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THE **BACK TO SCHOOL** ISSUE

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HIGGS BOSON AND CREATION: WHY FAITH NEEDS SCIENCE AND SCIENCE NEEDS FAITH

WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER DIEP



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“WE ARE SUPPOSED TO LEARN BY BOTH REASON AND REVELATION, AND THAT DOES NOT HAPPEN WHEN WE COMPARTMENTALIZE SCIENCE AND RELIGION.”

— DALLIN H. OAKS, LIFE'S LESSONS LEARNED: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

On July 4th, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) announced the discovery of a particle consistent with the properties of the Higgs Boson, though many remain cautious to pronounce it as such just yet. At the very least, it is a new boson.

The Higgs Boson has been given the misnomer “the God Particle” to describe its significance: an analogy in science can only do so much to make ideas more palatable.

The Higgs Boson is thought to be responsible for giving mass to particles in the universe.

Think of energy zipping along and nothing having any weight after the Big Bang. The Higgs Boson slows down all the zipping in its molasses-like field. Things get caught and in-

teract, becoming heavier. In the end, matter is created and now there is something other than energy.

However, even as scientists reveal to us evidence supporting the Big Bang, Latter-day Saints encounter statements that seem to disregard such discoveries.

In April's General Conference, Elder Russell M. Nelson used in his talk “Thanks be to God” an analogy to emphasize his point about the miraculous creation that is the human body and its many physical attributes.

“...Some people erroneously think that these marvelous physical attributes happened by chance or resulted from a big bang somewhere,” he said. “Ask yourself, ‘Could an explosion in a printing shop produce a dictionary?’ The likelihood is most remote. But if so, it could never heal its own pages or reproduce its own newer editions!”

Such thoughts are not new. In 1909 the Church issued an official statement in reaction to Darwinism denouncing the idea that “the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation.”

Scientific reasoning and Mormonism have always been seemingly incompatible with one another, causing conflict. However, history has shown that even Apostles harbor conflicting opinions and beliefs on some subjects.

However, it was the Prophet Brigham

Young who declared that Mormons “differ from the Christian world, for our religion will not clash with or contradict the facts of science in any particular” (Journal of Discourses, v. 14, p. 116).

God gives us the gift of a reasoning mind. It's what separates people from animals. It seems like a sin not to use it. Turning our intellect off, especially in the face of difficult and trying questions, seems counterintuitive to God's purposes. Why else would he grant us such a gift? Only to tease?

Settling cognitive dissonance by compartmentalizing is an easy way out.

In fact, the division of these two things seems nearly sacrilegious. As the famous author Annie Dillard once asked, “What is the difference between a cathedral and a physics lab? Are not they both saying: Hello?”

Ultimately, I believe that by combining faith and trust with searching and reasoning, we can discover the truth of, as we say, all things, though in what time frame I don't know. I believe that is what we are meant to do. I also believe it is meant to be difficult with answers only down long, tangled trails. And I believe that whatever the answers, God will be pleased with our efforts. Because in the end, as Brigham Young said, “Mormonism includes all truth” (LDS.org, DBY 3). ■

NEW JOURNAL ON MORMON STUDIES LAUNCHES

WRITTEN BY STEPHEN O. SMOOT



IMAGE DANIEL C. PETERSEN FROM MORMONINTERPRETER.COM

Shortly after his dismissal from the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Professor Daniel C. Peterson, a professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at BYU, announced last month at the annual Mormon Apologetics Conference the initiation of a new scholarly journal that will explore a number of subjects related to Mormon doctrine, history and scripture. The new journal, titled *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scriptures*, will hopefully be, according to Peterson, “an exciting venue for faithful Latter-day Saint thought and scholarship.”

The purpose of *Interpreter*, according to the mission statement on the journal's website, “is to increase understanding of scripture through careful scholarly investigation and analysis of the insights provided by a wide range of ancillary disciplines, including language, history, archaeology, literature, culture, ethnohistory, art, geography, law, politics, philosophy, etc.”

The new journal also intends to “publish articles advocating the authenticity and his-

toricity of LDS scripture and the Restoration, along with scholarly responses to critics of the LDS faith.”

In all, those behind the new journal “hope to illuminate, by study and faith, the eternal spiritual message of the scriptures—that Jesus is the Christ.”

The journal is peer-reviewed with Professor Peterson currently serving as the Chairman of the Board alongside his friend and associate William J. Hamblin who is serving as Executive Editor.

Other members of the editorial board include former Maxwell Institute researchers Louis C. Midgley and Gregory L. Smith, who were dismissed from the Institute along with Peterson earlier this year.

All researchers and associates involved in *Interpreter* are unpaid volunteers.

Interpreter further plans on remaining as financially transparent as possible: monthly expenditure reports will be released for public viewing.

Thus far, *Interpreter* has published ar-

ticles addressing subjects surrounding the Book of Mormon, modern atheism and the New Testament.

David E. Bokovoy, a PhD in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East, and Mark Alan Wright, a professor of ancient scripture at BYU and a PhD in Anthropology, have published articles on the Book of Mormon, while William J. Hamblin, a PhD in History and associate professor of history at BYU, has published an exegetical essay on John 17.

Articles from *Interpreter* may be downloaded from the website as PDF files, Kindle and Nook files, MP3s and print-on-demand orders. In addition, there is a podcast, YouTube channel and blog. All content may be freely shared with others when accompanied by proper citation.

In all, *Interpreter* appears to be on track to become the flagship LDS apologetic journal. This was once a position once filled by the FARMS Review, which has since been re-christened the Mormon Studies Review in order to meet the Maxwell Institute's new

THIS I BELIEVE

WRITTEN BY SPENCER CAMPBELL

This I believe is a recurring article by Student Review where BYU students can submit articles discussing their various beliefs. This is not limited to religious topics. If you'd like to share a "This I Believe," please email it to thestudentreview2@gmail.com.

"PERSECUTIONS MAY RAGE,
MOBS MAY COMBINE, ARMIES MAY
ASSEMBLE, CALUMNY MAY DEFAME,
BUT THE TRUTH OF GOD WILL GO
FORTH BOLDLY, NOBLY,
AND INDEPENDENT."

— JOSEPH SMITH, JR.

I was first enticed to memorize the "Standard of Truth" by a Snickers bar when I was 14. At 22, I am still uncovering how deeply these words, and others like them, affect Mormon culture.

Powerful statements like this one, though once shouted in the face of violent persecution, seem—at least in the Provo student wards I've attended—to act as insurance that in the end, we conservative Mormons, the embodiment of truth, will win.

To argue against that conservatism is not just some philosophical or religious debate for many Mormons; it is a personal attack on our identity and potential. It would be like telling an Israeli Jew they should give East Jerusalem back to its Palestinian inhabitants, or telling a Muslim that Muhammad was not the last prophet. We, as people, simply take offense when our concepts of eternal laws, rights or prophecies are disagreed with.

I lived in California for a couple years and was often reminded of the financial and physical effort the Church put forth to defeat Proposition 8. Our strength and unity is infamous within some circles.

It is as the Standard of Truth states: "no unhallowed hand can

stop the work from progressing." The unhallowed, the unholy, the hateful, the spiteful will never have power to stop the herd. But there is a difference, I believe, between what is truly unholy and what many of us perceive to be unholy.

I love the joke that says, "Catholics say that the Pope cannot make mistakes, but they do not believe it. Mormons say their prophets can make mistakes, but they do not believe it." We readily acknowledge that we have faults, so why are we so reluctant to identify specific problems? We have needed help to change our direction before: stricter adherence to the Word of Wisdom and diligence in tithing, for example. I realize neither of these examples were terribly "hard sayings," but we, individually and collectively, have needed to be corrected. Yet this does not seem to cause us to ponder our future. We do not seem to sit back and give consistent, honest evaluation to the type of Mormonism we are living individually and collectively and what changes may move us closer to the core of our faith.

In the Church we often talk about sheep and the Shepherd; however, shepherds know sheep have a tendency to look for a leader among themselves—a practice I do not believe God discourages. A bellwether is a sheep chosen by the flock to initiate movement and direction. It is still within the herd, but the others trust it to lead, to think. The bellwether still has to look, sound and smell like a sheep to fit in, but it does not have to think like the other sheep. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it's possible to gently lead those in your own circle to the green pastures and living waters we read about in the scriptures, and do so by avoiding the pitfalls infesting elitist Mormonism and self-centered Mormon policies and politics.



ILLUSTRATION BY HILLARY ONYON, HILLARYONYONILLUSTRATION.BLOGSPOT.COM

“WE ARE NOT GOING TO CHANGE
DOCTRINES—THOSE BELONG TO GOD—
BUT WE CAN CHANGE TRADITION. WE CAN
CHANGE PERCEPTION.”

If you disagree with Mormon policy or tradition, then imagine what you could do if you became a trusted bellwether within the flock, instead of aggressively, directly and openly opposing the Church and its members. You must remain humble about it. You must be doing it for the Lord Himself. And you must not think yourself above covenants. To be successful you must hold those closer than all other things.

In a way, I suppose I am encouraging those of you who despise Sunday School discussions and feel suffocated every time you step into a ward building, to stay. Please stay. True, your hurt and anger is often justified, but we can't make the mistake of committing the sin of those we deem our "enemies." We must learn to love everyone.

What's more, by staying and showing forth love, I believe acceptance will grow, both for you and your differing viewpoints. You can become a voice that matters. As college students, we are the next generation of leaders and thinkers in the Church. We are not going to change doctrines—those belong to God—but we can change tradition. We can change perception.

So feel free to empower the women you meet (not just open doors for them), to exclaim your joy that you are saved by grace (not works), or love a gay (or lesbian or bisexual or straight or questioning) friend because they are just as good of people as the rest of us. We can make a difference in how the Church of Jesus Christ is accepted worldwide.

Just stay a while, and do as Gandhi says: be the change you want to see. ■

non-apologetic direction.

On Saturday, September 22, 2012, Interpreter will be hosting its first academic conference on the theme of "The Temple on Mount Zion". ■

For more information, and to read essays published by Interpreter, visit <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com>