

Editor: Sandra Tanner

Utah Lighthouse Ministry

1358 S. West Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84115
www.utlm.org

Jerald Tanner's Quest for Truth

By Ronald V. Huggins

*For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be for ever blest.
Alleluia. Alleluia.*

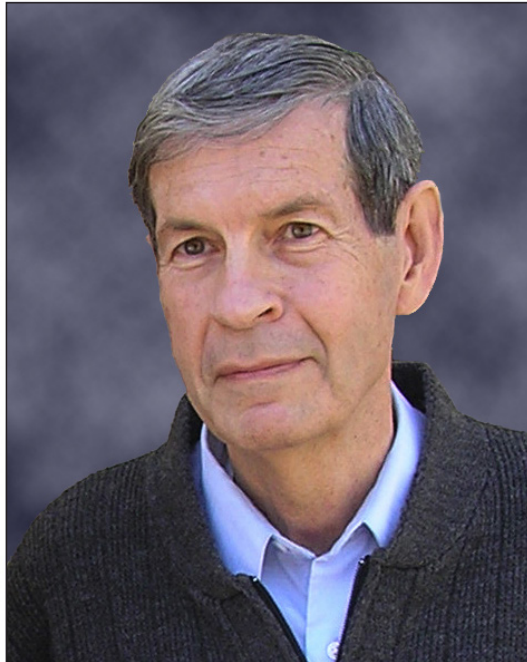
From now on whenever Christians throughout the world sing this triumphant hymn it will be celebrating, along with all the other saints throughout the ages, the life and witness of Jerald Dee Tanner, who passed into the Lord's presence on Sunday, October 1, 2006. For those who have not seen Jerald's obituary it can be found online at: <http://utlm.org/jeraldttanner.html>

In light of Jerald's death I thought it would be a good time to pause and reflect on his life and, more particularly, on how God initially led him into the ministry he carried on so effectively, and with such great energy, integrity, and accuracy, for more than forty years.

When people can't gain access to the information they want or need because the place which ought to be providing it is unwilling to do so, other less formal centers for the dissemination of information emerge.

If you happened to want to do research into Mormon history in the late 1950s or early 1960s (real Mormon history, I mean, not the largely sanitized version promoted in official LDS Church publications) sooner or later you would likely find your way to a barbershop at 424 South State Street in Salt Lake City.¹ Upon entering you would be assaulted by the usual barbershop smells: the hair tonic, the hot clipper oil, and the dust of ancient whiskers. You would notice also that the place looked as if nothing had

changed since the turn of the century; old-time woodwork and furniture all round with two classic barber chairs, one, as likely as not, filled with old books, and the other attended by the owner and proprietor of the establishment, a barber and the son of a barber, a champion skater, and Groucho Marx look-alike, James D. Wardle (1915–1997), to whom a Salt Lake alternative newspaper once applied the honorific sobriquet: "State Street Socrates."²



June 1, 1938 – October 1, 2006

Jerald Tanner, an inactive Mormon teenager, met Wardle in the late 1950s when, at the beginning of his spiritual quest, he attended an RLDS meeting. From that time on Jerald regularly visited Wardle's barbershop, not however to get his hair cut—the couple of times Jerald did sit in the chair he went away feeling a little too breezy on top—but rather because James kept in the back of his shop one of the most remarkable Mormon libraries around. In those days that meant not only that you would have to cast a wide net in terms of making connections in order to stock such a library in the first place, but that lots of people would be coming to see you once you had. It was in James' shop, for example, that Jerald met such characters as Francis W. Kirkham, compiler of the classic two-

volume collection of early Mormon texts entitled *A New Witness of Christ in America*,³ the LeBaron brothers, Ross, Joel, and the murderous Ervil LeBaron, and Ogden Kraut, defender of the good old-fashioned polygamous, Adam-God worshipping Mormonism.

If you kept your ear to the ground in the Mormonism of those days as James did, you would find out lots of interesting things, and as such you could become a particularly helpful resource on many occasions where the LDS Church wasn't

¹ The current location of the Scott Mattheson County Courthouse.

² Diane Olson Rutter, "State Street Socrates: A barber by vocation, a philosopher for free—James Wardle's passionate life lives on in collection of books," *Catalyst* (July 1998) pp. 16–17.

³ Francis W. Kirkham [1877–1972], *A New Witness for Christ in America: Evidence of Divine Power in the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon* (2 vols.; Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Printing Co. 1942 and 1951). Kirkham's work went through a number of editions and has only recently been largely superseded by Dan Vogel's *Early Mormon Documents* (5 vols.; Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1996–2003).

talking. Over the years James provided many things to the Tanners. His most significant contribution to Jerald's life, however, came early in their relationship when one day he handed Jerald a little 1887 tract entitled *An Address to All Believers in Christ* written by one of the original Book of Mormon witnesses, David Whitmer. It must be remembered that for Jerald the issue at this stage, as it would continue to be all his life, was finding peace with God, not refuting Mormonism. No doubt research on Mormonism has always carried its own interest due to its history as an authoritarian religious bureaucracy prone to clumsily applying the heavy hand of discipline as a way of covering up the truth of its past and clinging to its own power. At this stage, however, and in fact until 1962, Jerald expected to find God's truth at work at the roots of Joseph Smith's restoration. Consequently, what Whitmer said in his tract troubled Jerald greatly. Whitmer wrote:

If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon, if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to "separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, should it be done unto them." In the spring of 1838, the heads of the church and many of the members had gone deep into error and blindness. I had been striving with them for a long time to show them the errors into which they were drifting, and for my labors I received only persecutions.⁴

Changing Revelations

Jerald was devastated when he read Whitmer's further claim that the early Mormon prophecies had been changed. Whitmer wrote:

Some of the revelations as they are now in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants have been changed and added to. Some of the changes being of the greatest importance as the meaning is entirely changed on some very important matters; as if the Lord had changed his mind a few years after he gave the revelations, and after having commanded his servants (as they claim) to print them in the "Book of Commandments;" and after giving his servants a revelation, being a preface unto His Book of Commandments, which says: "Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my preface unto the Book of my Commandments, which I have given them to publish unto you, oh inhabitants of the earth."⁵

After reading Whitmer's tract, Jerald recalled, "I could not believe such a serious charge against the Prophet and I tossed the pamphlet down in disgust." But then he had second thoughts: "After throwing it down . . . I began to think that perhaps this was not the right way to face the problem. If David Whitmer was wrong in his criticism of Joseph Smith, surely I could prove him wrong. So I picked up the pamphlet and read it through."⁶

At the time Jerald could not compare Whitmer's claims against an original 1833 edition of the *Book of Commandments*, since he had not yet seen one. We do not know whether he tried to see one of the copies in the possession of the LDS Church at the time, but had he done so we can imagine what kind of response there may have been, considering the story told by the late LaMar Petersen, who published a little booklet in 1957 entitled *Problems in Mormon Text*. Petersen related how on one occasion in the 1950s, his well-meaning bishop persuaded LaMar to join him in going up to the LDS archives to have a look at a copy of the original *Book of Commandments* with the purpose of laying to rest once and for all the ridiculous nonsense LaMar had been spouting about changes in the early revelations. When they came to make their request, Earl E. Olson told them that the *Book of Commandments* was never actually finished since the Missouri mobocrats had destroyed the press it was being printed on. In response Petersen listed off the names of several libraries where he had actually seen copies. "Oh," Olson said, "I didn't realize you'd actually *seen* the book," and then toddled off cheerfully to fetch a copy.⁷

Jerald had never seen an original copy of the *Book of Commandments*, nor did he know LaMar Petersen at the time. He would not have been able to appeal successfully to the unwritten "well since you already know the document exists I might as well stop pretending it doesn't exist" policy illustrated by Petersen's story.

In any case Jerald grasped the seriousness of the situation well enough: "Like David Whitmer, I felt that it would be unthinkable for anyone to claim to have direct revelations from God and then turn around and alter those words."⁸

In the end Jerald reports that "I could not demonstrate that Whitmer was in error with regard to the statements which bothered me so much. His pamphlet, in fact, proved to be very reliable with regard to historical facts."⁹ In making his investigations Jerald might have made his comparison between the then-current *Doctrine and Covenants* and the editions of the *Book of Commandments* published by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) in about 1926 or the one printed by the *Salt Lake Tribune* in 1903. Since neither of these were actually photomechanical reprints, they would not ultimately be entirely acceptable. Nevertheless Jerald felt that he could trust their basic integrity when making his comparisons.

In a revelation dated March 1829 (now *D&C* 5) as it originally appeared in the *Book of Commandments*, God made it clear to Joseph Smith that his prophetic calling was to end once the Book of Mormon was finished: "he [Joseph] has a gift to translate the book, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift" (*Book of Commandments* 4:2). Some time later, however, Joseph apparently felt that God's language here was beginning to cramp his prophetic style, and so he created a little wiggle room for

4 David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Mo.: David Whitmer, 1887) p. 27.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

6 Jerald Tanner, *Jerald Tanner's Testimony* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987) p. 5.

7 Sandra heard Petersen tell this story on several occasions over a number of years.

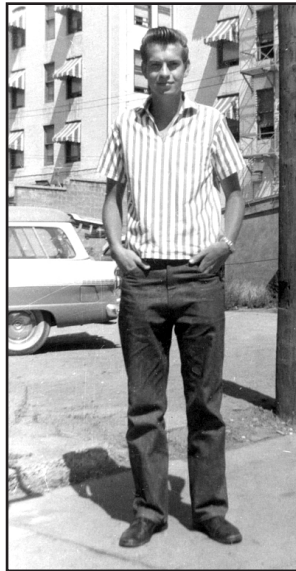
8 From Jerald's introduction to the Utah Lighthouse Ministry's photographic reproduction of Whitmer's *An Address to All Believers in Christ*.

9 *Ibid.*

himself by doctoring the passage, pretending that what God had actually commanded was to “pretend to no other gift *until my purpose is fulfilled in this*; for I will grant unto you no other gift *until it is finished*” (*D&C* 32:1 [1835]). Jerald reasoned from this that if the restoration was true, it had to rest on the original prophecies, not on the later ones that had been doctored to facilitate Joseph’s continuing ambition to play the prophet.

More striking still was Whitmer’s claim that the “matter of the two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, all originated in the mind of Sidney Rigdon,” and that “the High Priests and the ‘priesthood’ as you have it, was introduced into the Church of Christ almost two years after its beginning.”¹⁰ And indeed when Jerald looked at the *Book of Commandments* he discovered that the key sections dealing with the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods were either missing entirely (*D&C* 2 and 13) or were found to be in a more primitive form to which the crucial language had not yet been introduced (*D&C* 27 = *Book of Commandments* 28).

Jerald did not fail to see the implications of what Whitmer revealed with regard to Utah Mormonism. Even though Jerald still believed that the Book of Mormon was true, he was now convinced that Joseph had subsequently become a fallen prophet. In following Joseph Smith into his apostasy, then, Utah Mormonism proved that it had seriously missed the boat. “While I felt that the Catholic and Protestant churches were all wrong,” Jerald later recalled, “I needed to know which of the churches which claimed to be based on Joseph Smith was the true church. I felt that the only way to find out the truth was to go back to Missouri and visit the various [splinter] groups.”¹¹



Jerald Tanner in 1958

A Trip to Missouri

One night in the latter part of 1957 the nineteen-year-old Jerald climbed into his ’48 Chevy and headed for Missouri. When he reached Wyoming he was met by a blinding snow storm. The next morning found him parked on the roadside with steam boiling out from under the hood. His water pump had given out, the first of four problems with his car on the 1,200 mile trip. Fortunately all four problems occurred near a town, remarkably good luck for someone traversing the vast open distances of the Great Plains in an old jalopy. One day just after sunrise while Jerald was driving across Kansas he saw a sign that gave him great encouragement that he was on the right track. It read “Christ is the way.”

Once in Missouri Jerald made his way to Richmond, the town where David Whitmer’s tract had originally been published. He wanted to find the granddaughter of Book of Mormon witness Jacob Whitmer, who he had read belonged to the church David had started. When he found her she turned out to be an ancient lady, probably over ninety years old, but with a good memory. She could still remember seeing David Whitmer just before he died laying in his bed and working on the tract that had inspired Jerald’s journey. However, as it turned out, she was one of the last two members of David Whitmer’s church, the other being a woman of similar age, and, to Jerald’s disappointment, showed no interest whatever in seeing her church survive.

Upon his arrival in Independence Jerald visited two churches. The first was the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), named for the fact that it owned the lot Joseph Smith dedicated in 1831 as the site of the Temple to which Christ was to eventually return (see *D&C* 57 and 86). As already noted Jerald certainly knew and probably even owned a copy of the edition of the *Book of Commandments* printed by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot).

Jerald was received warmly and a copy of the original edition of the *Book of Commandments* was even brought out of the safe for him to look at. Yet Jerald says that he “did not feel led to return there.”¹² This was partly due to the fact that the Temple Lot group represented a more developed form of Mormonism than the one Jerald found described in Whitmer’s pamphlet. It was governed by Twelve Apostles, for example, a pattern of leadership disapproved of by Whitmer, and it accepted as valid all 65 prophecies in the *Book of Commandments*. In contrast Whitmer only accepted revelations up until June 1829, those “given through the ‘stone,’ through which the Book of Mormon was translated.” “These,” he had insisted “are the only revelations that can be relied upon, and they are not law.” Nor, Whitmer goes on to say, should these ever have been published, since the “Lord told us not to teach them for doctrine.”¹³

Pauline Hancock

The other church Jerald visited in Independence was also called the Church of Christ, but that group was known as the Lukites (after prominent member H. Irvin Luke). In reality its most prominent member was not Luke but its pastor, Pauline Hancock. Quite possibly Jerald had heard of the church from James Wardle. In any case Wardle would regularly boast afterward of having won two converts to Pauline’s group, namely Jerald and Sandra.

Pauline’s father, J. W. A. Bailey, had been Wardle’s own pastor at the RLDS Church at 336 South 400 East in Salt Lake



Pauline Hancock in 1959

¹⁰ Whitmer, *Address*, p. 64.

¹¹ *Jerald Tanner’s Testimony*, p. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹³ Whitmer, *Address*, p. 53.

City during the late 1930s and early '40s. And like so many others Bailey had enjoyed stopping in at Wardle's barbershop to commiserate about things.¹⁴ Bailey once even praised Wardle to RLDS President Israel A. Smith, saying he was "about the best posted on Mormonism that we have in Utah."¹⁵

Wardle also knew Pauline and a number of letters between them exist from this period. Many of these dealt with the sharing of documents. But it is in a letter that James wrote about Pauline, rather than to her, that we probably get the best picture of the sort of representation Wardle might have given to Jerald, making him want to go and visit her church. This appears in a letter dated December 17, 1959, that Wardle wrote to a Mrs. S. G. Winholtz, in which he said, "Pauline Hancock is one of the VERY FEW REAL CHRISTIANS that I have met in my whole life," and "she is one of God's women, a child of Christ. As far as I am concerned, I've never met anyone quite like her."¹⁶ He also had high praise for her basement church:

It is her group of people to whom she ministers. They have something that far exceeds anything I have ever felt in any church I've ever attended, including my own. They have the REAL fellowship.—If I were to judge I would say that they have the real SPIRIT of Christ in their midst. They LOVE one another . . . I wish we had more of that love in Salt Lake City.

No doubt the group's interest in early Mormon documents would have appealed to Jerald. They even owned a microfilm camera so as to be able to photograph and preserve such gems as came their way. Also Pauline agreed with Whitmer in rejecting all of the revelations in the *Book of Commandments* except for the fourteen that came through the stone (i.e., *Book of Commandments* 2–15). Appropriately when Jerald and Sandra finally produced their own photomechanical edition of Whitmer's *Address*, it was in fact from a copy that Pauline had given them.¹⁷

Something had happened in the little group there that was quite rare in the world of Mormon sectarianism. Pauline had actually come around to a view of God that was close to the Christian view, and an understanding of the gospel of grace that was dead on the money. Part of the reason for this was that at key moments in her life she was led in the right direction by visions and words from the Lord. One of the most important of these is where she first came to an understanding of "THE BLOOD OF CHRIST or the way of salvation," through a vision she had of the suffering of Jesus from the time he was being mocked by the soldiers until his crucifixion. As she looked on as he was being crucified, she said:

FOR THE FIRST TIME in my life I BEHELD THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB OF CALVARY. I knew all of a sudden MY OWN

VILE AND SINFUL NATURE, my lost condition. I knew that there was nothing good in me EXCEPT GOD HAD PUT IT IN THERE . . . I COULDN'T GET ENOUGH OF WHAT I SAW shining from His face. I knew that I was nothing like THIS WONDERFUL PERSON . . . When others were cruel and unkind, He was kindness itself. HIS FACE REFLECTED LOVE AND COMPASSION. I had murmured [sic] and complained at my burdens and trials while He in the greatest of agony, was willing to bear all this, that I might live again a new creature . . . I fell upon my knees and prayed to God THROUGH JESUS AND HIS SHED BLOOD, to be forgiven of my sins, that I might have the love I had seen in Him. When my prayer was finished, GOD BAPTIZED ME WITH HIS OWN SPIRIT and my soul was on fire WITH LOVE towards God and mankind—I became a new creature.¹⁸ (emphasis in original)

Jason R. Smith describes Pauline as "resolute about the fact that salvation was by grace through faith rather than earned through one's efforts. She rejected the idea that good works, taking the sacrament, church membership, or any other action would merit salvation. She later came to teach also that water baptism was not necessary for salvation."¹⁹ And by the time Jerald arrived her teaching was bearing a kind of fruit Jerald had never encountered before, so that what impressed Jerald most was "not their research but the love they had towards each other and even people outside their group . . . They were different from any people I had ever met. It was almost as if I had stepped back into the first century and was meeting with the original disciples of the Lord . . . The joy in the hearts of this people was so obvious that I could not miss it. It was evident that they really loved the Lord and had dedicated their lives to serve him."²⁰

Growing up a Mormon in Utah Jerald was used to hearing a lot of talk about Joseph Smith and the importance of the LDS Church, but here were people who spoke instead about a God who delivered his children from sin and blessed them with a peace that passes understanding. "It was at this church," Jerald recalled, "that I first heard the true message of Christ preached so that I really understood it. They had something in their lives that I knew I did not possess."²¹

Yet although Jerald was convinced they had what he needed, he found himself resisting turning his life over to God. Jerald had come to Missouri to find one thing but instead he discovered quite another. Even though he had already come to believe that the church of his youth could not be the true heir of Joseph Smith's restoration, he had yet to discover that it was not only wrong in doctrine but wrong in its entire concept of how one approaches finding God. Jerald related:

Before I set out for Missouri, I realized that I had committed many sins. I still felt, however, that I had the strength to change

14 Bailey writes: "I always liked to call at your shop and talk things over with you." Letter from J. W. A. Bailey to James D. Wardle (February 6, 1945). James D. Wardle Papers, box 47, folder 3, Marriot Library Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

15 Letter from J. W. A. Bailey to President Israel A. Smith (May 19, 1945). James D. Wardle Papers, box 47, folder 3, Marriot Library Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

16 James D. Wardle to Mrs. S. G. Winholtz (December 17, 1959). James D. Wardle Papers, box 22, folder 8, Marriot Library Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

17 See Jerald's introduction to the Utah Lighthouse Ministry edition of the tract (April 27, 1990).

18 Church of Christ (Bible and Book of Mormon Teaching) [Pauline Hancock,] "DOES GOD CALL WOMEN TO PREACH AND MINISTER? (A TESTIMONY)," *Independence Examiner* (February 25, 1956). This testimony was the final installment of a series of ads with the same title dated January 28, February 4, 11, 15, and, this one, February 25. This story is also quoted in Kate B. Carter, *Denominations that Base their Beliefs on the Teachings of Joseph Smith* (n.p.: Kate B. Carter, 1962) pp. 49–50. It is also reproduced from Carter in Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration* (4th ed.; Los Angeles, Ca.: Restoration Research, 1990) pp. 152–3.

19 Jason R. Smith, "Pauline Hancock and Her 'Basement Church,'" *The John Whitmer's Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006) pp. 190–191.

20 *Jerald Tanner's Testimony*, p. 6.

21 *Ibid.*

my own behavior and live a righteous life . . . I had been convinced that the church I was raised in was in error and it was only a matter of finding the one “true church,” and then living a good moral life that would be pleasing to God. What I had learned in Missouri completely changed my way of thinking. Instead of focussing on the errors of the Mormon Church and searching for the “true church,” I now had to take a hard look at my own heart and realize how completely undone I was before God. I was a sinner in desperate need of a Saviour. I could perhaps compare my life to a car which seemed to have a miss in the engine. At first I felt that it just needed some new spark plugs or a tune-up. The truth of the matter, however, was that it needed a major overhaul of the engine. In other words, I needed a completely new life within.²²

And so now, understanding more of the reality of things but as yet resisting surrendering to God, Jerald “came back to Salt Lake City with a heavy heart and continued to live under the burden of sin.”²³ When December came Jerald, who was not in the habit of sending Christmas cards, was greatly moved when he was unexpectedly deluged with them from the people in the Missouri church.

During this same time Jerald became more convinced “of the depravity of the heart of man,” which, he says, he learned from his own heart. Mormonism’s lack of a true understanding in this area has always stood in the way of its being able to understand the Bible’s message of sin and salvation. Yet from the Christian perspective this stage in Jerald’s experience was a very common one, and one that has often been described by great Christians like Augustine of Hippo, John Wesley, and Charles Finney, as an important stage leading to authentic conversion to Christ. This is a trustworthy saying, “Christ came to save sinners,” and “If we claim we have not sinned, we make [God] out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”²⁴ Knowing what he needed to do but still finding himself unwilling to do it, Jerald was even more alarmed to find himself tempted in ways he had never been tempted before. He began to fear that sin would plunge his life into the gutter, or that worse still, he would die in his sins and be forever separated from the presence of God. Knowing he had to come to terms with this Jerald felt that the best way to do it was to return to Independence and surrender to the Lord there.

A Second Missouri Trip

There was still snow on the ground when Jerald arrived in Independence in the early part of 1958 and checked into a cheap hotel in the center of the city. As soon as the people in the Church of Christ found out he was in town again he was invited to stay in the home of Gene and Barbara Moore, who had recently lost a son in a terrible automobile accident and welcomed him warmly into their home as “sort of a replacement for their son.” He stayed a full month. It was during that visit that Jerald recalled, “I looked to Jesus Christ and my life was miraculously changed. I passed from a life of sin and misery to one of peace and joy.” This took place without any remarkable “outward sign from God when I first

committed myself to Him.” He expected some sort of remarkable experience when he emerged from the baptismal waters in which Pauline baptized him, but nothing of the sort happened. Nevertheless, he says, “I began to walk by faith and to feel the spirit of God working in me and helping me with my life.”²⁵

Given the context in which Jerald became a Christian it is not surprising that for a time he carried with him some of the baggage of Mormonism. Following the example of Pauline he did not give up the Book of Mormon. Still that scarcely put him in close agreement with the religion of his youth, since, as Jerald himself continued to believe even after he had given it up, “the Book of Mormon itself does not teach the unique doctrines which separate the Mormon church from other Churches,” that it is in fact “far closer to Protestant theology than it is to Mormonism.”²⁶ Current Latter-day Saints are continually seen trying to artificially harmonize the Book of Mormon with current LDS doctrine in hopes of being able to press the former into the service of the latter.

Jerald Meets Sandra

Once back in Salt Lake City, Jerald became the sole representative of the little Church of Christ. He asked James Wardle for a list of people he thought might be interested in Pauline Hancock’s message and sent out invitations to them to come to meetings in the basement of his parents’ house on Dalton Street where they were treated to Pauline on tape with discussion afterward. It was to one of these meetings that the twenty-year-old Jerald was to meet the love of his life and complement in his ministry, an eighteen-year-old Mormon girl from California named Sandy McGee. Sandy, or Sandra as she is now usually called, probably didn’t even know who Pauline Hancock was and would likely not have been interested in attending if she had known. She only went one evening because she was driving her grandmother, Sylvia Rogerson, who had apparently received an invitation as one of those on James Wardle’s list.

Sylvia’s first husband had been Walter Stevens Young, the son of Apostle Brigham Young Jr., who in turn was the son of the Mormon Prophet Brigham Young himself by the first wife he married as a Mormon, Mary Ann Angell. Mary Ann’s brother, Truman O. Angell, designed such key Salt Lake historic monuments as the Salt Lake Temple, the Lion House, the Beehive House, and the Eagle Gate. Walter and Sylvia Young had a daughter named Georgia, who married Ivan McGee and together they had Sandra.

Sandra was understandably proud of her distinguished Mormon pedigree, but she had not been all that interested in independently researching Mormon history. But however much she might have wanted to quietly blend in at the Ward, find a nice Mormon boy, have a Temple marriage and get on with her life, it was not to be, given the family she had been born into. The fact that Sandra’s grandmother’s name found its way onto the list Wardle had given to Jerald shows that she was a woman who at least occasionally looked beyond the end of her nose

²² *Jerald Tanner’s Testimony*, p. 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁴ 1 Timothy 1:15 and 1 John 1:10.

²⁵ *Jerald Tanner’s Testimony*, pp. 7-8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE
www.utlm.org

to see what was out there beyond official Mormonism, and was therefore not a perfect fit in a culture where the sentiment “When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done,”²⁷ could be expressed in all seriousness. Similarly Sandra’s mother, Georgia McGee, and aunt, Lucille Hyler, were both eager beavers when it came to searching the used book stores for old Mormon books to buy and study. In the mid-1950s they were excited to learn that a polygamist sect had brought out a photo reprint of the 26-volume *Journal of Discourses*. Naturally Sandra’s mother and aunt bought a set. As a typical teenager Sandra sometimes found the level of Georgia and Lucille’s enthusiasm for research a bit irritating. On school days Sandra would rise early to attend Mormon seminary (high school level classes) from 6–7 a.m. before her usual classes started at 7:30 at San Fernando High. “This was part of the motivation for my dad to get me a car,” Sandra recalls, “he hated getting up at 5 [a.m.] to take me to seminary, which was across town.” Sometimes, after these long days at seminary and school, Sandra would return home to find books spread out all over the floor of the front room and Georgia and Lucille absolutely absorbed in study. Equally upsetting was the fact that she would have to scare up her own dinner, and, adding insult to injury, wash up afterward. This irritation got translated on more than one occasion into arguing with her mother about her “wasting her time” on all the study—after all the church was true and wasn’t that all we need to know? To be sure Sandra’s irritation was magnified by the usual angst that comes with being a teenager, and in retrospect, she admits that “my folks were pretty laid back and I had a pretty easy life.”

Mounting Questions

Sometimes Sandra’s mother would ask Sandra to run some of the questions she was encountering in her research past the seminary teacher. One of the issues Sandra remembers raising was the distinction between Elohim and Jehovah in the Old Testament. Current Mormonism identifies Jesus with Jehovah and Heavenly Father with Elohim. Sandra remembers one time when she was studying the Old Testament in seminary and “[my mother] was going after me several days about who Elohim was and who Jehovah was and how to tell which is which in the Old Testament, how you make the distinction between the two. So I went back to my seminary teacher about this, and essentially the way the answer broke down was: Generally speaking, it’s always Jehovah except in places where it’s Elohim.”

Attending ward meetings with Georgia and Lucille could also be more embarrassing than pleasant. Sandra recalls:

Back then Mormons didn’t carry their Bibles to church so if she took hers to church I knew she was going to ask questions, which would cause a stir. She was told one time something to the effect, “You don’t need to look up the references, the brethren are inspired to put the right references in the lessons. It shows a lack of faith.”

One time my aunt was in class with mom when they brought up something . . . and a man jumped up and shook his finger at [Aunt Lucille] and said “Only an adulterous nation seeks after a sign.”

Happily for her, Sandra was spared the embarrassment of being present on the latter occasion.

Despite her lack of involvement in her mother’s and aunt’s research Sandra could not help but become aware of some of the things they were discovering which caused her to have questions. Sandra’s seminary teacher, Ina Easton, was a very kind lady, a grade school teacher, who Sandra felt would not have the training to answer the kinds of questions her mother was posing. Sandra felt sure, however, that the answers would unfold once she graduated from seminary and moved on to LDS Institute (college level classes usually offered in a building owned by the Mormons next to secular university campuses). As it would turn out Sandra graduated early from seminary and so was able to begin attending Institute in the evening while she was still in high school. It was really not until her second year of Institute with a new teacher, at Los Angeles Valley Junior College (now defunct) in Van Nuys, California, that Sandra began asking substantive questions. She naturally assumed that if there is any time and place in the Mormon world where it is appropriate to ask the hard questions, surely it would be in these college-level Institute classes. She was mistaken: “When I started asking questions the second year [my teacher] got defensive and told me to stay after class. He then instructed me to not ask any more questions as I was disturbing a girl who was attending but wasn’t a member yet.” Ironically it had been Sandra who was giving the girl in question a ride to the class.

Despite her holding on to Mormonism at the time, Sandra is convinced that she knew enough even then about the cracks in the foundation of Mormonism that she would have eventually given it up even if she had never met Jerald.

But she did meet Jerald. During Sandra’s first year at the community college Sandra’s grandmother had come to California to stay the winter. Then Sandra accompanied her grandmother on her trip back to Salt Lake during spring break.

It was on Sunday evening of that weekend that Sandra’s grandmother asked her if she would drive her to a meeting she described as being “sort of like a fireside.” The words “sort of” did not escape Sandra and so she supposed that it was not a regular Mormon fireside they were going to. But she decided to tag along anyway to get her mind off the recent visit from her boyfriend (now attending BYU) informing her of his intention to toss her over in the hope of finding a finer filly in the stables of the Lord’s University. Still it was not as though she expected the meeting to be exciting. Sandra recalls, “I assumed it was a bunch of old Mormon people and she [Sylvia] didn’t want to tell me that in case I wouldn’t go. When this tall good-looking guy came to the door I immediately got more interested.” As it happened Jerald too was attracted to Sandra. “I thought that she was a beautiful young woman,” Jerald recalled, yet feared “she was probably too rich and sophisticated to have any interest in me.”²⁸

Afterward Sandra took the initiative to engage Jerald in a discussion about the meeting. Naturally he was eager to share both his discoveries about Mormonism and his newfound faith in Christ. An invitation was tendered for Jerald to come over to Sandra’s grandmother’s house the following Friday for dinner

27 “Ward Teachers’ Message for June 1945,” *Improvement Era* (June 1945) p. 354.

28 *Jerald Tanner’s Testimony*, p. 9.

and further discussion and then another for April 1st. On the latter occasion Jerald's first impression of Sandra's sophistication faced the challenge of her playing an April Fool joke by setting the dinner table that evening with cups, pans, measuring cups, anything besides normal tableware. When Jerald arrived, very eager to make a good impression and to be a good witness, he noticed the peculiar arrangement, concluded that there must be some legitimate reason for it, or some misfortune such as Sandra and her grandmother not being able to afford better, and so, not wanting to offend or embarrass, studiously avoided acting like anything was out of the ordinary. Sandra maintained her deadpan expression as long as she could, waiting in vain for some glimmer of recognition of the joke on Jerald's face, and then finally burst out laughing "April Fool!" After that fiasco Sandra feared Jerald might lose interest. But he was not so easily put off and we find Sandra having dinner at Jerald's two days later.

One of the first things Jerald showed Sandra in terms of problems with Mormonism were the changes Joseph Smith had introduced into the prophecies between 1833 and 1835. Following up, Sandra went down to Sam Weller's Zion's Bookstore and purchased an LDS triple combination (The Book of Mormon, *Doctrine & Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price* bound together under a single cover) and an edition of the *Book of Commandments*.²⁹ Then, as her grandmother read the prophecies from the *Book of Commandments* aloud, Sandra followed along in the then-current *Doctrine & Covenants*, noting the changes in the margins. In this way she was able to establish for herself beyond doubt that what Jerald had told her was in fact true. More decisive however was the reading she did in the sermons of her great-great-grandfather Brigham Young. One day Jerald challenged her with the question whether, given her pride in her ancestry, she had ever actually read any of Brigham Young's sermons. She admitted that she had not. And so Jerald began bringing over volumes of the *Journal of Discourses* with slips of paper marking places from which he would then show her passages where Brigham had taught things that were wrong or markedly out of line with current Mormon teaching. It was at this time that Sandra learned of Brigham Young's false prediction that the Civil War would not succeed in defeating slavery ("Ham will continue to be servant of servants, as the Lord has decreed, until the curse is removed. . . . Will the present struggle free the slave? No.")³⁰ She also learned how Young had taught that "Adam . . . is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do,"³¹ and his insistence that "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy."³²

Blood Atonement

Although she could see the problem in each case it did not seem to her that they were significant enough in themselves to prove current Mormonism wrong. What ended up being decisive

was Brigham Young's Blood Atonement teaching. To this day Sandra can point to the two paragraphs that in one stroke and forever more persuaded her that the branch of Mormonism led by Brigham Young could not be of God. They are found in a sermon preached by Brigham Young in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on March 16, 1856:

Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified, and they would atone for their sins, and be received into the kingdom of God. I would at once do so in such a case; and under such circumstances, I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do it with clean hands.

And then a couple of paragraphs later:

There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it; and the judgments of the Almighty will come, sooner or later, and every man and woman will have to atone for breaking their covenants.³³

Sandra was shocked at finding Brigham Young teaching that you are doing someone a redemptive favor by murdering them, and that our blood needs to be shed because the blood of Christ was not sufficient for us. In that instant all Sandra's illusions about Brigham Young being a true prophet of God fell away, as did her faith in the Church he led.

Enter Cupid

As Jerald and Sandra's study advanced so did their romance. On April 6th, while the LDS General Authorities busied themselves down at the Tabernacle during the Spring General Conference, serving up their usual courses of edifying platitudes, Jerald sat next to Sandra for the first time at her grandmother's house. On April 24, while sitting in the Tanner family's front room, the petting of a fat tabby cat that sat between them resolved itself, with a nudge of encouragement from Sandra, into holding hands. Three days later, on Monday, April 27, Jerald and Sandra met with the intention of listening to a Pauline Hancock tape on Jerald's trusty reel-to-reel tape machine. The thing had always worked great before, and indeed it did so on the following day, but for some reason Jerald couldn't get it to play the tape on that particular day. So they spent the evening talking instead, and as they talked the topic of discussion veered away from study and onto their relationship. Sandra's grandmother was in the front parlor watching television while Jerald and Sandra sat side by side holding hands in another parlor at the back of the house. Jerald remarked on how much he loved being with Sandra, and then, gazing at their hands, said that he wanted to hold her hand forever. Sandra, thinking she detected perhaps the sound of a proposal fluttering in the air, and noting that Jerald was looking at her hand rather than her face, sought further clarity with the

²⁹ At this point Sandra does not recall whether it was the 1926 Temple Lot edition or the 1903 *Salt Lake Tribune* edition.

³⁰ *Journal of Discourses* 10:250.

³¹ *Journal of Discourses* 1:50.

³² *Journal of Discourses* 11:269.

³³ *Journal of Discourses* 3:247.

result that Jerald made explicit that he loved her and wanted to marry her. To this Sandra responded with a line appropriately embarrassing to recall, something like “Wow! Me Too!” They kissed and started making plans.

As soon as Sandra’s mother and Aunt Lucille got the news they hurried from California to Salt Lake. On the evening of Saturday, May 2, Jerald and Sandra came close to eloping. While Sandra’s grandmother, mother, and aunt were out visiting relatives Sandra left a note. Then they went over to Jerald’s to fetch his mother to serve as witness and headed out west for Wendover, Nevada. They got no further than the Great Salt Lake, however, before Sandra began to have qualms about how disappointed her mother would be. And so they turned back. Sandra’s mother actually returned home before they did but didn’t see the note, and so might have never known anything about the planned elopement if Sandra hadn’t dumbly ventured to ask: “Did you see the note?”

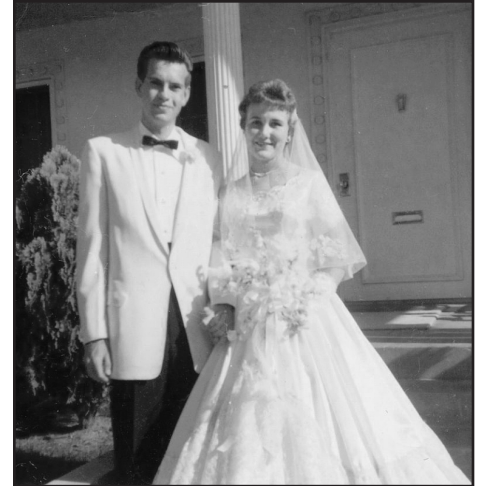
LaMar Petersen

The next day, May 3, Jerald and Sandra joined Sandra’s mother and aunt to go and visit a man who would become a beloved friend and helper to Jerald and Sandra for the rest of his life: LaMar Petersen (Dec. 23, 1910–Sept. 16, 2005). They met him at his Mozart School of Music, which in those days was located at 45 South Main Street above Daynes Music Company. Since it was a Sunday, and the school was closed, we may suppose that they had prearranged the meeting to follow LaMar’s usual Sunday performance as organist at Salt Lake’s Second Church of Christ, Scientist, where, although he was not a Christian Scientist, he would play for 65 years.

Two years prior to this LaMar had written the small booklet mentioned previously, *Problems in Mormon Text*, which dealt frankly with the kind of problems Jerald had been encountering. The booklet was well received by scholars such as Fawn Brodie and Sterling M. McMurrin.³⁴ Later he would write *Hearts Made Glad: The Charges of Intemperance Against Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (1975) and *The Creation of the Book of Mormon: A Historical Inquiry* (2000). He was a careful historian of Utah and Mormon origins, an honorary life member of the Utah State Historical Society, and served for eighteen years on the Advisory Board of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. One thing that becomes clear when one looks at Jerald’s career is that he never really worked alone. He was always helped by Sandra and a number of very gifted friends, so we cannot give a full picture of Jerald’s career without mentioning faithful friends and helpers like LaMar Petersen.

Tanners Are Married

The marriage took place in Mission Hills, California, on the afternoon of June 14th in the front room of Sandra’s parents’ large colonial style home at 14960 Chatsworth Street. The weather was nice and Jerald’s parents were able to come. Since Jerald



**Jerald & Sandra
Married
June 14, 1959**

and Sandra were both convinced that the LDS Church was not a legitimate Church, they did not want to have their wedding ceremony performed by a Mormon. So a Protestant pastor by the name of James H. Kepler, of the Church of Our Savior, a Congregational Church in Granada Hills, was brought in for the occasion. Pastor Kepler’s theological liberalism gave the young couple pause to wonder whether they might just as well have invited a secular justice of the peace to perform the duty. In any case the ceremony came off well and was followed by a reception that evening.

After a brief honeymoon in Yosemite National Park, the young couple rented the small apartment that belonged to Sandra’s parents that was behind their garage. There they remained until October of 1959 when they moved into their own apartment at 11946 Hart Street, North Hollywood.

Although Sandra had previously been very religious and active as a Mormon, she didn’t know Christ. Discovering that Mormonism wasn’t true didn’t equal becoming a Christian. Jerald was firmly convinced that God had sent Sandra into his life and reasoned that “since she told me that she wanted to be a Christian, I felt that it would be pleasing to the Lord for us to be married,” an assumption he later attributed to the fact that at the time he was “only a babe in Christ,” with no one older and wiser to consult upon the matter.³⁵ For her part, Sandra contented herself to let the excitement of the marriage push thoughts about becoming a Christian out of her mind. After they were married her Bible reading began to slip and even though Jerald encouraged her to read a little every day, she even neglected that. Finally Jerald asked Sandra to travel to Independence to visit the people that had led him to the Lord. This she did in September staying a week with the Moores as Jerald had done.³⁶ Describing this experience in one of her earliest tracts Sandra recalled that “When she arrived in Independence, she found herself among some of the sweetest people she had ever met. Here, the ‘Sonlight’ shown so bright that Sandra could not ignore it.”³⁷ Upon returning to California she found that she had come under conviction that she was a sinner,

³⁴ “I think you have done an unusual service in publishing it. In the near future I plan to obtain other copies for distribution to friends. (Letter from Sterling M. McMurrin to LaMar Petersen [March 27, 1957]).

³⁵ *Jerald Tanner’s Testimony*, p. 10.

³⁶ Jason R. Smith is incorrect when he says that Jerald and Sandra went to Independence in September 1959 and that “It was on that trip that Pauline baptized Sandra” (“Pauline Hancock and Her ‘Basement Church,’” p. 192). It was on a subsequent trip in which Jerald and Sandra traveled together that Sandra was baptized.

and yet she still resisted letting Christ come into her heart until the following month. The matter was finally resolved during a religious broadcast Sandra was listening to on the morning of Saturday, October 24, 1959. Sandra recalls:

I turned to the Christian radio station and listened to a sermon. The minister was preaching [from 1 John 4:10] on the great love of God and the mercy offered to us through Jesus Christ. Nothing ever struck me with such force. I opened my heart to God and accepted Christ as my own personal Savior. The Holy Spirit flooded my soul with such joy that I wept for over an hour.³⁸

Sandra seldom tells this story without mentioning how they played Elton M. Roth's old hymn, "In My Heart There Rings a Melody," and how the words described perfectly what she really came to understand and how she felt that day.

From that day forward Jerald and Sandra's distinctive gifts came together to form a very effective ministry team. Jerald was a tireless researcher with an extraordinary gift for handling documentary evidence. But he was too shy and retiring to ever be a dynamic speaker or presenter. Sandra on the other hand had a good logical mind and a speaking gift that she had already used effectively on many occasions while still a Mormon. This enabled her to effectively serve as the public face of the ministry.

One God

What is important to keep in mind at this point is that even though Jerald and Sandra had both now come to know Christ, they still believed in the Book of Mormon, and as such were careful to try to harmonize what they read in it about the doctrine of God with what the Bible said. Pauline Hancock clung to the Book of Mormon until her death even to the point of being unwilling to baptize people who didn't have a witness to its truthfulness.³⁹ One of the reasons for her commitment to the Book of Mormon was that God used its monotheistic doctrine to deliver her from what she considered to be her polytheistic background.⁴⁰ One of the difficulties is that the Book of Mormon is actually further from the later Mormon doctrine of God than traditional orthodox Trinitarianism, in that it is tainted with a view of God commonly referred to as modalism. Modalism teaches that the Trinity is not three persons in one God but one divine person in three different roles or expressions. We find numerous passages in the Book of Mormon that reflect this modalistic concept, such as Ether 3:14: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son," and 3 Nephi 1:14: "Behold, I come unto my own...to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh" (cf. Alma 11: 26-29, 38-39; Mosiah 3:5,8). The idea seems to be, in the second passage at least, that the spirit of Jesus is the Father and the body of Jesus is the Son. Traditional orthodox Trinitarianism accepts neither

modalism nor a plurality of gods. The Athanasian Creed, for example, put it this way:

We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For the person of the Father is one; of the Son, another; of the Holy Spirit, another. But the divinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one.

The chief concern of modalism is with safeguarding the unity or oneness of God. But it seeks to do so by "confounding the persons."

Taking her lead from the Book of Mormon, Pauline explained the Godhead as follows in one of the regular advertisement/columns she published in the *Independence Examiner* for many years, this one entitled "Does the Scriptures Teach A Trinity Concerning the Godhead?" (August 23, 1952):

When the scriptures refer to the Father, it is THE LORD, THAT SPIRIT, which fills heaven and earth, our Creator, our God; when the word refers to the Son it is THAT SAME SPIRIT, THE LORD, our God, revealing Himself in a body to redeem man . . . and when the scriptures refer to the Comforter which cometh into the heart of the true believer to give understanding, comfort, to fill with love and joy, it is THAT SAME SPIRIT, THE LORD, our God, in another one of His administrations or operations.⁴¹

Pauline had started out in the RLDS Church, but after the large split in that denomination when Frederick M. Smith issued the "Supreme Directional Control," Pauline first joined the faithful opposition and then eventually took advantage of the offer made by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) to transfer her membership there, along with other former RLDS members. Among the defectors was also Samuel Wood, who became an Apostle in the Temple Lot group but later got into trouble for coming to the same understanding of the Godhead as Pauline had. In 1934 he wrote a book endorsing it entitled *The Infinite God*. The book was sponsored by Pauline and the printing of was paid for by his close friend, Emily Beede Shehee of Council Bluffs.⁴² In 1935 Wood was tried by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and expelled. When the charges against Wood were presented to the General Assembly, Pauline asked whether belief in one God was to be regarded as heresy. The answer being given in the affirmative she asked that her name be removed from the Church record. When it was all over Wood made his way directly to the home of Pauline and her husband Silas, feeling, he said, very desirous of taking a bath, after which he reported: "we then felt better—we seemed to be cleansed both physically and spiritually."

In his book Wood describes the threefold character of the Godhead on the analogy of the human person, conspicuously

37 Sandra Tanner, "Out of Darkness, into the 'Sonlight'" (1960) 1. In this tract Sandra describes her experience in the third person. The assignment of the date 1961 to this tract in the copy included with the Scott Faulring Interview is incorrect. Jerald and Sandra were only at the address on the tract I have in my possession from April to July 1960. Faulring's copy does not have the address on it.

38 Quoted in *Jerald Tanner's Testimony*, p. 10.

39 This was true at least in Sandra's case. See footnote 37.

40 Her struggle in accepting the Book of Mormon teaching that Jesus is the Eternal God is described in the very rough transcription of a biographical sermon. (James D. Wardle Papers, box 22, folder 10, Marriot Library Archives.)

41 H. Michael Marquardt Papers, box 9, folder 3, Marriot Library Archives.

42 From the obituary Samuel Wood wrote for Pauline in *TM: An Independent Journal of Fundamental Religious and Social Reform* 7.6 (November 1963) p. 5. Also Pauline's name and address are given in the back of the book along with Wood's as sources from which the book could be obtained.

borrowing his manner of expression from the eighteenth century mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg:⁴³

By the ONENESS OF GOD is meant that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are ONE GOD IN PERSON. The Father, which is the Spirit from all Eternity, the Son, which is the flesh in which the Father revealed himself in the world, and the Holy Spirit, which is the operation of God in the world, constitute one man.⁴⁴

This view was not only held in Pauline's circle. James D. Wardle, who was still a member in good standing of the RLDS Church, was also convinced that the Book of Mormon taught the doctrine.⁴⁵

Jerald learned of Wood's book when Pauline gave him a copy of it. In that copy, which still exists, we discover that Jerald went right through from start to finish replacing the page numbers of the edition of the Book of Mormon that Wood was using (the so-called "Authorized Edition" published in Lamoni, Iowa, in 1908) with the page numbers and references of the standard Salt Lake LDS edition.

Interestingly this modalistic view of God, though inadequate theologically, nevertheless provided Book of Mormon believers like Pauline and Jerald with a unique perspective from which to view standard Mormon teaching.

First Vision

The idea that God was only one person cast doubt on the official LDS version of the story of the First Vision, in which Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son in 1820. Today we usually think of the problems with the First Vision story in terms of the historical evidence that stands against it. To these Book of Mormon believers, however, it stood out first of all as posing a theological rather than merely historical problem: How could you have two personages appear to Joseph Smith if God was only one person? The lengths to which someone holding the Book of Mormon view might go in order to try and validate the First Vision story, while at the same time remaining faithful to the Book of Mormon teaching about the nature of God, is well illustrated in the attempted harmonization of Moroni Sherman in his little tract "Who Is Jesus?" According to Sherman the two personages represented the spirit part and the flesh part of God, respectively:

The story of Joseph Smith seeing two personages stands as a monumental witness to the BOOK OF MORMON, p. 721. Joseph Smith saw two images and was over a hundred years ahead of scientists today who are just beginning to acknowledge that there are two beings in each of us. The spiritual man and the fleshly man are **one man**. Because we have two parts, flesh and spirit, does not make us two different and distinct people. Christ stated that He had a Spiritual body and a clay body and Joseph Smith was privileged to see **both**.⁴⁶ [use of caps and bold Sherman's]

Prior to meeting Jerald, Sandra became aware of a different set of problems facing the First Vision, problems discovered by her mother Georgia and her aunt Lucille. They discovered that the LDS Church had been quietly doctoring its sources relating to the First Vision in order to conceal the fact that the official story was not the one generally told during much of the nineteenth century.

Georgia and Lucille had discovered an interesting telling of the First Vision in the January 1888 issue of the Mormon periodical *The Historical Record* by Andrew Jenson. The account of the first part of the vision was quite similar to the official story told in the current *Pearl of Great Price*:

I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said (pointing to the other), THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM.⁴⁷

In current Mormonism the clue to identifying the personages in Joseph Smith's First Vision story are the familiar words, taken from the New Testament gospels "This is my beloved Son, Hear Him." We seem to have a conspicuous reference to the Father and the Son. However, as you read on in this particular source you find that one of the two figures is explicitly identified as an angel:

The angel again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches. . . . "Many other things did he (the angel) say unto me. . . ."

The idea that one of the figures was an angel seems to imply that something different is going on here than the simple identification of the personages in the passages as the Father and Son.

Having learned of this account, Lucille decided that she would like to obtain her own copy of *The Historical Record*. When she did, however, she was surprised to discover that the language in her copy had been changed so that the angel was now called the "Holy Being" in the first instance and "the Christ" in the second. The change was remarkable in the sense that both forms of the passage appeared in what was ostensibly bound copies of old newspapers, so that modifying it without any sort of notification amounted to the pretense of reprinting old issues of a newspaper, say the *New York Times* for example, but actually adding or subtracting words that you did not like.

A Letter to An Apostle

After a delightful week in Independence, Missouri, in September of 1959, Sandra was seen off at the train station by Pauline Hancock, Olive Wilcox, and Barbara Moore. Six days later we find her addressing a letter to Bishop Warren H. Kennedy in which she thanks him for an offer he had made during

43 Samuel Wood, *The Infinite God: Can Men Become Gods?* (Independence, Mo.: Lambert Moon Printing Company, 1934) p. 79. Swedenborg is mentioned positively by name on pp. 92-93 of the book.

44 Swedenborg expressed himself on this same point in very similar terms:

When it is said, that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are the three essentials of one God, like the soul body and operation, in man, it appears to the human mind as if those three essentials were three persons, which is not possible. (*The True Christian Religion: Containing the Universal Theology of the New Church Foretold by the Lord in Daniel VII. 13, 14; and in Revelation XXI 1,2* [Boston: Otis Clapp // New York: John Allen 1851] p. 144).

45 Letter to Moroni Sherman (May 9, 1958). James D. Wardle Papers, box 22, folder 8, Marriot Library Archives.

46 Moroni Sherman, "Who Is Jesus," (n.p.: n.d.) p. 6. I have not discovered when Sherman wrote this tract, but he discussed its contents with James D. Wardle in an exchange of letters in 1958.

47 "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *The Historical Record* 7.1-3 (January 1888) p. 355.

a “recent discussion” to send one of her questions to Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith in the LDS Church Historian’s Office. The question Sandra chose was the change discovered by Lucille in the *Historical Record*. In view of Smith’s blistering response to her question, I think it only fair to reproduce Sandra’s letter in its entirety to provide the reader opportunity to judge for him or herself whether Smith’s response got its heat from a natural ferociousness of temper on his part or in reaction to something provocative Sandra might have said:

October 1, 1959

Dear Bishop Kennedy,

In our recent discussion you said you would be happy to send my questions to the Church Historian’s Office for an answer. These are my questions.

I have been studying church history and find different wordings of the account of Joseph Smith’s first vision in 1820.

Jenson’s History published in 1888 says “The angel again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches. . . . Many other things did he (the angel) say unto me which I cannot write at this time. . . . and they did in reality speak unto me, or one of them did.” P. 355, 356

A later edition of the same history uses the wording “The Holy Being again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches. . . . Many other things did he (the Christ) say unto me which I cannot write at this time” and the words “or one of them did” have been dropped. [sic] from the later account.

The wording of our present Church History differs from both of these.

I would like a photostatic copy of Joseph Smith’s own account in his own hand writing of this first vision.

I cannot find where Joseph Smith or Brigham Young identified the personages in the first vision as “God, the Father. [sic] and His Son Jesus Christ,” or where either make any reference to this vision in a sermon.

Where can I find the first references made by authorities of the Church, wherein these personages are identified as God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and where and when was this first taught as doctrine?

I want to thank you for offering to get these answers for me.

Sincerely,
Sandra Tanner [signature]

Joseph Fielding Smith’s November 5, 1959, response to Bishop Kennedy regarding Sandra’s letter was filled with judgmental statements about the pregnant, eighteen-year-old Sandra. He waxed expansive on how evil, devious, and unfaithful she was. “Those questions come from those who do not seek the truth, but rather are steeled against it,” wrote the indignant Smith. “If this young lady would seek the Lord rather than the mouthings of enemies of the Church and obtain a testimony of the Gospel she would not be susceptible to the supposed arguments and mouthings of enemies of the Church.” And then, just in case Bishop Kennedy missed his point the first time, “I tell you,

Bishop, only those who do not seek to know the truth will quibble over this statement.” And then just for good measure: “I tell you Bishop, that this kind of argument is contemptible. It is used only by those who are in opposition to the work of the Lord.”

Not only was Sandra’s question out of line, she was also accused by Smith of actually acting on behalf of some sinister conspiracy against the LDS Church:

Now those who have concocted this plot have gone to considerable trouble to find other passages which seem to contradict this [i.e., the Churches official story of the First Vision]. If they had placed half of this diligent search in prayerful, faith, the chances are that the Lord would have given them a personal revelation that this is TRUE. But, No! They must quibble over it!

It is true that Andrew Jenson said the “Angel again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches.[”] Who was the angel? Moroni! The holy being again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches, was Moroni. Now I object to anyone placing in the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith words that he did not utter.

“These questions follow a type,” Smith explains dismissively, “I have had three or four other communications with questions such as these almost verbatim.”

“This young woman asks for a ‘photostatic copy’ of the Prophet’s statement in his own handwriting. Well, if we furnished it would that convince her?” The implied answer is of course, no it wouldn’t, as is seen in Smith’s follow-up suggestion that Bishop Kennedy direct Sandra to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where the rich man in torment asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, only to be told “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31) along with the Lord’s statement against those who sought a sign but would not be given one, which Smith mistakenly references as coming from Matthew 12:29.

It is amazing how much Smith thinks he knows about Sandra’s attitudes and motives. He seems quite certain that she does not pray, or have a testimony, or care about the truth. In fact he is sure she is steeled against it.

One thing Smith said, however, was certainly true. Providing Sandra with a photostatic copy of the First Vision in Joseph Smith’s handwriting would not have built her confidence in the official version of the story. When Joseph Fielding Smith wrote this denunciatory letter he would have been aware of the existence of the only version of the First Vision in Joseph Smith’s own handwriting, which the LDS Church was then suppressing apparently because it differed radically from the official story and in fact at the precise point Sandra had inquired about. It said nothing whatsoever about Joseph seeing the Father and the Son, or even two personages.

That Joseph Fielding Smith knew of this account is established by the fact that he personally refused Fawn M. Brodie access to it in 1943, remarking at the time that “There are things in this library we don’t let anyone see.”⁴⁸ LaMar Petersen, although he had never seen it himself, was told by Apostle Levi Edgar Young in 1953 of “a ‘strange account’ (Young’s own term) of the

48 Newell G. Bringhurst, *Fawn McKay Brodie: A Biographer’s Life* (Normon, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999) p. 84.

First Vision, which he [Young] thought was written in Joseph's own hand and which had been concealed for 120 years in a locked vault." Young declined to give details, "but stated that it did not agree entirely with the official version. Jesus was the center of the vision, but God was not mentioned."⁴⁹ Petersen goes on, however, to say that he "respected Young's wish that the information be withheld until after his death." So even though LaMar might have helped with the question, he was not telling what he knew at that point. After Young died in December 1963 LaMar told Jerald and Sandra what he knew. They in turn sent a request for a copy of it along with some money to Joseph Fielding Smith, who never responded. Eventually the Tanners would publish the account for the first time in 1965 under the title *Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision*.

A Visit with the Bishop

When Joseph Fielding Smith's letter arrived Bishop Kennedy invited Sandra down and read it to her. She was shocked and asked whether the bishop thought it was fair. He said he saw no problem with it. Sandra recalls her objection:

I told him either Joseph Fielding Smith didn't pay me the courtesy to look up the references or he was deliberately evading the real issue. Anyone reading the original source would know that to identify the "angel" as "Moroni" makes no sense. The account is talking about Joseph Smith being in the woods praying. I asked if I could have the letter, he said no. I asked if I could have a copy of the letter, he said he would have to pray about it.

As we can see from the fact that we are able to quote from the letter, Bishop Kennedy did finally give Sandra a copy. In any case, had Smith known the real circumstances behind the letter would he perhaps have responded to it more circumspectly? The situation was more complicated than Smith knew. Sandra was already out of Mormonism and would be a Christian before Smith's answer arrived. Georgia and Lucille were concerned that Sandra had married what we nowadays call a Jesus Freak. Sandra's mother knew about Pauline Hancock's kind of Christianity, and she didn't like it. It was, from her perspective, too fanatical. So when she heard that her daughter was going to marry a man of similar mind and zeal to Pauline's she disapproved. In those early days Jerald and Sandra turned away from worldly entertainments in order to focus on the work of the Lord. They watched no television nor did they go to the movies. Sandra's giving up make-up, lipstick, and fancy clothes greatly alarmed Georgia and moved her to want to fight to get Sandra back on track by somehow getting her back into the "more normal" LDS Church. Smith couldn't have been more mistaken in casting Sandra as an evil dupe, and Georgia and Lucille as sinister villains in the background, who were "steeled" against the truth, concocting plots to undermine the official story of the First Vision as a way of tempting the foolish girl out of the LDS Church.

In fact Georgia and Lucille were very typical Mormons who loved to look things up and find out all the problems with LDS history but had no plan of ever leaving the Church. One does

have to wonder at their surprise at Sandra's leaving, however, after being confronted with all the problems that they showed her.

Before Smith answered the letter, Sandra would join Jerald in having something better than Mormonism, namely the knowledge of the living Savior, Jesus Christ. But even before Sandra found Jesus she was the sort of person who wanted to know that her Church was from God and told the truth. She did not view it as consistent with her moral upbringing to buy into the logic of Joseph Fielding Smith in this letter. She wanted the Church to actually be true, not just rely on a feeling that it was true.

The letter from Joseph Fielding Smith accomplished two things. First, it gave Jerald and Sandra a good feel for how surly and defensive Mormon leaders could become when questioned (a thing they would definitely need to get used to if they planned to continue in their ministry), and second, that they were not always going to get the straight scoop on things from LDS headquarters.

Joseph Fielding Smith was the quintessential boundary guardian in a Church that had institutionalized the practice of keeping the finger of blame firmly pointed outward on all occasions where the Church's truthfulness and integrity were questioned. One might suppose that this goes back in part to the ongoing cultivation by the leadership of the LDS Church of the oft commented upon persecution complex among its members as a way of steeling them against outside influences. And so by the time Jerald and Sandra began their work the LDS Church had very much become a blaming church, an its-not-our-fault-its-your-problem church.

But someone will no doubt say: "Now wait a minute. Sometimes people actually do leave the Church because of their own failure to live up to its standards, and then turn around and invent fake reasons to make it sound like it was the LDS Church's fault," I dare say. But will such an objector consider that perhaps that is not the *only* reason people criticize the LDS Church? Or again someone may remind me that there are two sides to every story and ask how I know whether Sandra's story or Joseph Fielding Smith's story was more true to the facts. Well, for one thing, Joseph Fielding Smith did not know the background out of which the question Sandra sent arose, and yet he clearly jumped the gun and assumed the worst. Secondly, Sandra asked a substantive question and Smith presented something in answer to it. We have Sandra's letter, we have Smith's answer, we have the documents in question. And when we look at both it very quickly becomes clear that when Sandra told the Bishop that Smith "didn't pay me the courtesy to look up the references or he was deliberately evading the real issue," we can see she is telling the truth. Anyone reading the original pages from the *Historical Record* can see at once that to identify the "angel" with "Moroni" just doesn't work.

In addition to this, further vindication for Sandra's position has since become available in the form of the First Vision account in the handwriting of Joseph Smith. Joseph Fielding Smith made it sound as if he was unwilling to make that account available to Sandra because of his certainty that since her intent was evil, she would not recognize the inconspicuous witness it bore to the

49 LaMar Petersen, *The Creation of the Book of Mormon: A Historical Inquiry* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Freethinkers Press, 2000) p. xii.

official story of the First Vision. We now know that since Smith knew the contents of that account, he would have known that it was significantly different from the official story, raising further suspicion in our mind that Smith was indeed trying to evade Sandra's question by casting blame.

Hiding the Past

Now to be sure the LDS Church is not alone in relying on the blame game as a way of dealing with substantive criticisms of its teaching, history and behavior. Other religious institutions tend to resort to it also. It seems, however, to be a particular temptation to the only-true-church variety of religious institution.

I would think, for example, that the LDS Church might benefit from reading the following excellent comments in Roman Catholic dissident Hans Küng's book *Truthfulness: the Future of the Church* (1968). "The Church which does not conceal her mistakes, but constructively comes to terms with them, is, because truthful, also credible."⁵⁰ Unfortunately when the Church insists upon concealing its mistakes, it must do so illegitimately, adopting an overblown view of the extent of its leadership's spiritual authority by the manipulation of truth, where, Küng goes on to say,

truth is put at the disposal of the system and politically managed . . . Language is corrupted through tactical ambiguity, objective untruth, distorted rhetoric and shallow pathos . . . If continuity is lacking, it can be procured by omissions and harmonizations. The admission and correction of errors is strictly avoided, and instead a practical omniscience of authority insinuated. It is no longer a question of an untiring quest for truth, but of the inert, imaginary possession of truth, maintained by every instrument of power.⁵¹

Out of this kind of manipulative situation inevitably flows a series of undesirable consequences,

secrecy is demanded in things that concern everyone; scholarship consequently must serve the system; people speak differently in private from what they do in public, they speak differently from what they write; through fear of commitment they take refuge in esoteric spheres of study, far from the storms, and for the rest adapt themselves tacitly to the party line. Thus people escape from the real difficulties of life, the most urgent decisions are postponed. Anxious and opportunist—but therefore not particularly scrupulous—prestige-, power-, and system-thinking is dominant, not humility and respect for truth.⁵²

People unfamiliar with Küng's background might suppose he was a dissident Mormon. Indeed one would be hard pressed to find a better description of the problems of the institution Jerald and Sandra spent their lives counteracting for the sake of the Gospel. But in the teeth of a lifetime of vindictive slander by the Mormon leadership, Jerald and Sandra could encourage themselves with Jesus's wonderfully comforting words: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and *falsely say* all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad,

because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).

Tanners Start Publishing

It was Sandra who made the suggestion that launched their adventure in publishing by mentioning to Jerald one day that she knew how to work a mimeograph machine, which led to their purchasing one from Sears on May 20, 1960.

One of the first items Jerald and Sandra mimeographed and sent around to a good number of people was a letter by Sandra explaining her reasons for leaving the LDS Church. At the time they little imagined the negative response they would get. After all, were not the LDS people committed to doing the right thing when confronted with truth? Sandra recalls her thinking at that time:

I assumed, naively, when we first started out that everyone in the Church operated under the great moral standard I was raised to believe we operated under. We seek for truth and accept it when we see it. We can study our history and we don't run from it . . . We are for the truth. "The glory of God is Intelligence." And that works out fine as long as you are willing to accept that what the leaders tell you is truth and intelligence, but as soon as you decide that you may have the capacity of determining truth on your own, then you're in trouble . . . If God is truth, then we must stand for truth. And if it conflicts with what we believed in the past, then we must give it up.⁵³

Jerald and Sandra had no idea how deep the "conflicts with what we believed in the past" would go. But they were to learn soon enough.

On June 21, Sandra and Jerald began sending out the letter by Sandra entitled "Dear Friend," giving her testimony and explaining why she was leaving the LDS Church.

Making the most of their new mimeograph machine, they sent copies to nearly everyone they knew in Mormonism, everyone on the Ward mailing list, all her friends and family, and even to Mormon scholars like Francis Kirkham and the General Authorities of the LDS Church.⁵⁴ In it Sandra gave a number of reasons for her leaving, starting with the theme that the LDS Church seemed more interested in itself than in Jesus and His Word. She begins:

After much prayer and study, I am withdrawing from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because:

1. I have found that since I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior that I cannot reconcile the teachings of the church with those of Christ.
2. The church does not teach or preach hard enough against sin. It is too conformed to the world. . . .
3. The church does not put enough emphasis on Christ and His marvelous atonement. It is too much "church" and not enough "Christ"
4. The church does not preach enough from the scriptures. Most of the talks are just sweet little stories, instead of the word of God.

⁵⁰ Hans Küng, *Truthfulness: the Future of the Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968) p. 141.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-42.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁵³ Sandra Tanner interviewed by James Vincent D'Arc (September 10, 1972) in Scott Harry Faulring, "An Oral History of Modern Microfilm company 1959-1982" (An Oral History Project Present to the Dept. of History, Brigham Young University, April 1983).

⁵⁴ The letter from Apostle LeGrand Richards to William E. Barrett (August 29, 1960) speaks of Jerald and Sandra "sending literature to all of us General Authorities."

Only then does Sandra turn to discuss historical problems she had encountered, including that “the church doctrine and the doctrine contained in the Book of Mormon are exactly opposite,” and that revelations in the *Doctrine & Covenants* had been changed. She includes as well an extensive statement about problems with the First Vision in so far as she understood them at that point:

Today the church teaches that the personages in the First Vision were God and Christ, but, in studying I have found that until after the death of Brigham Young the church proclaimed that angels appeared in the First Vision. There is no testimony in existence dated within the 50 year period, “1820 to 1870,” claiming the personages in the Vision of 1820 were God the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ . . . For 50 years no testimony or sermon by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, the Twelve Apostles, church historians, witnesses [sic] to the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith’s own family, friends, relatives or acquaintances, Mormon or Anti-Mormon literature proclaims a visitation of God and Christ to Joseph Smith in 1820.

Interestingly it is this letter, and in particular this statement about the First Vision, that gets things rolling in the ministry that would later become Jerald and Sandra’s life work. Their taking issue with the First Vision really became the string that, once pulled, began to unravel the whole garment of Mormonism.

Sandra Resigns

Jerald and Sandra would move to Salt Lake City on July 11, 1960, but their final days in California were marked by events that would prove particularly significant. In June Sandra wrote to the Bishop in their new ward requesting that her name be removed from the membership roles of the LDS Church. Again at that time the only procedure for getting that done was designed to exonerate the Church and attribute evil to the person asking to have it done. A Bishop’s Court had to be held and you had to be found guilty of something. Sandra’s trial was held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 7, at the North Hollywood Ward on 10837 Collins Street. Sandra was duly “found guilty” of “Apostasy and engaging in activities contrary to the in[te]rests of the church.”⁵⁵ Sandra recalls that the Bishop “was visibly shaken by the proceeding. He was almost tearful. I was the first person he had excommunicated and he very obviously believed he was sentencing me to spend eternity outside the presence of God. I tried to comfort him by telling him that I felt no sorrow about being excommunicated and I was fully ready to face God as an ex-Mormon since I was trusting in Christ, not church membership, to save me.”⁵⁶

Once they were settled in Salt Lake City, Jerald and Sandra continued researching the First Vision. On July 22, for example, we find them poking around among the books at James Wardle’s barber shop only to find yet another account that contradicted the official version, this time in the first volume of RLDS writer Vida E. Smith’s *Young People’s History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (1914):

It was morning, the day beautiful and clear, and early in the spring of 1820 . . . He saw two persons standing in the air. One of them spoke to him. Then the boy Joseph asked which of all the churches was right, and wanted to know which he should join.

The angel told him to join none of them. Their creeds (the ways they believed) were wrong. The angel said many other things to this young boy, then went away.⁵⁷

This account, it will be noted, agrees with the one in the *Historical Record* before it was changed. Two persons (or personages) are mentioned as appearing to Joseph Smith, and the one that speaks is referred to as an angel.

A Chance Meeting

At Wardle’s barbershop that day Francis Kirkham, the LDS historian who edited what was for many years a two-volume standard collection of early historical documents relating to Mormonism, came in for a haircut and began chatting with James about having received a letter from a young woman who said the LDS Church was too much conformed to the world. Quite obviously he had also been sent a copy of Sandra’s “Out of Darkness, into the ‘Sonlight’” tract as well because he mentions something included in it to James, namely that the author had told of becoming a Christian through the influence of a group in Independence, Missouri. Since James was himself a member of the RLDS Church, also headquartered in Independence, Kirkham may have wondered whether he might be able to shed some light on the story. For his part James, recognizing that Kirkham was referring to Sandra and wanting to take the opportunity to have a little fun with it, played cat and mouse with Kirkham, dragging out the conversation as long as possible before finally asking him whether he would like to meet this woman, and then introduced him to the girl who had been in the shop the whole time. At the time Sandra described Kirkham as “nice and broad-minded” and reports that they all talked for a long time. That evening Kirkham invited Jerald and Sandra over to dinner in order to present them with a copy of the new edition of the second volume of his compilation, which he signed:

To newly found friends and beleivers [sic]
in the Book of Mormon.
Mr & Mrs Jerald Tanner.
Francis W. Kirkham
Salt Lake City, Utah
July 22, 1960.

The next day Kirkham left for an LDS Church tour and said that when he got to Independence he would visit Pauline Hancock.

Letter From An Apostle

Another interesting encounter that also had its roots in Sandra’s “Dear Friend” letter occurred after LDS Apostle LeGrand Richards, for some reason, decided to respond. Richards’ letter is dated July 12, 1960, the day after Sandra and

⁵⁵ See the photostatic reproductions of the letters in Jerald & Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* 5th ed. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987) p. 575.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

⁵⁷ From typescript from pages 5-6 of Vida E. Smith’s book in a letter of Sandra to Georgia McGee (September 22, 1960).

Jerald left California, and runs six pages. From its contents we can tell that along with her “Dear Friend” letter, Sandra must have sent her “Out of Darkness, into the ‘Sonlight’ ” tract as well, which she had also written after her conversion but before leaving California. Richards’ letter was infinitely more courteous than Joseph Fielding Smith’s. And yet in it Richards could not resist trying to explain away Sandra’s account of her leaving the Church by casting her in a bad light. “You haven’t found that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the true church because that is absolutely impossible,” writes Richards. “You have become infatuated with the man whom you married and love is blind. You have not had the courage to stand out for what you knew to be correct.”⁵⁸ Happily, however, instead of railing against Sandra as Joseph Fielding Smith had done, the Apostle confines himself to telling a sequence of anecdotes about Protestants becoming Mormons and Mormon girls who married non-Mormons only to find out that they could not stay away from the LDS Church forever because they knew it was true. He ends by predicting: “Some day you will have to find your way back, if you leave the church, and the return trip, you will find much more difficult than you anticipate.”⁵⁹

The Apostle does spend a short time trying to rebut Sandra’s statement about there not being any account of the First Vision containing an explicit reference to the Father and the Son between 1820 and 1870. He dismissed it as “absurd and untrue,” quoting a passage from the diary of his great-grandfather Joseph Lee Robinson containing such a reference, which he said dated to 1841.⁶⁰

Naturally once Sandra got wind of this supposed 1841 account she became very eager to see it. Before that summer of 1960 was over, a meeting had been arranged for Sandra to come and see the Apostle with the understanding that he would show her the crucial passage.⁶¹

“I Am Warning You”

When the day came Sandra and Jerald went down to the massive stone LDS Administration Building on South Temple next to the Beehive House. They mounted the steps, passed between stately columns, entered the solemn precincts, and took the elevator to the appropriate floor. A secretary directed them to enter the Apostle’s office, which was like that of a bank president. The Apostle himself was impressive. He donned a well-tailored three-piece suit of a good material, a crisp white shirt and smart, though appropriately conservative, tie. The Apostle looked pleased to see Sandra enter. He then looked displeased to see Jerald enter behind her. He motioned for them to sit down. They did. Sandra gives the following account of this meeting.

“Just what is it that this Jesus of yours has that the LDS Church hasn’t got?” the Apostle asked, addressing himself to Jerald.

“Well,” Jerald answered, “During my teenage years I began to fall into alcoholism and other sins, but thank God, Christ delivered me!”

The Apostle was lofty, dismissive: “I never drank,” he said.

“And what about you,” the Apostle said. “What do you have to offer that this Church doesn’t have?”

“The love of Christ,” Jerald said, “I want to show the Mormon people the love of Christ.”

The Apostle was not amused: “IF YOU THINK YOU’VE GOT MORE LOVE THAN US,” the Apostle said, “YOU’RE CRAZY!”⁶²

Before they were finished the Apostle drew himself up and thundered like Moses at Jerald: “*I am warning you, don’t start anything against this church!*”⁶³

The subject turned to the passage from his great-grandfather’s journal. The Apostle produced a sheet of typed excerpts and laid it before Jerald and Sandra. They looked at the him with astonishment. Surely he did not mean them to be satisfied with typed excerpts. How could the Tanners know they were accurate? (As it turned out, they weren’t.) How could they be certain that the excerpts were correctly contextualized historically? (As it turns out, they hadn’t been.) The young couple argued with the Apostle until he grudgingly agreed to accompany them over to the genealogical library to show them the microfilm of the diary itself.

Once out of the office they went down the elevator. Two elderly Mormon ladies who found themselves riding in the elevator with the Apostle sputtered excitedly to one another to the point of nearly swooning.

The Apostle was used to this kind of treatment and he took it all in stride: “Hello, Sisters,” he said, beaming magnanimously.

Parting company with the ladies when they reached the ground floor, they passed out a side entrance and into the sunshine and then across to a building that in those days faced North Temple Street where the western arm of the Church Office Building now stands. Then up the elevator again.

As the elevator doors to the genealogical library slid open and the Apostle emerged with Jerald and Sandra, a rush of whispering sounds swept down the room like a tsunami as the astonished patrons passed along the news of the Apostolic visitation. And then... utter silence. Everyone watched in speechless awe as the Apostle floated through the large room and over to the help desk. After giving his instructions, the woman there snapped into action looking the film up, hurrying to get it, and then bringing it out and putting it on the machine, and all with breathless devotion.

The Apostle authoritatively twiddled the crank on the microfilm viewer until he came to the page he wanted. He then let Jerald sit down to read it. Jerald read the page, and sure

58 LeGrand Richards to Sandra Tanner (July 12, 1960) p. 1.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2. Unfortunately page 2 of this letter is lost.

61 Jerald recalls having this meeting in the fall of 1960 (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality* [5th ed.; Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987] p. 570). It took place, in any case, prior to the end of August that year since it is referred to in the past tense in a letter from LeGrand Richards to William E. Barrett dated 29 August 1960 and in one from Georgia McGee to William E. Barret dated August 30, 1960.

62 The first question and answer along with Richards’ response was recalled by Sandra, the second reported by Jerald in Jerald Tanner, *Mormonism: A Study of Mormon History and Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Jerald Tanner, 1962) p. 238.

63 *Jerald Tanner’s Testimony*, p. 11, and *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* p. 570.

enough, there was a passage very like the one on the typed sheet the Apostle had given them. But it was not clear when precisely it was written. Was it written near when it happened or later, perhaps much later? So Jerald asked whether he could turn back a few pages in order to get that information. Dark clouds began to gather in the furrowing brow of the Apostle as he snapped the handle back one frame, and then another, and then yet another, each time manifesting an increasing air of impatience. Still Jerald did not have his answer, and so asked the Apostle either to keep on flipping or let him look around a bit in the document until he could satisfy himself as to its temporal provenance. At that the clouds gave way to smoke and fire. The Apostle was used to veneration, but he didn't know how to handle being questioned, doubted or challenged on the simple veracity of his word. He began to angrily whip the crank so as to take the film off the machine. "Here I have gone to all the trouble of showing you this and you're still not satisfied," the Apostle fumed. "No amount of evidence would ever make you believe! You're just enemies of the Church 'trying to find some trick word or statement that would try and prove that he [Joseph Smith] is not a prophet.'"64

When the Apostle had finished rewinding the film, he handed it back to the doting lady librarian. As he did, Jerald asked her whether he could come another time and view the microfilm. She said he could. The Apostle turned on her and thundered the command that that was not to happen, that Jerald and Sandra were not to be permitted to see the diary again.⁶⁵

The Apostle then tramped off angrily in the direction of the elevator, with Jerald chasing after and asking: "Why won't you let me look at the microfilm? What is it you are trying to hide?"

Sandra, deeply embarrassed at being a part of this fiasco trailed along at a distance, wishing she were invisible. By the time she reached the elevator the Apostle was gone.

One of the most formative moments for Jerald personally during this encounter was when Apostle Richards said: "*I am warning you, don't start anything against this church!*" We may thank God that although Jerald was frightened by Richards' threats at the time, he was not ultimately cowed: "While this meeting with Apostle Richards did cause me to grow somewhat weak in the knees," Jerald later recalled, "it made me realize more than ever that the Mormon leaders had something to hide from their people and that I should become actively involved in bringing the truth to light. Since I am basically a cowardly sort of person, I entered into the work with fear and trembling."⁶⁶

Fear and trembling, yes, but not so much as to cause Jerald and Sandra to call off the search for the truth concerning the First Vision.

"Out for Repair"

The day after the Apostle commanded the librarian not to show Jerald and Sandra the microfilm, Sandra and her grandmother Sylvia returned and put in a request for it. They were told that it was out for repair. The same excuse was given again after that, but they were successful the fourth time they asked the librarian to let them see it.⁶⁷ This took place on or before September 25, 1960.⁶⁸

When they finally gained access to the microfilm they discovered that there was a good deal in it that would embarrass the Apostle and the LDS Church. And so their suspicions seemed to be confirmed that the Apostle had something to hide. But was he aware of what was in the diary? As one reads Apostle Richards' letters related to the affair it very quickly becomes clear that he was a man who had no real head for history, that he viewed its details as irrelevant to the question of coming to know the truth as he defined it. He makes a revealing remark to this effect in a letter he wrote to Sandra's mother around this time: "The important matter is whether or not the Father and the Son did appear to the Prophet Joseph Smith and we know that they did and that is far more important than...being able to authenticate it."⁶⁹ Neither was he a stickler for detail. For example when he first tells Sandra and Jerald about Joseph Lee Robinson's diary reference to the presence of the Father and Son in the First Vision, he dates it to 1841. In a letter he writes a month later to William E. Barrett at BYU he says it "was written back in 1840."⁷⁰ On October 9, 1960, after reading the diary, Jerald and Sandra informed Richards in a letter that "the portion of the journal that you quoted in your letter to us was not written until 1883."⁷¹ Despite having been so informed, Richards repeats his assertion about the early date (this time giving 1842, rather than 1841 or 1840) on November 25, 1960: "my grandfather Joseph Lee Robinson states in his journal published in 1842 when he first came to Nauvoo, that he had seen the prophet who had seen the Father and the Son and so it was common knowledge among the saints of that time that he had seen the Father and the Son."⁷²

Notice that Richards does not qualify any of his three dates with words like "around." He simply gives three different dates. A year later in a book entitled *Just to Illustrate* (1961), Richards quotes the First Vision account from Joseph Lee Robinson's journal, part of which reads in the book: "We have long since believed and known that Joseph Smith was a true and humble prophet of God who had seen the Father."⁷³ However, already on the previous October, Jerald and Sandra had sent Richards a letter in which they informed him that "in checking the microfilm of the original journal, we found that the words, 'who had seen the Father' were not in the original!"

64 The description of Richards' words is a composite of various accounts. The statement about Jerald "trying to find some trick word or statement that would try and prove that he [Joseph Smith] is not a prophet" comes from Richard's own account of the incident in a letter to Georgia McGee (September 26, 1960).

65 Sandra describes these events in a letter to LeGrand Richards dated October 9, 1960.

66 *Jerald Tanner's Testimony*, p. 11, cf. *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* p. 570.

67 This account is based on letters from Jerald and Sandra Tanner to LeGrand Richards (October 9, 1960) and Georgia McGee to William E. Barrett (August 30, 1960).

68 The date of a letter addressed to Pauline Hancock containing quotes from Joseph Lee Robinson's diary, along with the remark: "After copying this off, we rechecked it to be sure we had a correct copy. We are satisfied that it is correct." (James D. Wardle Papers, box 34, folder 1, Marriott Library Archives).

69 LeGrand Richards to Georgia McGee (September 26, 1960).

70 LeGrand Richards to William E. Barrett (August 29, 1960).

71 Jerald and Sandra Tanner to LeGrand Richards (October 9, 1960).

72 LeGrand Richards to Georgia McGee (November 28, 1960; dictated November 25).

73 LeGrand Richards, *Just to Illustrate* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1961) p. 205.

Robinson's Quotes

When Jerald and Sandra read the Joseph Lee Robinson diary they discovered that, beside the fact that it was written in 1883 and not earlier as Richards claimed, there were several passages of interest, including the following incident in which Robinson's sister-in-law reported to Emma Smith what she took to be Joseph Smith going into the house of another woman:

I knew that Angeline, Ebenezer's wife, had some time before this had watched Brother Joseph the prophet and had seen him go into some house and that she had reported to Sister Emma, the wife of the prophet. It was at a time when she was very suspicious and jealous of him for fear he would get another wife, for she knew the prophet had a revelation on that subject. She (Emma) was determined he should not get another, if he did she was determined to leave and when she heard this, she, Emma, became very angry and said she would leave and was making preparations to go to her people in the State of New York. It came close to breaking up his family. However, he succeeded in saving her at that time but the prophet felt dreadfully bad over it. He went to my brother's and talked to Angeline on the matter and she would not give him any satisfaction and her husband (Ebenezer) did not reprove his wife, and it came to pass the prophet cursed her severely, but they thought it would not take effect because he, the prophet, was angry supposing the offense was not sufficient to merit so great a curse.⁷⁴

There could be little doubt that Richards would have been embarrassed in those days to have such a passage become commonly known, the only question is whether he would have been more troubled by it being known that Joseph took women behind Emma's back or that his own great-grandfather's sister-in-law had been cursed by the prophet. The diary also recounts Brigham Young teaching his Adam-God doctrine and Joseph Lee Robinson declaring that he "believed every word."

Some time after December 1, 1960, and before December 20, 1961,⁷⁵ Jerald and Sandra published a sheet that contained some of the above material, entitled "Excerpts from the Writings of Joseph Lee Robinson," and a tract called "Suppression of the Records." When Richards became aware of the fact that Jerald and Sandra were publishing material from Robinson's diary he threatened legal action on the dubious grounds that "if any one descendant objects, no one has the right to copy and print anything from such journals."⁷⁶ Happily Jerald and Sandra recognized the emptiness of the threat. After all if the Apostle were correct, Sandra could have done very well for herself over the years by suing the LDS Church every time they published materials by Brigham Young without her permission!

Jerald and Sandra's effectiveness lay partly in the fact that when push comes to shove very few people are interested enough

in the truth to put themselves on the line for it. Bill McKeever began his excellent tribute at Jerald's funeral by quoting the words of A. A. Hodge, founder of Princeton Seminary: "it is easier to find a score of men wise enough to discover the truth than to find one intrepid enough, in the face of opposition, to stand up for it."⁷⁷

Similarly one needn't be a Roman Catholic to appreciate the words of Cardinal Stephan Wyszyński when he said:

The greatest weakness in an apostle is fear. What gives rise to fear is lack of confidence in the power of the Lord . . . The apostle then ceases to offer witness. Does he remain an apostle? The disciples who abandoned their Master increased the courage of the executioners. Silence in the presence of the enemies of a cause encourages them. Fear in an apostle is the principle ally of the enemies of the cause. 'Use fear to enforce silence' is the first goal of the strategy of the wicked.⁷⁸

This valuable insight of Wyszyński's was forged in the fires of conflict with another of the great nineteenth century spiritual counterfeits, Communism, but all false claimants to the human soul use similar means to achieve their ends.

Happily by the time Jerald and Sandra began to really draw the displeasure of the Mormon leadership they were already convinced that that leadership's claim to spiritual authority was false.

Once it became clear that Robinson's diary did not contain the promised confirmation of the official First Vision story, Jerald and Sandra simply continued to press on in their research of it. And along the way they were aided by friends and family members.

Pauline in Salt Lake City

Pauline Hancock, accompanied by her friend Barbara Moore, who had put up Jerald during his visit to Independence and then also Sandra when she went there alone, came to Salt Lake City for a visit on September 19, 1960, and stayed until September 28. During their visit they attempted to gain access to the First Vision account written by Joseph Smith, but were refused. Pauline later recalled:

I, personally accompanied by Mrs. Barbara Moore, went to the Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, Utah, September 21 1960, and asked to see the record history of this vision as written by Joseph Smith, WHICH THEY CLAIM TO HAVE. I was told emphatically and in no uncertain terms, "NO, that such things were too sacred for the public to see." We told him that we had always heard that they had the record of THIS HAPPENING OF 1820 and again asked him (Mr. A. William Lunde [sic]) to let us see JUST THAT ITEM OF IT. He again said, "THE ANSWER IS NO."⁷⁹

74 Quoted here from the Kevin Merrel ebook edition (2003), Basic Version, pp. 81-82, at http://www.planetnielsen.com/joseph_lee_robinson/index.html. See also, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, "Excerpts from the Writings of Joseph Lee Robinson," [1961] and, Letter of Jerald and Sandra Tanner to LeGrand Richards (October 9, 1960) p. 3.

75 The former date is derived from the fact that it was produced while Jerald and Sandra lived at 319 N. 5th West, where they began living on December 1, 1960. The latter date is that of the letter where LeGrand Richards threatens to sue them for publishing passages from the diary. That date is only good so long as my assumption that Richards refers to this particular sheet and not something else that the Tanners had produced.

76 LeGrand Richards to Jerald Tanner (December 21, 1961).

77 Read the full text of the tribute online at: http://www.utlm.org/jerald_tanner.html

78 Quoted in John Paul II, *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way* (trans. By Walter Zięmba; New York: Warner Books, 2004) p. 190.

79 [Pauline Hancock], *THE GODHEAD: Is There More Than One God? Did Joseph Smith See The Father AND THE SON IN 1820?* (Independence, Mo. Church of Christ, [1961]) p. 12.

The use of the claim that certain documents are “too sacred for the public to see” as an excuse for suppressing them is interesting and echoes the “not secret but sacred” distinction that is often appealed to nowadays (without Old Testament precedent) to defend concealing what goes on in the Mormon Temples.

The above statement concerning Lund comes from a nineteen-page tract Pauline wrote and published in 1961 entitled *THE GODHEAD: Is There More Than One God? Did Joseph Smith See The Father AND THE SON IN 1820?* sometime between March 21 and September 21.⁸⁰ In it Pauline suggests that the changes in the First Vision story were to support the theological innovations in the Book of Abraham.⁸¹

Pauline, Olive Wilcox and Barbara Moore returned to Salt Lake City in September of 1961, after Pauline’s tract had become available. Olive and Barbara tried once more to gain access to the First Vision material. The resulting interaction with A. William Lund was so unbelievably frustrating and absurd that the two women had their description of it notarized:

He asked us what particular thing we wished to see. We told him we would like to see the history written by Joseph Smith in 1838. Mr. Lund told us that the history written in 1838 and published in the Times and Seasons in 1842 was not in Joseph Smith’s own handwriting and that he had told Pauline Hancock that when she visited him. He stated that it was written by a clerk or scribe and that it was impossible to say just which scribe wrote it.

We then asked Mr. Lund if we could see the history that Joseph Smith had dictated and a scribe had written. He said, “I didn’t say that Joseph Smith dictated it.” He informed us that it was impossible for him to show it without Mr. [Joseph Fielding] Smith’s permission. He also said that there had been some minor changes made in this history, which he could not account for.

Mr. Lund stated that the “Stevenson’s Journal” referred to by Orson Pratt, would prove that the first vision was written before 1840-1842, and that Orson Pratt’s published work of 1840 proved that the first vision was true.

We told him that Mr. Pratt’s work of 1840 did not call the “two personages” the Father and the Son. Mr. Lund told us that Joseph Smith did not claim that they were. We then asked if we could see the “Steven[son]’s Journal” or anything else that would substantiate this claim of Joseph Smith’s so-called first vision. Mr. Lund said that he couldn’t show any of it to us.⁸²

While Pauline was in town, Jerald and Sandra hosted a meeting (September 26, 1960) at which Pauline spoke in the basement of Jerald’s parents’ home, where Sandra and Jerald were then living. Francis Kirkham was among those attending.

In Kate B. Carter’s 1962 booklet *Denominations that Base their Beliefs on the Teachings of Joseph Smith*, she describes the “youthful Jerald Tanner” as the head of a Salt Lake City branch of Pauline Hancock’s group, which she calls the Church of Christ Independent. Happily she also included a doctrinal statement Jerald had prepared:

We believe the Bible and the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

We do not believe in holding up any man, but rather in holding up Christ.

We believe that all mankind are lost through the fall: for the natural man is an enemy to God and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord....

We believe that a person must be faithful in Christ until death or he cannot be saved.

We believe that this life is the only time given man to prepare to meet God, for there will be no chance for repentance after death.⁸³

If from this we were to assume that Jerald had overcome his natural bashfulness and had now become the dynamic leader of a new restorationist sect, we would be mistaken. Even the doctrinal statement was drawn up, not for adherents but for Kate Carter herself as she was preparing her book. By that time Jerald and Sandra had made a serious mark on the Mormon establishment in Salt Lake City, not through raising a following but through research and writing in their quest to bring truth to light.

(to be continued...)

Excerpts from Letters and Emails

I am a recently resigned member of the LDS church, and I was able to take my wife and five children with me. I am a 6th generation former Mormon, and your ceaseless efforts to expose the fraud of Mormonism has helped me more than you can know.

I am extremely offended by your website and all your work. . . . Are you that insecure in your own religion that you have to tear ours down with lies and slander?

I have been an LDS convert for 30 years but, I have been studying the scriptures with an open heart and mind and I am aware of the many discrepancies with the Bible and many of Joseph Smith’s teaching. I have most recently been reading Romans in detail and have a much better understanding of faith and the saving grace of the Savior.

It never ceases to amaze me how offended one can get and the lengths that they can go to to justify their guilt. What was it that made you leave the church anyway? Now be honest, what was it really? Were you immoral and had to go through the church disciplinary system, and it made you really mad? Or, did someone offend you and you have now taken on a vendetta to destroy anyone else who is associated with that religion who, supposedly, so willingly destroyed your pride?

⁸⁰ The dating rests on the fact that the tract itself references Hugh Nibley’s March 21, 1961 letter to Sandra and Pauline’s tract is mentioned in a notarized statement by Olive Wilcox and Barbara Moore on September 25, 1961, in which the tract is referred to in connection with a conversation that took place four days earlier.

⁸¹ [Pauline Hancock], *THE GODHEAD: Is There More Than One God? Did Joseph Smith See The Father AND THE SON IN 1820?* (Independence, Mo. Church of Christ) pp. 11-12. Pauline’s name is listed in the back as author.

⁸² Notarized statement dated September 25, 1961, in the James D. Wardle Papers, box 22, folder 12.

⁸³ Kate B. Carter, *Denominations that Base their Beliefs on the Teachings of Joseph Smith* (n.p.: Kate B. Carter, 1962) p. 51.

I will never forget how much the two of you helped me when I first became a Christian. . . . It was also a blessing to have worked with Jerald at the Rescue Mission.

From an LDS researcher.

I barely knew Jerald, but I had tremendous respect for his integrity . . . I also recall years ago you and Jerald being so kind as to allow me to attend services at your church . . . where Jerald was an elder . . . I truly enjoyed those services . . . It is unfortunate that so many people knew of Jerald only as a hated anti-Mormon, not realizing the valid and energizing role he played in sparking a deep, meaningful discussion of Mormon history.

I was an L.D.S. member for 35 years, but could no longer accept their version of the truth in their doctrines. When I was a member I was warned about the Tanner's that they were anti-Mormon. I have come to find out the Tanners are just good people who wish for others to come to know the truth.

You don't have a PhD. in history or a degree in English. You're just saleswomen trying to make money selling books that have no value at all.

Your publications and books helped me a great deal after I learned for myself that Joseph Smith was not a prophet of God or divine. My first thought that day was anger and betrayal, followed by tremendous sorrow for all the years I had lost and for all my ancestors who lived and died in Mormonism. I grieved for them as well as for myself. For about 10 seconds I entertained the thought of taking the "easy Way" which was to say nothing and just go on as usual, pretending to believe. It just took those few seconds to realize for certain I could never be untrue to myself, no matter what the cost.

I have to thank Jerald and yourself Sandra for helping me learn how to see false doctrine. When I left the Mormon Church I really had a hard time believing anything and if your ministry did not help me see truth I would have been a bitter person.

We . . . will always be thankful that we knew Jerald as a friend. . . . Our approach to ministry, especially the ministry in Utah, was deeply imprinted with principles of kindness and respect that Jerald always demonstrated.

I left [Mormonism] about 16 years or so ago . . . I always had a lot of questions ever since childhood. . . . The "brainwashing" they do on people from childhood is truly hard to overcome, even when intellectually one side of you knows their claims are entirely bogus, . . . I really admire you and your husband for . . . standing firm for what you know to be the truth no matter what.

I am a former Mormon (this marks my second year), a grandmother, and mother of 6. . . . Your publications and books helped me a great deal after I learned for myself that Joseph Smith was not a prophet of God or divine. My first thought that day was anger and betrayal, followed by tremendous sorrow for all the years I had lost . . . But the joy in Christ takes away the sting, and we have moved on.

Note from Sandra— *My heartfelt thanks for your prayers, emails and letters of condolence after Jerald's death. I treasure each and every one of them.*

Ministry Files Appeal

March 26, 2007, U.S. District Judge Dale A. Kimball ruled against our claims of trademark infringement and in favor of Allen Wyatt, Scott Gordon and FAIR (Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research) in the use of 10 domain names—

- utahlighthouseministry.org
- utahlighthouseministry.com
- utahlighthouse.org
- utahlighthouse.com
- sandratanner.org
- sandratanner.com
- jeraldtanner.org
- jeraldtanner.com
- geraldtanner.org
- geraldtanner.com

—in conjunction with a fake site that linked back to FAIR's site. (See #104 Messenger for more information.)

We believe the case was wrongly decided and have initiated an appeal to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The judge's ruling has unfairly impacted our ability to protect our trademarks and opens the door for future exploitation. Further, this decision, if left unchallenged, could negatively affect trademark owners' rights.

One of the egregious factual errors in Kimball's decision was the claim Wyatt had turned over all the domain names to us already. However, only six of ten domain names have been turned over by Wyatt, and that was over a year and half ago.

This continued battle for our trademark rights is an expensive process, and we welcome any donations to help defray legal costs.

Utah Lighthouse Ministry is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax-deductible.

Donations may be made with cash, check or credit card.

Thank you for your support.

LDS CLAIMS
Under the Search Light
 Recorded Message (801) 485-4262
 (Message is three to five minutes)

Free Book Offers

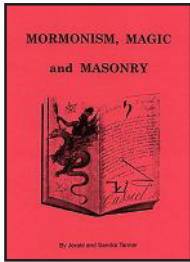
Offers expire July 31, 2007

Orders that total \$30 or more (before shipping charge) will receive

FREE

Mormonism, Magic and Masonry

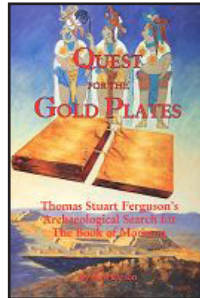
by Jerald and Sandra Tanner and
2 tracts on the First Vision



Orders that total \$60 or more (before shipping charge) will receive the items listed above

PLUS

Quest for the Gold Plates by Stan Larson



All orders receive a free copy of the new DVD, Jesus Christ/Joseph Smith (while quantities last)

New Titles

- 10 Questions and Answers on Mormonism* (Pamphlet) \$3.50
Bill McKeever - Rose Publishing
- Captain Alexander Fancher: Adventurer, Drover, Wagon Master & Victim of the Mountain Meadows Massacre*..... \$20.50
Burr Fancher - Inkwater Press
- Breaking the Mormon Code: A Critique of Mormon Scholarship Regarding Classical Christian Theology and the Book of Mormon*..... \$14.50
Matthew A. Paulson - WingSpan Press
- Banking on Heaven: Polygamy in the Heartland of the American West* (DVD)..... \$20.00
Over the Moon Productions
- How to Talk to a Mormon*..... \$12.50
Ed Bliss - Book Surge
- Inside Today's Mormonism* (Formerly *Becoming Gods*) \$15.50
Richard Abanes - Harvest House
- Lifting the Veil of Polygamy* (DVD)..... \$10.00
Living Hope Ministries - Available June 2007
- The Long Way Home: Moving from a Pseudo-Christian Cult into Genuine Christianity* \$10.00
Paul Trask - Refiner's Fire Ministries
- Statements of the LDS First Presidency*..... \$31.50
Compiled by Gary James Bergera - Signature Books
- What Every Mormon (and Non-Mormon) Should Know* \$24.00
Edmond C. Gruss and Lane A. Thuet - Xulon Press

Recently Added Titles

- Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (Paperback) \$17.00
Richard Bushman - Vintage
- The Mormon Murders: A True Story of Greed, Forgery, Deceit and Death* \$6.00
Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith - St. Martin's Press

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Salt Lake City, Utah
Permit No. 3745