

Salt Lake City Messenger

Utah Lighthouse Ministry

1358 S. West Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84115

Edited by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Issue No. 91

November 1996

QUEST FOR THE GOLD PLATES

STAN LARSON'S NEW BOOK

Stan Larson, who was a scriptural exegete for Translation Services of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons), has recently published a book entitled, *Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon*.

In this book Dr. Larson dealt with the vexing question of whether Thomas Stuart Ferguson, who organized the New World Archaeological Foundation and devoted himself to proving the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, had eventually lost faith in that book and in Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet. As many of our readers may know, Ferguson wrote the well-known book, *One Fold and One Shepherd*.

FERGUSON AND ARCHEOLOGY

In the introduction to his book, pages XIII-XIV, Larson noted:

In the fall of 1977 I first heard from a fellow church employee in the LDS Translation Services Department in Salt Lake City that Ferguson no longer believed in the historicity of the Book of Mormon. To me this unfounded rumor — for so I considered it — seemed absolutely unbelievable, for I had over the years faithfully followed Ferguson's writings on the Book of Mormon. . . . I decided to verify or falsify this assertion by contacting Ferguson himself. . . . I first talked about my having read *Cumorah — Where?, Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* and *One Fold and One Shepherd* — and then I hesitantly mentioned that I had heard that he had reached some very critical conclusions concerning the Book of Mormon. With no bitterness but with a touch of disappointment, Ferguson agreed with this statement and openly discussed with me his present skepticism about the historicity of the Book of Mormon, the lack of any Book of Mormon geography that relates to the real world, and the absence of the long-hoped-for archaeological confirmation of the Book of Mormon.

After Ferguson's death in 1983, a controversy developed with regard to whether he really lost faith in Joseph Smith's work. His son, Larry Ferguson, insisted that his father maintained a testimony to the Book of Mormon up until the time of his death. On page 4 of his book, Stan Larson reported:

On the other side, Jerald and Sandra Tanner . . . presented a completely different image of Ferguson.

First of all, the Tanners reproduced Ferguson's study of problems in Book of Mormon geography and archaeology that he had prepared for a written symposium on the subject. The Tanners entitled this 1988 publication *Ferguson's Manuscript Unveiled*. At the same time the Tanners published an article . . . in the September 1988 issue of their *Salt Lake City Messenger*. . . . the principal interest of the Tanners is in documenting his purported disillusionment and loss of faith by recounting his visit to their home in December 1970 and by quoting from seven letters which Ferguson allegedly wrote from 1968 to 1979.

Like Stan Larson, we were very surprised when we learned that Thomas Stuart Ferguson had doubts about Mormonism. We also had a copy of his book, *One Fold and One Shepherd*. A believer in the Book of Mormon had recommended it as containing the ultimate case

SOME SPECIAL OFFERS

OFFERS GOOD UNTIL JANUARY 31, 1997

(Mail orders add 10% - Minimum postage \$1.50)

QUEST FOR THE GOLD PLATES

By Stan Larson

Deals with Thomas Stewart Ferguson's futile attempt to prove the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. The regular price in bookstores is \$25.00. Our special price is only **\$21.00**.

CASE REPORT OF THE MORMON ALLIANCE

A very important book detailing a serious problem of sexual abuse in the Mormon Church. the regular price in bookstores is \$20.00. Our special price is only **\$16.00**.

ANOTHER FREE BOOK!

With every order of \$25.00 or more we will send a free copy of *Occultic Ritual Abuse*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. This book normally sells for \$6.95. It contains important information on sexual and ritual abuse in Mormonism.

NOTICE: You must tell us if you want the free book.

Extra Newsletters Free at the Bookstore – By Mail: 5 for \$1.00 - 25 for \$3.00

for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. The first indication we had that Mr. Ferguson was losing faith occurred almost a decade before Stan Larson questioned Ferguson about his skepticism regarding the Book of Mormon.

This was just after Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri were rediscovered. As we mentioned in the 1972 edition of our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* in 1968 Ferguson wrote us a letter saying that we were “doing a **great thing** — getting out **some truth on the Book of Abraham.**” This, of course, was a significant statement since we were presenting strong evidence that Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham was not a correct translation of the papyri.

Later we heard a rumor that Ferguson had given up the Book of Abraham. This, however, hardly prepared us for his visit to our home on December 2, 1970. At that time, Mr. Ferguson told us frankly that he had not only given up the Book of Abraham, but that he had come to the conclusion that Joseph Smith was not a prophet and that Mormonism was **not** true! Ferguson told us that our work was important and that it should be subsidized. He also told us that he had spent twenty-five years trying to prove Mormonism, but had finally come to the conclusion that all his work in this regard had been in vain.

He said that his training in law taught him how to weigh evidence and that the case against Joseph Smith was absolutely devastating and could not be explained away. Speaking of Joseph Smith's First Vision, Ferguson commented that when Cheesman and *Brigham Young University Studies* made available the strange accounts of the vision (accounts coming from the lips of Joseph Smith that had been suppressed by the church for about 130 years) they completely destroyed his faith in Mormonism. He felt that instead of helping the cause, these contradictory accounts caused serious confusion. He stated that the Mormon scholars had shot the bird, plucked out its feathers and left it “**dead and naked on the ground.**”

Ferguson referred to Dr. Hugh Nibley's defense of the Book of Abraham as “nonsense,” and told us that just before coming to visit us he had discussed the Book of Abraham with Hugh B. Brown (Brown served as a member of the First Presidency under church president David O. McKay). According to Mr. Ferguson, Brown had also come to the conclusion that the Book of Abraham was false and was in favor of the church giving it up. A few years later Hugh B. Brown said he could “not recall” making the statements Ferguson attributed to him. Ferguson, however, was apparently referring to the same incident in a letter dated March 13, 1971, when he stated:

I must conclude that Joseph Smith had not the remotest skill in things Egyptian-hieroglyphics. To my surprise one of **the highest officials** in the Mormon Church **agreed with that conclusion** . . . privately in one-to-one [c]onversation.

About thirteen years after Thomas Stuart Ferguson informed us that Hugh B. Brown did not believe in the authenticity of the Book of Abraham, he told the same story to Ronald O. Barney who worked at the LDS Historical Department:

Ferguson said that the thing that first led him to seriously question the church was the papyri purported to be the source of the Book of Abraham. He said he took a photograph of the papyri to a couple of friends of his that were scholars at Cal., Berkeley. They described the

documents as funeral texts. This bothered Ferguson in a serious way! Later he said that he took the evidence to Hugh B. Brown. . . . After reviewing the evidence with Brother Brown he [Ferguson] said that Brother Brown agreed with him that **it was not scripture**. He did not say or infer [imply] that it was his evidence that convinced Brother Brown of this conclusion. But nevertheless, he did say that Hugh B. Brown did **not believe the Book of Abraham** was what the church said it was. (*Quest for the Gold Plates*, page 138)

On page 165, footnote 13, Stan Larson gave additional information regarding this matter:

Barney, interview with Ferguson, typed on 19 April 1984. Barney then recorded his own reaction to Ferguson's recounting of this episode with Brown: “I felt as Ferguson was telling me this that **he was not making up the story**. It appeared that he really believed what he was telling me.”

When Ferguson visited us he was adamant in his claim that President Brown did not believe in the Book of Abraham. He was very stirred up over this matter, and we felt that the conversation he had with Brown probably disturbed him to the point that he decided to visit us.

From what we know from other sources, Hugh B. Brown had a very difficult time accepting the Mormon teaching that blacks could not hold the priesthood nor be married in Mormon temples. Since this doctrine was chiefly derived from Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham, it seems likely that Brown acquired serious doubts about the book even before the papyri were rediscovered and translated. It was not until 1978 that President Spencer W. Kimball claimed to receive a revelation which removed the curse from the blacks.

One matter which we discussed with Mr. Ferguson was the possibility that he might write something about his loss of faith in the Book of Mormon. He was deeply grieved by the fact that he had wasted twenty-five years of his life trying to prove the Book of Mormon. He informed us that he had, in fact, been thinking of writing a book about the matter.

Stan Larson wrote the following concerning this matter:

After going through all this internal turmoil, Ferguson decided to publish his new ideas concerning the origin of the Book of Mormon in a final book. A tantalizing string of evidence exists, showing that Ferguson had indeed researched and written another book-length manuscript and **had decided to move ahead with publishing it**. He had told Jerald and Sandra in December 1970 that “he had been thinking of writing a book about the matter and that it would be a real ‘bombshell.’” Throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s Ferguson spent an immense amount of his spare time working on this new project. His basic assumption during this period was that the Book of Mormon was not an ancient document, but a product of the nineteenth century. . . .

In February 1983 Ferguson . . . told Pierre Agrinier Bach, a longtime friend and archaeologist, that ‘he was working on a project, a manuscript which would (according to him) expose Joseph Smith as a fraud’ and that his manuscript was almost completed. It would be a bombshell on the Book of Mormon, showing both positive and negative evidence from Mesoamerican archaeology, but concluding that the Book of Mormon was

produced through Joseph Smith's own creative genius and through his use of contemporary sources, including Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* and Sidney Rigdon . . .

Ferguson's unexpected death in 1983 stopped his efforts, and, inexplicably, his final manuscript has to date never surfaced. . . . Wishful thinking and fond memories do not change the way things had changed in Ferguson's thinking. The anecdotal theory of Ferguson's having faith, losing it, and regaining it is just not supported by any available evidence from Ferguson himself. . . . Two short sentences in Ferguson's last known letter illustrate his persisting inquisitiveness: "I am continuing my research. It is fun and stimulating."

These final two letters, together with Barney's two journal entries, confirm Ferguson's critical views just two months before his death in 1983. . . . several of his friends — who were aware of his change of attitude — counseled him not to publish his "Bombshell" manuscript which was strongly critical of the Book of Mormon. (*Quest for the Gold Plates*, pages 157-158, 160, 162-163)

It is certainly a shame that the manuscript Ferguson was working on is not available to the Mormon people. Unfortunately, however, there were individuals who did not want it to come to light.

Dr. Larson also wrote the following regarding Ferguson:

Ferguson admitted that the problem that first made him "seriously question the Church was the papyri purported to be the source of the Book of Abraham." Like falling dominoes, his belief in the prophetic status of Joseph Smith and the historicity of the Book of Mormon also collapsed. At first Ferguson still believed that Joseph Smith had been a true prophet of God in 1829 when he translated the Book of Mormon, but he decided that Joseph Smith had become a fallen prophet by 1835 when the Egyptian scrolls and mummies arrived in Kirtland. However, Ferguson, the logical lawyer, continued thinking: since the English text of the Book of Abraham cannot be considered a translation of the Egyptian papyri, maybe the Book of Mormon is not a real translation of an ancient document. Ferguson's conviction concerning the Book of Mormon was devastated as the chain reaction continued. (*Ibid.*, page 134)

Ferguson's skepticism first became public . . . when the Tanners published an account of his visit with them in a revised edition of their *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality*: . . . Though this passage by the Tanners was pointed out to Ferguson many times, he never denied their account of his loss of faith. (*Ibid.*, pages 139-140)

He [Ferguson] then recommended to them [Mr. and Mrs. Harold W. Lawrence] a short reading list: an article about "Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality*, *The True Believer*, and *No Man Knows My History*. Since these works significantly affected Ferguson, he evidently felt that they would be valuable for them to read. (*Ibid.*, page 153)

Likewise, Ferguson responded to Sorenson's earlier geographical study — which was titled with the question "Where in the World?" — by answering that Book of Mormon geography exists nowhere in the real world.

Describing his own 1975 study, Ferguson divulged that "the real implications of the paper is that you can't set Book of Mormon geography down anywhere — **because it is fictional** and will never meet the requirements of the dirt-archaeology." In his view the Book of Mormon is not a translated account of historical peoples, but a fictional story concocted by Joseph Smith, perhaps with the assistance of one or two others. . . . Ferguson found that the known archaeology of Mesoamerica does not fit the requirements of the Book of Mormon. This raised for him serious questions about the antiquity of the volume. From his youth he had assumed that the Book of Mormon was historical — and had believed in it intensely — but during the last thirteen years of his life Ferguson maintained that that assumption was wrong and the best explanation was found in Joseph Smith and his nineteenth century environment. (*Ibid.*, pages 214-215)

On pages 251-52 of *The Messiah in Ancient America*, published in 1987, we read that "Tom Ferguson first approached the President of Brigham Young University, Howard S. McDonald, about establishing a Department of Archaeology. . . . Tom Ferguson was able to convince officials of BYU of the benefit to the University of having such a department."

Ferguson also worked very hard to get the Mormon Church interested in helping him with the organization he envisioned — i.e., the New World Archaeological Foundation. At first church leaders were not excited about the project.

Although Ferguson apparently received no financial help from the church to begin with, he "scraped together \$3,000, a painfully small sum but sufficient to fund the year's short field expedition" (*Ibid.*, page 260). Later, however, the church began supporting the Foundation. On one occasion Ferguson asked President David O. McKay for "\$250,000" and received it (*Ibid.*, page 264-265).

When Ferguson came to our house in 1970, he indicated that he had been faced with a dilemma; he had just received a large grant from the church (\$100,000 or more) to carry on the research of the New World Archaeological Foundation. Although he no longer believed in the Book of Mormon, he felt that the Foundation was doing legitimate archeological work. Consequently, he decided to accept the money and continue the work. He, of course, realized that the organization he had founded to confirm the authenticity of the Book of Mormon was now beginning to cast serious doubt upon the Book of Mormon because archeologists were unable to turn up anything relating to a Hebrew or Christian culture existing in Mesoamerica prior to the time of Columbus.

Eventually, the Mormon Church's Brigham Young University took over the New World Archaeological Foundation and Ferguson "became secretary of the board of directors and held that position until his death in 1983" (*The Messiah in Ancient America*, page 277).

Dr. Stan Larson has certainly written an interesting book regarding Thomas Stuart Ferguson's struggle to know the truth about Mormonism. In addition to this, however, he analyzes the current problems in Book of Mormon archeology and geography. Moreover, Larson gives some very good information regarding the Egyptian papyrus Joseph Smith claimed to translate as the "Book of Abraham." He clearly shows that it is a

spurious book and demonstrates Smith's inability to correctly translate the writing which appeared on the scrolls.

Stan Larson is a very careful scholar who is not intimidated by the FARMS-BYU scholars. He, in fact, deals with a number of their arguments and shows the weakness of their position. The reader will find that we are offering *Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon* for a limited time at a special price (see the first page of this newsletter).

MORMONISM'S PROBLEM WITH CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Mormonism is to be commended for strongly stressing chastity and encouraging its members to avoid any type of sexual sin. When we were members of the church we were taught these wise principles. Nevertheless, Mormon officials today seem to be having some serious problems regarding how to handle the sexual abuse of children.

The following appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on August 28, 1996:

BECKLEY, W. VA. — A lawsuit accusing the Mormon Church of failing to intervene when it knew a member was abusing his daughter should be heard in federal court, a judge has ruled.

U.S. District Judge Elizabeth Hallanan said Monday the \$750 million lawsuit deals with a crucial constitutional issue.

The lawsuit, filed by a woman . . . of Alaska, alleges church leaders knew of sexual abuse her ex-husband inflicted on her daughter but did nothing about it until his arrest in 1994.

James Adams Jr. of Crab Orchard was sentenced to up to 185 years in prison in February for molesting the girl and her brother between 1989 and 1994. His son was 8 and his daughter was 5 when the abuse began.

The lawsuit names the church and church officials along with Raleigh General Hospital in Beckley, Adams' employer. Kenneth Holt, the former head of Raleigh General, was a church member. . . .

The lawsuit said national leaders failed to instruct West Virginia church officials in dealing with the abuse once they learned of it. The victim's attorneys have said they plan to delve into church teachings and the church's handling of sexual-abuse allegations.

The lawsuit originally was filed in Raleigh County Circuit Court, but church lawyers argued questions about the separation of church and state should be heard in federal court.

On September 12, 1996, *The Idaho Statesman* published an unusual story under the title, "Allegation Against Bishop Investigated." It was alleged that a Mormon doctor had sexually abused many of his patients and that a cover-up had taken place in Rexburg, Idaho, the home of the Mormon Church's Ricks College. The newspaper reported the following:

Bonneville County officials are investigating a report that a Mormon Church official tried to discourage a girl from testifying that then-Rexburg physician LaVar Withers sexually abused her.

No charge has been filed, and the LDS official, Ucon-area Bishop Dean Andrus, denies the allegation. For two years, Andrus has served as the lay leader of the Milo Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Ward near Idaho Falls.

"I absolutely am not (guilty)," Andrus said. "This is not accurate."

Andrus declined to answer further questions. He was set to meet Wednesday with investigators . . . Special Prosecutor Dan Hawkley, whose handling of the case led to Withers' plea-bargained agreement to plead guilty to a single battery charge, said Andrus may have violated Idaho's anti-witness intimidation law. That statute carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

"It was serious misconduct," Hawkley said.

Withers is to begin serving a 30-day sentence today at the Madison County jail. After more than a year of denying allegations that he sexually abused female patients, **Withers pleaded guilty** to a single battery count, which referred to numerous victims . . . during the period from 1965 through 1995, when he retired under pressure from the State Board of Medicine.

Hawkley had charged him with a series of felony charges before agreeing to accept a guilty plea to the misdemeanor Monday. . . . Withers will serve a 30-day period in confinement, pay \$15,000 in fines and spend two months on probation — in lieu of a suspended four-month jail term.

Throughout the case, some victims have alleged that **Mormon Church officials ignored their pleas for help or actually discouraged them from pursuing charges against the doctor.**

Hawkley said he learned of the allegation against Andrus last week. His client said the church official expressed concern that her testimony would cause harm to Withers. The session occurred Aug. 11 at Andrus' church offices, he said. . . .

Meanwhile, some of the women who accused Withers of molesting them filed a class-action lawsuit against him. The suit, filed Wednesday in Blackfoot, could cost Withers millions of dollars if the number of plaintiff's expands. For now, five women are listed as plaintiffs.

More than 117 women have told the Rape Response and Crime Victim Center of Idaho Falls that Withers abused them.

Because the conviction covered a 30-year period, women with allegations too old to prosecute under the statute of limitation were able to testify at Withers' sentencing hearing. . . .

The lawsuit seeks at least \$25,000 for each woman named in the suit to cover "mental anguish and emotional harm."

About nine months before Dr. Withers pled guilty to the abuse, *The Idaho Statesman* brought forth a mountain of evidence pointing to his guilt. The paper was very disturbed that there was a cover-up and wanted to know why no charges had been filed. In the issue for December 10, 1995, we find the following:

Embarrassed by the intimate nature of the assaults and afraid of being ostracized by those who won't believe them, most of the women didn't tell anyone who could have put Withers out of business. The few who did found what the others feared: Their complaints were met with almost universal denial

by doctors, Mormon Church officials, regulators, local law enforcement and the Idaho attorney general's office. . . .

It's a story eerily similar to a case in Lovell, Wyo., where a family doctor was accused — and eventually convicted — of raping Mormon women in the privacy of his office, and with the initial complicity of a community, church and law enforcement officials.

Another article in the same issue explained why many Mormon women were reluctant to come forward:

The LaVar Withers story is unfolding in a predominantly Mormon community where church values of deference to men and respect for authority are as much a part of the culture as the religion.

Deep down within Mormon theology lies a fundamental difference that separates the sexes: Most men are members of the church's priesthood, agents of God on Earth; no woman ever can be.

It's a sharp distinction that spills into everyday life for many Mormon women and creates a respect for men and a willingness, in some cases, to let men control.

"Since leaders in the priesthood have more authority and since no woman ever has the priesthood, no woman ever has as much authority as most men in her life," said Lavina Fielding Anderson, an excommunicated Mormon who still attends her ward in Salt Lake City and sings in the choir.

"She is still down on the totem pole and, in some cases, at the bottom of the totem pole."

That fundamental difference could make it almost impossible for some Mormon women to step forward to acknowledge they'd been sexually abused by another church member.

"You wouldn't have been believed in the past," said Marybeth Raynes, a Mormon and licensed marriage and family therapist in Salt Lake City. "Or, if you were believed, you would be told it would embarrass the church or that your job is to forgive."

Push too hard, and there's the risk of being chastised for not supporting the church, putting church membership in jeopardy and even risking eternal salvation. (*Ibid.*, page 10A)

At least two of Dr. Withers's victims were **only thirteen years old** when he molested them (see page 8A).

On the same page we read that "Dr. LaVar Withers and the state's medical board struck a secret deal in July 1995. Give up your medical license, the board told the Rexburg doctor, and no one will ever hear what went on behind closed doors. But word of the deal leaked."

On Page 7A of the same paper the following appears:

Religion, more than history or agriculture, is the common bond among Rexburg residents, 90 percent of whom are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The mayor, City Council members and many law enforcement officials are Mormons. So is Withers. And so are most of his alleged victims. . . .

Knowing that their church leaders work closely together to solve problems in the community, Mormon women felt they could turn to church leaders.

Joan filed a complaint with the chief regulatory agency for doctors . . . A devout Mormon, she took another step in January. She contacted Withers' stake president, Rexburg dentist G. Farrell Young. . . .

"He told me not to go to the police until he had a chance to deal with it," Joan said.

Joan waited one month before turning to Rexburg police. Months passed without a response from Young. . . .

Young will not discuss Withers. But he defends his counsel to Joan. "I may have said do not go to the police immediately. Let me take care of it here. I was hoping to find out more about it."

It seems disgraceful that a doctor who abused so many women and even children over a period of about thirty years could get off with just a slap on the hand.

JOSEPH SMITH AND WOMEN

Unfortunately, Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet, seems to have had a sexual problem that significantly affected the lives of many of those who converted to his church. All of the evidence points to the inescapable conclusion that Smith was unsatisfied living with just one wife. Consequently, he declared that God gave him a revelation that he was to enter into plural marriage.

The revelation regarding polygamy is still published in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, one of the four standard works of the church. The following is taken from that revelation:

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph . . . if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, **then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery** . . . And if he have **ten virgins** given unto him by this law, **he cannot commit adultery** . . . therefore is he justified. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132, verses 1, 61-62)

Joseph Smith, of course, was obedient to the "revelation" which he dictated and proceeded to marry dozens of plural wives before he was murdered in 1844. The prophet also instructed many other Mormon men to enter into polygamy. Since the laws did not allow such a practice, there was a great deal of deceit practiced by Smith and his followers.

Today, the Mormon Church does not allow its members to practice polygamy. However, since church leaders never repudiated the doctrine itself, teach that it will be lived in heaven, and still retain the revelation on polygamy in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, many Mormons have secretly entered into the practice. These people are known as Mormon Fundamentalists because they cling tenaciously to some of the fundamental doctrines taught by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young — doctrines that the church now wishes to disregard.

Today, Mormons who are caught practicing polygamy are excommunicated. There are a large number of Mormon Fundamentalists who have severed all connections with the Mormon Church and have their own leaders. On the other hand, we believe that there probably are still many within the Mormon Church who, like Joseph Smith, are secretly practicing polygamy and playing a dual roll so that they will not be excommunicated.

Unfortunately, although there are many polygamists who treat their families well, the practice of polygamy opens the door for other sexual practices which are extremely harmful to children and young women.

While the present leaders of the Mormon Church condemn fornication, adultery, and incestuous relationships, during the time of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young some strange things were taught concerning this matter. Joseph Smith, for instance, “married **five pairs of sisters**” and even a “**mother**” and her own “**daughter**” (*No Man Knows My History*, page 336). In her book, *Intimate Disciple*, page 317, Mormon writer Clair Noall verified that Smith did marry a mother and her daughter: “**Sylvia Lyon, Patty’s daughter and the wife of Windsor J. Lyon, was already sealed to Joseph.** This afternoon she was to put **her mother’s hand in the Prophet’s.**”

Unfortunately, Joseph Smith’s desire to obtain many wives led him to take other men’s wives. George D. Smith wrote:

Beginning in 1841, Joseph Smith took as plural wives several married women, as if exercising a variant of the feudal *droit du seigneur*: a king’s right to the brides in his domain. This option was presented to the married woman as a favor to her. A woman who wanted higher status in the celestial kingdom could choose to leave a husband with lower status in the church, even if she had been sealed to him, and become sealed to a man higher in authority.

On October 27, 1841, Smith was married for eternity to Zina D. Huntington, Henry B. Jacob’s wife . . . On December 11, 1841, the prophet married Zina’s sister, Prescindai Huntington, who had been married to Norman Buell for fourteen years and remained married to Buell until 1846. Prescindia then left Buell and married Heber C. Kimball ‘for time,’ that is until the end of her life. In the afterlife, ‘for eternity,’ she would revert to Joseph Smith.

Smith married Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner in February 1842, when she was already married . . . Apparently, Smith had planned to marry her long before her marriage to Adam Lightner . . . After her celestial marriage to Joseph, Mary lived with Adam Lightner until his death in Utah . . . In April 1842, two months after the Lightner ceremony, Nancy Marinda Johnson married Joseph Smith while her husband, Orson Hyde, was on a mission to Jerusalem. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1994, pages 10-11)

On February 19, 1854, Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to President Brigham Young delivered a sermon that made it very plain that Joseph Smith did ask for other men’s wives:

What would a man of God say, who felt aright, when Joseph asked him for his money? He would say, “Yes, and I wish I had more to help to build up the kingdom of God.” Or if he came and said, “**I want your wife?**” “**O yes,**” he would say, “**here she is, there are plenty more.**” . . . **Did the Prophet Joseph want every man’s wife he asked for?** He did not . . . If such a man of God should come to me and say, “I want your gold and silver, **or your wives,**” **I should say, “Here they are, I wish I had more to give you, take all I have got.”** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 14)

While non-Mormons would tend to consider Joseph Smith’s marriages to other men’s wives as adultery, many faithful Mormons try to justify Smith’s actions in various ways. It is apparent, however, that the system of polygamy he set up was very detrimental to young women and children. Smith, in fact, even **married a fourteen-year-old girl**, Helen Mar Kimball, when he was **thirty-seven years old!** Most people would consider this child abuse.

Moreover, Joseph Smith went so far as to take two young women into his house, become their personal guardian, and then lure them into becoming his wives. Mormon scholars Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery wrote:

The Lawrence sisters had come to Nauvoo from Canada without their parents in 1840 when Maria was about eighteen and Sarah fifteen. Emma and Joseph offered them a home. According to William Law’s account, the girls had inherited about eight thousand dollars in “English gold.” Law said, “Joseph got to be appointed their guardian,” . . . Joseph’s history dated May 30, 1843, reads, “I superintended the preparation of papers to settle the Lawrence estate,” and four days later the “accounts of the Lawrence estate were presented to the probate judge, to which he made objection.” (*Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, 1984, page 144)

In 1981, Andrew F. Ehat, a Mormon scholar who is very knowledgeable about early Mormon history, wrote his Master of Arts thesis at Brigham Young University. It is entitled, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question.” Speaking of Joseph Smith, Ehat wrote:

In particular, he knew his responsibility as guardian to the Lawrence Estate could be misunderstood given the fact that he was sealed to Maria Lawrence — a fact that made him particularly vulnerable to William Law.

In June 1841, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith and William Law had assumed the responsibility of the deceased Edward Lawrence’s estate valued at \$7,750.06. **Joseph was named as guardian of the Lawrence children.** Somehow during his period of indecision, William Law found out that Maria Lawrence was sealed as a wife to Joseph; in fact, Law, he later stated, found Joseph in a compromising situation with Maria on 12 October 1843. Two weeks later, 26 October 1843, Joseph ostensibly sealed Maria for time to John M. Bernhisel . . . But in January 1844, Joseph apparently felt this would no longer calm the angered William Law. The day after Joseph and William’s final confrontation, Joseph began arrangements to relinquish the estate affairs entirely. . . . Undoubtedly, if William Law, one of the appointed trustees of the estate, “claimed” that Joseph had not only extorted the funds of the estate, but had also **committed adultery with the eldest child of whom he was personal guardian**, that would make an explosive expose. . . . What was said and done in public was guarded and carefully worded in order to protect both the Church and his faithful colleagues as they entered practices **illegal** in the sight of man yet covenants they were assured were commanded by God. . . . Law appeared before the first sitting of the Grand Jury of the Hancock County circuit court to swear out charges against Joseph. Law filed charges and presented such evidence that the Grand Jury

authorized an indictment against Joseph Smith for “adultery and fornication.” (pages 132-134)

George D. Smith did a great deal of research on polygamy in the early years of Mormonism. He discovered that Joseph Smith was not only sealed to a fourteen-year-old girl, but also to a fifteen-year-old girl and to two girls who were sixteen years old. All of these sealings to young girls occurred when Joseph Smith was between thirty-seven and thirty-eight years of age.

In his article George Smith included a list of 153 men who took plural wives in the early years of the Mormon Church. When we examined this list, we noted that two of the young girls **were only thirteen years old** when they were lured into polygamy. Thirteen girls were **only fourteen years old**. Twenty-one were **fifteen years old**, and fifty-three were **sixteen years old** when they were secretly enticed into this degrading lifestyle.

Fanny Stenhouse, who at one time had been a firm believer in Mormonism and had even allowed her husband to take another wife, wrote the following:

It would be quite impossible, with any regard to propriety, to relate all the horrible results of this disgraceful system. . . . Marriages have been contracted between the nearest of relatives; and old men tottering on the brink of the grave have been united to little girls scarcely in their teens; while unnatural alliances of every description, which in any other community would be regarded with disgust and abhorrence, are here entered into in the name of God . . .

It is quite a common thing in Utah for a man to marry two or even three sisters. . . . I know also another man who **married a widow** with several children; and when one of the girls had grown into her teens he **insisted on marrying her also** . . . and to this very day the daughter bears children to her step-father, living as wife in the same house with her mother! (*Tell It All*, 1874, pages 468-469)

Because of the practice of polygamy there was a shortage of women in Utah. The competition for those who were not married became intense, and many men were marrying girls who were very young. On page 607 of her book, Stenhouse commented about the matter: “That same year [1872], a bill was brought into the Territorial Legislature, providing that **boys of fifteen years of age and girls of twelve might legally contract marriage**, with the consent of their parents or guardians! In stating this disgraceful fact, I feel certain that the reader who never lived among the Saints and is not versed in Utah affairs will think that I must be mistaken in what I say. It is, however, I am sorry to say, only too true, and the records of the Legislature will bear me witness. The fact was stated in the *New York Herald* of January 27, 1872” (*Ibid.*, page 607).

An entry added to Joseph Smith’s private dairy after his death confirms that Smith believed a man could be married for eternity to his own sister. It appears under the date of October 26, 1843, and reads as follows:

The following named deceased persons were **sealed to me** (John M. Bernhisel) on Oct[ober] 26th 1843, **by President Joseph Smith: Maria Bernhisel, sister**; Brother Samuel’s wife, Catherine Kremer; Mary Shatto (Aunt) . . . [eight other names follow]

\ John M. Bernhisel

\ Recorded by Rob[er]t L. Campbell,

July 29th 1868.

(*An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, edited by Scott H. Faulring, 1987, page 424)

The reader will notice that **Joseph Smith sealed John M. Bernhisel to his own sister**. If the doctrine of Celestial Marriage were really true, in the resurrection John Bernhisel would find **himself married to his own sister Maria Bernhisel!**

Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet, asserted that “God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, **is a man like unto one of yourselves** . . .” (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, pages 613-614). He also taught that God was married and had billions of spirit children in the pre-existence. In other words, according to Smith’s theology, we were all born of God and his wife and lived as his sons and daughters before coming to earth.

Mormons believe that those who are accounted worthy of the highest glory in heaven have sex forever with those to whom they are sealed. They become Gods and Goddesses, giving birth to spirit children throughout all eternity. These spirit children eventually take physical bodies on other worlds. Consequently, when John Bernhisel had his sister sealed to him, he was planning to have sex with her forever. To the non-Mormon this would appear to be heavenly incest. In any case, Joseph Smith not only sealed Bernhisel to his sister, but also to four aunts and two cousins!

Brigham Young, the second prophet of the Mormon Church, reasoned that since all people who come to the earth were originally brothers and sisters, there is really no problem with brothers and sisters marrying on earth. On October 8, 1854, Brigham Young made these controversial comments:

Then I reckon that the children of Adam and Eve married each other; this is speaking to the point. **I believe in sisters marrying brothers, and brothers having their sisters for wives.** . . .

This is something pertaining to our marriage relation. The whole world will think what an awful thing it is. What an awful thing it would be if the Mormons should just say **we believe in marrying brothers and sisters**. Well we shall **be under the necessity of doing it**, because we cannot find anybody else to marry. (*The Teachings of President Brigham Young*, compiled and edited by Fred C. Collier, vol. 3, pages 362, 368)

Mormon scholar Jessie L. Embry, of the church’s Brigham Young University, acknowledged that as late as 1886 Lorenzo Snow, who became the fifth prophet of the Mormon Church, still secretly held to the belief that brothers and sisters could marry. Embry cited from the journal of Apostle Abraham H. Cannon to prove the point:

. . . Abraham H. Cannon, an apostle recorded in 1886 that he talked with “Pres. [Lorenzo] Snow about various doctrines. **Bro Snow said I would live to see the time when brothers and sisters would marry each other in this church**. All our horror at such an union was due entirely to prejudice and the offspring of such union would be healthy and pure as any other. These were **the decided views of Pres. Young** when alive, for Bro. S. talked to him freely on this matter.” (*Journal of Mormon History*, 1992, page 106)

The fact that Apostle Cannon received this information about brothers and sisters marrying from Lorenzo Snow is very significant because Snow later became the fifth president of the Mormon Church.

The illegal practice of polygamy with all the deception that it entailed certainly took its toll on Mormon women and also made its mark on Mormon men. The betrayal and abuse that some of the women suffered is almost beyond belief. The early marriages and the strange idea that brothers and sisters might some day marry, certainly was a blight upon the early Mormon Church. Some who deal with sexual abuse in the church today wonder if the teachings of the early church may have trickled down to the present time.

THE MORMON ALLIANCE

On July 4, 1992, an organization known as The Mormon Alliance was formed for the purpose of countering “spiritual and ecclesiastical abuse in the Church and to protect the Church against defamatory actions.” This organization is composed of both Mormons and former Mormons who have been excommunicated from the church for disagreeing with some of the opinions promulgated by the leaders of the church.

At first members of the Mormon Alliance were mainly concerned about reporting incidents of spiritual and ecclesiastical abuse. As it turned out, however, they were deluged with accounts of sexual abuse and information indicating that this abuse was sometimes swept under the rug. Because of this development, the Mormon Alliance decided to compile a book containing over 300 pages of material relating to sexual abuse in the Mormon Church. It was published under the title, *Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance*, vol. 1, 1995.

One thing that has alarmed many people is the accounts of Mormon bishops who have either engaged in sexual abuse or have failed to properly deal with the matter when it was brought to their attention. One woman recently reported to us that her husband was a bishop who sexually abused their children. She had to leave him to protect the children.

We, of course, do not mean to imply that most Mormon bishops are involved in sexual abuse or cover it up. The great majority of the bishops are sincere people who would never want to be involved in this type of abuse or in any type of a cover-up. Nevertheless, the word has gotten out that there is a problem in the Mormon Church. In fact, NBC has contacted us about this matter and we have turned over some information to those who are investigating the situation.

One disturbing thing that has been reported to us on a number of occasions is that when some bishops have conducted worthiness interviews with members of their ward they have asked questions regarding sexual matters that go far beyond the bounds of propriety. For example, one man reported to us that when he was young, both he and the girl he was going with felt they were becoming too intimate and went to the bishop for help. Instead of just giving the counsel they needed, the bishop questioned them at great lengths, asking all kinds of questions regarding what went on. The man described the questioning as “pornographic,” and said he felt that the bishop was actually enjoying the interrogation.

Another woman reported to us that when she went to the bishop for a temple recommend she was questioned extensively regarding her sexual relations with her own husband. The questioning became very explicit. Finally, she informed the bishop that she felt the interrogation was highly improper and said that she would not answer any more questions without her husband being present. When she later discussed the matter with her husband, he stated that the bishop had not asked him about details of their sexual life. Instead, he had willingly given him a temple recommend! She, of course, felt that the bishop was grilling her to satisfy his own interest in sexual matters.

The Mormon Alliance mentioned “a bishop [that lived in Oklahoma who] had been ‘legendary’ among the youth for asking sexually explicit questions during worthiness interviews. One young woman refused to be interviewed unless her father was present. The youth sarcastically nicknamed him ‘**Bishop Triple-X**’ because of the types of questions he asked, and his motto was, ‘You’re not worthy until *I say you’re worthy.*’ ” (*Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance*, vol. 1, page 271, footnote 1)

Bishops begin interviewing children when they are young. Mormon children are supposed to be interviewed by the bishop when they are eight years old to see if they are ready for baptism. When a boy reaches the age of twelve, he is interviewed by a bishop to see if he is worthy to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. This interview is conducted behind closed doors.

These interviews continue as the boy advances in the priesthood. Unfortunately, some Mormon bishops have been accused of using these interviews as an opportunity to sexually abuse young men. Since the bishop is supposed to have special authority from God, sexual advances by the bishop tend to greatly confuse young men. Furthermore, it is very difficult for those who are abused to accuse the bishop of wrongdoing. Consequently, they tend to bottle up their feelings.

Jack McCallister, who was formerly a bishop in the Mormon Church, felt that it was very improper for one individual to be alone with a young man and ask all kinds of questions related to sexual matters:

Standard Church policy is that two priesthood officers must be present to handle Church funds, a check and balance system to prevent financial error and inhibit the temptation to steal. And the Church conducts regular financial audits. How many priesthood officers are required to conduct a personal worthiness interview with a youth? **One.** And there are no procedures for auditing the actions of these leaders for inappropriate behavior. (*Case Reports*, page 205)

Jack McCallister was especially concerned about these “worthiness interviews” because he himself was abused by his bishop in his office. He related the following:

We were the only ones in the meetinghouse. We shook hands and he put his arms around me. He told me how much the Lord loved me. He felt directly inspired tonight to call me down to his office. . . . He asked if we could pray together before we talked. He said a lot of really nice things about me to God . . . I felt very special and very humble. It was one of the most beautiful, heartfelt, eloquent prayers that I’ve ever heard on my behalf,

asking the Lord to bless me, watch over me, care for me, and assuring the Lord of what a fine wonderful young man I was. . . . Then we sat down in two chairs in front of his desk. He pulled his chair up really close to mine, looked me straight in the eyes through his pink-tinted bifocal lenses. I could see he still had tears in his eyes from the prayer. "What sincerity!" I thought. "Maybe some day I can learn how to talk to God with such powerful impressive prayer language." (*Ibid.*, pages 167-168)

After some conversation about temporal matters, the bishop proceeded to discuss sexual matters with him and eventually molested him. This abuse caused severe trauma to Jack. He wrote:

I couldn't figure out what was going on. He was the bishop. I was the obedient but unworthy servant. He was God's chosen leader on earth. Whatever he did was directly authorized by God. My thoughts raced around. (*Ibid.*)

Jack McCallister decided to keep the matter secret. Even though he eventually became a bishop, his suffering did not end. To add to his own pain, he learned that his own son was also victimized by another Mormon bishop. In a letter to Gordon B. Hinckley, the current president of the Mormon Church, Jack and his wife, Merradyth, expressed their dismay that things were being swept under the rug:

In June of 1963, my husband Jack, had been sexually molested by his bishop (Samuel H. Gardener) [a bishop of the Oklahoma First Ward who died in 1967] for two years between 15-17. He was afraid to tell me because I wouldn't love or respect him. After we had been married about four months, he told me what had happened and how ashamed he felt . . . I believed him.

In June of 1993, our son, Scott, was 23 years old and recently returned from an honorable mission. He told my husband about being sexually molested between the age of 15-17 by his bishop (Ronald W. Phelps). Scott was ashamed to talk about it prior because he feared the negative reaction of others . . . I believed him.

In September of 1993, the three of us talked to our Stake President, Gary James NEWMAN. Scott both told and graphically demonstrated the sexual abuse he suffered . . . The details and manner of the molestation were discounted and minimized by Pres. NEWMAN. He told us he couldn't believe such a thing was true. . . . we also wrote you a letter explaining the details of the situation and asking for direct intervention and investigation into the matter from Church Headquarters. We heard nothing . . . only silence. Our pain increased. We talked with other member parents to see if they were aware of anything that had happened to their family members. We formed an emotional support group for survivors of sexual abuse. . . . We felt only contempt for us by Pres. NEWMAN. He threatened us to "either stop talking to the Church members about this or I'll draw up the papers to have you excommunicated for failure to sustain your leaders and apostasy." He told us . . . they couldn't accept Scott's word over a priesthood leader held in high esteem . . .

Because Pres. NEWMAN was not willing to hear our cries for help and told us to "do what you have to do . . . but stop talking to the members of the Church about this or I'll excommunicate you," we went to the police and filed

felony charges against Ron Phelps . . . The police informed us until there was more evidence developed, it would be difficult to prosecute the case. They believed Scott and recognized the deception used by typical pedophiles with multiple victims. . . .

A criminal background check revealed Ron Phelps had been arrested for indecent exposure prior to being called as Bishop in 1980 [the charges were later dropped]. He was recently arrested in an Oklahoma University restroom in Norman Oklahoma on December 3, 1993. He did "unlawfully, willfully and wrongfully solicit, induce and entice one John Bishop, an undercover police officer, to commit an act of lewdness contrary to the form of the Statutes in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Oklahoma." (Copy enclosed) We thought it was important to notify others with this public information to protect their children . . . (Letter dated March 23, 1994)

Neither President Hinckley nor other church leaders in Salt Lake City were anxious to go to bat for the McCallisters.

Significantly, according to a statement made on television, the McCallisters filed felony charges against Ronald Phelps on September 13, 1993, over two months **before** he was arrested at the University of Oklahoma on December 2, 1993!

On April 20, 1994, *The Yucon Review* reported that Phelps "pleaded guilty to two misdemeanors for outraging public decency. . . ." Local church leaders, however, seem to have been oblivious to the importance of these charges being made against Phelps prior to his arrest. In his zeal to hush up the whole matter Stake President Gary J. Newman sent a letter to Merradyth McCallister threatening her with excommunication:

This letter is to inform you that the Stake Presidency is considering formal disciplinary action against you, including the possibility of **disfellowshipment or excommunication** . . . (Letter dated July 29, 1994)

On August 2, 1994, Bishop Larry A. Morgan sent a letter to Mrs. McCallister informing her that she had been excommunicated: "It was the decision of the Council that you, Merradyth McCallister, are hereby excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for conduct contrary to the laws and order of the Church."

Jack McCallister beat church leaders to the punch and withdrew his membership. In a letter to Bishop Morgan, dated July 24, 1994, he wrote: "I refuse to bow down before this false image. I refuse to be intimidated into silent consent. I refuse to place the reputation of the church ahead of the safety of our children. I refuse to protect child sexual molesters in high places."

Mary Plourde, who also was a member of the church when Phelps was bishop, was very disturbed regarding the charges of sexual abuse and refused to be silent about the matter even though she was threatened with excommunication. On August 9, 1994, bishop Larry A. Morgan sent her a letter that contained the following: "It was the decision of the Council that you, Mary Snow Plourde, are hereby excommunicated . . ."

Since Jack McCallister's son did not have an eyewitness to testify that Ronald Phelps was guilty of sexually abusing him, we can understand why Mormon Church officials in Oklahoma

would have a very difficult time trying to determine who was telling the truth. The fact that Phelps was arrested for his sexual behavior and pled guilty makes us very suspicious that Scott McCallister was indeed telling the truth.

It is evident that church leaders made a very serious mistake when they decided to excommunicate church members who were unable to keep silent. These people sincerely believed they were doing their Christian duty. Before the excommunications took place an attorney, Floyd W. Taylor, warned Stake President Gary J. Newman that it would be foolish to cut people off from the church to silence them:

This firm has been counseling with Jack and Merradyth McCallister . . . There is more than enough here to put reasonable minds on inquiry. It is regrettable that you and the Church council appeared to be bent on a course of silencing the allegations of parents and victims of possibly abusive conduct perpetrated by persons affiliated with your Church, instead of listening with open minds and trying to find solutions.

I am Roman Catholic. As you know, my church has experienced multiple charges of sexual abuse by clergy against minors. My church's initial reaction was cover-up. The result was a plethora of lawsuits and astronomical liability losses. One Archdiocese is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Please do not interpret this as a threat of litigation. I am trying to make a plea to common sense and ask that you look upon the experience of the Catholic Church and not follow the same path. The Catholic Church today has reversed its initial course and is openly acknowledging the problem and is trying to do something about it. Your Church should at least be open to the possibility that these allegations may have some substance and that investigating the allegations is a more appropriate way of handling them than trying to silence the accusers through threats of disfellowshipment and excommunication.

If the McCallisters and others who are accusing LDS officials of unspeakable acts are right, your Church will profit from listening and taking action to protect your most valuable asset, your children. . . . It is not my desire to be perceived as a legal threat to the LDS Church. The McCallisters love their religion and wish the Church no harm. Since they truly believe what they have alleged; and, if what they are saying is true, the worst thing they could do to your Church would be to become part of a cover-up which would jeopardize the safety of countless Mormon youngsters and open your Church up to the kind of legal quagmire the Catholic Church faces today. We urge you to reconsider your approach to this matter. (Letter written by Floyd W. Taylor, Attorney At Law, dated March 14, 1994)

In *Case Reports*, pages 23-24, we find this information:

Estimates about child sexual abuse vary, but figures from the Boy Scouts of America and the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse indicate that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before age eighteen. "Women from highly religious homes are just as likely to be abused as nonreligious women." According to one study of eighty-nine married Mormon women from "very religious" homes, 26 percent had been sexually abused as children. . . . Rather than

dealing straightforwardly and helpfully with the topic, it [the church] has rather taken the position of deploring the behavior but leaving survivors and their families in the hands of local leaders who may or may not be equipped and motivated to deal with the problem.

The same book informs us that four sociologists studied the experiences "of seventy-one Mormon women when they disclosed their abuse, or considered disclosing their abuse, to ecclesiastical leaders." The research made it clear that most of the women were not satisfied with the response they received:

The researchers found that only twelve (17 percent) of the women had positive interactions with their Church leaders when they disclosed their abuse. Forty-nine (69 percent) had negative experiences, and ten (14 percent) had not talked to church leaders, because they "had no confidence in their leaders' ability to help them." . . . This study therefore raises serious doubts about the accuracy of President Hinckley's statement that unsupportive priesthood leaders are "a blip here, and a blip there." Obviously more research needs to be done with random samples and generalizable results. But in this group alone, 69 percent of Mormon women sexually abused as children had negative experiences (including disfellowshipping and excommunication when they disclosed their abuse to their bishops as adults while another 14 percent (a total of 83 percent) feared to do so lest they be punished. (*Ibid.*, pages 48-49)

Case Reports cites other important material from the report by the four sociologists mentioned above. The article which they published was entitled, "Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: The Case of Mormon Women." It was printed in *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 11, Spring 1996, pages 39-60. All four of the researchers taught at Brigham Young University.

According to the article as cited in *Case Reports*, the women described their leaders as

"judgmental," "unbelieving," "protective of perpetrators who held the priesthood," "intrusive," "nosy," or "impatient." . . .

"1. The leaders did not want to talk about the abuse or refused to believe that the alleged perpetrators 'would ever do anything like that.'

"2. The leaders offered simple 'solutions' (such as, 'Stop thinking about it' or 'read your scriptures and pray more').

"3. Several leaders implied that the victims just needed to 'forgive and forget' and get on with their lives.

"4. Some leaders implied that the abuse or related problems were the women's fault.

" . . . Ten women felt 'threatened' because they believed they would be punished or silenced if they came forward with allegations of abuse. One woman went to her bishop in an effort to gain control over life choices that she felt were destructive. She explained that she had been sexually abused as a child and believed that the abuse was a primary factor in her compulsive behavior. As a result of her revelations to the bishop, she was excommunicated, which, she said, "emphasized that I was no good and not worthy of anything."

"Five of the women who spoke to Church leaders were . . . disfellowshipped . . . or excommunicated for behaviors (such as sexual behavior) related to their abuse. Of the 80 Mormon

perpetrators, **only 3 were disciplined in any way**. Thus sexual “impurity” by these adult survivors of abuse, all of whom confessed their behavior voluntarily, was punished more harshly than was the sexual abuse of children by male priesthood holders.

“Some of the perpetrators remained priesthood holders in good standing after they were **legally** convicted of molesting children. In the case of one perpetrator who admitted his guilt but was not legally tried, a bishop said that he had made sufficient recompense because he offered to pay the victim \$30 a month for six months; the total cost of this survivor’s psychotherapy was about \$16,000.” (*Ibid.*, pages 107-108)

On page 109 of *Case Reports* we read:

A final finding was that sixty-five (92 percent) of the abuse survivors felt that Mormon culture did not aid in their recovery because it forced them to maintain a public identity at odds with their private selves. It maintained a heavy-handed “code of silence.” Abuse was “a taboo topic,” said one woman.

Marion B. Smith, the first director of the Intermountain Specialized Abuse Treatment Center, reported a number of cases of sexual abuse committed by Mormon bishops. In a letter published in *Sunstone* magazine, December 1991, pages 4-6, she reported: “**Six of my clients in cases of incest were daughters of former bishops.**”

Case Reports, pages 124-125, tells of some cases Marion Smith dealt with:

A professional woman in her forties sought Marion’s help in therapy after being abused by both her father and her grandfather for years when she was a child. Her father, **the bishop**, was widely respected in the ward during the same time period. . . .

A Provo woman incested as a child by her father went to the stake president with whom her father had served on **a regional council**. He responded that he “had to assume that her father was ‘an honorable man’ because he held a high Church office. She must be wrong.”. . .

A Salt Lake City woman and her sisters, between ages seven and nine, were “repeatedly abused” by a ward member and entered therapy as adults to deal with the trauma. One sister was “horrified to see their abuser serving as a temple worker.” He was also volunteering with children at a local hospital. She reported him to the hospital, who discontinued his volunteer services. . . .

Kristie Morton, raised in an active LDS family with pioneer roots, was sexually abused during childhood by various relatives. One was her great-uncle, **a branch president**, who said he was “helping her” and doing her “a favor.” She tried to defend herself, but her confusion was as paralyzing as her great-uncle’s greater power: “In Church they told us young women to be morally pure; they warned us about young men our own age trying to take sexual advantage of us, but they didn’t warn us about our priesthood leaders or family members trying to do the same thing. They told us to honor male priesthood holders because they act for God on earth. They told us to follow our leaders and do what we were told and everything will be all right. Well, it wasn’t all right.” Kristie entered therapy in her mid-thirties, after her great-uncle had died, and confronted

her aunt with the fact of the abuse. The aunt said that the uncle “was only human” and had given “devoted service for so many years the Lord had forgiven him his sins.” She blamed Morton for bringing the abuse upon herself, and she accused her of trying to tear apart the family.

Among the numerous accounts of child sexual abuse noted by the Mormon Alliance we find the following:

Ellen (a pseudonym) had been molested twice by the time she was fourteen. . . . Confused and distraught, she and her family turned to bishops Arlo Atkinson and James Stapely, who also is a Mesa city council member. Atkinson took her into his home in Mesa. She would live with his family, and he would shepherd her through the court proceedings that followed.

Two months later, he began “a sexual relationship” with her. It did not stop, even after she tried to commit suicide. When ward members became “suspicious” about the amount of time Ellen was spending with Atkinson, she moved back home but the sexual relationship continued. When she became pregnant, she “concocted a story” about date rape and was placed in a state foster home. The foster mother intercepted “sexually explicit” letters from Atkinson to Ellen and contacted the police. Atkinson was excommunicated from the Church, served 132 days in jail for “sexual misconduct with a minor, and was sentenced to three years” probation. When he was out of jail, he moved to California but continued to telephone and visit Ellen. During the visits he continued to have sexual relations with her. (*Case Reports*, pages 89-90)

THE FALL OF GEORGE P. LEE

While some Mormons would like to believe that their leaders are almost infallible, the case of George P. Lee clearly demonstrates that even a highly respected leader can fall into sin. The Mormon Church is led by a group of men known as the General Authorities. Since Lee served in the First Quorum of the Seventy, he was a member of this elite group that directs the affairs of the church.

On September 2, 1989, the *Salt Lake Tribune* made this startling announcement:

George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy since 1975, was stripped of his membership by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for “apostasy” and “other conduct unbecoming a member of the church.”. . .

Dr. Lee has been considered a rising star in the church hierarchy, but his questioning of church leadership landed him in trouble two years ago, he said. Since then, he claims **church officials have accused him of polygamy and “immorality,”** both of which he denies. When those charges didn’t stick, they charged him with apostasy, he said.

After George Lee’s excommunication, he wrote two letters “To the First Presidency and the Twelve” in which he severely castigated the leaders of the church. In the first letter he asked: “Who wrote a letter to George P. Lee and falsely accused him of things which were not true such as **polygamy** and teaching false doctrine?” His letters were turned over to the news media and caused a good deal of dissension in Salt Lake City.

George Lee's many supporters discounted the comments regarding **polygamy** and **immorality**, believing that the church was out to get him. Unfortunately, however, in 1993, the statements about polygamy and immorality became very important. On July 30, 1993, the Mormon Church's newspaper, the *Deseret News*, reported the following:

George P. Lee, former LDS Church general authority, is expected to surrender to authorities next week on charges that he sexually abused a **12-year-old girl** in 1989.

Investigators say he fondled the girl at his home and during official trips made as a member of the church's First Quorum of Seventy.

Lee, 50, was charged Thursday with aggravated sexual abuse of a child, a first-degree felony that carries a maximum penalty of five years to life in prison. The single charge accuses him of fondling the girl at his West Jordan home while **talking to her about polygamy**. . . .

The girl would sometimes accompany Lee's daughter when they traveled to conferences in other states while he served as a general authority for the church. Lee is accused of fondling her during trips to Arizona, Canada and Lake Powell, according to a sheriff's report. . . .

Prosecutors filed the charge as a first-degree felony because Lee 'occupied a position of special trust to the victim' as a religious leader and because the incidents are said to have occurred more than five times, the charges state.

On August 13, 1993, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

Former Mormon general authority George P. Lee said God will bring "calamities and judgments" upon those who have accused him of child sex abuse. . . . Mr. Lee compared his plight with the persecution of Jesus Christ. "We all have peaks and valleys," he said. "This is my valley, my Garden of Gethsemane."

Finally, on October 12, 1994, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that Lee acknowledged his guilt:

A year ago, former Mormon general authority George P. Lee proclaimed he was "innocent before God" of sexually molesting a 12-year-old neighbor girl.

But Tuesday before a 3rd District judge, Lee humbly hung his head and admitted to touching the girl's breasts for sexual gratification. . . .

Lee, 51, pleaded guilty to attempted sexual abuse of a child, a third-degree felony. . . .

Lee admitted only to fondling the girl's breasts.

But the victim, now 17 years old, said Lee fondled her breasts, buttocks and genitals for three years, beginning in 1986 when she was 9 years old. . . .

The last time Lee abused her was after a camping trip in June 1989 at Lee's home.

George Lee, like the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, mentioned the practice of "polygamy" to the young girl after they had returned from a camping trip:

During that trip, she went camping with the Lee family. Lee disappeared for a day and a night, then returned and brought her . . . back to their West Jordan home. That night, he called Karen [a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the victim] into his bedroom and had her sit on his bed. He

told her that he had hiked to the top of a nearby mountain where he spoke "to the Lord and he **told the Lord he'd fallen in love with me**. . . . I was confused and taken aback about him speaking to the Lord and the Lord saying it was OK." Lee then **began talking to her about polygamy**. "**He said that it was going to be brought back to the Earth and we'd be asked to live it**." . . . Still later that night, Lee woke her up and said "he was sorry he'd ever started touching me and that he'd never do it again."

However, "almost every day" for the month, he continued the fondling: in her friend's bedroom, in the family room, in the pool at the Deseret Gym, on a Heber Creeper train ride, and in hotels when they traveled to Canada. She testified later that there were "more than 20 touching incidents" that month. (*Case Reports*, page 73)

The Mormon Alliance raises the question of whether church leaders knew about Lee's sexual problem before he was excommunicated. In his first letter to the First Presidency and the Twelve George Lee made it clear that the church had put him on probation:

Who is acting as judge, jury and executioner at the same time and delights in putting George P. Lee on probation without fair hearing. . . . Who put George P. Lee on probation after he faithfully and honestly opened up to you in his attempts to answer your questions and false accusations with a presentation on the chalkboard?

The Mormon Alliance reported that there was a possibility that Lee may have abused other individuals:

In 1993 when criminal charges were filed against Lee, a Church spokesman said "they were unaware at the time [of the excommunication] of the sexual-abuse allegations." Despite the Church's silence and Lee's denial, however, it is not impossible that allegations of sexual misconduct were known among the other General Authorities, for simultaneously with the period of probation and the pattern of intensifying ostracism, Lee was turning to children for sexual gratification and had been doing so since at least 1986, three years before his excommunication.

According to newspaper accounts spanning the time period between the filing of charges and Lee's plea bargain, there may have been additional victims. A story published two days after he was charged states: "Other possible victims are alluded to in the report, but officials say that for now, only incidents involving the 12-year-old will be prosecuted." A second newspaper story quoted sheriff's officials as saying "others allegedly have made similar allegations against Lee." A third news story, published in May 1994, reported that Lee's attorney had filed a motion "asking the judge to exclude 'any evidence of other misconduct or bad acts concerning defendant's sisters-in-law . . . for the reason that said incidents, even if true, are irrelevant.' The motion did not elaborate on the 'misconduct or bad acts.'" . . .

Many questions remain unanswered: Did Lee abuse other children besides Karen, including the sisters of his wife Kitty? Were there abuse victims earlier than Karen? What was the influence of his abusive activities on his "apostasy" and vice versa? What did other General Authorities suspect or know? What kinds of interventions did they attempt during his "probation" and why was he placed on "probation"? (*Case Reports*, pages 72, 76)

On April 19, 1992, the *Salt Lake Tribune* published an article containing the following:

The social structure of the Mormon Church and its emphasis on family protect child sex abusers, according to two women who have written a book about sexual abuse in two Mormon neighborhoods.

Paperdolls: Healing from Sexual Abuse in Mormon Neighborhoods, was written by two Salt Lake Valley women using the pseudonyms April Daniels and Carol Scott. . . . While the women tell their stories of sex abuse separately, they share more than authorship: One of the teenage boys who abused Ms. Daniels in the 1970s married Ms. Scott's daughter and later abused his own children. . . .

"I wrote it out of a need to empower myself, just some deep need to have the truth spoken," said Ms. Scott, who relates how her grandchildren were abused at "touching parties" staged by **the daughter and son-in-law of a Mormon Church apostle**. . . .

In the book's foreword, Salt Lake County psychiatrist Dr. Paul L. Whitehead reports he treated three of the children described in the book and "can verify the accuracy of their horrific experiences."

On page 52 of *Paperdolls* Carol stated that when she thinks of the kids from one of the neighborhoods, "it makes me physically ill. **Six kids dead. Three of them suicides.** Three in and out of institutions. Five with eating disorders or drug abuse."

Carol claimed that the apostle's daughter was very generous about tending children, but felt there was an evil motive:

This mother . . . is a daughter of a general authority in the Mormon church, a daughter of one of the Twelve Apostles. **Her husband is in the bishopric** . . . Our children told about the "touching parties" at her house. About what the dad did to his two little girls and ours while the mom gave out Popsicles and cookies and took videos. About how she used some of the Junior Sunday School visual aids for backgrounds in the videos. . . . The detail from each matches what the others have said. (*Paperdolls*, page 55)

On page 108, Carol related that pornographic videos were shown and then the children all took part in various sexual acts: "The whole 'party' took less than an hour. Usually about seven children, a couple of teenagers, and three or four adults were there. Sometimes there were costumes and props, and sometimes the children were given injections, 'especially if it was going to hurt.'" On the same page we find that the children were threatened:

Cynthia said **the apostle's daughter told them, "I'll run over your Mommy and Daddy with my truck if you tell,"** and "I'll drop Claire in the road going to pre-school, and she'll get lost or run over." Cynthia and Claire **watched as the apostle's son-in-law strangled a baby kitten.** They made the children help bury it. "We can do this to Claire," they told Cynthia. "We'll bury her right here by the kitty if you ever tell."

According to Carol, the church did not take any action against this man: ". . . the stake president . . . talked with one of the children's therapists. The stake president told us he believed it. There has never been an excommunication trial. . . . the ones who had the 'touching parties,' are the daughter and son-in-law

of an apostle in the Mormon church. . . . What Utah police official, what church authority is going to deal with that?" On page 145, she stated: "The apostle's son-in-law would continue to sit next to the bishop on the stand in church, looking down on all the faces of the children he had molested."

In a letter to *Sunstone*, Marion B. Smith indicated that she felt there was a cover up with regard to the daughter and son-in-law of a Mormon Church apostle:

A little over five years ago . . . I, along with five or six other therapists, interviewed approximately twenty children from a Bountiful ward. In this same ward other children had made allegations about Bret Bullock and other adults in what appeared to be a group sex ring. Bullock was subsequently convicted. . . . In this same neighborhood, totally different adults were named by totally different children . . . the children who reported the second, non-Bullock sex ring did not know what the children in the Bullock case had said and were too young to come up with the consistent, spontaneous, explicit detail and congruent emotional affect that they manifested. These two Bountiful sex rings were never linked by any children as far as I know. Both groups involved **ritualized sex acts** but to my knowledge, not satanic rites. . . .

One aspect of the second alleged sex ring was that a **daughter and son-in-law of a general authority** were named as the main abusers by at least seven children. Explicit detail was given about this couple's activities by all of these children. When the couple's names surfaced, the Bountiful police, for all practical purposes, dropped the case. . . . At the time, the stake president and others in the Church system said they believed the children, but no Church action was ever taken against any of the alleged perpetrators. . . . much of the sex ring activity being reported allegedly has taken place within LDS congregations and is perpetrated by active LDS members. . . . Within the Salt Lake Valley alone, sex abuse rings have been reported in Midvale, West Valley, Salt Lake, and Bountiful. . . . The patriarchal system where the priesthood holder's authority is not questioned allows pedophiles a unique opportunity. Bishops often support the perpetrator because he is a priesthood holder. . . . The Church needs to change its implied message that its leaders are morally infallible. . . . LDS denial of anything being wrong within family or Church systems is exceedingly strong. **I believe that a Church cover-up occurred in the case of the general authority's children** . . . If there has been a cover-up, obviously it is intolerable to Mormons and non-Mormons alike. . . . (*Sunstone*, December 1991, pages 4-6)

In the story published in *Paperdolls* the apostle's son-in-law is referred to only as "Hank." The Mormon Alliance *Case Reports* gives additional information with regard to this matter:

The story continued after the publication of *Paperdolls*. In the summer of 1992, Carol's two youngest daughters and one of their husbands met with Hank's current bishop and his stake president. They sought this meeting with these ecclesiastical leaders as part of their own healing. They pled with Hank's priesthood leaders to take action to right the wrong that had been done and to protect the children to whom Hank still had access. Carol reports: "These authorities told us they were worried Hank might kill himself if they took action against him, but they said

they believed us. They said they would have to check with their legal department and get back to us. We heard no further response from them.” Carol’s son-in-law wrote to the stake president later:

We met with you, as spiritual leaders, with the hope that something could be done to protect against more abuse, to better facilitate the long and difficult healing process . . . President, I cannot begin to tell you how crushed I felt to look you, a fellow priesthood holder, in the eye and tell you that a diagnosed pedophile, who had returned from a mission and who had married in the temple, raped and sodomized my wife and many others when they were but small and innocent children, only to have you tell me that you would have to check with your legal department and get back to me, which you have not bothered to do. . . . Because we cannot get any support from our Church, we are forced to resort to a civil court of law. . . . I pray for you, as well as the children.

A copy went to Elder Loren C. Dunn, then area president. Two of the women initiated a civil suit against Hank for damages from his abuse when they were children. Criminal action was not possible because the statute of limitation had run out. Even though Hank was an attorney and a member of the Utah Bar, he did not contest the suit, and the women were awarded a default judgment for **\$5 million**. Their “damages” consisted of a token \$100 a month, as Hank had sought protection from previous creditors by declaring bankruptcy. He had never paid any child support for his four children.

In 1992, an adult woman who had read *Paperdolls* called Carol and said, “I know who Hank is. . . . He abused me for four years when I was a child, right up until he left on his mission.” She had gone to Hank’s current bishop and stake president and told her own story . . . hoping they might warn families in his present ward. But nothing ever happened.

In fall 1993, Hank was fired from his position with the State Tax Commission, allegedly for sexually harassing a teenage female employee. Carol and her daughters were amazed to be told later that Hank’s mortgage was paid from ward welfare funds for many months, a payment authorized by Hank’s bishop, who apparently felt that Hank’s financial needs took precedence over his victims’ claims. . . . Carol, reported to me in the spring of 1996 the ending of this story for Hank . . . She had learned these details when Hank’s second wife, Elaine, called her. A year before in the spring of 1995, Hank and Elaine separated . . . When Elaine told her two daughters by her first marriage and the son she had borne to Hank that she planned to divorce him, the three children told their mother of their years of sexual and physical abuse at his hands. . . . Elaine called Hank, told him that the children were in therapy, and that she was going to see him “rot in jail for what he’d done.”

Hank disappeared from his job. Elaine later learned that he had returned to his mother’s home in Salt Lake City. The morning after his return, his mother found him dead from an overdose of prescription drugs. A suicide note addressed to his stepdaughters said . . . he knew God would forgive and understand his death because he could not continue the destruction of more lives. . . .

Carol summarizes bleakly, “I know of at least thirty people Hank molested when they were children. . . . Hank

was never called to a disciplinary council, and we have never been given an explanation for this lack of Church action against him. We believe that Church officers shielded Hank from ecclesiastical action and even paid his bills because of his connection to an apostle’s family.” (*Case Reports*, pages 118-120)

RITUAL ABUSE CONFIRMED

While the sexual abuse reported above is certainly very distressing to read about, there is another form of abuse that is **far worse** because it includes extreme torture along with all types of sexual abuse. This is the ritual abuse of children. Although it is often referred to as satanic ritual abuse, those who participate in it do not always worship Satan. They may, in fact, be occultists who worship other gods. In addition, many of those involved in this evil practice may not even believe in the existence of any god. They simply use occultic or satanic trappings to terrify their victims.

Although we knew there was a group that broke off from the Mormon Church and committed many murders (the LeBarons), and two dissident brothers (the Laffertys) who ritually sacrificed a baby by cutting its throat, we were not aware that anything like this was going on within the Mormon Church.

In July 1991, however, we were presented with a copy of a very sensational memo written by a General Authority of the Mormon Church. It was a highly secret document authored by Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the church. It was dated July 19, 1990, and was directed to the “Strengthening Church Members Committee” of the Mormon Church. In the memo Pace states that he met with many victims of “ritualistic child abuse,” and that “All sixty individuals are members of the Church.”

Since we felt that this information should be available to members of the Mormon Church so that the children could be protected, we published the Pace memo in the November 1991, issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger* (copies of this newsletter are still available free to those who write us at: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110).

In addition to the large number of copies we distributed from our bookstore, we also sent copies of it to the news media. All three of the major television stations in Salt Lake City ran the story. On October 24, 1991, it became the lead story on the Channel 4 evening news. Channel 2 also ran the story on its evening news, and even the Mormon Church’s own station KSL (Channel 5), ran the story on its 10 o’clock newscast. To our surprise, KSL actually presented a frank and accurate account of the contents of the memo and of the serious implications for the church. Other stories concerning ritual abuse and the Mormon Church were presented on all three of the major stations in the days that followed and a number of the victims gave their stories. The story also became national news.

Although we thought Mormon leaders would deny the accusations of ritualistic abuse in the church, we are happy to report that they acknowledged that Pace wrote the memo and that there was indeed a problem in the church. The church’s own newspaper reported:

Officials from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints said Friday they are evaluating reports that satanic cults

dedicated to sexually abusing children are operating within the church. . . .

“**Satanic worship and ritualistic abuse** are problems that have been around for centuries and are international in scope,” said a statement issued Friday by the church public affairs department. “While they are, **numerically, not a problem of major proportions among members** of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, **for those who may be involved they are serious.**”

The Church has strived to help local ecclesiastical leaders **understand and deal with the issue**, the statement said, citing a Sept. 18 message from the First Presidency “reaffirming their **concern about such distasteful practices** and encouraging **vigilance in detecting** and treating situations that may arise.” . . . Bishop Pace said satanic abusers in Utah “represent a cross-section of the Mormon culture.” (*Deseret News*, October 25, 1991)

While some Mormons have tried to skirt around the official statement made by the church itself, the Mormon Alliance acknowledges that the document which we published is authentic:

On 2 July 1991, Jerald and Sandra Tanner received a copy of the Pace memo from an unidentified source. Linda Walker, an investigator and writer from San Francisco then doing research on incest and satanic abuse within Mormonism, says that she received a copy of the memo from them. Walker interviewed Bishop Pace and he confirmed that he had “interviewed about one hundred victims of ritualistic abuse.” The Tanners also gave a second copy to a second researcher, who was suspicious about the authenticity of the memo and about the existence of the Strengthening Church Members Committee. He confirmed the existence of both the memo and the committee with a secretary in Pace’s office. . . .

The authenticity of the memo has been challenged by those who feel that Jerald and Sandra Tanner . . . would not scruple to forge a document. Those who are familiar with the Tanners’ work, while they may not agree with their methods or conclusions, believe that they adhere to scrupulous standards of accuracy. Since the Church acknowledged the existence of the memo without any qualifications about its accuracy, attempts to deny the existence or seriousness of ritual abuse by casting doubts on the authorship of the memo cannot be taken seriously. (*Case Reports*, page 138)

In the highly secret report Pace noted that he had met with sixty victims. Later, however, he interviewed forty more people, thus making a total of **one hundred victims**. The following is taken from Pace’s memo to the Strengthening Church Membership Committee of the Mormon Church:

Pursuant to the Committee’s request, I am writing this memorandum to pass along what I have learned about ritualistic child abuse. Hopefully, it will be of some value to you as you continue to monitor the problem. You have already received the LDS Social Services report on satanism dated May 24, 1989. . . . I have met with **sixty victims**. That number could be **twice or three times as many** if I did not discipline myself to only one meeting per week. . . . All sixty individuals are members of the Church. Forty-five victims

allege witnessing and/or participating in human sacrifice. The majority were abused by relatives, often their parents. All have developed psychological problems and most have been diagnosed as having multiple personality disorder or some other form of dissociative disorder.

Ritualistic child abuse is the most hideous of all child abuse. The basic objective is premeditated — to systematically and methodically torture and terrorize children until they are forced to dissociate. . . .

Many individuals with whom I have spoken have served missions . . . One individual has memories of participating in rituals while serving as a full-time missionary. . . . when sixty witnesses testify to the same type of torture and murder, it becomes impossible for me, personally, not to believe them. . . .

Children are put in a situation where they believe they are going to die — such as **being buried alive** or being placed in a plastic bag and immersed in water. Prior to doing so, the abuser tells the child to pray to Jesus to see if He will save her. Imagine a seven year old girl, having been told she is going to die, praying to Jesus to save her and nothing happens — then at the last moment she is rescued, but the person saving her is a representative of Satan. He uses this experience to convince her that the only person who really cares about her is Satan, she is Satan’s child and she might as well become loyal to him.

Just before or shortly after their baptism into the Church, children are baptized by blood into the satanic order which is meant to cancel out their baptism into the Church. . . . Most victims are suicidal. They have been brainwashed with drugs, hypnosis, and other means to become suicidal as soon as they start to tell the secrets. They have been threatened all of their lives that if they don’t do what they are told their brother or sister will be burned, or they themselves will be killed. . . . They believe they might as well kill themselves instead of wait for the occult to do it. . . . Our priesthood leaders, when faced with such cases, are understandably at a loss of how to respond. . . .

I’m sorry to say that many of the victims have had their first flashbacks while attending the temple for the first time. The occult along the Wasatch Front use the doctrine of the Church to their advantage. For example, the verbiage and gestures are used in a ritualistic ceremony in a very debased and often bloody manner. When the victim goes to the temple and hears the exact words, horrible memories are triggered. . . . **The perpetrators are also living a dual life. Many are temple recommend holders.** This leads to another reason why the Church needs to consider the seriousness of these problems. In affect, **the Church is being used.**

I go out of my way to not let the victims give me the names of the perpetrators. I have told them that my responsibility is to help them with spiritual healing and that the names of perpetrators should be given to therapists and law enforcement officers. However, they have told me the positions in the Church of members who are perpetrators. Among others, there are **Young Women leaders, Young Men leaders, bishops, a patriarch, a stake president, temple workers, and members of the Tabernacle Choir.** These accusations are not coming from individuals who think they recognized someone, but from those who have been abused by people they know, in many cases their own family members. . . . Not only do some of the perpetrators represent

a cross section of the Mormon culture, but **sometimes the abuse has taken place in our own meetinghouses**. . . . I have met with 60 victims. Assuming each one comes from a coven of 13, we are talking about the involvement of 800 or so right here on the Wasatch Front. Obviously, I have only seen those coming forth to get help. (Memorandum written by Bishop Glenn L. Pace to the Strengthening Church Membership Committee, July 19, 1990, pages 1-5)

In a television interview Noemi Mattis, who holds a doctorate in psychology from Columbia University and treats victims of ritual abuse, reported that at “a meeting of therapists” in this area she “circulated a questionnaire asking how many cases have you seen, have you treated in therapy who have reported ritual abuse. And there was a total of **32 therapists who were in the room. There was a total of 360 cases reported.**”

As noted above, after we published the Pace memo it received a great deal of attention from the news media. The subject of both sexual abuse and ritual abuse was widely discussed in Utah. In fact, on January 18, 1992, KSL TV reported the results of a poll about ritual abuse:

Utahns overwhelmingly believe that satanic and/or ritualistic child abuse exists. A recent KSL-DN [*Deseret News*] poll showed that **90% of those surveyed say it exists**. Some say it's widespread, while others see it happening only occasionally or seldom. **Only 2% do not think it exists at all.**

On November 24, 1991, the *Salt Lake Tribune* supported a plan by Governor Bangerter to appoint investigators to look into the charges of ritual abuse in Utah. The measure was passed by the Utah Legislature and two investigators, Lt. Michael R. King and Lt. Matt Jacobson, were selected to investigate the allegations.

King had previously served as the “lead investigator” in the prosecution of the Shreeve group. This cult used passages from Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon as they sexually abused children. This, of course, is a bizarre use of the Book of Mormon, since there is nothing in the book that could possibly be used to justify sexual abuse. In any case, twelve adults were charged with sexually abusing children, and all of them were convicted. Arvin Shreeve, the leader of the group, and Sharon Kapp “are respectively serving 20 years and 10 years to life sentences in the Utah State Prison.”

When we were interviewed by Lt. Matt Jacobson, we informed him of allegations of ritual abuse in a Mormon Church in Oklahoma which could throw some light on cases in Utah. Jacobson, in turn, told us that the investigation had led him to believe that ritual abuse was taking place in Utah.

On April 25, 1995, the Utah Attorney General's Office released the report on ritual abuse. It is entitled, *Ritual Crime in the State of Utah: Investigation, Analysis & A Look Forward*. While the investigators were unable to find enough hard evidence to prosecute any of the perpetrators, they did bring forth **very convincing proof that ritual abuse is indeed a reality!** In their report they noted:

In another case, **three adult female children recalled memories of satanic sexual abuse** that occurred while

they were very young. The victims, in separate interviews discussed **robed ceremonies, alters [sic], candles, animal sacrifices and extreme physical and sexual abuse**. Since their recollections appeared to show some consistency, an in-depth investigation was launched. At the conclusion of the investigation, the suspects were interviewed. **Both the mother and the father admitted to serious sexual and physical crimes against the children and named several other individuals who were also involved.** The case, however could not be prosecuted because the statute of limitation had run. The crimes occurred over 25 years ago, but this case does indicate that serious sexual and physical abuse can happen and that it is perpetrated by those who cloak their crimes in ritualistic activity. (*Ritual Crime in the State of Utah*, page 3)

Significantly, when the report by the ritual abuse investigators was released, the Mormon Church's newspaper, *Deseret News*, revealed a great deal about one of the three victims whose parents confessed to the practice of satanic ritual abuse. *Deseret News* staff writer Jerry Spangler wrote the following about this important case:

From the time she was 3 years old until she became a young adult, Rachel Hopkins was ritualistically tortured, raped, bathed in blood and threatened that she would be killed if she ever told anyone.

It's a story so bizarre and so terrifying that some people refuse to believe that it really happened. Hopkins (not her real name) was a victim of what is commonly called satanic ritual abuse — a phenomenon that many psychological experts say doesn't exist.

Rather, they argue, memories of ritualistic abuse are fantasies or false memories planted by unscrupulous therapists. “I am sure there are cases where bogus therapists have suggested things. Of course, there are false memories,” Hopkins said. “But that is not what happened to me.”

Like most victims of satanic ritual abuse, Hopkins remembered the abuse many years later. But her case is significantly different from others.

She has **the signed confessions of her parents — both of whom admitted abusing her during satanic rituals — that corroborate every memory she has of the abuse.** The confessions offer much greater detail of events Rachel could not have known.

Hopkins' parents also confessed in detail to two investigators from the Utah attorney general's office and to leaders of the church they attended.

Hopkins was also able to recover a photograph of herself as a child that shows bruises inflicted during the ritual abuse. Her siblings have also corroborated the events surrounding the ritual abuse.

“The biggest weapon they (occultists) have is secrecy,” she said. “By our society not acknowledging that it exists, we aid in that secrecy and we refuse to allow the healing to begin.” . . .

Hopkins . . . has met repeatedly with investigators Matt Jacobson and Mike King from the attorney general's office, who said **her case was “absolutely, concrete evidence” of satanic ritual abuse.** They even requested her permission

to cite her case specifically in the report and asked her to talk to the media about her experience.

“The truth is they (occultists) do wear black robes, they do abuse children, they do kill animals,” she said. “It exists, and to say otherwise is to deny the facts in front of them. Our society used to deny the existence of incest, too, because we didn’t want to believe it.”

Today, Hopkins . . . is a mother of two children, she has been happily married for 20 years, she has just returned to college to complete her undergraduate degree and she is devoted to the LDS Church.

Hopkins recalls how her parents and others, some of them relatives, would dress in black robes for sporadic rituals that involved terror and torture. “I was sexually abused in every way you can conceive. I was tortured and had the bottoms of my feet cut, I was **made to believe I was killing a baby**, and they forced me to kill dogs and cats,” she said.

“I was bathed in a tub of blood and forced to look at myself in a mirror. I was tied up and hung upside down and spun. I was suffocated and electrocuted to the point of being bowed and paralyzed. Sometimes they forced me and my siblings to hurt one another. They would tell me, ‘now you’re one of us. If you tell anybody, they won’t believe you and they’ll put you in a mental hospital.’ And they threatened to torture me until I was dead.”

Hopkins and her siblings believe Rachel was singled out for more intensive abuse because of her blond hair and blue eyes and because she refused to submit willingly to the rituals. . . .

Two years and eight months ago the memories started coming back. At first, she couldn’t believe it either. She had heard of satanic ritual abuse before but had never associated her memories with that behavior.

“The first time I called my parents up and told them I had been sexually abused and I knew they did it, they told me I was hallucinating,” she said. “Since that time, they have written letters to each of the children confirming everything in explicit detail.”

For Hopkins, the healing began when people started to believe her — her husband, her therapist, church leaders and even the attorney general’s investigators.

“It was my faith in Jesus Christ that got me through it all,” she said. “I am at peace with this now.” . . . “But I want those out there who may have been victimized by this kind of abuse to know that there are those who believe them. With a good therapist, they can start the healing process, too. They can break free of this and have a new life,” she said. (*Deseret News*, April 25, 1995)

On April 25, 1995, the television station KTVX (Channel 4) gave additional information regarding the same victim (referred to as Jenny in the newscasts). Paul Murphy reported:

One woman who came forward to tell about ritual abuse brought something no one else has — a confession from the perpetrators. . . . The way the abuse occurred sounds like scenes out of *Rosemary’s Baby*.

Paul Murphy said that “most people would be skeptical of Jenny’s story of satanic ritual abuse, except for one thing — her parents confessed. In these letters [which were shown to the

television audience] the parents ask for forgiveness and describe the abuse in detail. Her mother wrote: ‘He cut off your night clothes and panties. A dog was hung by the back feet, throat cut and disemboweled, and hind legs cut off. You were hung by your feet after being bound.’”

Mr. Murphy also quoted the woman’s father as writing the following: “I performed the same sexual acts on you at home. The sexual abuse in our home was a repeat of the ritual.” Murphy went on to reveal that, “The confessions come after Jenny and siblings interfered with the parents’ plans to go on a [Mormon] Church mission.”

According to the woman, when her parents were confronted about the ritual abuse, “They denied it vehemently, but the bishop and the stake president said . . . ‘why would all of your children say this . . . Why would they all say this about you, if it isn’t true.’ And so finally they did confess.”

Murphy reported that, “The parents settled out of court to pay Jenny’s therapy bills along with a note that says, ‘We are so happy to send this check. We pray for your healing. Love Mom and Dad.’”

Paul Murphy revealed the following: “This is what her father wrote about the rituals: ‘You were threatened that if you ever told this, that you would **really be cut apart**.’”

When one of the newscasters asked Murphy if anything could be done to the parents, he replied: “Well, they admitted to things that didn’t fall within the statute of limitations. The girl still hopes that her parents may be prosecuted on other things that have happened. **They were also excommunicated from the church**, which I understand has no statute of limitations.”

Newscaster Randall Carlisle summed up the whole matter regarding ritual abuse by saying: “Boy, if no one’s seen proof up till now, they certainly see the proof now.”

It would be very difficult to set this woman’s report aside as fantasy. While some might ignore the statements of three children, when all five members of a family testify to the same thing, it becomes very difficult to deny the charges. That both the children’s mother and father would write letters confirming the satanic ritual abuse is very important. Moreover, the fact that the parents confirmed the abuse to investigators and even allowed themselves to be subjected to excommunication from the Mormon Church is highly significant.

It is very difficult to gloss over the serious implications of this information. Those who doubt the reality of ritual abuse usually point out that the so-called “Satan scare” was triggered by “Christian fundamentalism” and the publication of the book, *Michelle Remembers*, in 1980.

The case investigated by the Utah Attorney General’s Office throws important light on the subject of satanic ritual abuse because it clearly shows that this type of sexual abuse and torture was actually taking place long before the book *Michelle Remembers* was published.

In the secret memo written by Glenn Pace regarding ritual abuse he explains that in many cases the abuse is too horrible to cope with. Consequently, the victims often block it out of their minds for many years. Pace commented: “The victims lead relatively normal lives, but the memories are locked up in a compartment in their minds and surface in various ways. . . .

As they become adults and move into another environment, something triggers the memories and . . . flashbacks and/or nightmares occur. One day they will have been living a normal life and the next they will be in a mental hospital in a fetal position.”

The case reported above gives strong support to the claim that a child who is severely abused can repress the ugly memories for many years, only to have them break forth into their conscious mind after they have grown up. As noted above, the Deseret News article reported that the woman repressed memories of the abuse for “many years.” In fact, according to the article, written on April 25, 1995, it was only “Two years and eight months ago, the memories started coming back.”

This demonstrates that traumatic memories can be stored in the mind and later retrieved by the victim. While it must be acknowledged that this does not prove that all recovered memories are true, in this case it shows the victim’s long-suppressed recollections were dependable. This is demonstrated in the fact that her parents’ signed confessions “**corroborate every memory she has of the abuse.**” (*Deseret News*, April 25, 1995)

Interestingly, a recent civil case tried in Salt Lake City, which involved a claim of repressed memories was won by the victim:

Cherese Franklin told a Salt Lake City jury that she completely repressed memories of being sexually abused as a child — and then recovered those memories 33 years later.

And the jury believed her.

After an 11-day trial in 3rd District Court, jurors Thursday awarded Franklin \$750,000 in physical and emotional damages for lifelong illnesses and mental symptoms she claimed resulted from abuse inflicted upon her by an older cousin. . . . Franklin began her journal in November 1992 . . . By the end of the year, she had detailed 15 horrific incidents of abuse that involved death threats accompanied by the mutilation of animals. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, August 16, 1996)

Mormonism stresses morals and the importance of the family. These things, of course, are admirable and should be continued. On the other hand, however, the many reports of sexual and ritualistic abuse are very disturbing. The church certainly needs to take a tougher stand against child sexual abuse.

Because of the significance of the information contained in the book, *Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance*, vol. 1, we have decided to make it available to the reader at a special price. In addition, our book, *Occultic Ritual Abuse: Fact or Fantasy?* which usually sells for \$6.95 can be obtained for free with every order of \$25.00 or more. This book contains a great deal of material on both child sexual abuse and ritualistic abuse in the Mormon Church. See the special prices on the first page of this newsletter.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

“To the *Salt Lake City Messenger*: Actually the **clowns** known as the Tanners. **I am a missionary** for the LDS church

. . . This is the **ONLY** church set up like Christ set it up. Not some joke thing out of Salt Lake **like you clowns.** . . . Satan is on your side . . . He’s got a whole section rooting for **you clowns.** Your ex[ac]tly that. **Clowns! . . . Satan is your pimp.** . . .” (Letter from Idaho)

“I have found your newsletters to be very interesting, in particular the articles concerning FARMS. . . . Your ministry was instrumental as far back as 20 years ago in helping us to see the truth. Thank You!” (Letter from Oklahoma)

“We, as a family [of five], officially resigned from the Mormon church as of June 23, 1996. Thank you so much for your words of encouragement . . . We discussed all that we had found with our children, with the Holy Bible in hand and much prayer for guidance, and the change in their perspective about the Mormon church was quite dramatic. We know that the Holy Spirit played a great part in the transformation. For us it constitutes a miracle.” (Letter from Arkansas)

“We want to thank you so much for the honesty and integrity that you both display . . . more than all your willingness to stand up to the Mormon Church. . . . Thank you so much for your helping us to see the truth about the Mormon Church, we have been very faithful Mormons for 35 years . . . You folks have made it possible to finally know the truth about Mormonism, and we have since left the Mormon Church and we are very glad we have done so. We have found out who Jesus Christ really is and what part he plays in all of our lives, no more nonsense, or deceit, or lies. We finally are free thanks to you fine people and others. We now understand what life really is about. Many Mormons are leaving the church and many are questioning the truthfulness of the church . . .” (Letter from Utah)

Those who would like to help us reach the Mormon people should be aware of the fact that Utah Lighthouse Ministry is a non-profit organization. In addition to our work with Mormons, we provide support for **44 children** through World Vision, and furnish some help to a local Rescue Mission. Those who are concerned about helping this ministry can send their **tax-deductible** contributions to UTAH LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY, P. O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110. Both contributions and orders can be made over the phone (801-485-8894 or 801-485-0312) with Visa, MasterCard or Discover Card.

While we deeply appreciate the financial support that we receive, we strongly desire your prayers. We believe they will bring thousands of Mormons to the truth. As Apostle Paul admonished: “**Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving**” (Colossians 4:2).

**LAWRENCE FOSTER'S
RESPONSE TO OUR LAST NEWSLETTER**

September 17, 1996

Dear Jerald Tanner,

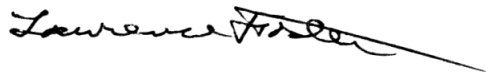
Thank you for allowing me to respond to your comments in the most recent issue of the Messenger. Since it is difficult in a single page to address more than a dozen pages of comments, including some serious distortions of my Mormon history scholarship over more than two decades, let me ask those interested in an accurate statement of my complex views to read my two articles on your work in Dialogue (Summer 1984) and Differing Visions (1994); the relevant sections of my two books, Religion and Sexuality and Women, Family, and Utopia; and the personal statement of my approach to Mormon history in Dialogue (Fall 1983).

On the question of why I would have drafted a press release critical of what I took to be your unwillingness to meet with me when I was attempting to prepare a serious scholarly analysis of your work, I have only this to add. I came up with that idea immediately after talking with Michael Marquardt more than a month after not receiving an answer to my two written requests for an interview (I wrote rather than called you because I did not want to open the possibility that anything I might say on the phone could subsequently be reported in a distorted form in your newsletter). Michael told me, though he does not remember his specific statement more than a decade later, that you were uneasy about meeting with me and had not yet decided whether or not you would agree to an interview. Immediately after Marquardt's comments, I drafted the statement you have reproduced. I was quite frankly fed up that after all the times you had berated Mormon leaders for not responding to you, you were apparently not willing to meet with a non-Mormon scholar interested in trying to write a serious analysis of your work. If I was in error on this point, I apologize for the error.

The larger issue here is relevant to my fundamental critique of your work, however. You and Sandra are accomplished debaters, but your analysis is ultimately unconvincing because you refuse to apply consistent standards to assessing both Mormonism and your own faith. I have repeatedly pressed you on this point to no avail. Despite the importance of your research in various areas of Mormon history, my fundamental assessment thus still stands: "Until the Tanners are prepared to use consistent standards of judgment for their own faith as well as for that of others, their stance cannot be taken seriously by scholars or by the general public." This weakness is one that both you and many Mormon apologists associated with FARMS both share.

I am similarly concerned that your discussion of my work in the Messenger seriously misrepresents some of my most important conclusions. For example, the key point of my assessment of the origins of Mormon plural marriage was that the motivation for introducing the practice was enormously complex and could not simply be reduced to the argument that Joseph Smith had an excessive sex drive. Similarly, my analysis of the complex sources of Joseph Smith's genius (Dialogue, Winter 1993) never refers to him as "mentally ill" but instead stresses the complex psychological dynamics that may have contributed to his exceptional creativity. Whatever the sources of that genius may have been, the ultimate issue is, in Jesus' words: "By their fruits shall ye know them."

Sincerely yours,



NOTICE: Since Dr. Foster took over four months to prepare his rebuttal, we were unable to respond in this issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger*.

BOOKS AND TAPES

(Mail orders add 10% — Minimum postage \$1.50)

Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, by Newell and Avery, now in paperback. **Price: \$16.00**

How to Understand Your Bible, by T. Norton Sterrett. **Price: \$11.00**

Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible, Parallel of Inspired Version and KJV. **Price: \$22.50**

Latter-Day Facade (34 minute video) by Bill McKeever. **Price: \$25.00**

LDS Classics CD ROM (PC compatible). Contains *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and a number of other books relevant to Mormonism. **Price: \$40.00**

The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power, by D. Michael Quinn. The regular price is \$29.95 — **Special price: \$28.00**

Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess, by Richard S. Van Wagoner. Reg. \$28.95 — **Special price: \$27.00**

The Mormon Missionaries: Inside Look at Their Real Message and Method, by Janis Hutchinson. **Price: \$10.00**

A Ready Defense, by Josh McDowell. **Price: \$15.00**

Divergent Paths of the Restoration, by Steven L. Shields. Discusses the different groups that have broken off from the Mormon Church. **Price: \$14.00**

Sandra Tanner Tape No. 3. Two radio interviews. Contains information about the 1990 changes in the Mormon temple ceremony and the false translation of the Book of Abraham. **Price: \$3.00**

Mormons in Transition, by Leslie Reynolds. **Price: \$10.00**

Mysteries of Godliness: History of Mormon Temple Worship, by David John Buerger. **Price: 22.50**

Power From on High: Development of Mormon Priesthood, by Gregory A. Prince. **Price: \$23.00**

MANY MORE BOOKS!!!

We have many other books which are not listed in this issue of the *Messenger*. A complete book list will be sent free upon request by writing to us at **Utah Lighthouse Ministry, PO Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110.**

**UTAH LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY
PO BOX 1884
SALT LAKE CITY UT 84110**