

# SALT LAKE CITY MESSENGER

December 2022  
Issue 136

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## LAST SALT LAKE CITY MESSENGER THE END OF AN ERA OF MORMON RESEARCH

2023 is shaping up to be a monumental year for Utah Lighthouse Ministry. First, after much prayer, I am announcing my retirement effective March 1, 2023. While my health is good, at 82 I realize my body is getting older and slower. Second, we have sold the property and will be closing the bookstore and selling all of our inventory in February. As we sell the various titles we will not be restocking them, but we will post our research on our web site, [utlm.org](http://utlm.org). Thus



we will no longer have a physical office or bookstore as of March 1st. We will be donating all of the Tanner research files to the University of Utah Library, Special Collections Department. The bulk of the ministry's remaining assets and finances will be divided up among several non-profits, with a portion set aside to maintain the UTLM website.

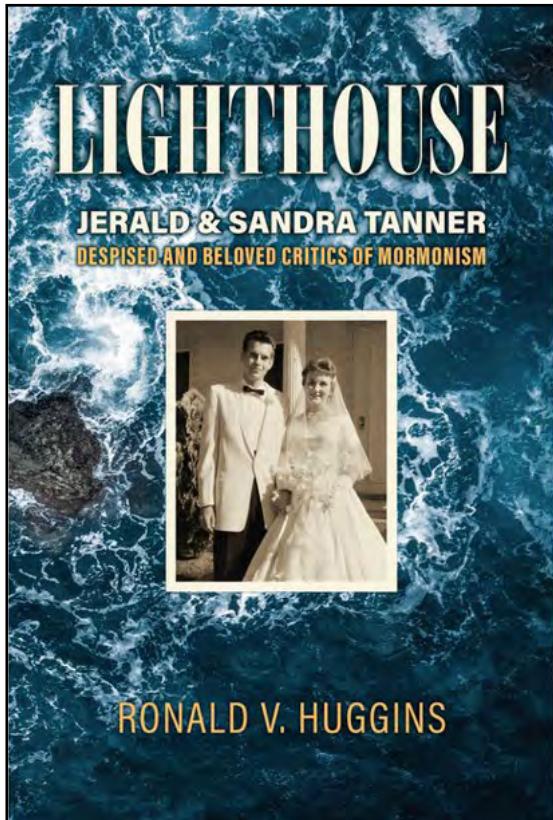
We send our deepest thanks and appreciation to all our friends who have supported our research over the decades. We couldn't have done it without you.

**Utah Christian Radio AM 820**

**LIGHTHOUSE**  
**JERALD & SANDRA TANNER**  
*Despised and Beloved Critics of Mormonism*

For several years our friend Dr. Ron Huggins has been working on our biography, which has finally been published by Signature Books under the title *Lighthouse: Jerald and Sandra Tanner: Despised and Beloved Critics of Mormonism*. It is available both directly from Utah Lighthouse Ministry and from the other usual outlets, including Amazon.com.

**Dr. Huggins wrote:** I am grateful to the publisher, Signature Books, for granting permission to include an



excerpt from the book in this issue of the newsletter. The one we have chosen tells the story of the absurdly comical, cloak-and-dagger attempt on the part of the LDS Church Historian's Department to refute the Tanners in an anonymously written and clandestinely distributed booklet entitled *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* [1977] The Church ended up with egg on its face after the Tanners figured out in only a few weeks not only who had written it (the late Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, 1944-2021) but also where it came from, i.e., the LDS Church Historian's Department. With that introduction, I hope you will enjoy the story of "Dr. Clandestine."

### LIGHTHOUSE — CHAPTER 12: DR. CLANDESTINE.

Wilfrid Clark, an employee of Salt Lake City's venerable Sam Weller's Zion Bookstore, was driving down Redwood Road, a north-south street lined with dilapidated industrial buildings running the length of the city. Locals knew it as something of a rough dividing line between the city's blue-collar westside and the vast salty wastes to the west. It was December 1977 and there was little hope for a white Christmas. The weather was overcast and dreary, with temperatures stuck in the low 40s. As he drove, Clark kept his eye out for an address given to him by his boss, Sam Weller. Clark spotted the building, turned off the road in front of a non-descript self-storage company, and began searching. He was hunting for a numbered door that matched the key he held—the key that had mysteriously arrived with instructions in an anonymous letter sent to Weller.

Clark found the door, turned the key, and stepped inside. The light outside revealed the room's contents: a pile of boxes. The bookseller dutifully loaded them into his vehicle and drove back to Zion Bookstore. They opened the boxes and found 1,800 copies of a booklet, *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* The booklet listed Salt Lake City as its printing location and its author as "a Latter-day Saint Historian." A note on the inside cover stressed 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."

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JERALD AND SANDRA TANNER'S DISTORTED  
VIEW OF MORMONISM:  
A RESPONSE TO MORMONISM — SHADOW OR  
REALITY?

By a Latter-day Saint Historian

Salt Lake City, Utah  
1977

Dr. Clandestine's (D. Michael Quinn's)  
anonymous tract

Five days before Christmas, the sky cleared and the temperature plummeted to near zero, and Weller put the anonymous booklets on display. It was the same day that, according to one student who witnessed it, LDS Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington was seen distributing copies of the booklet at BYU.<sup>1</sup>

Before the New Year, the tract had made its way to other places as well, such as Bloomington, Minnesota, where the mission president gave a copy to Jack Hallman, who read it and then wrote to the Tanners asking if they knew about it.<sup>2</sup> The mission president would say only that a friend had sent it to him, but refused to identify the friend. Hallman said that, "from what he told me, that 'friend' was probably the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake."<sup>3</sup>

1 Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, enlarged ed. (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, 1978), 5. Arrington was the first academically credentialed person to be set apart as official LDS Church Historian. Prior to Arrington, the post was filled by LDS general authorities, as it is today.

2 Jack Hallman to Jerald and Sandra Tanner, Jan. 7, 1978, 1, in Tanner and Tanner, Papers. In his letter Hallman says that he had been given the booklet "a little over a week ago."

3 Jack Hallman to Jerald Tanner, Jan. 24, 1977, 1, Tanner and Tanner, Papers.

The Tanners were naturally curious to discover who wrote the pamphlet. To find out, they first asked Weller where he sent the payment for the booklets. Weller told them that instead of paying, he was asked to reprint the pamphlet with any profits.<sup>4</sup> When the Tanners asked to see the original anonymous letter, Weller declined.<sup>5</sup>

No one in the burgeoning Mormon historian community admitted to knowing anything about *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism*. Arrington claimed he was in the dark until it mysteriously appeared.<sup>6</sup> However, there had been rumors of a forthcoming response to their work for more than a year. The 1970s were a unique era in Mormon historiography. The once-closed LDS Church archives had become more accessible—not to everyone, and certainly not to Jerald and Sandra Tanner. But certain professional historians and favored graduate students could call at the archives in the east wing of the new Church Office Building on North Temple Street and ask to see documents long inaccessible. It was not a free for all; some collections remained restricted, and historians employed by the church had more access than outsiders. But it seemed to represent a positive shift in how the LDS Church approached and handled its history, and more people, especially students, were getting involved. But it was all still very fragile and tenuous.

A senior project by Richard Steven Marshall, a student at the University of Utah, submitted the previous May, inadvertently shed some light on the booklet. Marshall's paper, "The New Mormon History," included several interviews with Mormon historians and others (including the Tanners) as part of the project. Marshall interviewed Reed C. Durham Jr., a historian and former director of the University of Utah Institute of Religion:

[Durham] 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

<sup>4</sup> Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Tanner and Tanner, 2, and "Ambushing the Tanners," *Salt Lake City Messenger* 39 (July 1978): 8.

<sup>6</sup> Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 4.

can not 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 be published anonymously, to avoid any difficulties which could result were such an article connected with an official Church agency.<sup>7</sup>

Jerald found the possibility of a committee of Mormon scholars shooting at him from the shadows of anonymity under the pretense of a letter written by a single person disconcerting because of the level of deception involved. "Inasmuch as we are being attacked from ambush," Jerald wrote, "we would like to know if we are up against one individual or a team of well-trained marksmen."<sup>8</sup> Jerald used the word ambush to intentionally mirror the words of Mormon historian B. H. Roberts, who had once insisted that engagement in debate "would certainly require that the acceptance of the challenge should be otherwise than from ambush . . . I am entitled to know the name of my opponent that I may judge somewhat of his character and standing."<sup>9</sup>

Jerald vaguely recalled a conversation he had had a year prior during which he learned about a potential response. He could not remember all the details, including whom he had spoken to, but the name Michael Quinn stood out. Leafing through Quinn's published works did not prove helpful, but when the Tanners studied his 1973 University of Utah master's thesis and his 1976 Yale doctoral dissertation, they detected similarities to *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism*.

The author of the booklet included Latin fallacy phrases such as *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this). Who but Quinn, Jerald reasoned, would employ a phrase like that in a document purporting to be written to a layperson with questions? Quinn, Jerald noticed, had previously used *post hoc ergo propter hoc* in both his thesis and his dissertation.<sup>10</sup> There were other similarities, such as footnotes containing the same references to the same sources in the same order in the booklet as in the thesis and the dissertation. Quinn's work and the booklet quoted from a rare anti-Mormon manuscript in the Oliver H. Olney Papers in Yale University's Beinecke Library where Quinn had worked on his doctorate.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Stephen Marshall, "New Mormon History," Senior Honors thesis, University of Utah, 1977, 61–62.

<sup>8</sup> Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 6.

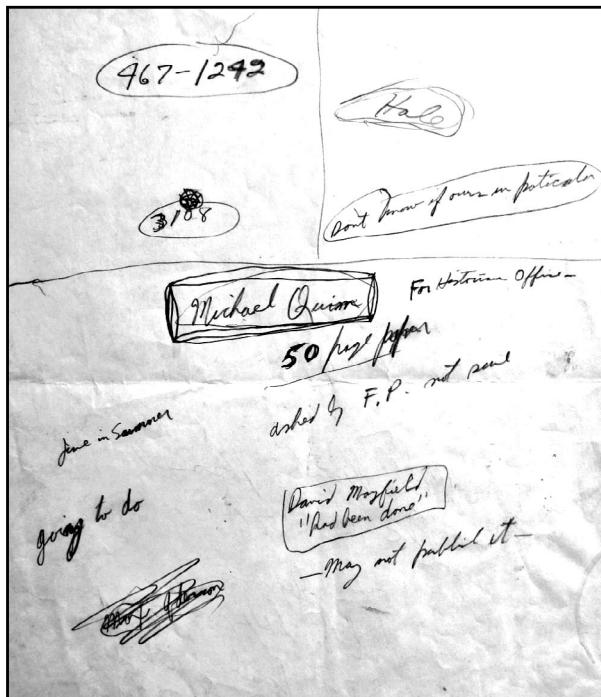
<sup>9</sup> B. H. Roberts, *Defense of the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1907), 1:328; Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 1.

<sup>10</sup> D. Michael Quinn, "Organizational Developments and Social Origins of Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: A Prosopographical Study." Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1973.

By the time Jerald had finished working through Quinn's master's thesis, he felt sure he had enough evidence to get an admission from Quinn that he was the anonymous "Latter-day Saint Historian." When he called and presented his evidence, Quinn emphatically denied that he had anything to do with the matter. It was this that had caused Jerald to work his way through Quinn's doctoral dissertation as well, which only further solidified what he suspected.

Jerald finally confirmed the authorship when, digging through a drawer, he found his handwritten notes of the previous year's conversation when he had first heard that a response was in the works. Quinn's name had been mentioned. The conversation, according to the notes, had taken place almost a year to the day before the booklet was put on sale at Sam Weller's Zion Bookstore. The notes, consisting of only a few words and phrases in Jerald's scrawl, "confirmed that the author was 'Michael Quin[n],' that the work was written 'For [the] Historians Office,'" that "it was a '50 page paper,' and that the Church 'may not publish it.'"<sup>11</sup> But it also included the name "David Mayfield" written in a box along with the line "had been done."<sup>12</sup> (see drawing below)

So Jerald picked up the phone and gave Mayfield a call, but apparently did not identify himself, or, if he did,



<sup>11</sup> Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 4; "Ambushing the Tanners," 9.

<sup>12</sup> Mayfield was an LDS Church employee who was later director of the Family History Department. The note, still in the Tanners' papers, says that "someone phoned on Dec. 12, 1976."

Mayfield missed it. One of the first things he asked was if Mayfield had seen Quinn's paper before it came out in the form of a booklet. Mayfield, apparently assuming he was speaking with someone at the LDS Church History Department, admitted that he had. But when he discovered it was Jerald he was talking to, he quickly backed away from his earlier statements. After hanging up, Jerald called Arrington and confronted him with Mayfield's admission. Arrington recalls his response:

I vehemently denied that this was true, and had a considerable argument with him, completely denying everything. We got into a little bit of a shouting match. I then telephoned Dave, who said that Jerald had telephoned him and asked if he had seen a paper by Mike Quinn which was a response to the Tanners. He said he was "caught off guard," and did admit he had seen such a paper. Pretty soon, Jerald Tanner telephoned me again and apologized for becoming angry with me for my denial. I re-denied the whole business again. Tanner said he was going to publish the complete story, and no doubt he will publish what he believes to be the true story. But he said he would publish that I denied it. I telephoned Mike Quinn to tell him this.<sup>13</sup>

After a conversation with Mayfield, Arrington told Jerald that Mayfield had said he had made a mistake and had been thinking about a different paper. When subsequently asked about this, Mayfield refused to say one way or the other. When Jerald confronted Quinn with what he now knew, Quinn no longer denied he had been the author, but adopted a neutral position that he would neither affirm nor deny being its author.

In the meantime Jerald had found the historical scholarship in Quinn's dissertation to be excellent: "Although Dr. Quinn has almost nothing good to say about us," Jerald wrote, "we feel that he is probably one of the best historians in the Mormon Church. His dissertation written for Yale University is a masterpiece."<sup>14</sup> But the quality of scholarship in the booklet was mixed, suggesting to Jerald that other scholars besides Quinn

<sup>13</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *Confessions of a Mormon Historian, The Diaries of Leonard J. Arrington, 1971-1997*, edited by Gary James Bergera, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2018), 2:453-54.

<sup>14</sup> Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 5.

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might be involved.<sup>15</sup> “Since we do not think it fair to give Michael Quinn all the blame for this pamphlet,” Jerald wrote, “we have decided to christen the ‘author or authors’ as ‘DR. CLANDESTINE.’”<sup>16</sup>

The Tanners spent nearly half of their *Answering Dr. Clandestine* unmasking the author. The thing that made *Distorted View of Mormonism* interesting, after all, was not what it said, but its anonymity and the absurd carnivalesque series of events that accompanied its birth.

The two dueling publications, Clandestine’s on the one side and the Tanners’ on the other, provoked different responses. Chad Flake, director of Special Collections at BYU’s Harold B. Lee Library, understood the Tanners’ frustration. “Here’s a man who’s writing to evaluate the Tanners, yet he doesn’t have enough gumption to put his name on it. The credibility of the pamphlet, as far as I am concerned, is nil.”<sup>17</sup> Non-Mormon historian Lawrence Foster, on the other hand, saw the Tanners’ preoccupation with the anonymous author as thin-skinned: “How could anyone who had unleashed the volume of invective that the Tanners have on the Mormons react with such outrage and seeming surprise to a generally fair, if critical, analysis of their own efforts?”<sup>18</sup>

But Foster got it wrong. Far from being motivated primarily by anger, Jerald was also energized by it, excited to engage it. If anything angered Jerald, it wasn’t the response. It was the subterfuge, the anonymity, the cloak and dagger. As Sandra recalls, “He would have been glad to see someone give a serious review of the issues, but why such a cowardly process? We were always in the phone book, put our name and address on everything. If the church was going to put out a rebuttal why not own their defense? It was like the anonymous phone calls we would receive telling us off.”<sup>19</sup>

Although convinced that Quinn had written at least a substantial portion of the booklet, the Tanners were left in doubt over the extent of Arrington’s involvement. As it would turn out Arrington had to have known about the booklet before its release because he had sent a copy

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15 But it also may reflect Quinn’s being stronger in some research areas than others.

16 Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 6. Quinn identifies himself as the author of the tract in “The Chosen Path of a Conflicted Mormon Historian, 1944–2009.” D. Michael Quinn Papers, WA MSS S-2692, Special Collections, Beinecke Library, Yale University. Cited in Arrington, *Confessions of a Mormon Historian*, 2:453n12.

17 Flake interview, Jan. 18, 1978, in Bergera, “Dissent in Zion: Jerald and Sandra Tanner,” Unpublished manuscript, 1978, 7.

18 Lawrence Foster, “Career Apostate: Reflections on the Works of Jerald and Sandra Tanner,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 51–52.

19 Email to Huggins, Jan. 14, 2020.

of an earlier draft to a friend along with a cover letter dated September 6, 1977, which eventually came into the Tanners’ hands.<sup>20</sup>

The Tanners probably didn’t need to write an entire book in response to *Distorted View of Mormonism*. A newsletter establishing its connection with the Church History Department would have probably sufficed, after which they could have watched the booklet sink under the burden of the problems it had created for itself. It was too honest. “We certainly do not believe that Apostle [Ezra Taft] Benson would approve of the rebuttal,” Jerald and Sandra wrote. “[I]t makes far too many admissions concerning historical problems in the Church.”<sup>21</sup> Some LDS apostles were in fact at that moment taking steps to rein in Arrington and his department, which they felt had been too secular in their historical writing.<sup>22</sup>

In the process of making his case, the anonymous author admitted that Joseph Smith had a violent temper, drank alcohol after revealing the Word of Wisdom, took plural wives before the polygamy revelation, retroactively changed revelations, quoted from the King James Bible in the Book of Mormon, and was tried as a glass looker in 1826. The pamphlet argued that church leaders had the “limitations of all men” and might err in their teaching due to misunderstandings of scripture and history. It acknowledged that the LDS temple endowment may have borrowed from Freemasonry. It chided “many of our writers (including nearly all of our apologist-defenders)” on the ground that they “ignore or even deny the weaknesses, fallibility, and humanity of our prophets and apostles.” The author frankly acknowledged the issues surrounding the First Vision and embarked on a lengthy but idiosyncratic argument in support of its historicity.<sup>23</sup>

An anonymous historian refuting the Tanners by not only admitting that many of their criticisms against Smith and the church were true, but also challenging the veracity of the First Vision as recounted in the LDS canon, was not a strategy that was likely to warm the hearts of a majority of LDS Church leaders. Then to have the booklet traced directly to the LDS Church Historical Department within a month of its publication represented

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20 The letter is reproduced in Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 24. Arrington actually knew of the pamphlet and spoke about it more than a year prior to that (Arrington, *Confessions of a Mormon Historian*, 2:453 n12).

21 Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 7.

22 Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 143–56.

23 Anonymous, *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* (Salt Lake City), 29–46.

a particularly bad bit of luck for Arrington, who was already sensing that his position as church historian was becoming increasingly untenable. On the same day Jerald called him to confront him over the booklet, Arrington recorded in his diary

my job as Church Historian is an impossible assignment. Consider the following.

1. The anti-Mormons (Jerald and Sandra Tanner, Michael Marquardt, Wesley Walters, John W. Fitzgerald) seek to use every advantage to get information. If one is truthful and “open,” they destroy me by citing you, by declaring I permitted them access, by tripping me up on inconsistencies. They’re out to injure the Church by injuring me.
2. The highly orthodox, cautious people, such as Elders [Ezra Taft] Benson, [Mark E.] Petersen, and [Boyd K.] Packer, are alert for every misstep; they want to discredit me.
3. [Church employee] Tom Truitt (and also Lauritz Petersen at an earlier stage) is a spy for Elders Benson and Petersen. He reads everything I do or say that he can get his hands on, underlines statements which, out of context, will be objectionable to Elders Benson and Petersen, and sends these on to them....

I feel very despondent today, pessimistic about my future, feel that I do not have the support of the brethren, and also that I do not have the support of the fellow historians I have a right to expect support from.<sup>24</sup>

For years the Tanners had argued that the LDS Church suppressed documents and was squeamish about its past. If it publicly began to look as though things were changing as Arrington and his team produced honest, if sympathetic, LDS history, church leaders privately proved Jerald and Sandra right. In the previous five years, apostles had complained publicly about Arrington and his team’s work. Within a few years, Arrington and his department would be moved to BYU, and the previous open access to the LDS archives would be curtailed.<sup>25</sup>

*Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism* had strengths and weaknesses in its challenge of the Tanners’ work, but one claim rings especially hollow: That the LDS Church archives functioned as all other professional and academic institutions throughout the world. The Tanners “berate the LDS for Suppression of Records,” the anonymous author said, but other “prestigious manuscript libraries throughout the world . . . have long refused permission to photocopy manuscripts,

<sup>24</sup> Jerald called Arrington on January 14, 1978. Arrington, *Confessions of a Mormon Historian*, 2:452–53 (Bergera’s brackets).

<sup>25</sup> Gregory A. Prince, *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 328–71.

or have restricted the photocopying of manuscripts—but this is not mentioned by the Tanners.”<sup>26</sup> The issue, however, was not simply restrictions on photocopying, but access itself. In addition, the other archives Clandestine refers to have not tended to restrict materials as a way of controlling the outcome of historical research.<sup>27</sup>

One Mormon historian asked the Tanners “not to expose the role of the Historical Department in the[ir] rebuttal lest it cause unsurmountable [*sic*] problems for Leonard Arrington.”<sup>28</sup> The Tanners were convinced, however, that the general authorities would have already seen Richard Steven Marshall’s thesis and that Arrington would have more than enough trouble because of disclosures made in it. Arrington would later describe Marshall’s paper as a “land mine . . . that later exploded.”<sup>29</sup> Marshall had been summoned to Mark E. Petersen’s office, questioned, and asked to provide a copy of his paper. Copies were made and subsequently distributed among the Twelve Apostles, and several Mormon scholars suffered the consequences.<sup>30</sup> The Tanners felt sure that whatever they published about the booklet could not get Arrington into any more trouble with the church than he already was. Rumors were spreading that Arrington’s days were numbered.

The Tanners published their twenty-two-page edition of *Answering Dr. Clandestine* in February 1978, less than two months after the booklet appeared. On February 24 Arrington was called into the office of his supervisor, G. Homer Durham, and informed that the First Presidency had decided to bring the Historical Department under its direct control, with Apostles Gordon B. Hinckley and Boyd K. Packer reporting to the presidency on the department’s actions. Arrington was also informed that he was no longer the official Church Historian, but would now be called Director of the History Division. Arrington was not to publicize this change in title.<sup>31</sup> ■

<sup>26</sup> Anonymous, *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View*, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Prince, *Leonard Arrington*, 205.

<sup>28</sup> Tanner and Tanner, *Answering Dr. Clandestine*, 43.

<sup>29</sup> Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian*, 154, without naming Marshall.

<sup>30</sup> Prince, *Leonard Arrington*, 298–99.

<sup>31</sup> Arrington, *Confessions of a Mormon Historian*, 2:474–81.

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## LETTERS AND EMAILS

**March 2022:** I sent an email in the early 2000's telling you how despicable I thought you were. I AM SORRY. You were always telling the truth. The church is so harmful. I can't believe how brainwashed I was until recently. Keep up the GREAT work.

**April 2022:** Excerpt from a letter sent by an LDS customer who actually ordered a book:

"You people in your cult ministries, you're really arrogant and haughty!! Why is it that you're always right and every one else is wrong? You dismiss a God-Given testimony, giving it no credit or importance at all; then condemn the group or church the convert has just joined!! . . . You think you're so right and you push your beliefs upon others. I, for one, cannot be pushed around like that. . . ."

BTW--she contacted us, we did not initiate contact with her.

**June 2022:** I am sure that Sandra isn't reading this, but just in case, thanks for being the exact opposite of who I was taught you are Jerald were. You have heard it thousands of times, but I will forever be in your debt, thank you for everything. You guys kick ass.

**June 2022:** This was my second order from utlm as I have been more than grateful for Sandra and Gerald's examples of truth, honesty, and integrity.

I saw Sandra on one of the episodes of Mormon Stories back in 2015 when I was having my "faith crisis" with the church and have loved and admired her since. Please give her the biggest hug from me and let her know that there are people in this world who love and value her more than she will ever know! I have appreciated her sacrifices to bring this truth to the world. My life has been incredibly blessed because of it.

**June 2022:** Thank you Sandra and your late husband Gerald for your years of hard work and perseverance to provide reliable materials and support to those who are investigating the Mormon church, usually from within the ranks. I, like many others, saw this book [Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?] on the series [Under the Banner of Heaven ?] and I'm eager to read this publication too. I've read other books and work your ministry has done. I'm really excited to read this one too! Bless your whole ministry for what you are doing: working on distributing the truth!

**July 2022:** I recently got your book in the mail, '3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon'. It's been really eye opening! I am also a former Mormon. I was baptized into the LDS faith in June 2015, and left in September of 2016. I accepted Jesus as my Savior on September 9, 2016, and he is the only one I need. I've seen many

of your interviews, on John Ankerberg, Mormon stories podcasts, and also a couple of documentaries on Mormonism. Your ministry has really helped me study the true history of the Mormon faith. Thanks for all you do Ms. Tanner!!

**July 2022:** We are still so appreciative and amazed that you came out and visited with us 4 years ago, just days after Christmas! What a wonderful and special honor it was to meet you. Thank you so for your 2 hours of time, for sharing your great knowledge, and for devoting your life to truth and to the gospel of our Savior. I sat across a table from you, where you lovingly explained so much that I never knew. Barbie and I praise God for your part in helping me come to a glorious place in my life; to be free and worshipping in a non-denominational church. We have found community and can rest in His Grace. Praise God for blessing you with His care, protection, and love. We certainly love you and pray for you always.

**August 2022:** I received my copy [of your biography] yesterday and have [read] the first 100 pages. So far I am loving this book. Some cool pictures too. Sandra is right, Jerald was a handsome young man. He looks like he's fresh out of high school in that wedding picture. I want to say thanks for the extras you sent with it. Especially that copy of the Nauvoo Expositor. That was awesome and I appreciate it.

**August 2022:** Dear Sandra

I live in the UK . . . and about 2 months ago 2 LDS missionaries turned up at my doorstep. I did initially try to avoid them and kept avoiding them but did end of talking to them in the end and met 3 times and talked for about 10 hours in total.

Initially I was positively surprised (especially by one of them) and was impressed with their commitment and dedication to their mission. What they told me did not seem to deviate from standard Christianity all that much and for the first time I felt that God and Jesus became a bit more accessible to me through them and the Book of Mormon than before (I was raised by Roman Catholic and Serbian Orthodox grandparents).

However, I did also do my own research on the side as I am a naturally curious and skeptical character. It was when I went beyond the Book of Mormon and I came across Joseph Smith's King Follett Sermon [<http://mlbd.byu.edu/follett.htm>] I realized that Mormonism fundamentally differs from Christianity. Joseph Smith's claims about the nature of God (and the Council of Gods) contradicts all descriptions of God in both Old and New Testaments of the Bible. In particular the claim that God created the world out of 'chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory.' God summoned the council of Gods and then came up with the plan to create the universe out of this chaotic [matter] that already existed. However, this raises the question: did its

existence pre-date the existence of God? If so it raises the question who or what in turn created this matter and where does it come from? Joseph Smith also mentions that God was once a man like we are now in this mortal ‘Fall of Man’ world and then became God and this is something we all can achieve and aspire to. But this would mean that there must have been meta-Gods (or something like that) that existed before God and these created the world for him to prove himself in and then became God.

None of this is spelled out in the Sermon and these logical gaps remain. I wanted to ask you as you are much more familiar with LDS ideology than I am: is it just me and my lack of complete understanding or does this simply not make sense? (to anyone who actually tries to think it through).

When I asked the missionaries they shrugged shoulders and said they did not know. (As it's not in the Book of Mormon and they generally don't want to talk about anything that is not in this book.)

I also cannot really buy into their claim that there has been a Great Apostasy and that priesthood authority was given to Joseph Smith by the Ghosts of John the Baptist, and Peter, James, and John and that the LDS Church is the only church on this earth that now has the authority to give the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Their Celestial Kingdom also seems to have a very ‘manmade flavour’, it’s a re-combination of things that already exist on this earth, just like most of the things in the Book of Mormon that make sense are pinched from the Bible and are a pastiche of it).

They say that these things are true and that if I don’t believe them I need to pray more and read more of the Book of Mormon and eventually it will happen.

I assume you have heard stories like mine many times by now. But what is interesting is that these missionaries seem to have unlocked and revived my belief in God and Jesus and I have started to pray and read the Bible and the Holy Spirit is giving me wonderful insights and experiences that are bringing me closer to God (I was effectively an atheist before they turned up).

**August 2022:** Sandra, you were very instrumental in getting me out of the cult. Born again, God bless.

**August 2022:** Thank you so much for your ministry. I have been able to touch dozens and dozens of people's lives with relative ease because of Gerald and Sandra's decades' long hard work. I am grateful for you and your team. Many blessings.

**August 2022:** I never thought I'd say this, but thank you so much for all of the hard work you & Jerald did researching the LDS church history.

I grew up thinking your “Anti-Mormon” literature was of the devil, but when I could no longer get answers from church sources & I needed to know the truth I realized your research told the truth. I've been out of the church

for 1 ½ yrs. & your ministry/bookstore was an important part of my journey. Thanks for spending time with my mom & me when we came to visit. You are a God-send to so many.

**September 2022:** I've told you before, but we will forever be grateful for what you did for us. The day after Thanksgiving or Christmas—the day after that holiday, about 7 years ago—I was through w/LDS religion, but my TBM husband was unsettled by the things I had told him. We dropped in to your bookstore, and you were THERE! The Lord provided the space, the time, and a bookstore free of other patrons, and you sat across your desk and with the gentle brilliance you possess, shared so much with him – for 2 hours! You planted a beautiful seed, and although it took several more years, [my husband] and I now rejoice in our new life in Christ and worship actively in a non-denominational church. I cannot imagine being happier in our new life. Thank you.

**September 2022:** If there ever was “A Marvelous Work and Wonder” it wound have to be the Utah Lighthouse Ministry and all the work that Brother and Sister Tanner have done in bringing Light to a Darken Religion. With much love

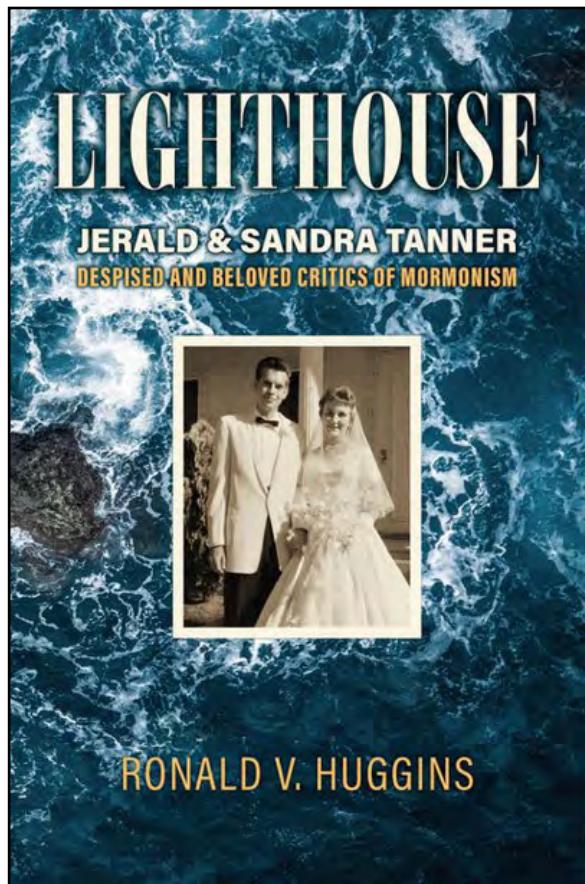
**October 2022:** I'm sure you will be getting many of these ‘thank you cards’ over the next few months, but I wanted to be included with those saying thank you.

In 1975 I found myself in love with a boy from an LDS family who having completed a mission to France was now questioning Mormonism. We had many discussions and I even came to SLC to meet with you. I gave him [Mormonism] ‘Shadow or Reality’ to read.

It was that book that convinced him that Mormonism was an evil cult . . . He became a Christian & . . . he deeply loves & trusts the Lord now. We have [grown] children and grandchildren who all love & serve Jesus. . . . Thank you for being faithful, humble, honest & persevering through what I'm sure were hard times . . .

**October 2022:** I became a believer in 1974 but I was not strong in my doctrine when in 1977 (at age 25) I was being proselytized by a Mormon young lady at Columbus Air Force Base where I worked. Not having the answers to her allegations about 3 levels of heaven, a mother god, God once being a man, etc., I turned to a friend who put me onto the works of Dr. Walter Martin and he also provided me some of the resources he had obtained from you and Jerald. . . .

Your resources (along with Walter Martin's books) provided me what I needed. Your research allowed me to respond to her accurately. This interaction with her actually began a life-long study of Mormonism (and the cults in general) that has strengthened my faith over the years and allowed me to address many, many other Mormons through the years . . . in confidence and truth.



*Description of the book from the  
Signature Books web site.*

While some may view Jerald and Sandra Tanner only as despised critics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is impossible to trace the course of Mormon history over the past sixty years without acknowledging their contribution. Many both inside and outside of Mormonism respect them for their unflinching quest for truth no matter the cost, as when Jerald declared Mark Hofmann's notorious Salamander Letter a forgery months before some experts declared it authentic. Their Utah Lighthouse Ministry has operated for decades only blocks from church headquarters, where their many works on Mormonism are still printed and sold. Jerald died in 2006 but Sandra continues to oversee the ministry.

The Tanners consistently challenged the church's position on many historical issues. Utah Lighthouse was long the only source for Mormon scholars to obtain crucial historical reprints, which they still happily or begrudgingly purchase; for others, the Tanners' writings have been the source of disillusionment with the church. Despised or beloved, the influence of Jerald and Sandra Tanner cannot be underestimated or ignored.

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## **Lighthouse: Jerald & Sandra Tanner**

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### Reviews of *Lighthouse: Jerald & Sandra Tanner*

**Lady in Utah:** I just finished reading the biography. I read it in about 12 hours in a span of 24 hours. I have not read a book so quickly in years. It was a most excellent and captivating account of 2 people just being faithful to God's leading. The detail was incredible. I was touched by your recount of dreaming of and talking to Jerald.... I am so blessed to know you.❖

**Local pastor:** I am writing both of you to say "thank you" for the sacrifices you have made for the cause of Christ. I have just finished the biography ... I have recommended it to several. It is an excellent book, well written with stories beyond the pale of believability. Thank you for enduring the nonsense described and still love Jesus. "Great ships rarely see their own wake." At least with this book you have, hopefully, been able to see enough of the wake of your lives to know a difference has been made, and a difference for the better. Thank you.❖

Gosh, I just finished the biographical account of Sandra and Jerald written by Huggins, and I never wanted it to end. It has to be one of the best books I've ever read, and trust me, I'm a very avid reader.

I "learned apologetics" from the Tanners, and I also believe that documentation is paramount.

I am the Administrator of [a Facebook page] designed to teach Christians about Mormonism. I'm not as kind and patient as the Tanners. My first concern has always been to protect the Body of Christ from Mormonism. But one thing I do try to accentuate is the need for documentation and references . . . to the point where I'm sure some of the posters get frustrated. But, hey, we can't make claims that are unsubstantiated.

God bless Sandra. . . . I'm trying to prepare others to take over when I finally retire (and that could be sooner than later), and I hope they stress the need for documentation in everything.

Jerald was a model for us all - he attended to detail. He made no false accusations. I will let everybody on my site know about this wonderful book.❖

### Reviews of *Lighthouse* from Amazon.com

#### Warm and in-depth retelling of the Tanner's story

I have long admired the Tanners for their writing about the significant problems in Mormon history and theology, and enjoyed this book that gave me more about their story and their personal lives. They are people with real integrity, something rare these days! ❖

#### What a Wonderful Book!

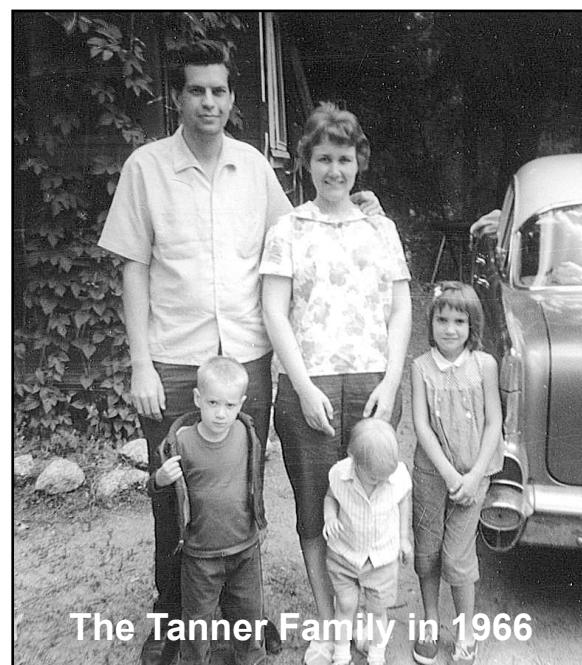
I have run into Sandra Tanner when she was interviewed by John Dehlin. I am not a member of the LDS church but had a faith crisis that led me to change churches. I found listening to Sandra talk about her journey in faith to be reassuring and helpful.

I bought the book already having heard some of her and her husband's stories. The book does not disappoint and provided me with more information about their ministry. As a writer myself, I love footnotes which were numerous and accurate. The narrative of Gerald's decline was very touching.

Congrats on a book well written about lives well lived.❖

#### Fascinating Stories

This book will interest anyone who has been on a spiritual journey or gotten pushback when they have asked honest questions about the viewpoints of their family or regional culture. Jerald and Sandra Tanner questioned what they had been taught by their Mormon religion. This book documents their quest for truth and so much more. It is also an intriguing history of what it was like to live in a Mormon culture a few decades ago. The book also addresses other issues such as racism during this era. This story demonstrates that one couple's courage can have a great impact that is still felt years later. It is inspiring. It establishes the Tanners deep roots in the culture that they questioned. The Mormon institution is more open about its teachings now days in part because of this couple. Also, the Kindle format is great. The footnotes are easy to read with a touch.❖





Sandra in the bookstore



Sandra working at her desk

## A Tanner Bibliography 1959–2022

**By H. Michael Marquardt**

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*A Tanner Bibliography 1959–2022* contains a list of publications written by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. It is compiled, as far as possible, in chronological order. The listing with title and short comment is based upon the format prepared by Robert R. Black in 1970. Jerald and Sandra first started publishing their works in a mimeograph format. They later used offset printing. The following publications are considered both of their writings and exceptions will have each name after the title. For a very short period they wrote papers while living in North Hollywood, California. All other publications were done in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sandra Tanner is listed as editor of the *Salt Lake City Messenger* commencing October 2003. Jerald Tanner died on October 1, 2006.

Not included in this bibliography are cassette tapes, videos, postings on web site, newspaper advertisements, introductions to reprinted publications, short handouts on various topics, and reprints of church periodicals. A few exceptions are listed. [Digital books are not included in this list. See <http://www.utlm.org/booklist/digitalbooks.htm>] “Ad” at the end of an entry means advertisement for the book by the Tanners and is included without quotation marks. All other notations are my own.

(A Tanner Bibliography 1959-2022 is posted on our web site at <http://utlm.org/onlineresources/pdf/tannerbibliography.pdf>)



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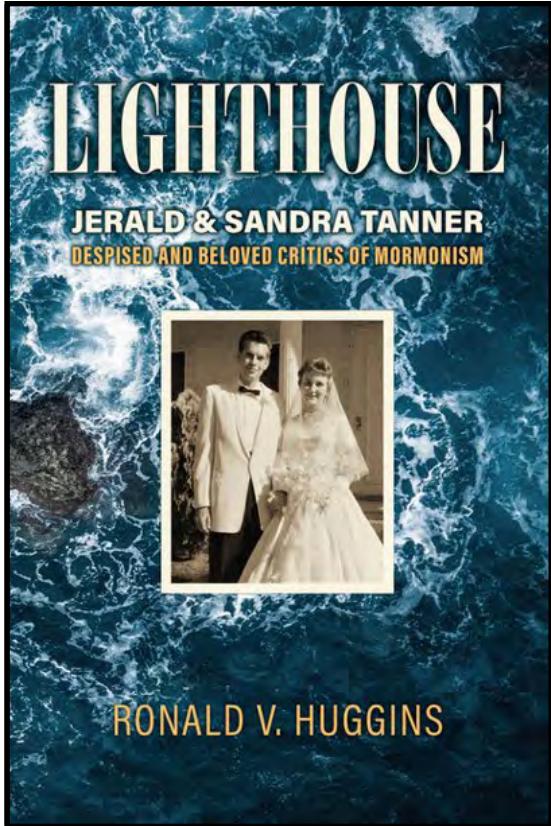
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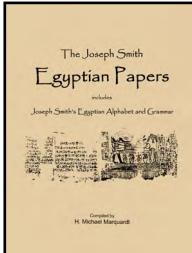


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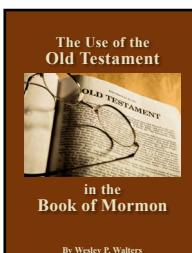
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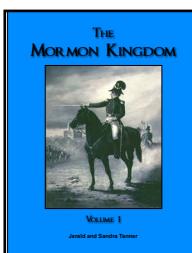
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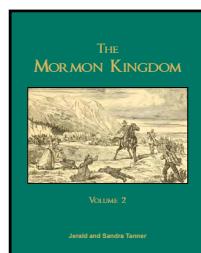
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