

# Mormon Blogs, Mormon Studies, and the Mormon Mind

*Patrick Q. Mason*

*Note: Earlier versions of this essay were delivered at the American Society of Church History Winter Meeting, held in Chicago in January 2012; and the Mormons and the Internet conference at Utah Valley University in March 2012.*

In 1971, African-American artist Gil Scott-Heron released a powerful political anthem called “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.” Forty years later, in Tahrir Square and Occupy Wall Street, the revolution was not only televised, but also blogged, Facebooked, YouTubed, and tweeted. The phenomenon of Mormon-authored, Mormon-themed blogs—collectively known as the “blogger-nacle”—may not properly constitute a revolution in Mormonism, but it has undoubtedly changed both the cultural landscape and the broader conversation both within and about Mormonism. Rather than focusing on the entire digital landscape of the blogger-nacle and its meaning and impact, here I will narrow my focus to consider some of the intersections of Mormon blogs with the emergent academic field of Mormon studies, and then offer some reflections on what we might call the “Mormon mind” in the context of modern secularity. Even more specifically, this study con-

---

\*The twelfth annual UVU Mormon Studies Conference, centered on the theme of “Mormonism and the Internet,” was held March 29–30, 2012, at the Utah Valley University campus in Orem.

centrates on the experiences of current graduate students who will help constitute the next generation of Mormon academics. By way of terminology, I will refer interchangeably to the “blogger-nacle” and “the blogs,” keeping in mind that my subject of study is limited to Mormon-themed, Mormon-authored blogs, especially those that aim to deliver intellectual content rather than (or often in addition to) personal or devotional reflections.

My observations are based on an online survey and questionnaire I conducted in late November and early December 2011. The survey was posted on four major Mormon blogs—*By Common Consent*, *Faith Promoting Rumor*, *Juvenile Instructor*, and *Times and Seasons*—and was linked to from other blogs and Internet sites. The questionnaire specifically requested the participation of “current graduate students (full or part-time) who are also members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or otherwise interested in the field of Mormon studies.”<sup>1</sup> I did not define “Mormon studies,” nor try to independently verify the graduate student status of the respondents. My sample is neither random nor representative—I simply collected anonymous responses from anyone who volunteered. In all, I received 113 responses, with male respondents outnumbering females more than three to one (86 to 27). As one would expect for a survey of graduate students, the vast majority fell in their late 20s and early 30s, though there was a wide range of ages included in the sample.

When asked to list the blogs they regularly read, the 113 respondents provided 86 distinct answers, demonstrating the astonishing breadth in the world of Mormon blogging, even excluding personal and devotional blogs. This wide variety also suggests a fractured online community, as 68 of the 86 blogs were mentioned by five respondents or less. Only five blogs received more than twenty total mentions; all of them are group blogs: *Faith Promoting Rumor* was listed by 32 of 113 respondents (28%), *Juvenile Instructor* by 38 (34%), *Feminist Mormon Housewives* by 41 (36%), *Times and Seasons* by 66 (58%), and *By Common Consent* by 94 (83%).<sup>2</sup> I should underscore that my sample consisted of an unrepresentative, self-selecting group of graduate students, so we cannot make any significant inferences about the broader Mormon blogging community or readership from these statistics. For instance, the substance and tone of *Faith Promoting Rumor* and *Ju-*

*venile Instructor* would generally be more attractive to graduate students (especially those in the humanities) than to a broader reading public. On the other hand, the readership of the three blogs receiving the most votes—*By Common Consent*, *Times and Seasons*, and *Feminist Mormon Housewives*—probably cuts across the board, due to their diversified content and popular authors. Although most blogs keep statistics close to the vest, key bloggers at *By Common Consent* told me that in 2011 they had over two million visitors, requiring a vastly broader viewership than merely the 94 respondents who listed it in my survey.

Beyond simply asking what people were reading, I included a series of questions about what that reading meant to them. When asked what their main reasons were for participating on the blogs, whether as active writers, commenters, or more passive readers, most respondents pointed to the blogs as a space that filled otherwise unfulfilled needs, usually in the form of a community where they could explore the relationship between their spiritual and intellectual selves. Often feeling isolated because of their intellectual orientation within a formal congregational structure and culture that values consensus and surety over critique and questioning, most of the respondents said that the blogs acted as a lifeline allowing them to bridge the life of the mind and the spirit and thus stay integrally connected to Mormonism within an intellectual framework. As one respondent wrote, the blogs serve as “something of a safety valve to keep my sanity; to keep me from being too cynical.”<sup>3</sup> Another reflected that the blogs “have shown me a place where the intellectual and devotional realms can intersect. . . . I continue to read these blogs so that I can see what this sort of intersection looks like in practice, and hopefully bring it into my own practice.” A related response was that the blogs allowed their readers, most of whom are Latter-day Saints, to join in a community of individuals with similar attitudes, interests, and outlooks—a process which many reported was difficult to do in most geographically defined LDS wards with a generally conservative membership. One respondent said that he specifically approached the blogs “looking for like-minded Latter-day Saints”; another noted that it was “helpful to have an outlet where I can find others with similar views.” Readers used various terms to describe the qualities of the community they were seeking for: “in-

tellectual,” “progressive,” “interesting,” “liberal,” “challenging,” “meaningful,” or “discussing the ‘hard’ questions.” What seems to emerge from this conglomerate profile is the desire for a community within a community, predicated on a shared sense that the institutional Church is not fulfilling all the spiritual or intellectual needs of at least this segment of its membership.

The blogs represent, and to some degree validate and perpetuate, heterogeneity within the Mormon community. One respondent wrote that they “thicken the narratives of what it means to be an active committed member of the LDS Church”; another said that they “have opened up a space for alternative kinds of Mormon study, faith, and practice.” The possible downside of this, as some writers pointed out, is balkanization within a religious community that prizes unity. One respondent warned that the blogs create “micro-communities that self-select, and then self-reinforce”; another suspected that they “have a polarizing impact . . . because now everyone can find support for his or her ideas about religion outside the structured organization.” Others also expressed concerns about a growing “dichotomy between ‘Internet Mormons’ and ‘chapel Mormons.’” Although some blogs are specifically oriented toward those who have left active membership in the Church, are in the process of doing so, or who are otherwise “on the fence,” writers and commenters on the most widely read blogs generally express their fidelity to the institutional Church while embracing the alternative voluntary community mediated on the bloggernacle.

What is the relationship between the blogs and Mormon studies? How are they impacting the training of the next generation of LDS academics, not just in Mormon studies but in all fields? One of the striking (but perhaps not surprising) findings of my survey was that the vast majority of the graduate students reading the blogs are *not* specifically engaged in original research in Mormon studies, nor have they received any formal academic training in the field; this would presumably be even more true for the general blog readership. Of the 88 respondents who listed their degree program, only 16 are in fields that are typical cognates of Mormon studies (American history, religious studies, or theology).<sup>4</sup> Other degree programs ranged from Chinese history to Spanish literature, domestic violence policy to speech language

pathology, atmospheric sciences to civil engineering, and also a number of JDs and MBAs. On the question of whether they had ever formally studied Mormonism in a university setting, many noted that they had taken religion classes at one of the Brigham Young University or LDS Institute of Religion campuses, but they typically discounted that instruction as primarily devotional rather than academic. There was some correlation between those who have at least some Mormon studies training and those currently engaged in original scholarly research, although it was not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence.

When asked about the relationship of their participation on the blogs to their formal graduate studies, in whatever field they were pursuing, one writer bluntly captured the majority response: "It serves as a distraction when I should be studying metallurgy." A number of respondents rather sheepishly admitted that they consciously concealed their participation on the blogs from their faculty advisors. Some noted that this was not just to avoid the image of being distracted from their formal studies, but also to dodge any suspicion that might come upon them in academic circles if their faith commitments were fully revealed. One even said that his faculty advisors had told him to "remain somewhat distant from the bloggernacle" so as not to be tainted or pigeonholed on the job market.

A number of others, however, had just the opposite experience. One respondent noted that "the blogs help me come to articulate Mormon concepts, history and engagement in more secular ways I can [then] explain to my classmates and professors." This use of the blogs to help construct a second-order discourse about Mormonism is particularly intriguing, especially given that the vast majority of the discussion on the blogs is by Mormons and at least implicitly for Mormons. A number of respondents said that conversations on the blogs provide concepts and framing devices that were helpful in their research on non-Mormon topics. For those respondents who are engaged in Mormon studies scholarship, the blogs provide a scholarly community that complements and actively supports their research and writing—"we regularly hit each other up for bibliographical tips, help on primary sources, and sometimes even proofreading." This was particularly important for students in foreign countries who read

the blogs “as an access point to LDS opinion, culture, theology and general lifestyle,” and for the handful of non-LDS respondents studying Mormonism who use the blogs to get a better “feel” for distinctive Mormon discourse, to build networks with LDS scholars and interlocutors, and for general fact-checking; one non-LDS respondent remarked that he used the blogs “to make sure I don’t make too many boneheaded mistakes.”<sup>5</sup>

When asked specifically what effect the blogs had on Mormon studies, most responses ranged from warm to rapturous. In addition to the aforementioned creation of spiritual and intellectual community, a number of respondents were enthusiastic about the bloggernacle’s democratizing effect on Mormon studies. Blogs allow for immediate dissemination of ideas as well as for publicizing new work being published in traditional print venues, thus creating a multi-tiered platform for those interested in engaging with Mormon history, ideas, belief, and culture. The blogs also provide a forum for writers to “field test among the masses.” As one respondent put it, “the blogs are to research and academia as commercial- and consumer-grade products are to scientific research.” The nature of the online community on most blogs forces writers to think beyond a purely academic audience, so they must translate their ideas into readily accessible language. Authors must “be better prepared to share their research with general members,” thus helping “[close] the distance between academia and the pews.” A number of respondents thought the blogs were especially important as an independent and thus safe space for exploring ideas not generally discussed in Church meetings or in correlated and devotional church publications. In this way, the bloggernacle has helped secure the position of Mormon studies “firmly outside the control of Church leaders” and made it more difficult for the institutional Church “to control and clamp down on dissenting voices.” All of this creates a space where “grassroots scholarship” can thrive and “a new generation of Mormon scholars” can be trained. Some respondents see the blogs not just as a vehicle and platform for Mormon studies but also as an important text to be studied. Many said that the blogs constitute an important primary source that will be drawn upon by future researchers as a record of “what ‘we’ thought in 2011.”

A vocal minority of respondents was more skeptical, even crit-

ical, about the impact of the blogs on Mormon studies. One avenue for this critique was through a gender lens. A few respondents reported what they saw as an overarching patriarchy in many segments of the bloggernacle, referring to it as “a kind of ‘old boys’ club.” One writer said, “I think that it tends to be very male-dominated, and women continue to be not taken seriously, especially when they write from experience rather than from a scholarly perspective.” If the unbalanced gender ratio among my survey respondents is at all indicative (76% of respondents were male), it suggests that there are more Mormon men than Mormon women in graduate school, or reading these particular blogs, or both.<sup>6</sup> While each of the major Mormon blogs has outstanding and highly respected women writers, even a cursory scan of daily posts and responses suggests that most of these well-trafficked blogs are disproportionately if not dominantly male. A lopsided gender mix does not necessarily equate with patriarchy, but it is a red flag for further consideration. Of course, women are hardly invisible in the bloggernacle, as a number of widely-read and well-regarded blogs, such as *Feminist Mormon Housewives* and *The Exponent*, are almost exclusively the preserve of women. Some respondents asserted that the blogs have “unquestionably strengthened feminism” among their readers. None remarked that the predominantly female blogs should feature more male writers. A gendered critique of the bloggernacle opens space for future research—a systematic analysis of the gendered nature of participation on the blogs would provide clues to masculine and feminine discourse, performance, and ways of knowing in contemporary Mormonism.<sup>7</sup>

Another complaint was that the blogs diluted, rather than enhanced, the quality of Mormon studies scholarship. One respondent wrote that with a few notable exceptions, “the blogs have turned Mormon Studies into even more of an echo chamber . . . more interested in entertaining readers than in actually dealing with the paramount issues facing Mormon Studies.” Other critics wrote that most activity on the blogs qualified as little more than “glorified navel-gazing.” Still others lamented the quality of scholarship on the blogs, complaining that the bloggernacle “creates pseudo-scholars”; one dismissed the content on the blogs as “pretty worthless” and “rather superficial.” One writer contrast-

ed his own professional field of engineering and observed, “it’s too easy for amateurs to become convinced they are experts [in Mormon studies]. . . . I have to wonder if we have too many arm-chair Mormon experts and not enough trained professionals.” In that vein, another respondent argued that the blogs tilt discursive authority toward “younger scholars,” even those in the early stages of their education. While this gives the blogs “a dynamic feel,” the writer feared it also lent “a sense of immaturity” to the discussion, as “ideas are sometimes aired too early.” While many respondents were convinced that the blogs facilitated greater output of Mormon studies scholarship through collaboration, encouragement, and shared ideas, others were not so sure. Acknowledging instances when the blogs have seeded scholarly projects, some worried that all the effort spent by graduate students on the blogs took time and energy away from the rigorous demands of professional-level research and publication. One writer was concerned that the blogs “had the negative (and entirely unintended) effect of reducing the attention paid to other scholarly work” because people “will be satisfied with the research to which [the blogs] link.” Indeed, some suggested that the blogs have too much influence, at least among their dedicated readers, in the sense that they become a substitute for published research for many readers and “are becoming an authority of sorts that needs to be somewhat appealed to,” even to the point, in one respondent’s view, that “if an idea doesn’t gain traction amongst the blogs than it might as well have been unthought.”

No doubt many of these critiques, from questions about the gendered nature of the blogs to their possible distraction from the time-honored (if somewhat elitist) tradition of high-quality peer-reviewed scholarship, are valid. To some degree, this is all part of a broader conversation about the nature of knowledge and community in the digital age, a conversation that includes but far transcends Mormonism and the Mormon blogs. Some of the challenges of the information revolution for traditional scholarship were recently articulated by Samuel Brown, who as a medical researcher, physician, blogger, and university press-published author personifies the new frontier of research and writing opportunities opening up beyond the professional, full-time academy: “Whose voice will be heard? What standards will regulate access



to the accepted corpus of Mormon [studies]? What is a credential? What do we make of chemists and mathematicians and linguists and attorneys who seek to contribute both in the more traditional and in the more current methods of Mormon [studies]?”<sup>8</sup>

The hierarchical, credential-obsessed world of the academy is still coming to grips with the democratizing, flattening nature of the Internet. But the simple fact is that no single work of published Mormon scholarship—and perhaps not even the composite of all published Mormon scholarship—will ever enjoy over two million visitors in a single year, as *By Common Consent* did in 2011. The bloggernacle, though less than a decade old, has had and will continue to exert significant influence not just on the interior intellectual and spiritual landscapes of its readers but also on the direction and output of the growing field of Mormon studies, many of whose practitioners and apprentices are anxiously engaged in blogging. We have to anticipate that the trend will only accelerate. Each medium of scholarship—the classroom, the periodical, the book, the blog—has its advantages and disadvantages, its strengths and weaknesses. If all these media are here to stay, then Mormon studies will do well to harness their complementarities and, while honestly acknowledging their respective liabilities, also capitalize on their unique contributions in moving the field forward by any and all means available.

A significant question all of this raises is not just what the blogs do for Mormon studies—though that is important—but what it all means for what we might call the Mormon mind. Emerging from most of my survey respondents whose graduate work is not directly related to Mormon studies was a practical notion of separate intellectual spheres. As one noted, “in reality I compartmentalize my interest in Mormon blogs pretty well from my formal graduate studies.” Another confessed, “One side effect of blog participation is that I have no desire to do Mormon themed work in my field. I have realized that for my sanity and spiritual well-being my professional life and Mormon life are best kept separate.” One respondent acknowledged that participating on the blogs helped her “to be a better writer and aid in being a critical thinker,” but otherwise did not contribute substantively to her graduate studies. Another, reflecting on the link between the blogs and his graduate studies, simply stated, “There is no mean-

ingful relationship between the two.” For others the wall of separation was not so high and impenetrable, but the relationship between their graduate work and the blogs was essentially unidirectional. As one respondent wrote, “what I study does have implications for what I think about Mormonism. I blog as a way of working out . . . how religious studies, gender studies, critical theory, biblical hermeneutics, etc., affect my understanding of what Mormonism is, was, and can be.” Another put it even more directly: “My studies influence what I write on my blogs more than the blogs dictate what I study.”

This bifurcation between the respondents’ Mormon and non-Mormon intellectual selves, lived out in the blogs and graduate school, respectively, belies the notion often propagated by Brigham Young and others that Mormonism “embraces all truth that is revealed and that is unrevealed, whether religious, political, scientific, or philosophical,” and thus approximates a theory of everything.<sup>9</sup> Instead, we can sense a Mormon corollary to historian Mark Noll’s famous opening line to his book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*: “The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind.” Noll proceeded to stick the pin halfway back into the grenade by acknowledging that of course there are plenty of highly intelligent evangelicals, but he claimed that “modern evangelicals have not pursued comprehensive thinking under God or sought a mind shaped to its furthest reaches by Christian perspectives.” What he pined for, nearly twenty years ago, was greater “effort to think like a Christian—to think within a specifically Christian framework—across the whole spectrum of modern learning, including economics and political science, literary criticism and imaginative writing, historical inquiry and philosophical studies, linguistics and the history of science, social theory and the arts.”<sup>10</sup>

To appropriate Noll’s question, what would it mean to think like a Mormon? Certainly, some Mormon bloggers and graduate students have made forays in precisely the direction of considering what a “Mormon mind” would look like, and speculating on its implications for the full range of human thought and endeavor. One survey respondent intriguingly asserted, “My spirituality, and specifically my religiosity, is integral to my theory of psychology and how I approach therapy with my clients. How I view

my field (psychotherapy) is directly impacted by what I read on these blogs.” Another respondent affirmed that his participation on the blogs and his graduate work (not in Mormon studies) were “very closely integrated.” But this sort of integrated approach proved the rare exception to the rule. If the responses to my questionnaire can be taken as any kind of measuring stick, it must be said that the general sensibility among Mormon graduate students is that religious (and specifically Mormon) ways of knowing and being should be, or at least simply are, more or less sealed off from secular ways of knowing. What hath Mormonism to do with metallurgy? For that matter, what hath a Mormon mind to do with Mormon studies?

One of the hallmark characteristics of the secular modernity borne by the Western Enlightenment is the differentiation of knowledge. To some degree we are the fortunate victims of an explosion of information in recent centuries (and especially the last one). Even more so than in earlier ages, it is simply impossible for any one person to comprehend, let alone master, the sum of all accumulated knowledge. The university was designed to be the collective repository of all knowledge, but even that is no longer feasible in terms of any one institution. Disciplinary specialization has added necessary and productive depth at the cost of unifying breadth. We often admire Newton for his physics but judge his alchemy and occult studies to be quaint if not suspect. Such a judgment is really an articulation of a late modern worldview that makes distinctions between science and superstition (or religion and magic) rather than acknowledging Newton’s early modern (or even premodern) notion of the unity of all knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

This unity of knowledge characterizes much of the nineteenth-century Mormon worldview, classically formulated in a September 1830 revelation: “For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal. . . . Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:31, 34). Nineteenth-century Mormons (and Protestants, and Muslims, and others) could read prophecy as science and history, and vice versa. It was not that they did not recognize diverse ways of knowing and being—certainly they understood that digging an irrigation ditch,

engineering the Salt Lake Temple, and preaching the gospel required different skill sets. They simply would not have recognized a late modern distinction between ditch digging as inherently secular, proselytizing as only spiritual, and building a religious edifice as something of both.

If Mormonism is, as its nineteenth-century proponents and prophets claimed it to be, a totalizing, comprehensive worldview that resists the differentiation of knowledge characteristic of secular Enlightenment modernity, then its adherents, regardless of their chosen professions, might search for ways to integrate in more robust fashion the different sources and ways of knowing that are, for the most part, currently segregated in their minds—and certainly in most segments of the academy. This is more complicated than we might assume at first blush, since secularity is the very air we breathe in the late modern (or postmodern) West. We are all deeply secular, to the degree that we buy into and perpetuate a modern paradigm of the differentiation of religious and other forms of knowledge and authority. To proceed along any other lines is perhaps the most countercultural thing that a modern person can do—hence the existential danger of fundamentalism in late modernity. An exclusively Mormon mind (or a Christian mind, or a Muslim mind) thus stands in inherent conflict with a modern mind. Scriptures that might be invoked to imply a rapprochement—for instance, “the glory of God is intelligence” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:36)—are actually expressions of a premodern unity that by definition stands in contrast to the differentiation that is characteristic of modern ways of knowing.<sup>12</sup>

The most fundamental conclusion that may be drawn from my survey data is that one does not have to choose between being secular and being Mormon. My graduate student respondents demonstrated that they more or less comfortably reside in both epistemic communities every day. This is presumably true of virtually all Mormons, even those not engaged in postgraduate study and pursuing academic careers. Recognizing the cohabitation of the Mormon mind and the secular mind helps confirm what many scholars have postulated in recent years: that even if functional and epistemological secularity in many ways define the modern condition, there are actually multiple—and often con-

tending—ways of being modern. What is needed is not the triumph of the Mormon mind over the secular, but a fuller articulation and understanding of what it means for the two to be integrated. If the blogs resist the temptation to pit the Mormon versus the secular and explore instead what it means for modern Mormons to be both, then perhaps they will have proven to be revolutionary after all.

### Notes

1. The survey was called “The impact of blogging on Mormon studies.” It was originally posted online on November 29, 2011. The survey asked participants to respond to twelve questions in short-answer form, and then to identify themselves by gender, age, and the graduate program they were currently enrolled in. They could include their name and e-mail address for follow-up contact, but were not required to do so, and I guaranteed to preserve all respondents’ anonymity in any presentations or publications using the data from the survey. The project received “exempt” status from the Institutional Review Board at Claremont Graduate University.

2. There could be a strong sample bias here, since the blogs that I posted the survey on were the ones that came back with the greatest number of professed readers. I deliberately selected the venues for posting the survey based on what I knew to be the most likely places to attract the highest number of responses.

3. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes in this article are compiled from responses to my online survey.

4. This number is necessarily a broad approximation, because people could be engaged in Mormon studies from other fields such as political science, anthropology, or philosophy, or they could be avoiding Mormon studies altogether within religious studies or American history.

5. This has been the experience of my non-LDS teaching assistant and many of the non-LDS students in my Mormon studies courses at Claremont Graduate University. They find reading blogs an invaluable way to go beyond official and scholarly discourse to feel the pulse of contemporary Mormonism. I remind them that the blogs do not represent the entirety of the Latter-day Saint community but agree that they can be helpful in revealing the breadth and depth of current debates within certain segments of Mormonism. For this reason the bloggernacle can be an important resource for students—undergraduate and graduate, LDS and non-LDS—seeking to get oriented to the often-confusing world(s) of Mormonism.

6. It is possible the disproportionately high male response rate simply represents a statistical anomaly.

7. An earlier iteration of this paragraph, as delivered in a conference paper, inspired a blog post on *By Common Consent* specifically taking up the question of patriarchy on the bloggernacle. mmiles, "Mormon Blogging and the Good Ole Boys' Club," *By Common Consent*, February 1, 2012, <http://bycommonconsent.com/2012/02/01/mormon-blogging-and-the-good-ole-boys-club/> (last accessed May 30, 2012). The post precipitated a lively debate with 226 responses before being closed five days later.

8. Samuel M. Brown, "Canon: Open, Closed, Evolving." Review of *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restrain in Early America*, by David F. Holland. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44 no. 4 (Winter 2011): 202.

9. Brigham Young, "Eternal Punishment - 'Mormonism' - &c.," *Journal of Discourses* vol. 9 (Liverpool: George Q. Cannon), 149. More contemporarily, Howard W. Hunter observed, "With God our Heavenly Father, all truth, wherever found or however apprehended, is circumscribed into one great whole. Ultimately, there are no contradictions, no quarrels, no inscrutable paradoxes, no mysteries." "President's Formal Charge of Responsibility," *LDS Church News*, November 26, 1994.

10. Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 3-4. See also Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011).

11. In Newton's day, the tools of "science" were more or less limited to mechanical physics. A recognizably scientific field of chemistry would not develop for another century or so, meaning that for Newton and his colleagues, alchemy *was* chemistry. Thanks to Richard Haglund for this insight.

12. My characterization here is especially applicable from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. It would be less true for those in certain areas of the sciences, such as unified field theory, who continue to search for a "theory of everything." Ironically, this puts fundamentalists and (some) scientists closer together than either camp would probably prefer or admit.