

MORMON LEADERS SUPPRESS "KEY" ITEM IN MURDER CASE

THE TRUE MCLELLIN DOCUMENTS FOUND IN FIRST PRESIDENCY'S VAULT!

On October 15, 1985, a bomb exploded in Salt Lake City, Utah, killing Steven F. Christensen, a Mormon bishop. Later that morning, Kathleen Sheets, the wife of another bishop, was killed when she picked up a package containing a booby-trapped shrapnel bomb. The following day, a Mormon document dealer named Mark Hofmann was seriously injured when a bomb exploded in his car.

After an intensive investigation, it was discovered that Mark Hofmann was the bomber. Hofmann was transporting a third bomb he had constructed at the time of the explosion. Although this bomb was prepared to kill someone else, it accidentally went off in his own car. Hofmann later confessed to the murders and was sent to the Utah State Prison.

In October, 1986, before Mr. Hofmann pleaded guilty, we published the book, *Tracking the White Salamander*. About two months after Mr. Hofmann pleaded guilty in 1987, we published a second book, *Confessions of a White Salamander*. In these books we discussed many important details regarding Hofmann's murders and the forged documents he sold to the Mormon Church and other collectors. Three other books were published the following

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year. The first book to appear was *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders*, by Linda Sillitoe and Allen Roberts, two Mormon historians. The second book was entitled, *Mormon Murders*, by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith. The last book, *A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder and Deceit*, was penned by Robert Lindsey, a reporter for the *New York Times*.

The authors of all three of these books interviewed investigators and all reached the conclusion that some leaders had not been forthright in their contacts with law enforcement officials. In addition, they felt that the church had been suppressing important documents from its members.

The Mormon Church leaders were very disturbed about the bad publicity and on September 18, 1988, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that "sources within the Mormon media establishment . . . said the church already has begun a battle against what it believes is the most serious attack against the church since the polygamy controversy... The church has embarked on a massive study of the books and news articles in an attempt to assemble a master list of errors, misquotes and exaggerations. **'Our response to all the allegations made against the church will be made public in about 60 days,'** [Richard P.] Lindsay said."

Notwithstanding this public announcement, this "master list of errors, misquotes and exaggerations" has never been made public. Some time later, however, it was announced that Richard E. Turley, Jr., managing director of the LDS Church Historical Department, was writing a book which would give the church's side of the issue. Mr. Turley's work has finally appeared under the title, *Victims: The LDS Church and the Mark Hofmann Case*.

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TURLEY'S BOMBSHELL!

While Richard Turley seems to have nothing to say about the two books we have written on the subject, he attacks all three of the other books. He does, however, make observations concerning our work on the Salamander letter and other questionable documents. His comments with regard to our work are generally good and contain nothing requiring a response.

One strange thing about the Turley book is that although the index lists thirteen different pages which refer to our work, it does not have a single reference to the three books he is attacking. Moreover, the names of the authors (Sillitoe, Roberts, Naifeh, Smith and Lindsey) never appear in the index. It seems that everything he has written about these authors is found in the footnotes. Mr. Turley apparently does not want these authors or their books to have more publicity than they have already received.

However this may be, in his footnotes Mormon apologist Richard Turley tries to undermine the authenticity of these books. He seems to be especially upset with charges that church leaders were trying to cover up facts during the investigation and does his best to try to smooth over these accusations. Unfortunately for the Mormon Church, however, Mr. Turley's laborious work of shoring up faith in church leaders comes crashing to the ground when a person reaches page 248 of his book. It is at that point that Turley divulges one of the most embarrassing secrets that a Mormon historian has ever revealed. Mr. Turley begins by saying that "March 1986 brought a startling discovery." Turley goes on to explain that at that time church officials became aware of the fact that **they had an important part of the McLellin collection concealed in the First Presidency's vault and that it had been there since 1908!**

William E. McLellin was one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the Mormon Church. He was well acquainted with Joseph Smith and other church leaders and knew a great deal about what was going on in the early church. Later, however, he turned against the church and accused Joseph Smith of altering the revelations which are found in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The current edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* still contains an "Explanatory Introduction" which purports to be the "Testimony of the Twelve Apostles to the Truth of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants." According to Daniel Macgregor, William McLellin claimed that this "Testimony" was "a base forgery." (*Changing of the Revelations*, page 32) McLellin was very upset that Joseph Smith would change revelations given by God. The *Salt Lake Tribune* for Oct. 6, 1875, printed this statement regarding McLellin: "His faith was first shaken by the changes made in the revelations. He had been careful to keep copies of the originals, presented proof that all the early revelations **were changed three times**, and considerably amended before they appeared in their present form."

In 1838, Oliver Cowdery, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, claimed that Joseph Smith had "A dirty, nasty, filthy affair" with a young woman named Fanny Alger (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 203-204). William McLellin claimed to have some explosive information on this matter. He asserted that Joseph Smith's wife, Emma, had told him about this affair. In his book, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, 1986, page 6, Richard S. Van Wagoner wrote: "McLellin's 1872 letter described Alger's relationship with Joseph Smith. 'Again I told [your mother],' the former apostle wrote, that 'I heard that one night she missed Joseph and Fanny Alger. She went to the

barn and saw him and Fanny in the barn together alone. She looked through a crack and saw the transaction!!! She told me this story too was verily true.' McLellin also detailed the Alger incident to a newspaper reporter for the 6 October 1875 *Salt Lake Tribune*." In 1852 Mormon Church leaders acknowledged that Joseph Smith practiced plural marriage, but they were silent concerning an incident in the barn.

Those who are familiar with the Hofmann case know that Mark Hofmann falsely claimed that he had discovered the McLellin collection and that he was helping the church obtain the collection so that it would not fall into the hands of the anti-Mormons who would use it to embarrass the church. Since William McLellin had made some startling charges like the one regarding the Fanny Alger affair, church leaders would naturally be nervous concerning what such a collection might contain. In his confession, Hofmann described a conversation he allegedly had with Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the church's First Presidency, regarding the McLellin collection:

A Well, of course, I basically told him that I could tell him what my fears were concerning its getting in to the enemy's hands, or whatever. . . . And his interest wasn't so much in having the Church obtain it as having it going someplace where—In fact, I would almost say he almost didn't want the Church to obtain it, he just wanted to make sure it **did not fall in to the enemy's hands** which was good since **I knew I didn't have it, I knew the Church couldn't obtain it.** (*Hofmann's Confession*, page 529)

Eventually, it was decided that Hugh Pinnock, a General Authority in the Mormon Church, would help Mark Hofmann obtain a loan of \$185,000 from First Interstate Bank so that he could go to Texas and obtain the McLellin collection. According to Richard Turley, Pinnock felt that the collection required special protection: "Pinnock offered to arrange for secure transportation of the documents **by jet or armored car**, but Hofmann said he would send them back to Utah by registered mail, adequately insured" (*Victims*, page 124). The transaction was to be very confidential. David E. Sorensen, "who had recently been asked to preside over the church's Canada Halifax Mission," would buy the collection and hide it away from the enemies of the church. Later, however, he would donate it to the church. Richard Turley reported that "Sorensen later recalled that Pinnock 'asked if I would listen to **a matter of concern to the church** and determine if I would be in a position or interested in helping.' . . . Sorensen recalled, 'Elder Pinnock was interested in seeing if I might purchase the collection. If so, would I consider donating it to the church at a later date.' . . . Sorensen later remembered saying that he would be happy to help the church if he could but wanted to 'investigate the matter in a business-like way'" (*Ibid.*, page 136).

Bishop Steven Christensen was supposed to authenticate the McLellin collection for Sorensen on October 15, 1985. Since Mr. Hofmann did not have the collection, he killed Steven Christensen that morning so that the transaction could not take place.

When church leaders later discovered that they already had the most significant part of the McLellin collection hidden in the First Presidency's vault and that it had been there since 1908, they found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. If they admitted that they had the collection all along, it would prove the charge made by critics that the church suppressed important documents from their people. In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for August 1985, we spoke of "the role that Mormon leaders

have taken in suppressing important documents.” We noted that in 1983, Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, secretly acquired a letter - later found to have been forged by Mark Hofmann—which purported to be in Joseph Smith’s own hand and linked the prophet to money-digging and magic. President Hinckley believed the letter was authentic. He paid Mr. Hofmann \$15,000 for the letter and then hid it in the First Presidency’s vault.

When researchers learned what happened and said that it was being suppressed, the church decided to “stonewall.” A spokesman for the church said: “The church doesn’t have the letter . . . It’s **not in the church archives or the First Presidency’s vault**” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 29, 1985). Finally, when it became clear that some Mormon scholars had photocopies of the letter and were going to turn them over to the news media, the church backed down, and the same spokesman admitted his earlier statement was “in error”: “The purported letter **was indeed acquired** by the church. For the present it is stored in the First Presidency’s archives . . .” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 7, 1985).

In the issue of our newsletter cited above, we made this observation: “The First Presidency’s archive or vault, where the 1825 letter was concealed, is undoubtedly the ultimate ‘black hole.’ Documents which are embarrassing to the Mormon Church disappear into this bottomless abyss and are seldom heard of again.”

The fact that church leaders could lose sight of the McLellin collection in the First Presidency’s vault for almost eight decades shows just how dark it is inside the “black hole” which contains the deeper secrets of Mormonism.

The disappearance and rediscovery of the McLellin collection would almost make one wonder if the right hand knows what the left hand is doing at church headquarters. While Mormons might expect this type of thing to happen at some bureaucratic agency, they will have a difficult time explaining how this could happen in a church which is supposed to be led by direct revelation from God. The implications are very serious indeed. For example, how can one explain the fact that Mormon leaders were helping Mark Hofmann obtain a collection from Texas which they already had in their own vault?

In view of the circumstances, it would be very difficult for church leaders to come forth and admit they had made such a serious mistake. On the other hand, however, they faced a far more serious problem if they did not reveal the existence of the McLellin collection. To continue to suppress the existence of the collection would mean that church leaders would have to deliberately keep a key piece of evidence hidden from investigators who were working on the Hofmann case. Unfortunately for the Mormon Church, Richard Turley makes it very clear that **church leaders chose to keep law enforcement officials completely in the dark concerning the existence of the McLellin collection.**

The importance of this piece of evidence cannot be overstated. While investigators seemed to have a great deal of evidence that Mark Hofmann forged documents and defrauded investors in his schemes, they had a real problem establishing a motive for the murders. At first some investigators believed that the bombings might relate in some way to the Salamander letter. (Hofmann had sold the Salamander letter to Steven Christensen for a great deal of money.) This theory, however, could not be confirmed by any evidence. Christensen apparently believed the letter was genuine and seemed pleased that Hofmann had sold it to him.

The McLellin collection, on the other hand, seemed to provide an explanation for the murder of Steven Christensen. Hofmann’s reluctance to produce the collection was very upsetting to Christensen. Since Hofmann did not have the collection, there was nothing he could do except to continue to give Mr. Christensen excuses. Consequently, friction continued to mount between the two men. At Hofmann’s preliminary hearing, Curt Bench said that about three weeks before the murders, Steven Christensen called him and wanted him to convey a message to Mark Hofmann. Bench testified that Christensen told him that “a member of the First Quorum of Seventy and an apostle . . . were upset because Mark had defaulted on a loan to a bank and had written a check and the check had bounced . . . They were quite upset over this and said some very serious things could happen as a result of that not being taken care of.”

Curt Bench went on to say: “Steve told me that various things could occur if Mark didn’t make good and some of them were he would certainly lose his credibility and credit with the Church and with President Hinckley, that **criminal action could be taken, that he could conceivably go to jail**, he could also be sued by the bank or even by the Church if the Church was sued. He could **lose his membership in the Church**. . . . It was very serious. And Steve wanted me to convey that to Mark . . .” Bench also testified that “Steve used the term crook” when referring to Hofmann. (*Tracking the White Salamander*, page 24)

Investigators did not believe that Mark Hofmann had the McLellin collection to turn over to Mr. Christensen and felt that this was Hofmann’s motive for killing Christensen—by getting rid of Christensen he could buy some time. They could not, however, actually prove that Hofmann did not have the documents hidden away some place. There was no way to know for certain. If Mr. Hofmann should produce the collection at the time of his trial, it would destroy the motive for murder and could ruin the murder case. The Mormon Church, of course, had the vital information needed by prosecutors in the First Presidency’s vault. Church leaders knew that there was no way that Mark Hofmann could produce McLellin’s diaries because they already had them. It is plain, therefore, that **Mormon Church leaders were suppressing some of the most important evidence in the entire case!**

A close examination of Richard Turley’s book shows that

BOOK ON McLELLIN

THE TRUE STORY OF THE McLELLIN COLLECTION, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. We are now in the process of preparing a book that will not only deal with the rediscovery of the genuine McLellin collection, but will also discuss Mark Hofmann’s bogus “McLellin collection.” It will show how Hofmann used blackmail-like tactics to get a General Authority of the Mormon Church to obtain \$185,000 for him so the collection would not fall into the hands of the “enemies of the church. In addition, this book will provide Hofmann’s own confession with regard to his fake collection. The book will also contain important information on the ex-Mormon Apostle William E. McLellin and some of his writings. **Regular Price: \$4.00**

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Mormon Church leaders were engaged in a conspiracy of silence with regard to the McLellin collection to save the church's image. The following quotations from Turley's book make this very clear:

March 1986 brought a startling discovery. Historical Department personnel seeking information about William McLellin had contacted Dean Jessee. . . . Jessee visited the department and explained to Glenn Rowe that he had found some interesting information about McLellin in his research files. Jessee's notes referred to correspondence in the department's uncatalogued Joseph F. Smith collection. The correspondence mentioned McLellin's diaries and other belongings. . . . Rowe and his staff searched the collection and located letters that amazed church officials.

The first letter had been written by J. L. Traughber of Doucette, Texas . . . Dated January 13, 1908, and addressed to the librarian of the church, the letter explained that Traughber had an original copy of *A Book of Commandments*. . . . what Traughber offered next was even rarer. He wrote, "I also have the **Journal**, in part, of **Elder W. E. McLellin** for the years 1831, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6." Traughber said he had tried to get more of the journal from McLellin's widow, but she had refused to give them up "as she said she did not want some things to be known." Traughber said he also had some manuscript books that McLellin had written. . . and offered to sell them for fifty dollars.

On January 18, 1908, President Joseph F. Smith and his counselors wrote to President Samuel O. Bennion of the Central States Mission. The Presidency . . . instructed Bennion on how to handle the offer: "While we have studiously avoided expressing any particular desire on our part to purchase the things mentioned by Mr. Traughber, we desire you to know that **we would like very much to possess McLellan's [sic] Journal**, if for no other reason than to prevent the writings of this unfortunate and erratic man, whose attitude after his apostasy was inimical to the Prophet Joseph Smith, **from falling into unfriendly hands**; and for this reason alone, we feel quite willing to pay the price asked for these things . . ." The Presidency also suggested that Bennion contact McLellin's widow to obtain the rest of the journals, even if their acquisition were to cost another fifty dollars.

The letter to Bennion mentioned an interview Joseph F. Smith and another church leader had had with McLellin in 1878, when McLellin had told them he had writings he wished to publish. The Presidency wrote Bennion that the manuscripts . . . might be the same ones McLellin had mentioned in 1878. "We hope they are," the First Presidency wrote, "as it would be **an act of mercy** on our part to purchase them, and thus **prevent them from being published by unfriendly hands** to the injury of innocent people."

Rowe and his staff also found a February 12, 1908, response from Bennion to the First Presidency. Bennion reported that he . . . had acquired the proffered materials from Traughber. . . . He said he would send all the acquired items to the First Presidency that day by registered mail.

Rowe had kept his new supervisor, Richard Turley, informed about Jessee's clue and the letters to which it led. Turley told Dean Larsen about the letters, and Larsen informed (apostles) Packer and Oaks, who in turn contacted the First Presidency. When Gordon Hinckley learned of the letters, he asked Francis Gibbons if the First Presidency's vault contained the items the letters mentioned. Gibbons searched the vault. Hinckley and the other church officials then learned to their astonishment, that **the church had owned McLellin's journals and manuscripts all along**.

The journals . . . revealed a man deeply dedicated to his religion. . . .

The little manuscript books, on the other hand, typified the later McLellin, an avowed enemy of the church. . . .

Like the materials the *Tribune* had discovered, the McLellin items found in church possession were not the McLellin collection touted by Hofmann. . . . Unlike the *Tribune's* discovery, however, the church's McLellin materials included a key item from the collection Hofmann claimed to have bought. That item, **McLellin's early journals, confirmed to church officials that Hofmann was a fraud**.

The discovered documents did not fall within any of the subpoenas issued to the church, and thus officials were **not legally obligated to mention them to anyone**. Still, **it was apparent they were relevant to the case**, and those involved in the discovery felt the documents' existence should be revealed. Yet disclosing them would not come without a cost. Church officials had sought to dispel the notion that they were buying documents to hide them. Disclosure of the newly discovered McLellin materials, however, would reinforce notions of **church suppression** because those documents had in fact been **bought at the direction of the First Presidency and locked away nearly eight decades earlier**, eventually to be forgotten. . . . Alluding in his journal to the day's remarkable discovery, [Apostle] Oaks wrote, "Today [Boyd K. Packer] & I learned that the Church has some documents that have been unknown until now, but will be of great interest when they are revealed, as they should be prior to the Hoffmann trial (in my opinion)."

What church officials did not know was that there would be no trial. (*Victims: The LDS Church and the Mark Hofmann Case*, pages 248-251)

This is a shocking disclosure to be coming from the pen of Richard Turley, managing director of the LDS Church Historical Department. As the reader will see from the quotation above, Mr. Turley acknowledges that he himself became aware of the fact that the church had the McLellin collection in March 1986. Although Turley practiced law before becoming a historian, he obviously felt it was more important to protect the church than to tell investigators working on the Hofmann case about this important matter. The church continued to suppress knowledge of the collection for six years after it was rediscovered.

Why Turley would reveal the matter at this time is a matter of speculation. It could be that Mr. Turley was bothered by his role in the matter and felt compelled to bring out the truth. On the other hand, there could have been concern that too many people knew what had happened and that the "enemies of the church" would eventually find out about the cover-up and publish the facts to the world. When Mormon leaders are convinced that something embarrassing is about to leak out, they sometimes try to get the information out first. For example, the Mormon Church at first denied that the 1825 letter existed, but then rushed to print it when it was discovered that scholars were preparing to release it to the press. In any case, we are very pleased that Mr. Turley has revealed this information.

After Mormon historian Dean Jessee reported the existence of the correspondence mentioning the McLellin collection, a number of people became aware of the fact that the church had obtained the collection. Church archivist Glenn Rowe received the information from Jessee. Rowe, in turn, reported the matter to Richard Turley and Turley relayed the information to Dean Larsen. Larsen then informed apostles Boyd K. Packer and Dallin H. Oaks about the matter. These two apostles "contacted the First Presidency." The First Presidency is composed of President Ezra Taft Benson (the Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the church), President Gordon B. Hinckley and President Thomas S. Monson. Francis Gibbons was the one who finally found the McLellin collection in the vault. In addition, members of Glenn Rowe's staff also knew about the matter.

Although at least a dozen people knew about the McLellin collection, no one seems to have reported the matter to investigators. Those on the lower levels may have felt that church leaders would tell police that the McLellin collection had been found. Instead, the highest leaders of the church chose to remain silent and put the church in a cover-up situation. Since the church is supposed to have a “living prophet,” one would think that he would point out that the information must be reported to investigators.

Furthermore, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks had enough legal knowledge that he should have demanded that a full report be immediately turned over to the police. Richard Turley says that Apostle Oaks “served as a United States Supreme Court clerk, University of Chicago law professor, American Bar Foundation executive director, Brigham Young University president, and Utah Supreme Court justice” (*Victims*, page 116). Mr. Turley also states that “Oaks’s experience as a lawyer and judge **made him sensitive to investigators’ need for any information** that might help solve a crime . . .” (*Ibid.*, page 163).

On page 171 of the same book, Turley reports that after the bombings, Shannon Flynn came to church headquarters and talked with Apostle Oaks. Flynn wanted to know what to tell investigators. Oaks responded, “‘As soon as I learned that Mark Hofmann had been the object of a bomb, I knew that I had some facts that would help police. . . . I talked to two F. B. I. agents. I told them **everything I knew** about it. The Church is **going to cooperate fully and it has absolutely nothing to hide**. Sometimes there are some confidential transactions but this is a murder investigation. **Confidentiality is set aside**. We will cooperate fully.’”

On page 153, Turley tells of Mark Hofmann coming to Apostle Oaks’ office: “Hofmann said he thought bombing investigators might want to question him. He worried about what to tell them. Oaks told him to tell the truth. . . . Oaks said that as far as he knew, Hofmann’s activities with the McLellin collection, though confidential . . . had nothing to do with the bombing investigation. Police probably would not ask him about the deal. If they did, he should answer **truthfully and completely**.”

Richard Turley shows that Oaks also gave Alvin Rust similar advice: “[Martell] Bird recorded, ‘He told Brother Rust that he should tell the truth in every instance, and that he **should not be worried at all about the Church**, because when the facts all come out, the Church will have no need to be embarrassed . . .’” (page 175).

On December 11, 1985, Apostle Oaks addressed members of the Historical Department. According to Turley, Oaks encouraged employees to be forthright: “Of the bombing investigation, he said, ‘We are like others in that we **must cooperate fully** in an investigation and tell the truth on all matters material to that investigation’” (page 226).

While at first Apostle Oaks claimed that he told the F. B. I. “everything I knew” about the Hofmann case and freely gave advice to others about how they should be completely honest and provide **all relevant information** to investigators, when he realized that the church would be embarrassed by the truth, he clammed up just like the other church leaders. While Richard Turley claimed that “Oaks’s experience as a lawyer and judge **made him sensitive to investigators’ need for any information** that might help solve a crime,” when he saw the church was in danger, he put a bridle on his tongue and joined in the conspiracy of silence.

The reader will remember that Turley quoted this statement from Apostle Oaks’ journal on the day that the McLellin collection was discovered: “Today [Boyd K. Packer] & I learned that the Church has some documents that have been unknown

until now, but will be of great interest when they are revealed, as they should be prior to the Hoffmann trial (in my opinion).”

While Turley seems to feel that this entry shows Oaks’ openness, it seems to foreshadow the possibility of a cover-up. The reader will note, for example, that Oaks does not mention the fact that he is talking about the McLellin collection. He merely states: “I learned that the Church has some documents . . .” Why would he hesitate to identify the documents? If Turley had not revealed that Oaks was talking about the McLellin collection, a person reading his diary today would not know what he was talking about and would assume that whatever the documents were, they had been made available.

Apostle Oaks’ statement that “when they are revealed, as **they should be** prior to the Hofmann trial (**in my opinion**)” seems to suggest that there was a possibility that they would not be revealed prior to the trial. (They, of course, would be of no value to prosecutors after the trial.) The words, “in my opinion” seem to imply that if the other church leaders did not want them available, Oaks would support the decision.

If the church had no plans for a cover-up, Apostle Oaks would have written something like the following: “Today I learned the Church has had the McLellin collection stored in a vault since 1908. Since this is very important to the Hofmann case, we have called the county prosecutor and informed him of this development. He will pick up the documents in the morning.”

Oaks’ statement that the documents should be revealed “prior to the Hofmann trial” certainly raises an important question. By March 4, 1986, the day Oaks made the entry in his journal, church leaders were well aware of the fact that prosecutors were preparing for Mark Hofmann’s preliminary hearing. If the prosecution could not produce sufficient evidence at that hearing, Hofmann would be set free and there would be no trial. For this reason investigators were working feverishly to obtain the evidence necessary to be sure that Hofmann would be bound over for trial. The fact that the Mormon Church had rediscovered the McLellin collection would have been extremely important to their case.

Since Apostle Oaks did not mention anything about revealing the McLellin collection “prior to the Hofmann trial,” it is obvious that church leaders were planning to keep it suppressed at least through the preliminary hearing. The preliminary hearing did not start until April 14, 1986. This gave church leaders almost a month and a half to turn over the McLellin collection to investigators. Instead of coming clean, however, they chose to keep the documents hidden. The General Authorities of the church were already concerned enough about the bad publicity the church would receive during the preliminary hearing and must have hoped that no trial would ever occur. This, of course, is exactly what happened and the church never had to reveal the truth about the McLellin collection to investigators.

Since Salt Lake County prosecutors did not have the important piece of evidence that the church could have provided, their case on the murders was not as strong as it could have been. They were obviously concerned about the strength of their case. Robert Lindsey reported the following: “At the end of a week of testimony, David Biggs [one of the prosecutors] wrote in his journal: ‘I really feel **as if we’ve missed the “glue”** that connects the pieces of this puzzle together. **The pieces don’t seem to want to stay together**. We have evidence, motive, murder, but it is all just a degree off. I’m still trying to find out what the problem is’” (*A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder and Deceit*, page 317).

As we have already shown, Richard Turley has admitted that the McLellin collection in the church vault “included a **key**

item” which “confirmed to church officials that Hofmann was a fraud.” Turley also acknowledged that “it was apparent they [the McLellin documents] **were relevant to the case**, and those involved in the discovery felt the documents’ existence **should be revealed**.” A person certainly does not have to be a lawyer to know that the church should have immediately made these documents available.

Church leaders had publicly stressed how they were cooperating with investigators. In the beginning, the church officials pledged “‘our **fullest cooperation** with city, county and federal authorities in the investigation’” (*Victims*, page 165). Hugh Pinnock, the General Authority who helped Hofmann obtain the loan for \$185,000, wrote a letter to Steven Christensen’s widow in which he said: “Several of us have talked with law enforcement people. We want them to **know whatever is relevant**” (*Ibid.*, page 176).

On October 19, 1985, “the church issued its news release . . . ‘From the outset of this investigation,’ the release noted, ‘the Church has cooperated fully with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, **responding to every inquiry and request**. The Church will continue to cooperate with law enforcement officials to **bring to light any facts that may contribute to this investigation**’” (page 177).

A VERY BAD EXAMPLE

Church leaders obviously broke their pledge to “bring to light any facts” that would help investigators. Richard Turley tried to justify the church’s suppression of the records by saying: “The discovered documents **did not fall within any of the subpoenas** issued to the church, and thus officials **were not legally obligated to mention them to anyone**” (page 250). This is certainly a very poor excuse. It seems analogous to a person finding a pistol used to commit a murder and then maintaining there was no obligation to turn the gun over to police because it had not been subpoenaed.

Investigators certainly would have subpoenaed the McLellin collection if they had any idea that the church had it. On October 19, 1985, the Mormon Church issued a news release which stressed that the McLellin collection had never been purchased by the church: “So far as we have been able to determine, no Church officials or personnel have ever seen the ‘M’Lellin Collection,’ **nor has it been purchased by the Church**, directly or indirectly” (*Victims*, page 178).

On October 23, 1985, the church held a press conference. According to Richard Turley, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “**I had never heard of the McLellin collection**,” Hinckley said, and he asked Hofmann what was in it . . . ‘I have never seen any such collection,’ Hinckley continued, ‘and **know nothing about it** beyond that’” (*Ibid.*, pages 191-192). Turley quotes Apostle Dallin Oaks as saying the following at the same press conference: “‘Moreover,’ Oaks explained, ‘to have the church involved in the acquisition of a collection at this time would simply fuel the then current speculation reported by the press that the church already had something called the McLellin collection or was trying to acquire it in order to suppress it’” (page 193).

Since Mormon leaders had emphatically stressed that they had never seen the McLellin collection and that the church had not obtained it, law enforcement officers had no reason to think otherwise. When the collection came to light, Mormon officials should have immediately reported the discovery. Instead, however, they took advantage of the fact that investigators were in the dark concerning the matter.

That there was, in fact, a conspiracy of silence is evident from the following: Hugh Pinnock, the General Authority who arranged the loan of \$185,000 for Mark Hofmann, was called upon to testify at Hofmann’s preliminary hearing. The following is taken from an official tape recording of the hearing:

ROBERT STOTT—To your knowledge, did any authority in the LDS Church ever obtain or possess the McLellin collection?
HUGH PINNOCK—No.

This would have been a very good time for Mr. Pinnock to have said, “Yes, the McLellin collection has been in our vault since 1908.” Richard Turley tries to explain away this testimony by saying: “He [Pinnock] had **not been told about the McLellin materials** discovered the previous month” (*Victims*, page 274). It may be true that Hugh Pinnock was not told about the discovery, but if this is the case, it raises a very important question: why would the other church leaders keep him in the dark about such an important issue. The answer, of course, must be that they were doing their best to hide the information from investigators and feared that if Pinnock knew about the collection he might have to tell prosecutors about it.

HINCKLEY NOT CALLED

Even if Hugh Pinnock did not know about the discovery, President Gordon B. Hinckley, who many believe is really running the church because of President Ezra Taft Benson’s age, knew all about the matter. He was subpoenaed to testify at the preliminary hearing about two weeks after he learned that the church had the McLellin collection in its vault.

Richard Turley gives this interesting information about a meeting Hinckley had with the prosecutors:

Before the preliminary hearing, Hinckley received a visit from prosecutors Bob Stott and David Biggs. Church counsel Wilford Kirton also attended the meeting. . . .

Biggs recalled that they told Hinckley why they were there, and then Kirton began to do most of the talking. Eventually, however, the prosecutors explained that they needed to talk to Hinckley so they could find out what his relationship had been with Hofmann. Hofmann had claimed a close relationship with the church leader, telling people that he had Hinckley’s private numbers and could get hold of him day or night, in the country or out. Prosecutors wanted to know when, where, and how many times Hinckley had met with Hofmann and with Christensen.

Hinckley said he had met about half a dozen times with Hofmann, but he could not recall any information about those meetings beyond what he had told investigators earlier. **His answers frustrated both Stott and Biggs**. “President Hinckley was very little help, **extremely little help**,” Stott later said. “His memory of the occasions was very poor.” . . . Though he kept a journal, Hinckley had been forced to turn to Francis Gibbons when trying to reconstruct for investigators the meetings he had with Hofmann. (*Victims*, pages 253-255)

Although we may never know what President Hinckley told the prosecutors concerning the McLellin collection at that time, one thing is certain: he did not reveal that the church had the collection in its vault.

All accounts seem to agree that Mr. Hinckley did not want to testify at the preliminary hearing. Although there were probably a number of reasons why he did not want to be questioned under oath, he must have been very concerned that he would be asked questions which might lead to the disclosure of the rediscovery of the McLellin collection. Richard Turley gives this information:

Because Hinckley was so busy, [church counsel Wilford] Kirton suggested to the prosecutors that they **postpone calling him as a witness until the trial itself** rather than using him at the preliminary hearing. Hinckley added that **he would prefer not to testify**. Kirton's suggestion riled Stott, who thought the attorney was being paternalistic. "How old is he?" Stott later asked, recalling the incident. "Anyway, the old experienced lawyer going to tell the young lawyer how to handle the case. I became very incensed at that . . . he's saying, 'Why don't we do it this way? Why don't we save President Hinckley for the trial and don't use him at the prelim.?' I got a little upset at that, him trying to tell me how to run my case. And so I just told him, 'I'm in charge. I need President Hinckley. And **he'll testify**.'" . . .

Kirton let it be known explicitly, "Is there some way we could **get along without President Hinckley**?" Stott recalled. "Is there some way that he could have a deposition or whatever it takes?"

Stott told Kirton the only way the prosecution would consent to have Hinckley not testify at the preliminary hearing would be for the defense to agree to stipulate to what the prosecution wanted Hinckley to testify about if he were present: that he bought the Stowell letter from Hofmann on a certain date for a given price. **Kirton and Hinckley asked Stott if he would broach the subject with the defense, and he agreed to do so.** (*Victims*, pages 255-256)

President Hinckley finally got his way and did not have to testify at the preliminary hearing. Robert Lindsey wrote the following regarding Hinckley's escape from testifying at the hearing:

To most members of the prosecution team, it was plain that Mark Hofmann had blackmailed the church. It was equally clear that leaders of the church were terrified that Gordon B. Hinckley would be required to testify against him and would be forced to testify, under oath, about his dealings with Hofmann.

From the first weeks of the investigation, lawyers for the church sought to head off this possibility. . . .

Shortly before the preliminary hearing was scheduled to begin, David Biggs and Bob Stott met with Hinckley . . .

Hinckley said it was not in the best interests of the church that he be subpoenaed to testify at the preliminary hearing . . . He had far more *important* things to do as a member of the First Presidency's Office than to appear in court; Hofmann's hearing was insignificant compared with the important challenges that he faced in his job . . .

Gordon Hinckley was not summoned as a witness after all..

Judge Grant, a devout Mormon, later attributed his absence to the trial attorneys' concern for Hinckley's health. But church spokesmen said Hinckley was not ill, and in fact the reasons were more complex than that. Ron Yengich, Hofmann's lawyer, was no more eager to have the leader of the church that dominated the community raise the specter of his having been blackmailed by his client than the church wanted a man close to its Prophet to appear to have been blackmailed.

Yengich agreed to accept a statement—a stipulation . . . (*A Gathering of Saints*, pages 311, 318)

The stipulation itself proves to be embarrassing to the church now that it is known that President Hinckley knew about the rediscovery of the McLellin collection before the stipulation was entered into. According to Richard Turley, the "stipulation, which Biggs noted was 'prepared and signed by Mr. Yengich and Mr. Stott,' identified Gordon Hinckley and stated that he met with Hofmann sometime between January 11 and 14, 1983 . . . Finally, it stated that Hinckley '**has never seen nor possessed nor has any knowledge of the whereabouts of a document or a group of documents known as the McLellin Collection.**'" (*Victims*, page 303)

It is clear, then, that notwithstanding the fact that President Hinckley was fully aware of the rediscovery of the McLellin collection, both the prosecution and the defence understood him to say he never knew anything about any "group of documents known as the McLellin Collection."

Richard Turley tries to minimize the importance of this by saying that the stipulation was "read into the [court] record without Hinckley ever seeing it. Had he reviewed it, Hinckley **could** have revised the stipulation to reflect the church's discovery of McLellin materials in its possession" (*Ibid.*). The reader will notice that while Turley says that Gordon B. Hinckley "**could** have revised the stipulation," he does not go so far as to say that he "**would**" have revised it. In any case, it is clear that President Hinckley not only refused to provide the important information about the McLellin collection to the prosecution, but his statements made to those who took part in the stipulation led them to believe that he had absolutely no knowledge of the location of any McLellin material.

A DANGEROUS GAMBLE

In holding back the McLellin collection from investigators, the Mormon Church was taking a real risk. As we stressed earlier, Richard Turley admitted that the collection included "a key item" which convinced church leaders "Hofmann was a fraud." Moreover, Turley acknowledged that this "key item" was "relevant to the case." This raises a very important question: what if the suppression of the McLellin collection by church leaders made it impossible for prosecutors to get Hofmann bound over for trial? If prosecutors had failed to make a strong enough case, we could have had a cold-blooded murderer walking the streets of Salt Lake City today. Although there is no way of knowing for certain, it is reasonable to believe that Hofmann might murder again.

If church leaders were convinced that Hofmann was a fraud after learning about the McLellin collection, why was Judge Grant not allowed to see this highly significant part of the evidence?

Richard Turley explains that the church hoped that the prosecutors had sufficient evidence without the church revealing the discovery of the McLellin collection: "If the prosecution's evidence was as strong as some sources had **hinted**, the preliminary hearing would almost certainly result in Hofmann's being bound over for trial" (*Victims*, page 251). Turley, however, tries to show that the church did not have an inside track on what was going on in the Salt Lake County Attorney's Office: "The cautious distance being kept between church headquarters and investigators meant church officials remained **largely unaware** of the direction the investigation was taking, except to the extent they could piece together clues from media reports, subpoenas, and other sources" (*Ibid.*).

Turley reports that on February 6, 1986, Apostle Dallin Oaks expressed doubts regarding the prosecution's ability to prevail: "Dallin Oaks, who viewed the case with his extensive legal background, began to wonder about the adequacy of the murder case against Hofmann and about whether, even at this late date, the prosecution had filed its charges prematurely. 'I hope the prosecution has more evidence on the murder charges than the newspaper speculation has hinted,' he confided in his journal" (*Ibid.*, page 243).

It is certainly deplorable that church leaders would take such a gamble with regard to a person charged with two murders just so they could protect the church's image. On page 251, Turley

tries to justify this by making this strange statement: "Because a preliminary hearing was not a trial to determine ultimate guilt or innocence, state law would allow prosecutors to try again if they failed during the first hearing to prove probable cause." Turley seems to be hinting that if the prosecutors did not succeed the first time around, the Mormon Church could bring forth the McLellin collection and a second preliminary hearing could be conducted.

Does Mr. Turley realize the implications of what he is suggesting? The preliminary hearing extended over five weeks causing great pain to the relatives of the victims. In addition, it cost a great deal of money. It seems hard to believe that if prosecutors were unsuccessful in their first attempt to bind Hofmann over for trial, that church leaders would have stepped forward with the McLellin collection. The church was already very upset with the bad publicity it had received. In the *Messenger* for September 1987, page 8, we quoted Apostle Dallin Oaks as saying: "In the course of this episode, we have seen some of the most sustained and intense LDS Church-bashing since the turn of the century. . . . the Church and its leaders have been easy marks for assertions and innuendo ranging from charges of complicity in murder to repeated recitals that the Church routinely **acquires and suppresses church history documents in order to deceive its members and the public.**"

If church leaders had come forth with the McLellin collection after an unsuccessful preliminary hearing, it would have caused a far greater outcry than they encountered during the early investigation of the bombings. The church would have been accused of covering up and protecting a murderer to save face with the public. A second preliminary hearing would have probably taken a good deal of time to schedule and complete. In the meantime a murderer would have been running loose. Furthermore, investigators and prosecutors would have been incensed at church leaders who had hidden a "key item" from them. Many of them were already upset with the church's lack of cooperation. Fortunately, Judge Grant did find there was enough evidence to warrant a trial.

Richard Turley makes this peculiar statement regarding the period after the hearing: "When the curtain closed on the preliminary hearing, church officials . . . anticipated a long intermission before the next acts began in the legal drama. While waiting for the curtain to rise again, **they continued to cooperate** with investigators and prosecutors gathering evidence in the case" (*Victims*, page 307). How Turley can convince himself that the church was cooperating when they were withholding one of the most important pieces of evidence is very difficult to understand. That church leaders would continue to hide this vital information from investigators is almost beyond belief.

THE PLEA BARGAIN

The new information about the suppression of the McLellin collection also raises questions regarding the plea bargain which finally ended the Hofmann case without a trial. It seems obvious that church leaders did not want the case to go to trial and were hoping that some kind of agreement could be reached. Although President Hinckley managed to maneuver his way out of testifying at the preliminary hearing, he probably would have been called as a witness at the trial. Hinckley would have been very uncomfortable testifying concerning the McLellin collection when he knew that it was being suppressed in the First Presidency's vault. Furthermore, Glenn Rowe knew about the rediscovery and it seems likely that he would be called as a witness.

If prosecutors had an airtight case they probably would have sought the death penalty and would not have agreed to the type of plea bargain they entered into. Although we may never know for certain, the fact that the church refused to provide important evidence it had in its possession may have made the prosecutors more willing to accept the agreement and cancel the trial.

SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS

The suppressive actions of the top leaders of the Mormon Church have done more damage to the church than the "enemies of the church" could have done in many years. It is going to be very difficult to sweep this matter under the rug. Their actions will undoubtedly haunt the church for many years to come.

As stated earlier, in 1908 Joseph F. Smith, the sixth prophet of the church, ordered that the McLellin collection be purchased by the church to keep it "from falling into unfriendly hands." If President Smith had made the collection available to researchers instead of suppressing it, its contents would have been known by researchers and Mark Hofmann never could have claimed to have the collection because scholars would have known that it was in the church archives. Consequently, Steven Christensen would not have become involved in trying to obtain the collection from Hofmann and Christensen and Kathleen Sheets would probably be alive today.

In trying to keep Hofmann's purported McLellin collection from falling into unfriendly hands, Hugh Pinnock followed in the footsteps of President Smith and opened the way for the tragedy when he arranged a loan of \$185,000 for Hofmann to purchase the imaginary collection.

As if this is not bad enough, when church leaders discovered the real collection, they were so embarrassed that they kept it hidden from investigators. This conspiracy of silence forced investigators to spend untold hours trying to pin down the truth about the collection. If the church had been forthright about the matter, investigators could have spent this time in pursuing more profitable areas. The church's silence concerning this matter definitely hurt prosecutors and left them with a weaker hand in their dealings with Hofmann's lawyers.

While it is true that the General Authorities of the Mormon Church have preached openness, honesty and trust in God from the pulpit, when it came right down to it some of the very highest leaders of the church were unable to live up to the lofty teachings they have set forth. They apparently did not believe that the God they serve was able to handle the embarrassing situation the church found itself in. Therefore, they proceeded to protect the church with their own strategy. In their attempt to save the church, they gave an advantage to a man whom they knew was a desperate criminal who was charged with murder. Their behavior with regard to this matter did not match up with their twelfth Article of Faith: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."

While it is true that they did not receive a subpoena for the McLellin collection, it was only because they kept its existence well hidden from the prosecution. Now that this information has come to light, the actions of these leaders speak louder than their words. The message seems to be that the church's image is more important than the truth, even to the point of withholding key evidence in a murder investigation! We feel that this is a terrible example to set before the youth of the church.

WHAT'S IN THE VAULT?

While Richard Turley stresses the cooperation by church officials during the investigation, the evidence seems to provide a different story. Robert Lindsey relates the following:

... Salt Lake City detective Jim Bell spoke at a meeting that had been called to review what detectives knew ... He said he suspected **the church was concealing information about Hofmann and the murders.**

"They're hiding something; the church is doing everything it can to make this as difficult as possible. I've never seen anything like this in a homicide investigation." (*A Gathering of Saints*, page 236)

Lindsey went on to say that "many of the investigators" felt "that they were being stonewalled by leaders of the church" (*Ibid.*). On pages 268-269 of the same book, we find this information:

The salamander letter and several other documents Hofmann had sold to the church were still in Washington at the FBI laboratory. When Ted Cannon [Salt Lake County Attorney] pressed the church to let his investigators look at the originals of those that were still in Salt Lake City, a lawyer for the church said that **would be impossible**, because some of the documents were **extremely confidential** and the church did not want to risk having them made public.

Cannon said that if the church declined to provide the documents voluntarily, he would subpoena them - and indeed, he subsequently did so. But, to head off a court fight over the subpoena, Cannon surrendered to a demand by the church's lawyers to keep the substance of the documents a secret.

"The content and meaning and interpretations to be placed upon what is iterated within the documents," Cannon wrote to Wilford Kirton, the church's lawyer, "is either immaterial or of secondary concern as far as this investigation is concerned. ... every reasonable measure will be employed to secure not only the documents themselves, but the contents thereof, from scrutiny or discussion by anyone outside the authorized investigative team. ..."

Cannon agreed to let church officials maintain a sign-in/sign-out log identifying everyone who examined the documents and agreed with the church's demands that members of his staff would have to **turn over to the church all notes, photocopies, photographs and negatives** made during examination of the documents. Cannon ended his letter with an expression of thanks for the church's cooperation, a clause that brought snickers from many of those in the War Room [i.e., the room where investigators met to discuss strategy in the Hofmann investigation].

Richard Turley acknowledges that there were some problems regarding documents the prosecution wanted and goes so far as to say that at one point Church leaders were preparing to resist a subpoena:

The next morning, [Apostle] Dallin Oaks telephoned Rowe ... Rowe described the burden the request imposed on the Historical Department and the risks it posed to the 261 books and manuscripts involved. Oaks, in turn, wrote to Thomas Monson of the First Presidency about the request. "It would be a very large burden and risk for the Church to produce 261 books and manuscripts, or to copy them," Oaks observed. He also doubted the investigators really needed all they were seeking. He recommended that **the church go to court to resist the subpoena**, even though **"our differences with the County Attorney would then become public."** After drafting the letter, Oaks received a

telephone call from his fellow Historical Department adviser, [Apostle] Boyd Packer ... **Hinckley and Packer both backed Oak's recommendation.** (*Victims*, page 248)

As it turned out, the Mormon Church did not go to court to resist any of the subpoenas, but it did impose very unusual restrictions on the use of its documents. This quibbling with investigators over access to documents undoubtedly cost prosecutors a good deal of time that could have been spent on more important matters.

Michael P. George, of the county attorney's office, felt that President Hinckley was not telling the truth about his dealings with Hofmann. On page 224 of his book, Richard Turley provided this information:

In response to other questions, Hinckley said he knew of no dealings between Hofmann and general authorities of the church beyond those already mentioned. Mike George later explained that "what we were talking about at that time was other dealings involving Hofmann in regards to documents being sold to members of the First Presidency." When Hinckley said he knew of no others, **George did not believe him.**

Hinckley answered based on his recollections, supplemented by information provided him by Francis Gibbons and Glenn Rowe. **Two pieces of information had eluded church officials**, however, in their attempts to reconstruct Hofmann's dealings with the church. They recalled that the Grandin printing contract had been purchased by the Historical Department using funds provided by the First Presidency. Later research would convince them, however, that the transaction itself was closed in Hinckley's office.

The other **elusive item was the Bullock-Young letter.** Hofmann had given it free to Hinckley for the church ... In the more than four years that had elapsed since the gift, Hinckley had forgotten about it ... Later, **Gibbons would rediscover the Bullock-Young letter** and bring it to Hinckley's attention, but on December 9, 1985, when George and Farnsworth interviewed him, the document had been forgotten.

The Bullock letter was a very controversial Hofmann forgery which church leaders assumed was authentic and suppressed in the First Presidency's vault. Mark Hofmann had previously sold the Mormon Church a document he had forged in which Joseph Smith blessed his son, Joseph Smith III. According to former Church Archivist Donald Schmidt, Hofmann received material from the archives which was valued "in the neighborhood of \$20,000" for the blessing document. This blessing indicated that Joseph Smith III was the prophet's true successor, not Brigham Young.

In the letter to President Brigham Young, Thomas Bullock indicated that he would not turn over the blessing because he feared Young would destroy it. Bullock told Young that he did not have "licence to destroy every remnant of the blessing which he received from his Father... I will not, nay I can not, surrender that blessing, knowing what its certain fate will be if returned" (*Victims*, page 61).

This letter tended to put Brigham Young in a very bad light, and therefore Mormon leaders felt it must be suppressed. Turley relates that Mark Hofmann brought the Bullock-Young letter directly to President Gordon B. Hinckley:

After Hinckley read the document, Hofmann said he was a believing, active Latter-day Saint, that he wanted to give the original document to Hinckley, and that **he did not want to blackmail the church.** ... Hinckley asked, "Are you telling me that you wish to give this document to the Church without cost?"

Yes, Hofmann answered. He also told Hinckley he had not kept a copy of the document for himself . . . Hinckley discussed the matter with his fellow counselors in the First Presidency, N. Eldon Tanner and Marion Romney. . . . The men decided to file the document **in the First Presidency's vault**. (*Victims*, page 62)

President Hinckley was obviously fooled by Mark Hofmann's clever attempt to make him believe he was a faithful Mormon. Since Hofmann told him that he had not even retained a copy of the letter for himself, Hinckley apparently thought that he could hide it in the First Presidency's vault and that it would never be brought to light.

It seems unlikely that Hinckley would have forgotten such an important transaction with Hofmann. In any case, Richard Turley gives this information about the matter on pages 232-233 of his book:

Also on January 8, Francis Gibbons transferred to Dean Larsen the original and a typescript of the Bullock-Young letter, which Gibbons had rediscovered. . . . It was overlooked until Gibbons happened across it.

The **rediscovery of the letter put church officials in an awkward position**. Because the letter had been forgotten, it had not been mentioned in the church's news conference **or in previous interviews with investigators**. Undoubtedly, its discovery would subject church officials to ridicule. Despite the likelihood of criticism, however, Hinckley directed Gibbons to turn the letter over to investigators. In his memorandum to Larsen, Francis Gibbons wrote, "The brethren understand you will make this letter available to the Salt Lake County Attorney under a subpoena which has been served on the Church to produce all documents in its possession received from Mark W. Hofmann . . ."

Michael George, of the county attorney's office, was rather upset when he learned of the existence of the Thomas Bullock letter. In *A Gathering of Saints*, page 274, Robert Lindsey reports what happened when the "rediscovery" of the letter became known:

After being issued a subpoena, the church had released to Throckmorton and Flynn what it said were all of the documents it had acquired from Hofmann since 1980, including some that it **had previously kept secret**.

When the First Presidency's Vault yielded the letter presented to Gordon Hinckley by Hofmann in which Thomas Bullock accused Brigham Young of having tried to destroy the Blessing of Joseph Smith III, it caught the War Room by surprise.

"**What else are they hiding?**" Michael George demanded. "None of the church historians I've talked to — Don Schmidt, Leonard Arrington, Dean Jesse — even knew this existed. *They've never heard of it*. What else do they have? **Who knows what's in the First Presidency's Vault?**"

Now that we know that the McLellin collection was also hidden in the First Presidency's vault, Michael George's question concerning what else is in the vault seems almost prophetic.

Mormon leaders were not only uncooperative with investigators when it came to providing historical documents, but they were secretive regarding other matters as well. The book, *Mormon Murders*, claimed that a detective by the name of John Foster wanted to get a copy of a page from "the Church Administration Building log" which showed Hofmann had come to the church offices on a certain day. According to Naifeh and Smith, when Foster "went to pick up the photocopy, every entry except the one relating to Hofmann **had been whited out** . . . giving police no way to determine if relevant entries had been whited out along with irrelevant ones" (page 302).

Richard Turley, on the other hand, maintained that "the log photocopy attached to Foster's police report has no whited-out entries. Investigative Information Memo #840 . . ." (*Victims*, page 439, footnote 1). After making this point, however, Turley turns right around and says that "there was one Administrative Building log page on which **extraneous entries were whited out before being given to police**. It was a page for October 15, 1985, that was furnished to investigators who asked when Hofmann met with [Apostle] Dallin Oaks on that day. The unmasked entry answered their question, and they did not ask to see the other entries, **which had been whited out** because they were irrelevant to the question and because church officials felt ethically bound to protect church visitors' privacy unless required by investigators to do otherwise" (*Ibid.*, pages 439-40).

That the Mormon Church would find it necessary to hide such information from the police is certainly strange. We would expect that type of reaction from the CIA or the FBI, but to have a church which proclaims that it operates "in full light" with "no secrecy about its doctrine, aim, or purpose" behave in such a manner makes one rather curious as to what is really going on. It also seems strange that there was no attempt to force the church leaders to produce the original log. While there may not have been anything else of importance in the log, the fact that most of the material was deleted would make one wonder if Hofmann met with Apostle Oaks more than once on the day of the two murders or if other important figures involved with Hofmann or the McLellin transaction were in Oaks' office that day. The entire log book should have been subpoenaed and thoroughly examined for all meetings between church leaders and Hofmann as well as others who were in any way associated with Hofmann's document deals. We seriously doubt that other people in Salt Lake City would have received the preferential treatment which the LDS leaders received in the Hofmann investigation.

At any rate, on page 247 of his book, Richard Turley admits that this was not the only time that the church "removed or masked information" provided to investigators:

When Mike George delivered one [subpoena] the next day, the county's request had expanded to "any records, check out slips, logs, cards, or other documentation of visits to the LDS Church Historical Archives and the documents, books, catalogs, letters, information, etc" that Hofmann and five others had used since 1975. . . .

The next day, February 20, a county investigator delivered a subpoena to the church's Missionary Department asking for missionary records pertaining to Hofmann and one of his associates. . . . library circulation records and missionary records dealt with living individuals and thus raised issues of privacy that were hot topics among legal scholars, librarians, and archivists across the United States. Church officials felt a responsibility to comply with the subpoenas while at the same time fulfilling their legal and ethical responsibility to safeguard the privacy of living individuals. Thus in responding to requests for information, **officials sometimes removed or masked information** not specifically required by the investigators. When Kirton received the missionary records, he reviewed them and **eliminated portions** not required by the subpoena. . . . On February 27, Kirton sent **the screened materials** on to the county.

Although the tide of Richard Turley's book begins with the word *Victims*, it is basically the story of only one victim, the Mormon Church. The story of the real victims of the tragedy seems to be glossed over. While we have to agree that the church was a victim of Mark Hofmann's devious plans, we feel that

Richard Turley, Apostle Dallin Oaks and other church officials have painted a role of martyrdom which does not fit with the facts.

When a person carefully examines the evidence, it becomes evident that church leaders shot themselves in the foot. The Mormon church hierarchy must accept a great deal of blame for the tone of the books and articles which have tended to embarrass the church. The fact that church leaders alienated a significant number of the investigators who worked on the Hofmann case with their secrecy and lack of cooperation seems to have made a very negative impression on the authors who interviewed them.

It seems that the Mormon leaders and the investigators were on a collision course from the day of the bombings. Church officials felt that in order to prevent embarrassment to the church they had to remain as quiet as possible about the McLellin collection Hofmann had dreamed up and the role Hofmann, Christensen and Sorenson were playing in its suppression. The investigators, on the other hand, needed this very information to solve the murder case. Although the Mormon leaders' main concern seems to have been to protect the church and themselves from embarrassment, they ended up obstructing the investigation, wasting the valuable time of investigators and, consequently, delaying the arrest of the murderer.

TESTING THE PROPHETS

If the leaders of the Mormon Church did not make such extravagant claims concerning their prophetic ability to detect and fight off evil influences, it might be easier to accept the idea that they were martyrs in the Hofmann scandal. Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet, maintained that in his youth he had seen a vision of both God and Christ. In this vision he was told that all other churches were corrupt. The following statement by Smith is taken from the *Pearl of Great Price*, one of the four standard works of the church:

... I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right ... and which I should join. I was answered that **I must join none of them, for they were all wrong**; and the Personage who addressed me said that **all their creeds were an abomination in his sight**; that those professors **were all corrupt**; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but, their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." He again **forbade me to join with any of them** ... (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith—History 1:18-20)

Mormon leaders teach that all other churches are in a state of apostasy. More than fifty pages of the Introduction to the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* are devoted to proving that all churches except the Mormon Church are in apostasy. The following is found on page XL: "Nothing less than a **complete apostasy from the Christian religion** would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Church members are taught that only men who hold the Mormon priesthood have the authority to administer in the ordinances of the gospel. Consequently, those who perform baptisms in other churches do not operate with any authority and such baptisms are invalid in the sight of God.

The Mormons, as we have pointed out, claim to be led by revelation from God. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie made these claims regarding Mormon revelation:

Our Lord's true Church is established and **founded upon revelation**. Its identity **as the true Church continues as long**

as revelation is received to direct its affairs ... without revelation there would be no legal administrators to perform the ordinances of salvation with binding effect on earth and in heaven. ... Since The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is **the Lord's true Church**; and since the Lord's Church must be guided by continuous revelation ... we could safely conclude ... that the Church today is guided by revelation. ... the Spirit is **giving direct and daily revelation to the presiding Brethren** in the administration of the affairs of the Church. ... The presence of revelation in the Church is positive proof that it is the kingdom of God on earth. ... **For those who reject these revelations there awaits the damnation of hell.** (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pages 646, 647, 650)

Apostle McConkie also stated: "Members of the First Presidency, Council of the Twelve, and the Patriarch to the Church—because they are appointed and sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators to the Church—are known as the **living oracles**." (*Ibid.*, page 547)

Unfortunately for church leaders, Mark Hofmann has put the claim of revelation in the church to the acid test and found that the "living oracles" are just as fallible as other men. Because of this, President Hinckley, Apostle Oaks and other Mormon leaders find themselves in a very embarrassing position. At a time when revelation was really needed, they seemed to be completely in the dark as to what was going on.

In his youth Mark Hofmann undoubtedly was taught that Mormon Church leaders were led by revelation and had the gift of discernment to detect deceivers. The prophet Joseph Smith, in fact, claimed he received a revelation from God himself warning him that his enemies were falsifying an important religious document (see *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 10). Hofmann, however, finally came to the conclusion that the church was not led by revelation and that he could even deceive the "living prophets" and the top Mormon scholars. In his confession, Mr. Hofmann said that he could "look someone in the eye and lie" and didn't believe that "someone could be inspired" in a religious sense as to what "my feelings or thoughts were." He claimed that he "had lost faith in the Mormon Church" and that he "**wasn't fearful of the Church inspiration detecting the forgery**." (*Hofmann's Confession*, pages 99, 112)

Not only did church leaders fail to foresee through revelation the threat Hofmann presented to the church, but they completely ignored the many warnings about Hofmann's documents which began appearing in our newsletter about eighteen months before the bombings. In *Victims*, page 89, Richard Turley commented about this matter: "Surprisingly, the article [in the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, March 1984] concluded, 'While we would really like to believe that the [Salamander] letter attributed to Harris is authentic, we do not feel that we can endorse it until further evidence comes forth. ...'" The *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1984, reported that "The Tanners suggestion of forgery has surprised some Mormons, who note that the parallels in wording also could be taken as evidence of authenticity." Thirteen months before the murders, September 1, 1984, the church's own *Deseret News* printed the fact that "outspoken Mormon Church critics Jerald and Sandra Tanner suspect the document is a forgery, they told the *Deseret News*." In an article published in the *New York Times* after the bombings, Robert Lindsey wrote:

In a newsletter that he publishes with his wife, Sandra, Mr. Tanner began raising questions about their authenticity, in some cases comparing the texts with known Mormon writings.

But if senior Mormon officials were aware of his warnings, they apparently paid little attention. Several of the church's highest officials have acknowledged negotiating to acquire

documents from Mr. Hofmann until the day of the first two bombings. (*New York Times*, February 16, 1986)

Richard Lindsey has a quotation from Hugh Pinnock, the Mormon General Authority who was working on the McLellin transaction, which indicates that church leaders still believed in Hofmann two or three days after the bombings. Writing on April 17, 1986, Pinnock observed: “It seems that Hofmann has left a trail of evidence. The only effective manner to understand this situation is to realize that M[ark] H[ofmann] was **well considered** before 10-17 or 18th even though **he fooled us all**. M[ark] H[ofmann] did not internalize the gospel.” (*Victims*, page 271)

Apostle Dallin Oaks met with Mark Hofmann just hours after he had killed Kathleen Sheets and Steven Christensen. Oaks never suspected that Hofmann was involved in the bombings and encouraged him to go on with the McLellin transaction. On page 153 of *Victims*, Richard Turley wrote: “Oaks asked Hofmann if he still intended to proceed with the closing on the collection . . . Oaks told him he ought to get in touch with David E. West, Sorensen’s attorney, who would doubtless wonder how Christensen’s death would affect the transaction. . . . **Oaks thanked Hofmann for his work in discovering church documents** and for his willingness to sell the McLellin collection to **someone ‘friendly’ to the church.**”

Apostle Oaks later made a feeble attempt to explain why church leaders were unable to detect Hofmann’s evil plans (see *Confessions of a White Salamander*, page 64). He commented: “But why, some still ask, were his deceits not detected by the several Church leaders with whom he met?” Oaks maintained that Church leaders “cannot be suspicious and questioning” of the many people they meet with every year and noted that if “they fail to detect a few deceivers . . . that is the price they pay to increase their effectiveness in counseling, comforting, and blessing the hundreds of honest and sincere people they see.”

Apostle Oaks never really answered the question. Mark Hofmann was not meeting with church leaders for “counseling, comforting, and blessing.” He was meeting with them for the express purpose of deceiving them so that they would give him large amounts of money and authentic documents in exchange for his fraudulent documents. Furthermore, he had many visits with high Mormon officials. These meetings went on for years, yet church leaders were unable to discern the wicked plan that Hofmann had in his heart.

While the Mormon leaders claim to have the same powers as the ancient apostles in the Bible, their performance with regard to Mark Hofmann certainly did not match up to that of Apostle Peter when he caught Ananias and Sapphira red-handed in their attempt to deceive the church with regard to a financial transaction: “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” (Acts 5:3).

In a revelation given by Joseph Smith on March 8, 1831, the Lord warned against being “seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils . . . **beware lest ye are deceived**; and that ye may not be deceived seek ye earnestly the best gifts . . . it is given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the diversities of operations . . . to others **the discerning of spirits**. . . . And to the bishop of the church, and unto such as God shall appoint . . . are to have it given unto them to discern all those gifts **lest there shall be any among you professing and yet be not of God**” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 46:7, 8, 16, 23, 27).

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie proclaimed that church leaders did have the gift of discernment:

. . . the gift of the **discerning of spirits is poured out upon presiding officials in God’s kingdom**; they have it given to them to discern all gifts and all spirits, **lest any come among the saints and practice deception**. . . . There is no perfect operation of the power of discernment without revelation. Thereby even ‘the thoughts and intents of the heart’ are made known. . . . Where the saints are concerned . . . the Lord expects them **to discern, not only between the righteous and the wicked**, but between false and true philosophies, educational theories, sciences, political concepts and social schemes. (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 197)

It would seem that if these powers were really functioning in the church today, the “Prophet, Seer and Revelator” would have received a revelation warning him concerning Mark Hofmann’s “cunning plan” to defraud and disgrace the church. Furthermore, a revelation regarding his deception would have prevented two people from dying.

Spencer W. Kimball, who was the prophet and president of the church at the time Hofmann first began deceiving church leaders, was supposed to be a “seer” and have the power to “translate all records that are of ancient date” (Book of Mormon, Mosiah 8:13). The Book of Mormon also says that “a seer is greater than a prophet . . . a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have . . . a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light. . . .” (Mosiah 8: 15-17).

When Mark Hofmann brought the forged Anthon transcript, which was supposed to contain characters Joseph Smith copied from the gold plates of the Book of Mormon, President Kimball was unable to translate the characters. Instead of using the “seer stone,” he examined the characters which appear on the transcript with a magnifying glass. Not only did he fail to provide a translation, but he was unable to detect that the church was being set up to be defrauded of a large amount of money and many historical items out of its archives. Moreover, he entirely failed to see the devastating and embarrassing effect this transaction and others which followed would have on the Mormon Church. If ever revelation from the Lord was needed, it was on that day in 1980 when Mark Hofmann stood in the presence of President Kimball.

As President Kimball grew older, he became less able to function and President Gordon B. Hinckley took over many of his responsibilities and became to all appearances the acting president of the church. Hinckley, who posed with Mark Hofmann, President Kimball and other church leaders in a photograph taken in 1980, was also deceived on a number of occasions by Mr. Hofmann. He, together with Apostle Boyd K. Packer (also shown in the picture), approved many of the deals the church made with Hofmann.

It appears that if the Mormon Church was ever led by revelation, it has been lacking since Mark Hofmann came into the church offices with the Anthon transcript. The inability of Mormon leaders to detect the religious fraud perpetrated upon them raises a question with regard to their testimony regarding the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. After all, if they could not determine that Hofmann’s documents—which were supposed to be only 150 years old—were forgeries, how can we trust their judgment with regard to a record which is supposed to be ten times as old?

The reader will remember that Apostle McConkie maintained that “the Spirit is giving **direct and daily revelation to the presiding Brethren** in the administration of the affairs of the Church.” One would think that if such revelation was

in operation, Mark Hofmann would have been exposed years before the bombings. With regard to the inability of the Mormon leaders to detect that the Hofmann documents were fraudulent, a person might argue that these documents were not really important spiritual writings, and therefore the Lord did not see fit to intervene when the General Authorities examined them. The truth of the matter, however, is that they contained extremely important material directly relating to spiritual affairs. The Salamander letter, for example, changed the story of the Angel Moroni appearing to Joseph Smith to that of a cantankerous and tricky “old spirit” who transformed himself from a white salamander and struck Joseph Smith. Mormon Apostle Dallin Oaks tried to reconcile the Salamander letter with Joseph Smith’s account by saying: “One wonders why so many writers neglected to reveal to their readers that there is another meaning of ‘salamander,’ which may even have been the primary meaning . . . That meaning . . . is ‘a mythical being thought to be able to live in fire.’ . . . A being that is able to live in fire is **a good approximation** of the description Joseph Smith gave **of the Angel Moroni** . . . the use of the words **white salamander** and **old spirit** seem understandable.” (“1985 CES Doctrine and Covenants Symposium,” pages 22-23) After the Salamander letter was proclaimed a forgery, Apostle Oaks must have been very embarrassed that he ever made such an outlandish statement.

Significantly, some of the purported Joseph Smith writings which Hofmann sold to the church contain revelations from the Lord himself. For instance, the Joseph Smith III Blessing document gives this message from the Lord: “Verily, thus saith the Lord: if he abides in me, his days shall be lengthened upon the earth, but, if he abides not in me, I, the Lord will receive him, in an instant, unto myself.”

Mark Hofmann also forged an 1838 Joseph Smith letter to his brother, Hyrum, which the Mormon Church purchased in 1983. This letter was in its entirety a revelation purporting to come from the Lord. It begins with the words, “Verily thus Saith the Lord,” and ends with the word “Amen.” The fact that Mormon leaders were not able to recognize the spurious nature of these revelations casts doubt upon their ability to discern the truthfulness of the other revelations given by Joseph Smith.

The church has always claimed that it is virtually impossible for a person to write a revelation that would compare with Joseph Smith’s. It now appears, however, that there is someone who can write revelations comparable to Joseph Smith’s and that it is even possible to get them past the scrutiny of the highest leadership of the Mormon Church.

As we have noted earlier, another thing that shows the church’s lack of revelation in times of crisis is the way the rediscovery of the McLellin collection was handled. President Spencer W. Kimball died about three weeks after the bombings, and Ezra Taft Benson became the 13th prophet on November 10, 1985. It was only four months after Benson became president of the church that the McLellin collection was found in the First Presidency’s vault. On page 250 of his book, Richard Turley affirms that this information was reported to the First Presidency in March 1986.

One would think that at this vital period in the church’s history President Benson, “the living prophet,” would have had the insight to inform the other members of the First Presidency that the McLellin collection must be made available to investigators. Instead of Benson receiving the word of the Lord to point the church in the proper way, it seems that the heavens were silent and the Mormon leaders were left to their own devices. While there are probably some Mormons who would suggest that

President Benson was led by the Lord to suppress the discovery, we believe that most members of the church would feel that such an idea would be unthinkable.

Some may excuse Benson’s failure in this matter by saying that he was too advanced in age to deal with such problems. While there may be some truth in such an argument (he was 86 years old at that time and just recently turned 93), this explanation does not provide much comfort to the faithful. If Benson is not really capable of leading the church through revelation, who is in control? Although there were six General Authorities in the Mormon Church who were informed about this matter, none of them stepped forward to help investigators!

Although Apostle Dallin Oaks would have us believe that “Criticism is particularly objectionable when it is directed toward Church authorities,” there seems to be no way to get around the fact that they must bear a great deal of the responsibility in the Hofmann affair. If they had been open and forthright about historical documents, Mr. Hofmann would not have approached them with his blackmail-like documents with the idea of filling his pockets with the church’s money. Hofmann’s knowledge of the fact that church leaders were anxious to keep anything embarrassing from falling into the hands of church critics set the stage for the tragic events which followed.

We understand that Lynn Packer, the man who brought to light the story concerning Paul Dunn’s deception, was working on the story concerning the rediscovery of the McLellin even before we became aware of it. It is reported that his article on the subject may appear in the November issue of *Utah Holiday* magazine. We are looking forward to this article.

Those who wish to know more about the Mark Hofmann case should obtain our books, *Tracking the White Salamander* and *Confessions of a White Salamander*. ■

THE WARNKE PROBLEM

In our book, *Satanic Ritual Abuse and Mormonism*, we wrote the following: “While we have been aware of the influence of the occult for many years, *we were always somewhat suspicious of some of the tales of ex-Satanists*. We have always tried to be very cautious about accepting stories concerning conspiracies unless strong evidence could be marshaled to support the accusations. We have seen too many people make the mistake of leveling serious accusations against individuals and organizations without carefully considering all of the facts” (page 1). Unfortunately, we have learned that there is a serious question with regard to Mike Warnke’s story regarding his involvement in Satanism. Warnke is a noted Christian comedian who wrote the book, *The Satan Seller*. Mr. Warnke claimed that he became a satanic high priest and had 1,500 followers! Warnke, in fact, claimed to be working for the Illuminati.

Christian writers Jon Trott and Mike Hertenstein, who have done extensive research concerning Mike Warnke’s life, claim that they were unable to verify his claims concerning Satanism. They, in fact, feel they have evidence to disprove his published statements. They note, for example, that he started attending San Bernardino Valley College on September 13, 1965, and then make this observation: “Mike writes in *The Satan Seller* that it was after he started college that he first was introduced to drugs, sex, and finally Satanism. And he continues, it was only after the Satanists threw him out of their coven that he joined the navy. Warnke’s military records say he entered the navy on June 2, 1966. Therefore, whatever happened in Mike’s life regarding Satanism had to have happened **between September 13, 1965, and June 2, 1966**” (*Cornerstone*, vol. 21, no. 98, page 9).

This, of course, gives Mike Warnke less than nine months to become a Satanist and advance to his high position in Satanism. Trott and Hertenstein quote the following from Warnke's book, *Schemes of Satan*: "In my own case, being away from home at college and not having any close friends there meant that almost no one could have known what was happening to me except, of course, the members of the Satanic Brotherhood, and they were not telling!" (*Ibid.*). Trott and Hertenstein go on to reveal the following:

In reality, Mike Warnke simply did what countless other freshmen have done: he found a new circle of friends. We found that new circle, and they were not part of the Satanic Brotherhood. None of these people are mentioned by Warnke in *The Satan Seller* or anywhere else.

Greg Gilbert was one of Mike's first and closest friends at college. . . . Greg reflects upon the notoriety of his old college roommate. "After Mike became a star, I assumed that **since he had gotten this far with his Satan story, he'd always get away with it.** I never knew what to do. Who could you tell?" . . .

Greg's college girlfriend, Dawn Andrews, gave us her assessment. . . . "I remember how upset I was when *The Satan Seller* came out, because **what Warnke said was a lie. He has a very fertile imagination.**"

Dyana Cridelich was another of Mike Warnke's college friends introduced by Greg. "After he got famous, I always wanted to write him a letter and say, Mike, remember me? The one you gave the silver cross to? **When were you able to have this coven of fifteen hundred people?** Don't you remember, about the most exciting thing we used to do was play croquet in Greg's backyard?" (*Ibid.*)

The same article points out that Mike Warnke became engaged to a woman after he entered college and that she knew nothing about his satanic activities:

It was there that Lois Eckenrod, a girl who was soon to be his fiancée, joins the story. "Mike and I, met in September or October, that first semester at Valley," Lois said. "It was only a couple of months before we got engaged. **Hardly a day went by that we didn't see each other.**"

His friends remember Mike Warnke as thin, with . . . **short hair** . . . Yet Mike says in *The Satan Seller* that when college started . . . His hair, he writes, was already collar length. Within a short time, he claims to have become a full-fledged hippie: "I . . . bought some black pants and freaky shins. My hair was **longer than ever, and I bleached it blond** . . .

"He looked like everybody else," says Greg. . . .

On his *Mike Warnke Alive!* album, Mike further claims: "I'd had hepatitis four times from shooting up with dirty needles. I had scabs all over my face from shooting up crystal. I was a speed freak. I weighed 110 pounds soaking wet. My skin had turned yellow. My hair was falling out. My teeth were rotting out of my head. I'd been pistol-whipped five or six times. My jaw had been broken. My nose had been almost ripped off. I had a bullet hole in my right leg. Two bullet holes in my left leg."

Greg Gilbert and the others saw Mike on a daily basis, and say that it is totally impossible for Mike to have had hepatitis, facial scabs from injecting "crystal," and wounds from being shot three times. "Without us knowing it? **It's a lie,**" Greg says.

Lois's reaction to Mike's tale? "**That's just make-believe,**" she states. "Mike never fell in with drugs . . . I was training to be a nurse, and I think I would have known if he was using drugs. I wouldn't have dated Mike if he was drugged." . . . Tim Smith . . . states he never saw Warnke with **long hair or in the drug-induced emaciated state** he claimed to be during that period. . . .

By Christmas of 1965, Mike and Lois were seeing each other on a daily basis. "It was pretty fast that we said we were

going to get married," says Lois. "Within two or three months of school starting, he gave me a rose ring with a diamond in it. It cost \$60. He had to make payments on it. . . ."

In *The Satan Seller*, Warnke has gone through his drugs, sex, and promotion to high priest before Christmas of 1965. . . . Shirley Schrader says Mike had Christmas dinner in Crestline with the family. "He didn't seem emaciated by drugs to me," she says. . . .

According to *The Satan Seller*, Mike Warnke's reign as a satanic high priest ends, apparently sometime in the spring of 1966, when Warnke crumples under the strain of too much responsibility and too many drugs. On a "Focus on the Family" radio broadcast, he described his appearance at this time: "**I had white hair. It was about down to my belt . . . I had six-inch fingernails; I painted them black**". . . On the Mike Warnke Alive! album he describes his hair length the night before boot camp: "It hit me just below the pockets." He continues: "The night before I went to boot camp I went to this party. . . . I smoked a bunch of dope and ate a bunch of reds . . . the girl I was with decided the thing that would really be cute is if she braided my hair . . . She . . . braided it all together, and hung a jingle bell on the end of each braid."

Lois says she was the girl who gave Mike his going-away party. When she heard this story for the first time in 1979, she was furious. "I couldn't believe it when I heard that!" she says. "I'm the one who gave him the going-away party! We never touched drugs. **He never had long hair—his hair was short, short, short!**"

Greg and Dawn . . . offered Lois the use of their apartment for the party. (*Ibid.*, pages 9-12)

On page 8, *Cornerstone* has a photograph of Mike Warnke reportedly taken April 30, 1966. Instead of showing that he had white hair reaching down to his belt, it supports his fiancée's claim that his hair "was short, short, short!"

The reader may wonder what effect the charges against Warnke will have on our views regarding Satanic ritual abuse. Actually, we have never cited Mike Warnke as an authority on this subject. Although we had no idea of the depths of the problem, we had heard there might be questions regarding his claims about Satanic involvement. Consequently, we did not consult his books in preparing our material.

Actually, Mike Warnke's works present a problem with regard to the claim that human sacrifice takes place in Satanic rituals. When he was interviewed on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Warnke claimed he was never involved in such sacrifices:

WINFREY: Did you witness killings?

Mr. WARNKE: No, I never did. **I never witnessed a human sacrifice** . . . you just heard rumors of it even within the occult . . . (*The Oprah Winfrey Show*, September 30, 1986, Transcript #8607, pages 8-9)

While Mike Warnke claimed he had 1,500 followers in the satanic cult, he stated that he had no first-hand information about human sacrifice. For this reason the book, *The Satanism Scare*, page 130, uses Warnke as a witness against those who hold to the idea of satanic ritual abuse. If Mike Warnke was really involved in an important position in Satanism, his statement that he had no personal knowledge of human sacrifices might throw some doubt on the stories told by the survivors of satanic ritual abuse. Unless, however, Warnke can in some way overthrow the strong case that *Cornerstone* has built against him, his testimony concerning Satanism is of no value to either side of the controversy. Those who would like to know more about the Warnke problem can obtain a copy of *Cornerstone*, vol. 21, no. 98, for \$2.00 from *Cornerstone*, 939 W. Wilson Ave., Chicago, IL 60640.



“WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR”

In the Bible, we are told that when Pilate brought Jesus before his enemies, “they cried out, ‘Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’ So he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led him away” (New King James Version, John 19: 15-16).

Like the chief priests who lived almost 2,000 years ago, we are all confronted with the question of what we are going to do with Jesus. Are we going to receive him as the king of our lives or crucify him in our hearts? Jesus himself said: “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters” (Matthew 12:30). God has given each of us a free will so that we can make our own decision. We can either fall down before him and cry out, “My Lord and my God” (John 20: 28), or we can be like those mentioned in a parable who said, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:1).

The Bible says there are eternal consequences involved in this decision. Speaking to those who questioned his divinity, Jesus said:

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

In our natural condition we are not fit subjects for the kingdom of God. In Isaiah 59:1-2 we read:

Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

In his book, *Plain Christianity*, page 75, J. B. Phillips speaks of the gulf that separates us from God: “For the gulf between us and God is not merely an intellectual one—it is not that God is infinitely wise and we, by comparison, blundering fools, though that is true—but the real gulf lies in the moral realm. You and I, through our own sins and failures, as well as by the infection of the sins of other people, are separated from God by a moral gulf.”

In Romans 3:23 we find that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Because of our sinful condition we do not know the personal God who wishes to have fellowship with us. Fortunately, however, God has prepared a way for our salvation through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross:

And you **He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins**, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:1-10)

Although we usually think of the emperors of Rome when we hear the word “Caesar,” anything which controls our lives and keeps us from coming to the Lord could be considered to be as tyrannical to our soul as Caesar was to the people who lived in the Holy Land during the time of Jesus. When the Pharisees were trying to trick Jesus, they brought him a coin. Jesus looked at it and said:

“Whose image and inscription is this?” They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Matthew 22:20-21)

If we become enslaved to the desire for money, for instance, we find ourselves worshipping in the court of Caesar. We find these words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 6:19-21:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The way of Caesar is the popular way. It is disastrous when we put our desires for fame, power or riches above our relationship with the Lord. In John 5:44, Jesus warned: “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?” While it is certainly worth it, there is a price we have to pay if we desire to follow Jesus:

Then Jesus said to His Disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

“For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

We accepted the Lord into our lives over thirty years ago and have never been sorry for that decision. While life on this earth is not always easy, we have great joy and peace and have received many answers to prayer. Moreover, we look forward to the time when we will have inexpressible joy in the kingdom of heaven.

Instead of saying, “We have no king but Caesar,” we would urge all our readers to turn their lives over to God so that they can say:

“WE HAVE NO KING BUT JESUS”

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Mormonism: The Christian View. Narration by Wesley P. Walters. Deals with Mormon history, doctrines, claims to authority, changes in doctrine and witnessing suggestions. **Price: \$24.00** (plus shipping)