

BYU RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WINTER 2024

REVIEW

CALENDAR ✕ COMMENTS ✕ INTERVIEWS & SPOTLIGHTS ✕ STUDENT & TEACHER UPDATES ✕ BOOKS



*Experiential
Learning through
Service and
Scholarship*



The Prophetic Purpose of Religious Education



In addition to all we can learn from the world's educational experts, the Church Educational System (CES) enjoys a unique privilege: we receive foundational direction from prophets, seers, and revelators.

This June will mark five years since we received a document from the Church Board of Education entitled *Strengthening Religious Education in Institutions of Higher Education* (hereafter referred to as SRE). The SRE document is a rare example of a governing board giving such specific attention and directive vision to a single unit at a university. This sends a message that religious education really matters and that the prophets are willing to give us ongoing guidance as they receive direction from the Lord.

While much of the SRE document contains specific instructions for internal faculty hiring and promotion practices, the core of the document defines our central purpose. Note how the SRE's prophetic purpose statement below aligns with the mission of Jesus Christ and the core aspects of his gospel:

The purpose of religious education is to teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ from the scriptures and modern prophets in a way that helps each student

- Develop faith in and a testimony of
 - Heavenly Father and His "great plan,"
 - The Savior, Jesus Christ, and His infinite atoning sacrifice, and
 - The restored gospel of Jesus Christ, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the Prophet, Joseph Smith; and the other modern prophets, seers, and revelators.
- Become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ, who make and keep covenants, who love God and others, and who are able, willing, and committed to gather Israel on both sides of the veil.
- Strengthen their ability to find answers, resolve doubts, respond with faith, and give reason for the hope within them in whatever challenges they may face.

All teaching and scholarship efforts in Religious Education at CES schools are rooted in these stated purposes.

While given specifically to religious educators at CES institutions of higher education, these principles can also be applied to other learning settings in the home and at church. Great power comes when teachers and students work together to accomplish these inspired outcomes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tyler Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tyler J. Griffin

Associate Dean, BYU Religious Education

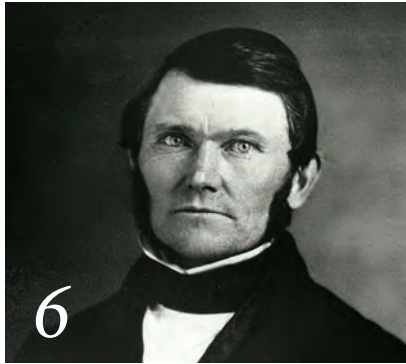
BYU

Religious Education

REVIEW

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HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Bringing Wilford Woodruff to Life

By Steven C. Harper



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On the cover: Students visit Temple Beth Israel in Boise, Idaho. Photograph by Michael Hubbard MacKay.

<p>RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER Founded in 1975 by Jeffrey R. Holland Director Scott C. Esplin Associate Director Gaye Strathearn</p>	<p>Publications Director Jared W. Ludlow Associate Publications Director Michael A. Goodman</p>	<p>REVIEW MAGAZINE Editor Jared W. Ludlow Managing Editor Brent R. Nordgren</p>	<p>Editors Don L. Brugger Rebecca Call R. Devan Jensen Publications Coordinator Leigh Ann Copas</p>	<p>Photographers Brent R. Nordgren Richard B. Crookston Student Editors Adi Marshall Emma Eastman Alyssa Stevens Emma Taylor</p>	<p>DESIGN & PRODUCTION Hales Creative, LLC Design Director Kelly Nield</p>
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RELIGION IS LOVE IN ACTION

JARED W. LUDLOW (jared_ludlow@byu.edu) IS THE PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR OF THE BYU RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER.

One of the messages of the Epistle of James in the New Testament is that religion is more than something we read and learn about; it is something we do, especially in our communities among those who need it the most—the widow, the orphan, and so forth (see James 1:27). Those same principles apply to lived religion today and the importance of extending ourselves to help others. King Benjamin taught something similar in his great sermon when he said, “Ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish” (Mosiah 4:16). King Benjamin tied our retaining a remission of sins to how we assist others: “For the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants” (Mosiah 4:26).

Our feature article highlights the work some faculty with students have

Religion is more than something we read and learn about; it is something we do, especially in our communities among those who need it the most—the widow, the orphan, and so forth (see James 1:27).

done to learn about and do more in communities of need as Andy Reed and Mike MacKay prepared a group of students to serve near BYU as well with an interfaith organization in Boise. Through a newly designed course, “Interfaith Leadership and Ethics” (REL C 393R), their efforts emphasize the value of experiential learning and mentoring. As they point out, “Students who have positive experiences with dialogue rather than debate develop more favorable views of the good that other religions offer society. As part of this process, they also see methods and examples of civic cooperation, religious devotion,



Jared W. Ludlow

and faith-filled service that simply are not experienced in other settings.”

This calendar year, we are focused on the Book of Mormon as the key scripture text for *Come, Follow Me*. Several articles and summaries in this issue introduce various manuscripts prepared by the RSC to assist one’s study of the Book of Mormon. In one article, author John Hilton discusses his book on the 149 various voices or testimonies within the Book of Mormon. Based on word clouds, he points out the

distinctive words and emphases of the various Book of Mormon writers and speakers that can give us insight into their teachings and personality. Because it is also an election year in the United States, it is timely to present a new volume that shares Latter-day Saint politicians' own words from interviews on how they have navigated their political responsibilities with their faith. It covers some local politicians from Utah, national ones in the United States, and political leaders from other parts of the world. It demonstrates that being a member of the Church does not require only one political approach to the issues that face society. Lastly, Steven Harper shares the great things the Wilford Woodruff Papers Foundation has been doing to provide public access to President Woodruff's vast writings (around thirty-five thousand pages!). It is a tremendous blend of technology, editorial oversight, administrative management, donor support, and student involvement.

As we study the restored gospel and seek to strengthen our discipleship, may we also remember to practice our religion in our day-to-day lives by loving as Jesus did.



Jared W. Ludlow
Publications Director
BYU Religious Studies Center

Free Events

BYU Religious Education Symposium in Honor of Sidney B. Sperry

Friday and Saturday, January 19–20, 2024

Jesus Christ is the central figure in the Book of Mormon. Ancient prophets in the Western Hemisphere consistently pointed to his life and atoning sacrifice. For example, Nephi wrote, "I glory in my Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell" (2 Nephi 33:6). After his resurrection, Jesus Christ personally ministered to the Nephites and taught them. This symposium shares important reminders about how to focus on Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon.

For more information, visit rsc.byu.edu/conferences/sperry.



BYU Easter Conference

Friday, March 29, 2024

The BYU Easter Conference will be held in the Joseph Smith Building auditorium on March 29 beginning at 7:00 p.m. The speakers will be Andrew C. Skinner, Lincoln H. Blumell, and Krystal V. L. Pierce. Each speaker will talk about various aspects of the Savior: his life, his mission, his Atonement, and his influence in our lives today.

For more information, visit rsc.byu.edu/conferences/easter.



These events are free of charge, and registration is not required. Some event details are subject to change. For more details, please visit us online at rsc.byu.edu/conferences or contact Leigh Ann Copas at 801-422-6975.



Staff Highlight: Leigh Ann Copas

LEIGH ANN COPAS (leighann_copas@byu.edu) IS THE PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR AT THE BYU RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER.



Leigh Ann Copas joined the RSC in December 2022 as the publications coordinator. She serves as a liaison between authors, the publications director, and editors and works closely with the production supervisor in coordinating all publications. She completed a BA in English and an MA in literature/rhetoric and composition at Western Kentucky University. She recently acquired a certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the University of Utah. Before working at BYU, she served as the Writing Center director at Utah Valley University for fifteen years and taught ESL, developmental writing, and first-year composition courses. She has served on multiple professional affiliate boards, including president of the Utah College Learning Center Association and Utah representative for the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association. In her free time, Leigh Ann enjoys camping, reading, learning new languages, and planning family events. ✂

Faculty Highlight: Maclane E. Heward

MACLANE E. HEWARD (maclane_heward@byu.edu) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.



Maclane E. Heward has been a full-time religious educator since 2009. He has primarily worked in the Seminaries and Institutes program, most recently as an assistant director at the Utah Valley Institute of Religion, where he has focused on creating and solidifying discipleship in Jesus Christ. He is excited to continue that pursuit at BYU. He graduated from BYU with an undergraduate degree in public relations and a master's degree in religious education. He studied under Patrick Mason at Claremont Graduate University and received his PhD in the history of Christianity and religions of North America in 2019. Maclane and Maria are the parents of five children. They currently reside in Cedar Hills, Utah, where they watch Cooper's hawks and great horned owls raise their chicks. ✂

Faculty Highlight: Joshua M. Matson

JOSHUA M. MATSON (joshua_matson@byu.edu) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE WITH AN APPOINTMENT TO THE JERUSALEM CENTER.



Josh Matson is a scholar of the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls and joined Religious Education in 2023 after teaching with Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. Josh holds a PhD in religion from Florida State University, an MA in biblical studies from Trinity Western University, and a BA with university honors in ancient Near Eastern studies from Brigham Young University. Josh's work on the Dead Sea Scrolls includes time as a research associate with the *Scripta Qumranica Electronica* project at the University of Haifa and an Orion Center Scholar at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Originally from Chubbuck, Idaho, Josh married the former Erin Barnes, and they are the parents of four children who enjoy reading, hiking, camping, road trips, and any type of athletics. He served as a missionary in the Canada Calgary Mission and has led youth on humanitarian projects around the world. ✂

Faculty Highlight: Robbie Taggart

ROBBIE TAGGART (robbie_taggart@byu.edu) IS AN ASSOCIATE TEACHING PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE.



Robbie Taggart delights in the radiant existence God has gifted him. He believes that all people are inherently holy as children of divine heavenly parents. He rejoices in the expansiveness of God's plan of mercy. Before coming to BYU, he taught in Seminaries and Institutes for seventeen years. He received his BA in English literature from BYU. He received an MA in comparative studies from BYU with an emphasis in comparative religious literature. He received a PhD in theological leadership from the University of the Cumberlands. He is interested in the intersections of literature and belief and in sacred literature from the world's religions. He and his wife, Julie, are the parents of five wild and holy children. In his free time, he reads, writes poetry inspired by scripture, and spends time in nature with his family. ✂

Bringing Wilford Woodruff to Life

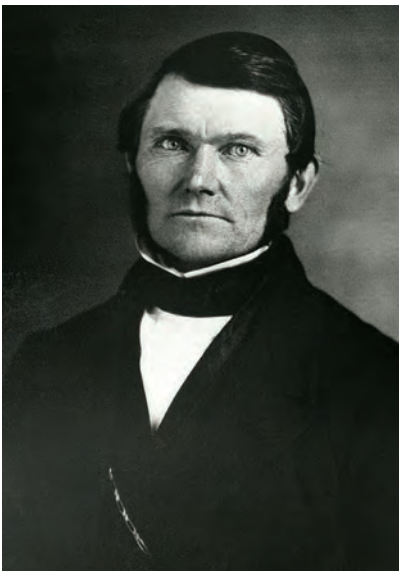
By Steven C. Harper

STEVEN C. HARPER (*steven_harper@byu.edu*) IS A PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.

Shortly after his baptism into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1833, Wilford Woodruff began keeping a journal. He wrote that his intent was to give an account of his stewardship because it is “not only our privilege but duty to keep an accurate account of our proceedings.”¹ He believed deeply, as he wrote, “This will make a valuable legacy to our children and a great benefit to future generations by giving them a true history of the rise and progress of the Church and the Kingdom of God upon the earth in this last dispensation.”²

President Woodruff did his part by keeping the records. But if those records remain in attics and archives, they won't fulfill their purpose of blessing future generations with a true history of the Savior's latter-day work.

Jennifer Ann Mackley has spent much of her life solving that problem. Mackley is a lawyer by training, but by passionate avocation she is a student of Wilford Woodruff's records, especially of what they say about the Lord's restoration of temple ordinances and covenants. She began researching Wilford's writings in 1996 and published *Wilford Woodruff's Witness: The Development of Temple Doctrine*.



Wilford Woodruff, 1849. Courtesy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Wilford Woodruff Papers Foundation

In 2020 Mackley cofounded the Wilford Woodruff Papers Foundation with Donald W. Parry, professor of Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea Scrolls at Brigham Young University. The Wilford Woodruff Papers Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization. It is not officially sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but it could not have accomplished all it has without the close cooperation and constant support of the Church History Department. The Church History Library (CHL) staff provides the

Wilford Woodruff Papers Project access to President Woodruff's documents in the CHL's possession, along with technical know-how, research assistance, and experience. Additionally, several of the people who work on the Wilford Woodruff Papers gained expertise from their prior work on the Joseph Smith Papers. Moreover, Joseph Smith Papers scholars Matthew C. Godfrey, Andrew H. Hedges, R. Eric Smith, and Jordan T. Watkins serve as advisers to the Wilford Woodruff Papers editorial team.

The Joseph Smith Papers encompass the written record of Church history from 1828 to 1844 and include the founding documents of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. *The Wilford Woodruff Papers* are a much larger collection covering the period from 1834 to 1898. They add immensely to the story of the Restoration. With so much misinformation easily accessible online, it is vital to make these primary, eyewitness sources of restored knowledge accessible to truth seekers. Therefore, the mission of *The Wilford Woodruff Papers* is, by 2027, to publish at wilfordwoodruffpapers.org Wilford's eyewitness account of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are publishing images of President Woodruff's documents

Willard Woodruff

Sharkaluna
Delaware

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A
BOOK

OF

COMMANDMENTS,

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE

Church of Christ,

ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO LAW, ON THE

6th of April, 1830.

ZION:

PUBLISHED BY W. W. PHELPS & CO.

1833.

Wilford Woodruff's
signed copy of A Book
of Commandments.

Wilford Woodruff Papers Progress

As of September 2023

35,000 Total Pages



34,225 Pages Located



25,681: Published

5,721: In Progress

2,822: In Queue

online along with accurate transcriptions that are easy to read and to search. Our purpose is to inspire all people, especially the rising generation, to study and increase their faith in Jesus Christ, understand and honor sacred temple covenants, and thereby receive the blessings of exaltation with their families.

The People behind the Project

Beside the foundation's executive director, Jennifer Mackley, a host of talented, hardworking, and devoted disciples of Jesus Christ do the work of the Wilford Woodruff Papers Project. Only a few representatives can be mentioned here. Krystyna Hales has degrees in anthropology and crisis and emergency management. She is the operations and human resources manager—the heart and brain of the workforce. Jon Fackrell is the senior software engineer. An innovative and highly

recruited professional with degrees in engineering and library science, Jon built wilfordwoodruffpapers.org, including a robust, behind-the-scenes content management system and interface with the text editing program at fromthepage.com. LaJean Purcell Carruth has been translating Wilford Woodruff's shorthand since the 1970s. She is a senior historian at the Church History Library and an adviser to the Wilford Woodruff Papers Project. She provides knowledge and skill no one else has, giving people access to Wilford's records as no one else can.

The Wilford Woodruff Papers Foundation is governed by a unique board of directors that includes descendants of Wilford Woodruff, accomplished professionals and educators, church and community leaders, and entrepreneurs. Every board member is more than one of those at the same time. Board

chair Jordan Woodruff Clements is Wilford's great-great-grandson, a former mission president and YSA stake president, and a corporate leader with extensive experience serving and leading nonprofit organizations. The board members and their impressive cadre of advisers are all committed donors themselves. For example, adviser Steven C. Wheelwright is an ambassador for the foundation.³ He is the Edsel Bryant Ford Professor of Management Emeritus at Harvard University. He was president of BYU–Hawaii after many years as a professor and administrator. His devotion to *The Wilford Woodruff Papers* and his desire to share them with everyone grew from reading Jennifer Mackley's book, *Wilford Woodruff's Witness: The Development of Temple Doctrine*, while presiding over the Boston Massachusetts Temple with his wife, Margaret Steele Wheelwright.

Margaret not only donates to the project. She works as an editorial assistant along with her daughter, Kristy Taylor, who serves on the board of directors.

Paying for the Wilford Woodruff Papers Project

Documentary editing of this quality is a painstaking and laborious process. It begins with accurate transcription of handwritten documents by a trained paleographer—a handwriting expert. Then teams of editorial assistants read and verify every word on every page to ensure accuracy. In addition, talented and devoted researchers identify each person and place mentioned in the documents. Then they link the names of people mentioned in the *Papers* to biographies and link places mentioned to interactive maps. These reference materials enable users to better search and understand the documents.

Papers projects are expensive. They consume a great amount of human and material resources, but they don't generally generate wealth. Their value is best measured in the knowledge they make available, not in money—so they almost always present the problem of funding. A creative combination of resources is solving that problem for the Wilford Woodruff Papers Foundation. One component is unlikely human resources. Most of the work of the Wilford Woodruff Papers is done by paid student interns and volunteers. Associate editor Ashlyn Pells and general editor Jason Godfrey are both recent college graduates who began working on the project while they were still in school. Along with research specialist McKenzie Wood

and others, these young scholars have long since shouldered responsibilities that are done by experienced MAs or PhDs at other projects. They have proven equal to every assignment, and they are typical of dozens of college-aged (and a few even younger) students who learn fast and who compose an efficient and capable workforce. Several former editorial assistants are now on missions, where their service is inspired by the knowledge that they gained by working on the papers of Wilford Woodruff, one of the greatest missionaries of the last dispensation.

The other part of the solution for funding the project is donors who value the knowledge in *The Wilford Woodruff Papers* more than the money it costs to publish those papers. The donors treasure the edifying insights that editorial assistants glean while they are immersed in the writings of Woodruff and his contemporaries. Recently one such editorial assistant, Joseph Flake, described transcribing letters from prospective missionaries to President Woodruff, in which they responded to the Lord's call to serve. Flake said,

I was struck by the sacrifices these missionaries were asked to make to obey their calls. When I left on my mission at eighteen years old, I had no career, no commitments, and no one to support. Yet these brethren write of leaving behind spouses, children, and jobs. In those days, disease was much more threatening than it is today, and these elders often had no idea if they

would come home safe, if their loved ones would be alive if they did return, how well their families would be provided for in their absence, and if the livelihoods they spent years investing in would be there for them when they got back. Whenever I feel it is hard to sacrifice what the Lord asks of me, I try to remember those who have sacrificed much, much more than me. I know these elders were blessed for their faithfulness in serving the Lord, and so will all of us when we choose to follow our Heavenly Father's plan for us, even when it is hard.

Editorial assistants like Joseph Flake collaborate and share, but the project is virtual, meaning all work is done on personal computers, and funds are not spent on physical office space or equipment. Even so, it costs several million dollars to identify, transcribe, verify, research, and publish at wilfordwoodruffpapers.org the tens of thousands of pages Wilford Woodruff wrote. The Wilford Woodruff Papers Project is funded by donations from faithful, generous individuals, families, and charitable organizations, all of their own free will.

These donors are anxiously engaged in the good cause of financing the project. Led by Sarah Dunn, The Carol Smith Fund contributed \$100,000 earmarked to provide Inspired Learning Experience scholarships to BYU students who work for ten to twenty hours a week on the Woodruff Papers. Administered by Religious Education at BYU, all of



these funds go directly to students. Donations like the Smith Fund’s not only enable the day-to-day work; they also cover the creation and maintenance of the content management system, including the website, to store and display the documents. Donors have access to annual reports of expenditures and metrics showing the Wilford Woodruff Papers Project’s progress and success. The foundation has a four-star profile on Charity Navigator and is a Gold Level GuideStar participant, demonstrating its commitment to transparency in every aspect of its operations. Visit wilfordwoodruffpapers.org to learn how you can contribute time, money, or documents to the project.

Wilford Woodruff Links the Past, Present, and Future

The Wilford Woodruff Papers Project is committed to innovatively connecting the past with the present and the future. Wilford Woodruff was the first prophet of the last

dispensation to have his voice recorded and preserved for posterity, using the Emerson phonograph, the most advanced technology of his age. Using the marvels of artificial intelligence, the Wilford Woodruff Papers Foundation, in collaboration with LIVINGHISTORY.ai, has pioneered the Wilford Woodruff AI Learning Experience.⁴ Now people can ask President Woodruff questions and hear answers—his answers, in his own words—as captured in the tens of thousands of pages of his experience, teaching, and testifying.

Asking AI Wilford Woodruff what actual Wilford Woodruff learned from Joseph Smith about actual intelligence will amaze you. “I have been playing with the AI experience for an hour now and can’t get enough,” one user reported. When was the last time you heard someone describe listening to and learning from a prophet as *playing*? “Wilford has answered every question eloquently and I have learned so much.” “How amazing,”

another user said. “I can listen to the testimony of a prophet who lived 150 years ago.” And another: “I have felt the Spirit multiple times and am amazed at how much he knows and how accurate he is.”

President Woodruff did his part by keeping the records. The Wilford Woodruff Papers Project is bringing the records from attics and archives to you in an open-access internet site. But Wilford Woodruff’s records won’t bless future generations with the truths of the Savior’s latter-day work if they are not accessed. It’s up to you to solve that problem. Join the visitor to wilfordwoodruffpapers.org who said, “I’m excited to see where it’s headed and to share it with more people.” In short, there’s nothing artificial about the intelligence you’ll receive from Wilford Woodruff here. ✂

1. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, p. 8, The Wilford Woodruff Papers Project, wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/journal.
2. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, February 12, 1862, p. 196, The Wilford Woodruff Papers, wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/journal/1862-02-12.
3. “Developing Wilford Woodruff as a Leader: An Interview with Steven Wheelwright,” <https://leadingsaints.org/developing-wilford-woodruff-as-a-leader-an-interview-with-steven-wheelwright/>.
4. “Decoding a Prophet with Artificial Intelligence,” May 25, 2022, The Wilford Woodruff Papers, wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/decoding-a-prophet-with-artificial-intelligence.

Voices in the Book of Mormon

Discovering Distinctive Witnesses of Jesus Christ

By John Hilton III

JOHN HILTON III (johnhiltoniii@byu.edu) IS A PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.

Think about some of your closest friends or family members. Are there distinctive words or phrases that they use often? Many of us could identify a person who is speaking or writing simply by the words they choose to use. For the past twelve years, I have been exploring the extent to which this is true for the different speakers in the Book of Mormon. Because the Book of Mormon purports to be a multiauthored work, we would expect to see differences between distinctive voices such as Jacob, Alma, and Jesus Christ. And that is exactly what we find. As a simple way of visualizing some of the distinctive voices in the Book of Mormon, compare the following three word clouds:

A glance at these word clouds shows different words that are emphasized by each of these speakers. Jacob speaks of *brethren*, Alma says *now*, and Jesus honors the *Father* with distinctive frequencies. And these word clouds only scratch the surface. Consider the following:

- The phrase “my soul delighteth” appears eleven times in the Book of Mormon, in multiple chapters, but it is used only by Nephi.
- Jacob and Nephi use the words *God* and *Lord* with statistically different patterns from each other; moreover, 2 Nephi 9–10 clearly shows Jacob’s pattern of speech rather than Nephi’s. This is significant since Jacob is the

speaker in 2 Nephi 9–10, and the speech patterns in 2 Nephi 9–10 are different than 2 Nephi 4–5, 11, where Nephi is the speaker.

- When Alma teaches his son Corianton, he uses several specific phrases from Abinadi, nearly all of which relate to the concerns Corianton had. In other words, Alma uses the words of scripture or recent prophets to address his child’s needs, setting a wonderful model for modern parents.
- Jesus Christ uses the word *baptize* significantly more than any other individual. He consistently emphasizes baptism when he speaks, both inside and outside of 3 Nephi. This clearly



Figure 1.1. Jacob’s word cloud.



Figure 1.2. Alma’s word cloud.



Figure 1.3. Jesus Christ’s word cloud.



shows how he views the importance of baptism.

I began my research in 2011 when, in collaboration with several colleagues, we split apart the text of the Book of Mormon by the person who is speaking. The Book of Mormon changes speakers more than seventeen hundred times. An example from Jacob 5 illustrates the layers of quotations that can be more closely examined through a study of individual voices. In the following passage, notice how Jacob quotes Zenos, who in turn quotes the Lord (who portrays the voice of the master of the vineyard):

Jacob

1 Behold, my brethren, do ye not remember to have read the words of the prophet Zenos, which he spake unto the house of Israel, saying:

Zenos

2 Hearken, O ye house of Israel, and hear the words of me, a prophet of the Lord.

3 For behold, thus saith the Lord,

The Lord

I will liken thee, O house of Israel, like unto a tame olive-tree, which a man took and nourished in his vineyard; and it grew, and waxed old, and began to decay.

4 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard went forth, and he saw that his olive-tree began to decay; and he said:

The Master of the Vineyard

I will prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it, that perhaps it may shoot forth young and tender branches, and it perish not.

Who Speaks in the Book of Mormon?

My colleagues and I identified 149 different voices that are present in the Book of Mormon; many of these are individuals who speak only a few words, including people from Amnor to Zeram.¹ The top five speakers follow:

Rank	Speaker	Words spoken	Words as a percentage of text
1	Mormon	97,591	36.4%
2	Nephi	28,166	10.5%
3	Alma	20,051	7.5%
4	Moroni ₂	19,513	7.3%
5	Jesus Christ	14,161	5.3%

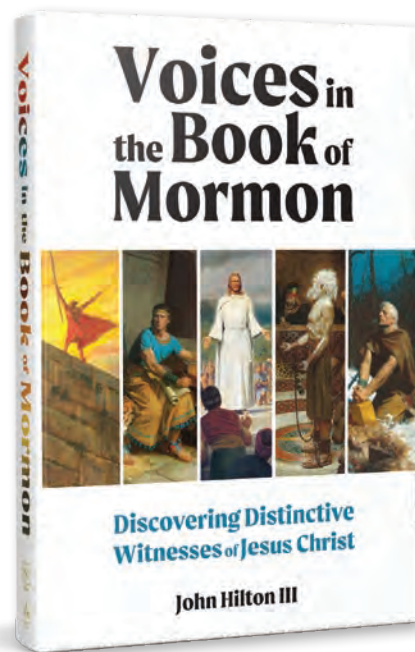
Once we identified the different voices in the Book of Mormon, we worked with the developers of the WordCruncher software program (published by BYU’s Digital Humanities Department) to develop a database we called “Voices in the Book of Mormon.” This database can be used to determine who spoke a particular word or phrase in the Book of Mormon—it is freely available at <https://johnhiltoniii.com/voicesinthebookofmormon>.

Carefully analyzing individual Book of Mormon voices can help us better understand the unique viewpoints, speaking patterns, and personalities of those who speak in the Book of Mormon, leading to spiritual insights we might otherwise miss.

In addition, annotating the text of the Book of Mormon with names of the individuals who speak makes it easier to see the text’s intricacy. This complexity strongly suggests that the Book of Mormon is a multiauthored work and that Joseph Smith did not write the Book of Mormon. While *not* required for deep spiritual conviction,

this type of intellectual evidence can strengthen our faith. As Austin Farrar wrote, “Though argument does not create conviction, the lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.”²

I have written several papers analyzing various aspects of the unique voices in the Book of Mormon and recently synthesized my work in the new book *Voices in the Book of Mormon: Discovering Distinctive Witness of Jesus Christ*, published by BYU’s Religious Studies Center. Ultimately, I hope that the unique



voices in the Book of Mormon can strengthen people’s interest in and testimony of the Book of Mormon, the good people that grace its pages, and the validity of this book of scripture. I also hope that reading the Book of Mormon with the lens of “who is speaking” can help us find life-changing doctrines taught by specific individuals with unique voices. ❧

Notes

1. Amnor and Zeram are quoted as speaking together, along with Manti and Limher, in Alma 2:24–25.
2. Austin Farrar, “Grete Clerk,” in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, comp. Jocelyn Gibb (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1965), 26; cited in Neal A. Maxwell, “Discipleship and Scholarship,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (1992): 5.

Alleviating Poverty
through **SERVICE**
and **SCHOLARSHIP**

By
Michael Hubbard
MacKay
and
Andrew C. Reed

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
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M

Mentoring and Experiential Learning in Religious Education

Brigham Young University prepares students to engage in the world around them with faith in Jesus Christ. This is not by chance. In fact, educators across the university help shape students morally, ethically, intellectually, and spiritually through experiential learning and careful mentoring. President Kevin J. Worthen explained, “Some of the most important inspiring learning opportunities occur outside the formal classroom setting through experiences that are, in that sense, extracurricular.”¹ In its effort to meet its missional aims and charge, BYU must not only be a place for listening and lecturing; it should be a place to foster community and positive relationships through modeled and experiential mentoring. Faculty and staff have essential roles to play in creating environments where our students reach their full educational potential while here at BYU.

As professors, we have seen the value and revelation in this guidance and shape our coursework around the idea of Latter-day Saint formation through experiential learning and mentoring. Teaching World Religions (REL C 351) has been an important space for us to mentor students and get involved in the local community. This includes participation in the Interfaith Student Association and the Council for Interfaith Engagement, both of which require experiential learning and explicit projects for student mentoring. This ranges from weekly projects, visitors, and

meetings to long-term projects and yearly plans to help the poor and maintain positive relationships with faith leaders and civic organizations. Not a week goes by where we are not actively engaged in extracurricular work with our students.

Mentoring requires more than parlaying information about a discipline to students or helping them fulfill an arbitrary task on behalf of faculty. Mentoring requires the heart and mind of disciple-scholars who seek to expand students’ capacities and experiences, ultimately helping them find confidence to act well in the world as a person of immense potential and faith. The weekly efforts combine to enrich students, of course, but in turn have blessed us in our sincere efforts to build faith and the kingdom on campus.

Interfaith Leadership and Ethics

This university emphasis to mentor students in practical and spiritual ways led us to design a course called “Interfaith Leadership and Ethics” (REL C 393R) for the Department of Church History and Doctrine. We sought to design a course that fostered love of God and faith in Jesus Christ and offered practical leadership skills that enabled cooperation with neighbors. As course designers and as teachers, we felt that the combination of academic rigor and civic engagement is all too often one-sided toward academic discussions. In the middle of the two extremes, there must be a place where the two meet to create unique and meaningful experiences and knowledge. The imperative for skills of negotiation, cooperation, and generosity of spirit that are noticeably absent from much of society today can be addressed by introducing students to interfaith practices and methods. Undergraduate students who engage in positive relationships with those of other faiths experience a profound shift in disposition toward other religions and the communities that compose them. Students who have positive experiences with dialogue rather than debate develop more favorable views of the good that other religions offer society. As part of this process, they also see methods and examples of civic

cooperation, religious devotion, and faith-filled service that simply are not experienced in other settings.

Our course was designed to foster inspired learning. We designed every lesson to include experience as the medium that we learned from, including dialogues with evangelical students, visits with faith leaders, reading and experiencing sacred texts, and especially case studies. One of the most important activities that we designed was a partnership with Catholic Community Services (CCS) in Salt Lake City. The students organized each other and other students across campus to volunteer for nearly an entire month in the semester. In the winter 2023 semester, BYU students contributed over seven hundred hours of service to CCS by preparing meals, serving dinner, and other projects. This work continues and has expanded to include work with other organizations that are serving local populations who seek assistance with housing and food scarcity.

The students enrolled in the Interfaith Leadership and Ethics class wanted to take seriously President Shane Reese's call to make "our 'service and scholarship' and resources available to the Church in other important areas, such as alleviating poverty."² Courtney Schriever, volunteer coordinator for CCS, came to our class and taught us about homeless care and the needs of the community she serves. This experience was a catalyst that motivated students to do more.

Interfaith and Homeless Care in Boise

Our most potent assignment required students to design their own interfaith trip. They worked to combine civic responsibilities with education and homeless care with the activities of Latter-day Saints. They wanted to learn from other faiths how they could care for the poor and how their compassion changes the world. Since they needed to find funding to carry out the trip, they looked locally for the best place to learn about interfaith and homeless care. They decided on Boise, Idaho. Boise is currently experiencing a growing homeless population, but it is also home to an extremely strong religious response to the homeless. There were two purposes to this proposed trip: (1) to create educational opportunities for BYU students to learn from interfaith organizations and leaders

about how to build networks of cooperation, and (2) to create opportunities for students to develop an interfaith, service-oriented program that enhances their experiential learning. By seeking to understand and learn first, our students were better equipped to serve with awareness of existing problems and solutions. Further, learning to hear from people at every level, from those in shelters to those at the highest levels of state government, students gained a broad perspective of how people understood the challenges and also how they were seeking to care for those who needed shelter and food.

By seeking to understand and learn first, our students were better equipped to serve with awareness of existing problems and solutions.



Gage Strathearn and a Methodist volunteer at the food pantry.

Students used leadership principles, ethics, hard work, and especially care as they planned and coordinated the trip to Boise. On our drive to Boise we stopped in Cache Valley to visit Cache Refugee and Immigrant Connection to learn about rural refugee care. We learned about nonprofit efforts and the value of language training as refugees find themselves in a new country. Once we arrived in Boise, we joined Temple Beth Israel and the local reformed Jewish community in Shabbat services. Sacred time became less theoretical and intellectual to our

students, and our Jewish friends offered hospitality to us at the temple and within their rituals. We also joined them for dinner and spent hours learning from them.

In the morning we split up into two groups. One group went with a small group of Bahá'í from Boise to see how they offer service to their community every year, by cleaning a mile-long stretch of the highway. They had lost a member of their community to a car accident and were determined to keep her memory alive. They taught us about service and love. The other group went to two separate Seventh-day Adventist congregations, the first of which was an African immigrant congregation that honored us by singing to us and welcoming us with hugs and friendship. The second congregation fed us a vegetarian meal and taught us about nonviolence and the practice of vegetarianism, while the pastor then offered us a lesson on the value of the Sabbath and Christ's mercy for his children. Later on in the day we went to Boise State University and examined sacred texts and important artifacts from their archives, including a piece of the first blue turf from the football stadium. In the evening we went to the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist to attend a Roman Catholic mass, in which each student was blessed by the priest.



Students met at the First Presbyterian Church in Boise to unload and organize weekly donations for those experiencing food scarcity.

Students used leadership principles, ethics, hard work, and especially care as they planned and coordinated the trip to Boise.



Students learned about Hare Krishna beliefs at the Vedic Cultural Center in Boise.

On Sunday we went to the Boise Young Single Adult Second Ward. This included a visit to the local temple before we attended many other services. In smaller groups we went to the Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship, Hill City Church, the First Presbyterian Dialogue service, and the Euclid Nazarene Church. We discovered the love and power of each of these wonderful congregations and made friends that will last for years. We also experienced the spirit at each place that we went.

On Monday one of our main visitors was the father of Ravi Gupta, a religious scholar from Utah State University, who taught us in our interfaith class the previous semester. As we arrived, it was like we already knew and loved him. At the Boise Hare Krishna Temple and Vedic Cultural Center, we learned that Arun Gupta and his family were the first family in Boise to build and temple and unite the Hindu population in the area. He taught us about their



Students visited Temple Beth Israel in Boise.

efforts to build faith and community in the area and also taught us about Hindu worship and belief. We also met with the First Presbyterian Church to unload and organize weekly donations for people experiencing food scarcity. We were met by a group of devoted older gentlemen who met at the church each week to make sure the donations were cared for and delivered. Their food pantry is one of the oldest in Boise, and their service has been done for nearly a century. Once we finished, we went to the Interfaith Sanctuary to learn about their efforts to house the homeless. They provide a building full of bunkbeds, helping families and individuals have a place to stay free from the cold and the heat. The director gave us a tour and expressed compassion for the people he helps. Then we learned about the clothing program before we helped organize and fold all their donations. We learned about the importance of housing and also legal IDs and their importance for getting jobs.

On Tuesday we started at Corpus Christi House, where we learned about how they serve the community. They taught us about donations (food, clothing, and cash) and how they can be best used in homeless care, but they also taught about human dignity. They helped us understand that humans need love, maybe even more than they need money and possessions. We spent half the day in various services, but most importantly we spent the day

with the homeless. Our students conversed with dozens of people asking them about their experiences. They listened to their stories and hopes for their futures. We learned so much about the human condition and power of friendship. In the second half of the day, we learned from Allie Reuscher, one of the directors and founders of the Nesting Place Maternity Home. They run an interfaith home for pregnant women who need the love of God in their lives. They provide social and medical care, housing, education, and coaching for homeless mothers who are pregnant or recently had babies. We met one of their mothers, who happened to be a Latter-day Saint woman whose life was completely changed by this organization. She shared her story of struggle and faith, leaving us with gratitude and plenty of tears. At the end of the day, a Jewish woman from

the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights gave a tour and history of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial. She inspired us to be better and warned us of the dangers of exclusive behavior. She taught us about anti-Semitism in a way that could have come only from that site and her testimony. We also went to the Cathedral of the Rockies (First United Methodist Church of Boise) to learn from Senior Pastor Duane Anders about their homeless care before we ended the night in contemplative vigil with the congregation, singing and praising Jesus Christ.

Wednesday we were blessed to travel to McCall, Idaho, and start the day out with a devotional from associate dean Gaye Strathearn. Her message on Christ was touching and so relevant to our experience on the trip. This was followed by visit to Mountain Life Church and a sermon from Pastor Joseph Eisenbrandt, who had just returned from a visit to the hospital. He told us about his ministry and his care for his parishioners. For years they worried

Importantly for faculty and students, the deep impressions of human capacities to care and comfort, to truly mourn alongside those who need to feel God's love in devastating circumstances, changed lives on this trip.



Students went with a small group of Bahá'í from Boise to help clean a mile-long stretch of highway.



Students gathered at the Interfaith Sanctuary.

about families who freeze during the winter, so they organized a wood-chopping event that happens every fall. They then deliver wood to every house that has a shortage of money. They expressed how difficult this act is, but it is worth it to know that people are warm in the community. We finished by contemplating our visit so far while we worked at sewing quilts for the local homeless population.

On Thursday we continued to learn from the local religious population about rural solutions to poverty and homelessness. This time we met a group of Methodists who meet every month at their food pantry. We first helped them weed and clean up their garden plots built for the local community and then spent the day creating baskets for families suffering from food scarcity. We couldn't help but learn from this group that service was something we needed to do all the time and the community needs people who care enough to give up their time.

Our final day we went to the Idaho State Capitol Building and met with state senator C. Scott Grow. We first went to a public hearing of the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, then spent the afternoon with Senator Grow asking him about the role of government in homeless care and interfaith engagement. This opportunity helped us see the connection between the civic and religious worlds.



There were many experiences and takeaways that our students brought home from Boise as part of the educational process. Importantly for faculty and students, the deep impressions of human capacities to care and comfort, to truly mourn alongside those who need to feel God's love in devastating circumstances, changed lives on this trip. As educators, learning to allow students to put their learning to use in real ways that are intended to make a difference is filled with risk. We may fail and they may fail. But when students learn that they are trusted, they have the confidence to accomplish something important in the world. ✂

Notes

1. Kevin J Worthen, "Inspiring Learning," University Conference address, August 22, 2016, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/kevin-j-worthen/inspiring-learning/>.
2. C. Shane Reese, "Becoming New Creatures," University Conference address, August 22, 2022, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/c-shane-reese/becoming-new-creatures/>.

BOOK OF MORMON EXPERIMENT

By R. Devan Jensen

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If the world was going to talk about the Book of Mormon because of the release of a creative musical, *The Book of Mormon*, in New York City in 2011, then wouldn't it be interesting if there was an equally creative approach to showing people what the book is truly about? BYU professor and AdLab director Jeff Sheets wanted to lean into that moment and counter that exposure with a more effective and spiritual social experiment to share the book of sacred scripture. "If we use creative problem-solving to solve other things, like business problems," said Sheets, "maybe we need the same type of thinking for hastening the work."

He and some former students brainstormed an idea of creating a social experiment where everyday people were the artists and what they read about God in the Book of Mormon became the creative data visualization of what the book is about. They worked with students to prototype the campaign. Book of Mormon prophet Alma invited readers to compare the word of God to a seed, then plant the seed in their hearts and "experiment" (Alma 32:23). If the seed sprouted and enlarged their understanding, readers could identify the message



Photographs by
Richard B. Crookston.

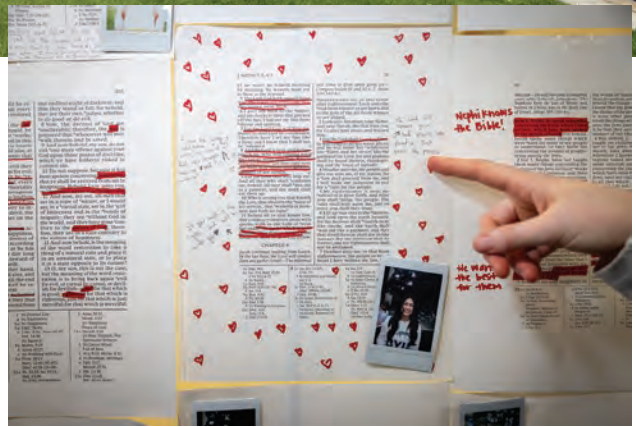
The Book of Mormon experiment would be to have friends of other faiths take pages of the book, highlight messages from God, then share impressions.

as a good seed. The Book of Mormon experiment would be to have friends of other faiths take pages of the book, highlight messages from God, then share impressions. And the resultant marked text with their photos and thoughts would make a visual art exhibit to show that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ, not because the Church



said it is, but because all the people who read a page witnessed for themselves that it is.

Students springboarded off project field-study trips already planned and set up displays in Sydney, London, Las Vegas, and Cape Town, South Africa. People of many belief



systems—atheists, Christians, Muslims, and others—would each read one page from the 531 pages, have their picture taken to represent their individual page, and then share thoughts.

For example, Rafi, a Muslim from the United Kingdom who read page 430 of the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 11:31–41; 12:1), said, “This is the first time that I have ever read a page of Christian scripture. I think the page was good. It shows that God is a God of miracles, not a God of punishment. . . . I believe that God is that way. He wants to help us. Reading this book has helped me.”

Since that initial experiment, the team has re-created the experiment dozens of times with the Church, and now including in Spanish and French. Missions, temple visitors’ centers, youth conferences, seminaries and institutes, and many other groups have implemented similar versions of the experiment all sharing the opportunity for people to discover for themselves that the Book of Mormon testifies of Jesus Christ.

In September 2023, to commemorate the 200-year anniversary of Moroni’s first visit to young Joseph Smith, BYU Religious Education

associate dean Tyler J. Griffin asked Sheets and his students to help re-create that initial Book of Mormon experiment for students on BYU campus.

Participants had Polaroid photos taken. Students running the event taped up the pages and accompanying photos inside the Joseph Smith Building. The resultant living art exhibit allowed other students to see experiences of their peers of reading one page of the book and what they discovered and felt.

For more information about the initiative, visit churchofjesuschrist.org.



BOOK HIGHLIGHT:

Religious Liberty and Latter-day Saints

By Emma Taylor

EMMA TAYLOR IS AN EDITORIAL INTERN AT THE BYU RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER.

Political affiliation is one of the most divisive identifiers in not only our country but global interactions. Now more than ever, it takes a mere spark of charged conversation to ignite a fiery argument between two people of differing political perspectives that often ends with both parties being burned. Where exactly is the line between faith and politics? It can be especially difficult for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to distinguish between the two, considering that both are so intimately entwined in our lifestyle. Turn to the history books, and one will find that the very foundation of the Restoration of the gospel is steeped in tensions between faith and politics. From the time of Joseph Smith to now, this struggle has been an appendage to the entire history of the Church. But is there only one way to serve both God and country?

As recently as June 1, 2023, the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a letter titled “Political Participation, Voting, and the Political

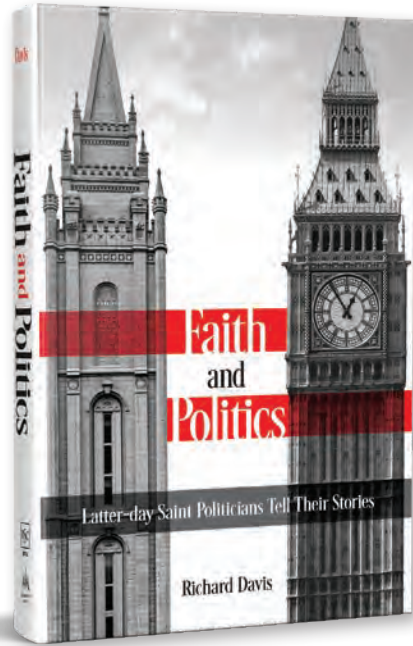
Neutrality of the Church.” In it, the First Presidency reaffirmed the political neutrality that the Church as an organization abides by and reminded members that truths of the gospel can be found in many political parties. They advise, “Some principles compatible with the gospel may be found in various political parties, and members should seek candidates who best embody those principles. Members should also study candidates carefully and vote for those who have demonstrated integrity, compassion, and service to others, regardless of party affiliation. Merely voting a straight ticket or voting based on ‘tradition’ without careful study of candidates and their positions on important issues is a threat to democracy and inconsistent with revealed standards.”¹

The letter shakes off the assumption that members of the Church are encouraged to vote for one party. Although Church members in the United States have long been predominantly conservative, the First Presidency makes it clear that straight-ticket voting based

In a system where individuals are categorized into warring ideologies with no room for nuanced understanding, Faith and Politics is a refreshing look at the humanity found beneath labels of political affiliation.

on tradition alone abbreviates the agency that is at the center of our doctrine. This powerful statement is timely and needed, as the 2024 United States presidential election is just around the corner. Now is the time to educate ourselves to make informed political decisions that best reflect principles of the gospel.

It is with great timeliness, then, that Richard Davis introduces his latest volume. *Faith and Politics: Latter-day Saint Politicians Tell Their Stories* is published by the BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book. This book features interviews



with twenty-five Latter-day Saint politicians from all over the world with different political parties and perspectives. While these politicians have varying political beliefs, their work is rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ. It's a good reminder that there

is not just one way to be a member of the Church and that political affiliation is not a determinant of testimony.

The book's interview format allows for these politicians to tell their stories on their own terms. It's an engaging glimpse into how life experiences and faith interact to influence political practices. No matter where one is on the political spectrum, there is so much to be learned from these men and women. Interviewees were asked to explain their background, talk about the offices that they have run for and served in, and lessons learned they've learned about politics that they want to share with youth. Yéah Samaké speaks on his experience growing up Muslim in Mali, West Africa, describing his conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and lessons on service he learned from

his father and his faith that became the focus of his mayorship. Harry Reid discusses the extreme poverty of where he grew up in a small town in Nevada, how he came to find the Church, and the criticism he has faced over the years from other Latter-day Saints about his political positions. Aimee Winder Newton shares how faith shapes her approach to politics and the challenges she has faced as a woman running for governor in Utah. These remarkable individuals, though diverse in background and politics, are united in their faith in Christ, which is at the center of their service to their communities.

In a system where individuals are categorized into warring ideologies with no room for nuanced understanding, *Faith and Politics* is a refreshing look at the humanity found beneath labels of political affiliation. If we take the time to truly understand the lives and perspectives of others, conflict will dissipate and be replaced with compassion. *Faith and Politics* is an exceptionally valuable resource that takes the time to understand the beauty in diverse perspectives. ✂



Former US senator Harry Reid.



Former US representative Rob Bishop.

Note

1. First Presidency letter, "Political Participation, Voting, and the Political Neutrality of the Church," June 1, 2023, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/leaders/2023/6/6/23751117/first-presidency-letter-emphasizes-participation-in-elections-reaffirms-political-neutrality>.

FACULTY AND STAFF

AWARDS

Kenneth L. Alford and William P. MacKinnon received the 2022 Western International Second Place Cofounders Award for Best Book for *Fact, Fiction, and Polygamy: A Tale of Utah War Intrigue, 1857–1858: A. G. Browne’s ‘The Ward of the Three Guardians’* (Tanner Trust Series, Marriott Library, University of Utah Press, 2022).

Matthew J. Grey received a Faculty Recognition Award and a Good Samaritan Mentored Learning Award from the BYU Accommodation Center (2023). He was also awarded an Alcuin Fellowship from the BYU Honors Program (2024–2026).

Aaron P. Schade received BYU’s Experiential Learning Award.

Joseph M. Spencer was a finalist for Best Theology Article Award, John Whitmer History Association, for “Books of Mormon: Latter-day Saints, Latter Day Saints, and the Book of Mormon,” in *Open Canon* (2023). He was also a finalist for Best Work of Religious Non-Fiction, Association for Mormon Letters for *Book of Mormon Studies: An Introduction and Guide*, coauthored

with **Daniel Becerra**, **Amy Easton-Flake**, and **Nicholas J. Frederick** (2023).

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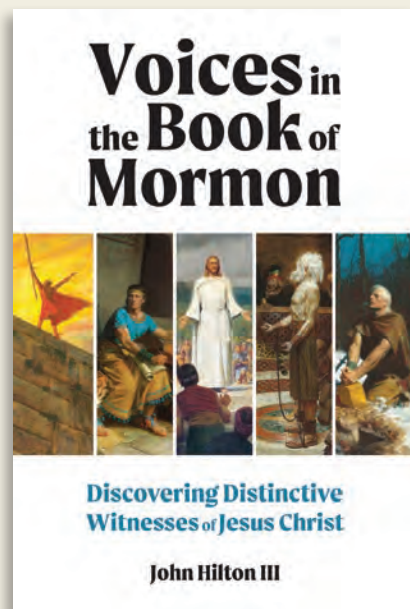
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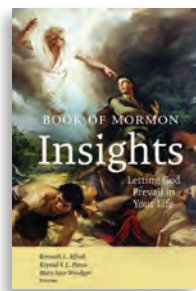
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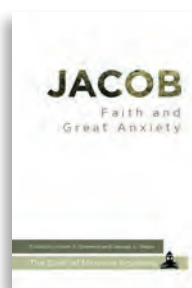
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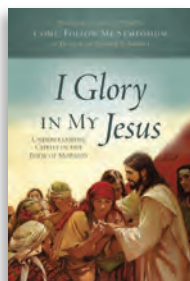
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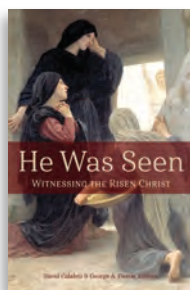
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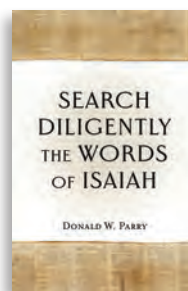
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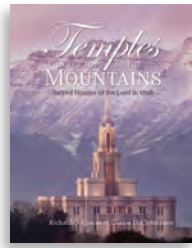
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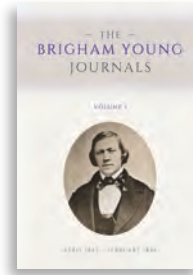
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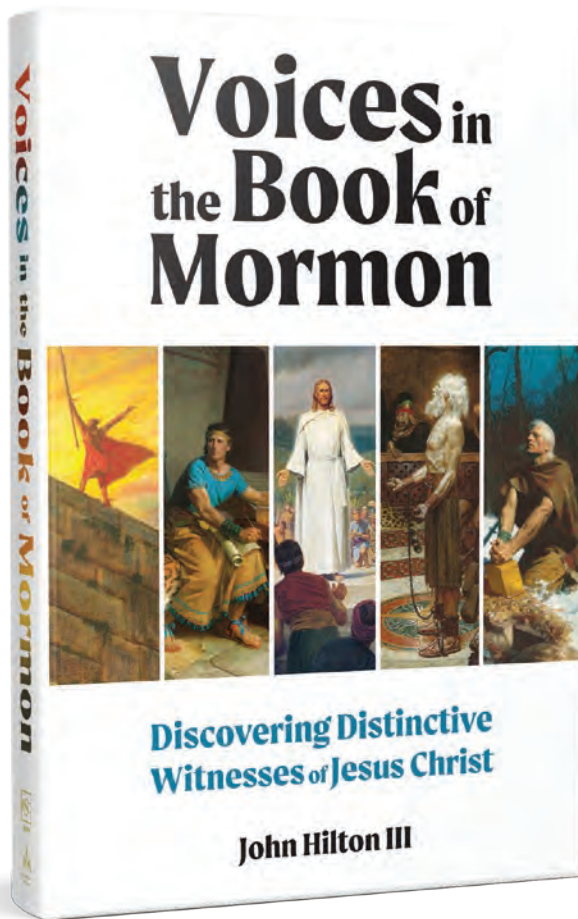
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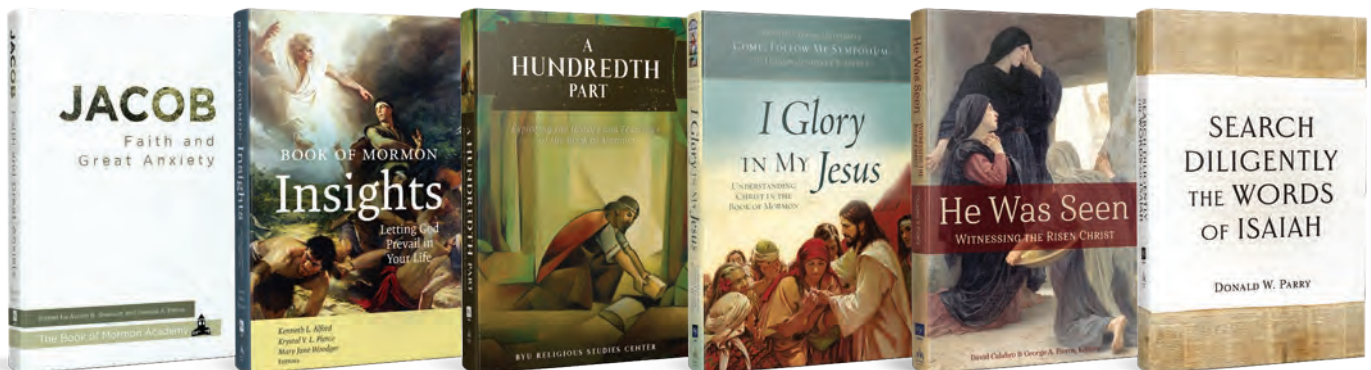
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