

# THE DAILY UNIVERSE

## MAGAZINE



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# THE DAILY UNIVERSE

February 2022  
Volume 75, number 6

## MAGAZINE

universe.byu.edu

My first real Valentine's experience was in seventh grade. A boy handed me a dozen red roses while I stood uncomfortably at my locker. Awkward is a massive understatement to describe how I felt. I shoved the flowers into my backpack with no regard for their survival or the feelings of the boy who just handed them to me. His delivery of the roses was followed by the death of our relationship.

Valentine's Day has the tendency to bring back the awkward nervousness of junior high school. Whether you are in a committed relationship or your last date is only a fuzzy memory, Valentine's carries with it a set of expectations.

The Daily Universe recognizes their readers as a mature audience—the sort that wouldn't shove a dozen roses into their bag while the giver looks on. So, this month, the Daily Universe hopes to break through our readers' traditional expectations for Valentine's Day. This issue takes a diverse, educated look at relationships and all their delicate intricacies.

We took a deeper look at attachment theories, how the pandemic has altered dating culture and a historical look at the Provo Temple. We hope our readers will reflect on the relationships in their lives—both romantic and otherwise, and remember that there is a lot more to relationships than a dozen roses.

— Margaret Darby



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The magazine is published monthly during fall and winter semesters. The journalism lab website, [universe.byu.edu](http://universe.byu.edu), is updated constantly during the academic year.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the student body, faculty, university administration, Board of Trustees or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

# THE HIGHS & LOWS OF DATING IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Maddie Selcho

**H**eather Robison met her now-husband only briefly in the MTC during her time as a missionary. However, when she came home due to the COVID-19 pandemic the last thing she expected was to receive a message from that guy asking her out. In the height of the pandemic they had to learn to get to know each other in different

ways than any couple had to before.

“Getting to know Zack in the middle of the pandemic was interesting. It was a time where no one really knew what was going on but, I think the pandemic was good for us,” Robison said.

While the now Robisons were getting to know each other, Hannah Pututau was already in a relationship before the pandemic started.

“We met a couple months before the pandemic happened and around that time we decided we wanted to get married,” Pututau said.

The pandemic caused much more trouble for them in deciding to get married rather than in dating.

“It was hard to plan a wedding during a pandemic because you could only have a limited amount of people which was hard because



MEGAN TURLEY

**Heather and Zach Robison enjoyed their engagement pictures as they prepared for their wedding.**

my husband has a really big family and we wanted everyone to be there,” Pututau said.

While a wedding was much harder to plan due to the pandemic, dating was actually something that went smoothly for others because of the limited distractions.

“The pandemic made it easier for the process of dating because we were able to spend more time actually getting to know each other. A lot of things were not open so we

really learned how to have fun with just us,” Robison said.

Olivia Holtby also started dating her fiancee during the pandemic, and she was able to find more time to get to know him while the world was starting to open up.

“I found that there was a slower paced world that we lived in when Michael and I started dating but that things were also opening up. We got to travel, see each others’ families, and

learn more about each other and it might have been difficult if we dated in a total lock down,” Holtby said.

The pandemic was hard on so many people but for these couples, dating and relationships have been worth finding even in this crazy world.

“The pandemic helped me understand how to be committed to someone who I love,” Robison said.

# ARE MARRIAGE & RELIGION CONNECTED?

By Kenzie Holbrook

Maddi Behrens, 22, and her husband, Nate Behrens, 24, have known each other for about two years. They dated for a year and a half, then got married in November 2021, shortly after graduating from BYU.

People outside of Utah might argue they are too young to get married, but BYU School of Family Life professor Alan Hawkins said the average age for people to get married in Utah is about 23.

So while their story sounds normal for most people living in Utah or people who are familiar with Utah's particular culture, it might not sound so normal to people in other states. In



MADDI BEHRENS

**Maddi and Nate Behrens enjoy married life together.**

the rest of the country it is more common for people to get married in their late 20s and into their 30s. Why is Utah different?

There's one big reason: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## Does religion in Utah affect marriage rates?

University of Utah family and consumer studies professor Nicholas Wolfinger is a social demographer who specializes in marriage and divorce.

He helped write a book published in 2006 titled "Utah At The Beginning Of The New Millennium: A Demographic Perspective." Wolfinger and Vincent Kang Fu, adjunct professor of sociology at the University of Utah, wrote chapter four titled "Marriage and divorce in Utah and the United States: convergence or continued divergence?"

In the chapter, Wolfinger and Kang Fu said there is not direct evidence of influence by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on marriage patterns in Utah. However, there is evidence of Utahns marrying at younger ages than the average in the United States, and Utah women of all ages are more likely to be married than other Americans. Although there isn't exact data, Wolfinger believes religious proclivities in Utah have fostered a pro-marriage social climate.

Data from the Utah Department of Health shows marriages and divorces in the state of Utah as well as the United States from the year 1990 to 2018. Over those 29 years, the marriage rates in

the state of Utah have been much higher than the national average, but the divorce rates were equal to or slightly higher in Utah than the national average.

Wolfinger said the number of members of the Church in Utah does play into the high marriage rates in the state. He said Utah has among the highest rates of married college students. Elsewhere it's common for people to get married after graduation.

## Religion's effects on marriage

According to Hawkins, highly religious couples are much less likely to divorce. Hawkins' research is focused on educational interventions and public policies to prevent unnecessary divorce and help couples form and sustain healthy marriages and relationships.

Wolfinger said people who attend religious services regularly are more likely to get married.

The idea of religion having a connection to marriage isn't specific to Latter-day Saints, but according to Wolfinger, Latter-day Saints have high rates of participation. "They go to church regularly and participate in other ways. And so that is correlated with a high rate of marriage," he said.

The fact that highly religious couples are much less likely to get divorced, and people who attend religious services are more likely to get married, shows there is a correlation between religion and marriage.

Why is it that religion and marriage are so connected? The Behrenses said there's no doubt religion played a huge part in their beliefs and ideas of marriage.

Maddi Behrens said her knowledge and belief in the Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ has made marriage a bigger deal to her than it probably would be otherwise.

"We know that it's eternal, and it's not 'till death do us part,' she said. "This is our forever."

## Marriage's impact on Church members

Although marriage in the world's view is

changing, the importance of marriage and family plays a big part in the Church, and the idea and trends of marriage look a bit different in the Church than elsewhere.

Both Maddi and Nate Behrens agreed their upbringing in the Church had a major impact on their idea of marriage and why they chose to get married.

Nate Behrens said having a knowledge of the gospel and how God's plan works helped him have a more sound concept of what it really means to have a lasting marriage and the principles required to establish a relationship that will last for eternity.

One of the major changes in marriages throughout the past several years is it has become more voluntary, Hawkins said. Marriage used to be something expected for someone's life at a certain point, but that's no longer the case in today's world. It's more of a personal choice, he said.

Maddi Behrens said if it weren't for their strong religious beliefs, she thinks she and Nate would have started living together and would have been doing everything they do now, just without the commitment of marriage. But because of the way she was raised and what she was taught, she has an understanding of the importance of the commitment of marriage, not just cohabitation. And that's why she and Nate chose to commit to marriage.

"It's important so that you can have a companion through life and have a family and get all the blessings from that, and it's what Heavenly Father has asked us to do," she said.

In the Church, it's a commandment to get married and have a family, which might be why a lot of Church members choose to get married seemingly quicker than other people who don't have that belief.

## How marriage has changed

Marriage has undergone a lot of changes over the years, and there are signs pointing to more changes to come in the future.

Hawkins said there is a nine-syllable word used for marriage these days: deinstitutionalization.

"Fifty years ago, it was a pretty strong institution that kind of ordered our life cycle, our life force and what we did," Hawkins said. "Now we're in a situation where marriage means a lot of different things to a lot of different people."

Hawkins expects the trend of deinstitutionalization to continue. He said he thinks society will transform someday to not expect marriage to order our lives. "It's just going to be one of those lifestyle features out there that

some people take on, and others don't," he said. "So it's going to recede in its importance to our society."

Hawkins thinks it will be easy to see a substantial increase in the number of people who choose not to marry, get married later in life or choose to not have children in marriage. But Hawkins said he hopes all the predictions he has for the future of marriage in society are wrong.

"Maybe we'll see a renaissance. Maybe we'll get to this threshold and look over the horizon and say, 'Whoa, wait a minute, there's a lot to marriage that we're giving up,'" he said.

## Utah's marriage and divorce rates

According to the Utah Department of Health's public health data resource, the marriage rate in Utah has seen a fairly consistent downward trend since 2002. Between 2015 and 2017 the rate spiked.

The divorce rates have also seen a downward trend. Marriage and divorce rates are going down everywhere, not just in Utah.

On the bright side of things, even though the rates are declining, Hawkins said the people who are getting married tend to have more stable marriages. This likely has something to do with Hawkins' idea that marriage in today's society has become more voluntary.

The data shows fewer people getting married, and fewer people getting divorced. According to Wolfinger, the divorce rate is at a 40-year low. Is the reason for less divorce because there is less marriage, or could something else be playing into it?

Wolfinger says one reason the divorce rate has gone down over the years is because people are waiting until they're older to get married. "People who get married very young have higher divorce rates," Wolfinger said.

Utah is following the national trends of marriage and divorce, but it's different in the sense that people are getting married at a much younger age in Utah, according to Wolfinger. Although generally people who marry young have high divorce rates, active members of the Church tend to have lower divorce rates.

Even after that has been accounted for, Wolfinger said the rates are still down. He said it's impossible to know for sure why the rates are going down, but one guess he has is this: "The kinds of people who don't marry now who used to marry, are the kinds of people who are more likely to get divorced."

Wolfinger concluded that even with fewer people getting married, "the majority of people still aspire to marriage, and indeed will get married."

# MARRIAGE DATA

## BYU STUDENTS

25% of the student body at BYU is married, while 75% is single, but according to the April 2021 statistical report for BYU, 53.3% of graduates were married.

## CHURCH MEMBERS

In the April 2021 General Conference, Elder Gerrit W. Gong said the majority of Church members are unmarried, widowed or divorced. "This demographic pattern has been the case in the worldwide Church since 1992 and in the Church in the United States and Canada since 2019."

## RATES IN UTAH

According to the World Population Review, 63% of Utah residents are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Out of about 3 million residents, 2 million are members.

Utah is among the top five states with the highest number of marriages. According to Statista, in 2019 Utah was the state with the fourth highest number of marriages just below Arkansas (number three), Hawaii (number two) and Nevada (the top). According to the report, Utah had about 8.1 marriages per 1,000 residents.

## MARRIAGE RATE DECLINE

According to a statistical report that came out in 2012 by the Utah Department of Health, the Utah marriage rate is always at least slightly higher than the U.S. rate, although the marriage rate average (in Utah and throughout the United States) has dropped overall between 1940 to 2010, and is continuing to go down.

According to the report, in 1940 the rate for marriages in Utah was about 15,000 and the U.S. overall rate was about 12,000. In 2010 the rate in Utah was about 8,500, with no data for the U.S. rate. Between 1985 and 2003 the rates stayed somewhere between 10,000 and 11,000 in Utah and then dropped from 2004 to 2010 where it has stayed between 8,000 and 9,000.

# VALENTINE'S DAY CAN BE MORE THAN ROMANCE

By Lindsey Reese

Valentine's Day has become a major holiday in the United States over the past few decades. Expectations for the holiday often are tied to celebrating aspects of romantic love, often leaving those who may not have romantic love in their life feeling left out or lonely.

However, BYU students shared some of their favorite memories of Valentine's Day that were not related to romance.

## Family fun

Naomi McAllister recounted several stories over Valentine's Day that touched her. One of her early family traditions was that the whole family would dress up on Valentine's Day to eat a "fancy dinner." Her dad would bring home flowers, and she would celebrate the holiday with her family.

Another year, she recreated her parents' first date with her family. The meal they ate as a family was Chinese food, something her parents had eaten the first time they dated.

McAllister also remembered a different Valentine's Day when everyone in her family decorated a box and wrote notes to each other. McAllister said that she loved this particular tradition because it helped her re-center what her views on Valentine's Day were.

"It was about showing love to people and



HEATHER SCHRAEDEL

**Even on Heather Schraedel's mother's own Valentine's Day birthday, she still chose to celebrate her children.**



KAYLEE BAKE

**Kaylee Bake's father always made sure to leave her siblings special treats and notes on Valentine's Day every year.**

letting them know you care, not just about romance," McAllister said.

This particular tradition went on to inspire new ones in the coming years that revolved around service to others.

## Thinking of others

Heather Schraedel remembered that every year on Valentine's Day, her mother would surprise her with notes and gifts. What made the experience even more special was that Valentine's Day is her mother's birthday.

"One year, I asked her why she always did something for us since it was her birthday. She told me that we were the best gifts she could have ever received, and Valentine's Day and her birthday seemed like the perfect day to show us how grateful she was for us," Schraedel said.

Schraedel said her mother made a holiday that once seemed shallow into a day all about showing genuine love for those who mean most to you. Her mother's perspective has been something she has always felt grateful for.

## Brightening the day

Joey Mena remembered a favorite tradition that his parents started throughout elementary school and middle school where they would deliver a gift to him at school so he would feel special.

"It always made me feel loved and appreciated. Maybe it was a Mexican thing, but I will

always love that memory," Mena said.

Kaylee Bake also had a similar memory of her father, who would always leave chocolates and a note on the table for her family each year. The memory has stuck with her throughout the years, similar to Mena.



JOEY MENA

**Joey Mena stands with his mother and younger brother. His favorite Valentine's Day memories include his parents taking time out of their day to bring him a present at school.**

# ATTACHMENT STYLES



EMMA GADESKI

Parents watch their child play with a toy.

By Emma Gadeski

Michaela Horn first heard about attachment theory in Tammy Hill's marriage prep class. She took an attachment style quiz and then had her now-husband Camren take it as well.

Camren's result was "secure," but Michaela's was "anxious." "It made a lot of sense afterwards," she said.

After Michaela took the test, she talked to her mom about why she might be anxious and figured it was related to caregiver inconsistency growing up. In relationships, she felt like if she didn't completely trust someone yet, she'd worry they would leave or she wouldn't be good enough. "So I strive for perfectionism," she said. "That's kind of like the hope that if I'm perfect then nobody will leave me type of thing."

This anxiousness transferred to her adult relationships — the day Camren proposed to her, she had thought he was going to break up with her.

## What is attachment theory?

Attachment theorists say individuals learn a "working model" of people from a very early age according to Jason Whiting, a marriage and family therapist and graduate program director for BYU's School of Family Life. If

someone learns as a baby that the world is safe and secure and someone will respond to them if they need something, then they would become securely attached.

This outlook then translates into adult romantic relationships in which a secure person assumes the best, isn't too easily offended, and believes they can count on their partner, Whiting said. However, if someone learns as a child that the world is not safe or they might be hurt, punished or neglected, then they become "insecurely attached."

Psychologists John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth were key researchers in attachment and individual differences in attachment styles.

According to research, children's attachment behaviors evolved to ensure they could remain under the protection of their caregivers to survive. Ainsworth later expanded on these ideas and pointed to three attachment patterns: secure attachment, avoidant attachment and resistant (anxious) attachment. Mary Main and Judith Solomon later introduced the fourth "disorganized" or fearful/avoidant attachment style.

Securely attached individuals have low anxiety and avoidance. They have an easy time opening up in relationships and can articulate what they need from their partners.

Anxious individuals have high anxiety but low avoidance. They have difficulty trusting their partners and worry about their relationships, needing reassurance. Avoidant individuals have low anxiety but high avoidance. They can be emotionally distant in relationships and say they fear commitment.

Fearful avoidant individuals have high anxiety and high avoidance, both fearing and desiring intimate relationships.

## 'Strange situation'

Ainsworth's "strange situation" test revealed these attachment styles in children, which later translate into adult relationships. In the experiment, a 12–18-month-old baby is placed in a toy-filled room with their mother. The researchers look at whether the child goes off to explore the environment or if they stay close to the mother.

After this, a stranger joins the room and the mother leaves. The researchers look for signs of separation anxiety and later their response when the mother returns. The stranger leaves the room, followed by the mother so the baby is alone for the first time. The stranger later returns. The mother returns after three minutes and the stranger leaves — creating the "strange situation."

The researchers looked for four interaction behaviors the babies exhibited when their mother returned to the room — the proximity of the infant in relation to the mother and whether they sought contact, whether they maintained contact, whether they avoided proximity and contact or whether they were resistant to contact and comforting.

The results revealed different attachment behaviors in children — the same ones later observed in adulthood. Securely attached infants were comfortable exploring when the mother was present, upset when the mother left and could calm down when she returned.

Anxious-ambivalent children did not explore the room, were distressed when the mother left and avoided her, unable to be comforted when she returned. Avoidant children were not upset when the mother left and could be comforted by the stranger and parent. They didn't show much interest when the mother returned.

## How do attachment styles affect relationships?

In adult relationships, people cope with these attachment issues in different ways, Whiting said. They might back off from people,

especially when things get tense (avoidant) or pursue a little harder, seeking reassurance by clinging onto someone else (anxious).

Dean Busby is a relationship author and professor in the School of Family Life. In the context of BYU where there's a lot of energy around dating and courtship, Busby advised individuals to understand their natural attachment tendencies and work on becoming secure.

Anxious people are vulnerable to those who are super accepting but maybe in a fake way. They could get into a relationship that may be helpful for them just because they felt accepted — but it's not very deep acceptance. On the flip side, avoidant people may find themselves uncomfortable with intense conversations and emotions, Busby explained.

Attachment theory can also help explain some of the baggage people bring into their adult relationships. The average person is entering marriage with 7-10 previous sexual partners, Busby said, having had quite a number of adult relationships that were often not very functional.

Principles taught in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints about commitment and fidelity are powerful and show up

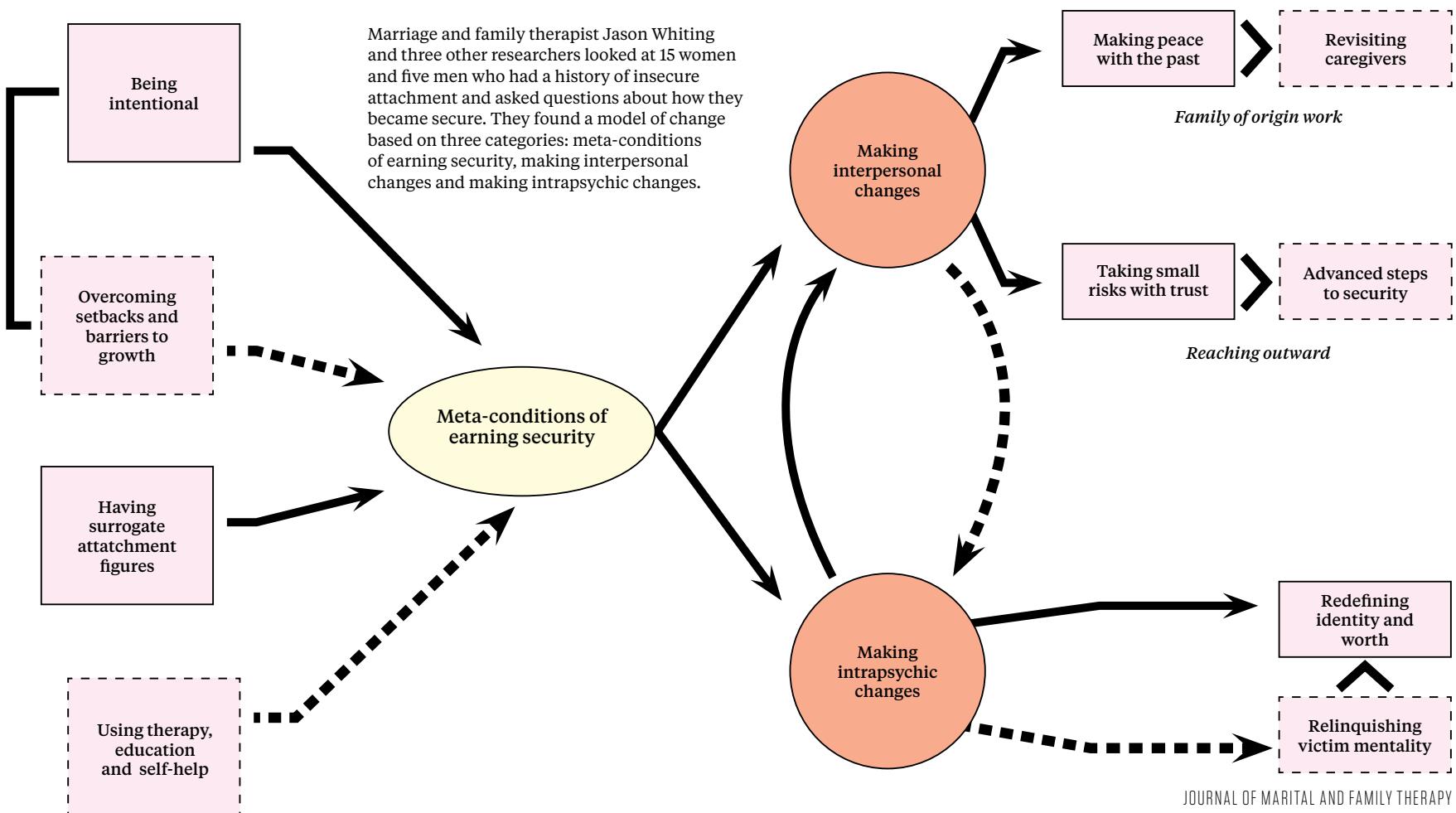
in research all the time, he said. For example, people with lots of romantic and sexual partners don't do as well because they are accumulating attachment insecurity across time.

"I think we have to be careful about how we give our hearts away as adults too," he said. "Attachment says — give your heart away carefully, be wise and then once you give your heart away, give it all, and give it to someone you can trust and you have a commitment with."

## How can someone become secure?

Whiting and three other researchers set out to find just that answer, creating a model of change to help people become secure. The study looked at 15 women and five men who had a self-reported history of attachment insecurity but showed evidence of earned security. They interviewed the participants and asked questions about their journeys to becoming more secure.

After analysis of each participant's background and experience of attachment change, the researchers found a model of change for becoming more secure based on three interrelated categories: meta-conditions of earning security, making interpersonal changes and making intrapsychic changes.



One condition to earning secure attachment the participants demonstrated was being intentional about the change, which is also something Whiting has noticed with his therapy clients. Recognizing behavior is a start to change, he said.

"If I see someone and they're saying 'I know I can get reactive, I know I can say mean things. I don't like that about myself. I recognize that that's not helpful. How do I become better?' Then that's the start," Whiting said.

"Relinquishing a victim mentality" was one of the intrapsychic changes participants made. It's empowering and helpful for someone to recognize they have the power to let go of resentments, Whiting said.

Interpersonal changes participants made included making peace with the past. This began with participants "changing their views, expectations and feelings toward their parents or primary childhood caregivers" according to the study. This leads to revisiting caregivers with a new lens.

One of the ways to look at caregivers with a new lens in therapy is asking a lot of questions about what caregivers may have gone through in their own growing up years. "It's just almost always the case that an unhealthy caregiver had their own unhealthy treatment of themselves," Whiting said.

"Exonerating" a parent means an individual puts themselves in their parents' shoes — letting them be a person rather than a figure to resent and blame, Whiting explained. This doesn't mean to allow someone to cause damage or be unhealthy, but rather to forgive and let go, maintaining boundaries at the same time.

## Surrogate attachment figures

Another way the participants became secure was by having "surrogate attachment figures." According to Whiting's study, these figures included adults who acted as parent figures, college mentors, friends, church communities, spouses and therapists.

Some people need those figures, Whiting said. If someone's mother, for example, isn't reassuring or helpful, it helps to find somebody who is.

"It's difficult, especially if there's been pretty serious abuse or neglect," Whiting said. He's done studies on kids in foster care and found that even when placed in therapy or in a foster

home with loving parents, those kids are often still going to struggle with believing they are lovable because they weren't treated that way.

Not every case is this extreme, but Whiting said it's always good to find other healthy relationships. An example of this is using romantic partners as a surrogate attachment figure and secure base.

Michaela, for example, hasn't struggled with any anxious attachment problems in a long time, and she thinks it was easy to transition to a secure attachment style because her relationship was a secure-anxious mix.

"I'm here to support her and everything. I don't feel worried about anything and I just make sure to understand her," Camren said.



MICHAELA HORN

Michaela and Camren Horn visit the Oakland California Temple.

The ability to become secure with help from someone who is already secure is a pattern in relationships. BYU student and marriage prep teaching assistant Nick Larsen had a similar growth experience. He had an anxious attachment style and became secure with the help of his girlfriend Alicia, who already had a secure attachment style.

"Having her example and working with the boundaries that we've set in our relationship have helped us grow in a way that has helped me overcome that anxiety," Larsen said. Through Alicia's commitment and patience and going to counseling for professional, psychological help, he's become securely attached.

The starting point in helping a partner becoming securely attached is knowing what side they're on — secure, anxious or avoidant — as those styles have different responses. For example, Larsen said his anxious

attachment meant he feared the relationship was ending if something was going wrong, whereas an avoidant person would close off and withdraw instead of being clingy.

"It's helpful if you're secure, because the clinginess or the avoidance is very taxing on the partner. And so taking time for yourself and making sure you're in a good place so that whenever your partner has those needs you can be there to meet them is another good starting point," Larsen said.

Larsen also advised establishing clear boundaries about personal space, being good about having vulnerable conversations, praying for patience and help to love one's partner, and being willing to just work things out both together and with professional help.

He and his girlfriend went to counseling last year together. Getting a professional perspective of what they should be doing in their daily lives to help with mental and emotional health was helpful.

Differentiating is also key. In a relationship with an anxious person, Larsen advised individuals to make sure the person knows that while they might have anxiety, they are not an anxious person — that's a big difference.

## Hope and improvement

Though it's sometimes challenging, Busby said with patience and time most people get a little more secure.

"This is adult attachment. And your childhood attachment matters, but it doesn't matter more than your adult relationships," he said. Even if someone came from a bad environment as a child, they can have trusting relationships as an adult and aren't "doomed" for the rest of their lives to be anxious or avoidant.

"You can earn attachment as an adult even if you didn't have it from childhood," Busby said. "That's pretty hopeful stuff in my opinion."

Larsen also emphasized the improvement factor in attachment theory as observed in his personal experience — being on the anxious, "process" side and now the more secure side with one person. "It's been wonderful to grow together in that way," he said, emphasizing hope that people can change and have healthy, happy relationships.

"You really can learn to be secure and have healthy and happy relationships before, during and after the process of that change."

# Q&A on FAITH with

Interviewed by Ingrid Sagers

*Questions and responses have been lightly edited for clarity.*

**Q** *Sunni, please tell me about yourself.*

**A** I am Diné (Navajo) and I grew up on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. I am majoring in political science with a minor in American Indian studies and legal studies. My mom is a convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was baptized when she was a young girl on the Navajo reservation. She then participated in the church's Placement Program where she went to live with an LDS family in California. My dad was not a member of any religion. However, he was spiritual, and he practiced his Navajo traditions. I grew up with a little bit of both teachings. Some of my hobbies include running, dancing, reading Indigenous literature, attending powwows and consuming aesthetically pleasing drinks

**Q** *Your Native American heritage is very important to you; how does your faith strengthen your connection to your culture?*

**A** My faith strengthens my connection to my culture by emphasizing the importance of family, keeping my body and surroundings sacred, and centering my life on the Creator.

**Q** *What are a couple of things other people can do to better understand the faith and traditions of Native Americans?*

**A** Before I speak on this, I would like to disclaim that I am not a spokesperson for all Native people. As a Diné woman, I can only speak from my experiences and upbringings. That being said, there are two things I would suggest other people can do to better understand the faith and traditions of Native Americans. First, appreciate us for our unique traditions and cultures. Don't assume that we are all the same. It's a common misconception that all Native people share the same beliefs and traditions. There are, presently, 574 federally recognized tribes with members from all different kinds of backgrounds and upbringings. Second, I have observed and been taught that Indigenous people are very spiritual

# SUNNI BEGAY

people. Navajo people believe that there is spirit in every living thing. We have a strong connection to the land, or Mother Earth, and we have been taught to live in harmony with it. It provides us with all that we need to live like water, food, and shelter. We must care for it as it cares for us.

**Q** *How has attending BYU impacted your personal faith?*

**A** BYU is unique because it emphasizes spiritual growth in all aspects of a



**Sunni poses in a field wearing traditional clothing**

college education. Getting a college degree as a first-generation student is challenging but I am constantly spiritually uplifted from classes, peers and activities on campus. I'm glad I have those reminders because it keeps

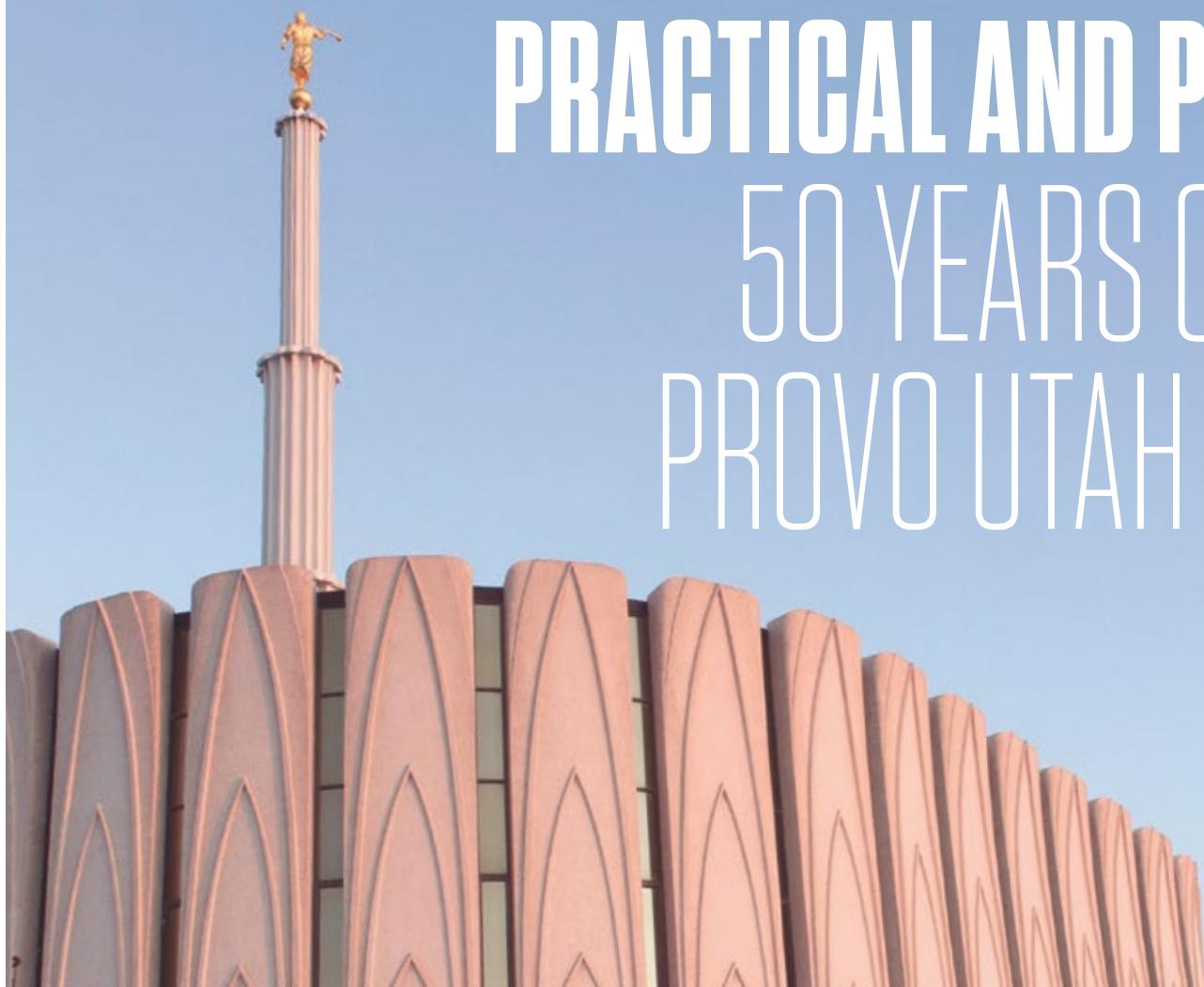
me going when I doubt myself and I am sure about giving up. There are a lot of ups and downs (a lot of downs it feels like) we will all experience in college but being reminded of my purpose in life and who

I am keeps me grounded. It's hard to not let superficial things like grades and resumes define my worth. But since I have tried to center my strength and faith in Jesus Christ, it's allowed me to recognize my true potential and see the good I must share with the world.

**Q** *What is an accomplishment you're proud of?*

**A** I am proud that I am about to get my degree. I am finishing up a class now and then I get to join 14.5 percent of the Native population who have earned their undergraduate degrees. I am not sure I could have made it here without the help of my family, mentors, church and friends. It was not easy, and I cried a lot but I'm glad I stuck it out.

SUNNI BEGAY



# PRACTICAL AND PRODUCTIVE: 50 YEARS OF THE PROVO UTAH TEMPLE

CAROLINE CLARK

By Allie Richard

Richard Cowan sat in the newly built Provo Temple, listening to the angelic sound of a choir singing the “Hosanna Anthem.” When the signal came for the congregation to join in singing “The Spirit of God,” he looked around to see others, like him, too choked up to sing.

“It wasn’t until we got outside that any of us really felt like talking,” Cowan said of the dedicatory session. “It was just such an overwhelming, spiritual experience.”

The Provo Temple was dedicated in two sessions on Feb. 9, 1972. The dedicatory sessions were broadcast via closed-circuit TV to the Marriott Center and other campus buildings. In the dedicatory sessions, President Joseph Fielding Smith’s prayer was read by his first counselor, President Harold B. Lee. The end of the prayer eloquently explained the purpose of the Provo Temple:

“We humbly pray that thou wilt accept this edifice and pour out thy blessings upon it as a house to which thou wilt come and in which thy Spirit will direct all that is done, that it

may be accepted unto thee. Let thy Spirit and blessings attend and guide all who officiate herein, that a feeling of holiness will prevail in every room of this, thy holy house. May all who enter have clean hands and pure hearts, and may they be built up in their faith and depart with a feeling of peace and praising thy holy name.”

Cowan is a co-author of the book “Provo’s Two Temples,” which traces the history of the Provo and Provo City Center temples. He attended the groundbreaking and dedication of the Provo Temple while serving as a stake president and working as a BYU religion professor.

The temple’s single spire, originally gold, rose out of the center of the round building. Cowan said many people believed the temple structure symbolized a pillar of fire rising out of a cloud. The spire was painted white after a statue of angel Moroni was placed on top in 2003.

As the temple reaches its 50-year anniversary, Cowan reflected on its importance to Provo residents, missionaries in the MTC, and

BYU students. Cowan said the Provo Temple “set the pace” as the temple that performed more ordinances than any other, at least up until the Mount Timpanogos Temple opened in 1996. He called the Provo Temple a “spiritual heart of the community.”

President Russell M. Nelson announced plans to reconstruct the temple in the October 2021 General Conference. Cowan estimated that the reconstruction will begin in fall 2023, after the completion of the Orem Temple. “We want to have a local temple available where the missionaries and BYU students and others can go,” Cowan said.

Provo Temple worker Ann Calder is one of many community members impacted by the 50-year-old building. She said she loves working at the temple because of the wonderful people.

“There’s a wonderful spirit and there’s so much to learn,” she said.

Despite some Provo community members’ wishes to preserve the original temple structure, Calder said she trusts the plan for reconstruction.



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*The rendering released in 1968 by the First Presidency showing the initial design of the Provo Temple.*

**Aug. 14, 1967** At a meeting with the 28 stake presidencies in the area, Presidents Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner, counselors in the First Presidency, announced plans to build a temple in Provo. President Tanner told the attendees that in 1966, 52% of all temple work was performed in the Salt Lake, Logan and Manti temples. At an afternoon meeting in Ogden the First Presidency announced plans to build a similarly designed temple there.

**Oct. 30, 1967** Church architect Emil B. Fetzer and Church Building Committee Vice-chairman Fred A. Baker discussed the flow of patrons and possible plans for the temples on an overnight flight to

London. Fetzer described a temple with recommend desk, foyer and offices on the first floor, chapel and sealing rooms on the second and six ordinance rooms surrounding the celestial room on the third.

**Jan. 24, 1968** Fetzer presented his plan for the Provo and Ogden temples to the First Presidency. Fetzer wrote in his memoirs he first explained the interior layout of the temples. Finally, he placed a rendering of the exterior on an easel. Fetzer wrote he heard a "very audible and distinct gasp."

"I did not know what they expected to see," he wrote, "but this was not it." After a counselor in the First Presidency asked President McKay if he found the design offensive, President McKay responded, "No! I like it very much." The design was approved.

**August 1969** Ben E. Lewis, chairman of the fundraising committee, reported in the Church News that members in the temple district stakes had contributed more than the assessed one million dollars for the temple's construction.

**Sept. 15, 1969** More than 12,000 people including 11 general authorities gather for the groundbreaking ceremonies.

**Jan. 8, 1970** President David O. McKay, ninth president of the Church passed away at 96.

**May 21, 1971** With more than 6,000 spectators and 19 General Authorities watching, the new First Presidency (President Joseph Fielding Smith with counselors President Harold B. Lee and President



L. TOM PERRY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*First Presidency counselors President Hugh B. Brown and President Joseph Fielding Smith and Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Quorum of the Twelve turn the first shovelfuls at the Provo Temple groundbreaking. It may be President N. Eldon Tanner, second counselor in the First Presidency whose back is toward the camera.*



L. TOM PERRY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*The cornerstone laying ceremony on the east side of the Provo Temple.*

N. Eldon Tanner) laid the cornerstone of the temple. Temple construction continued on the inside.

**Jan. 10-29, 1972** The public was invited to an open house to view the completed temple. The Church News reported that more than 246,000 visitors attended.

**Feb. 9, 1972** The Provo Temple was dedicated in two sessions. Approximately 74,000 members attended in the temple and via closed-circuit television to nine buildings on the BYU campus including the Marriott Center, Smith Fieldhouse, Joseph Smith Building and Harris Fine Arts Center. President Joseph Fielding Smith prepared the dedicatory prayer and asked President Harold B. Lee to read the prayer for the 15th operating temple in the Church.

The prayer included the petition to "let that great temple of learning, the Brigham Young University, and all that is associated with it ... be prospered to the full. Let thy enlightening power rest upon those who teach and those who are taught, that they may 'seek learning, even by study and also by faith.' ... May those who teach and study in all academic fields have their souls enlightened with spiritual knowledge so they will turn to thy house for blessings and knowledge and learning that surpass all that may be found elsewhere."



L. TOM PERRY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*The Provo Temple with the original gold spire and no Moroni statue.*



L. TOM PERRY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*The Provo Utah Temple after the spire was painted white and the angel Moroni statue was added in 2003.*

**1997** The opening of the Mount Timpanogos Temple split the Provo Temple district. For the first time in 26 years, the Provo Temple was not the most productive in the Church.

**October 1999** The Church standardized the naming of temples. The Provo Temple is now officially referred to as the Provo Utah Temple.

**May 12, 2003** A statue of angel Moroni was added to the temple's spire. The initial rendering showed a statue on the spire, but President McKay preferred no statue. The spire was built with the structure to support one. While the crane was in place, the gold spire was painted white.

**Feb. 18, 2010** After announcing plans to renovate the Ogden Utah Temple, Temple Department Executive Director Elder William R. Walker of the First Quorum of the Seventy said there was no plan for a similar renovation of the Provo Utah Temple (Ogden's twin).

**March 25, 2020** The First Presidency closed all temples including Provo because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**May 11, 2020** The Provo Utah Temple was one of 17 temples to reopen for living sealing ordinances. The temple added all living ordinances on Aug. 17, 2020, proxy baptisms on April 26, 2021 and all proxy ordinances June 14, 2021.

**Oct. 3, 2021** At the conclusion of General Conference, President Russell M. Nelson announced plans to reconstruct the Provo Utah Temple after the Orem Utah Temple is dedicated and begins operation. No date was given for the reconstruction to begin.

**Nov. 24, 2021** The Church released a rendering of the reconstructed Provo Utah Temple. The



DECKER WESTENBERG

*The Provo Utah Temple in January 2022, with Provo, Utah Lake and Lake Mountain in the distance.*

Utah and Red Cliffs Utah temples. Square footage and interior details have not been released.

SOURCES: "PROVO'S TWO TEMPLES" BY RICHARD O. COWAN AND JUSTIN R. BRAY, 2015, BYU RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER; 1979 DESERET NEWS CHURCH ALMANAC; CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST NEWSROOM PRESS RELEASES AND RESOURCES,



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*The rendering of the new Provo Utah Temple released by the Church in November 2021.*

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