

FOUNDATION FOR
INTERRELIGIOUS DIPLOMACY
MORMON CHAPTER

2010 Inaugural Conference

Mormon Engagement with the World Religions

Perspectives and Possibilities with the Abrahamic Traditions



University of Southern California

June 11th – 12th, 2010

all events will be held in the USC
Salvatori Computer Science Building
Room 101

for more information, contact

Brian D. Birch at brian.birch@uvsu.edu or

Charles Randall Paul at randallpaul@fidweb.org

Conference Description

The Mormon Chapter of the Foundation for Interreligious Diplomacy is organizing its 2010 conference to address issues surrounding the relationship between Latter-day Saints and the Abrahamic traditions. Recent events have demonstrated the Church's interest in participating more actively in interfaith dialogue and LDS leaders have encouraged their members to engage more directly in productive exchanges that are aimed primarily at the cultivation of mutual understanding.

The conference is designed to explore various perspectives and methods for thinking about Latter-day Saints among the faiths and cultures of the world. Its aim will be to connect theology with practice in allowing space for Mormons to think about the activity of interreligious dialogue and the possibility of mutual transformation. The recent statement by the Church entitled "Respect for a Diversity of Faiths" opens up new possibilities for thinking about other religions and ideologies and what might be learned from them. Citing Kristor Stendahl's three rules for religious understanding, the statement encourages us to "leave room for 'holy envy' by finding elements in other faiths to emulate." It goes on to affirm that "Latter-day Saints accept all sincere believers as equals in the pursuit of faith and in the great work of serving humanity." These are powerful words that open up space for the education of Latter-day Saints in relation to other religious traditions. Our goal is not to diminish the faith claims of any community, but to help enhance conversation that can lead to more peaceable and respectful relations.

In response to the increasing acrimony in public discourse, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently affirmed that "the moral basis of civility is the Golden Rule, taught by a broad range of cultures and individuals, perhaps most popularly by Jesus Christ: 'And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise' (Luke 6:31). This ethic of reciprocity reminds us all of our responsibility toward one another and reinforces the communal nature of human life." ("The Mormon Ethic of Civility," LDS Newsroom, October 16, 2009)

Respect for a Diversity of Faiths

<http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/respect-for-diversity-of-faiths>

The Mormon Ethic of Civility

<http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/the-mormon-ethic-of-civility>

Format and Participants

The conference will include participants from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints along with representatives from other faith traditions who can engage Mormonism in productive dialogue. The conference will be an opportunity for Latter-day Saints to 1) explore the resources in their own tradition for engaging other religions and ideologies, and 2) learn how other traditions deal with religious diversity and questions of pluralism and to engage them in conversation on related issues.

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Sponsors and Supporters

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Mormon Chapter

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Utah State University

Center for Religion and Civic Culture
University of Southern California

Los Angeles LDS Institute of Religion

Friday, June 11th

9:30 a.m. - Welcome and Introductions

10:00 a.m. - Opening Address

“The Latter-day Saint Approach to Interreligious Relations”

Elder Bruce D. Porter
First Quorum of Seventy
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

11:00 a.m.

Latter-day Saints and Interreligious Engagement
The Current Situation

Robert L. Millet
Abraham O. Smoot University Professor, Brigham Young University

Gregory A. Prince
author of *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*

Judy and Steve Gilliland
Southern California Public Affairs Council
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

12:30 p.m. - Lunch

1:30 p.m.

Judaism

Rabbi Gary Greenebaum
director of Interreligious and Intergroup Relations
American Jewish Committee

Jana Riess
former religion editor, Publishers Weekly

Mark Paredes
former press attaché, Consulate General of Israel

Joseph A. Cannon
editor-in-chief, Deseret Morning News

Friday, June 11th

3:30 p.m.

“The Grand Fundamental Principle”
The Theological Question of Religious Diversity

Charles Randall Paul
president, Foundation for Interreligious Diplomacy

Sheila Taylor
program in Systematic and Philosophical Theology
Graduate Theological Union

Brian D. Birch
director, Religious Studies Program
Utah Valley University

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Saturday, June 12th

9:00 a.m.

The Mormon Voice in a Pluralistic Society
The Challenges of Secularism and Religious Indifference

James Burklo
Associate Dean for Religious Life
University of Southern California

Kristine Haglund
editor, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*

Frederick Mark Gedicks
Guy Anderson Chair and professor of Law
Brigham Young University

Ralph Hancock
professor of Political Science
Brigham Young University

Saturday, June 12th

11:00 a.m.

Catholic and Orthodox Christianity

Father James Massa
Executive Director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Richard Sherlock
professor of philosophy
Utah State University

Rt. Reverend Alexei Smith
director, Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

James Faulconer
Richard L. Evans Professor of Religious Understanding
Brigham Young University

1:00 p.m. - Lunch

2:00 p.m.

Protestant Christianity

David McAllister-Wilson
president, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC

Terry C. Muck
Dean of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission
and Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary

Deidre Green,
Women's Studies in Religion
Claremont Graduate University

J. Spencer Fluhman
Department of Church History and Doctrine
Brigham Young University

Saturday, June 12th

4:00 p.m.

Islam

Maher Hathout
senior advisor, Muslim Public Affairs Council

Daniel Peterson
professor of Islamic Studies and Arabic
Brigham Young University

Bradley J. Cook
provost, Southern Utah University
former president of Abu Dhabi Women's College

J. Bonner Ritchie
scholar in residence, Utah Valley University
professor emeritus of International Organization Behavior
Brigham Young University

Conference Presenters

Brian D. Birch is director of the Religious Studies Program at Utah Valley University and editor of *Element: The Journal of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology*. He currently serves as chair of the Board of Directors for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* and is a member of the Steering Committee for the American Academy of Religion's Mormon Studies Consultation. His latest project is the forthcoming book *Mormonism and Christian Thought*.

James Burklo is associate dean for Religious Life at the University of Southern California. Reverend Burklo has been a university minister, church pastor, community organizer, and writer. For eight years, he served as the ecumenical Protestant minister for the United Campus Christian Ministry at Stanford University. He is the author of *Open Christianity: Home by Another Road* and *Birdlike and Barnless: Meditations, Prayers, Poems, and Songs for Progressive Christians*. He also served as minister of Sausalito Presbyterian Church and as campus minister of United Campus Christian Ministry at Stanford University.

Joseph A. Cannon is the editor of the *Deseret Morning News* in Salt Lake City. He served as chairman of the Utah Republican Party from 2002-06 and as assistant administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from 1983-85. He has been involved in a variety of educational and philanthropic pursuits including support of the United States Holocaust Museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. He is also a contributing writer for the *Mormon Times*.

Bradley J. Cook is provost at Southern Utah University and former president of Abu Dhabi Women's College in the United Arab Emirates. He served as director of governmental relations for International Bechtel, Inc. in Kuwait and as special assistant to the president at American University in Cairo. He holds a doctorate in Middle East studies from Oxford University and is the author of numerous publications in Islamic educational theory and international education practices.

James Faulconer is the Richard L. Evans Professor of Religious Understanding at Brigham Young University and professor of philosophy. He is the author of *Faith, Philosophy, and Scripture* and a soon to be published study of Romans 1-8. He is also the editor of *Transcendence in Religion and Philosophy* and *Appropriating Heidegger* (with Mark Wrathall). He has also recently completed a term as president of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology.

J. Spencer Fluhman is assistant professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University where he has been active in Mormon/Evangelical dialogue. He received a Ph.D. in history and religious studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and specializes in American religious history. His most recent project is a history of anti-Mormon thought in the 19th century.

Frederick Mark Gedicks is the Guy Anderson Chair and professor of law in the J. Reuben Clark School of Law at Brigham Young University. He is the author of *The Rhetoric of Church and State* and has published more than fifty articles on law and religion, and constitutional law including "Truth and Consequences: Mitt Romney, Proposition 8, and Public Reason." He has lectured widely in the United States and Europe on religion and its place in the American legal and social order.

Judy Gilliland is director of Interfaith Relations for the Southern California Public Affairs Council of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is active in a variety of organizations including the Southcoast Interfaith Council and the Women's Interfaith Committee. She is currently the president of the Interreligious Council of Southern California.

Steve Gilliland is director of Muslim Relations for the Southern California Public Affairs Council of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Upon completing his Ed.D. in counseling from Boston University, he established the LDS Institute of Religion in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has taught at the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center and is a member of the Christian-Muslim Consulting Group.

Deidre Green is a Ph.D. student in the Women's Studies in Religion program at Claremont Graduate University. Her areas of specialty include the philosophy of religion and feminist thought. In addition to her academic studies, she has served as president of the Claremont Mormon Studies Student Association and has organized a variety of events including CGU's 2009 Religions in Conversation conference on food and religion as well as a conference on the experience of women in Mormonism.

Gary Greenebaum is the United States director of the Department of Interreligious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee. Ordained in 1978 at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, he holds Master's degrees in Hebrew Letters and in Jewish Communal Service and a Bachelor's degree in English. In 2006 he was awarded the prestigious French National Order of Merit. An expert in leadership recruitment and skills development, Rabbi Greenebaum has led training seminars for many religious and secular organizations and has taught at several universities.

Kristine Haglund is the editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. She received an A.B. from Harvard University in German Studies and her M.A. from the University of Michigan in German Literature. Her areas of specialization include Mormonism in the new media and women's and children's history in the LDS Church. Her current research involves pedagogical material and women's contributions to Mormon theology.

Ralph Hancock is professor of philosophy at Brigham Young University and president of the John Adams Center. He received an M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University and is the author of *Calvin and the Foundations of Modern Politics* along with numerous articles and edited works on the philosophical and religious dimensions of public issues. Among his recent projects is the journal *Square Two*, an online publication devoted to LDS thought.

Maher Hathout is senior advisor at the Muslim Public Affairs Council. He also serves as a Charter Member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, the western partner of the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Hathout has written extensively on Islam, human rights, and democracy and serves on the Board of Directors of the Interfaith Alliance.

James Massa is executive director of the U.S. Episcopal Conference's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, which oversees seven ecumenical bilateral dialogues, two standing consultations with rabbinical associations, and three interreligious dialogues with the Muslim community in the United States. Father Massa is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and a graduate of Fordham University where he earned his Ph.D. in systematic theology in 1997.

David McAllister-Wilson is president of the Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. He received his Master of Divinity degree in 1988 and Doctor of Ministry degree in 2001 from Wesley. An ordained elder in the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, McAllister-Wilson's main areas of interest are revitalizing the Mainline Protestant Church and excellence in church leadership.

Robert L. Millet is the Abraham Smoot University Professor at Brigham Young University and former dean of Religious Education at Brigham Young University. He completed a Ph.D. in religious studies from Florida State University and is the author of numerous books including *Bridging the Divide: The Continuing Conversation Between a Mormon and an Evangelical* (with Gregory Johnson), *Claiming Christ: A Mormon-Evangelical Debate* (with Gerald McDermott), and *A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints*.

Terry C. Muck is Dean of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary and a professor of Mission and World Religion. He received a M.Div. from Bethel Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. He is a frequent speaker primarily addressing the relationship of Christianity to the world's religions. He is the author of ten books including *Christianity Encounters the World Religions*, *Alien Gods on American Turf*, and *Christians Talk About Buddhist Meditation*, *Buddhists Talk About Christian Prayer* (with Rita M. Gross).

Charles Randall Paul is founder and president of the Foundation for Interreligious Diplomacy, an organization committed to dialogues surrounding religious conflict. After receiving an MBA from Harvard University and a career in real estate development, he completed a Ph.D. at University of Chicago from the Committee on Social Thought, and is currently authoring two books, *Fighting about God: Why We Do It and How to Do It Better* and *Converting the Saints: An American Religious Conflict*.

Mark Paredes is the former press attache for the Consulate General of Israel in Los Angeles and a national outreach director for the American Jewish Congress. He served as a Foreign Service Officer in the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv and currently serves on the Southern California LDS Public Affairs Council. He has lectured widely on the relationship between Judaism and Mormonism and recently completed a speaking tour of eight European countries.

Daniel Peterson is a professor of Islamic Studies and Arabic at Brigham Young University and currently serves as editor-in-chief of Brigham Young University's Middle Eastern Texts Initiative. He is a member of the executive council of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at BYU and is the author of several books including *Abraham Divided: An LDS Perspective on the Middle East* and the critically acclaimed *Muhammad: Prophet of God* from Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Bruce D. Porter is a member of the First Quorum of Seventy for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Elder Porter received a Ph.D. from Harvard University in political science with an emphasis in Russian affairs. Prior to his service as an LDS General Authority, he taught at Brigham Young University and served as the Bradley Senior Research Fellow for the Olin Institute at Harvard University. He is the author of numerous scholarly and religious publications including *War and the Rise of the State* and "Is Mormonism Christian?" in *First Things* (with Gerald McDermott).

Gregory A. Prince is the author of several books and articles in Mormon Studies including *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* and the award-winning *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (with William Robert Wright). He has been active in interfaith activities in the Washington DC area and currently serves on the board of directors for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*.

Jana Riess is acquisitions editor for Westminster John Knox Press in Louisville, Kentucky and author of *Mormonism for Dummies*, *American Pilgrimage: Sacred Journeys and Spiritual Destinations*, and *The Spiritual Traveler*. She is the former religion book review editor at *Publisher's Weekly* and currently serves on the Board of Directors for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. She holds degrees in religion from Wellesley College and Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in American religious history from Columbia University.

J. Bonner Ritchie is professor emeritus of International Organizational Behavior at the Marriott School of Management, Brigham Young University and scholar in residence at Utah Valley University. After completing a Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley, he joined the faculty of the University of Michigan until his move to BYU in 1973. He taught as visiting professor at Stanford University, the University of California, Berkeley, St. Mary's College, BirZeit University (Palestine), the University of Jordan, the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy and the University of Southern Europe.

Richard Sherlock is professor of philosophy at Utah State University with advanced training in theology, ethics, and philosophy from Harvard University. He is a founding editor of the new on-line journal *Square Two*, which engages religion in public life from an LDS perspective. He recently published *Nature's End: The Theological Meaning of the New Genetics* and is currently completing his latest work entitled *Mormonism and the Moral Life*.

Alexei Smith is director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He was awarded a Master of Divinity Degree with High Distinction from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. In 1987 he was ordained as a Melkite Greek Catholic Priest and appointed Administrator of Saint Andrew Russian Greek Catholic Church and Saint Paul Melkite Greek Catholic Mission.

Sheila Taylor is a doctoral candidate in systematic theology at the Graduate Theological Union. She received an M.A. in history from the University of Illinois and an Master of Theological Studies from the University of Notre Dame. She is currently guest editor for *Element: The Journal of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology* for their forthcoming issue on feminist thought.

Special Thanks

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Blair Van Dyke
Orem Institute of Religion

David Yells
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...and many others