

“THE PLACE OF ALIENATION” MORMONISM ON THE MARGINS GLOBAL **MORMON** STUDIES 2025 CONFERENCE REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** Conference theme
- 2** Outline of conference programme
- 3** Conference aims & objectives
- 3** Pre-conference survey
- 4** Feedback from participants
- 5** Areas of improvement
- 6** Melissa Inouye Grant
- 7** Acknowledgements

CONFERENCE THEME

In her book *Sacred Struggle*, Melissa Inouye wrote:

“The place of alienation is familiar. All paths through eternity loop through here, more often than any of us would like... Christ was here. This place is sacred.”

The place of alienation and marginalisation is particularly familiar in global Mormon studies. Our research often dwells here.

This manifests in many ways. Within Mormonism some take pride in identifying as a ‘peculiar people’ and emphasise being separate from the world. Mormonism and the wider context of Abrahamic religions has a history of divinely mandated translocation and migration, both born of, and causing, alienation and conflict with other groups. Mormons in global contexts experience marginalisation in communities and cultures, feeling very far from a religious centre in Salt Lake City, and at times culturally at odds with the American roots of Mormonism. Opinions on a variety of subjects such as gender, family structure, LGBTQ, and politics can also cause alienation and marginalisation both within Mormonism and in relation to wider communities.



OUTLINE OF PROGRAMME

Thursday March 27th

Opening events

Announcement of Global Mormon Studies Melissa Inouye Grant

Keynote speaker, Laurie Maffly-Kipp

1A. ORATORY AND THE CREATION/CONTESTATION OF ALIENATION

Chair - Ben Crosby, Brigham Young University

Mallory Hutchings-Tryon, University of Washington

Kyle Bond, Florida State University

Michael Hamilton, Mary Baker Eddy Library

Jaclyn Foster, University of Montana

1B. A LOOK AT MORMONISM IN LATIN AMERICA (SPANISH)

Chair - David Bolingbroke, Church History Department

Eloisa Robledo, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia

Paola de Saade, Universidad Nacional de Argentina

Marxis Lenin Hernández Osorto, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras

Moroni Spencer Hernández de Olarte, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

1C. FORMING A MORMON LITERATURE IN LATIN AMERICA: EL TALLER DE ESCRITORES (WRITER'S WORKSHOP) IN MEXICO (SPANISH)

Chair - Rex Wilkins, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Rafael Vázquez, dir. Taller de Formación Literaria

Elizabeth González Torres, MEX

Alejandro Seta, ARG

Ruth Vidaca, MEX

Kevin Garzón Pulido, COL

Victoria Baldemar, MEX-USA

Eduardo Badillo Díaz, MEX

Andrea Jasbleidy Garzón Pulido, COL

1D. LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN AUSTRALIA

Chair - Sherrie Gavin, University of New England

Mormons Down Under: Assessing the state of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia

Elisha McIntyre, Independent scholar

"A Valuable Contribution to the Crusade Against Mormonism": Representation and Marginalisation of Mormonism and the Latter-day Saints in Early Twentieth-Century Australian Press

Brenton Griffin, Flinders University

Friday March 28th

2A. NAVIGATING CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND ALIENATION

Chair - Elizabeth Mawlam, Claremont Graduate University

Philanthropy as Voice: Mormon Christians Navigating Identity in a Muslim-Majority Country

Geger Riyanto; Harry Bawono; Sabara; Sitti Arafah; Abd Karim

Department of Anthropology, Universitas Indonesia; National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)

Gathering vs. Exodus: Contrasting Views of Culture among 19th-Century Mormon Missionaries in Hawaii

Greer Bates Cordner, Boston University

Alienation Within the Academy: Reflections on Publishing Global Mormon Studies

Hazel O'Brien, South East Technological University

2B. MORMONS IN ASIA AND ASIANS IN MORMONDOM

Chair - Spencer Stewart, Purdue University

In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Mormon Missionaries in Japanese-Occupied Korea, 1910

Joseph Seeley, University of Virginia

Helen Foster Snow: Lessons in Mythmaking

Sean Fitzgerald, Brigham Young University

Race, Religion, Romance: Asian American Mormon Attitudes on Dating, 1990s-2000s

Mengxi Seeley, Independent scholar

2C. LATTER-DAY SAINT GLOBAL IDENTITIES AND CHALLENGES

Chair - Devan Jensen, Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University

Alienation and Reconciliation in *Latter-day Sikh*

James Goldberg, Church History Department

Short History of Lao-Americans in the LDS Church

P. Mike Rattanasengchanh, Midwestern State University

The Imprisonment of Latter-day Saint Missionaries Abroad, 1851-1900

Reid L. Neilson, Brigham Young University

2D. LATTER-DAY SAINTS, INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS AND RECEPTIVITY

Chair - Greer Bates Cordner, Boston University

"Bring all that you have of good and truth": Cultivating the principle of Receptivity within Latter-day Saint Restoration Theology

Carolee Fairbanks, Independent scholar and Mauro Properzi, Brigham Young University

Mormonum Universalis: Imagining Global Interfaith Relationships in the Third Century of Mormonism

Rex Wilkins, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

2E. INTERSECTIONALITY AND GLOBALITY

Chair - Michelle Graabek-Wallace, Church History Department

Seeing and Being Otherwise: Intersectionality and Globality in the Memoirs of Farina King and Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Stacilee Ford, The University of Hong Kong

Waiting at the Bottom of the Trough, Patiently

Benjamin Inouye

'Greeks are Different': The establishment of the Greek community in Utah and its interactions with Mormonism, 1870-1940

Yianni Cartledge, Flinders University

2F. NARRATIVES OF THE RESTORED GOSPEL IN BRAZIL (PORTUGUESE)

Chair - Bri Romanello, Arizona State

Reviewing, Revising, and Ratifying Narratives: The New History of the Church's Beginnings in Brazil

Fernando Pinheiro, Universidade Federal de Alagoas

Gender and Invisibility: Roberta McKnight Hunt and the First Translation of Doctrine and Covenants into Portuguese

Clara Varjão Schettini, Universidade Católica de Pernambuco

Preserving Faith in the Oral Histories of the Saints in Southern Brazil: Experience Report

Elisa Matzenbacher, Independent scholar

Saturday March 29th

3A. VIRTUAL TOUR OF GLOBAL ARTWORK IN THE WORK & WONDER EXHIBITION AT THE CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Laura Paulsen Howe, Art Curator for the Church History Museum

3B. GENDER, FAMILY, AND THE SACRED IN PERU (SPANISH)

Chair - Amber Taylor, Church History Department

The Impact of Cultural Machismo on the Professional Aspirations of Peruvian Women Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Laura Masiel Vargas Anaya, Universidad Ricardo Palma

Daniela Irene Ancco Gonzáles, Universidad Nacional de San Agustín

Holy versus Sacred: The Reconquest of Peru as a Book of Mormon Setting

Jason Palmer, R.I.S.E Academy

3C. ALIENATION IN LATTER-DAY SAINT LITERATURE

Chair - James Goldberg, Church History Department

Alienation in Early Mormon Poetry in Europe

Kent Larsen, Hunter College, CUNY

A Spanish Diplomat's 1875 Visit to Salt Lake City

Ryan A. Davis, Illinois State University

"Had they met on an equal footing": Social class and Danish Latter-day Saint women in literature

Michelle Graabek-Wallace, Church History Department

3D. LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN SOUTH AMERICA (SPANISH/PORTUGUESE)

Chair - David Bolingbroke, Church History Department

Religious Espionage: Analysis of Military Dictatorship Documents on the LDS Church and Its Members in Brazil

Fernando Pinheiro, Universidade Federal de Alagoas

Between the possible and the Improbable: Three cases of Latter-day Saints and Bolivia along with a meditation on margins and religion

David C. Knowlton, Utah Valley University

History of the Church in Peru: Analysis of its Beginnings, Members, and Leadership

Alejandra Carolina Carrera and Marvin Jiménez Viveros

3E. NAVIGATING FAITH AND GLOBAL CULTURE

Chair - Arcia Tecun (Daniel Hernandez), Utah Valley University

Traditional Samoan Markings and the Church Standards of Tattooing

Toni Talamaivao, Samoan/Māori

A Mosaic of Faith in the Caribbean

Char Josier and Julia Meadows, The Bahamas

Nothing they taught us seemed strange

Jaime Licon, Africa Theological Seminary

3F. AUTHORS AND MORMON LITERATURE (PORTUGUESE)

Chair - Fernando Pinheiro, Universidade Federal de Alagoas

The influence of Latter-day Saint authors on speculative literature worldwide

Marcelo Bighetti, Brigham Young University

Editorial Trajectory of “The Friend Magazine” in Brazil: a comparative analysis of editions from the 2000s, 2010s, and 2020s

Pollyanna Vecchio, CEFET-MG

Language Teaching and LDS culture: How are they connected?

Inaê Leandro, Associação Brasileira de Escritores Santos dos Últimos Dias

CONFERENCE AIMS & OBJECTIVES



Our conferences aim to fulfill the main objectives of the GMS research network outlined in our constitution including:

- Encouraging scholars to enter the field of global Mormon research, especially emerging scholars, scholars from the Majority World, and scholars whose primary academic field is not Mormon studies
- Supporting regular global seminars and symposia to build a community of scholars and members of the public interested in global Mormon studies
- Developing a multi-lingual space in which scholars work to exchange ideas in the languages in which they can best express themselves

***“very
grateful for
all the
information,
which is
worth gold.”***

***-Conference
participant feedback***



To address these objectives our key aims for this conference were to have a diverse cast of presenters and global topics. We wanted to support presenters being able to present in different languages. We also wanted to ensure that we had disciplinary diversity, as at times Mormon studies can become synonymous with history, and we want to support the Global Mormon Studies research network being a multi-disciplinary space.

To fulfil these aims and objections, we alternate between in-person and online conferences in order to maximise global accessibility. While not everyone in the GMS community appreciates online conferences, for many this enables them to participate from far and wide. This was certainly visible in this year's online conference with presenters from all over the world including Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Ireland, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, and the Bahamas. To enable participation from all over the world we were very aware of scheduling sessions in a variety of time zones, especially taking time to ensure none of our presenters were presenting between midnight to 8am in their own time zone. This was much appreciated by our presenters, many of which complimented the effort we had gone to. This resulted in long days, but a great variety of high-quality presentations. We also ensured all sessions were recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing.

"I appreciate this gathering because it reminds me in a hurry of how truly "un-global" I am. Most humbling in good ways."

-Conference participant feedback

To support a multi-lingual conference, we ensured our communication was available in both English, Spanish, and Portuguese. We looked at various options for translation during the conference. Sadly, our live translators due to extenuating circumstances had to back out close to the conference, however at the recommendation of another translation company we used Zoom translated captions, which worked very well to enable all participants to watch and engage with multi-lingual panels. This enabled us to have panels in both English, Spanish, and Portuguese, including a panel with both Spanish and Portuguese presenters. We are very grateful to our chairs who with their linguistic skills were able to engage participants in all three languages.

To promote a more multi-disciplinary range of presentations the theme was carefully chosen and presented to suit a variety of disciplines. Our success in doing so was reflected in the diversity of disciplinary backgrounds and approaches that submitted proposals to the conference. We also wanted to engage new disciplines our research network hasn't engaged as much with, such as literature and art history. We reached out and invited a Latin-American writers group "Taller de Formación Literaria" to put together a panel on their experiences and the importance of Latter-day Saint Latin American literature, and invited Laura Paulsen Howe a curator at the Church History Museum to give a virtual tour of global artwork in their recent exhibition "Work & Wonder". These were highlights of our programme, "Taller de Formación Literaria"'s panel was the most well attended panel of our programme, and generated a lot of interest and engagement, and Laura showed Latter-day Saint artwork from all over the world, and shared her opinion that there should be far more art historians exploring the Latter-day Saint art tradition.

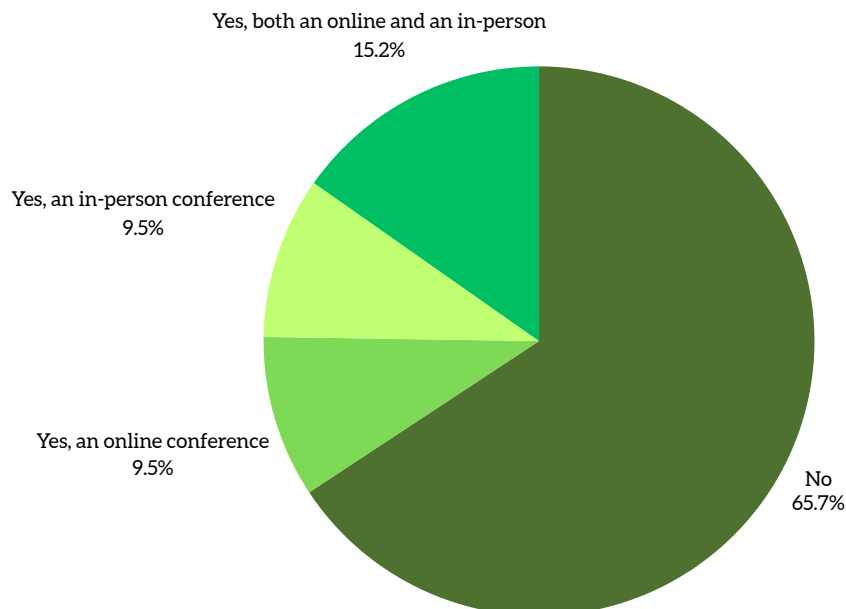


PRE-CONFERENCE SURVEY

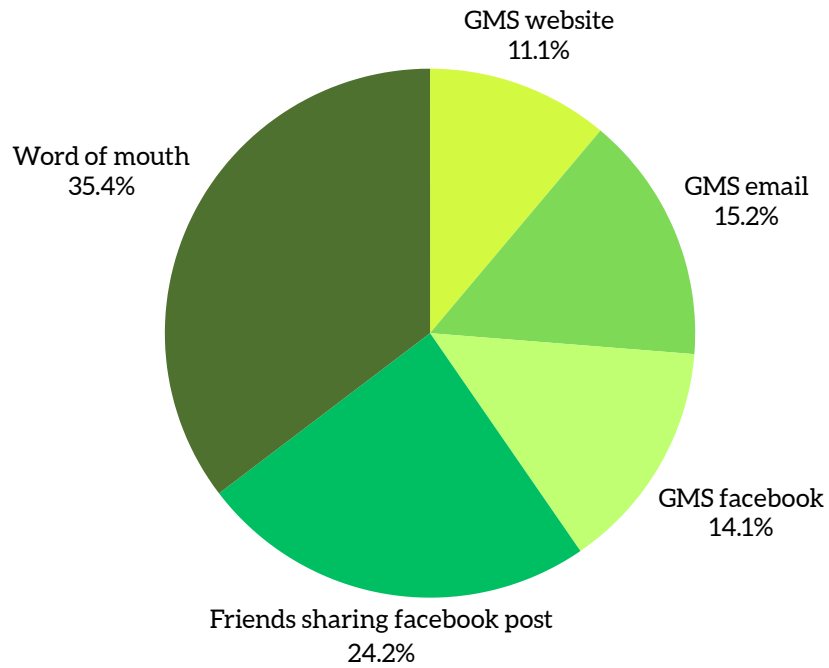
This year we decided to incorporate a pre-conference survey in the conference registration. The main aim of these questions was to evaluate whether we truly were meeting our objectives as an organization to encourage scholars to enter the field of global Mormon studies, whether we were creating a space that improved accessibility and removed barriers to participating in academic conferences. We also wanted to know whether we were succeeding in reaching a wider audience and how we were reaching them.

Our survey demonstrated that we are continuing to reach a wider audience. 65.7% of those who registered had not previously attended a GMS conference. An even amount had attended either an in-person or online conference previously. The survey also demonstrated that word of mouth is particularly important for us in sharing conference, followed by Facebook, and the emails we send out to our research network. Everyone attending the conference aim to learn more about current research in global Mormon studies, and both discussion in Q&As and networking are important to our participants.

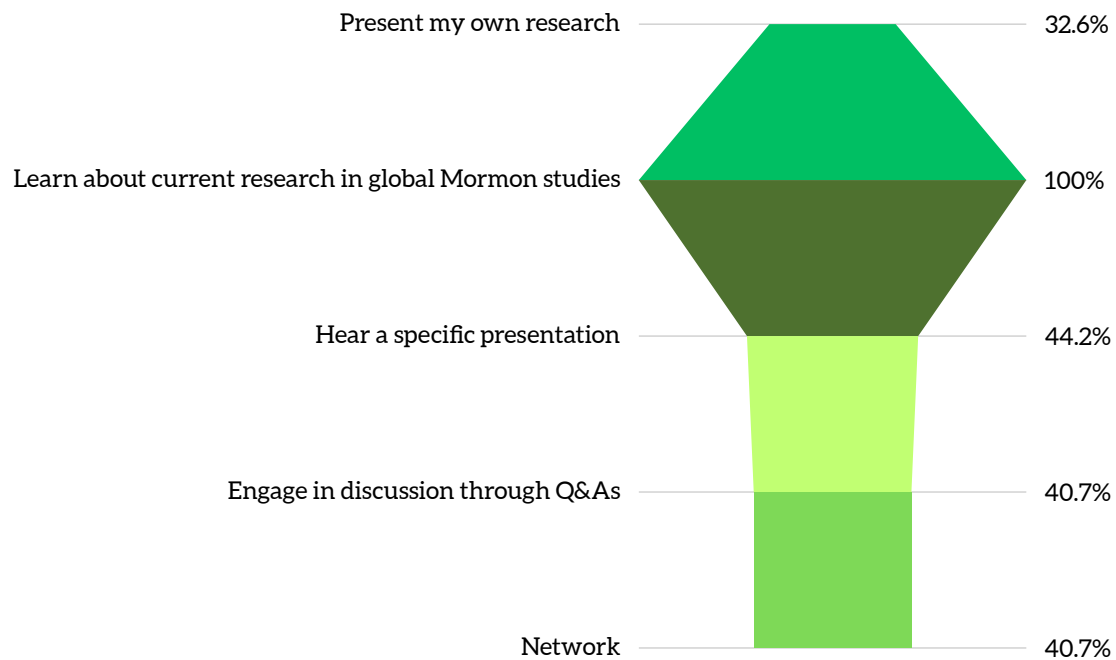
Have you previously attended a Global Mormon Studies conference, either in person or online?



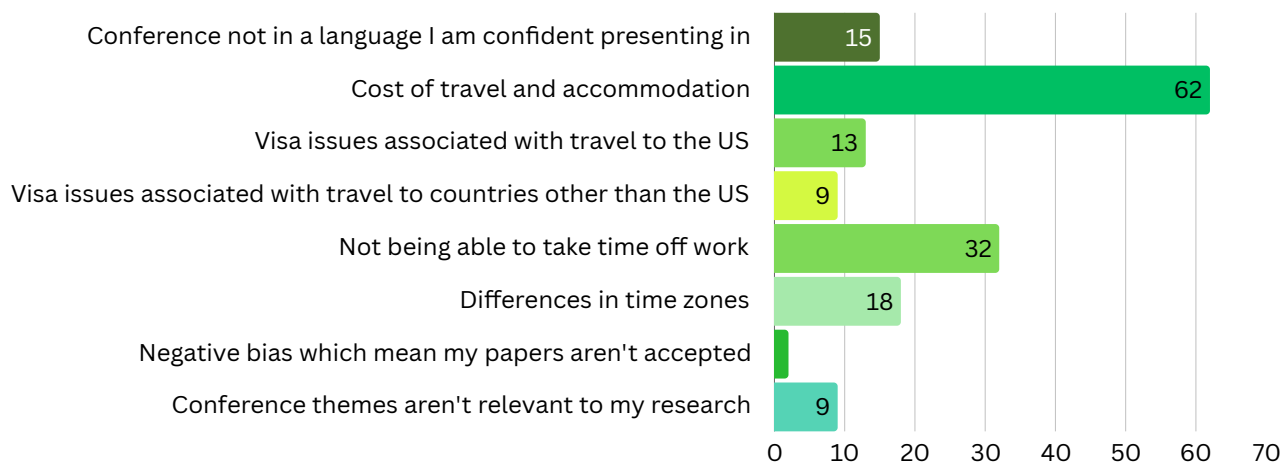
How did you hear about the Global Mormon Studies 2025 conference?



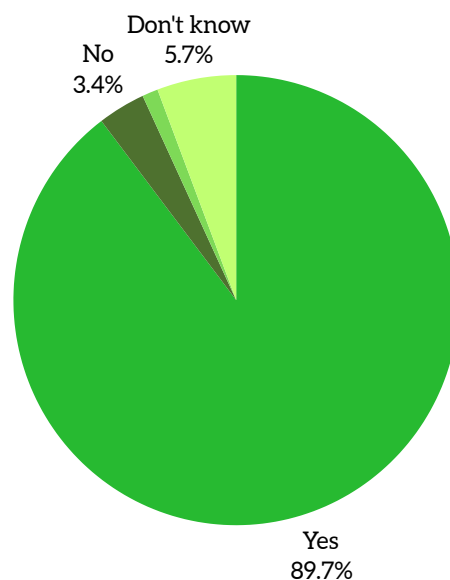
What are you hoping to get out of our online Global Mormon Studies conference?



What barriers do you typically experience to participating in academic conferences?

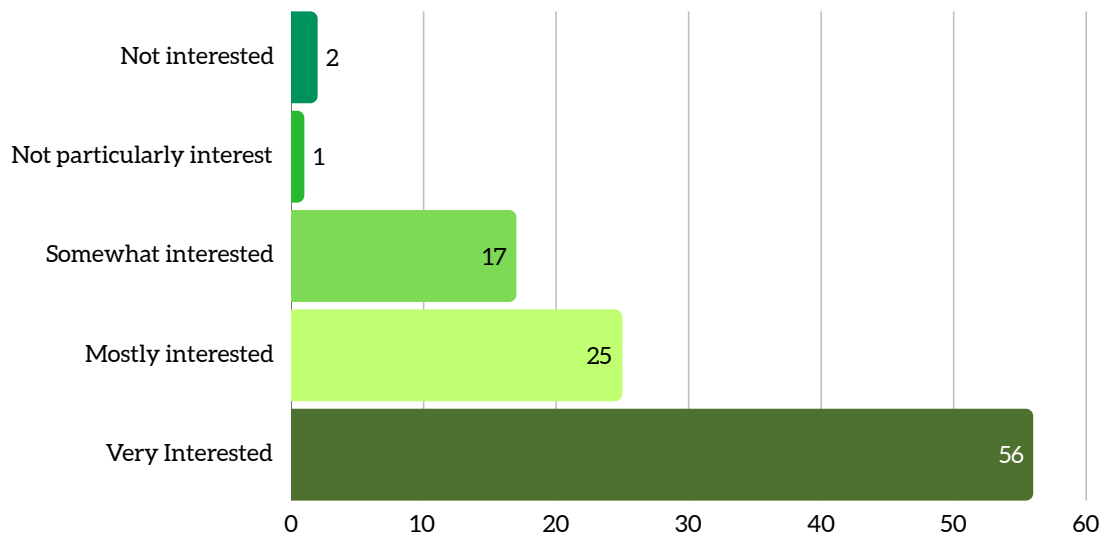


Do you feel Global Mormon Studies conferences help remove barriers to participating in academic conferences?



When we explored barriers to participating in academic conferences, many of our participants stated that cost of travel and accommodation and not being able to take time off work were significant barriers to participation. These demonstrate the importance of online conferences, which help overcome these barriers. However, many also started difference in time zones and language were barriers to participation. These are areas that we aim to make our online conferences different compared to many others, helping to improve accessibility. These are also barriers we want to keep in mind when organizing in-person conferences. When asked whether GMS conferences help remove barriers to participating in academic conferences the overwhelming majority stated that yes we did.

On a scale from 1-5 how interested are you in the conference theme: "The Place of Alienation": Mormonism on the margins?



To ensure that we are choosing themes that are relevant and of interest to our community we also asked participants to rate their interest in the conference theme "The Place of Alienation: Mormonism on the margins". More than half indicated they were very interested in the theme, with the majority of others stating they were mostly or somewhat interested. During the conference we had several presenters who indicated that they had been inspired by the theme and felt it was very inclusive, leading to globally and disciplinary diverse topics.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

We received a lot of positive feedback on our 2025 online conference. Many participants commented that that information was well communicated. This was an improvement from last year where one of our areas of improvement was communication, especially across the three languages of the conference. We improved our processes this year, providing clear and timely communication to all participants across multiple languages.

Participants were also impressed with the organization on links and translation. One participant responded, "Well done; virtual links worked well; great to have simultaneous translations." Another participant said, "Just a big thank you to all on the committee. I was particularly impressed at the way bi-lingual translation was made available in real time."

The quality of the conference was also clearly demonstrated in the responses to our post-conference survey. The majority of participants reported that they felt they learned a great deal about global Mormon studies, and the event overall was excellent. This demonstrates the quality not just of the organization of the event, but also of the speakers. One participant explained, "The energy from the speakers discussing *their own* church history was/is inspirational... I'm loving the space to share the global church."

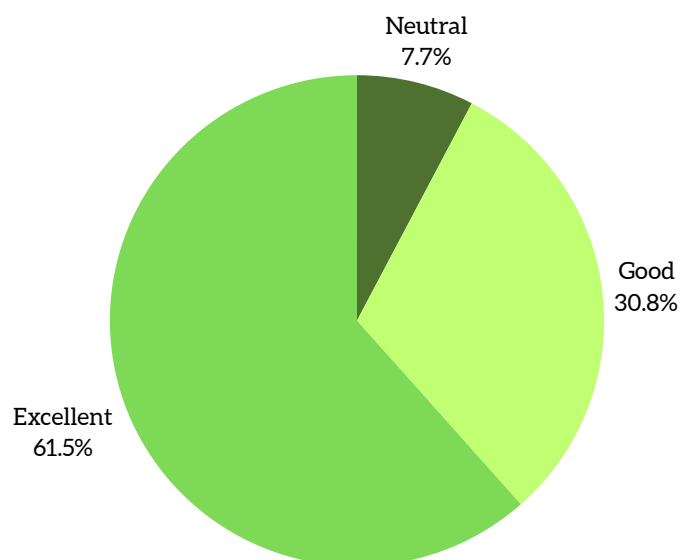
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Presenters

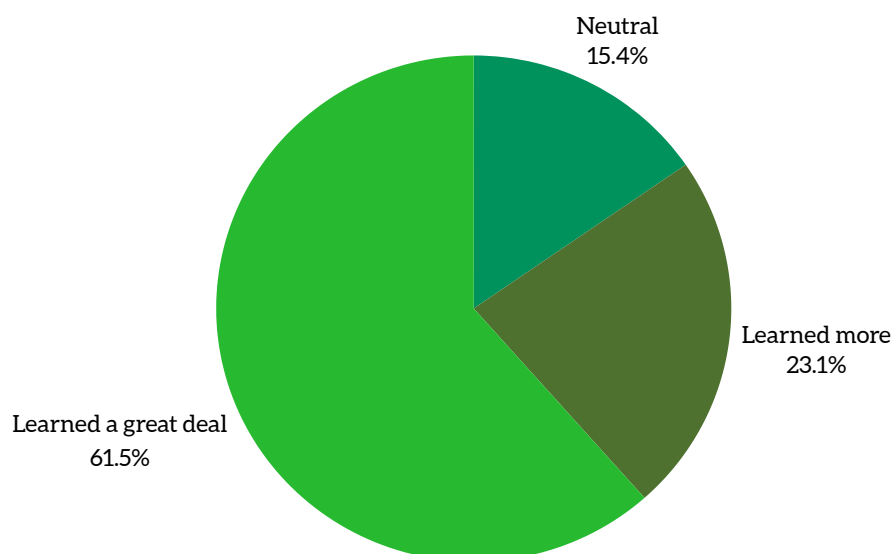
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Registered Participants

On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the event overall?



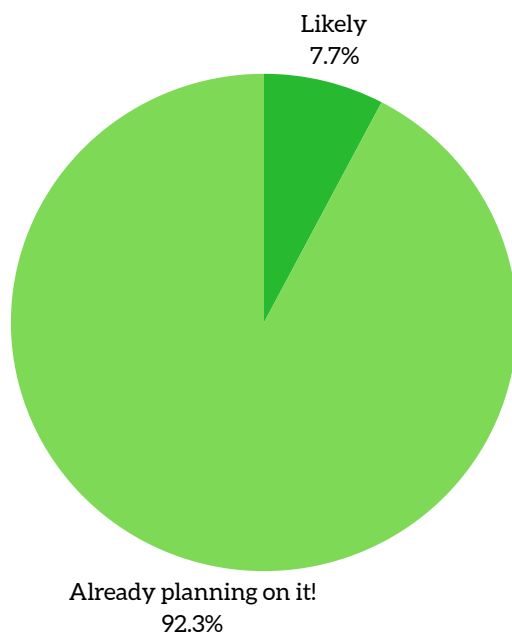
On a scale from 1-5, do you feel you learned more about global mormon studies?



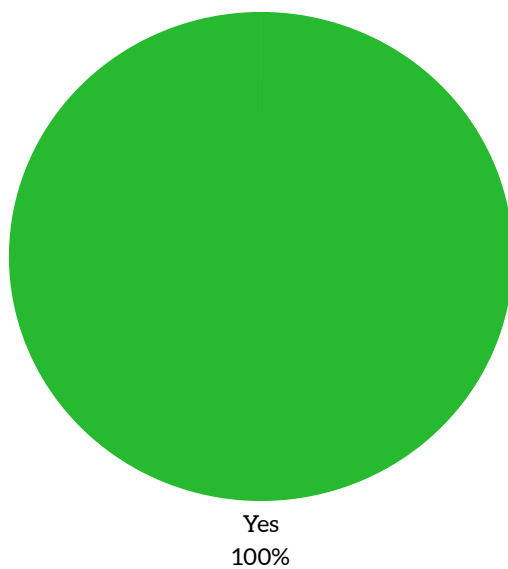
“This session makes me think a lot about the significance of diversity in the Church and ways that people interweave cultures and ways of being and knowing. Thanks for these important insights.”

-Conference participant feedback

On a scale of 1-5, how likely are you to attend another Global Mormon Studies conference?



Given your experience, would you encourage others to attend Global Mormon Studies conferences?



Significantly almost all participants who responded to the survey said they would attend another Global Mormon Studies conference, and 100% reported that they encourage others to attend. This is significant as we demonstrated earlier that word of mouth is an important way people learn about the Global Mormon Studies conference, and reflects the good experience they have at our conferences.

“Many thanks for all you have done to create a wonderful conference this week. I enjoyed presenting this morning and really believe in what you are doing.”

-Conference participant feedback



AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

We always seek to improve how we serve the Global Mormon studies community. When asking conference participants how we could improve future conferences we received very little feedback this year, but have two points we would like to improve.



No. 01 – Timing

While we received very positive feedback on our attention to timezones, in our attempt to fit in as many panels as possible into reasonable hours the panels were back-to-back, with a break in the middle each day. We also felt not having too many breaks would make it easier to keep people present in an online conference. However, we did receive feedback that it would be nice to have a 15min break between each session, and it did mean the timing on panels was tight. In future with our online conferences we will adjust the timing.



No. 02 – Workshops

One of our hopes for this conference was to organise some workshops and mentoring sessions, especially aimed at those new to global Mormon studies and academia, on topics such as publishing, methodologies, etc. We weren't able to organise these partly due to a lack of time, and partly because we didn't have space in the programme. However, this is something that we still hope to organise for future conferences.

MELISSA INOUE BIENNIAL GRANT



ABOUT THE GRANT

The Melissa Inouye Biennial Grant honors the legacy of Dr. Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, with a grant of \$1500. This grant supports innovative research in global Mormon studies, encouraging scholars to explore diverse perspectives and underrepresented voices within the Latter-day Saint tradition. Dr. Inouye's dedication to understanding the complexities of faith and culture is reflected in the grant's aim to foster groundbreaking research that bridges gaps and promotes inclusivity.

CRITERIA

- ✓ Projects must relate to global Mormon studies
- ✓ Projects may be new or ongoing
- ✓ may not be used to cover salary or capital equipment
- ✓ Funds should be used within a year of receiving the grant

WHO CAN APPLY

- ✓ Independent Scholars
- ✓ Postgraduate Students
- ✓ Academics
- ✓ Anywhere in the world
- ✓ Any academic discipline

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Making our 2025 conference a success took tireless work and dedication from our conference committee. We would like to thank the following:

- Elizabeth Mawlam, Claremont Graduate University
- Rex Wilkins, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- Michelle Graabek-Wallace, Church History Department

We thank our sponsors and donors for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to global Mormon studies.



Contact

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**Global Mormon Studies
2025 Conference Report**