



The Oakland California Temple. (Photo by Brent R. Nordgren.)

INTRODUCTION



Festschrift, a German word, literally means “celebration writing.” A centuries-old academic tradition, a Festschrift is “a collection of writings published in honor of a scholar.” This volume of original essays is a Festschrift prepared in honor of Dr. Richard O. Cowan, recently retired professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University. Brother Cowan, as he is affectionately known to most of his former students, served at BYU for more than half a century teaching, researching, writing, mentoring, and befriending all who crossed his path. It has been estimated that he personally taught over 40,000 students during his academic career. And did we mention that Dr. Cowan did it all while being unable to see with his physical eyes? Yes, he is blind. But Richard Cowan has clear vision in the things of God. Hence the title of this book, “An Eye of Faith.”

This volume appropriately begins with an interview with Richard O. Cowan by Lloyd D. Newell and concludes with a chronological bibliography of his many publications; a timeline of his life is also included. Dr. Cowan has a deep and abiding interest in temple work and has written prolifically and wonderfully about this important subject. In over five decades of scholarly writing, he has also published a wide variety of books, essays, and articles about modern-day revelation, service and missionary work, increasing scriptural literacy, and the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The essays in this volume have been organized likewise, and each essay begins with a personal reflection from the author regarding their associations

with Richard O. Cowan. We should also note that there were several additional authors who also wished to contribute essays in his honor, but this volume was unable to include all of them. The first section in this volume, “Temples: Ancient and Modern,” begins with an essay by Terry B. Ball discussing Isaiah’s prophetic insights into temple building and temple worship. Next, Craig K. Manscill explains several recent discoveries regarding the significant role that Hyrum Smith played in building the Kirtland Temple. Ann N. Madsen compares and contrasts ancient and modern temples as she looks at Solomon’s Temple and the Salt Lake Temple. The last essay in this section, by Alonzo L. Gaskill and Seth G. Soha, searches for the meaning and purpose of an unusual statue that has been mounted over the veil in the Salt Lake Temple’s celestial room since the temple was dedicated.

The second section, “Revelations to the Saints,” opens with two complementary essays investigating the doctrine and practice of baptism for the dead in the mid-nineteenth century. Alexander L. Baugh reports on the introduction of baptisms for the dead in Nauvoo, Illinois, while Richard E. Bennett’s essay picks up that narrative and expounds on the practice of baptism for the dead from 1846 through 1875. Craig J. Ostler explores the meaning of Moroni’s 1823 statement to Joseph Smith regarding “the promises made to the fathers,” and Christopher J. Blythe examines a vision that Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde received in 1837 at the beginning of missionary work in England.

“Serving Others and Sharing the Gospel,” the following section, begins with Susan Easton Black’s account regarding the 1970s creation of the Monument to Women Memorial Garden in Nauvoo, Illinois. Kenneth L. Alford shares little-known stories regarding acts of personal service and kindness rendered by each of the prophets of this dispensation from Joseph Smith Jr. to Thomas S. Monson. Nicholas J. Frederick analyzes early missionary outreach efforts by Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt. In the final essay in this section, Elise Petersen and Steven C. Harper investigate how collective memory and mass media have played a role in the Church’s understanding and use of Joseph Smith’s First Vision.

The fourth section, “Increasing Scriptural Understanding,” includes three scripturally based essays. Richard D. Draper carefully outlines the Lord’s doctrine in the scriptures regarding sexual purity. Kent P. Jackson scrutinizes the King James translators’ use of the word “replenished” in the Bible. In the concluding essay in this section, Kent S. Brown weaves a missionary narrative with a moral for our time from Helaman chapters 4 and 5.

“A Mighty Work to Come Forth,” the final section in this volume, begins with a nostalgic half-century look back by Brent L. Top to the popular Mormon Pavilion at the 1964–65 World’s Fair held in New York City—arguably one of the first times that the Church appeared prominently on a world stage. JeanMarie Stewart and Kenneth L. Alford trace the history regarding the establishment of the gospel in the African nation of Ghana. And in the final essay, J. B. Haws explores more recent history as he discusses the roles that the Church played, as well as those it consciously did not play, during Salt Lake City’s hosting of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

We appreciate this opportunity to honor our great colleague, Richard O. Cowan, and hope you enjoy this volume!

KENNETH L. ALFORD
RICHARD E. BENNETT
EDITORS

Note

1. Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. “Festschrift,” <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us>.

KEY EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF RICHARD O. COWAN

JANUARY 18, 1932	Dawn Sandra Houghton born in Oakland, California
JANUARY 24, 1934	Richard O. Cowan born in Los Angeles, California
DECEMBER 3, 1935	Richard's Sister Jean Isabelle Cowan born in Los Angeles, California
APRIL 4, 1942	Baptized in the Wilshire Ward Chapel, Los Angeles, California
NOVEMBER 1, 1949	Received patriarchal blessing at age fifteen from Orson Haynie
FEBRUARY 1, 1952	Received a priesthood blessing from President David O. McKay
SUMMER 1952 AND SUMMER 1953	Called to serve in the Los Angeles Stake Mission, Spanish-speaking
FEBRUARY 21, 1953	Ordained to the office of elder by his father
JUNE 23, 1953	Received mission call to the Spanish-American Mission
AUGUST 9, 1953	Missionary farewell in the Arlington Ward
AUGUST 19, 1953	Entered the Missionary Home
AUGUST 26, 1953	Set apart as a missionary by Elder S. Dilworth Young, First Council of the Seventy
MARCH 8, 1955	Dawn received her mission call to the Spanish-American Mission
SUMMER 1955	Met Dawn in the Spanish-American Mission in Texas.
FEBRUARY 1956	Released from full-time missionary work
APRIL 28, 1957	Dawn was released from full-time missionary work
NOVEMBER 19, 1957	Elected to Phi Beta Kappa
APRIL 1958	Engaged to Dawn Houghton
APRIL 1958	Awarded the Danforth Fellowship
JUNE 14–15, 1958	Graduated from Occidental College
AUGUST 14, 1958	Married Dawn in the Los Angeles Temple

MAY 8, 1959	Notified that he would receive a Recordings for the Blind scholarship
MAY 19, 1959	Recordings for the Blind scholarship presented by President Dwight D. Eisenhower
JUNE 14, 1959	Received master's degree from Stanford University
JUNE 10, 1960	Daughter Sandra Lynn born in Redwood City, California
JANUARY 25, 1961	Joined full-time religion faculty at Brigham Young University
AUGUST 11, 1961	Received PhD from Stanford University
AUGUST 29, 1961	Moved to Provo, Utah
SEPTEMBER 20, 1961	Began first year of teaching at Brigham Young University
JULY 13, 1962	Daughter Linda Dawn Cowan born in Provo, Utah
JUNE 11–14, 1962	Taught at BYU Campus Education Week for first time
JULY 27, 1963–JUNE 1965	Served as an elders quorum president
AUGUST 2, 1964	Son Reed Richard Cowan born in Provo, Utah
JULY 10, 1964	Published his first book
JUNE 24, 1965	Ordained a high priest
JUNE 24, 1965–1967	Call to serve on the BYU 6th Stake High Council
MAY 13, 1965	BYU “Professor of the Year”
MARCH 20, 1967	Son Lee Richard Cowan born in Provo, Utah
APRIL 28, 1967	Served as counselor in BYU 6th Stake Presidency
NOVEMBER 25, 1970	Contributor to Gospel Doctrine teachers manual
SEPTEMBER 26, 1971	Daughter Patricia Ann Cowan born in Provo, Utah
APRIL 30, 1972	Released as a counselor in the BYU 6th Stake Presidency
FEBRUARY 1973	Called to serve on the Church blind programs advisory committee

AUGUST 22, 1973	Assigned to be the Doctrine and Covenants coordinator at BYU
NOVEMBER 1973	Member of the Church Melchizedek Priesthood Research Committee
NOVEMBER 4, 1975	Served on the Church Gospel Doctrine committee
DECEMBER 20, 1976	Daughter Donna Jean Cowan born in Provo, Utah
MAY 1, 1976–1979	Served on the Mormon History Association executive council
1977	Taught noon Spanish class for faculty colleagues
1977	Produced Church history television modules
1979	Received the Karl G. Maeser Excellence in Teaching Award
DECEMBER 18, 1979	Called to serve as the Missionary Training Center historian
SEPTEMBER 1980–JUNE 30, 1993	Church Gospel Doctrine Manual Writing committee chairman
1981	Member of university rank advancement committee
OCTOBER 21, 1992	Served on Faculty Advisory Committee
1983	Joined Church Education System Church History text committee
NOVEMBER 12, 1983	Continuing Education Outstanding Teacher Award
JULY 8, 1986–2008	Member of Provo East Stake High Council
AUGUST 21, 1989–1993	Religious Studies Center Doctrine and Covenants director
FALL 1989	Taught at the BYU Jerusalem Center
APRIL 13, 1994–1997	Chair, Church History and Doctrine Department, BYU
JULY 24, 1996	Directed faculty study tour to California
SEPTEMBER 2000	Concluding speaker at Sidney B. Sperry Symposium
NOVEMBER 20, 2003	Gave annual Phi Kappa Phi lecture
FALL 2006	Church History area coordinator

2006	Chair of Religious Education rank and status committee
APRIL 3, 2007	Gave devotional assembly address in the Marriott Center
SPRING TERM 2007	Taught spring term at BYU–Hawaii
JANUARY 27, 2008	Ordained a stake patriarch
MARCH 22, 2008	Received the Robert J. Matthews Excellence in Teaching Award
AUGUST 14, 2008	Fiftieth wedding anniversary
2011	Completed fifty years in Religious Education as a faculty member
2014	Retired after teaching fifty-three years as a full-time faculty member at Brigham Young University