

Call for Papers

Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology

Tenth Annual Meeting

31 October - 2 November 2013

Utah Valley University
Provo, Utah

Theme: "The Atonement"

The Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology invites paper proposals on any aspect of Mormon belief, including its philosophical ramifications. We particularly encourage submissions on this year's theme.

"The fundamental principles of our religion," said Joseph Smith, "are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it."

The atonement of Christ is at the very center of Mormonism, as, indeed, of virtually all forms of Christianity, ancient and modern. Within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is commemorated every week as the central feature of congregational worship, and the crucial event that enables believers to overcome sin and live anew. The sacrament prayers—the only prayers that are prescribed and that must be repeated, verbatim, in the Church—commit those who partake of the bread and water to "always" remember the wounded body of Christ, and his blood, "which was shed for them," and Latter-day Saints are urged to reflect upon his sacrifice, then and always. The key ordinances of baptism and the giving of the Holy Spirit symbolically recall Christ's death and resurrection. The atonement is a central theme throughout the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants also offers unique perspectives on it.

Yet the atonement is also one of the greatest mysteries of theology, and controversies over its nature and extent have defined deep schisms within Christianity. Restoration scripture may clarify the nature and significance of the atonement, but also raises fresh questions.

Submission deadline: 23 August 2013

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Suggested topics

Topics falling under the theme, “The Atonement,” might include but are not limited to:

- Biblical accounts of atonement
- Competing or complementary models of the atonement
- Grace, responsibility, and atonement
- Theological vs. scriptural accounts
- Restoration scriptures on the atonement
- Locating the atonement: Gethsemane, the cross, or the Incarnation as a whole?
- Does the concept of a vicarious atonement make sense? How can such an act be said to “satisfy the demands of justice” (Alma 34:16)?
- Have Latter-day Saint attitudes toward the atonement and the centrality of Christ changed over time? If so, how and why?
- Do distinctive Mormon beliefs regarding human agency, the nature of God, or prospects for exaltation call for a distinctive conception of the atonement?
- Sin and the meaning of redemption
- Historical developments
- Atonement and divine judgment
- LDS & traditional Christian accounts—contrasts and common ground
- The need for and effects of atonement
- The impact of culture on views of the atonement

Submission Information

Papers on the conference theme are particularly encouraged, but proposals on any aspect of Mormon belief will receive full consideration.

Authors may submit either (a) a full paper, or (b) a précis:

(a) Papers should be suitable for a reading time of 25–30 minutes (3500 words maximum). Longer papers (up to 9,000 words) may be submitted in full, with the understanding that they will be revised for presentation.

(b) A précis should be about 800 words in length, and summarize the argument of the paper.

Please send submissions in PDF, RTF, or MS Word format, to SMPT Secretary Benjamin Huff at benjaminhuff@rmc.edu, by email attachment. Include author’s full name and contact information, and title and word count for the paper or précis.

The Society welcomes submissions by students. Some funding may be available, on a competitive basis, to reimburse travel for student presenters. Students should indicate their student status, and any interest in being considered for travel support, in the submission email.

Submission deadline: 23 August 2013

Authors will be notified of acceptance during the first week of September.

For more information, visit our web site at www.smpt.org, or contact SMPT Secretary Benjamin Huff at benjaminhuff@rmc.edu, or SMPT President Daniel C. Peterson at daniel_peterson@byu.edu.



The Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology promotes disciplined reflection on Latter-day Saint beliefs, including constructive engagement with the broader traditions of philosophy and theology. All of the Society’s publications, conferences, and other forums for discussion demonstrate respect for both the commitments of faith and the standards of scholarship.