

BYU RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FALL 2024

# REVIEW

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



## The Chosen Conference



# Becoming BYU Religious Education



**O**VER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, A CONSISTENT THEME HAS EMERGED across campus at BYU. “Our challenge during my administration,” BYU president C. Shane Reese has declared, is “becoming BYU.” This includes “to become the university that prophets have foretold, . . . ‘the fully anointed university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken in the past.’”<sup>1</sup>

The charge for BYU to progress in its journey to become what prophets have envisioned extends to Religious Education. Indeed, echoing President Reese’s message, BYU’s mission statement reinforces the importance of the study of religion within the university. It declares, “All students at BYU should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved.”<sup>2</sup>

In Religious Education, we seek to build on a vision outlined by prophets and the legacy implemented by generations of faculty who have nurtured the faith of students through the study of God’s word. Furthermore, we desire to bless the broader Church through scholarship and public outreach. Doing so

is our answer, in part, to the call that Church Commissioner of Education Elder Clark G. Gilbert recently gave for BYU to be “the educational ambassador [that] represents the entire system and the Church in its scholarship, academic programs, and ability to be a light beyond the university.”<sup>3</sup>

We rejoice in the task of helping BYU become the “Christ-centered, prophetically directed university” of the Lord. “Becoming BYU,” President Reese has concluded, “will require that we embrace our religious mission even as we speak to the broader academy with credibility and strength.”<sup>4</sup>

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott C. Esplin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott C. Esplin  
Dean, *BYU Religious Education*

## Notes

1. C. Shane Reese, “Becoming BYU: An Inaugural Response” (BYU devotional, September 19, 2023).
2. “Mission of BYU,” <https://catalog.byu.edu/about/mission-of-byu>.
3. Clark G. Gilbert, Scott C. Esplin, and Jared W. Ludlow, “Reanchoring Our Purpose to Jesus Christ,” *Religious Educator* 23, no. 2 (2022): 13.
4. Reese, “Becoming BYU.”

The logo for Brigham Young University (BYU), consisting of the letters "BYU" in a bold, blue, serif font.

Religious Education

# REVIEW

BYU Religious Education Review  
A Publication of the Religious Studies Center

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**“The Fame of This House Shall Spread”**  
*By Casey Paul Griffiths*



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*By John Hilton III*



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On the cover: Attendees to *The Chosen* Conference tour the Goshen set of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Photograph by Brad Fogarty.

<p><b>RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER</b> Founded in 1975 by Jeffrey R. Holland <b>Director</b> Scott C. Esplin <b>Associate Director</b> Gaye Strathearn</p>	<p><b>Publications Director</b> Jared W. Ludlow <b>Associate Publications Director</b> Michael A. Goodman</p>	<p><b>REVIEW MAGAZINE</b> <b>Editor</b> Jared W. Ludlow <b>Managing Editor</b> Brent R. Nordgren</p>	<p><b>Editors</b> Don L. Brugger Becky Isom Call R. Devan Jensen <b>Publications Coordinator</b> Leigh Ann Copas</p>	<p><b>Photographers</b> Brent R. Nordgren Richard B. Crookston <b>Student Editors</b> Emma Clark Ivy Fuhriman Emma Taylor</p>	<p><b>DESIGN &amp; PRODUCTION</b> Hales Creative, LLC <b>Design Director</b> Kelly Nield</p>
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# CORNERSTONES OF TESTIMONY

JARED W. LUDLOW ([jared\\_ludlow@byu.edu](mailto:jared_ludlow@byu.edu)) IS THE PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR OF THE BYU RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER.

I was recently reminded of President Gordon B. Hinckley's teachings on the four cornerstones of faith, first given as a general conference talk (October 1984), then republished in the February 2004 *Liahona*. The four cornerstones are Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone; the First Vision of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith; the Book of Mormon; and priesthood restoration through Joseph Smith. These four cornerstones bear witness to the plan of our Heavenly Father and to the grand restoration in this final dispensation. It can be easy in a world full of random information and distractions to lose sight of these core doctrines and their centrality to our testimony. If we lose sight of them, we can be swayed by things of far lesser importance. On the other hand, when our testimonies are built on these cornerstones, we focus on the main things and our testimony of these cornerstones can help us deal with future issues that may arise. It is a great blessing that we have been provided a Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ; that he appeared alongside his Father to Joseph Smith;

*It can be easy in a world full of random information and distractions to lose sight of these core doctrines and their centrality to our testimony.*



President Gordon B. Hinckley

and that through Joseph Smith we have received another testament of Jesus Christ and priesthood keys and authority to carry the work of salvation forward.

In this issue we will learn about some topics related to some of these



Jared W. Ludlow

cornerstones. The first academic conference on *The Chosen* was hosted here at BYU through the efforts of one of our religion professors, John Hilton. The television program *The Chosen* has been instrumental in spreading the message of Jesus Christ's ministry throughout the world, helping many deepen their understanding and testimony of the chief cornerstone. This conference discussed some of the show's impacts, efforts, and development. Another article in this issue discusses

the significance of some of the properties and artifacts purchased by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from Community of Christ. Most notably, the Kirtland Temple was the site of the restoration of significant priesthood keys discussed as the fourth cornerstone above. Other articles share aspects of conferences and courses that help participants grow in their understanding of the gospel and covenant leadership. Tyler Griffin discusses the return of a conference for religious educators across the Church Educational System along with other initiatives to strengthen religious education throughout the Church. Barbara Morgan Gardner and Olivia Osguthorpe report on the great mentoring female students have experienced in a course on women and covenant leadership.

As we hasten the spiritual work in our individual lives and in the Church in these last days, may we maintain a strong testimony of the four cornerstones of faith shared by President Hinckley.



**Jared W. Ludlow**  
Publications Director  
BYU Religious Studies Center

## Free Events

### BYU Church History Symposium

**Friday–Saturday, October 24–25, 2024**

The theme is “Shall the Youth of Zion Falter? The Young Women and Young Men Programs of the Church.” The symposium will convene at Brigham Young University (October 24) and at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City (October 25). Keynote speakers include Young Women General President Emily Freeman, Young Men General President Steven J. Lund, and Dr. Monica L. Mercado, professor of women’s studies and North American religions at Colgate University.

For more information, visit [rsc.byu.edu/conferences/church-history](https://rsc.byu.edu/conferences/church-history).

### BYU Religious Education Symposium in Honor of Sidney B. Sperry

**Friday–Saturday, January 17–18, 2025**

This symposium will be held at the Joseph Smith Building on BYU campus. Joseph Smith did not simply proclaim he had a different understanding of Christian religion; central to his teachings and the formation of the Church of Christ were the numerous angelic visitations through which important keys and teachings were delivered. 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 as Doctrine and Covenants 13, 76, and 137. This symposium focuses on these miraculous visitations and revelatory visions, their implications for Latter-day Saint doctrine, and their potential application to modern Saints and even the broader world.

For more information, visit [rsc.byu.edu/conferences/sperry](https://rsc.byu.edu/conferences/sperry).



### BYU Easter Conference

**Friday, April 11, 2025**

The BYU Easter Conference will be held in the Joseph Smith Building auditorium on April 11 beginning at 7:00 p.m. 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](https://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](https://rsc.byu.edu/conferences) or contact Devan Jensen at 801-422-9304.*

## Faculty Highlight: Philip Abbot

PHILIP ABBOT ([philip\\_abbot@byu.edu](mailto:philip_abbot@byu.edu)) IS A VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.



Philip Abbott is a scholar of the New Testament and early Christianity. Before joining the faculty of Religious Education in 2023, he was a lecturer of religious studies at Spelman College. Philip holds a PhD in ancient Christianity from Stanford University, an MA in biblical studies from Yale Divinity School, an MA in New Testament studies from Pepperdine University, and a BM in cello performance from Brigham Young University, where he also minored in classics. His publications appear in *Harvard Theological Review*, *Journal of Theological Studies*, *Studia Patristica*, *Vigiliae Christianae*, *Aramaic Studies*, and *BYU Studies*. Originally from Salt Lake City, Philip served as a missionary in the Romania Bucharest Mission. He met his wife, violinist Rachel Ostler, when they were students in the BYU School of Music. They are the new parents of a baby girl, and they enjoy traveling, reading, making music, and studying German together. ✂

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## Staff Highlight: Becky Isom Call

BECKY CALL ([rebecca\\_call@byu.edu](mailto:rebecca_call@byu.edu)) IS AN EDITOR AT THE BYU RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER.



If asked, Becky Call will tell you that the best thing in her life was meeting a soon-to-be-released missionary in the Paris Opera House years ago. A student on a BYU study abroad program at the time, Becky had come to watch a performance of *Swan Lake*, but the attractive missionary sitting nearby was intriguing—and the man she would eventually marry. Becky completed her BA in English at BYU and worked as a full-time homemaker and mother to six before receiving additional training in editing and publishing. In addition to her role at the RSC, Becky enjoys writing and editing for a nonprofit organization that promotes interfaith Bible study. She lives with her family in a charming Provo neighborhood, where Becky can be found playing board games with her family, running with friends, enjoying the gripping sleuth work of family history, organizing neighborhood bake-offs, and growing grapes. ✂

# Faculty Highlight: Scott L. Howell

SCOTT L. HOWELL ([scott\\_howell@byu.edu](mailto:scott_howell@byu.edu)) IS AN ASSISTANT TEACHING PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.



Scott L. Howell was born in Malad, Idaho, but lived most of his life in Draper and Bluffdale, Utah, and now resides in Spanish Fork, Utah. He earned a BS in business management, an MEd in community education, and a PhD in instructional psychology and technology from Brigham Young University. He served as a missionary in the Wisconsin Milwaukee Mission. He and his wife, Lori, returned in 2021 as mission leaders in the North Dakota Bismarck Mission. He previously worked as an administrator for BYU in the Division of Continuing Education and on campus as the Center for Teaching and Learning director. He primarily teaches Mission Preparation (Rel C 130) and serves in the MTC with his wife. They the parents of seven children with six grandchildren. ✂

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# Faculty Highlight: Derek R. Sainsbury

DEREK R. SAINSBURY ([derek\\_sainsbury@byu.edu](mailto:derek_sainsbury@byu.edu)) IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.



Derek R. Sainsbury grew up in Taylorsville, Utah, and Sunbury, Australia. He received a BA in political science from the University of Utah, an MPA from Brigham Young University, and a PhD in American history from the University of Utah. He taught and administered in Seminaries and Institutes for twenty-seven years before joining the Religious Education faculty at BYU. Sainsbury is the author of the first monograph on Joseph Smith's 1844 presidential campaign, titled *Storming the Nation: The Unknown Contributions of Joseph Smith's Political Missionaries* (2020). He has published several articles on Joseph Smith's campaign and on religious liberty. He is currently researching and writing a dual biography of Joseph Smith and Robert F. Kennedy as the only two assassinated US presidential candidates. He is married to his high school sweetheart, Meredith Pettit, and they are parents of three sons. They reside in Bountiful. Sainsbury enjoys reading, golf, '80s music, the sun, and playing with his dogs. ✂

# “The Fame of This House Shall Spread”

## The Kirtland Temple and Other Historic Properties Return to the Church

By Casey Paul Griffiths

CASEY PAUL GRIFFITHS ([casey\\_griffiths@byu.edu](mailto:casey_griffiths@byu.edu)) IS AN ASSOCIATE TEACHING PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.

For anyone interested in Latter-day Saint history, March 5, 2024, is a day that will linger long in their memory. Already it is an event that most interested parties can recall exactly when and where they were when they heard the news. A press release sent by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced the purchase of the Kirtland Temple, several historic properties in Nauvoo, and many historic manuscripts and artifacts from Community of Christ. The announcement was the culmination of years of negotiation between the two faiths, dating back to June 2021. The transfer was noted by President Russell M. Nelson, who announced, “We are deeply honored to assume the stewardship of these sacred places, documents, and artifacts,” adding, “We thank our friends at Community of Christ for their great care and cooperation in preserving these historical treasures thus far. We are committed to doing the same.” Stephen M. Veazey, president of Community of Christ, also released a statement saying, “Through funding from increased endowments, Community of Christ will have greater capacity to pursue our mission priorities around the world.”<sup>1</sup> It was an event that many people on both sides of the transfer never expected to see in their lifetimes.



Kirtland Temple in twilight. Photograph by Casey Paul Griffiths.

### What Was Part of the Transaction?

An announcement made in the *Church News* laid out the essentials of the transaction. The transfer of ownership of the Kirtland Temple, the first temple built by the Church, was the central focus of most of the attention given to the sale. But the sale also

included several significant properties in Nauvoo, including the Smith Family Homestead, the Mansion House, the Nauvoo House, and the rebuilt Red Brick Store. Each of these properties was the site of dramatic events in Church history. The Smith Family Homestead is where Joseph Smith and his family lived during the





Clockwise from top left: The Mansion House, the Nauvoo House, the rebuilt Red Brick Store, and the Smith Family Home. Photographs by Christian Ames.

Nauvoo period for all except the last eight months of the Prophet's life. It served as a hub of activity during the Nauvoo period and is the likely place where Doctrine and Covenants 124, 125, and 126 were received.

Included in the sale was the Nauvoo House, which the Lord commanded the Saints to build in Doctrine and Covenants 124:28. Intended as a house where "the weary traveler may find health and safety while he shall contemplate the word of the Lord" (Doctrine and Covenants 124:23), construction on the Nauvoo House was abandoned when the Saints were forced to leave Nauvoo. Lewis Bidamon, Emma Smith's second husband, partially completed the Nauvoo House and later operated it as a hotel. Emma Smith was living there when she passed away in 1878.

In addition, the sale included the Mansion House, where Emma and Joseph's family rented rooms

during the final months of his life. The Mansion House was also where the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were displayed following the martyrdom.

The sale also included the rebuilt Red Brick Store, which hosted many historic events. Here the Relief Society was organized, the first Nauvoo endowments were administered, and the Council of Fifty met.<sup>2</sup>

Accompanying the sale of these historic sites was the transfer of many artifacts with great importance to the history of the Saints. Chief among these were the manuscripts for Joseph Smith's new translation of Bible (JST), along with the marked Bible used in that project. High resolution photographs of the JST became available on the Joseph Smith Papers website several years ago, but to see the physical JST materials in the hands of the Church History Department is a great blessing. Along with the JST materials came an

eclectic collection of artifacts including the door of Liberty Jail, original portraits of Joseph and Emma, and the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House where the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon was placed by Joseph Smith. Other documents included early Church historian John Whitmer's history of the Church (see Doctrine and Covenants 47), seven letters between Joseph and Emma Smith, and the "Caractors" document, which is a possible sample of the characters from the gold plates of the Book of Mormon.<sup>3</sup>

### Reactions to the Transaction

Many members of BYU Religious Education have close ties to members of Community of Christ, and for many of them the message was met with a peculiar mixture of joy and sorrow. News of the transaction spread quickly on social media, and many noted the devastating impact

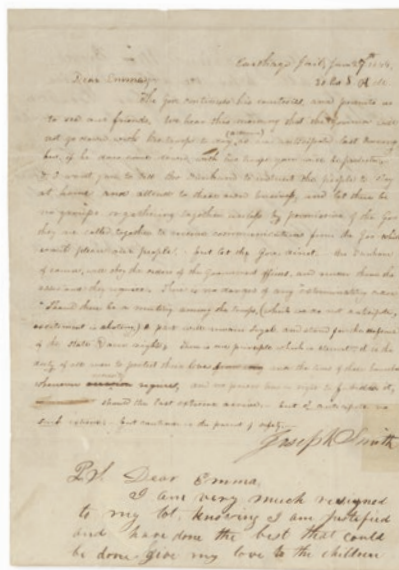


Above left: John Whitmer Church History.  
 Above right: New Testament Manuscript of Joseph Smith Translation.  
 Below: Joseph's last letter to Emma. Photographs by Cordale Ottley.

on members of Community of Christ when they became aware of the transaction. David Howlett, a historian in Community of Christ and a close associate of many in Religious Education, shared his feelings in a social media post: “We live in complex times, and people are forced to make hard choices to create a future for themselves and those they love. . . . I am heartbroken. I do not envy the church leaders who had to make this difficult decision.”<sup>4</sup>

One member of Community of Christ noted the impact on the relationship between the churches after the sale. “Relationships take work, and any description of the Latter-day Saint and Community of Christ relationship other than ‘it’s complicated but we’re trying’ is either public relations or non-understanding. The historic sites relationship will take that work especially after the emotions the transfer caused.”<sup>5</sup>

Lachlan Mackay, another close friend of Religious Education, filmed a video in which he described his wrestle over the sale of the historic properties. “The decision to part with these places has been devastating emotionally. There was a time when



I thought it might break me. But if I inherited anything from Joseph Smith III, it’s his pragmatism, and, intellectually, the path forward is clear. I care deeply about our past, but I care even more about our future.”<sup>6</sup>

At the time of the sale, an interfaith dialogue was already scheduled between faculty members of BYU Religious Education and leadership from Community of Christ. This dialogue group produced a collaboration exploring the two faiths in the RSC book *Restorations: Scholars in Dialogue from Community of Christ and The Church of Jesus Christ of*

*Latter-day Saints* in 2022. Three members of Community of Christ—Andrew Bolton, David Howlett, and Matthew Frizzell—participated in the meetings and shared their feelings over the sale of the historic sites and artifacts.

It was an emotional gathering, with many on both sides sharing their strong feelings over the impact of the sale on their shared friendships. One member of the BYU faculty later reflected, “When I heard about the sale of the historic properties and artifacts my first emotion was shock, then elation. I love these sacred spaces and objects. But shortly after, I began to receive messages from my friends in Community of Christ and other Restoration movements. The responses were quite different from mine, ranging from sadness to anger, to devastation, to pragmatic acceptance. I began to realize what a difficult day this was for many of the people that I care about. My impulse to celebrate was replaced with an impulse to “mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:9).<sup>7</sup>

## Future of the Historic Sites and Artifacts

After just over three weeks of hectic preparations, the Kirtland Temple and the historic sites in Nauvoo reopened for visitors on March 25. Before the temple reopened, construction teams took steps to further strengthen the structure, adding in additional supports in the basement.<sup>8</sup> On hand for the reopening of the temple were Karl and Joyce Anderson, who lived in the Kirtland area for decades and guided many members of Religious Education through the historic sites. Now in his late eighties, Brother Anderson expressed his joy at seeing a tour in the temple led by Latter-day Saint missionaries. “This is one of the greatest days of my life,” Brother Anderson remarked. “It’s hard to express.”<sup>9</sup>

The tour led by Latter-day Saint missionaries is markedly different than the tour led by Community of Christ docents. Typical tours start on the top floor of the Kirtland Temple after guests ascend two steep staircases with thirty-three steps each.

On the top floor, missionaries share with visitors the vision

experienced by Joseph Smith where he saw God the Father, Jesus Christ, Adam, Abraham, and his own father and mother along with his brother Alvin on January 21, 1836 (Doctrine and Covenants 137).

On the second floor, they are taught about the Lord’s instructions for the temple to be “a house of learning” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:119).

On the first floor of the temple, missionaries share the account of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery of the appearance of Jesus Christ, along with the ancient prophets Moses, Elias, and Elijah in the pulpits dedicated to the Melchizedek Priesthood. In the complexities of the entire transfer, we cannot overlook the simple fact that a place where Jesus Christ stood and spoke is now in possession of the Church. Not only did Jesus appear, but the temple itself was transformed by his presence.

Joseph and Oliver testified that the breastwork of the pulpit took on the appearance of “a paved work of gold, in color like amber” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:2). The Savior also told them that “the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands,” a prophecy still being fulfilled (Doctrine and Covenants 110:10).

Long-term plans for the historic properties and artifacts are still unknown, but for now members of every Restoration movement can take comfort in knowing the sites will be well maintained and well loved, just as they were under the stewardship

of Community of Christ. The sacred spaces in Kirtland and Nauvoo will remain houses of learning, where visitors can learn the stories of the Restoration. Most of the artifacts from the sale have already been placed on display in the Church Museum of History and Art in Salt Lake City for the public to view. The stewardship over these sacred properties has changed, but they retain their vitality as part of the continuing Restoration. ✨

## Notes

1. Quoted in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Church Purchases Kirtland Temple, Other Historic Buildings and Artifacts from Community of Christ,” *Church News*, March 5, 2024.
2. See Casey Paul Griffiths, Mary Jane Woodger, and Bryan Ready, *Search, Ponder, and Pray: Illinois Guide for Travel and Study* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort Publishing and Media, 2023).
3. See Michael Hubbard MacKay, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, and Robin Scott Jensen, “The ‘Caractors’ Document: New Light on an Early Transcription of the Book of Mormon Characters,” *Mormon Historical Studies*, 14, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 131–52.
4. David Howlett, Facebook post, March 5, 2024.
5. Katherine Pollock, personal message to author, June 26, 2024.
6. Lachlan Mackay, “Reflection – Apostle Lachlan Mackay,” Community of Christ, March 4, 2024, YouTube video, 1:19, <https://youtu.be/ZANaxTXRUQQ?si=JAW9bJ0sADOaRMSa>.
7. Casey Paul Griffiths, “The Most Important Lesson Learned from the Kirtland Temple Agreement,” *Meridian Magazine*, March 19, 2024.
8. Interview and tour with Grant Call, historic sites missionary, notes in author’s possession.
9. Trent Toone, “Church Reopens Kirtland Temple—the First Temple in This Dispensation—for Public Tours,” *Church News*, March 25, 2024.

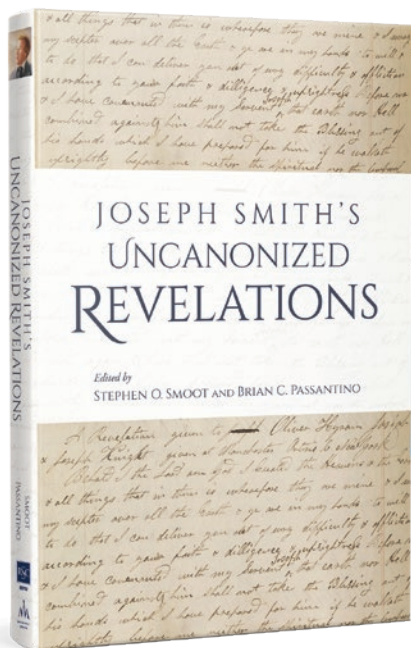


Bible used in Joseph Smith’s translation project.  
Photograph by Cordale Ottley.

# Joseph Smith's Uncanonized Revelations

By Stephen O. Smoot and Brian C. Passantino

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Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the Restoration, produced hundreds of recorded prophecies, visions, revelations, and manifestations during his prophetic ministry.<sup>1</sup> Many of these revelations and visions are canonized for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Doctrine and Covenants. However, it may come as a surprise

to some Latter-day Saints that not all of Joseph Smith's revelations are found in the Doctrine and Covenants. A significant number of revelations—a few dozen at least—have, for a variety of reasons, gone uncanonized since their first pronouncement. Although perhaps not as well-known as their canonized counterparts, these texts are no less important in helping Latter-day Saints appreciate Joseph Smith as a modern revelator and prophet. Besides this, they are valuable to scholars and historians seeking to understand Joseph Smith as an American religious leader.

Thanks to the monumental work of the Joseph Smith Papers Project (JSP), the Prophet's papers—his histories, journals, letters, revelations, translations, and other documents—are now better understood and more accessible than at any other time in the history of the Restoration. However, one major problem facing those wishing to navigate the JSP is the sheer volume of material to wade through. Besides twenty-seven

published volumes, the JSP also offers an expansive website with supplementary resources.<sup>2</sup> But trying to locate Joseph Smith's uncanonized revelations in this mass of documents is, understandably, going to be either difficult or bothersome for most average readers. To help make these sources more readily accessible, we felt the time was right to produce a single volume collection of the Prophet's uncanonized revelations. Building on past scholarship,<sup>3</sup> *Joseph Smith's Uncanonized Revelations*, published this year with the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University and Deseret Book, aims to remove that barrier to help facilitate access to these fascinating revelations. We also hope to enhance the Saints' study of this material by distilling the latest scholarship on this subject in an approachable yet rigorous manner. Scholars looking for a reference or guide to this corpus of Joseph Smith documents may also find this volume useful.

In this book, we have assembled forty-two revelations or portions of revelations the Prophet produced that went uncanonized in his lifetime and that remain uncanonized today. We have described the methodology for determining what was included in this project in the introduction of the book. Although we were thorough in our efforts to locate uncanonized revelations from Joseph Smith, we acknowledge the likelihood that there are additional uncanonized revelations that escaped our notice and thus do not appear in this volume. We should also say upfront that there are no uncanonized Joseph Smith revelations that fundamentally overturn any teachings of the Church or revolutionize our understanding of who Joseph Smith was. Instead, they provide fuller context to some of Joseph Smith's teachings and inform our understanding of some specific incidents in the early history of the Restoration. They contain, for example, more information on the duties of bishops, directions for publishing the scriptures, greater context for the practice of plural marriage, instructions for missionaries and local Church leaders, and admonishments to live the gospel with greater purpose. They contain inspired and uplifting principles that are in harmony with the restored gospel as taught in the scriptures and also raise some doctrinal questions

that are worth readers' considered attention.

Besides being interesting in their own right, the presence of uncanonized Joseph Smith revelations raises important questions about the nature of the Latter-day Saint canon. What status do we afford these uncanonized revelations? How authoritative are they? What does it mean to have an open canon of scripture where, conceivably, one day these revelations might be included? And how should they be viewed in personal study or used in Church settings? We address these and other important questions in the book, hoping to give some perspective and context for readers as they explore these fascinating documents.

Notwithstanding their place outside of the canon, these revelations in this volume portray a God who is engaged in our lives and who cares about even the seemingly minute details of our daily existence. We acknowledge the hand of the Lord in preserving these revelations and the countless individuals who have contributed to their preservation. Whether or not any of these revelations someday becomes canonical is something that the Lord will reveal to his appointed servants if and when the time is right. Whatever the case, these revelations stand as a testament to the ongoing restoration of the Church and gospel of Jesus Christ. ❧



*Revelation Given to Joseph Smith at the Organization of the Church*, by Judith Mehr. Courtesy of Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

## Notes

1. An excellent collection of these sources can be found in John W. Welch, ed., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2017).
2. The official website of the JSP is [www.josephsmithpapers.org](http://www.josephsmithpapers.org).
3. Previous publications that have collected the Prophet's uncanonized or unpublished revelations include Fred C. Collier, *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Collier's, 1979); H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text & Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999). While earlier books such as these two provided foundational work, they are now fairly outdated and out of print, making them expensive and not easily obtainable for average readers.

# *The Chosen*

By John Hilton III

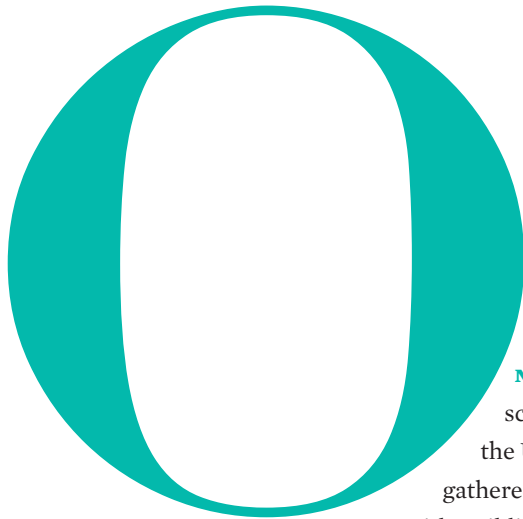


▲ Brad Pelo, executive producer and president of *The Chosen*, addresses conference attendees at the Joseph Smith Building auditorium. Photograph by Nora Shin.

# Conference



▲ Conference attendees take in a scene from *The Chosen* during a conference presentation. Photograph by Nora Shin.



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**ON MARCH 14–15,** scholars from around the United States gathered at the Joseph Smith Building to discuss the global sensation *The Chosen*. The occasion was *The Chosen* Conference, the first academic conference on the popular historical drama that premiered in 2017. These academics spoke not only to their peers but also to hundreds of people from the community who attended the conference.

### What Is *The Chosen*?

Given that more than two hundred million people have seen *The Chosen* thus far,<sup>1</sup> you're likely familiar with it, but just in case, here's a quick overview: *The Chosen* is the first multiseason television show about Jesus Christ and his disciples. It portrays the life of Jesus Christ through the perspective of those who knew him, including Mary Magdalene, Peter, and other disciples. The show aims to offer a fresh and personal portrayal of Jesus, emphasizing both his humanity and divinity.

Created, directed, and cowritten by Dallas Jenkins, *The Chosen* has gained popularity for its high production values, engaging storytelling, and respectful approach to its subject matter. While it's true that much of what appears in *The Chosen* is not scriptural, that's intentional. At the very beginning of the first episode in *The Chosen*, a disclaimer states, "The Chosen is based on the true stories of the gospels of Jesus Christ. Some locations and timelines have been combined or condensed. Backstories and some characters or dialog have been added. However, all biblical and historical context and any artistic imagination

are designed to support the truth and intention of the Scriptures. Viewers are encouraged to read the gospels."

Although some people are concerned about the fictional aspects of *The Chosen*, it is also true that visual depictions of the Savior can motivate us to return to the scriptures and study them with greater intensity. According to Jenkins, this has been the result of *The Chosen*. He said, "We hear every day from literally thousands of people around the world who say, 'I'm reading my Bible more than I ever have before. I feel closer to Jesus than I ever have before from watching this show, and it's causing me to want to dig in more in my prayer life and in my Bible reading.' And I don't see how that can be a bad thing."<sup>2</sup>

Seasons 1–4 of *The Chosen* were released from 2019 to 2024,<sup>3</sup> and three additional seasons are planned for release in 2025, 2026, and 2027). The first four seasons focus on Christ's Galilean ministry, leading up to the triumphal entry. Season 5 will portray the events from the triumphal entry to Christ in Gethsemane, with seasons 6 and 7 depicting Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.

With its increasing popularity, it was only a matter of time until an academic conference would be convened to discuss the show. So how is it that the first academic conference on *The Chosen* occurred on BYU campus?

### A Conference Is Born

*The Chosen* Conference began with a happy accident. On December 24, 2022, my family sang Christmas carols at a local retirement home. Afterward, as we visited with the residents, I learned that one of the residents was the mother of Brad Pelo, the president and executive producer of *The Chosen*.



I told the woman how much I admired her son's work, and she responded, saying, "My son is coming to visit me in about an hour. You should come and say hello to him." I took her up on the invitation, which started a relationship with Brad that led to me asking him a few months later what he thought about the idea of gathering a group of scholars from across the country to talk about *The Chosen* from an academic perspective. Because *The Chosen* represents a diverse set of Christian viewpoints, the goal was to have academics from a variety of faith traditions come and share their various insights.

Brad encouraged the idea and said that if we were able to hold our conference either in Texas or Utah, we could include a tour of *The Chosen* set as part of our conference (*The Chosen* uses two sets, one in Texas and one in Utah).

But how to find scholars interested in *The Chosen*? My next step, and I admit this was not the most professional

approach, was to look up news articles that had been written about *The Chosen* and search for scholars who had been quoted in those articles. I developed a list of about twenty-five scholars and began emailing them to see if they would be interested in helping plan the conference.

*Because The Chosen represents a diverse set of Christian viewpoints, the goal was to have academics from a variety of faith traditions come and share their various insights.*



▲ Attendees to *The Chosen* Conference visit the Goshen, Utah, set of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Photograph by Brad Fogarty.



▲ Attendees to *The Chosen* Conference visit the Goshen, Utah, set of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Photograph by Brad Fogarty.

Eventually we developed a conference steering committee comprised of Dr. Paul Gondreau (Providence College), Dr. Thomas Hibbs (Baylor University), Dr. Douglas Huffman (Biola University), and me. We originally explored hosting the conference in Texas but eventually determined it was more feasible to hold it at Brigham Young University.

The committee advertised the conference through various channels, and we received several proposals for presentations. Our final program included fourteen presentations from scholars coming from ten different institutions around the United States.

*“I felt like God was laying it on my heart very strongly that ‘You are going to impact lives in this place. People around the world are going to be impacted by the things done on this set.’”*

*—Dallas Jenkins*

### The Set Tour

*The Chosen* Conference began on March 14, with a tour of *The Chosen* set in Goshen, Utah, for the visiting scholars and their guests. Beginning in season 2, many scenes from *The Chosen* were filmed on this set, which is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The set was originally built to film the Church’s Bible videos. Yet, from the beginning of this set’s existence, space was created for interfaith collaboration.<sup>4</sup>

Brad Fogarty, vice president of talent for *The Chosen*, led the tour and was able to show us where specific scenes had been filmed. One memorable spot was the Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus (portrayed by Jonathan Roumie) healed a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. Our set tour also included a surprise visit from Giavani Cairo, the actor who portrays the Apostle Thaddaeus.

Commenting on the tour, Dr. T. Adam Van Wart, associate professor of theology at Ave Maria University, said, “Touring the set was an exciting and eye-opening experience. I had no idea how creative and resourceful the crew was in maximizing the set and its features. It has been fun after the conference to rewatch the show and see the actors walking exactly where we all had been.”

## Keynote Addresses

After the tour, the visiting scholars gathered in the Joseph Smith Building for dinner, followed by keynote addresses given by Stan Jantz and Brad Pelo. Stan Jantz is the president of the Come and See Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all seven seasons of *The Chosen* are globally accessible, available for free on *The Chosen* app, and eventually translated into six hundred languages (*The Chosen* app currently features more than fifty different dubbed languages). Jantz shared a video showing multiple different language dubbings of the scene from *The Chosen* in which Christ healed the man who was let down through a roof (this video is available at [comeandseefoundation.org](http://comeandseefoundation.org)). It was truly inspiring to see how an increasing number of people can now interact with *The Chosen* in their native languages.

In his keynote address, Brad Pelo shared how he began to be involved in *The Chosen*. In 2019 Pelo was an executive at Bonneville Communications, a media company owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Pelo became aware that Dallas Jenkins was looking for a place to film season 2 and invited Jenkins to visit the Goshen set, still unsure whether permission for use would be a possibility.

After touring the set, Jenkins described it as “one of the best TV sets I’ve seen in my life” and expressed feeling the presence of God. He later commented that “I felt like God was laying it on my heart very strongly that ‘You are going to impact lives in this place. People around the world are going to be impacted by the things done on this set.’”<sup>5</sup>

However, the Church did not yet have procedures in place to authorize the external use of the set during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to an initial rejection of the request to lease the set. However, after Jenkins secured an audience with Church leaders to discuss the project, the First Presidency quickly granted approval for *The Chosen* to use the Goshen set. Pelo left Bonneville in 2020 and later became president of *The Chosen*.



▲ Brad Pelo (right) embraces Stan Jantz. Photograph by Nora Shin.

## Presentations on *The Chosen*

The following day there were fourteen academic presentations on various aspects of *The Chosen*. The first presentation was given by Biola University professor Dr. Douglas S. Huffman, who spoke about how *The Chosen* strives to balance authenticity, plausibility, and relatability. Huffman, who serves as one of the theological advisors and script consultants, helps ensure the historical and biblical accuracy of the show. He shared several examples of how *The Chosen* strives for historical accuracy, while acknowledging that sometimes, to make the show relatable to others, it adds additional details not found in the scriptural text (For example, all the dialogue is in English, a language that did not exist at the time of Christ!).

Later that morning Dr. Gaye Strathearn, associate dean of Religious Education at Brigham Young University, presented on the topic of “The Women of *The Chosen*.” She pointed out that women play a prominent role in *The Chosen*. In speaking about the female characters in *The Chosen*, Dallas Jenkins stated, “One of the things that we’re very proud of with the show is—and I don’t think we’re creating this, we’re revealing something that sometimes people forget is—just how much Jesus honored women in a time period and a culture that wasn’t always as honoring as you might expect.”<sup>6</sup>

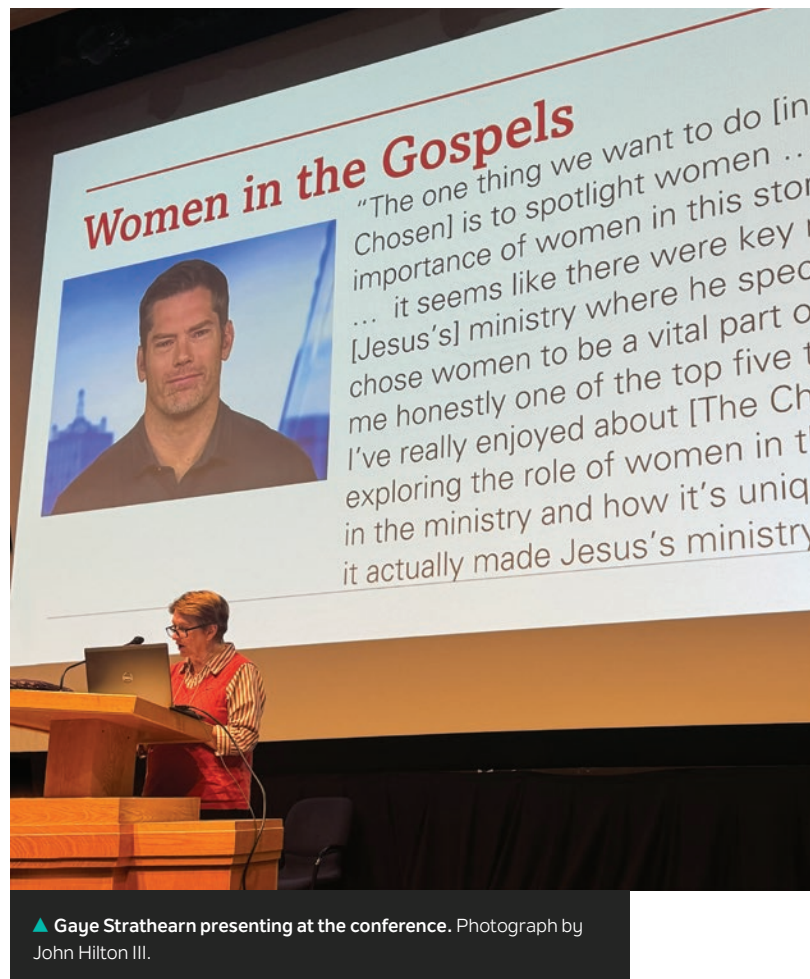
In highlighting women, *The Chosen* frequently uses artistic license to fill in the narrative gaps in the New Testament text (along the lines of Huffman’s “historical plausibility;” described above). For example, the New Testament infers that Peter had a wife when Jesus heals Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29 and parallels), but it is otherwise silent on this unnamed woman. *The Chosen* therefore creates a major storyline around a character called Eden who plays Peter’s wife. In a powerful scene, Jesus converses with her acknowledging that he asked Peter “to make sacrifices and leave things behind in order to follow [Jesus].” Then he continues, “You are one flesh with Simon. He cannot make sacrifices that are not also yours. You have a role to play in all of this. . . . I see you.” While this conversation is not historical, it does highlight a true message—that Jesus Christ sees each one of us. (See Doctrine and Covenants 38:7.)

Just before lunch, Dr. Joel R. Gallagher from the Catholic University of America, gave a presentation titled “*The Chosen* in the Classroom: ‘I Know That Power Has Gone Out From Me.’” Gallagher discussed how scenes from *The Chosen* can breathe life into classroom conversations.

As recounted by *Deseret News* reporter Hanna Seariac, “Gallagher addressed the audience saying, “You’re all here quite voluntarily, and you’re here because you love ‘The Chosen.’ You’re interested in the course material,” Gallagher said. “It’s not always the case with undergraduate students.”

Gallagher said he uses *The Chosen* to ask questions around how Jesus was impacted by the events that unfolded in the Gospels. As his first example, Gallagher spoke about the healing of a woman with an issue of blood. The woman reaches out to Jesus to touch his hem because she believes he has the power to heal.

Gallagher said, “We see Jesus, something happens to him in turn. Apparently, he’s almost knocked off his feet. He’s knocked off balance. Something has touched him emotionally.” Gallagher said this scene can be used to start a conversation about what happened when Jesus said his power went out of him and to talk about what healing meant for him.”<sup>7</sup>



▲ Gage Strathearn presenting at the conference. Photograph by John Hilton III.

Later that afternoon, Dr. Matthew Grey, associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University, spoke on the topic of “Excavating *The Chosen*: An Archaeological Perspective on the Series and the ‘Authentic’ World of Jesus.” Grey highlighted some of the historical challenges with creating cinematic portrayals of Jesus Christ and shared details from his archeological studies that can expand our understanding of what villages such as Capernaum really looked like at the time of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

After the final presentations and a closing prayer had been offered, the scholars lingered in the auditorium for nearly an hour, greeting audience members and continuing conversations on the impact and meaning of *The Chosen*.



▲ Conference attendees at the Joseph Smith Building auditorium. Photograph by Nora Shin.

## Personal Reflections

For me, one of the best things about this conference was the opportunity to interact with scholars who are deeply faithful to their own religious traditions. One conference participant captured my feelings when he wrote to me, saying, “As a theologian with family ties and a personal history in Catholicism, evangelical Protestantism, and the Latter-day Saints, I was incredibly pleased to discover the new avenues for interfaith conversation that an artistically driven show like *The Chosen* and events like this conference make possible. There were, of course, deep and significant theological differences present among the conference’s many participants. But this conference made it possible for us to establish new relationships around a common appreciation of *The Chosen* wherein genuinely fruitful dialogue about those differences might begin. In a time and culture wherein so many people are looking for reasons to argue and separate, it was nice to participate in something that was so clearly striving for a collective appreciation of something truly beautiful.”

*“I don’t know very much about your church, but after this conference, I’m sure of one thing—you guys believe in Jesus Christ.”*

My personal highlight came during a lunch conversation with a faculty member who teaches at a Christian college on the East Coast. He said, “I don’t know very much about your church, but after this conference, I’m sure of one thing—you guys believe in Jesus Christ.” Yes, we do!

In reflecting on the conference, Huffman wrote me the following, “*The Chosen* is a work of art. And like

any artwork, it calls for the viewer to interact with it, to interpret it, and perhaps to be interpreted by it. In such interpretative endeavors, sharing reflections with others can be beneficial for us as individuals and for our communities. Jesus is truly a captivating figure, and it is helpful to interact with people who differ from me in my view of him. Such interactions remind me that Jesus is not to be ‘owned’ by any particular perspective. He, in fact, desires to own each of us.” ✂

## Notes

1. Michael Foust, “The Chosen Crosses 200 Million Viewers Worldwide: ‘Just Extraordinary,’” *Crosswalk.com*, March 26, 2024.
2. Dallas Jenkins, interview with Morgan Jones, *All In*, podcast audio, July 29, 2020, <https://www.ldsliving.com/all-in/dallas-jenkins-behind-the-scenes-of-the-chosen>.
3. The pilot episode was released in 2017.
4. In the dedicatory prayer offered on August 2, 2011, Elder David A. Bednar specifically petitioned the Lord to touch the hearts of other film producers, saying, “We also ask Thee to bless other believers in the film industry that they will be touched and influenced to inquire how this set might be used to further goodness and righteousness through the earth. We pray that all may have an understanding through the power of the Holy Ghost that the hand of the Lord has been and will continue to be over this inspired effort.” The Jerusalem Set, Goshen, Utah, Remarks and Dedicatory Prayer, August 2, 2011, CR 1038 1, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
5. “Outside Filmmaker for ‘The Chosen’ Gets Unprecedented Access to LDS-Owned Set,” *Fox 13*, April 17, 2022.
6. Deborah Evans Price, “‘The Chosen’ Creator Dallas Jenkins Opens Up About the Heart of the Hit Series (EXCLUSIVE),” *Yahoo!Life*, February 1, 2024.
7. The report of Gallagher’s presentation comes from Hanna Seariac, “Inside the Interfaith, Academic ‘The Chosen’ Conference Held at BYU,” *Deseret News*, March 18, 2024.
8. For a more in-depth account of what Capernaum would have looked like, see Matthew J. Grey, “Simon Peter in Capernaum: An Archaeological Survey of the First-Century Village,” in *The Ministry of Peter, the Chief Apostle*, ed. Frank F. Judd Jr., Eric D. Huntsman, and Shon D. Hopkin (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2014).

# WOMEN OF COVENANT LEADERSHIP

By Barbara Morgan Gardner with Olivia Osguthorpe

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“It is not for you to be led by the women of the world,” President Joseph F. Smith said to women in the Church; “it is for you to lead the world and to lead especially the women of the world, in everything that is praiseworthy, everything that is God-like, everything that is uplifting and that is purifying to the children of men.”<sup>1</sup>

More recently, in his landmark talk, “A Plea to My Sisters,” President Russell M. Nelson pleaded, “We need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices.”<sup>2</sup> Then, in a follow-up talk to the women of the Church, President Nelson repeated the phrase quoted above and added, “We simply cannot gather Israel without you.”<sup>3</sup>

Building on my belief that all women who make and keep sacred covenants are powerful leaders and to help answer the prophets’ plea, I worked with students and other covenant women to create a class that would prove to be life-changing for the fifty-plus covenant women involved. What began as an idea and a few phone calls has now culminated



Left to right: Barbara Morgan Gardner, Elaine S. Dalton, Aubrey Clark, and Olivia Osguthorpe at the Women of Covenant Leadership class. Photograph courtesy of Barbara Morgan Gardner.

in the first Women of Covenant Leadership cohort. Over the course of the last semester, we have piloted a class at BYU focused on developing faithful covenant women into leaders in any setting they find themselves. This class began in small conversations between me and Elaine S. Dalton, former Young Women General President.

Upon reaching out to a few women to act as mentors and perhaps guests to participate in teaching the course, it quickly became apparent that many women were united in

their desires to fulfill the plea of the prophet to both become better covenant leaders as well as mentor others in the process. Every woman I spoke with for counsel and possible participation in the class expressed not only agreement for the need for such a class but also immediate excitement and urgent desire for participation. Jane Clayson Johnson, for example, with merely a mention of the idea of having the class was willing to travel from Boston to Utah and help “in whatever way was needed,” because she strongly believed this class had

the potential to fill a “critical need” that she has observed over the years. Sharon Eubank, director of Church’s humanitarian effort and former counselor in General Relief Society Presidency, would enthusiastically make whatever time was needed to visit with the students as a guest lecturer and mentor students on an individual basis throughout the semester as desired. Elaine Dalton was willing to not only help create the syllabus for the course, but was even willing, upon invitation, to help teach the weekly class and participate in any opportunity presented to her.

Over the course of the next few months, preparation for the class began to take root with distinctive and critical class elements coming to the forefront. The class would be unique among other courses taught in BYU Religious Education in various ways. For example, although I was the primary instructor of the course, it would be partially team taught with Elaine Dalton and would include weekly guests—women who we considered covenant leaders, who have served in various capacities of leadership in the Church, home, community, and world. Each of these women would instruct the students for a minimum of one hour on a gospel principle of their choice associated with covenant leadership and would agree to be both grounded in the gospel and authentic and even vulnerable in sharing worthwhile experiences for the purpose of training future covenant leaders. With a heavy emphasis on experiential learning, this course would include an overnight retreat, field trips to the homes of leaders who were unable

to come to campus, course projects which included further mentorship from these covenant women leaders in the form of interviews and editing for a future podcast and humanitarian efforts as well as time during class for questions and answers.

As I continued my preparation for the class, it became apparent that I needed young adult women students to act as covenant leaders among their peers and that I needed to both train them and learn from them as I continued to write the syllabus and prepare for the class. I eventually chose Aubrey Clark and Olivia Osguthorpe as these peer mentors. To help prepare Aubrey and Olivia for the heavy responsibility that would be theirs in being peer mentors, as well as to learn from them what was needed for the class, I intentionally observed and listened to them in various capacities. For example, as we studied and analyzed material from church leaders on covenants, priesthood, and leadership as well as historical documents on women and the Relief Society I was able to see the gaps in both knowledge and experience of these young adult women as well as be astonished by their spiritual and intellectual maturity and wisdom. I also recognized how beneficial it would be for them to experience firsthand the truths and people we studied in their original historical context of Nauvoo.

With funding from the experiential learning grant, Olivia, Aubrey and I traveled to Nauvoo. We spent significant time in the Sarah Granger Kimball home, where the Relief Society began; the Red Brick Store, where the ordinances and covenants

associated with the endowment were administered to women for the first time; and the Nauvoo Temple. At these sites we studied the original writings and teachings associated with covenant women and leadership. In Nauvoo we more clearly understood both the unique role of women regarding covenant leadership and the generalizable principles that applied to all covenant leaders. These historical, doctrinal, and pedagogical foundations helped us to develop a model for both lecture and experience-based learning.

As we continued our preparation for the class by speaking with individuals such as those previously mentioned as well as Kim B. Clark, BYU administrators, and other general women leaders, the course syllabus became clear. Readings for the course and the course syllabus were a compilation of talks and scriptures produced by prophets and other Church leaders, both men and women, but were uniquely taught by, analyzed by, and discussed through the lens of covenant women. Doctrines and principles of the gospel including the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Godhead, plan of salvation, temple covenants, priesthood power, spiritual gifts, charity, covenant relationships, and the importance and unique role of women as covenant leaders became major themes of the class in both what and how the class would be taught.

After studying and praying over applications, thirty young adult female students were invited and accepted the invitation to participate in the class. As a part of the application process, we asked our cohort of thirty women to

respond to a series of questions about their own personal commitment to their temple covenants and what their thoughts were on covenant leadership. Many of them recounted experiences from university study or eighteen-month church missions, which many of our cohort chose to serve. Before the class began, this is what they had to say about covenant leadership:

I've never considered the concept of covenant leadership before, but the first thought that comes to my mind is that those who truly understand and honor their covenants with Christ are striving to become like him, and he is the perfect leader. To me, the best leaders are those who see potential in people and in situations, and they nurture that potential until it blossoms. Rather than being the big voice driving the group, a leader is someone who is gentle but firm, who delegates and supports, and who reminds those around them of the ultimate goal and vision. These qualities are ones I think a covenant leader would possess, because they are the qualities of Jesus Christ. —L. C.

Covenant leadership to me means that I am in partnership with the Savior. Whether this is leadership in a calling or leading by example, as we are bound to the Savior we can lead like him. —K. M.

In addition, thirteen women who had experience with covenant leadership from different walks of life and professions were invited to become guest lecturers and mentors to the young adult women. These women were Brigitte C. Madrian, Sharon Eubank, Jane Clayson Johnson, Liz Darger, Virginia Hinckley Pearce Cowley, Brooke Romney, Becky Craven, Reyna Aburto, Julie B. Beck, Susan W. Tanner, Lisa Leonard, Bonnie L. Oscarson, and Elaine L. Jack. These women accepted the invitation to present the most important principle for young adult women to learn that would help them be the most effective covenant leaders in the way they thought was most effective. Supplemental principles and topics for the class from these covenant women leaders included such topics as charity, covenants and ordinances, meekness, consecration, covenant confidence, counseling, pride,

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*“Covenant leadership to me means that I am in partnership with the Savior.”* —K. M.

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history, doctrine, application of priesthood power for women, and spiritual gifts. There were as many pedagogical approaches as there were women.

As President Johnson has taught, frequent study of prophetic teaching leads to deeper conversion. To prepare for class, students were assigned readings recommended by the guest speaker, ranging from doctoral dissertations and academic articles to general conference talks

and BYU speeches. Day-to-day class proceedings included a devotional by the students, instruction from Elaine Dalton and me, and an introduction of the speaker by a student. During the one-hour-fifty-minute block, the guest would speak from forty-five to seventy minutes. Before ever mentioning their achievements and Church callings, each of these covenant women spoke to their divine identities as children of God, children of the covenant, and disciples of Jesus Christ. Each of these women were authentic and real in their experiences as leaders in the family, community and church and allowed considerable time for Q&A with the students both during the class and on an individual basis.

Students were expected to take notes on what stood out to them and items pertaining to these questions:

- What did you learn from what was said regarding covenant leadership?
- What did you learn from how these covenant leaders taught?
- What are your reflections on the class period as a whole?

We asked students to turn in the answers to these questions for each lecture. In addition to notetaking, students participated in projects outside of class serving in their community or helping create a “women of covenant leadership” podcast by preparing and conducting interviews, editing content, setting up the studio every week, and running sound and lighting. The podcast was also an important place for students to forge relationships with each other and with the women invited as guests.



A highlight of the semester was a class retreat at Spring Haven in Hobbie Creek Canyon. At the retreat, we took time to have organic bonding experiences by playing games and sharing meals as well as giving instruction and answering questions. We invited Liz Darger to join us in instructing and to participate in a panel where we discussed themes of leadership as well as priesthood power. This time together was not just intellectually enlarging or spiritually strengthening, it was also a major emotional boost. There is much power in connecting good women with good women; gathering is essential to the Lord's work in our day. These were special relationships that could have only been made in a class like this.

At the conclusion of the semester, we asked students the same questions about what *covenant leadership* means. Some responses follow:

Covenant leadership could be described as a life lived in deliberate and devoted discipleship to Jesus Christ. That partnership with the Savior is, to me, the key of covenant leadership, as opposed to leadership in any other sense. We have learned that leadership is having influence, vision, and confidence—among other things. Taking these three points as an example: covenant leadership is not just to have general influence but to be filled with the Spirit so that your influence leads others to seek God;

covenant leadership is to have spiritual vision—to see as God sees and to think celestial; and covenant confidence is all in Jesus Christ, for we know his promises are sure—and thus, as we are faithful, we need have no fear of evil or even of our own shortcomings. —K. G.

Covenant leadership is living life in a way that is in accordance with the covenants you have made with the Savior. It is realizing that you influence others just by living, and that is leadership—your influence, whether small or great. So, by being intentional and aware and committed to how you live your life and living it in accordance with those covenants you can influence others for good. —C. K.

Covenant leadership is not loud, self-proclaiming, self-focused, or worldly; it's not about being at the top. This kind of leadership points everything and everyone to Christ, focuses on being an instrument for him, and applies principles of daily repentance, humble submission, and seeking the will of the Lord in all things. —A. L.

All who make and keep covenants are covenant leaders primarily through example of living like Christ, who is the perfect leader.

You do not need a calling or a position to be a covenant leader; rather, you need to know and strive to become like Christ. —G. O.

Students in this course experienced learning in a variety of ways, not just from what our speakers said and from what they read in their readings, but also from watching how our guest speakers interacted with them and how they interacted with each other. Having a small class facilitated relationships and allowed for very personal learning. At the conclusion of the class, one young adult woman wrote, "I did not know there were so many stalwart, covenant leaders among my peers on the BYU campus. I look forward to using the principles I learned in this class as I seek to increase my capacity to be a leader as President Nelson has pled. This experience has truly been a life-changer for me!" We are thankful for the prophetic invitations that led us to begin this class as well as the continued direction we receive from church leaders on how to be the covenant people God expects us to be. This was a wonderful class, and we are excited to continue Women of Covenant Leadership (REL C 393R) this fall. ✂

## Notes

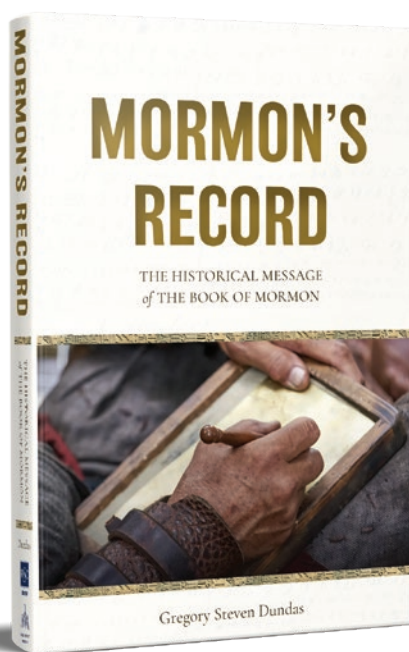
1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 185.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters" (general conference talk, October 2015), [www.churchofjesuschrist.org](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).
3. Russell M. Nelson, "Sisters' Participation in the Gathering of Israel" (general conference talk, October 2018), [www.churchofjesuschrist.org](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).

# BOOK HIGHLIGHT:

## Mormon the Historian

By Kent P. Jackson

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The Religious Studies Center recently published *Mormon's Record: The Historical Message of the Book of Mormon*, by Gregory Steven Dundas. Dundas has a PhD in Greek and Roman history from UCLA and a juris doctorate from the University of Michigan. In his study of historical sources from the classical world and the ancient Near East, he has researched ancient historians and has explored the perspectives and biases from which they wrote. Now in *Mormon's Record* he brings that

exploration to the work of the prophet Mormon.

Some Latter-day Saints push back when they are reminded that Mormon was the *author* of the Book of Mormon (aside from the small plates and the material his son Moroni added). Part of the struggle with that concept is the English word *abridgment*, which we find on the book's title page. An abridgment is usually a condensed version of a single work, like a condensed dictionary or a condensed edition of a novel. Mormon's record, in contrast, is the abridgment not of a book but of a whole national history, the thousand-year history of his people. Drawing on earlier records compiled on the large plates of Nephi, which by Mormon's time were likely a large stack of plates, and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he authored the Book of Mormon. It is named after him because he wrote it; it is in his words. Like any other author, he's the only speaker in the book, except when he's quoting others.

It is solely from Mormon's record that we have knowledge of Abinadi, Alma, Helaman, Samuel, and other great people and events in the

history of Lehi's descendants. He included their words and stories in his record, but the commentary he added was not from the perspectives of those earlier people but from his own later vantage point. With his comments coming at the end of the story and having the entire course of the Lehiite family's experience before him, Mormon was in a unique position to understand the story in ways they could not. Thus, Mormon's vision of history runs through his book. Readers know that Mormon pays little attention to times of peace and happiness, assuming, perhaps, that we know what it's like to be happy. Instead, he pays a great deal of attention to times of dissension and warfare, likely to teach us how we can ruin our lives. The Book of Mormon is, as Dundas reminds us, "a book about failures," the repeated failures of people to live in ways that would ultimately bring meaning and satisfaction to their lives.

The good news in all this is that Mormon had us and our happiness in mind when he wrote. He didn't want us, including the modern descendants of his own people, to fall prey to the failures he witnessed in his family's

story. Whether we deserve it or not, he was not without hope about us, as can be seen in the frequent sermonizing in which he says, in effect, “Don’t be like the people in this book!” He knew that Jesus Christ is the key to ancient Israel’s covenant and to our well-being, and he made sure we would understand it by including in his record the magnificent Christian teachings of King Benjamin, Alma, Amulek, and others. We are blessed that Mormon’s book contains “a record of a fallen people,” and we are also blessed that it contains “the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:9).

So how does Mormon’s historical writing stack up against the work of his ancient historian peers?

That question is a primary focus in *Mormon’s Record*, and Dundas deals with it impressively. The first part of the book describes how ancient writers in classical and Near Eastern societies viewed history. He shows that in contrast to how most people today perceive reality, authors in ancient societies typically wrote from the point of view that the deity was at work in human events. Thus, recordkeeping and history writing were crafts that revealed the nature of the god (or gods) and placed human behavior in the context of divine purposes. This describes well the perspective of the Book of Mormon. It soon becomes obvious in Dundas’s book that Mormon’s writing fits within the context of the ancient world better than within our own. The evidence he presents is so compelling that midway through the



Above: The goddess Hathor was sometimes depicted as a cow or as a woman with the cow’s horns. Here she is shown with the ears of a cow. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Right: Nut, goddess of the sky, is represented as a huge cow overarching the earth. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.



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*It soon becomes obvious in Dundas’s book that Mormon’s writing fits within the context of the ancient world better than within our own.*

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book, readers will get the point of the last chapters before they read them.

Dundas deals with a variety of themes that can be identified in Mormon’s writing. Mormon saw God’s interaction with his people as a manifestation of the covenant, and he saw how pride, prosperity, peace, dissention, and war affect the lives of individuals and nations. Throughout the book, Dundas lets Mormon do the teaching.

*Mormon’s Record: The Historical Message of the Book of Mormon* is among the best studies of Mormon the historian. It is an important academic work done by a good thinker, and it will be an important addition to scholarship about the Book of Mormon. Because the message of the Restoration is true, it should not surprise us that good scholarship about it leads to greater faith. This book is no exception. Among its other contributions, it reminds us again that the Book of Mormon—a complex, compelling, and profound book—could not be a creative product of the imagination of Joseph Smith. ✂

# RECENT CHURCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM INITIATIVES

By Tyler J. Griffin

TYLER J. GRIFFIN ([tyler\\_griffin@byu.edu](mailto:tyler_griffin@byu.edu)) IS AN ASSOCIATE DEAN OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.

As the commissioner of the Church Educational System (CES), Elder Clark G. Gilbert stated, “We ask our universities to be different from the world and from each other.”<sup>1</sup> While all institutions within CES share a similar vision to develop disciples of Jesus Christ, each entity also has a distinct role to play within the larger system. He outlined those distinct roles as follows:

- **BYU** is the *educational ambassador or flagship* brand for CES, tasked with producing high-quality teaching and research.
- **BYU–Idaho** is the *educator* with a laser focus on teaching excellence with emphasis on meaningful connections between faculty and students.
- **BYU–Hawaii** is the *Asia/Pacific capstone* that is tasked with providing educational opportunities for students in Asia and the Pacific Rim.
- **Seminaries and Institutes (S&I)** is the *spiritual anchor* with responsibility to teach hundreds

of thousands of students across the world.

- **Ensign College** is the *applied curriculum provider* focused on helping students quickly earn certifications toward meaningful work early in their educational process.
- **BYU Pathway Worldwide** is the youngest member of the CES family. It will soon have more students enrolled than all the other CES universities combined (not counting Institutes of Religion). It is the *access provider*, offering an affordable, scalable, high-quality education to people all over the world.

While these differences and distinctions are important, it is also vital for all CES entities to maintain focus on what we all share and have in common, and that is a need to provide religious education that will build enduring discipleship in the rising generation. In June of 2019, the Board of Education produced a document titled “Strengthening Religious

Educations in Institutions of Higher Education” (SRE).

The SRE document states that our purpose as religious educators is to teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ directly and devotedly from the scriptures and modern prophets in a way that helps each student build faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, the gospel and Church, Joseph Smith and other modern prophets; become lifelong disciples; and strengthen abilities to find answers and resolve doubts that arise. The SRE also provides principles and guidelines for how to assess our work and how to make hiring and promotion decisions.

With the SRE document and Elder Gilbert’s encouragement, the institutions within CES have begun to work together more collaboratively as a true *system* rather than functioning as separate entities. The past five years have seen many productive interactions between CES institutions. A religious educators committee that previously met annually now has leaders from S&I, BYU, BYU–Idaho,



BYU–Hawaii, Ensign College, and the commissioner’s office that have met three times annually for the past two years to discuss ways to better coordinate and collaborate efforts.

One major initiative that came from this group was organizing a large-scale CES Religious Educators Conference that took place at Brigham Young University on June 18, 2024. It had been over twenty years since the last weeklong CES Conference (formerly known as CES Symposium) was held on BYU’s campus with thousands of in-person attendees.

This year’s conference was intentionally simplified and scaled back to one day and had only 850 in-person attendees from the Church universities and local S&I faculty. The majority of those participating joined remotely through digital conferencing links. The focus of the conference was on amplifying prophetic voices in our work.

The keynote speaker was Elder Dale G. Renlund. He shared four

vital gospel nutrients all learners need to combat spiritual malnutrition. The general sessions featured Commissioner Gilbert; R. Kelly Haws (associate commissioner) in a panel discussion with all the university presidents (C. Shane Reese, BYU; Alvin F. Meredith III, BYU–Idaho; John S. K. Kauwe III, BYU–Hawaii; Brian K. Ashton, BYU Pathway Worldwide; Bruce C. Kusch, Ensign College; and Chad H Webb, S&I administrator); a message from Chad Webb about the reach and impact of S&I; and finally, a panel discussion from college deans about department and individual efforts to amplify prophetic messages (Scott C. Esplin, BYU; David R. Peck, BYU–Idaho; Aaron Shumway, BYU–Hawaii; Rory C. Bigelow, S&I; and Brad Streeter, BYU director of AV Services). The conference also provided twelve breakout sessions in various formats and modalities (single presenter, team teachers, panel discussions, and previously recorded lessons).

Recordings were made of all proceedings to allow personnel around the world to participate in a setting and at a time that best fits local needs. The general session recordings can be found here: [www.churchoffesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/language-recording/2024/06](http://www.churchoffesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/language-recording/2024/06).

The breakout session videos can be found here: [www.churchoffesuschrist.org/church-education/conference-2024](http://www.churchoffesuschrist.org/church-education/conference-2024).

Another CES Conference has been scheduled for June 12–13, 2025. Additionally, we are working on other projects that have potential to be implemented as a system, such as: exploring possibilities for a unified policy for transferring religion credits between CES entities, looking for a set of student ratings questions that could be added to existing institutional surveys for all religion classes, and improving every institution’s recruitment and hiring through better public outreach and relationship building within CES.

This is a unique time in the history of the CES. We are confident that the Lord is guiding both the collaborative efforts mentioned above as well as those initiatives being pursued by each individual institution within CES. Many of us believe our best days as a system are yet to come. ✨

## Note

1. Rachel Sterzer Gibson, "Elder Gilbert Explains Why the Church Educational System Must Have the Courage to Be Different," *Church News*, August 17, 2024.

# DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD, UTAH WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

By Gaye Strathearn

GAYE STRATHEARN ([gaye\\_strathearn@byu.edu](mailto:gaye_strathearn@byu.edu)) IS A PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.

On April 5, 2024, Rachel Cope of the Department of Church History and Doctrine received the Distinguished Service Award from the Utah Women in Higher Education Network (UWHEN) at their annual leadership conference held at Utah Valley University. This award is given to “an individual who has exhibited sustained, exemplary leadership, scholarship, and/or creative work, philanthropy or service which has served to advance the mission of UWHEN.” UWHEN is the Utah affiliate to the American Council on Education (ACE) Women’s Network, whose mission is to advance women’s leadership on higher education campuses through the following **IDEALS**:

- **Identifying** women leaders.
- **Developing** women’s leadership abilities.
- **Encouraging** the use of leadership abilities.
- **Advancing** women’s careers.
- **Linking** women to other women and mentors.
- **Supporting** women in mid- and executive-level positions.”<sup>1</sup>

The UWHEN awards committee was “very impressed with the work [Dr. Cope] is doing on behalf of women in Utah” and commended her for her leadership. The nomination for this award highlights Rachel’s contributions in each of the following four areas of focus for the award.



Fig. 1. Rachel Cope, associate professor of Church history and doctrine.

*One of Dr. Cope’s strongest leadership qualities is her work as an interfaith bridge builder, bringing scholars from different faiths together in dialogue.*



Fig. 2. Evangelical & Latter-day Saint Dialogue.

### Interfaith Leadership

One of Dr. Cope’s strongest leadership qualities is her work as an interfaith bridge builder, bringing scholars from different faiths together in dialogue so each group can better understand their counterparts in their own religious context. These dialogues among the various scholars enable the development of what Kirster Stendahl describes as “holy envy.” She has worked to build these types of bridges through three main projects:

- In 2010 and 2017 she served as a visiting research fellow at the Oxford Center of Methodism and Church History at Oxford Brookes University. There she distinguished herself as a Latter-day Saint scholar among leading Methodist scholars with her ability to research Methodism with intellectual rigor and religious empathy.
- Between 2008 and 2014 she served as a member of the Evangelical & Latter-day Saint Dialogue, where she facilitated bringing together young scholars from both religious traditions to develop relationships of academic and religious honesty between two groups often divided by religious contention.
- From 2016 to 2023 she served as a member of the Nazarene & Latter-day Saint Dialogue, where her knowledge and empathy for the Methodist traditions forged bridges of understanding and respect.

J. B. Haws, one of her colleagues who worked with Rachel in both dialogues, writes about one of her contributions:

“Rachel was on a faculty panel in a question-and-answer session with students at Point Loma Nazarene University. Her response to a question asked by a student who was obviously hurting and upset and feeling anger toward The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was one of the most unforgettable moments I’ve had during my time at BYU. It was a moment that drew together her skills as an empathetic teacher and communicator as well as her deft abilities as a scholar. Her response carried the authority of deep learning but also deep empathy and her own authenticity and vulnerability. Plus, it was in an interfaith context, an area where she continues to make important contributions and to represent [BYU] faculty so well. It was one moment that stands out as representative of so many others.”



Figs. 3–4. Interfaith group at Point Loma Nazarene University and a Nazarene student after an interfaith panel.

### Scholarship on Women and Families

One of Rachel’s major research interests has been women’s spirituality and conversion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Examples of her publications that draw attention to individual women and their religious contributions include

- (with Zachary Hutchins), *The Writings of Elizabeth Webb: A Quaker Missionary in America, 1697–1726* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019),
- (with Amy Easton, Keith A. Erikson, and Lisa Olsen Tait), *Mormon Women’s History: Beyond Biography* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017),

- “A Sacred Space for Women: Hymnody in Emma Hale Smith’s Theology,” *Journal of Religious History* 42, no. 2 (June 2018): 185–264, and
- “Emptied and Filled: Catherine Livingston Garrettson’s Quest for Sanctification,” *Religion in the Age of Enlightenment* 3 (2012): 277–300.

Her colleague Gerrit Dirkmaat has described her work on Elizabeth Webb as “an essential contribution to the field. [The editors’] painstaking compilation and annotation of the letters and personal writings of Webb have shifted our understanding of the earliest women missionaries in colonial America.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition, her scholarship has also highlighted the importance of family, where women play significant roles. Cope, along with Amy Harris and Jane Hinckley, compiled a four-volume series entitled, *Family Life in Britain and America, 1690–1820* (New York: Routledge, 2015) that focused on primarily newly transcribed manuscript materials that bring together sources from both sides of the Atlantic and from a wide range of regional archives. This was the first collection of its kind, allowing comparisons between the development of the family in England and America during a time of significant change. Dr. Cope was the primary editor of volume 4: *Managing Families*.

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*“[Students] sang her praises not in the general way of saying ‘I love her, her classes are great’ (which, indeed I have heard often), but more specifically about how effective and exemplary she was as a teacher and researcher for their own work on their honors theses.”*

—Joseph D. Parry

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### Advancing Women’s Careers

During her research for the *Family Life in Britain and America* project, Dr. Cope took the opportunity to mentor multiple female students by teaching them to work with primary sources and to transcribe documents. Several of the students went on to earn PhDs.

Since 2012 Dr. Cope has regularly taught a class on Mormon Women’s History in the Global Women’s Studies Program and has served as either faculty adviser to Women’s Studies Senior Capstone projects or research adviser for fourteen female students on topics particularly highlighting the work and impact of women, such as

- “Mormon Women Academics Searching and Longing for What Mormon Women Teachers Have” (2020),
- “Women and Theology” (2019),
- “‘See, My Blood is as White as Anyone’s’: Black Women Challenging the Priesthood Ban and Racism in the Early Church” (2018),
- “Elizabeth Webb [A Quaker Missionary] on the Book of Revelation” (2016),
- “Prisoner or Preacher? Examining the Relationship between Female Latter-day Saint Missionaries and Perceptions of the Church in Victorian England” (2015),
- “Abuse and the Christian Woman: An Eighteenth Century American Spiritualist Perspective” (2014), and
- “‘Mary Is Now to Be the Sower’: Mary Sturlaugson as a (Self) Constructed Symbol of Transition” (2013).

Joseph D. Parry, who served as a director of BYU’s Honors Program and worked closely with two students who worked as Dr. Cope’s research assistants for her work on Methodist women’s spiritual writing project, wrote the following about her impact as a mentor:

They sang her praises not in the general way of saying ‘I love her, her classes are great’ (which, indeed I have heard often), but more specifically about how effective and exemplary she was as a teacher and researcher for their own work on their honors theses. I have heard this from many



others, including men who have benefitted from her mentorship. In fact, honors students chose her as the honors distinguished faculty speaker at their annual banquet in 2015.

But we have also been mentors of women who are distinctively bright, capable students, who had hard things happen to them in life. Rachel gave them tremendous comfort and counsel (I know this firsthand), but again, the example she set for them of dealing with hard things with poise, discipline, and responsibility (which they also acknowledged explicitly) had a tremendous impact on their ability to be successful. Rachel has had to deal with very hard things. But the result is, and this is not hyperbole: that in thirty-plus years of higher education teaching, research, and administration, I have not worked with anyone who is more deserving of the award that the Utah Women in Higher Education Network offers to women mentors of students, primarily, but not exclusively, women. And while she mentors many students who will go on to academic careers in higher education, many of these women go into nonacademic careers. Her impact has, is, and will have significant effect on women in all walks of life.

### Humanitarian Service

The most significant service to which Dr. Cope dedicates her time and service is with the Worldwide Fistula Fund (WWF), a nonprofit organization that raises funds to “protect and restore the health and dignity of the world’s most vulnerable women by preventing and treating devastating childbirth injuries.”<sup>3</sup> She is deeply committed to raising awareness of and funding for obstetric fistula victims. Her service with WWF is personal but goes far beyond that. According to the World Health Organization,

Each year between fifty to one hundred thousand women worldwide are affected by obstetric fistula, an abnormal opening between a woman’s genital tract and her urinary tract or rectum. The development of obstetric fistula is directly linked



Fig. 5. Rachel Cope with Dr. Holly Richter, the Endowed Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology and professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Urology & Geriatrics at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), who is also secretary of the Worldwide Fistula Fund.

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*She has been a voice of advocacy for obstetric fistulas, which afflict “more than two million women worldwide—the poor, the voiceless, the overlooked, and the forgotten.”*

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to one of the major causes of maternal mortality: obstructed labour.

Women who experience obstetric fistula suffer constant incontinence, shame, social segregation and health problems. It is estimated that more than 2 million young women live with untreated obstetric fistula in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>4</sup>

She has been a voice of advocacy for obstetric fistulas, which afflict “more than two million women worldwide—the poor, the voiceless, the overlooked, and the forgotten.”<sup>5</sup>

Her efforts to raise awareness of this physically and emotionally devastating female tragedy include the following:

- In 2020 she organized and participated in a Zoom Fistula Panel sponsored by BYU’s Global Women’s Studies that included several experts and fistula survivors.

*Dr. Cope is a quiet achiever who is committed to promoting women's voices. She helps them to be seen, valued, and heard.*



Fig. 6. Left: Dr. Lewis Wall, the Selina Okin Kim Conner Professor Emeritus for Medical Anthropology in Arts and Sciences, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, College of Arts and Sciences, Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, School of Medicine, Washington University in St. Louis, and founder of the Worldwide Fistula Fund. On the right is Dr. Richard McWhorter from Utah Valley Urology, Intermountain Health.

- In 2020 under Dr. Cope's direction, BYU's Global Women's Studies raised money for the Worldwide Fistula Fund for the annual service week.
- In 2021 she invited and hosted Dr. Lewis Wall, the Selina Okin Kim Conner Professor Emeritus for Medical Anthropology in Arts and Sciences, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, College of Arts and Sciences, Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, School of Medicine, Washington University in St. Louis, and founder of the Worldwide Fistula Fund. Dr. Wall gave a colloquium lecture sponsored by Global Women's Studies, BYU Religious Education, and the College of Nursing. The lecture was entitled "Samaritans and Unclean Women: Directive Parables in a Suffering World." In addition, while he was on campus Dr. Wall and Dr. Cope made a video for the WWF to draw from.
- In 2022 she gave a presentation entitled "Fistula Sisters: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," at

the Southern Association for the History of Science and Medicine, Atlanta, Georgia.

- In 2022 she was a faculty adviser for a Women's Studies Senior Capstone Project on "Vesicovaginal Fistula."
- From 2022 to the present she has worked with female students on Fistula research: majoring in nursing and biology, public health. Students reach out to her for help every semester with questions about fistulas and how to engage in that kind of work and research.

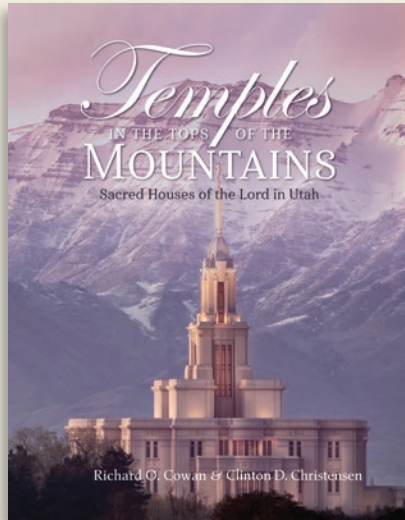
Dr. Cope is a quiet achiever who is committed to promoting women's voices. She goes about her work without a lot of fanfare, wanting to help all students, but particularly women, to navigate the complex nature of university life, to find answers to their questions, and to find their place and their voice in society. She helps them to be seen, valued, and heard. She does not seek public acclaim, but even so, there needs to be at least some moments in time when a spotlight finds them and allows others to recognize the contribution that they also make. ✂

## Notes

1. Utah Women in Higher Education Network, "Mission & Goals," <https://www.uwhen.org/about-1>.
2. From a personal email to the author.
3. Worldwide Fistula Fund, <https://worldwidefistulafund.org/home>. For an overview of the extent of this medical malady, see the BYU Ballard Center's brief titled "Obstetric Fistulas in Sub-Saharan Africa," January 22, 2024, <https://ballardbrief.byu.edu/issue-briefs/obstetric-fistulas-in-sub-saharan-africa>.
4. World Health Organization, "Obstetric Fistula," February 19, 2018, <https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/10-facts-on-obstetric-fistula>.
5. Rachel Cope, "Guest Blog: A Voice for the Voiceless," December 7, 2020, <https://worldwidefistulafund.org/news/blog/a-voice-for-the-voiceless>, and "Guest Blog: Rachel's Journey for Healing," May 20, 2020, <https://worldwidefistulafund.org/news/blog/guest-blog-rachels-journey-for-healing>.

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This volume shares the story of Utah's temples, now numbering twenty-eight. Organized chronologically, this gorgeously illustrated book begins with the iconic pioneer-era temples and elaborates on each era of Utah temple building since, including temple remodels and renovations, tabernacles renovated into temples, and new temple designs that maximize efficiency and accommodate patrons in less-populated areas. The stories of the miracles behind the temples show the hand of God in the lives of the Saints and the faith and efforts that have built so many temples in the tops of the mountains in Utah. US \$32.99



## The Voice of the Lord: Exploring the Doctrine and Covenants

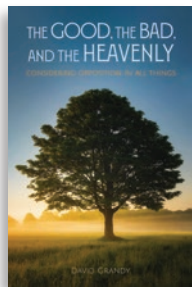
EDITED BY  
ALEXANDER L.  
BAUGH

This volume of essays provides insight into selected revelations canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants. Contributors explore

topics such as Elijah's visitation in the Kirtland Temple, the sacred location of Adam-ondi-Ahman, priesthood power of women, Satan's reality, the establishment of Zion, and plural marriage. Authors also examine the historical context of consecration, sacramental covenants, baptism for the dead, redemption of the dead, and the three degrees of heavenly glory. The articles combine to show that from the very beginning of the

Restoration, our prophets' inspired words are "the will of the Lord, . . . the mind of the Lord, . . . the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (Doctrine and Covenants 68:4). US \$29.99





**The Good, the Bad, and the Heavenly: Considering Opposition in All Things**

DAVID GRANDY

This book is a faith-affirming

exploration of Lehi’s teaching that “opposition in all things” structures the world and enables our salvation (2 Nephi 2:2). A single uniform state can’t deliver the goods of salvation—life, happiness, meaning, intelligence. We need a compound-in-one experience in which we are challenged, stretched, and sometimes even puzzled. Given its soul-stretching complexity, mortality is not a world in which there is a right answer to every ideological or intellectual question; it is rather a living laboratory for the development of kindness, forgiveness, empathy, and charity. To this end Grandy takes a fresh look at fundamental gospel principles to show how they are admirably adapted to the intrinsically uncertain world we live in. As followers of the Savior, we have everything we need—the good, the bad, and the gospel of Jesus Christ, which teaches us how to transmute the earthly dross of sin and hardship into heavenly gold. US \$22.99



**Doctrines and Covenants Insights: Capstone of Doctrinal Understanding**

EDITED BY

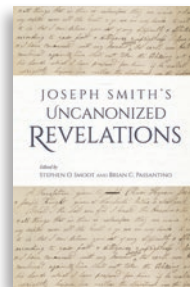
KENNETH L.

ALFORD,

MARY JANE WOODGER, AND MARK A. MATHEWS

This book is designed to supplement the 2025 Doctrine and Covenants *Come, Follow Me* Church curriculum year. The Doctrine & Covenants beautifully illustrates that the Lord Jesus Christ lives and speaks today. This volume teaches the restored gospel of Jesus Christ by exploring how the Doctrine and Covenants teaches doctrine, principles, laws, prophecies, typologies, and gospel applications by integrating both spiritual and secular understanding and insights.

US \$29.99



**Joseph Smith's Uncanonized Revelations**

EDITED BY

STEPHEN O.

SMOOT AND

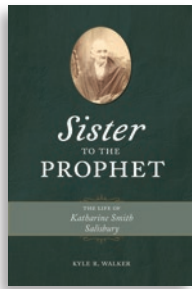
BRIAN C.

PASSANTINO

The revelations

formally canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants are of tremendous value and importance for the spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs of the Latter-day Saints. Something that might come as a surprise to many members of the Church, however, is the fact that Joseph Smith recorded dozens of revelations that, for a variety of reasons, went unpublished or uncanonized during his lifetime. Although perhaps not as well known, these texts are also important in helping Latter-day Saints appreciate Joseph Smith as a modern revelator and prophet. They are also valuable to scholars and historians seeking to understand Joseph Smith’s role as an American religious leader. These uncanonized revelations are the subject of this volume, which, building on the groundwork laid by the Joseph Smith Papers Project, aims to assemble these texts and make them accessible for Latter-day Saints who are looking to confirm and strengthen their testimonies in Joseph Smith as God’s prophet. US \$24.99



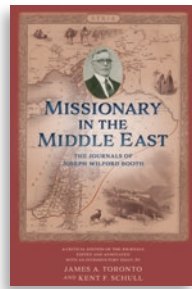


**Sister to the Prophet:  
The Life of  
Katharine  
Smith  
Salisbury**

KYLE R. WALKER

Katharine Smith  
Salisbury was

the longest-surviving member of the Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith family. Her biography records a life of challenges, including overcoming religious prejudice and ostracism. Three of Katharine’s children died in infancy. The Salisburys were driven from Ohio and Missouri. Her husband only sporadically provided for the family, was outside the faith for a time, and died at forty-four. After the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum, Katharine remained in Hancock County, Illinois, where the family continued to experience untold hardships due to her connection to the church’s founder. Through all these challenges Katharine remained loyal to her brother Joseph Smith Jr., vouching for his prophetic appointment. She successfully perpetuated her faith in these early Restoration events to her expanding posterity before her death in 1900. US \$27.99



**Missionary in the Middle East: The Journals of Joseph Wilford Booth**

EDITED BY JAMES  
A. TORONTO AND  
KENT F. SCHULL

Joseph Wilford Booth was one of the first Latter-day Saint missionaries to serve in the Ottoman Empire. He served for seventeen years over a thirty-year period in several parts of what are today Turkey, Israel/Palestine, and Syria. Clearly and engagingly written with an acute eye for detail on a variety of subjects, this daily journal provides insights about the early Church in the Middle East and the everyday lives of not only the missionaries but also the local Saints and larger populations in the region. The journals also provide rich understanding of the broader social, political, and cultural issues of this volatile time in the Middle East.

US \$37.99



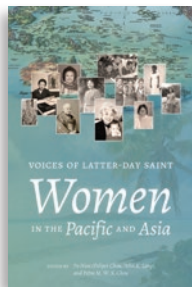
**Mormon's Record:  
The Historical  
Message of the  
Book of  
Mormon**

GREGORY STEVEN  
DUNDAS

Although the

ancient scriptural record known as the Book of Mormon contains profound doctrinal and theological content, it is foremost a history. Thus, it is not surprising that it has the earmarks of ancient rather than modern works of history. Yet few studies analyze the Book of Mormon as a legitimate work of ancient history. The author describes the sacral worldview that informed much of ancient writing, surveys four millennia of historical writings to show how the sacral worldview differs from modern historiography, and discusses many underlying historical themes found in the writings of Israelite and Greco-Roman historians that also figure in the composition of the Book of Mormon. That scripture’s sobering theological message is shown to emerge from the historical accounts that inform it. US \$29.99

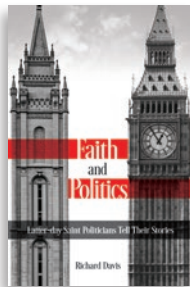




**Voices of Latter-day Saint Women in the Pacific and Asia**

PO NIEN (FELIPE) CHOU, ALISI K. LANGI, AND PETRA M. W. S. CHOU

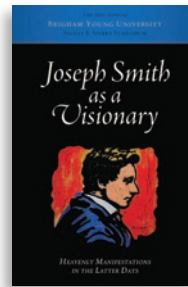
The history of The Church of the Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Pacific and Asia includes a vast array of stories and experiences spread across a diverse spectrum of peoples and cultures. However, this history is often focused or told from the perspective or voices of the first missionary elders, branch presidents, bishops, district or stake presidents, and mission and temple presidents. The other half of this important latter-day history includes mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters. The experiences of the first sister missionaries, Relief Society or Primary presidents, companions to the mission presidents, temple matrons, and other female leaders are essential to provide a more complete picture of this great work of faith and sacrifice among the people in the Pacific and Asia. US \$29.99



**Faith and Politics: Latter-day Saint Politicians Tell Their Stories**

RICHARD O. DAVIS  
The First Presidency of The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has declared the church's political neutrality while urging individual church members to participate in the political process, become informed about the issues, choose candidates who demonstrate integrity and compassion, and avoid voting straight party based on tradition alone. Some wonder if faith and politics can coexist harmoniously. This book features twenty-five interviews with active Latter-day Saint politicians who have served or currently serve in offices at the local, state, and national levels in several countries. They also represent a broad array of political parties and ideologies in accordance with the First Presidency's repeated position that "principles compatible with the gospel may be found in various political parties." US \$27.99



**Joseph Smith as a Visionary: Heavenly Manifestations in the Latter Day**

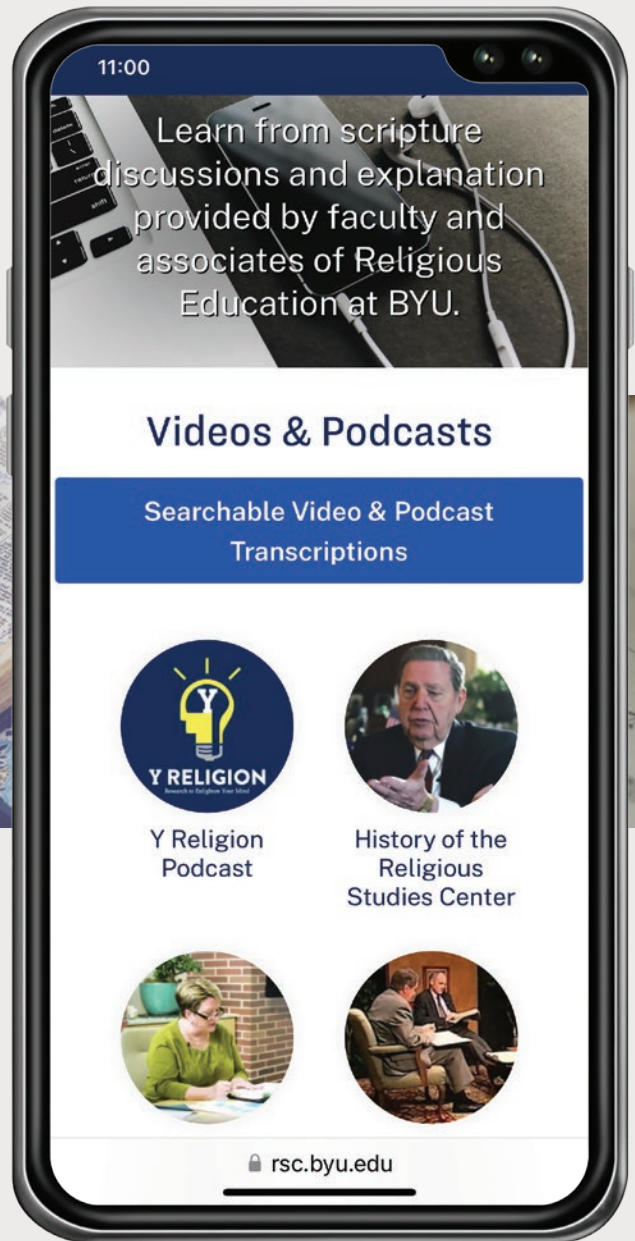
EDITED BY ALONZO L. GASKILL, STEPHAN D. TAEGER, AND ROGER G. CHRISTENSEN

Joseph Smith did not simply proclaim he had a different understanding of Christian religion; central to his teachings were the numerous angelic visitations through which important keys and teachings were delivered. 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 as Doctrine and Covenants 13, 76, and 137. This book focuses on these miraculous visitations and revelatory visions, their implications for Latter-day Saint doctrine, and their potential application to modern Saints and the broader world. US \$27.99





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# FACULTY AND STAFF

## APPOINTMENTS

**Anthony R. Sweat** was appointed chair of the Department of Church History and Doctrine.

**Byran B. Korth** was appointed associate chair.

**Michael H. MacKay** was appointed to the Moral Education Professorship.

**Jan J. Martin** was appointed to the Teaching and Mentoring Professorship.

**Jenet J. Erickson** and **Lee G. Harms** passed third-year review for candidacy for continuing faculty status.

**Joshua M. Sears** and **Jordan T. Watkins** received continuing faculty status and advancement to associate professor.

**Amy Easton, Barbara Morgan Gardner, Michael A. Goodman, J. B. Haws, Shon D. Hopkin, Mark D. Ogletree,** and **Anthony R. Sweat** advanced to professor.

## AWARDS

**Jeffrey R. Chadwick** received the Karl G. Maeser Excellence in Teaching Award at the 2024 University Conference.

**Rachel Cope** received the Distinguished Service Award from the Utah Women in Higher Education Network (UWHEN) at their annual leadership conference held at Utah Valley University.

**Mark D. Ellison** received the Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award for his book *The Visual Rhetoric of the Married Laity in Late Antiquity: Iconography, the Christianization of Marriage, and Alternatives to the Ascetic Ideal*, published by Routledge Press.

**Jenet Erickson** received the Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award for her research on the importance of family connections and how we related to one another as exemplified in her article “The Effects of Relational Poverty: Healing our Culture” that appeared in *Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy* in 2023.

**Barbara Morgan Gardner** received the Robert J. Matthews Teaching Award. She has been teaching professionally since 1999—first as a seminary and institute instructor, a Religious Education instructor, and an institute director in Boston after becoming a full-time BYU Religious Education faculty member.

**Matthew J. Grey** received the Outstanding Citizenship Award. He recently served on the department’s Rank and Status committee, on the Faculty Advisory Council, and as interim coordinator of the Ancient Near Eastern Studies program.

**Adam Hellewell** was recognized for five years of service.

**Steven C. Harper** received the Richard L. Anderson Research Award. He has authored, coauthored, or edited eight books including several in *The Joseph Smith Papers*. He has authored or coauthored fifteen book chapters and ten journal articles. He has contributed to publications such as *BYU Studies*, where he currently serves as editor in chief, as well as the *Religious Educator*, the *BYU Religious Education Review*, and the *Ensign*.



**John Hilton III** received the B. West Belnap Citizenship Award. He served as a fellow on the Council for Interfaith Engagement. He took the reins of the *Y Religion* podcast as its producer and primary host. He chairs the Academic Teaching and Biblical Studies program unit of the Society of Biblical Literature and successfully organized and hosted the first academic conference on *The Chosen*.

**Eric D. Huntsman** and Trevan Hatch were finalists in the Association for Mormon Letters award for best religious nonfiction for their book *Greater Love Hath No Man: A Latter-day Saint Guide to Celebrating the Easter Season*.

**R. Devan Jensen** received a SAERA (staff and administrative employee recognition award) for teamwork. He serves as the executive editor and social media manager at the BYU Religious Studies Center.

**Michael Hubbard Mackay** received a university Experiential Learning Award.

**Andrew C. Reed** received the Outstanding Mentoring Award. Dr. Reed’s engagement with students, often with diverse backgrounds, helps them deepen their own faith while assisting them in connecting with those of other faith traditions. In 2018 he founded the BYU Interfaith Student Association, and last year he was awarded an Arthur Vining Davis Foundation’s Grant for “interfaith leadership and religious literacy” to build “interfaith leaders for future service to the world.”

**Ryan H. Sharp** received the Religious Education Outstanding Teaching Award. He teaches and reaches large sections of one to two hundred young adult students—typically over a thousand students a semester. His student ratings are stellar and are evidence of the time and effort he puts into the student experience in his classes.

**Joseph M. Spencer** received the Association for Mormon Letters award for best religious nonfiction for his book *A Word in Season*. Joseph was also a finalist in the same category for *Approaching the Tree: Interpreting 1 Nephi 8*, which he edited with Benjamin Keogh and Jennifer Champoux.

**Jordan T. Watkins** received the Lavina Fielding Anderson Award for the best article published in the *Journal of Mormon History*. His article is “Slavery, Early Latter-day Saint Constitutionalism, and the Limits of the Right to Petition,” *Journal of Mormon History* 49, no. 3 (2023): 47–102.

**Fred E. Woods** received a university Creative Works Award.

## RETIRING

**Robert C. Freeman** retired on July 31.

# The Job That Changed Her Trajectory

EMMA TAYLOR  
Class of '24

Photo by Matthew Norton/BYU

Coming from a big family, Emma Taylor knew she would be responsible for much of her college funding. When she started at BYU, donor-funded scholarships were a big help, but she eventually realized she would also need a student job.

An avid writer, Emma started out pursuing a degree in animation but soon switched to editing and publishing, where she realized her love for editing. "On a personal level I am really big into writing, but professionally, I'm more interested in helping others," says Emma.

In the fall of 2022, she found herself looking for work. Having previously worked as a janitor, she hoped to find something more in line with her career goals. At an internship fair, she discovered an opportunity at the Religious Studies Center working as an assistant editor. Internships like this are largely donor funded and provide real-world experience that can strongly influence the career arc for a student like Emma.

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*"I am really big into writing, but professionally, I'm more interested in helping others."*

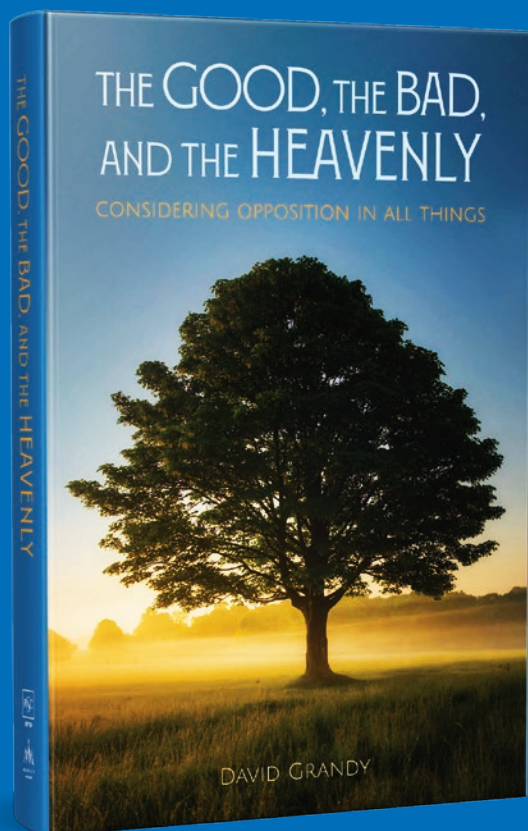
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Now with a couple of years of part-time experience under her belt, she feels her opportunities have greatly expanded.

Emma is grateful for the help donors have offered and the mentoring she has experienced in her position at the Religious Studies Center. "It is nice to know that all my hours of work are helping me acquire the tools for my career."

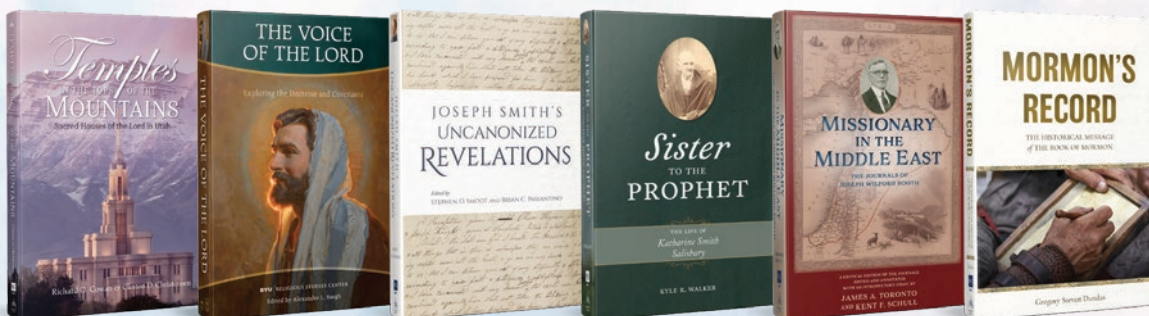
**BYU Annual Giving**

# THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE HEAVENLY



This book is a faith-affirming exploration of Lehi's teaching that "opposition in all things" structures the world and enables our salvation (2 Nephi 2:2). A single uniform state can't deliver the goods of salvation—life, happiness, meaning, intelligence. We need a compound-in-one experience in which we are challenged, stretched, and sometimes even puzzled. Given its soul-stretching complexity, mortality is not a world in which there is a right answer to every ideological or intellectual question; it is rather a living laboratory for the development of kindness, forgiveness, empathy, and charity. To this end Grandy takes a fresh look at fundamental gospel principles to show how they are admirably adapted to the intrinsically uncertain world we live in. As followers of the Savior, we have everything we need—the good, the bad, and the gospel of Jesus Christ, which teaches us how to transmute the earthly dross of sin and hardship into heavenly gold.

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Make time for these upcoming Religious Education events.

**BYU Church History Symposium . . . . . Friday–Saturday, October 24–25, 2024**

**BYU Religious Education Symposium in Honor of Sidney B. Sperry . . . . . Friday–Saturday, January 17–18, 2025**

**BYU Easter Conference . . . . . Friday, April 11, 2025**

*See page 3 for more information.*