



# Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel

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## End Matter

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# The Mormon Image *in the American Mind*

FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION



J.B. HAWS

*The Mormon Image in the American Mind: 50 Years of Public Perception*

## Review of The Mormon Image in the American Mind: Fifty Years of Public Perception

REVIEW BY DEVAN JENSEN

J. B. Haws. *The Mormon Image in the American Mind: Fifty Years of Public Perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Notes, black-and-white illustrations, bibliography, index. 412 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-989764-3, US \$29.95.

This book tells the story of America's perceptions of Mormonism over the past five decades, bookended by the presidential campaigns of George Romney and Mitt Romney. It deservedly won the Mormon History Association's Best Book Award for 2013. The book provides valuable historical context to events of modern Church history. In terms of Church publicity, it was truly the best of times, the worst of times.

The introduction notes how little George Romney's religion affected his presidential campaign of 1968. His credentials were impressive. George led American Motors to new prominence and gave rise to the compact car. His prominent role in company commercials made him a "household name" (1). Elected three times as Michigan governor, he led the state's constitutional convention. He was also viewed as a progressive in the civil rights movement.

During his campaign, the media viewed his faith neutrally and even positively at times. *The New Republic* called him "a kind of political Billy Graham."

*The Nation* commented on his faith as one of his “assets” and a significant part of his “attractive public image” (2). This was a surprising turn from the Church’s image just a few decades earlier when Senator Reed Smoot was grilled in a Senate hearing about his loyalty to the United States because of suspected ties to polygamy.

All seemed golden until a candid but politically damaging comment surfaced about George being “brainwashed” about US involvement in the Vietnam War. His campaign never recovered, but public perceptions of his faith did not contribute to his political downfall.

In contrast to his father’s campaign, Mitt Romney’s credentials were overshadowed by his religion. After years of success at Bain Capital, Mitt helped save the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. As a Republican, he won the governorship of Massachusetts. But his faith led to serious challenges from the Religious Right in his first presidential campaign. A Christian website posted the claim that “if you vote for Romney you are voting for Satan” (2). In an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll on December 13, 2006, 53 percent of respondents reported that they were “very uncomfortable or have some reservations about voting for a presidential candidate who is Mormon” (3). Clearly the landscape had changed, but why?

The book offers an incredible perspective on swings in public perception toward the Church over the past fifty years. Like the world of politics, public perception is fickle, oscillating drastically as a result of world events and media portrayals. The civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s negatively impacted the view of the Church, but some ground was regained after the 1978 revelation extending the priesthood to all worthy men. The title “Church Rites versus Civil Rights” cleverly summarizes the tension between these two worldviews.

In the chapters titled “Familiar Spirits” (parts 1 and 2), Haws discusses the public relations nightmare of anti-Mormon efforts in the 1980s and 1990s. The book and film titled *The God Makers* had a devastating impact on the Church’s image, with some carryover into the early 2000s. The Mark Hofmann forgeries and bombings similarly left a crater in the Church’s public image. The book offers a noteworthy discussion of six excommunications in September 1993 and the tension growing between conservative and liberal intellectuals of that time. Haws briefly mentions the expulsion of several BYU professors in the 1990s, and this topic could have been explored more.

In today’s Church, we still feel the tension simmering between orthodox and progressive views in the Ordain Women and same-sex marriage movements.

In the 1980s to 1990s and on into the 2000s, the pendulum swung to the positive—for example, the national championship BYU football team in 1984, a Mormon Miss America, the Church’s sesquicentennial in 1997, and the 2005 celebration of the bicentennial of Joseph Smith’s birth. President Gordon B. Hinckley’s openness to the media sent a signal of new openness to interviews (158).

In more recent years, popular media portrayed the Church in a more complicated light. The Broadway musical *The Book of Mormon* surprised audiences with its irreverent but warmhearted tribute to Mormons, and the HBO drama *Big Love* burned in the public mind an afterimage of polygamy and discouraged some members with its portrayal of sensitive temple scenes.

Surprisingly, faith played a less important factor in Mitt’s second campaign in 2012. Mormon support for Proposition 8 in California did win the ire of same-sex marriage advocates. But media sources mainly portrayed the faith neutrally or positively, and Harry Reid’s presence as Senate majority leader perhaps limited the anti-Mormon rhetoric. Many from the religious right supported Mitt’s second campaign, although they thought of it as, in Larry Sabato’s words, a “shotgun marriage between two very different religions [that] are completely dependent on one another for victory” (265). Chief among those reluctant supporters in 2012 was Pastor Robert Jeffress, who just one year earlier labeled Mormonism a cult. He rejected President Barack Obama’s “perceived attack on religious values and religious liberties” and threw his support to Mitt. Richard Mouw was much more positive about supporting Mormon faith and values.

Haws concludes that public perception of Mormons remains ambivalent. Laurie Maffly-Kipp, professor at the University of North Carolina, wryly summed up deep-seated distrust of Mormons as the invasion of the body snatchers syndrome: “While Mormons embody the economic and moral success endorsed by the American Dream, they also subscribe to beliefs that to many, seem peculiar—even bizarre. . . . No matter how much Mormon behavior conforms to what most consider admirable (and maybe *especially* because they look so wholesome), some Americans are convinced Mormons secretly await an opportunity to take over the world” (277). This perception will continue as long as Mormons remain *in* the world but not *of* the world.

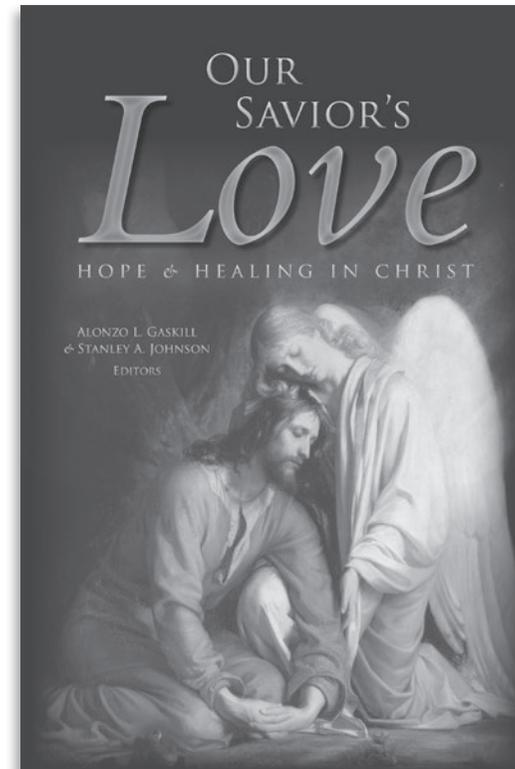
In the concluding chapter, Haws writes that the Church wants to be accepted as Christian, but with a distinctive brand. Terryl Givens stated the paradox this way: “You want to have acceptability . . . [so] that you can fraternize with . . . fellow Christians, but at the same time you don’t want to feel so comfortable that there’s nothing to mark you as a people who are distinct, who have a special body of teachings, a special [body of] responsibilities” (280). This different flair will likely always set us apart from our fellow Christians as well as our fellow Americans.

A limitation of the book is that its well-defined scope circumscribes discussion within the walls of the American political area. There are few references to Church events worldwide or international perspectives of Mormonism. Historians may dislike the placement of notes at the back of the book (rather than footnotes or endnotes).

This book would be excellent for general readers interested in Mormonism’s changing public perception, as well as for teachers of modern Church history seeking context for recent events and the status of the Church in American media and political arenas. **RE**

## New Publications

To purchase any of the following publications, please visit [www.byubookstore.com](http://www.byubookstore.com) and search by book title or ISBN number, or call the BYU Bookstore toll-free at 1-800-253-2578.

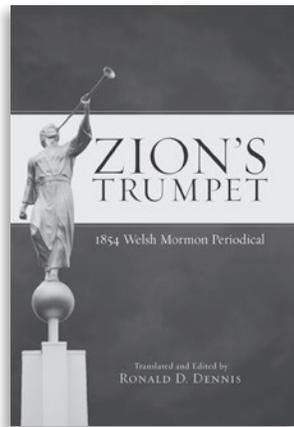


### **Our Savior’s Love: Hope & Healing in Christ**

Editors: Alonzo L. Gaskill and Stanley A. Johnson

When we actually, really know, understand, and feel of our Savior’s love—we are transformed; we are changed in our understanding of what divine love is. It is the encounter with Christ’s love that causes us to submit our wills and lives to God’s will and way. Our Savior’s love enables us to see ourselves in proper perspective and helps us to see others as God sees them and to love them as deeply as he loves them.

*ISBN: 978-0-8425-2883-2, Retail: US \$17.99*



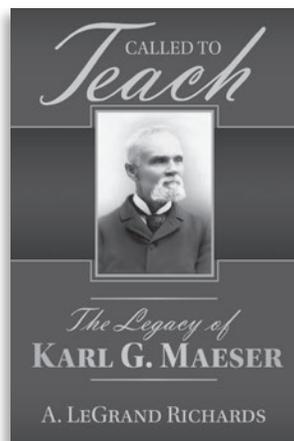
### Zion's Trumpet: 1854 Welsh Mormon Periodical

Edited by Ronald D. Dennis

Dan Jones assumed the editorship of *Zion's Trumpet* at the beginning of 1854. His first mission to his native Wales was in fulfillment of a prophecy uttered by Joseph Smith on the eve of his martyrdom: "You will see Wales and fulfill the mission appointed you ere you die." Jones calls *Zion's Trumpet* "a treasury of heavenly pearls, a gift given to the age that unfolds." As with the English translation of the six preceding volumes of *Zion's Trumpet*, this 1854 volume is

published in a "facsimile translation" format to provide the reader with something of the appearance and flavor of the original Welsh publication.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2874-0, Retail: US \$31.99



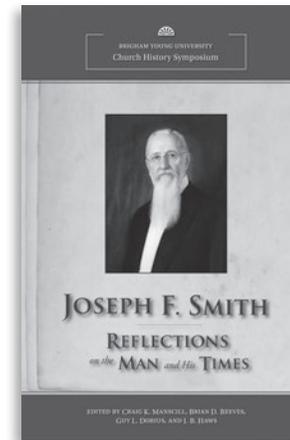
### Called to Teach: The Legacy of Karl G. Maeser

A. LeGrand Richards

Karl G. Maeser has rightfully been called the spiritual architect not only of Brigham Young University, but also of the Church Educational System. As the first superintendent of Church Schools, he helped found and maintain over fifty academies and schools from Canada to Mexico. He helped develop the public education system in Utah and helped establish the Utah Teachers' Association. The students he taught personally included future US senators

and members of the House of Representatives, a US Supreme Court justice, university presidents, and many General Authorities.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2742-9, Retail: US \$32.99



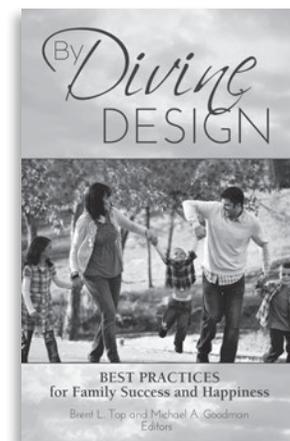
### Joseph F. Smith: Reflections on the Man and His Times

Edited by Craig K. Manscill, Brian D. Reeves,  
Guy L. Dorius, and J. B. Haws

This book is a compilation of presentations from a BYU Church History Symposium. It features more than twenty messages about the life of Joseph F. Smith, including chapters by Elder M. Russell Ballard and Joseph Fielding McConkie. Elder Ballard, great-grandson of Joseph F. Smith, describes how the Lord prepared President Smith to lead the Church. Several scholars, historians, educators, and

researchers highlight aspects of President Smith's life, including his boyhood and adolescence, family and personal relationships, doctrinal contributions, developments in Church government, initiatives taken during his presidency in education, building construction, building the Laie Hawaii Temple, creating the seminary program, and public outreach.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2847-4, Retail: \$31.99



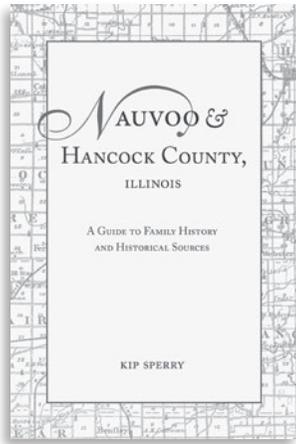
### By Divine Design: Best Practices for Family Success and Happiness

Edited by Brent L. Top and Michael A. Goodman

The prophets of God continually raise their warning voices and lovingly give counsel to strengthen our families and heighten the spirituality of our children. This is a gospel-centered "best practices" book for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, that is founded on prophetic teachings and substantiated by good science. This book will help readers gain new and important insights about our most important responsibilities in

time and eternity—our families.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2850-4, Retail: US \$27.99



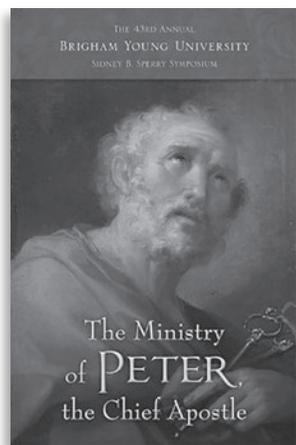
### **Nauvoo and Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources**

Kip Sperry

This comprehensive family history reference book describes hundreds of genealogical and historical resources for Nauvoo, Hancock County, and west-central Illinois. It includes descriptions of original records, primary and secondary sources, computer databases, finding aids, guides, websites, indexes, manuscript collections, newspapers, oral histories, historical and genealogical periodicals, library collections,

and much more. It also includes an extensive bibliography of genealogical, local history, and historical resources.

*ISBN: 978-0-8425-2857-3, Retail: US \$35.99*



### **The Ministry of Peter, the Chief Apostle: The 43rd Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium**

Edited by Frank F. Judd Jr., Eric D. Huntsman, and Shon D. Hopkin

This volume sheds important light on the mission of the man whom Jesus himself referred to as “the rock.” As a sometimes fallible but nonetheless earnest disciple, Peter is an important example of grace, transformation, service, and power. Essays in this collection treat his cultural background and context, his role in the apostolic church, many of his noted teachings,

and his important legacy in early Christianity and the Restoration.

*ISBN: 978-1-60907-922-2, Retail: US \$31.99* **RE**

## Upcoming Events

### **BYU Easter Conference**

*March 27, 2015*

BYU’s annual Easter Conference will be at 7 p.m. in the Joseph Smith Building (JSB) auditorium on BYU campus. This year Elder Spencer J. Condie, emeritus member of the Seventy, will be the keynote speaker. Other speakers will be Matthew O. Richardson, advancement vice president at BYU, and Jennifer Brinkerhoff Platt, formerly a visiting professor of ancient scripture at BYU. Each will talk about certain aspects of the Savior, his life, his mission, the Atonement, and his influence in our lives today. There will also be musical presentations to enhance the evening. For details, visit [rsc.byu.edu](http://rsc.byu.edu).

### **Sidney B. Sperry Symposium**

*Friday and Saturday, October 23–24, 2015*

The 44th Annual BYU Sperry Symposium will be start in the Joseph Smith Building (JSB) auditorium on BYU campus. The title of this year’s symposium is “The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: A Marvelous Work and a Wonder.” Presentations will cover the Book of Mormon’s role in restoring doctrinal truths, the translation process, the witnesses, and the printing of this book.

### **2016 Church History Symposium**

*Thursday and Friday, March 3–4, 2016*

The 2016 theme is “Beyond Biography: Sources in Context for Mormon Women’s History.” Scholars of Mormon women’s history have long demonstrated a commitment to and an interest in biography. The resulting narratives have helped to recover and preserve voices that would have otherwise been lost to modern awareness.

*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](http://rsc.byu.edu/conferences) or contact Brent Nordgren at 801-422-3293. **RE***

## Staff Spotlight



### Associate Director

Dana M. Pike is professor of ancient scripture and ancient Near Eastern studies, associate dean of Religious Education at Brigham Young University, and associate director of the Religious Studies Center. He was born in Boston and raised in New Hampshire. Brother Pike earned a BS degree in archaeology from BYU, and a PhD in Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern studies from the University of Pennsylvania. Since coming to BYU more than two decades ago, Brother Pike has taught two years at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. Other assignments have included serving as the coordinator of BYU's interdepartmental Ancient Near Eastern Studies major and as the publications director of the Religious Studies Center. He has worked as one of the international editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls and has been involved in researching and publishing about the scrolls, the Bible, and the Book of Mormon. Dana and his wife, Jane, have three children and six grandchildren.

### Editing Intern

Hadley Griggs is a junior from Phoenix, Arizona, studying English with minors in editing and TESOL. She has been involved in too many opportunities on campus—from the BYU Writing Center to entomology lab work, from TAing for modern American usage to editing at the Religious Studies Center. After graduation, she plans to travel to Nepal to teach kids English. When she is not busily rushing around campus, she loves petting dogs, playing Scrabble, and trying to write the next great American novel.



### Design Intern

Madison Swapp is a senior from Draper, Utah, studying art history and curatorial studies with a minor in business management. She has worked at the Religious Studies Center since September of 2013, beginning as a research assistant and now as a designer. She has loved her time as a designer and plans to pursue this new interest following her graduation in December of 2015. In her free time, Madison enjoys spending time with family and friends, going out to dinner (Café Rio in particular), and traveling. **RE**

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The *Religious Educator* serves the needs and interests of those who study and teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ on a regular basis. The distinct focuses are on teaching the gospel; publishing studies on scripture, doctrine, and Church history; and sharing outstanding devotional essays. The beliefs of the respective authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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Manuscripts should be double-spaced, including quotations. Authors should follow style conventions of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition, and the *Style Guide for Publications of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 3rd edition, as reflected in a recent issue of the *Religious Educator*.

Manuscripts will be evaluated by the following questions:

1. Does the manuscript address a clear *thesis*? Does the argument proceed *cautiously* and *logically*? Is the writing *clear*? Is it *engaging* and *interesting*? If not, why?

2. To what degree is the author *knowledgeable* on the topic as a whole, as shown, for example, by content, phrasing, contextualizing, thorough use of the best sources, and bibliography? Does the author adequately acknowledge and deal with opposing views? If not, why?

3. Does the manuscript present significant *new* data or *new* perspectives? What is its main contribution? Will people want to read this ten years from now? Does it make a contribution without resorting to sensationalism or controversy?

4. Does the author follow *the canons of responsible scholarship* (uses sound and fair methodology; documents arguable facts)? If not, why?

5. Is the manuscript faith-promoting? Is the piece in harmony with the established doctrine of the Church?

If a manuscript is accepted, authors will be notified and asked to provide photocopies of all source materials cited, arranged in order, numbered to match the endnotes, and highlighted to show the quotations or paraphrases. Photocopies of source material must include title page and source page with the highlighted quotations.

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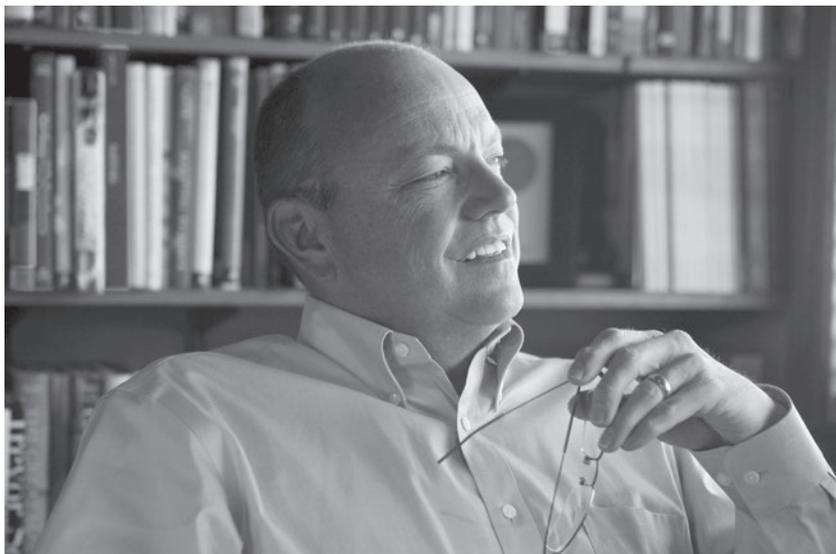
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## In Memory of Stephen A. Hales



We are deeply saddened to learn of the unexpected death of Stephen A. Hales in January. Stephen has contributed much to the Religious Studies Center (RSC). Former RSC publications director Richard Holzapfel wrote:

When we looked to increase the Religious Studies Center's professional look, we asked Stephen A. Hales to help us. He created the RSC logo, designed the *Religious Educator* journal, the *Religious Education Review* magazine, and a number of RSC books. Each bears the touch of his master's design. Following his creative efforts, we had to match the quality of our contents with his talented gifts to the RSC.<sup>1</sup>

In 2000, when Robert L. Millet was the dean of Religious Education at BYU, he asked Richard Neitzel Holzapfel to put together an academic journal now known as the *Religious Educator*. Richard recruited Ted D. Stoddard and Stephen A. Hales to help him launch the new journal. Ted taught business writing in BYU's Marriott School of Business, and Stephen was a professor at BYU and the founder and president of Stephen Hales Creative.

Together, Richard, Ted, and Stephen set out to find a niche that would enhance gospel scholarship and teaching without duplicating the excellent efforts at BYU Studies or the *Ensign*. The target audience, identified by Dean

Millet and the Religious Education Administrative Council, was seminary and institute teachers, religion professors, and Church teachers who taught Relief Society, priesthood, and Sunday School (Gospel Doctrine).<sup>1</sup> You, the reader, now hold the journal conceived by this team.

With the help of his team, Stephen helped conceive of the design, the look, and the feel of the journal. The *Religious Educator* is practical, yet beautiful. Each cover is adorned with a beautiful nature photograph and the interior, which has evolved over the years, is designed to be inviting to a broad audience of readers, including the academic and nonacademic. To make the journal more accessible, there is at least one image at the beginning of each article. Without Stephen's creative input, the *Religious Educator* would not be the journal it is today.

Not only was Stephen an exceptional designer of advertisements, websites, magazines, books, and other media, he was an incredible man and example of a life well lived.

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### Note

1. Brent R. Nordgren, "Ten Years at the Religious Studies Center," *BYU Religious Education Review*, Fall 2010, 16.