



BY COMMON CONSENT



Volume 13, No. 3

September 2007

Conference Critique

Post-Conference Analysis

The comparatively rare opportunity to change the faces in, not one, but two seats in the Quorum of the Twelve has added more interest than usual to this pre-general conference lead-up. With absolutely no insider information (but perhaps a dash of wishful thinking), an informal poll has showed Elder Dallin H. Oaks's name coming up frequently as a possibility for counselor in the First Presidency to replace President James E. Faust. Reasons cited for his appeal are his comparative youthfulness, his reputation (not always consistently deserved) as a doctrinal heavy hitter, and a strong reputation for competence garnered as president of Brigham Young University and service on Utah's Supreme Court.

Another individual whose name has also been mentioned as a possible counselor in the First Presidency is Presiding Bishop H. David Burton, whose responsibilities for the Church's temporal properties have brought him into frequent and sometimes abrasive contact with Salt Lake City's departing mayor, Rocky Anderson over such issues as the Main Street Plaza and the make-over of the ZCMI/Crossroads Malls. Bishop Burton has the reputation for

holding his own and representing the Church with a fair amount of expertise. His business and financial expertise might also be factors.

Either appointment would leave a vacancy, and presumably the first two quorums of the Seventy would be a logical place to look for candidates. Commented one observer, "It's getting conspicuous that, despite the steadily tilting demographic balance toward Latin America, there still isn't a Latino on the Quorum of the Twelve. Perhaps now's the time for such an appointment." Eight members of the First Quorum of the Seventy have Spanish surnames, although the seven-man presidency is all Anglo. No Spanish surnames appear in the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

Another argued that the growing public scrutiny and public awareness of Mormonism in the United States would make someone with public presentation skills more attractive. Although past public spokesmen for the Church have included Elder M. Russell Ballard (most recently joining other religious leaders in publicly supporting the constitutional marriage amendment) and Elder Oaks (participating with Elder Lance Wickman in an interview by Public Relations on homosexuality), Elder Marlin K. Jensen, currently Church

Historian, has seemed particularly appealing, thanks to his candid, articulate, and unflappable appearance in Heln Whitney's three-hour PBS special, *The Mormons*.

Speculation will be history by the time conference is over, but join the semi-annual Conference Critique to process the appointments and their possible significance. The Conference Critique will convene on October 8, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the Salt Lake in Conference Room A at Salt Lake City's main library downtown (210 E. 400 South). Take the elevator just inside the east plaza-level entry and go down one floor. Conference room A is the first on the right going west from the elevator on the lower level.

As traditional, Janice Allred will lead this freewheeling and insightful exchange. (See her analysis of trends in types of conference talks from October 1999 to April 2007, for the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, on p. 2.)

The best parking (though not free) is in the lot under the building. Enter from Fourth South going east and turning right at the mid-block entrance between 200 East and 300 East.

And don't forget to tune in Saturday evening, September 29, to the women's general meeting. A new Relief Society president, appointed last April, will have their first opportunity to address the Church's women as a presidency. Julie B. Beck, the new president, was previously a counselor in the Young Women's general presidency and is the daughter of Norm Bangerter, previously Utah's governor.

Her first counselor, Silvia Henriquez Allred, is the first Latina to serve in a general auxiliary presidency. (Japanese-Hawaiian Chieko N. Okazaki was the first non-Caucasian.) Sister Allred was born in El Salvador where, as a recent convert,

she served at age sixteen as Relief Society secretary to her mother, the branch Relief Society president. She also served a full-time mission in the Central America Mission and studied mathematics and languages on the university level. She served with her husband, Jeffrey A. Allred, who was called as president of the Paraguay Asuncion Misión, president of the MTC in the Dominican Republic; both were public affairs missionaries in Spain.

The second counselor, Barbara Thompson, is a never-married woman, the second to serve in the Relief Society general presidency. (Sheri Dew was the first.) She also served a full-time missionary and made a career in the Utah Department of Human Services.

A Modest Proposal

Rustin Kaufman

In Geneva, Switzerland, there stands a monument to four giants of the Protestant Reformation. One of the four is Roger Williams who, according to the historian of the New England Puritans, Perry Miller, was exiled from Boston--not because he was a "Separatist" (threatening the community with the prospect of their charter being taken away)--nor because he was reviling them for illegally seizing Indian lands. It was because he was a "typologist"--believing that the accounts of Old Testament luminaries were simply allegories, pointing up to the New Testament, which was factual.

And today we have the retired Episcopal Bishop John Henry Spong telling audiences and congregations, all across the land, that *both* the Old and New Testament writers were just a bunch of Jewish storytellers.

I am beginning to detect that there are Mormon "typologists" among us who are

General Conference Classification of Talks October 1999 to April 2007

First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve

| Speakers | 1999 | | 2000 | | 2001 | | 2002 | | 2003 | | 2004 | | 2005 | | 2006 | | 2007 |
|--------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-------|--------|------|-----|-------|
| | Oct | Apr | Oct | Apr | Oct | Apr | Oct | Apr | Oct | Apr | Oct | Apr | Oct | Apr | Oct | Apr | Apr |
| Gordon B. Hinckley | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | I,D,I | I,CL,I | 21 | 31 | I,D,I |
| Thomas S. Monson | CL | CL | I | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | D | CL | CL | I | I | CL | CL | D,I |
| James E. Faust | CL | I | I | D | D | CL | CL | I | I | CL | CL | I | I | I | I | I | I,CL |
| Boyd K. Packer | CL | D | CL | D | I | I | P | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | D | I | I |
| L. Tom Perry | CL | I | CL | I | I | P | I | I | D | I | I | I | I | I | I | D | I |
| David B. Haight | | I | I | I | I | | I | P | | I | | | | | | | |
| Neal A. Maxwell | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | I | P | | | | | | |
| Russell M. Nelson | D | D | CL | I | I | I | CL | CL | P | I | I | D | D | I | I | I | CL |
| Dallin H. Oaks | I | D | D | CL | I | I | I | CL | I | D | P | CL | D | D | D | CL | I |
| M. Russell Ballard | I | I | I | I | CL | D | P | I | I | D | I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| Joseph B. Wirthlin | P | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | CL | D | CL | CL | CL | CL | D | CL | CL | CL | P |
| Richard G. Scott | CL | P | CL | D | I | D | CL | D | I | I | CL | I | D | I | CL | CL | |
| Robert D. Hales | | | D | I | P | D | I | CL | I | I | CL | I | I | D | D | P | |
| Jeffrey R. Holland | CL | I | P | I | I | CL | I | I | D | I | I | P | CL | CL | I | CL | |
| Henry B. Eyring | CL | I | CL | P | CL | I | I | I | I | CL | I | I | CL | CL | P | CL | |
| Dieter F. Uchtdorf | | | | | | | I | | | | I | I | I | P | I | CL | |
| David A. Bednar | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | CL | D | P | CL | I | D | |

All Speakers

| Year | Institutional | Christian Living | Doctrinal | Total |
|----------|---------------|------------------|-----------|-------|
| Oct 1999 | 12 | 12 | 3 | 27 |
| Apr 2000 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 25 |
| Oct 2000 | 13 | 12 | 3 | 28 |
| Apr 2001 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 25 |
| Oct 2001 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 25 |
| Apr 2002 | 13 | 9 | 5 | 27 |
| Oct 2002 | 11 | 11 | 3 | 25 |
| Apr 2003 | 13 | 10 | 2 | 25 |
| Oct 2003 | 17 | 3 | 5 | 25 |
| Apr 2004 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 26 |
| Oct 2004 | 16 | 9 | 1 | 26 |
| Apr 2005 | 16 | 6 | 3 | 25 |
| Oct 2005 | 13 | 7 | 7 | 27 |
| Apr 2006 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 24 |
| Oct 2006 | 15 | 13 | 3 | 31 |
| Apr 2007 | 18 | 8 | 3 | 29 |

I = Institutional
CL = Christian Living
D = Doctrinal
P = Priesthood Meeting

inclined to see the Book of Mormon as mythological. They would tell you that Lehi, Nephi, Alma, the wicked King Noah, and even (or especially*) the dancing daughter of Jared--are no more than storybook characters.

The most devout of such members think that the Book of Mormon stories point up to the Restoration; and so it doesn't much matter whether or not they are true stories. Should we kick them out of Boston?

I see it this way: We have already accommodated liberal thinking to an extent by accepting Richard D. Poll's categories of "Iron Rodders" and "Liahonas." Why not go along with "Typologists" as well? Excommunicating them might cause quite a stir, as they may be numerous--staying with the Church because they are attracted to "the Way" as opposed to the beliefs. Perhaps we should look to the Jewish community for a pattern. If the Jews have three tiers of orthodoxy, which shouldn't we add the "Typologists" to the Iron Rodders" (like me) and the "Liahonas"?

*"Give me the head of Jokanaan," as Richard Strauss puts it in his opera *Salome*.

Thoughts on Apologies *Lavina Fielding Anderson*

September 11 was marked this year, not only by remembrance of the acts of terrorism that brought down New York City's World Trade Towers, but also by an unprecedented apology on another killing field, this one distinctive to Mormonism.

Apostle Henry B. Eyring participated in a memorial service at the site of the Mountain Meadows Massacre where local Mormons killed 120 unarmed men, women,

and children traveling through Utah, also on September 11 (1857), 150 years ago. Reading a statement on assignment from the First Presidency, he addressed the gathering "as relatives of the massacre victims and perpetrators and as unrelated but interested and sympathetic parties." The Church is one of these "unrelated but interested and sympathetic parties."

At President Hinckley's behest, the Church created and has maintained and repaired the monument, the most recent iteration of which was erected eight years ago. At that time, President Hinckley announced, somewhat prematurely, "Let the book of the past be closed." However, the Church has sponsored the research and writing of *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* by senior LDS historians Richard E. Turley, Ronald Walker, and Glen Leonard, all of them career Church employees. For the past five years, the authors have annually announced that the book would appear in just another few months from Oxford University Press. Elder Eyring repeated that the book would be out "in coming months" and announced, as its two main conclusions, that the massacre did not communicate Brigham Young's intentions and that the responsibility lies with "local [Church] leaders" and "members . . . acting under their direction."

Elder Eyring expressed "profound regret" for the massacre with "a separate expression of regret" to the local Paiute bands who probably "would not have participated without the direction and stimulus provided by local Church leaders and members."

He then deflected requests from representatives of the Mountain Meadows Monument Foundation and the Mountain Meadows descendants to make the monument a federally managed site. He stated: "The

Church has worked with descendant groups since then [President Hinckley's dedication of the monument in 1999] to maintain the monument and surrounding property and continues to improve and preserve these premises and to make them attractive and accessible to all who visit. We are committed to do so in the future."

This "apology" generated considerable comment on email lists, on the one hand prompting amazement that it had happened at all and, on the other, raising questions about whether "regret" constituted a "real" apology.

It is true that the Church, like other churches, has not been eager to announce responsibility for its past errors. Pope John Paul II ushered in a new era by exonerating Galileo for his "heresy" and, even more specifically, apologizing to the Jews for the centuries of Christian-sponsored pogroms, denigration, and anti-Semitism.

The LDS Church, in contrast, when encouraged to renounce "folk" explanations for withholding priesthood ordination from worthy black men since the 1850s, declined. On the twentieth anniversary of Spencer W. Kimball revelation in June 1978 extending ordination without regard to race, media reported plans that the Church planned "to disavow past doctrine that was interpreted as saying blacks were inferior and their skin color was the biblical mark of Cain." Such statements had provided a century of racist "explanations" from Church presidents and apostles and were accepted as doctrinally binding by most members of the Church.

The Public Affairs department countered by announcing that "church leaders have no plans to issue a statement." No repudiation of these policies has been made to date. The result is an uneasy historical limbo in which these previously

authoritative but unrenounced statements co-exist with the Church's official silence on reasons for the priesthood ban and, consequently, the need for the change in policy, commonly accepted as a revelation.

Not even on the table for discussion is the Church's continuing exclusion of women from priesthood ordination, despite the increasingly conspicuous lameness of explanations that "men have priesthood, women have motherhood."

These are not problems that can be solved by apologies. They are examples of a more serious underlying problem: The problem is that there seems to be no way to acknowledge the problems and, hence, no way to start solving the problems.

The Church has no formal feedback mechanisms for input by members of the Church who have questions, wish to raise concerns, or are troubled by existing policies. An all-too-frequent response to question-askers is to stigmatize them as trouble-makers by implying--or flatly stating--that God will tell the prophet what the Church needs. In this top-down model, there is no encouragement or welcome for grassroots input. Dissatisfaction with the status quo becomes prima facie evidence of lack of faith or incipient apostasy.

Maybe that's a situation that deserves an apology--and the most sincere form such humility could take would be the changes advocated by the Lord himself: "And now come, saith the Lord, . . . and let us reason together" (D&C 50:10).

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

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ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENT

By Common Consent is the quarterly newsletter of the Mormon Alliance. Comments, articles, and items for inclusion are welcome, if they are submitted thirty days before the mailing deadlines, which are the last weeks of December, March, July, and September. Please send all correspondence about articles and subscriptions to Mormon Alliance, 1519 Roberta Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84115.

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