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An Interview with the Presiding Bishop

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MAY AUTHORS

Don Breckon, elder, Ph.D., professor of Health Education, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

Harry A. Dennis, elder, Ph.D., vice-president/dean, School of Community Education, Park College

Reed Holmes, former presiding patriarch, Jonesport, Maine

Bob Paschall, elder, Paris, Tennessee

Randy Veazey, Paris, Tennessee

Richard C. Brown, elder, director, Office of Caribbean Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Laurie L. Smith, Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa

Christine French Clark, Indianapolis, Indiana

Eloise Kucera, El Cerrito, California, chairman of the board, Long Term Health Care Education

Mark McKiernan, elder, Ph.D., Independence, Missouri

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Presiding Bishop Francis C. Hansen in his office at the Central Professional Building

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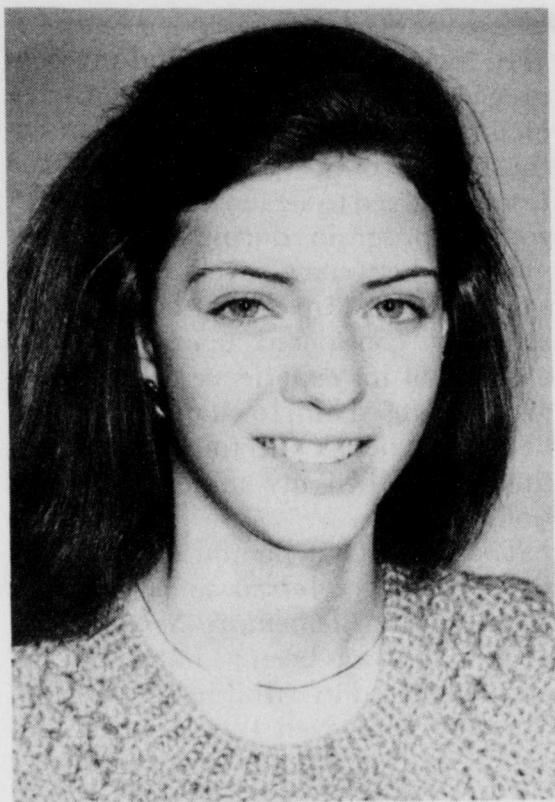
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Laurie Smith

Winter term classes provide rich learning experiences

Faith with Works Is Alive at Graceland

By Laurie L. Smith

COLLEGE is a place for questioning. Academically, students must face and adjust to new ways of thinking. Because Graceland is a liberal arts institution, they must be exposed to new ideas. Religiously, however, they may feel confused or dissatisfied. Their increased intellectual awareness may lead to a skepticism of previous, less thought-out beliefs.

College does not always pull the rug out from under those thinkers. Many courses encourage the type of questioning that leads to stronger, more satisfying convictions. Two winter term courses did just that: "Latter Day Light (Science and RLDS Scripture)," and "The Church and You: Opportunity for Service and Growth."

Religion and Science

Latter Day Light took a different approach to exploring the RLDS religion. Ron Smith, a mathematics instructor at Graceland who led the class, intended to show students that science and revelation are complementary ways of seeking truth. "The main goal, I guess, was to get an appreciation for the parallels between science and the scriptures," he explained.

Several guests from different areas of the country presented their insights to the class. Mildred Smith, a recently retired nutrition specialist from the state extension service of the University of Missouri, gave a seminar on Word of Wisdom and modern nutrition. Gerald

Bolingbroke, a physics instructor at Graceland, discussed light and its relationship to Doctrine and Covenants statements about light. Deam Ferris, through videotaped presentations, showed his experiences in studying the paths of science and religion, concluding that they are convergent rather than divergent or parallel. Dr. Ferris, a microbiologist at the Plum Island Foreign Animal Disease Laboratory, identifies and studies animal diseases in various areas of the world. His discussion added to the positive atmosphere that had been created in the class.

"Most of the people felt that it was the kind of class you couldn't wait to come back to. . . . Winter Term went really fast," Dawn Roberts (junior) said.

Paul DeBarthe, a teacher in the Kansas City School District, took an anthropological approach to Latter Day Light. By comparing various creation stories, students were able to recognize certain commonalities between them. Dennis Steele, a computer science teacher from the University of Wyoming, examined intelligence from a philosophical point of view. Finally, Dennis Bidney offered a personal perspective on religious motivation in his life. Bidney is presently exploring the possibilities of setting up a potato research laboratory at Graceland.

Along with reading daily assignments, several students also searched

the scriptures for possible answers to questions class members had put into a question box.

"It made me aware of the inspiration that Joseph Smith must have had when he received those revelations and how today we are seeing those things come to pass," Kevin Brunner (senior) said.

"The class brought things together for me. It enabled me to discover a different, more religious meaning to the things that are going on. I found answers to a lot of questions I'd had. Now I want to search for more answers," another student added.

"You can seek learning just by study, or you can seek learning just by faith, but when you put them together, you have a good combination," Mildred Smith concluded.

Church and Community

In "The Church and You" students focused on their potential to serve in contractual or permanent positions within the church. Various leadership skills were discussed in their relationship to community and congregational services. Information was presented about volunteer and employment possibilities developing throughout the church.

Because students are often unsure of their role in religion and their church, they must become acquainted with the numerous opportunities that exist. Rick Bunch, campus minister and class coordinator, exposed class members to

several existing programs, while highlighting the church's general beliefs and practices.

On one occasion, the group traveled to Des Moines to talk with members there who had reached out to the H'Mong people from Laos. This congregation has created a language school and assisted the refugees in gaining employment and becoming enculturated. Students saw firsthand the kind of difference Christian ministry can make in people's lives.

President Howard Sheehy spoke to this class about several facets of the church. Christian education, pastoral care, and Temple School activities were all discussed as outlets for the leadership skills students were developing. Dr. Bunch also took his class to the

Sunshine Center for handicapped children. At the Independence Sanitarium, Charles Mader talked to the group, and at the Chemical Abuse Center John Starns and Mary McDermott discussed the skills needed in their field.

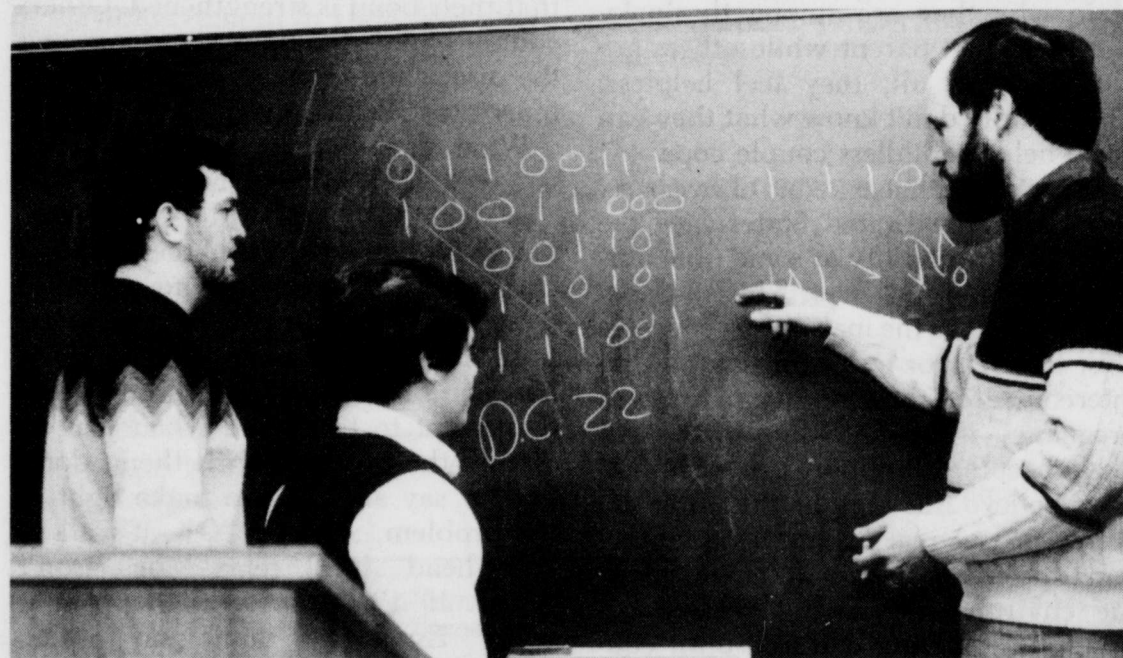
These Gracelanders also visited the Blue Valley Activity Center. BVAC provides organized recreation for the community, illustrating yet another way young adults can contribute to the work of the church.

"It helped me to reestablish my beliefs and to understand myself more. I'm not used to talking about religion. . . . It was a good opportunity to be exposed to the beliefs that our church leaders have and to learn how to serve," Dace Taylor (junior) said.

Steve Morgan (junior) will be working in the contractual assignee program in Michigan this summer. The pastoral care ministry skills, along with the leadership and recreation skills Steve has developed in the class, will add to his abilities in this area. "We spent a lot of time in the field. . . . It was exciting to get out there and see what was actually happening," he commented.

"I got a lot of strength from that class. It helped me with my personal growth," Dace Taylor said.

Both classes provided rich learning experiences for students. Although all questioning people experience occasional tremors in their religious beliefs, perhaps these Gracelanders have developed a firmer ground on which they may stand to face such tremors.



Instructor Ron Smith (right) with students in his Latter Day Light class

Photos by Myrna Morris



Knee-high to a Pharaoh

(Continued from page 15)

we have pitied the Protestants for years because they say it is all and already in The Book. Well, why should anyone believe we mean it about continuing revelation if we don't expect God to surprise us occasionally with something we don't already know?

Some are able to come to conviction quickly. . . maybe too quickly. Others have the ability to suspend judgment, while giving thought or even being disturbed, and remain faithful and productive. They dismiss the trauma of anger as unfruitful and wait for more evidence. They hang in there, convinced that the Lord has not forgotten the church.

The time will surely come when we will all notice, with appreciation, that other fundamental and magnificent things were said and are now included in the Doctrine and Covenants. The temple shines more brightly as concept and function, with the strong emphasis on its being an instrument of peace. That's something to get excited about. And priesthood is to be removed from the stultifying atmosphere of easy tenure and prerogative in favor of equipping a live organism with creative and functioning parts.

We have a lot to be thankful for. Not the least is that the menfolks can relax! We don't have to prove our superiority any longer. It was getting more difficult all the time. Illusions are very hard to prove!