

By What Authority?

Authority is a, if not *the*, crucial question among religious traditions that make unique truth claims. Roman Catholics and orthodox Christians claim apostolic succession and sacred tradition dating to the time of Jesus. Protestants generally speak of a "priesthood of all believers" and rely upon individual calls and giftedness as well as the holy scriptures for their authority. Latter-day Saints believe that a restoration was needed in order for doctrinal truths and divine authority that existed in the primitive church to be enjoyed by men and women once again.

This conference on religious authority allows individuals representing various religious traditions, each of whom professes to be Christian, to discuss similarities and differences on this important matter, and to do so in an irenic, nonconfrontational environment. The overall purpose of the conference is to expand our knowledge and broaden our horizons of those who hold to differing religious beliefs. Each presentation will last approximately 30–40 minutes and will be followed by a brief question-and-answer period. The proceedings of the conference will eventually be published in book form.

For information, call 801-422-4853.

Friday, April 7, 2006

Session I

8:30–9:00 a.m.

Welcome, Introductions, and Overview

Terry B. Ball, Dean of Religious Education, Brigham Young University

9:00–9:50 a.m.

Views of Authority in Earliest Christianity

Thomas A. Wayment, Assistant Professor of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University

10:00–10:50 a.m.

Authority in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition

Bradley L. Nassif, Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies, North Park University (Chicago)

10:50–11:10 a.m.

Break

11:10 a.m.–Noon

The Religion of Reality: Living the Faith in a Created World

David Neff, Editor of *Christianity Today*

Noon–1:30 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

Session II

1:30–2:20 p.m.

Competing Models for Authority in the Early Church

Karen Jo Torjesen, Dean of the School of Religion, Claremont Graduate University (California)

2:30–3:20 p.m.

Apostles and Bishops: Puzzling Over Priesthood Succession

Stephen D. Ricks, Professor of Asian and Near Eastern Languages, Brigham Young University

3:20–3:40 p.m.

Break

3:40–4:30 p.m.

Visions, Dreams, and Holy Fools

Father Athanasius-Paul Thompson, Greek Orthodox Church

4:30–6:00 p.m.

Panel Discussion/Questions and Answers, Sessions I and II

6:00

Dinner (on your own)

Saturday, April 8, 2006

Session III

8:30–9:20 a.m.

Jonathan Edwards on Religious Authority: Was He Right?

Gerald McDermott, Professor of Religion and Philosophy, Roanoke College

9:30–10:20 a.m.

"We Speak Where the Bible Speaks": How Biblical Authority Works in Churches of Christ

Robert Randolph, Dean of Students, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

10:20–10:40 a.m.

Break

10:40–11:30 a.m.

"Lead, Kindly Light": Authority for a Catholic Pluralist

Peter Huff, Chair of Religious Studies Centenary (Louisiana)

11:40 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

On Loving Truth More Than Religion: Confessions of a Rebellious Christian Mind

Roger E. Olson, Professor of Theology, Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor

12:30–2:00 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

Session IV

2:00–2:50 p.m.

Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the Role of the Legal Administrator

Robert L. Millet, Professor of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University

3:00–3:50 p.m.

Visions and the Word: The Authority of Ellen White in Relationship to the Authority of Scripture among the Seventh-Day Adventists

George R. Knight, Professor of Church History, Andrews University (Oregon)

3:50–4:10 p.m.

Break

4:10–5:00 p.m.

Angels in This Enlightened Age

Steven C. Harper, Assistant Professor of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University

5:10–6:40 p.m.

Panel Discussion/Questions and Answers, Sessions III and IV