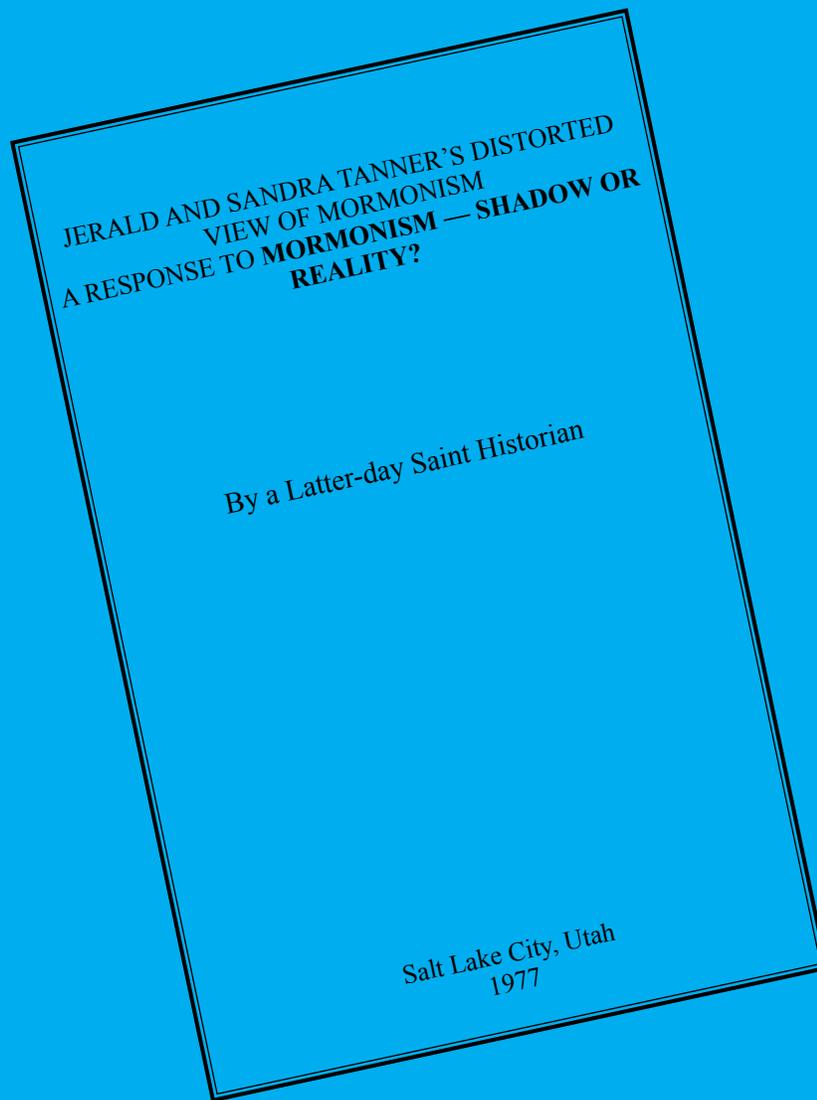


Sample

ANSWERING DR. CLANDESTINE

A Response to the Anonymous
LDS Historian



Enlarged
Edition

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

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February 1978

Enlarged in November 1978

Includes an Article by Wesley P. Walters

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Answering Dr. Clandestine: A Response to the Anonymous LDS Historian

The following is written in reply to the pamphlet, *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* by a Latter-day Saint Historian.

The first thing that we notice concerning this rebuttal to *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* is that it is written anonymously. Now in view of the serious charges which the writer makes we feel that he should come forth and identify himself. He should not only reveal who he is, but he should be willing to meet us in a public debate. After all, in a revelation given by Joseph Smith the Mormon people are exhorted to “confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 71:7).

“FROM AMBUSH”

We feel that there are probably times when a person is justified in remaining anonymous. In the present situation, however, we can see no excuse for the author to keep his identity hidden from the public. We do not believe that most Mormons would approve of such a cowardly method of attack. In 1903, the noted Mormon historian B. H. Roberts publicly condemned an adversary for remaining anonymous:

Editor *Salt Lake Tribune*: — . . . when the challenge was accepted, the courtesy of debate would certainly require that the acceptance of the challenge should be *otherwise than from ambush*. I mean that I am entitled to know the name of my opponent, that I may judge somewhat of his character and standing. And why should the gentleman remain in cog? Is he ashamed to be known as engaging in such a discussion? Or is it a precaution he takes so that if his argument does not rise to the expectation of his friends, he may remain unknown behind the mystery of a single initial. If the first supposition be true, it is a difficulty he could easily have avoided; if the second suggestion be the true reason for his remaining unknown he is to be commended for his cunning. I need say nothing of his courage. (*Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, Salt Lake City, 1907, vol. 1, page 328)

Like B. H. Roberts, we feel that any challenge to our work “should be otherwise than from ambush.” Is the author of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism* “ashamed to be known as engaging in such a discussion? Or is it a precaution he takes so that if his argument does not rise to the expectation of his friends, he may remain unknown . . .”

A COVER-UP

If the reader will look carefully at the front of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism*, he will find that more than the name of the author is missing. A careful examination shows that no publisher is given. This is certainly a very strange pamphlet! It is supposed to be a reproduction of a letter, yet if the reader will look at page one he will find that the name of the person who received the letter has been deleted. Moreover, the name of the writer has likewise been deleted on page 63. Further examination of the Introduction reveals that the booklet “has not been copyrighted, so that it can be reproduced and distributed freely by others, if they feel that the contents have value.” While this outwardly seems like a generous offer, the question arises as to whether this is another attempt to cover-up the identity of the author. A name would have to be given to obtain a copyright.

Although these details are interesting, when we try to trace the source of the pamphlet we find a cover-up that reminds us of the Watergate episode. (The reader will remember that a great deal of literature was printed anonymously by some of Nixon's supporters. In one case a bogus letter was published which destroyed the candidacy of Senator Edmund Muskie. In the Senate investigation of Watergate and the subsequent investigation of the CIA, the public became aware of the methods used by undercover agents. We learned of clandestine meetings where material or money changed hands, of agents working under assumed names and of post office boxes being rented to carry on ultra-secret operations. Some of those involved in this work talked of “deniability”—i.e., the idea that the “enemy” must not be able to trace back the true source of an operation directed against him.)

When we tried to trace the source of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism*, we found that the whole matter had all the earmarks of an intelligence operation mounted by the CIA or the KGB. “Deniability” seemed to be the name of the game.

It was obvious that Zion Bookstore was the distributor of the booklet. The name of the store might suggest that it is owned by the Church, but it is actually owned by Sam Weller. Although Mr. Weller has sold copies of our books for years, he has always been careful to keep them in such a secluded place that very few people find them. Wallace Turner made this observation in 1966:

There is no formal index of books which Mormons should not read. But there are books which every Mormon knows he should stay away from.

One of these is a fascinating biography of Joseph Smith called *No Man Knows My History*. . . . A copy was requested at the non-Mormon Zion's Bookstore in Salt Lake City. It was brought out from under the counter and put in a bag. The action was nearly surreptitious, but not so close as to permit certainty. (*The Mormon Establishment*, Boston, 1966, page 10)

However this may be, when we asked Mr. Weller where he was getting copies of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism*, he replied that he did not know! He said that it was all a very secret operation. He claimed that he had received a letter giving details of how he could handle the pamphlet, but that the writer was not identified. When we asked Mr. Weller to show us the letter, he replied that he would not because it was his own "personal property."

It seemed logical to us that he must pay someone for the pamphlets, but when we asked him about the matter he replied that he had received them absolutely FREE and that he could use any money he made to make a reprint. (Later he told us that he was committed to make a reprint.) Mr. Weller indicated that he had received 1,800 free copies of the pamphlet. We reasoned that this must represent a large amount of money, and since it is very unlikely that the CIA would have an interest in discrediting our work we felt that the pamphlets must have been donated by an organization or individual who had a great deal of money to spend.

So far we have been unable to trace exactly how Zion Bookstore received the pamphlets. According to one report, the books were first mailed anonymously to a post office box. From there they were transported to a publishing company near Redwood Road and were subsequently picked up by an employee from Zion Bookstore. We talked with Wilfrid Clark, who works for Sam Weller. Mr. Clark maintained that he did not know anything about a publishing company picking up the books from a post office box. He said that all he knew about the matter was that Zion Bookstore received an anonymous letter containing a key to a room in a self-storage company on Redwood Road. He claimed that he personally went to the company and picked up the booklets.

THE CHURCH'S FINGERPRINTS

Jesus once said: "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2). This statement becomes very significant in the light of developments with regard to this cover-up.

As we followed the tracks of this conspiracy to destroy our work, we found that they led right into the Mormon Church Office Building in Salt Lake City. Actually, it was more than a year ago when we first heard that something was afoot. We had a visit with a young Mormon singer who had some questions regarding Church history. He told us he had an appointment with a woman at the Church Office Building who claimed she had been part of a committee which was organized to evaluate our research. The committee worked on our material until they received an order from the Prophet—i.e., the President of the Church—that they were to desist from the project. We were unable to learn anything more about this purported committee, but one of the top Mormon historians did tell us in a telephone conversation in December 1976 that a manuscript had been prepared to refute the allegations contained in our work. He was not sure if the Church would actually publish it, but the writing had been done.

One of the major clues which led to the discovery of the source of the pamphlet *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism* was an unpublished thesis by Richard Stephen Marshall. Mr. Marshall had interviewed us for the paper, "The New Mormon History," but we were not aware he had completed it until a friend obtained a copy. We were absolutely amazed at its contents. Three of the top historians in the Mormon Church are cited as making very candid statements concerning our work and other matters relating to the history of the Church. These three men are all assigned to write volumes in the Church's new "sixteen-volume sesquicentennial history of the Latter-day Saints." Two of them subsequently found themselves in trouble with the Church and were called in to answer for the statements attributed to them. At any rate, one of these historians really "spilled the beans" when he told that the Mormon Church Historical Department had assigned a scholar to answer our work and that his manuscript would probably have to be published anonymously. We cite the following from Mr. Marshall's paper:

Recent years have seen the emergence of a new kind of anti-Mormon literature which uses Mormon historical records (history has long been used to attack the Church) to try to show that the Church was more human than divine. This new kind of literature is best typified by Jerald and Sandra Tanner and their Modern Microfilm Publishing Company located in Salt Lake City. They have been prolific since 1961 and have, at present, a world-wide reputation. This writer encountered materials published by them while living in Australia several years ago. Max Parkin, of the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah, calls them "publishers extraordinary," and notes that one of their most recent volumes, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* is the finest, most comprehensive and hard-hitting anti-Mormon book in history.

A recent leaflet printed by the Tanners entitled *20,000 Books Met With Silence* notes the lack of official response from the Church to *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* . . .

Many prominent Mormons have expressed a high regard for the work the Tanners have done. . . . T. Edgar Lyon, a Mormon historian and long-time teacher at the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah, told this writer he thought the Church should subsidize the Tanners, although he said it tongue-in cheek.

Reed Durham using virtually the same words as Lyon said that he thought the Church should subsidize the Tanners because of all the historical research they do for it. He teaches a class at the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah on the problems of Mormon history called "Special Studies in Mormon History." He uses the Tanner's book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* as the text for the class. Formerly he would purchase copies of the book in quantity from Modern Microfilm through the Institute. Because it did not look very good for the Institute to be purchasing quantities of an anti-Mormon work he now encourages his students to go down to Modern Microfilm (1350 South West Temple, Salt Lake City,) and buy the book on their own.

Durham said he would like to write a book answering the accusations of the Tanners point by point. To do so, however, would require *certain admissions that Mormon history is not exactly as the Church has taught it was*, that there were things taught and practiced in the nineteenth century of which the general Church membership is unaware. He said that *the Church is not ready to admit that yet*. He also said that due to the large number of letters the Church Historian's Office is receiving asking for answers to the things the Tanners have published, a certain scholar (name deliberately withheld) was *appointed to write a general answer to the Tanners* including advice on how

to read anti-Mormon literature. This unnamed person solicited the help of Reed Durham on the project. The work is finished but *its publication is delayed, according to what Leonard Arrington told Durham*, because they cannot decide how or where to publish it. Because the article is an open and honest approach to the problem, although it by no means answers all of the questions raised by the Tanners, it will *probably be published anonymously*, to avoid any difficulties which could result were such an article connected with an official Church agency. (“The New Mormon History,” by Richard Stephen Marshall, A Senior Honors Project Summary, University of Utah, May 1, 1977, pages 57, 61 and 62)

The fact that an anonymous rebuttal should appear just seven months from the time Mr. Marshall wrote his paper seems like more than just a coincidence.

TRACKING THE MYSTERIOUS POST HOC ERGO PROPTER HOC

Unfortunately, Mr. Marshall’s paper does not give the name of the author, referring to him only as “a certain scholar (name deliberately withheld) . . .” We did, however, remember our telephone conversation with the Mormon scholar (see above) and thought that he might have told us that D. Michael Quinn was the historian assigned to write the rebuttal. We began to do research in Dr. Quinn’s writings, but did not run into anything of any real significance until we examined his M.A. thesis, “Organizational Development and Social Origin’s of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: A Prosopographical Study,” Department of History, University of Utah, 1973. On page 162 of Dr. Quinn’s thesis we found these words: “. . . the extent of preexisting family relationships . . . should not be construed into a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy of logic.” The words *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, seemed strangely familiar, and when we turn back to page 20 of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism*, we discovered this statement: “. . . if one insists on the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* analysis . . .” Later we found the words *post hoc ergo propter hoc* in Quinn’s dissertation written at Yale University.

According to the dictionary the Latin words *post ero propter hoc* mean “after this, therefore because of it (a formula designating an error of logic: taking for a cause something merely earlier in time).” Now, while these Latin words may have their place in a thesis or dissertation, we feel that their only use in an ordinary publication would be to impress the reader with the author’s knowledge. Since most people do not understand their meaning, they are certainly out of place in *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism*. In any case, the use of these words in all three documents aroused our interest to do more study. We found that Dr. Quinn often uses foreign words in his writings. For instance, he uses the words *sine qua non* in an article published in *BYU Studies*, Winter 1976, page 191. These same words are found in his dissertation for Yale University (page 197). Now, on page 32 of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of, Mormonism*, we read of “the earliest *sine qua non* of Mormonism.”

We found a number of things in Dr. Quinn’s thesis which led us to believe that he was the author of the rebuttal. We thought that in light of the evidence he would surely confess his involvement. To our great surprise, however, he emphatically denied any connection with it. We were somewhat taken back by his firm and unyielding denial, and therefore decided to do further research. We spent some time examining Quinn’s

dissertation written at Yale University, a copy of which is found at the University of Utah Library. The evidence against Quinn seemed to increase. For instance, in his dissertation we find this statement: “An early defector from Mormonism, Ezra Booth, wrote in 1831 . . .” (“The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: An American Elite,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by Dennis Michael Quinn, Yale University, May 1976, page 58)

In the rebuttal (page 16) we read: “In 1831 a Mormon defector Ezra Booth wrote . . .” This might not be too significant by itself, but when we turn to the footnote for this information (page 17) we read:

¹²Letter to Ezra Booth in *OhioStar*, 8 December 1831, and letter of William W. Phelps to Brigham Young, 12 August 1861, Church Archives.

Now, if we turn back to the dissertation we find these same documents listed in footnotes 38 and 39 on page 58:

³⁸Letter of Ezra Booth in *Ohio Star*, December 8, 1831.

³⁹Letter of William W. Phelps to Brigham Young, August 10, 1861, Church Archives.

The reader will note that the wording is almost identical. It is true that in the rebuttal the author gives the day before the month—e.g., “8 December 1831”—whereas it is given in the dissertation as “December 8, 1831.” This presents no real problem, however, because in Quinn’s article in the *BYU Studies*, Winter 1976, he consistently gives the day before the month.

One thing that really tended to convince us that Michael Quinn wrote *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism* was the use of an extremely rare document from Yale University on page 14 of the pamphlet:

. . . the Tanners . . . could have read the versified, anti-Mormon manuscript by Olney, dated July 2, 1842:

As a company is now a forming / In to the wilderness to go / As far west as the Rocky mountains. . . . If this was not the secret whispering / Amongst certain ones of the Church of L. D. S. / And could be easily proven if man could speak.

The source for this quotation is noted as: “Oliver H. Olney Papers, Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.”

If we examine the footnotes in the rebuttal we find that this is the only unpublished manuscript cited which is located outside of Utah. Is it just a coincidence that Michael Quinn went to the same University where this very unusual document is located? When we read Dr. Quinn’s dissertation from Yale University we found that he actually cited Olney’s manuscript on page 88:

. . . Oliver Olney, wrote a description in doggeral verse . . . on April 16, 1842:

I look at the poor / I se them oprest / I look at the widows / I se them rejected / I look at the orfan / I se him neglected / I look at the actual saints / That is adoin the will of God / I se them neglected . . .

In spite of Michael Quinn’s emphatic denials, much circumstantial evidence points to him as the author of the rebuttal. From what we can learn, Dr. Quinn seems to be a

very secretive man, and since the whole operation was carried out in such a clandestine manner, we were not surprised to learn that Quinn has served as a “Special Agent, U.S. Military Intelligence, Washington, D.C. and Munich, Germany, 1968–1971” (“Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy . . .,” page 311). It is interesting to note that on page 6 of the rebuttal we find a defense of “*secrecy* in Mormonism.”

STONEWALLING

After examining Dr. Quinn’s writings, we were rather certain that he wrote the rebuttal. Still, we did not want to be too hasty in rushing into print. His vigorous denials were still ringing in our ears, and we felt that it was unfair to accuse a man of such an act unless we had very good evidence. Michael Marquardt, who was also very interested in the whole affair, helped us by making many phone calls and inquiries. We talked with quite a number of Mormon historians and they all denied any knowledge of the authorship of the rebuttal.

The reader will remember that Richard Steven Marshall’s paper gave information that indicated Leonard Arrington, Mormon Church Historian, was involved in the project even before May 1, 1977. We had a number of phone conversations with Dr. Arrington, and in every conversation he emphatically declared he did not know who the author of the rebuttal was and had absolutely no foreknowledge of the matter.

Everywhere we turned we met with the same response—an absolute stonewall. We knew that we had circumstantial evidence that Quinn was the author and that the project came through the Mormon Church Historical Department, but since everyone contacted denied the accusation our confidence was somewhat shaken. Then an unbelievable thing happened: while searching through a drawer for some samples of typewritten material we came upon a handwritten note we had made a year ago concerning the phone conversation we had with the Mormon scholar. Our note, written on or before December 12, 1976, confirmed that the author was “Michael Quin[n],” and that the work was written “For Historians Office.” The note also indicated it was a “50 page paper” and that the Church “May not publish it.” The reader will notice that the printed rebuttal has 63 pages of typewritten material reduced down, but some of these pages must have been added after December 1976, because a footnote on page 58 refers to the *BYU Studies* for Spring 1977.

COVER-UP BREAKS DOWN

The handwritten note also contained what proved to be a very significant item—i.e., a statement that a man by the name of “David Mayfield” said the paper “had been done.” We decided to call Mr. Mayfield and ask him concerning the matter. After all the “stonewalling” we had encountered we really expected to learn very little from Mr. Mayfield. To our great surprise, however, he turned out to be very honest about the matter.

Our first question to Mr. Mayfield was whether he worked for the Mormon Historical Department. He replied that he had worked there but was not working there at the present time. Then we asked him if he had seen Michael Quinn’s paper in the typed form before it was published as *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism*. After hesitating slightly, he replied: “Yes.” Then we asked if he was sure that it was the typed copy he had seen. The reply: “Yes.” The third question we asked was whether it was about a year

ago when he saw it. Mr. Mayfield also replied “yes” to that question. Then he began to get uneasy and asked to whom he was speaking. (He apparently thought he was talking to a Mormon who had been initiated into the secret.) Needless to say, he was not too happy when he learned who it was, although he was still very polite. He went on to say that he was told not to reveal the identity of the author because it was supposed to be an anonymous publication. We reminded him, however, that in his answer to an earlier question, he had already revealed the identity of the author. He had replied “yes” to the question of whether he had seen the typed copy of Michael Quinn’s paper before it was published.

As soon as we had terminated the conversation with Mr. Mayfield, we called Dr. Arrington, Church Historian, and asked him if he was still going to stand by his story in the light of David Mayfield’s admission. He emphatically replied that he knew absolutely nothing about the project and that the charges were completely untrue. Later that day Dr. Arrington called us and said he had checked with Mayfield, and that Mayfield told him he had made a mistake; it was another document that he had seen. We, of course, could hardly believe that Mr. Mayfield could have made such a serious mistake. In light of the handwritten note and the telephone conversation confirming the note, we could only believe that the Historical Department was behind the whole project. Nevertheless, Dr. Arrington continued to deny the whole matter. Later we called David Mayfield and asked him if he had told Dr. Arrington that he had made a mistake about the document. Mr. Mayfield did not support Dr. Arrington; he simply replied that he was “not going to comment” about the matter.

With this new evidence in hand, we called Michael Quinn. The reader will remember that Dr. Quinn had strongly denied the accusation when we first called him. This conversation was entirely different from the first. When we asked him if he was the author of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism*, he replied that he would “neither affirm nor deny” the allegation. He explained that only a small number of Mormon historians were capable of writing the rebuttal. To affirm or deny the allegation would help us to limit the field, and since the author wished to remain anonymous he would not help us in any way. This, of course, was a long step from his original position. He had moved from an absolute *no* to the compromised position that he would “neither affirm nor deny” authorship. Now, if he had taken the position of refusing to affirm or deny at the first, he would have been in far better shape. As it is, Dr. Quinn has put himself in a very embarrassing position.

When we asked him what he thought of the rebuttal, he replied that he thought it was “well done.” We told Dr. Quinn that we felt this was a very serious matter and that we should meet together and thoroughly discuss it. He declined to meet with us and claimed that he felt like the movie star who said she didn’t care what reporters said about her as long as they spelled her name right. On January 23, 1978, we had another telephone conversation with Dr. Quinn. We asked him if he would meet us in public debate over the issue. He replied that he would “not meet in public debate,” and said that he had “no desire” to discuss the matter anymore.

One question arises concerning the author of the rebuttal—i.e., is he a paid employee of the Church or is he only an historian who is interested in his religion? A man who is paid by the Church might find it harder to be objective. The author only says that he is “a professionally trained historian who has studied Mormon history and theology at some length.” When we look at Michael Quinn’s record we find that before he was

a “Special Agent, U. S. Military Intelligence, he served on a mission for the Church. The *Utah Historical Quarterly*, for Winter 1973, page 70, informs us that Dr. Quinn has served as “a historical assistant with the Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” The *Ensign* for August 1977, page 37, says that D. Michael Quinn is “an assistant professor of history at Brigham Young University.” Brigham Young University is, of course, owned by the Church. At the present time Dr. Quinn is on a special assignment to do some writing for Brigham Young University. While Dr. Quinn’s employment by the Church might not have a serious effect on his work, we feel that this fact should at least be made known.

Although Dr. Quinn has almost nothing good to say about us, we will not repay in kind. We feel that he is probably one of the best historians in the Mormon Church. His dissertation written for Yale University is a masterpiece. He has written excellent articles in *BYU Studies*, the *Journal of Mormon History* and the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. It is hard, however, to equate these works with the booklet *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism*.

On page 5 of his thesis written for the University of Utah, he stated: “This study is intended as a secular approach to the Mormon hierarchy, rather than a faith-promoting apologia or an iconoclastic polemic. Nevertheless, the inevitably religious environment of this group makes the question of my bias relevant. Although I consider myself to be a believing and loyal member of the LDS Church, I have sought in the present study to submerge personal biases and to be guided strictly by the weight of evidence in the presentation of data and interpretation.” We feel that Dr. Quinn has succeeded in submerging his “personal biases” in the writings to which he has attached his name and that he has made many important discoveries. Perhaps, however, Dr. Quinn has “submerged” his “biases” for too long and when he finally wrote the anonymous rebuttal they all had to come to the surface. In any case, we feel that some of the statements and information contained in Quinn’s earlier writings can be used to refute the pamphlet *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism*.

In proposing D. Michael Quinn as the author of the rebuttal, we must give him credit for providing “deniability” for both himself and the Historical Department. His experience as a “Special Agent in U.S. Military Intelligence” probably helped him a great deal in this work. At any rate, in the seventy footnotes included in the pamphlet, Dr. Quinn never mentions any of his previous writings. This is certainly not Quinn’s normal pattern. For instance, in an article published in *BYU Studies*, Winter 1976, Quinn’s third footnote refers to an article which he previously wrote. In the second footnote found in an article appearing in *Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 1, 1974, Quinn refers to another piece which he authored.

The attempt to cover-up the involvement of the Historical Department becomes very obvious when one examines the footnotes. A great many books are cited, but we find only seven references to unpublished manuscripts. Six of these manuscripts are found in university libraries. This leaves only one reference which refers to the Historical Department: “. . . letter of William W. Phelps to Brigham Young, 12 August 1861, Church Archives.” By giving only one reference to the “Church Archives” it is obvious that the author is trying to make tracks away from the Historical Department. Now, since Dr. Quinn has served as “a historical assistant with the Historical Department, and since in all of Quinn’s other writings he refers to many documents in the “Church Archives,” we can only infer that the lack of reference to documents in the

Historical Department is a means of providing “deniability” for the rebuttal.

It is also interesting to note that so far there has been no attempt to distribute the rebuttal through normal Church channels—i.e., the Church’s Deseret Bookstore. This also helps to provide “deniability” for the Church. In a letter written a year ago (January 19, 1977) a spokesman for Deseret Bookstore wrote: “We do not plan a specific written response to the Tanner book. *Perhaps it does not deserve the dignity of a response.*”

Another thing that is rather interesting about the rebuttal is that although the Mormon Historian Leonard Arrington denies any foreknowledge of the rebuttal, he seems to feel that it will be a useful tool in combating our work. A student from BYU, who takes a class which Leonard Arrington teaches there, told us that Dr. Arrington said he had been receiving inquiries about *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and that one phone call came at 3 o’clock in the morning. Mr. Marshall’s paper (page 62) says that the Historical Department was receiving a “large number of letters” about our book. At any rate, the day that the booklet first appeared for sale at Zion Bookstore, Dr. Arrington was observed giving out copies at BYU, and he is quoted as saying that the Historical Department would now have something to give those who make inquiries about *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* According to the BYU student, Dr. Arrington said he knew the author’s name but would not reveal it.

As far as we can determine the booklets were first distributed at Zion Bookstore on December 20, 1977. Before the month had ended, however, a mission president in Minnesota was distributing the rebuttal. On January 7, 1978, we received a letter which contained this information: “I got my answer a little over a week ago. The Mormon mission president of Bloomington, Minnesota gave me a 63-page booklet entitled *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to Shadow or Reality.*”

When we asked Earl Olson, of the Church Historical Department, if he knew if the rebuttal was being officially distributed by the Church, he replied that he did not know, but he felt that it should be. He claimed not to know who the author was nor to have any foreknowledge of the publication. He also stated that he did not know if it was printed on Church equipment.

A FICTITIOUS LETTER?

Since it is claimed that a committee was set up to examine our work, we think it is possible that there was more than one author involved in the writing of the rebuttal. Although we are convinced that Michael Quinn played the major role, others could have contributed. In our phone conversation with Dr. Quinn, he spoke of the “author or authors” who might have been involved. It is reported that on another occasion Quinn referred to the “men or women” who may have authored the rebuttal. It is interesting to note that a woman was supposed to be on the above mentioned committee.

One Mormon scholar told us he was informed that an answer to anti-Mormon criticism was being prepared by the Church. He was taken into a room where “they picked my brain” for answers to the problems. He admitted that Dr. Quinn was involved in the project but did not identify the others.

The reader may ask: what does it matter whether it was a committee or just one individual who produced the rebuttal? We feel that it makes a great deal of difference. The pamphlet gives the impression that it is just a letter produced by one individual and indicates that much more criticism could easily

be found if the author took the time. This would certainly be a misrepresentation if it was actually a committee of the Church's leading scholars working together to produce the best answer they could come up with. Inasmuch as we are being attacked from ambush we would like to know if we are up against one individual or a team of well-trained marksmen. Since we do not think it fair to give Michael Quinn all the blame for this pamphlet, we have decided to christen the "author or authors" as "DR. CLANDESTINE."

The more we examine this purported letter the more convinced we are that it is a fictitious production—i.e., not a real letter at all. We have already shown that both the name of the author and the name of the person who received the letter are missing. The letter is also undated. It is not impossible, of course, that a person would write a 63-page letter, but it seems quite unlikely, especially since it contains such detailed footnotes. It has more the appearance of a manuscript written for publication.

One thing that makes it very difficult to believe that it is actually a letter is that according to the handwritten note spoken of above, it had been completed by December 12, 1976. David Mayfield verified that he had seen the manuscript about a year ago. Another Mormon historian has now revealed to us that he was allowed the privilege of reading a copy of the manuscript about 13 or 14 months ago. He denied that it was Dr. Arrington who let him read the copy, but he agreed that it was almost inconceivable that Arrington could be unaware of it since he is Church Historian. In any case, he said that it was in the form of a letter, except that the names had been deleted as in the printed version. He thought it was about 57 pages long, about 8 pages being footnotes at the end of the letter. He said that "they" would not tell him whether it was an actual letter or who the author was. Furthermore, he was told that he could not show it to anyone or make a copy. The fact that the manuscript of the rebuttal was seen a year before it appeared in print creates a real dilemma for those who want to believe that it is a real letter. The author mentions "the work of Hugh Nibley, Michael Rhodes, and Eric Olson" on page 58. The footnote refers to an article by Michael Dennis Rhodes which was published in *BYU Studies* 17 (Spring 1977). Unfortunately for the reputation of Dr. Clandestine, that issue of *BYU Studies* was delayed; according to Michael Marquardt, he did not receive his copy until October 19, 1977. In another footnote on page 61, we are referred to an article which was not published in the *Ensign* until "September 1977." The problem, then, is this: if the letter was mailed to the friend before the Historical Department received a copy, and we know that this was prior to December 12, 1976, some of the material which appears in the printed book had to be interpolated. This would not seem to fit with the claim that Dr. Clandestine is a "professionally trained historian" who has "tried to present all evidence and analysis as truthfully and honestly as I can" (pages 62-63).

If, on the other hand, it was not mailed until toward the end of October 1977, when *BYU Studies* came out, this would make about a year's gap between the time the inquiry was made and the letter answered. The first part of the letter talks about a "delay in answering," but since the end of the letter speaks of the "urgency of your own request" we would not expect such a long delay in answering. Then, too, if at least 50 pages had been completed by December 12, 1976, why did it take almost a year to finish the remaining portion?

The most reasonable explanation to all this is that it is not really a letter at all but a manuscript prepared to look like a letter. This interpretation would seem to fit the facts and would free the author(s) from the charge of making interpolations into a letter which had already been mailed. (An author, of course, has a right to make interpolations in his own manuscript.) To accept this theory, however, opens up an entirely different criticism of the work. It purports to be a letter to "a recent convert to Mormonism" who has become "seriously disturbed" after "reading Jerald and Sandra Tanner's work *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*" The Introduction to the pamphlet seems to imply that the friend was so convinced by the letter that he recommended publication:

As an historian, I have been concerned that a number of faithful Latter-day Saints seem to have been troubled by reading Jerald and Sandra Tanner's *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* After preparing the following letter for a friend, upon his recommendation I have decided to publish the letter in this form.

Now, if we accept the idea that it is really a manuscript rather than a letter, it puts the whole production into a fictitious setting. The idea that a recent convert was saved from apostasy by this particular letter and that he recommended its publication, then, is not a true representation and gives the reader a "distorted view" of the origin of the rebuttal. The reader will remember that according to Mr. Marshall's paper, a Mormon historian "said that due to the large number of letters the Church Historian's Office is receiving asking for answers to the things the Tanners have published, a certain scholar (name deliberately withheld) was appointed to write a general answer to the Tanners . . ." ("The New Mormon History," page 62). We think that this is probably the true origin of the rebuttal. It is undoubtedly a fictitious letter designed to save new converts from *Mormonism—Shadow, or Reality?* and since a good portion of those who read this book are converts, the pamphlet is written so that they can personally identify with its contents. This seems evident from the following comments which appear on pages 1 and 2:

You seemed almost embarrassed to admit reading a book you regard as anti-Mormon, and you seemed to feel that my first reaction to your letter would be a criticism of your paying any attention to such writings. . . . I cannot be sure whether you have looked at several of the Tanners' publications, or whether the revised 1972 edition of *Shadow-Reality* is the only one you have read. . . . You admit that you have been "seriously disturbed" by what you have read, and you mention some general areas you want me to respond to. You are a recent convert to Mormonism, and I sense that although your experience with anti-Mormon literature of this type has jolted you, that you sincerely want to know how the information in the Tanners' publication(s) fits within the whole framework of Mormonism.

We remember that after the release of certain tapes in the Watergate scandal, President Nixon's press secretary had to get up and admit that previous statements made about the situation had become "inoperative." In the light of the material which we have presented, we feel that the Historical Department of the Church should come forth and proclaim that this rebuttal is now "inoperative." Unless someone comes forth and produces the original signed letter with a date on the top, we cannot help but feel it should be exposed as a fictitious production.

End of sample pages.
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