium Committee:

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Potential paper topics could include but are not limited to:

- Angelic visitations to the Prophet Joseph Smith
- The nature of visions in the life of Joseph Smith (patterns in the how, when, where, etc.)
- Visions of the afterlife
- Communal visions (visionary experiences that included multiple people)
- Visions of Deity
- Non-canonical visions and visitations to Joseph Smith
- Joseph Smith on false visions and visitations
- Other topics that fall within the theme of the symposium