

A SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT

Mormon Newspaper Publishes Article on the Tanners

Since we began publishing material regarding the Mormon Church in 1959, church leaders have carefully avoided making any mention of our work. David Merrill wrote: "The official attitude of the Mormon hierarchy towards the Tanners has been **one of silence** and apparent unconcern. They have, however, **actively discouraged LDS scholars and intellectuals from jousting with the Tanners.** . ." (*Utah Holiday*, February 1978, page 7).

To our surprise, however, when the Associated Press writer Kristen Moulton wrote an article about our work the *Deseret News* picked up the story. In addition, the church's newspaper even included a photograph of Jerald and Sandra Tanner standing outside the Utah Lighthouse Ministry Bookstore. We were astonished that an article that seems rather favorable to our work would be featured in the church's own newspaper.

The article appeared in the *Deseret News* on May 16, 1998, under the title, TANNERS ARE WELLSPRING OF DOCUMENTS. We have no way of knowing how many other newspapers picked up the story.

Before giving our readers a chance to examine the article we should point out that there is an error in the *Deseret News* printing which should be corrected. It is erroneously stated that "the Tanners created a video, *The Mormon Puzzle*." While it is true that Sandra Tanner was often consulted and interviewed a number of times in the video, the Southern Baptists actually financed the project and had total control of its contents.

One other thing should be mentioned regarding the Associated Press story. Mormon professor Daniel C. Peterson of Brigham Young University complained that one of his comments concerning our work was misunderstood. In a letter he wrote to the *Deseret News* he stated:

I was dismayed to see myself, in the recent Associated Press article on them, praising Jerald and Sandra as unexcelled researchers ("Tanners are wellspring of documents," May 16). "As far as LDS history goes," I remarked, "there's no one out there who has the documents mastered as they do." Perhaps I was not clear. I meant that there is nobody among professional critics of the LDS Church who knows the

historical documents as well as the Tanners do . . . there are certainly plenty of serious historians whose factual knowledge is equal to or better than theirs . . .

Tanners are wellspring of documents Critics say pair's agenda colors interpretation

By Kristen Moulton
Associated Press writer

Sandra and Jerald Tanner's quest fit the times: They were fumbling into adulthood in the early '60s, brash and full of big ideas.

They weren't war protesters or hippies, though; the Tanners' rebellion was more personal.

Pioneer descendants, Sandra and Jerald — 18 and 20 when they met in 1959 — believed that the church's 19th century founder, Joseph Smith Jr., was a fraud and the religion he created a sham.

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And the firebrands began broadcasting their convictions, first in mimeographed handouts to dismayed family members and eventually around the world through a newsletter, pamphlets and more than 40 books.

At the same time, they began ferreting out and publishing early church documents, newspapers, diaries and books they believed proved their case.

More than 30 years later, the evangelical Christian Tanners are recognized for their trove of documents. They're loved by those trafficking in anti-Mormon literature and grudgingly respected by many Latter-day Saint scholars for their painstaking and accurate research, if not for their interpretations.

Their Utah Lighthouse Ministry and its bookstore have become a chief resource for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who are interested in early church history as well as members who are disillusioned and looking to get out.

"The Tanners, pound for pound, year after year, have been the most successful opponents of the church," said Daniel C. Peterson, professor of Islamic studies and Arabic at Brigham Young University. "I don't mean it as a compliment."

Source for 'The Mormon Puzzle'

Sandra Tanner, the spokesperson of the duo, was one of the experts the Southern Baptists turned to last year to explain The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To help them do this, the Tanners created a video, "The Mormon Puzzle."

She also will present a workshop about the church for Southern Baptists when some 10,000 come here next month for their annual meeting.

"As far as LDS history goes, there's no one out there who has the documents mastered as they do," said Peterson, chairman of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies at BYU. "They occasionally have forced us (LDS Church defenders) to sharpen a line of reasoning or come up with a line of reasoning."

"The Tanners have caused a lot of Mormon historians to do better homework," said Elbert Peck, editor of the periodical *Sunstone*.

Yet, Peck notes, the Tanners' evangelical agenda colors their interpretation of history.

"They're one-sided in their approach. They believe the Mormon Church is wrong, and they are doing research to prove it's wrong."

Sandra puts it this way: "Historians see us as self-righteous simpletons."

She and Jerald, however, see it quite differently.

"It was like God had given us a burden to share with them that they had been misled and betrayed," says Sandra, a great-great granddaughter of Brigham Young, the second prophet of the LDS Church. "The church isn't worthy of their devotion."

The Tanners came to that conclusion fairly young.

Early questions

The Tanners met in the spring of 1959, when Sandra, raised in Southern California, was visiting her grandmother in Salt Lake City. She'd already strained her reputation by asking cheeky questions in religion classes, and found Tanner—obsessed with his growing knowledge of early church history—fascinating.

He had been on a loner's pilgrimage to Independence, Mo., where he talked to members of offshoot religions and became

convinced that Joseph Smith and later prophets were corrupt.

The two married in June of that year and were excommunicated within a couple of years of asking that their names be stricken from LDS Church membership rolls.

The young Tanners tangled with church apostles over matters of history, by letter and once in person.

"Hardly anyone challenged the brethren on anything," recalls Sandra. "To have two young whippersnappers do it was the height of impudence."

When the couple printed up copies of their reasons for disbelieving, family members, including those who harbored their own doubts, were angry. "There was a feeling we had gone too far," Sandra says.

Jerald was surprised by the rejection.

"I thought it would be easy. I had very good evidence. I soon realized how hard it would be."

When the couple shed their last tie to the church in 1962—a belief in the veracity of the Book of Mormon—it was a turning point. They turned to the Christian Missionary Alliance, where they remain active today.

They also launched their own ministry—to put on microfilm and later into print obscure historical documents. Within two years, Jerald gave up his full-time machinist's job.

"We had three little babies. They were meager years," recalls Sandra.

They bought a home in 1964 in a down-and-out Salt Lake neighborhood, and operated the bookstore from their front parlor until expanding next door three years ago.

Collecting documents

Historian Michael Quinn says the Tanners' contribution of early documents is often overlooked.

While academics could study such materials through universities and church archives, others had no way to read them. "For people who are just curious about Mormon history, that has been a tremendous contribution," Quinn said.

Reaching the common LDS Church member, Jerald says, has been his goal all along. He brushes off criticism from researchers, who find his underlining and use of word capitalization annoying and even comical.

"I wasn't trying to write for scholars. I've tried not to use big words that confuse people," says Jerald, who volunteers several hours each day at the Rescue Mission downtown.

Wayne Jensen of Ogden, a former LDS stake mission president, said he left the church "kicking and screaming" after his wife, Carol Jensen, concluded it was not the "one true church." It was the Tanners' research that pointed the Jensens to hundreds of church documents from which they drew their own conclusions, Carol Jensen said.

"I expected them to be these great big, eat-you-alive people," she says of the Tanners. "You couldn't meet two kinder, gentler people in the world."

One episode in the mid-1980s, more than any other, changed how the Tanners were perceived by intellectuals in the church.

Salamander letter' labeled forged

Jerald concluded that the so-called "white salamander letter" was a forgery while other historians, including some employed

by the church, considered it an authentic historical document.

After Mark Hofmann killed two people with pipe bombs in 1985 in a failed attempt to cover that and others of his forgeries, Jerald and Sandra helped investigators and reporters piece together the case.

The fact that the Tanners debunked a document that could have hurt the church showed their integrity, said Peterson.

"There are some anti-Mormons out there that I hold in contempt. They're demagogic. They spread hatred and strife and disharmony. I don't see the Tanners in that way," he said.

Yet Peterson doubts the Tanners have pulled as many Latter-day Saints from the fold as they'd like.

In the years since the couple began their ministry, the church has grown from 2 million to 10 million members.

Sandra Tanner says their impact can't be quantified. But she estimates thousands have left the church, including the Tanners' parents and most of their siblings.

The Tanners themselves have divided their work over the years. Jerald, an almost painfully shy introvert, does the research. Sandra runs the bookstore and is the public speaker.

"Either one of us would have had a hard time doing this," says Sandra. "We're two halves of one whole."



COVERING UP MORMON POLYGAMY

On April 5, 1998, the Associated Press reporter Vern Anderson reported that the leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) were attempting to hide the fact that polygamy was once an important part of Mormonism. Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet, actually claimed that God gave him a revelation that polygamy was to be practiced by the Mormons!

A STRANGE REVELATION

The revelation, dated July 12, 1843, contained the following:

Verily, **thus saith the Lord** unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein **I, the Lord Justified** my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and **doctrine of their having many wives and concubines—**

Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions . . .

For behold, I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, **then are**

ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory. . . .

And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith [Joseph Smith's wife] receive **all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph**, and are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, **shall be destroyed**, saith the Lord God. . . .

And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another . . . he is justified; he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132, verses 1-3, 52, 61-62)

Smith secretly entered into plural marriage taking many wives for himself. In addition, he encouraged the brethren to do the same. In 1887, Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson made **a list of 27 women** who were sealed to Joseph Smith (*Historical Record*, vol. 6, p. 233). More recent research, however, demonstrated that the number 27 was too small. Mormon writer John J. Stewart believed that Smith married "**three to four dozen or more**" (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, 1961, pp. 30-31).

IN SACRED LONELINESS

While the leaders of the Mormon Church have tried to down play the fact that the early leaders of the church were polygamists, Mormon writer Todd Compton has compiled an astounding amount of material regarding the suffering Joseph Smith's plural wives endured.

Compton's 788-page book is entitled: *In Sacred Loneliness – The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*. Unlike some of the leaders of the church, Dr. Compton is willing to tell what really happened in the early years of Mormonism. In the preface of his book Compton wrote:

All historians are subject to the limitations of the evidence available, and this book is no exception. But it is surprising that these key women have been comparatively forgotten, especially considering the reverence Mormons hold for their founding prophet, and considering how important polygamy was to Smith. In fact, one occasionally meets Mormons who have no idea that Joseph Smith had plural wives at all: twentieth-century

Mormons are undoubtedly uncomfortable with the details of nineteenth century polygamy. (page xi)

Further on Compton observed:

Often plural wives who experienced loneliness also reported feelings of depression, despair, anxiety, helplessness, abandonment, anger, psychosomatic symptoms, and low self-esteem. Certainly polygamous marriage was accepted by nineteenth-century Mormons as thoroughly sacred—it almost defined what was most holy to them—but its practical result, for the woman, was solitude. (pp. xiv-xv)

Many scholars have sought to ascertain exactly how many wives Joseph Smith had during his lifetime. Compton addressed this issue on the first page of his book:

I have identified **thirty-three well-documented wives of Joseph Smith**, which some may regard as an overly conservative numbering . . . Historians Fawn Brodie, D. Michael Quinn, and George D. Smith list forty-eight, forty-six, and forty-three, respectfully. Yet in problematic areas it may be advisable to err on the side of caution.

Compton made it clear that Joseph Smith wanted to marry even more women. He noted that Joseph **“proposed to at least five more women who turned him down.”** Compton also reported that Smith “apparently experimented with plural marriage in the 1830s in Ohio and Missouri . . . In 1841 Smith cautiously added three wives in the first eight months of the year . . . during the first half of 1843, Joseph Smith married fourteen more wives, including five in May” (pp. 2-3).

Since most people who lived in Illinois in the 1840’s were very opposed to polygamy and adultery, Joseph Smith’s secret teaching caused a great deal of conflict. Despite the fact the Smith attempted to hide these strange practices and even publicly denied them, leaks occurred and the practice became known to his enemies. Just about a month before his death Joseph Smith was charged with adultery (see *History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 403).

When Joseph Smith learned that some of his own followers had become disenchanted with his leadership and were planning to publish the fact that he was deeply involved in polygamy he panicked. Instead of handling matters in a peaceful way, he ordered the destruction of the opposition’s newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*. This incident was very disturbing to non-Mormons who lived in or near Nauvoo. They were convinced that Smith had violated freedom of the press and that something had to be done. The noted Mormon historian B. H. Roberts wrote:

“The legality of the action . . . was of course, questionable, though some sought to defend it on legal grounds; **but it must be conceded that neither proof nor argument of legality are convincing**” (*History of the Church*, Introduction to vol. 6, p. xxxviii).

Unfortunately for Joseph Smith, this incident eventually led to his death. While Joseph and his brother Hyrum were being held in the Carthage Jail a mob attacked the jail. Both Joseph and Hyrum were murdered by their assailants. This, of course, was a very cowardly act and even anti-Mormon writers refer to it as “cold-blooded murder.”

ASHAMED OF POLYGAMY?

Joseph Smith’s revelation regarding polygamy caused serious difficulties for faithful Mormons who followed him. After Smith’s death Brigham Young, the second prophet of the church, continued to stress the importance of plural marriage. On June 3, 1866, Brigham Young declared:

We are told that if we would give up polygamy—which we know to be a doctrine revealed from heaven, and it is of God and the world for it—but suppose this Church should give up this holy order of marriage, then would the devil, and all who are in league with him against the cause of God, rejoice that they had prevailed upon the Saints to refuse to obey one of the revelations and commandments of God to them . . . Will the Latter-day Saints do this? **No; they will not to please anybody.** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 239)

On August 19th, 1866, Brigham Young strongly admonished his people to continue the practice of plural marriage:

The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy . . . I heard the revelation on polygamy, and I believed it with all my heart . . . “Do you think that we shall ever be admitted as a State into the Union without denying the principle of polygamy?” If we are not admitted until then, we shall never be admitted. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 269)

On another occasion President Brigham Young warned: “Now if any of you will deny **the plurality of wives** and continue to do so, **I promise that you will be damned** . . .” (*Deseret News*, November 14, 1855).

President Young, like Joseph Smith, was very emphatic about the need for his people to practice

polygamy. In 1873, he gave this stern warning:

Now, where a man in this church says, "I don't want but **one wife**, I will live my religion with one," he will perhaps be saved in the Celestial kingdom; but when he gets there **he will not find himself in possession of any wife at all**. He has had a talent that he has hid up. He will come forward and say, "Here is that which thou gavest me, I have not wasted it, and here is the one talent," and he will not enjoy it but it **will be taken and given to those who have improved the talents they received**, and he will find himself **without any wife**, and he will remain **single forever and ever**. (*Deseret News*, September 17, 1873)

The reader will note that the quotations above were taken from the church's own publications, *Deseret News* and *Journal of Discourses*.

After Brigham Young's death the Mormon Church continued to practice plural marriage. The government, however, was determined to stop polygamy. Consequently, many Mormons were imprisoned.

Lorenzo Snow, who became president of the church in 1898, strongly argued that the church would never cease plural marriage. When Snow was on trial for the practice of polygamy, Mr. Bierbower, the prosecuting attorney, predicted that if he were convicted, "a new revelation would soon follow, changing the divine law of celestial marriage." To this Lorenzo Snow responded:

Whatever fame Mr. Bierbower may have secured as a lawyer, he certainly will **fail as a prophet**. The severest prosecutions have never been followed by **revelations changing a divine law**, obedience to which brought imprisonment or martyrdom.

Though I go to prison, **God will not change his law of celestial marriage**. But the man, the people, the nation that oppose and fight against this doctrine and the Church of God, **will be overthrown**. (*Historical Record*, p. 144)

Although Lorenzo Snow said that the "severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law," Wilford Woodruff, the 4th president of the church, issued the Manifesto in 1890. This document proclaimed the church would not continue to allow the practice of plural marriage.

Although the highest leaders of the Mormon Church promised to obey the law of the land, many of them broke their promises. Few people, however, realized to what extent until they were called to testify in the "Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the

United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator From the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat." It is commonly referred to as the *Reed Smoot Case*.

Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the church, testified as follows in the *Reed Smoot Case*:

The CHAIRMAN. Do you obey the law in having five wives at this time, and having them bear to you eleven children **since the manifesto** of 1890?

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, **I have not claimed that in that case I have obeyed the law of the land**.

The CHAIRMAN. That is all.

Mr. SMITH. I do **not** claim so, and I have said before that **I prefer to stand my chances against the law**. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, p. 197)

Mr. TAYLER. You say there is a State law forbidding unlawful cohabitation?

Mr. SMITH. That is my understanding.

Mr. TAYLER. And ever since that law was passed **you have been violating it?**

Mr. SMITH. I think likely **I have been practicing the same thing even before the law was passed**. (*Ibid.*, p. 130)

The CHAIRMAN. . . . you are violating the law?

Mr. SMITH. The law of my State?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. **Yes, sir**.

Senator OVERMAN. Is there not **a revelation** published in the Book of Covenants [i.e., the *Doctrine and Covenants*] here that you shall abide by the law of the State?

Mr. SMITH. It includes **both unlawful cohabitation and polygamy**.

Senator OVERMAN. Is there not a revelation that you should abide by the laws of the State and of the land?

Mr. SMITH. **Yes, sir**.

Senator OVERMAN. **If that is a revelation, are you not violating the laws of God?**

Mr. SMITH. **I have admitted that, Mr. Senator, a great many times here**. (*Ibid.*, pp. 334-335)

It seems incredible that President Joseph F. Smith could admit that he violated both "the laws of the State" and "the laws of God" and still remain the "**Prophet, Seer, and Revelator**" of the Mormon Church.

After making a long and careful study of the church's cover-up of polygamy, the Committee on Privileges and Elections submitted a report showing that the Manifesto was a deception:

A sufficient number of specific instances of **the taking of plural wives since the manifesto of 1890**, so called, have been shown by the testimony as having taken place **among officials of the Mormon Church** . . . the leaders in this church, the first presidency and the twelve apostles, **connive at the practice of taking plural wives, and have done so ever since the manifesto was issued** which purported to put an end to the practice . . . As late as 1896 one Lillian Hamlin became the plural wife of Abraham H. Cannon, who was then an apostle . . . The prominence of Abraham H. Cannon in the church, the publicity given to the fact of his taking Lillian Hamlin as a plural wife, render it practically impossible that this should have been done without the knowledge, the consent, and the **connivance of the headship of that church**.

George Teasdale, another apostle of the Mormon Church, **contracted a plural marriage** with Marion Scholes since the manifesto . . . Charles E. Merrill, a bishop of the Mormon Church, **took a plural wife** in 1891 . . . The ceremony . . . was performed **by his father**, who was then and until the time of his death **an apostle** in the Mormon Church. It is also shown that John W. Taylor, **another apostle** of the Mormon Church, has been married to **two plural wives** since the issuing of the so-called manifesto.

Matthias F. Cowley, another of the **twelve apostles**, has also taken one or more **plural wives since the manifesto** . . . Apostles Taylor and Cowley, instead of appearing before the committee and denying the allegation, **evade service of process** issued by the committee for their appearance and **refuse to appear** after being requested to do so . . .

It is also proved that about the year 1896 James Francis Johnson was married to a **plural wife** . . . the ceremony in this instance being performed by an **apostle** of the Mormon Church. To these cases must be added that of Marriner W. Merrill, **another apostle**; J. M. Tanner, superintendent of church schools; Benjamin Cluff, Jr., president of Brigham Young University; Thomas Chamberlain, counselor to the president of a stake; Bishop Rathall, John Silver, Winslow Farr, Heber Benion, Samuel S. Newton . . .

It is morally **impossible** that all these violations of the laws of the State of Utah by the contracting of plural marriages could **have been committed without the knowledge of the first presidency and the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church** . . . the authorities of said church have endeavored **to suppress, and have succeeded in suppressing, a great deal of testimony** . . . it was well known in Salt Lake City that it was expected to show . . . that Apostles George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, and M.F. Cowley, and also Prof. J. M. Tanner, Samuel Newton and others who were all high officials of the Mormon Church had recently taken plural wives

. . . All, or nearly all, of these persons . . . were then within reach of service of process from the committee. But shortly before the investigation began **all these witnesses went out of the country**. . . .

It would be nothing short of self-stultification for one to believe **that all these important witnesses chanced to leave the United States at about the same time** and without reference to the investigation. All the facts and circumstances surrounding the transaction point to the conclusion that every one of the witnesses named left the country **at the instance of the rulers of the Mormon Church and to avoid testifying before the committee.**" (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, pp. 476-482)

Although Mormon leaders promised the government in 1890 that they would not sanction any more plural marriages, they secretly continued the practice until 1904! This, of course, casts serious doubt on their integrity. Unfortunately, these authorities followed the path of Joseph Smith, who always denied the practice of polygamy even though he actually had many plural wives.

An example of Joseph Smith's deception is found in the official *History of the Church*. On May 3, 1844, Joseph Smith responded to the accusation that he "kept six or seven young females as wives":

What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having **seven wives, when I can only find one**.

I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them all **perjurers**. (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 411)

REVELATION REMAINS

While the Mormon Church leaders no longer allow their members to practice polygamy, they will **not** remove Joseph Smith's revelation concerning plural marriage from the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Although this book is canonized as one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church, it is not usually given to outsiders. Many non-Mormons who live outside of Utah have told us that they could not obtain this book from the Mormon missionaries. The church is apparently embarrassed by the polygamy revelation which appears in that book.

The church's reluctance to remove the revelation from the *Doctrine and Covenants* led to a great deal of confusion. Unfortunately, the double standard of the Mormon leaders after the Manifesto left such a credibility gap that many Mormons continued to hold to polygamy even after the church withdrew its official support of the practice. Like Joseph Smith, they secretly entered into

polygamy, and even though the Mormon Church excommunicated a large number of them, the movement did not die out. Consequently, almost a century after Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto; there are thousands of people who are still practicing polygamy in Utah. On December 27, 1965, the *New York Times* reported that as “many as 30,000 men, women and children live in families in which polygamy is practiced.” Ben Merson reported:

“Today in Utah,” declares William M. Rogers, former special assistant to the State Attorney, “there are more polygamous families than in the days of Brigham Young. At least **30,000** men, women and children in this state are now living in plural households—and the number is rapidly increasing.” Thousands now live in the adjoining states of Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona—plus sizable portions in Oregon, California, Canada and Mexico. (*Ladies’ Home Journal*, June 1967, p. 78)

The number of polygamists has of course grown since Ben Merson wrote his article. On June 7, 1998, Maxine Hanks wrote an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* pointing out that polygamy is a serious problem:

Utah usually ignores polygamy, hoping it will go away. But **its scope and problems have grown and “festered like cancer,”** according to an ex-wife . . . Polygamy is a relic of 19th-century Mormon fundamentalism, still thriving. Today, there are a dozen major clans consisting of hundreds of families. And there are small independent groups. Often the clans are eccentric and insular, while other polygamists blend unnoticed into contemporary American society. Estimates vary widely, but insiders claim that Mormon fundamentalism may involve **60,000** people scattered from Canada to Mexico across seven Western states. Most of them are practicing some form of polygamy.

Because they claim to go back to the original teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young concerning polygamy and the Adam God Doctrine, they are usually referred to as Mormon “Fundamentalists.” The Mormon leaders now find themselves in a very strange situation. On the one hand, they have to uphold polygamy as a righteous principle, but on the other, they have to discourage members of the church from actually entering into its practice. If they completely repudiated the doctrine of polygamy, they would be admitting that Joseph Smith was a deceiver, and that the church was founded on fraud. If, however, they vigorously defended the doctrine, many people would probably enter into the practice and bring

disgrace upon the church. Their position is about the same as a person saying, “My church believes in water baptism, but we are not allowed to practice it.” Because of this peculiar dilemma, church officials discourage discussion of plural marriage.

As long as the Mormon leaders continue to publish Joseph Smith’s revelation on polygamy (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132), there will no doubt be many people who will enter into the practice. Church leaders of course cannot repudiate this revelation without destroying their doctrine concerning temple marriage. The two doctrines were revealed in the very same revelation. (Temple marriage is the marriage of a man and woman for time and all eternity in a secret ritual performed only in a Mormon temple.)

The fact that polygamy and temple marriage stand or fall together was made very clear by Charles Penrose, who was later sustained as first counselor in the First Presidency, at a conference in Centerville, Utah: “Elder Charles W. Penrose . . . showed that the revelation . . . was [the] only one published on Celestial Marriage, **and if the doctrine of plural marriage was repudiated so must the glorious principle of marriage for eternity, the two being indissolubly interwoven with each other**” (*Millennial Star*, vol. 45, p. 454).

Apostle Orson Pratt argued that “if plurality of marriage is not true or in other words, if a man has no divine right to marry two wives or more in this world, **then marriage for eternity is not true, and your faith is in vain, and all the sealing ordinances and powers pertaining to marriages for eternity are vain, worthless, good for nothing;** for as sure as one is true the other also must be true” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 21, p. 296).

DAMAGE CONTROL

In 1997, the First Presidency of the Mormon Church and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles decided to publish a manual entitled: *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young*. This manual has generated a good deal of controversy. As noted above, Vern Anderson wrote an interesting article that demonstrated the church’s attempt to suppress information regarding Brigham Young’s plural wives.

Anderson reported that a young woman who had recently married a Mormon came to the home of Valeen Tippetts Avery, a noted Mormon writer, seeking to know why the new manual overlooked Brigham Young’s practice of polygamy. Vern Anderson wrote: “She was confused now, and someone had suggested she talk to Avery.

“Dr. Avery,” she said, “I just got the new Relief Society manual, which is about Brigham Young, and **he only has one wife.**”

Avery, a Mormon who knew the pioneer leader had **55 wives**, couldn't explain why the lesson manual being used since January by male and female church members in 22 languages paints America's most famous polygamist as a monogamist.

But she had some advice.

“The Mormon church is trying to say to the new people coming into the church, as well as to the larger American society, that there was nothing questionable in the Mormon past,” Avery told the woman. “And if you want answers to these kinds of sticky questions, you're not going to find them inside accepted Mormon manuals and doctrines.”

The absence of any mention of polygamy is just one of the criticisms being leveled at the manual...

“Whoever compiled the manual is extraordinarily embarrassed by the church's second president,” says Ron Priddis of Signature Books.

“It's a religious tract, not history,” scoffs historian Nancy J. Taniguchi. . . .

Within months of assuming the church presidency in March 1995, Gordon B. Hinckley told the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to begin updating the curriculum of the adult male priesthood quorums and the Relief Society, both of which had always been separate . . . Soon, a writing committee was formed, using *Discourses of Brigham Young*, a 1954 compilation of Young's teachings by Apostle John A. Widtsoe, as the primary source for a new priesthood manual . . .

Widtsoe's work, narrowly windowed from the hundreds of Young speeches contained in the multivolume *Journal of Discourses*, had served to spruce up and sanitize the rough-and-ready frontier prophet for modern audiences. Widtsoe eliminated many of the cantankerous, contradictory, hyperbolic rantings for which Young was known . . .

Polygamy, which church founder Joseph Smith secretly practiced . . . and which Young publicly championed, was dropped 13 years after his death . . . and appears nowhere in the Widtsoe index or the new manual.

Also missing from the manual are Young's theories that Adam was God the Father and that Eve was just one of God's wives, the rest having been left on other worlds. Blood atonement was another casualty.

Worse than a glaring lack of context, though, say critics who have closely compared statements in the manual of Young's sermons, are the resulting misrepresentations of his ideas.

“I'd say that about 10 percent of the quotes are overtly lifted out of context, with about another 10

percent that are more subtly altered. In addition, about 5 percent have been abbreviated to avoid offense regarding race, nationality, gender and so on,” Priddis said. (Vern Anderson. *The Associated Press*, April, 1998)

HIDING YOUNG'S WIVES

As noted above, the manual authorized by the church's highest leaders carefully plows around the question of polygamy. The manual does contain a “Historical Summary” that mentions Young's first wife, Miriam Works, and tells of her death. It then states that he married Mary Ann Angell in 1834 (see page vii). On page 4, the manual notes that “six children were born into their family.” Unfortunately, the fact that Young actually had 55 wives and 56 children during his lifetime is entirely omitted from the record!

Sandra Tanner, who is the great-great-granddaughter of Brigham Young and one of the editors of this newsletter, finds it ironic that the church would try to hide the truth about Brigham Young's polygamous practices when there must be hundreds of his descendants in the church.

The attempt to conceal Brigham Young's numerous wives is evident. Interestingly, the *Deseret News 1997-98 Church Almanac* mishandled the matter in the same way. It noted that Joseph Smith was married to “Emma Hale Jan. 18, 1827.” The fact that he actually had many plural wives, however, is not found in the “Historical Listing of General Authorities” (see pages 40-41). As a matter of fact, in the *Deseret News 1997-98 Church Almanac* there is a deliberate attempt to whitewash **the first seven presidents of the church** because they were all polygamists. The names of these leaders of the church are as follows: *Joseph Smith, Jr., Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph Fielding Smith, and Heber Jeddy Grant.*

The interesting thing about this matter is that after mentioning the death of the seventh president of the church in 1945 (Heber Jeddy Grant) the *1997-98 Church Almanac* switches its emphasis. From that point on it lists the names of the women that were married to the presidents of the church. Furthermore, it tells the number of children that they had. For example, George Albert Smith, the eighth president, was not a polygamist. Consequently, those who compiled the *Almanac* were able to provide information regarding his wife and the number of children they had. It was noted that George Albert Smith, “Married Lucy Emily Woodruff May 25, 1892 (she died Nov. 5, 1937); they had three children.”

David Oman McKay, the ninth president of the church, lived to the age of 96. His marriage and his children are mentioned in the *Almanac*. It was noted that he was, “Married to Emma Ray Riggs Jan. 2, 1901 (she died Nov. 14, 1970): they had seven children.”

The next six presidents of the church: Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold Bingham Lee, Spencer Woolley Kimball, Ezra Taft Benson, Howard William Hunter and the current leader of the church, President Gordon B. Hinckley, all had the names of their wives mentioned in the current *Almanac* as well as the number of children they fathered. The attempt to conceal the fact that the early Mormon leaders were all polygamists is evident to anyone who takes a serious look at the matter (see the *Deseret News 1997-98 Church Almanac*, pp. 14, 40-42).

Some interesting examples of suppression are found on page 165 of the church manual. In the first example we find this admonition by Brigham Young: “. . . Set that example before your **wives** and your children . . .” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 15, p. 229).

In his book published in 1946, Apostle John A. Widtsoe rendered the quote as it appeared in the original *Journal of Discourses*. Unfortunately, however, those who were in charge of preparing the new manual decided that the word **wives** should not be used. Consequently, they fixed the text so it read: “. . . Set that example before your [**wife**] and your children . . .” The reader will notice that the word wife is set in brackets. This was clearly an attempt to remove material about plural marriage from the text.

On the same page of the manual we find another attempt to cover up the past. Young is quoted as saying: “Let the husband and father learn to bend his will to the will of his God, and then instruct his [**wife**] and children . . .” The reader will note that “wives” has been replaced with the word “wife.” Neither the *Journal of Discourses* nor Apostle Widtsoe’s book agrees with the new manual.

Although we have not had the time to make a thorough search of the material found in the manual, we did find additional evidence of tampering with the text. For example, Brigham Young stated:

The ordinance of sealing must be performed here **man to man**, and woman to man . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 12, p. 165)

In the manual, however, this has been changed to read:

The ordinance of sealing must be performed here [**son**] to [**father**], and woman to man . . .

It is obvious that those in authority did not want Brigham Young’s comments concerning men being sealed to men to appear in the manual. Another example of the same type of cover-up is found on page 334 of the manual. Brigham Young stated:

Then **man will be sealed to man** until the chain is made perfect . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 15, p. 139)

The manual, however, has been changed to read as follows:

Then [**children**] will be sealed to [**parents**] until the chain is made perfect . . . (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church, Brigham Young*, p. 334)

Most people who are familiar with present-day Mormonism know that dedicated Mormons have a wedding ceremony in the temple in which they seal women to men for time and all eternity. Their children are also sealed to them for eternity. Most Mormons, however, are not aware of the fact that the early leaders of the church had a very unusual ceremony known as the “the law of adoption.” Thus a man could have any number of men adopted to him as sons for eternity. Interestingly, the adopted sons were sometimes older than the men who adopted them! Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president of the church, wrote in his journal that he “officiated in Adopting **96 Men to Men**” (*Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, edited by Scott G. Kenney, 1985, vol. 9, p. 408).

The noted Mormon historian Juanita Brooks reported that when a man was sealed to another man it was not considered improper for him to take the surname of that man. Mrs. Brooks also wrote:

If the prophet Joseph were to become a God over a minor planet, he must not only have a large posterity but able assistants of practical skills. **Brigham Young had been “sealed” to Joseph** under this law; now he in turn had some **thirty-eight young men sealed to him.**” (*John D. Lee: Zealot-Pioneer-Builder-Scapegoat*, p. 73)

Those who censored the church manual concerning Brigham Young obviously did not want their people to know about this strange doctrine of sealing men to men. This attempt to disguise the truth about what was going on in the early years of Mormonism is deplorable. For more information about this matter see our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pp. 480-483.

MARRYING A CHILD

The Mormon prophet Joseph Smith married a number of young women before his death in 1844. One of his victims was Helen Mar Kimball. Todd Compton wrote: "Having married Joseph Smith at the age of fourteen, Helen Mar is the youngest of Smith's known wives" (*In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 487).

Even before Joseph Smith's marriage to Helen Kimball, Smith had upset the Kimball family when he asked for Heber C. Kimball's wife, Vilate Kimball. Todd Compton wrote:

The first chapter in the story of Smith, the Kimballs, and polygamy is that of Vilate's offering, which Orson Whitney, Helen's own son, recounted in his biography of Heber. In early 1842, apparently, Joseph approached Heber and made a stunning demand: "It was no less than a requirement for him to surrender his wife, his beloved Vilate, and give her to Joseph in marriage!" wrote Orson. Heber, naturally was 'paralyzed' and initially unbelieving. "Yet Joseph was solemnly in earnest." . . . For three days Heber endured agonies. Finally asked to choose between his loyalty to Mormonism and his intimacy with his wife, Mormonism and Smith won out. "Then, with a broken and bleeding heart, but with soul-mastered for the sacrifice, he led his darling wife to the Prophet's house and presented her to Joseph." "Joseph wept at this proof of devotion, and embracing Heber, told him that was all that the Lord required." It had been a test, said Joseph, to see if Heber would give up everything he possessed . . .

This prefigured the next test for the couple, which was nearly as difficult as the first: Smith now taught Heber the principle of polygamy and required him to take a plural wife . . . Smith had already selected Heber's first plural wife . . . to add to the trial, Joseph commanded Heber to keep the plural marriage secret even from Vilate "for fear that she would not receive the principle." Helen wrote, "This was the greatest test of his [Heber's] faith he had ever experienced . . . the thought of deceiving the kind and faithful wife of his youth, whom he loved with all his heart, and who with him had borne so patiently their separations and all the trials and sacrifices they had been called to endure, was more than he felt able to bear."

According to Orson, "Heber **was told by Joseph Smith that if he did not do this he would lose his apostleship and be damned.**" As so often, Joseph Smith taught polygamy as a requirement, and to reject it was to lose one's eternal soul. Once one had accepted him as a prophet, one had to **comply or accept damnation.** . . . Heber and Vilate had passed through the fiery ordeal of two polygamic tests. One more, this one involving Helen,

still awaited them. . . . Polygamy was inching closer and closer to the unsuspecting teenager . . . Orson Whitney wrote, "soon after the revelation [to Vilate] was given, a golden link was formed whereby the houses of Heber and Joseph were indissoluble and forever joined. Helen Mar, the eldest Daughter of Heber Chase and Vilate Murray Kimball, was given to the Prophet in the holy bonds of celestial marriage." . . . As Helen told the story, polygamy entered her life when her father approached her one day . . . in the early summer of 1843. "Without any preliminaries [my father] asked me if I would believe him if he told me that it was right for married men to take other wives." Helen's response was instinctual Victorian: "The first impulse was anger . . . My sensibilities were painfully touched. I felt such a sense of personal injury and displeasure; for to mention such a thing to me I thought altogether unworthy of my father, and as quick as he spoke, I replied to him short and emphatically, No I wouldn't! . . . This was the first time that I ever openly manifested anger towards him." . . .

Helen listened in disbelief and complete dismay. She wrote that, for her, this first interview "had a similar effect to a sudden shock of a small earthquake. When he found (after the first outburst of displeasure for supposed injury) that I received it meekly, he took the first opportunity to introduce Sarah Ann to me as Joseph's wife. This astonished me beyond measure." However, before introducing Helen to the subject of her possible marriage to Smith, Heber had apparently already offered her to the Prophet. In her 1881 reminiscence Helen wrote, "Having a great desire to be connected with the Prophet, Joseph, **he offered me to him;** this I afterwards learned from the Prophet's own mouth. My father had but one Ewe Lamb, but willingly laid her upon the alter: how cruel this seemed [seemed] to the mother whose heartstrings were already stretched until they were ready to snap asunder, for he had taken Sarah Noon to wife & she thought she had made sufficient sacrifice [*sic*] but the Lord Required more." Heber thus ended his first interview with Helen by asking her if she would become Joseph Smith's wife. If possible, Helen was even more astounded than before. She wrote, "I will pass over the temptations which I had during the twenty four hours after my father introduced to me this principle & asked me if I would be sealed to Joseph." Undoubtedly, unbelief and rebelliousness were part of these temptations.

In a published account Helen described her indecision during this twenty-four-hour period, but her trust in her father turned the scales toward accepting polygamy: "[He] left me to reflect upon it for the next twenty-four hours . . . I was skeptical—one minute believed, then doubted. I thought of the love and tenderness that he felt for his only daughter . . . I knew that he loved me too well

to teach me anything that was not strictly pure . . . and no one could have influenced me at that time or brought me to accept of a doctrine so utterly repugnant and so contrary to all of our former ideas and traditions.”

The mention of twenty-four hours shows that time pressures were being placed on the prospective bride, just as Smith had applied a time limit to Lucy Walker.

The next morning Joseph himself appeared in the Kimball home and personally explained “the principle of Celestial marriage” to Helen. In her memoir Helen wrote, “After which he said to me, ‘If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father’s household & all of your kindred.[.]’ This promise was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward.” As in the case of Sarah Whitney, Joseph gave the teenage daughter responsibility not only for her own salvation but for that of her whole family. Thus Helen’s acceptance of a union that was not intrinsically attractive to her was an act of youthful sacrifice and heroism.

The only person still reluctant to see the marriage performed, after Helen had accepted the proposal, was Vilate. Helen wrote, “None but God & his angels could see my mother’s bleeding heart—when Joseph asked her if she was willing, she replied, ‘If Helen is willing I have nothing more to say.’” This is far from a glowing positive bestowal of permission . . . Despite Vilate’s obvious deep reluctance to see her daughter enter plurality, the ceremony took place. In May 1843 . . . she was married to Joseph . . . it appears that Helen, when she married Smith, understood that the marriage would be “for eternity alone,” and that it would leave her free to marry someone else for time. But apparently this was not the case, as is shown by a number of factors. First, there is no evidence elsewhere that Smith ever married for eternity, only not including “time.” For instance, in the marriage ceremony used for Smith and Sarah Ann Whitney . . . they both agreed “to be each other’s companion so long as you both shall live” as well as for eternity . . . So apparently Helen had expected her marriage to Joseph Smith to be for eternity only, then discovered that it included time also. (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 495-500)

TAKING OTHER MEN’S WIVES

Many members of the Mormon Church find it very difficult to believe that the prophet Joseph Smith would be involved in anything unseemly. Some of them, in fact, cannot believe that he had sex with his wives. The evidence, however, is irrefutable. Todd Compton wrote:

Emily Partridge Young said she “roomed” with Joseph the night following her marriage to him, and said that she had “carnal intercourse” with him.

Other early witnesses also affirmed this. Benjamin Johnson wrote: “On the 15th of May . . . the Prophet again Came and at my hosue [house] ocupied [*sic*] the Same Room & Bed with my sister that the month previous he had ocupied with the Daughter of the Later [late?] Bishop Partridge as his wife.” According to Joseph Bates Noble, Smith told him he had spent a night with Louisa Beaman . . . many of Joseph’s wives affirmed that they were married to him for eternity and time, with sexuality included. Eliza Snow . . . wrote that “I was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith for time and eternity, in accordance with the Celestial Law of Marriage which God has revealed.” (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 12-14)

Todd Compton frankly discussed the issue of Joseph Smith marrying women who already had husbands. This strange type of marriage is known as polyandry (i.e., the practice of a woman having more than one husband at the same time.)

On pages 15-16 of his book, Compton wrote:

Polyandry is one of the major problems found in Smith’s polygamy and many questions surround it. Why did he at first primarily prefer polyandrous marriages? . . . In the past, polyandry has often been ignored or glossed over, but if these women merit serious attention, the topic cannot be overlooked . . . A common misconception concerning Joseph Smith’s polyandry is that he participated in only one or two such unusual unions. In fact, fully one-third of his plural wives, eleven of them, were married civilly to other men when he married them. If one superimposes a chronological perspective, one sees that of Smith’s first twelve wives, **nine were polyandrous**. So in this early period polyandry was the norm, not the anomaly . . . Polyandry might be easier to understand if one viewed these marriages to Smith as a sort of de facto divorce with the first husband. However, none of these women divorced their “first husbands” while Smith was alive and all of them continued to live with their civil spouses while married to Smith . . . In the eleven certain polyandrous marriages, only three of the husbands were non-Mormon (Lightner, Sayers, and Cleveland) and only one was disaffected (Buell). All other husbands were in good standing in the church at the time **Joseph married their wives**. Many were prominent church leaders and close friends of Smith. George W. Harris was a high councilor . . . a position equivalent to that of a twentieth-century general authority. Henry Jacobs was a devoted friend of Joseph and a faithful missionary. Orson Hyde

was an apostle on his mission to Palestine when Smith married his wife. Jonathan Holmes was one of Smith's bodyguards . . . Windsor Lyon was a member in good standing when Smith united with Sylvia Lyon, and he loaned the prophet money after the marriage. David Sessions was a devout Latter-day Saint.

These data suggest that Joseph may have married these women, often, not because they were married to non-members but because they were married to faithful Latter-day Saints who were his devoted friends. This again suggests that the men knew about the marriages and permitted them.

Another theory is that Joseph married polyandrously when the marriage was unhappy. If this were true, it would have been easy for the woman to divorce her husband, then marry Smith. But none of these women did so; some of them stayed with their "first husbands" until death. In the case of Zina Huntington Jacobs and Henry Jacobs—often used as an example of Smith marrying a woman whose marriage was unhappy—the Mormon leader married her just seven months after she married Jacobs, and then she stayed with Jacobs for years after Smith's death. Then the separation was forced when Brigham Young (who had married Zina polyandrously in the Nauvoo temple) sent Jacobs on a mission to England and began living with Zina himself. (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pages 15-16)

In the fourth chapter of his book Todd Compton gives a great deal of information regarding Joseph Smith's polyandrous relationship with Zina Diantha Huntington:

On February 2, 1846, in an inner room in the Nauvoo temple, Zina Huntington Jacobs stood by the side of Brigham Young, presiding apostle and de facto president of the Mormon church . . . Somewhat apart stood Henry B. Jacobs, whom Zina had married in a civil ceremony in March 1841. She was now seven months pregnant with their second child . . . That Henry Bailey was inside the temple shows that he was considered a faithful, worthy Latter-day Saint.

Zina and Brigham turned toward each other and Kimball sealed (married) Zina to Joseph Smith for eternity; Brigham stood proxy for the dead prophet, answering in his stead when the ceremony required a response . . . as was customary in temple proxy marriages, Zina and Brigham turned to each other and were sealed to each other for time. Once again Henry stood as witness. One suspects that none of the four participants in these ceremonies understood their full significance. Henry and Zina probably felt that they would continue living together as husband and wife, as they had during Joseph Smith's life. Young had married some women

by proxy with whom he never lived . . . But Brigham Young would eventually decide that Zina must become his wife fully, and the story of Zina Huntington would run its enigmatic course.

Zina . . . was a polyandrous plural wife of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. It is well documented that she married Henry Jacobs in March 1841 and continued to live with him until May 1846, bearing him two children . . . It is also well documented that Zina married Joseph Smith in October 1841 and Brigham Young in February 1846. While "official" Mormon biographies have Zina marrying Smith and Young after she left Henry, her marriages are so well documented that one is forced to reject this sequence and confront the issue of Nauvoo polyandry . . . as was the case with many of Joseph Smith's plural wives, Zina lived in his house before her marriage to him . . . Apparently in the midst of Henry Jacobs's suit, Joseph Smith taught Zina the principle of plural marriage and then proposed to her. One can only imagine the shock this must have caused her. The "cult of true womanhood" in nineteenth-century America required that a woman live by the ideals of purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness; and Smith's new doctrine offended against domesticity (the sanctity of the home), piety (typical American religious mores), and purity (the belief that sexuality should be reserved for monogamous Christian marriage). So it is not surprising that despite her religious reverence for the Mormon leader, she either flatly rejected his proposals or put him off. Furthermore, she was probably in love with Jacobs, and may have revered Joseph's wife Emma, whom she probably realized would be unsympathetic to an extramonogamous union . . . Smith was always persistent in his marriage proposals, and rejections usually moved him to further effort, so he continued to press his suit with Zina at the same time that she was courting Henry. And Smith usually expressed his polygamous proposals in terms of prophetic commandments. In addition to the religious dilemmas she faced, Zina was also choosing between two men, both of whom she cared for in different ways. In early 1841 Zina made here choice: she would marry Henry Jacobs, her romantic soulmate. The engagement was announced. By making this decision, she probably felt that she had put an end to Smith's suit and to the specter of polygamy in her life. It is not known whether Henry knew that Smith had also proposed to Zina, but it is known that he was a close friend and disciple of Smith. According to family tradition, as the day of marriage approached, Henry and/or Zina asked Smith to perform the marriage, and he agreed . . . but Smith did not appear, so they turned to John C. Bennett . . . to officiate. Zina must have felt a

sense of relief and finality as she and Henry exchanged vows and began their married life in Nauvoo.

However, Zina learned soon afterwards, undoubtedly to her complete astonishment, that Smith had not given up. Again according to family tradition, she and Henry saw Smith soon after the marriage and “asked why he had not come . . . he told them the Lord had made it known to him she was to be his celestial wife.” Once again Zina was plunged into a quandary. Smith told them that God had commanded him to marry her. However, he apparently also told them they could continue to live together as husband and wife. According to family tradition, Henry accepted this, but Zina continued to struggle. If polygyny offended against the American cult of true womanhood, polyandry offended even more. Nevertheless . . . submissiveness required her to obey. Disobeying Smith would also be an offense against Mormon piety. So polygamy divided the cult of true woman hood against itself. If a woman interpreted Smith’s polygyny and polyandry as sacred, she would become entirely devoted to the new system . . . Zina remained conflicted until a day in October, apparently, when Joseph sent Dimick to her with a message: *an angel with a drawn sword had stood over Smith and told him that if he did not establish polygamy, he would lose “his position and his life.”* Zina, faced with the responsibility for his position as prophet, and even perhaps his life, finally acquiesced . . . Apparently, Henry knew of the marriage and accepted it. He believed that “whatever the prophet did was right, without making the wisdom of God’s authorities bend to the reasoning of any man” . . . Zina and Henry stayed married, cohabiting, throughout Smith’s life. Thus Zina’s explanation for her marriage to Smith may be a “revision” of history to gloss over her simultaneous marriage to both men. It is certain that the marriage was not enough to cause the couple to stop living together during Smith’s lifetime, or for years after his death . . . for reasons that are not completely clear, Brigham Young pressed his suit with Zina. According to family traditions, **“President Young told Zina D. if she would marry him she would be in a higher glory.”** . . . Brigham approached her after Smith’s death and she apparently married him for time in September 1844. Nevertheless, she remained married and cohabiting with Jacobs, which was consistent with Smith’s practice of polyandry . . . At Winter Quarters the next development in Zina’s marriage history took place: **she began to live openly as Brigham Young’s wife.** She later wrote, “Those days of trial and grief [at Mt. Pisgah] were succeeded by my journey to Winter quarters, where in due time I arrived, and was welcomed by President Young into his family.” This method of practicing polyandry contrasted sharply with Joseph Smith’s. Smith

had never required any of his polyandrous wives to leave their first husbands and never lived openly with any of his polyandrous wives. Another problematic aspect of Zina’s relationship to Young was that they apparently did not write Henry and tell him of the development. (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 71-72, 78-81, 84, 90)

Many years ago we searched through the Mormon Church’s publication *Journal of Discourses* and found a sermon delivered in the Tabernacle by Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to Brigham Young. In this sermon, delivered February 19, 1854, Jedediah Grant made these weird comments:

There were quite a majority, I believe, in the days of Joseph, who believed he had no right to dictate in temporal matters, in farms, houses, merchandize, gold, silver, &c.; and they were tried on various points.

When the family organization was revealed from heaven—the patriarchal order of God, **and Joseph began, on the right and on the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel.** Says one brother to another, “Joseph says all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants; now **suppose Joseph should come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that?**” “I would tell him to go to hell.” This was the spirit of many in the early days of this Church . . . If Joseph had a right to dictate me in relation to salvation, in relation to a hereafter, he had a right to dictate me in relation to all my earthly affairs, in relation to the treasures of the earth, and in relation to the earth itself . . . 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, but in that thing was the grand thread of the Priesthood developed. The grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them. 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, pp. 13-14)

LDS CLAIMS
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Todd Compton made this observation regarding Jedediah Grant's sermon:

Grant disapproves of those who were asked to give up their wives and refused . . . He states that Smith did not want every wife he asked for, **which implies that he wanted some of them** . . . the fact that at least eleven women were married to Joseph polyandrously, including the wife of prominent apostle Orson Hyde, shows that in many cases Joseph was not simply asking for wives as a test of loyalty; sometimes **the test included giving up the wife.** (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 18-19)

FALSE PROPHETS?

Mormon apostle John A. Widtsoe boldly asserted that Joseph Smith and the other early leaders were completely honest. The evidence with regard to polygamy, however, reveals exactly the opposite. The first seven presidents of the church who were supposed to be "prophets, seers, and revelators to the church," were involved in a doctrine that led them into breaking the law, adultery, polyandry, deception, perjury, bribery and a massive cover-up. The reader will find a great deal of evidence concerning these matters in our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*, pp. 202-249.

As we have noted above, the evidence clearly reveals that Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy is an evil that continues to draw thousands of people into its web. Since Jesus Himself warned us to beware of "false prophets," and instructed us that we will "know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:15-16), it seems imperative that we face the truth about Mormonism. There is no way around the problem; the deceptive practices used by Joseph Smith and the other early leaders of the Mormon Church must be recognized for what they are—the "evil fruit" which Jesus attributed to "false prophets." While we do not agree with much of the material written by President Joseph Fielding Smith, the sixth president of the church, he did make one statement that really gets to the heart of the matter:

Mormonism as it is called, **must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith.** He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was **one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground.**

If Joseph Smith was a deceiver, who willfully attempted to mislead the people, **then he should be exposed;** his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false . . . (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 188-189)

We sincerely hope that Mormons who read this newsletter will see the futility of trusting in leaders who have used so much deceit and cover-up in establishing their work. We pray that they will awaken to the true message of Christ, realizing that in Him alone we have eternal life.



Temple Marriage?

One of the most important tenants of the LDS Church is the necessity of temple ordinances. They teach that marriage in one of their temples is a requirement for Eternal Life. Past President Spencer W. Kimball said:

Only through celestial [temple] marriage can one find the strait way, the narrow path. Eternal Life cannot be had in any other way. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, November 12, 1977)

Yet there is no mention of temple marriage in either the Bible or the Book of Mormon. The Jewish temple ceremonies are clearly explained in the Old Testament (Exodus, chapters 26-30) and have no relationship to the LDS temple ceremony.

In the New Testament the only eternal marriage is the spiritual marriage of the believer to Christ (see 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Romans 7:4). This is a spiritual union, not an actual marriage. Christ never mentions that a temple marriage is necessary for eternal life. In fact, he taught just the opposite.

The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God. (Luke 20:34-36)

Extracts from Letters

(spelling and grammar corrected)

You call yourselves Christian and are out there serving a purpose to try to convert members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Yet you purposely tear down their beliefs. You say that you're helping them. But do you realize what you are doing? Families are being torn apart. Good relationships are now bad. People in the church have now left it because of the garbage you guys put out.... All the anti you publish just goes to show you that it is of the devil. (Letter from Georgia)

Dearest friends in Christ, just wanted to tell you that I have left the mormon church. I am a 8th generation mormon. I left a few years ago and there was a book that I once read called Mormonism- Shadow or Reality? I have been looking for this book to give to my girlfriend's family. If you know where I could find one please let me know.... I also challenge anyone to dispute the book Mormonism- Shadow or Reality? When I was a mormon I tried my best to prove it wrong and to show that it was bunk and the Tanners' book really made me think and I asked my bishop what's going on here and he instructed me to shut up about it. So I looked up each and every one of their quotes and found that they are NOT taken out of context. (email from William)

Just dropping you a note to let you know that through the information given to me by your efforts and the folks on the Ex-mormon email list, my wife has sent in her letter to have the names of my children and hers removed from the LDS rolls. (email from James)

I was raised Mormon and one of the first books that I read about the Mormon church was The Changing World of Mormonism. I even gave it to my mother to read. Soon after I was saved thanks to your book making me question the Mormon church, prayers and my husband's teaching of the Bible. I have been saved five years and am now learning some things that I didn't know that the Mormon church believed. (email from Melinda)

I want to extend my sincere gratitude for the work that you have done, which has glorified our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The various materials from the Utah Lighthouse Ministry have been a blessing in my life.

I came out of Mormonism two years ago and was able to put to rest some of the reservations I had about leaving the Latter-day Saints. Mrs. Tanner, it was your book "The Bible and Mormon Doctrine" that had the most spiritual effect on me. The Holy Ghost has blessed me by making God's word come to life. I no longer feel the hindering burden of Mormon doctrine shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against me. (Letter from North Carolina)

THE BEACON

**A Monthly Support Group
for Those Leaving or Questioning Mormonism**

**2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH
7:00 pm**

**Utah Lighthouse Ministry
1358 South West Temple**

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While we deeply appreciate the financial support 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).

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Additional Books

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The Counterfeit Gospel of Mormonism: The Great Divide Between Mormonism and Christianity, by Francis Beckwith, Norman Geisler, Ron Rhodes, Phil Roberts, Jerald and Sandra Tanner. **Price: \$10.00**

Mormonism Unmasked: Confronting the Contradictions Between Mormon Beliefs and True Christianity, by R. Philip Roberts, Tal Davis, Sandra Tanner. **Price: \$9.00**

Is the Mormon My Brother?: Discerning the Differences Between Mormonism and Christianity, by James R. White. **Price: \$10.00**

What's With the dudes at the Door?: Stuff to Know When the Cults Come Knocking, by Kevin Johnson and James White. Great book for young teens. **Price: \$8.00**

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Out of the Cults and Into the Church: Understanding & Encouraging Ex-Cultists, by Janis Hutchinson. **Price: \$10.00**

Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine, edited by Gary James Bergera. **Price: \$15.00**

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Nauvoo Expositor. Photomechanical reprint of the newspaper Joseph Smith sought to destroy in order to suppress the truth about polygamy and other practices. **Price: \$2.00**

Letters to a Mormon Elder: Eye-Opening Information for Mormon and the Christians Who Talk with Them, by James R. White. **Price: \$10.00**

Christ Among Other Gods: A Defense of Christ in An Age of Tolerance, by Erwin W. Lutzer. **Price: \$14.00**

Witness to Mormons, by Concerned Christians. Comparison of Mormon teachings in three parallel columns—Mormon Doctrine, Mormon Scripture and the Bible. **Price: \$5.00**

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

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