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## Utah Lighthouse Ministry

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# WHO WILL BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT?

This October the LDS Church celebrated its 187th Semiannual Conference without 90-year-old president Thomas S. Monson in attendance. Monson, who was appointed to the council of Twelve Apostles in 1963, became the sixteenth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 2008. After a couple of years of deteriorating health, it was announced on May 23, 2017, that “*Because of limitations incident to his age, President Monson is no longer attending meetings at the Church offices on a regular basis. He communicates and confers with his counselors on matters as needed.*”<sup>1</sup>

Many people are surprised to learn that upon Monson’s death the office of prophet/president will pass to 93-year-old Russell M. Nelson, the senior apostle. But why not appoint a younger man? The answer to this requires a bit of digging into LDS church history.

During Joseph Smith’s lifetime there were a number of possible successors to the office of president.

Historian D. Michael Quinn observed “by the summer of 1844 [following the death of Joseph Smith] there was no explicit outline of presidential succession in print.”<sup>2</sup> Part of the problem was that through the 1830s and early 1840s Joseph Smith had rearranged his leadership offices and designated various leaders as his successor. With no clear instructions as to a successor to Smith, many laid claim to the title due to either importance of their particular office or special ordination.

1 LDS Newsroom, “Church Provides Update on President Monson,” May 23, 2017, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/president-monson-update>.

2 D. Michael Quinn, “The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844,” in *BYU Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2, p. 187.

## THE FIRST PROPHET

According to Joseph Smith, when he was fourteen years old, in the spring of 1820, God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him in a vision and informed him that he was to join no existing church “for they were all wrong;



Joseph Smith Jr.,  
First President of the LDS Church

and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt.”<sup>3</sup> Three years later, on the autumnal equinox of September 1823, an angel appeared to him in a vision to tell him of an ancient record of the forefathers of the American Indians that was hidden in a nearby hill outside Palmyra, New York. However, Smith was not allowed to retrieve the plates until 1827. With the plates either hidden or covered in a cloth, Smith dictated the story to a scribe, reading the text off a seer stone in his hat,<sup>4</sup> a process often referred to as scrying. Smith finally published the new volume of scripture in March

of 1830, financed by his neighbor Martin Harris. Then on April 6th, 1830, twenty-four-year-old Smith and his followers organized the Church of Christ, later renamed The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>5</sup> A revelation was given appointing Joseph Smith “a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church.”<sup>6</sup>

3 *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith-History 1:19 (Intellectual Reserve Inc. [LDS Church], Salt Lake City: 2013).

4 David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Missouri: 1887), p. 12.

5 *Doctrine and Covenants*, sec. 114:4 (Intellectual Reserve Inc., Salt Lake City, 2013).

6 *Book of Commandments*, ch. XXII, 1833, p. 45; *Doctrine and Covenants*, sec. 21.

While today's Mormonism has a well-developed hierarchal system, with a president/prophet and two counselors who oversee twelve apostles and dozens of Seventies, such was not the case at the beginning. In the Articles and Covenants, dated June of 1830, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, a former rod worker<sup>7</sup> and one of the Book of Mormon witnesses, were appointed apostles and elders, sharing jointly in directing the fledgling church.<sup>8</sup> The church minutes for June 9, 1830, show that the church offices were elders, priests and teachers,<sup>9</sup> following the pattern laid out in the Book of Mormon.<sup>10</sup>

Soon Hiram Page, a former money-digger and one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, started claiming revelations through his own seer stone, thus presenting a rival to Smith's authority.<sup>11</sup> This led to Smith issuing a revelation in September of 1830 that only Joseph Smith was to receive revelations for the church "for he receiveth them even as Moses." The revelation goes on to instruct Oliver Cowdery to inform Hiram Page "that those things which he [Hiram] hath written from that stone are not of me, and that satan deceiveth him."<sup>12</sup>

In 1830 there was no concept of a First Presidency with two counselors, or the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood. These ideas developed over the next few years. D. Michael Quinn explains:

A closer look at contemporary records indicates that men were first ordained to the higher priesthood over a year after the church's founding. No mention of angelic ordinations can be found in original documents until 1834-35. Thereafter accounts of the visit of Peter, James, and John by Cowdery and Smith remained vague and contradictory.

The distance between traditional accounts of LDS priesthood beginnings and the differing story of early documents points to retrospective changes made in the public record to create a story of logical and progressive development. For example, as now published in *Doctrine and Covenant* 68:15 a revelation of November 1831 referred to "the Melchizedek Priesthood." However, the original text of the 1831 revelation did not contain that priesthood phrase which was a retroactive addition in 1835.<sup>13</sup>

7 D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 1998), p. 37.

8 *Book of Commandments*, 1833, ch. XXIV, p. 48; revised *Doctrine and Covenants*, sec. 20.

9 *Joseph Smith Papers*, "Minutes, 9 June 1830," <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-9-june-1830/1>

10 Book of Mormon, Moroni 3:1-4.

11 E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, (1834), Statement by Ezra Booth, pp. 215-216.

12 *Book of Commandments*, 1833, ch. XXX, pp. 67-68; *D&C* 28:11.

13 D. Michael Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 1994), pp. 15-16.

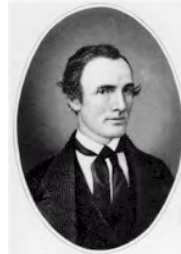
Quinn further explains "The traditional account of church origins, which assumes that Smith encountered Peter, James, and John sometime in 1829, also claims that at the church's organization in April 1830 those ordained 'elders' were ordained on that date and received the Melchizedek priesthood. A closer look at the evidence demonstrates that they were in fact re-ordained [later] and that no concept of higher priesthood existed. The office of elder was at first associated with what would come to be known as the lesser (or Aaronic) priesthood."<sup>14</sup>

The ordination of the original LDS apostles occurred in 1835, five years after the founding of Smith's church. Although their ranking was done by age, the current seniority system, based on when they were ordained an apostle, developed after Joseph Smith's death.<sup>15</sup> However, in the early church simply being an apostle was not considered the path to become president of the church.

The changing claims of priesthood, apostleship, High Councils and First Presidency over the fourteen years Joseph Smith led the church left the Mormons with a number of competing claims of authority after Smith's death on June 27, 1844.

## POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS TO SMITH

### 1. OLIVER COWDERY



At the founding of Joseph Smith's church in 1830 Oliver Cowdery, Smith's main scribe in the production of the Book of Mormon, was called to be Second Elder and Smith was to be First Elder, as recorded in *Doctrine and Covenants* 20:2-3. This placed Cowdery next to Smith in authority.

As others were given various callings in the coming years, Cowdery's position became less clear. But on December 5, 1834, Smith reaffirmed Cowdery as standing next to him in authority. D. Michael Quinn explained "Smith conferred on him [Cowdery] an office which further complicated the lines of authority. On 5 December 1834 Smith ordained Cowdery to the office of assistant president of the high priesthood to 'assist in presiding over the Church, and bearing the keys

14 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 27; also see Gregory A. Prince, *Power From On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood*, (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 1995), chapter 1.

15 Todd Compton, "Development of Presidential Succession in the LDS Church," in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002), pp. 114-115.

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of this kingdom.’ Cowdery’s understanding was that he would not be subordinate to the current first and second counselors.”<sup>16</sup> However, with Cowdery’s apostasy in 1838, his claim to succession was no longer considered valid.

## 2. SIDNEY RIGDON



The concept of a First Presidency gradually developed with the 1832 appointment of Sidney Rigdon, former preacher, and Jesse Gause, former Shaker, as counselors to Joseph Smith. After Gause left the church, Smith reorganized the presidency in 1833 and appointed Frederick G. Williams to replace Gause. This also required changing the name of Gause to Williams in the *D&C* sec. 81 revelation. Sidney Rigdon was appointed to be “equal with thee [Joseph Smith] in holding the keys of this last kingdom.”<sup>17</sup>

Rigdon was not always in agreement with Smith, but by 1841 his standing seemed to improve. In June of 1841 the *Times and Seasons* reported that “Sidney Rigdon has been ordained a Prophet, Seer and Revelator,” reinforcing his position as first counselor to Smith.<sup>18</sup> However, the next year Rigdon and Smith were once again in conflict due to Smith’s overtures to Rigdon’s daughter, Nancy, to marry him in polygamy.<sup>19</sup> His standing improved when Smith decided to run for President of the United States in the next election and Rigdon was chosen as his running mate. In fact, the reason Rigdon was not in Illinois when Smith was killed was because of Rigdon’s need to establish residency in Pennsylvania in order to qualify as Smith’s running mate.<sup>20</sup>

When Rigdon arrived in Nauvoo, over a month after Smith’s murder, the church leaders were still in a quandary as to who should lead the church. Rigdon, as assistant president, felt he was the rightful successor. There followed a number of meetings with Rigdon and Brigham Young presenting their claims to the leadership. However, Smith’s inner circle feared Rigdon’s opposition to their secret polygamist activities.

Richard Van Wagoner observed “On the public record, Smith and the Quorum of the Twelve denied polygamy.

16 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 44; *History of the Church*, vol. 2, (Deseret Book, Salt Lake City: 1976), p. 176.

17 *Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835, sec. LXXIX, p. 208; *D&C* sec. 81. See heading to sec. 81 for information on the name change from Jesse Gause to Frederick G. Williams. Also LXXXIV, pp. 214-215, dated March, 1833; *D&C*, sec. 90:6.

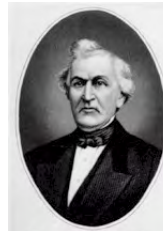
18 *Times and Seasons*, v.ol. 2, p. 431, (June 1, 1841), Nauvoo, Ill.

19 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 162.

20 Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 1994), pp. 331-336.

At the time of Smith’s death, he and at least twenty-nine other known polygamous males in Nauvoo, including the Twelve, had married a total of 114 women. Many more would contract polygamous marriages before the main body of Saints trekked west. . . . Rigdon viewed spiritual wifery and the smokescreen that concealed it as reprehensible, less to do with God’s work than the affairs of men.”<sup>21</sup>

## 3. DAVID WHITMER



In July of 1834 David Whitmer, one of the three Book of Mormon witnesses, was appointed by Smith to be President of the High Council in Missouri. Four years later Joseph Smith gave “a history of the ordination of David Whitmer, which took place in July 1834, to be a leader or a prophet to this Church, which (ordination) was on conditions that he (J. Smith jr) did not live to God himself.”<sup>22</sup>

D. Michael Quinn observed:

Whitmer’s ordination as successor was known to only a few in Missouri, and news of this most important appointment was not published in the Church periodical at the headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio. The fact that Whitmer was excommunicated from the Church in 1838 for apostasy removed his name as a possible successor, but did not alter an important development in the succession question. Joseph Smith had established precedent for ordaining men to the highest offices of the Church without prior common consent and without immediate public knowledge.<sup>23</sup>

After Smith’s death in 1844, William E. McLellin, former member of the twelve apostles, appealed to David Whitmer to embrace his right to succeed Joseph Smith based on the 1834 calling. Quinn tells that on September 6, 1847, “William E. McLellin and Book of Mormon witnesses John Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, and Hiram Page ordain David Whitmer as ‘Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and Translator’ for the church organized at Kirtland in February.”<sup>24</sup> This splinter group, named after the original 1830 Church of Christ, only lasted a few years.

21 Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, p. 369.

22 Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Deseret Book, Salt Lake City: 1983), p. 151.

23 Quinn, *BYU Studies*, p. 194.

24 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 659.

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Then in the 1870s Whitmer tried to restart the Church of Christ. While David Whitmer maintained his testimony of the Book of Mormon throughout his life, he never rejoined the LDS Church. And until his death in 1888 he believed Smith had gone astray shortly after the publishing of the Book of Mormon:

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, so it should be done unto them.”<sup>25</sup>

Since David Whitmer had left the main body of Mormons in 1838 and never returned, his earlier ordination was considered null and void.

#### 4. JOSEPH SMITH III



Joseph Smith III was only eleven years old at the time of his father’s death. While some believed he was the heir apparent, his age kept people from pressing the succession claim until he came of age. Historian Roger Launius explained:

From the perspective of the Reorganized Church, there can be little doubt that Joseph Smith Jr. believed in the right of lineage, as “Old Testament” an idea as ever there was, and numerous statements abound about this particular aspect of his belief system. An 1835 revelation to Joseph Smith Jr. proclaimed lineal priesthood: “The order of this priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen see[r], to whom the promises were made.” In 1841 he announced another revelation making a direct statement about the favored position of his own descendants: “In thee and in thy seed shall the kindred of the earth be blessed.”<sup>26</sup>

Launius continued on his blog:

Perhaps no issue has been more controversial than presidential succession in the Latter-day Saint movement. Joseph Smith III, son of the Mormon founder, buttressed his ascension to the presidency of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1860 through several methodologies. One of those, and a powerful one for many Mormons of the nineteenth century, was Smith’s legitimacy based on lineal priesthood succession.<sup>27</sup>

25 Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 27.

26 Roger Launius Blog, <https://launiusr.wordpress.com/2015/02/20/joseph-smith-iii-and-lineal-succession-claims-to-the-mormon-presidency/>. Retrieved 10-2-2017.

27 Launius Blog.

The Community of Christ, formerly the RLDS Church, is now the second largest sect of Mormonism, claiming a membership of 250,000.<sup>28</sup>

While Brigham Young had originally made statements favorable to Joseph Smith III taking his rightful place when he came of age, Smith’s opposition to polygamy kept him from being acceptable to the Mormons who went west.

#### 5. DAVID SMITH-YOUNGEST SON OF JOSEPH

According to D. Michael Quinn:



Smith’s intentions for his unborn son David rivaled his succession ordinances for Joseph III. Brigham Young said that in the spring of 1844 Smith told him: “I shall have a son born to me, and his name shall be called David; and on him, in some future time, will rest the responsibility that now rests upon me.” Young added that Smith made this statement to Young and several others.<sup>29</sup>

Quinn also explained that in “April 1844 Smith prophesied that his son would succeed him and would become ‘president and king of Israel.’ The child was named David. Needless to say, he never became ‘president and king of Israel.’ Nor did he succeed his father. He died in 1904 at the age of 60, after spending the last 27 years of his life in an insane asylum.”<sup>30</sup>

Joseph’s widow, Emma Smith, raised her sons with the firm assertion that their father never taught or practiced polygamy, thus making them unacceptable to the Utah Mormons.

#### 6. HYRUM SMITH, JOSEPH’S BROTHER



Due to Oliver Cowdery’s apostasy in 1838 he lost his calling as Assistant President. The position was not filled until January of 1841 when Joseph appointed Hyrum Smith, his older brother to be Assistant President:

And from this time forth I appoint unto him [Hyrum] that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph; That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be

28 Community of Christ, <http://www.cofchrist.org/who-we-are>. Retrieved 10-12-2017.

29 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 230.

30 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 644.



crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priesthood, that once were put upon him that was my servant Oliver Cowdery.<sup>31</sup>

Joseph Smith's revelation also announced Hyrum's calling as "Patriarch" to fill the vacancy left by the death of Joseph Smith's father. However, Hyrum's death at Carthage changed everything. Quinn observed:

On 15 June 1844, less than two weeks before his death, Hyrum Smith signed an announcement as "HYRUM SMITH, President of the Church." A few months later, Brigham Young remarked "Did Joseph ordain any man to take his place? He did. Who was it? It was Hyrum, but Hyrum fell a martyr before Joseph did. If Hyrum had lived he would have acted for Joseph."<sup>32</sup>

### 7. SAMUEL H. SMITH, JOSEPH'S BROTHER



Samuel Smith was one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, a founding member of the LDS Church and early missionary. William Clayton, Joseph Smith's trusted secretary, recorded in his 1844 journal the various meetings by the top leadership as they tried to resolve the succession question

after Joseph and Hyrum's murder. Then on July 12, 1844, Clayton wrote "Joseph has said that if he and Hyrum were taken away Samuel H. Smith would be his successor."<sup>33</sup> However, there was opposition to appointing a successor until all of the apostles were convened in Nauvoo. Samuel's efforts to press his claim ended on July 30, 1844, a month after Joseph and Hyrum's death, when he became violently ill and died.

Some in the Smith family felt he had been poisoned to stop his appointment as president of the church. Quinn explains: "William [Smith] eventually concluded that Apostle Willard Richards asked [Hosea] Stout to murder Samuel H. Smith. The motive was to prevent Samuel from becoming church president before the full Quorum of Twelve arrived."<sup>34</sup> Quinn went on to speculate that "Samuel was dead, possibly a murder victim of the succession crisis."<sup>35</sup>

31 D&C 124:91, pp. 94-95.

32 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 213.

33 George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: the Journals of William Clayton* (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 1995), p. 138.

34 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 153.

35 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 213.

### 8. WILLIAM MARKS



While William Marks, president of the Nauvoo High Council, did not make a claim to be Smith's successor, Joseph's widow Emma pushed for him to be appointed trustee in trust for the church. With her husband dead she found herself in dire financial straits. Historian John S. Dinger explains:

When Joseph died, his financial situation was not sound. It was difficult to determine what property and debts were Joseph's and what were the church's. . . .

Just as Emma feared, the church owned the assets, while she was liable for the debts. Because she was left with a young family and was pregnant, it is no surprise she pushed for leadership whom she could trust and who could help her out of her financial mess.

Because Emma was also an ardent opponent of polygamy, any trustee she pushed for must be the same. In this view she had many allies. One was William Marks, who rejected the doctrine after hearing it officially taught on August 12, 1843, in a high council meeting.<sup>36</sup>

Dinger explains why Marks could have made a claim for leadership.

While Marks is not usually brought up today when discussing the succession "crisis," he was initially one of the most likely options. First, he was one of the highest-ranking church leaders alive at the time. Joseph Smith revealed in 1835 that the high council of Zion (which was the Nauvoo High Council) was equal in authority to both the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles. However equal, the high council was the "cornerstone of Zion," while the Twelve Apostles were a "traveling high council." Thus, it could be argued that Marks should have presided in Nauvoo and the twelve in the periphery. Second, it could be argued that Marks's standing in the Quorum of the Anointed was greater than that of other claimants. Marks was one of the first to be anointed (as was Brigham Young), but he was also the first non-Smith to receive his second anointing. Finally, Marks outranked all other claimants in the Council of Fifty, which used a seniority system according to William Clayton. Marks was the tenth most senior member of the council, outranking both Brigham Young and Sidney Rigdon.<sup>37</sup>

Those favoring the Twelve's leadership gradually moved Marks out of authority, and raised questions about his loyalty. Then in December of 1844 the high council

36 John S. Dinger, "A Mean Conspirator' or 'The Noblest of Men': William Marks's Expulsion from Nauvoo," in *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, ed. William D. Morain, vol. 34, no. 2, p. 14; see also Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 159.

37 Dinger, *JWHA Journal*, pp. 15-16.

demanded he sign a document in support of the Twelve and opposing Rigdon's claims to leadership.<sup>38</sup> Even after this capitulation Marks continued to experience harassment and theft of property as rumors spread that he was trying to undermine the Twelve. He and his family fled Nauvoo in March of 1845 and eventually joined the Strangites, later affiliating with the RLDS Church in 1859.<sup>39</sup>

## 9. JAMES J. STRANG



Thirty-year-old James J. Strang first encountered the Mormons in Wisconsin Territory during the summer of 1843. Then in February of 1844 he journeyed to Nauvoo, Illinois, to meet Joseph Smith. Historian William D. Russell observed:

Apparently Strang liked what he saw in Nauvoo, as he was baptized by the prophet on 25 February and was ordained an elder by Hyrum a week later . . . In the course of their discussions with Joseph Smith, James Strang and Aaron Smith suggested that a stake of Zion be established in the area of the White River in Wisconsin. Smith suggested that Strang investigate the situation and send him a report.<sup>40</sup>

In May Strang sent his favorable report to Smith. Strang claimed that in response to his letter, Joseph Smith sent a letter appointing Strang as his successor. William D. Russell wrote:

According to Strang, Smith answered the letter on 18 June, ten days before his murder. Called by Strangites "the letter of appointment," its postmark is of 19 June. Strang claimed to have received it at Burlington, Wisconsin, on 9 July, some twelve days after Smith's death, but before word of his death had reached the Saints in Wisconsin. Considerable controversy ensued over this claim. . . . Brigham Young labeled the letter "a lie—a forgery—a snare."<sup>41</sup>

While Brigham Young had been a top leader in the LDS movement since the early 1830s and was head of the Twelve Apostles, he lacked the charisma of Strang and made no claim to special revelation. William D. Russell explains:

Baptized into the Mormon church by Smith himself only four months before the prophet's death in June 1844,

Strang was nonetheless able to make a believable claim that he was Joseph's legitimate successor by producing a letter purported to be from Smith, by claiming a vision in which Smith ordained him, by publishing revelations which he had received, and by unearthing plates and translating them, reminiscent of Smith's Book of Mormon. These were claims which Brigham Young could not make to buttress his assertion that he was Joseph's legitimate successor.<sup>42</sup>

The fact that Strang initially denounced polygamy helped to win over a number of prominent Mormons, including several from the Smith family, who did not accept Brigham Young's claim. According to Russell, "His [Strang] biggest catches were William Smith, apostle and younger brother of the martyred leader; the prophet's mother, Lucy Mack Smith; Apostle John E. Page; George Miller, who had been the presiding bishop at Nauvoo; and William Marks, president of the Nauvoo Stake."<sup>43</sup>

According to Robin Jensen:

Mormons did not join Strang simply because they rejected plural marriage, Brigham Young and the Twelve, or the way west, although part or all of the above were likely factors in their decision. In other words, Mormons were not simply looking for a negative reason to reject the leadership of the Twelve; they also were legitimately attracted to Strang's version and interpretation of Mormonism.<sup>44</sup>

While thousands joined Strang's movement, there were many who left after he openly embraced the doctrine of polygamy in 1850. Russell explains, "Included in those who defected are some key leaders in the development of the Reorganized Church, including Jason W. Briggs, Zenas H. Gurley Sr., and Henry H. Deam."<sup>45</sup>

Strang died in 1856 without appointing a successor. His dying admonition was "for every man to take care of his family and do the best he could, till he found out what to do."<sup>46</sup> According to Vickie Cleverley Speak, "Strang's death set up a succession void that would eventually cause most of his scattered flock to join Joseph Smith III's Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now known as the Community of Christ)."<sup>47</sup>

42 Russell, *Mormon Mavericks*, p. 131.

43 Russell, *Mormon Mavericks*, p. 139.

44 Robin Scott Jensen, "Mormons Seeking Mormonism: Strangite Success and the Conceptualization of Mormon Ideology, 1844-50," in *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism*, eds. Newell G. Bringham and John C. Hamer (John Whitmer Books, Independence MO: 2007), p. 128.

45 Russell, *Mormon Mavericks*, p. 145.

46 Vickie Cleverley Speak, "From Strangites to Reorganized Latter Day Saints: Transformations in Midwestern Mormonism, 1856-79," in *Scattering of the Saints*, p. 141.

47 Speak, *Scattering of the Saints*, p. 141.

38 Dinger, *JWHA Journal*, pp. 31-34.

39 Dinger, *JWHA Journal*, pp. 36-37.

40 William D. Russell, "King James Strang: Joseph Smith's Successor" in *Mormon Mavericks: Essays on Dissenters*, eds. John Sillito and Susan Staker (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 2002), pp. 135-136

41 Russell, *Mormon Mavericks*, p. 136.

## 10. BRIGHAM YOUNG



The two main contenders in Nauvoo for leadership after Smith's death were Sidney Rigdon, the last surviving member of the First Presidency but who opposed plural marriage, and Brigham Young, president of the Twelve Apostles and husband to several secret plural wives. The struggle was much more than determining authority claims. Also at issue was whether or not one accepted Joseph Smith's recent secret teachings on polygamy, Second Anointing, Council of Fifty, and the political Kingdom of God.<sup>48</sup>

Brigham Young, as president of the Council of Twelve, wisely sidestepped the issue of appointing a new prophet and directed attention to the authority of the Twelve to preside over the church after Smith's murder. Mormons today assume the right of the Twelve to appoint the president, yet this was not the understanding at the time of Smith's death. Under Joseph the Twelve had jurisdiction in the branches, which were outside the established areas of the church, and the Presidency and High Council had oversight of the stakes.<sup>49</sup>

According to Quinn:

If written revelation alone governed the post-martyrdom situation, then the Quorum of Twelve had authority only over scattered branches of the church. . . . Young rightly told Mormons in August 1844 that the Quorum of Twelve "stand next to Joseph," but he did not remind them that the Nauvoo Stake high council also stood "next to Joseph." At church headquarters before June 1844, no quorum or echelon of authority separated the First Presidency from the high council's jurisdiction over Mormons.<sup>50</sup>

## THE VOTE

On August 8, 1844, a meeting was called in Nauvoo to hear the arguments for leadership. Rigdon and Young both addressed the members, each presenting their particular claim for oversight of the church. Rigdon put forward his right to govern based on personal revelation and his standing as the only survivor of the First Presidency. Young argued that the Twelve were the rightful leaders by rank and by steadfast service. As he spoke, some felt that he was transfigured and took on the appearance and sound of Smith, thus showing God's approval of him.

48 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, pp. 120-126.

49 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, pp. 156-160.

50 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 159.

Quinn writes:

For those attuned to this manifestation, it was a compelling sign that the apostles should lead the church. However, not everyone present at the August 1844 conference experienced this manifestation. About twenty people voted against the apostles. Most accepted the calm logic of the apostles without seeing a miraculous transfiguration of Young. Some voted for the apostles but had second thoughts later. . . .

In August 1844 Latter-day Saints actually voted to sidestep the succession question. There were too many unresolved succession claims for various men to be the sole successor to Smith. The church membership simply voted to defer that question by turning to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles to "act in their place."<sup>51</sup>

During the months following Smith's death Sidney Rigdon, William Marks and James J. Strang were excommunicated, thus limiting their influence in the church.

Then on December 5, 1847, Brigham Young called a meeting of the apostles at Orson Hyde's cabin in Iowa to formalize his position as President of the church. According to Gary James Bergera:

He [Brigham Young] wanted to resolve the thorny issue once and for all. In what proved to be a marathon meeting, any who had questioned the wisdom and necessity of forming a new First Presidency changed their minds. By meeting's end the Twelve voted unanimously to sustain Young as president of the church and to allow him to organize a First Presidency and select his two counselors.<sup>52</sup>

## A FIRST PRESIDENCY

Most Mormons today probably assume that the First Presidency, with a president and two counselors, overseeing the Twelve Apostles, was always the pattern. However, history shows that this hierarchal order was not established until Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards were voted in as the LDS First Presidency.<sup>53</sup> This also helped set the precedence of appointing the next president of the church by apostolic seniority.

According to Quinn:

In reality since 1844 the organized First Presidency has always been an apostolic presidency. Since 1844 the senior apostle in rank within the Quorum of the Twelve, based first on age and later on length of service in the

51 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 167.

52 Gary James Bergera, *Conflict in the Quorum: Orson Pratt, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith* (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 2002), p. 64.

53 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, pp. 248-249.

quorum, has been president of the church. As Wilford Woodruff stated in a letter of 28 March 1887: “The President of the Twelve is really the President of the Church by virtue of his office as much while presiding over the Twelve Apostles as while presiding over his two counselors.” The church has experienced an unbroken apostolic interregnum since 1844.<sup>54</sup>

## BRIGHAM YOUNG’S SONS

A seldom mentioned event in early Mormon history is Brigham Young’s ordination of three of his sons to be apostles. With the move to apostolic seniority according to date of ordination Brigham Young may have hoped that by ordaining his sons at an early age it would give them seniority among the apostles and hopefully set the stage for one of them to advance to church president.

According to Todd Compton, “On November 22, 1855, eleven-year-old John Willard Young, son of Brigham Young received his endowments, undoubtedly accompanied by his father. . . . following the endowment—President Young placed his hands on the head of his son and ordained him an apostle. . . . About eight years later, Brigham Young ordained two more of his sons [Joseph Angell Young and Brigham Young Jr.] apostles in a private ceremony.”<sup>55</sup> In 1864 they were set apart “as assistant counselors to the First Presidency.” However, they were not placed into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time of their ordination or calling as assistants to the First Presidency. This later raised the question of Brigham Young Jr.’s seniority in the Twelve—should he be ranked by the date of his ordination as an apostle or by the later date of his entrance into the actual Quorum? In 1900 this was resolved by ranking him according to his entrance into the Quorum, which put Joseph F. Smith, Joseph Smith’s nephew, ahead of him. Thus when Pres. Lorenzo Snow died in 1901 Joseph F. Smith became the next president of the church instead of Brigham Young Jr., who died two years later.<sup>56</sup>

## ORSON PRATT’S PROBLEMS WITH SENIORITY

Two of the original apostles ordained in 1835, Orson Hyde and Orson Pratt, had problems with church leadership and were removed from their positions. During the late 1830s Hyde had a number of disagreements with the

leaders and was put out of the Twelve for several months, but was reinstated in 1839.<sup>57</sup>

Orson Pratt’s problems centered around Joseph’s new teaching on polygamy. Sometime after Pratt’s return from his mission to England in 1841 his wife informed him that Joseph Smith had requested her to become his plural wife. This so outraged Pratt that he left the church. While some question the reliability of Sarah Pratt, it is clear that Joseph Smith did approach other apostles about marrying their wives. Pratt was dropped from the Quorum in 1842 and Amasa Lyman was ordained to take his place. Then in 1843 Pratt was reconciled with Smith, accepted plural marriage, and was reinstated to his former position as an apostle.<sup>58</sup>

Hyde and Pratt’s standing became an issue in 1875 when the leaders were trying to resolve issues of seniority. Should Hyde and Pratt be listed apostles by their date of original ordination or by the dates of their reinstatement? Many years before, Joseph Smith had stated that they were to be admitted back into the Quorum and given their original place in seniority. But now the apostles questioned this position. It was resolved by placing them in seniority according to the dates of their reinstatement.<sup>59</sup> This meant that John Taylor would become president following Brigham Young’s death, rather than Orson Pratt.

## SENIORITY OR RETIREMENT

Another challenge to senior apostolic succession came in 1970. According to Quinn:

In the last years of his presidency David O. McKay was so impaired by injury, stroke, and medication that five counselors were needed in the First Presidency. McKay’s biographer, a secretary to the First Presidency, notes that when the second-ranked apostle Joseph Fielding Smith became one of the extra counselors in October 1965, “he was then in his ninetieth year, [which] made it impossible for Elder Smith to carry much of the administrative load of the First Presidency.”<sup>60</sup>

By going to a pattern of apostolic seniority the church has gone from being led by relatively young men to senior citizens. Brigham Young was ordained as an apostle in 1835 at the age of 34, then at the age of 46 he became president of the church and was 76 when he died. There

54 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, pp. 253-254.

55 Todd Compton, *Dialogue*, pp. 111-112.

56 Travis Q. Mecham, “Changes in Seniority to the Quorum of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Masters Thesis, Utah State University, 2009, pp. 45, 50-54, <http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1370&context=etd>, retrieved Oct. 26, 2017.

57 Mecham, USU thesis, pp. 30-32

58 Mecham, pp. 33-35

59 Mecham, pp. 35-38

60 Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins*, p. 256.



followed a three year gap in the office before John Taylor, at age 72, was formally appointed president.<sup>61</sup> Since 1887, when Wilford Woodruff became the LDS president at age 82, most of the presidents of the LDS Church have been in their 80s or 90s.

At present the senior apostle, Russell M. Nelson, is 93 and appears to be in good health. Upon the death of President Monson, if the usual protocol is followed, Nelson will be the next president of the LDS Church. Apostle Nelson is evidently a firm believer in celestial plural marriage. Having outlived his first wife, his second marriage was solemnized in the temple.<sup>62</sup> Thus, according to LDS doctrine he will be a polygamist in heaven.

If Nelson were to die before Monson then Dallin H. Oaks, age 85, would become the next president. He, like Nelson, outlived his first wife and remarried in the LDS temple, thus putting him in the same category as Nelson of looking forward to living polygamy in the hereafter.<sup>63</sup>

Some have questioned the wisdom of continuing the current system. One way to keep apostolic seniority and yet allow for younger men to advance would be to offer aged apostles the option of retirement. However, there doesn't seem to be any movement in this direction. In 1978 the church instituted a policy that gave emeritus status to the First Quorum of Seventy at the age of 70, but not to the apostles.<sup>64</sup>

Upon the death of a church president his two counselors revert back to their seniority positions among the apostles and the next president will usually pick his two counselors from that list. With the death of LDS Apostle Robert D. Hales in October of 2017 and not counting President Monson, the ranks of the apostles have been reduced to thirteen. A new apostle, to replace Robert D. Hales, will be announced at the April 2018 LDS annual conference. Below is a listing of the current apostles according to seniority.

61 For a discussion of the controversies surrounding John Taylor's appointment as president, see *Conflict in the Quorum*, Bergera, chapter thirteen.

62 General Authorities and General Officers, Russell M. Nelson, <https://www.lds.org/church/leader/russell-m-nelson?lang=eng>, retrieved Oct. 25, 2017.

63 General Authorities and General Officers, Dallin H. Oaks, <https://www.lds.org/church/leader/dallin-h-oaks?lang=eng>, retrieved Oct. 25, 2017.

64 Emeritus Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1978/11/news-of-the-church/emeritus-members-of-the-first-quorum-of-the-seventy?lang=eng>, retrieved Oct. 18, 2017.

Russell M. Nelson, 93  
Dallin H. Oaks, 85  
M. Russell Ballard, 89  
Jeffrey R. Holland, 76  
Henry B. Eyring, 84  
Dieter F. Uchtdorf, 77  
David A. Bednar, 65  
Quentin L. Cook, 77  
D. Todd Christofferson, 72  
Neil L. Andersen, 66  
Ronald A. Rasband, 66  
Gary E. Stevenson, 62  
Dale G. Renlund, 65

Historian Todd Compton gave this summary of the development of apostolic succession:

It was not delivered to the church in final form, neatly packaged and immediately recognized. It developed through a system that might be called creative trial and error. It moved through four distinct stages, from (1) age within group in the original Twelve, to (2) age combined with group date of ordination/entrance in the Quorum, to (3) date of ordination (the standard throughout most of the nineteenth century), to, finally, at the dawn of the twentieth century, (4) date of entrance into the Quorum and public sustaining.<sup>65</sup>

## TRUSTEE IN TRUST

The LDS Church is registered as a corporation sole with the state of Utah. Under the name of Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all of the LDS Church assets are under the control of the president of the church as Trustee in Trust.<sup>66</sup> Unlike other churches, there are no voting members and no disclosure of its finances. While the appointment of a new president may not happen immediately on the death of the previous one, the transfer of Trustee in Trust of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will pass to the senior apostle. If someone besides the senior apostle were to be appointed president, the senior apostle would then transfer the office of Trustee in Trust to him.

## IS IT BIBLICAL?

Traditionally, Mormon literature has emphasized that the true church would have twelve apostles and a first presidency patterned after the Gospels. However, we have seen that when Mormonism was founded in 1830 it did

65 Todd Compton, *Dialogue*, p. 131.

66 See photo of Utah State document on next page.

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not have a First Presidency or twelve apostles. Instead, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were First and Second Elders over the church. The concept of a First Presidency presiding over the Twelve Apostles was a later addition.

As for the Bible, Peter, James and John were part of the twelve, not in addition to them. Also, the original twelve were witnesses to the entire ministry of Jesus and his resurrection (Acts 1:20-26). When the apostles met after Jesus' death they chose a replacement for Judas from two men who met this criteria. As the years passed there would no longer be someone who could qualify

as a witness to all of Christ's ministry. Although there were people other than the twelve who were referred to as apostles in the book of Acts, there is no indication that they were ever accepted as replacements for the original twelve. Indeed, there is no expectation recorded in the New Testament that a body of twelve apostles needed to be perpetuated after the original twelve had passed on.<sup>67</sup>

67 "By Whose Authority? Problems in LDS Priesthood Claims," *Salt Lake City Messenger*, no. 102 (May 2004), p. 9.

State of Utah  
Department of Commerce  
Division of Corporations and Commercial Code  
I hereby certify that the foregoing has been filed  
and approved on this 09 July 2015  
in this office of this Division and hereby issued  
This Certificate thereof.

AMENDMENT



RECEIVED  
JUL 09 2015

01706515700

Examiner to Date 7-10-15

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY



Kathy Berg  
Kathy Berg  
Division of Corporations and Commercial Code

Utah Div. of Corp. & Comm. Code

555534 - 0145

**THOMAS S. MONSON**, do hereby certify that (a) I am the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a religious association, and by virtue of such office I am the incumbent of Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a Utah corporation sole; (b) I am the person designated in the Articles of Incorporation of said corporation sole to sign and execute deeds and other instruments of writing and to transact all of the business of said corporation sole pursuant to the provisions of Title 16, Chapter 7, Section 8, Utah Code Annotated, 1953, as amended; and (c) pursuant to said Section 16-7-8, I hereby designate and appoint **ROBERT W. CANTWELL, DOUGLAS H. MARTIN and GREGORY N. TARBET**, each individually, as an agent authorized and empowered to act and execute documents on behalf of said corporation sole (a) to execute stock powers and to assign and endorse for transfer certificates representing stocks, bonds or securities now registered or hereafter registered in the name of said corporation sole and (b) to establish trading accounts with stock brokerage firms and to designate those with authority to initiate transactions through such accounts.

This Certificate of Authority shall expire and be of no further force or effect as of the close of business on January 15, 2016.

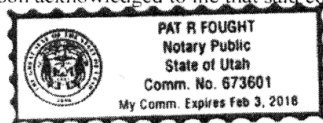
Dated this 9 day of July, 2015.

CORPORATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, a Utah corporation sole

By: Thomas S. Monson  
Thomas S. Monson, incumbent

STATE OF UTAH )  
: ss  
COUNTY OF SALT LAKE )

On this 9 day of July, 2015, personally appeared before me Thomas S. Monson, personally known to me to be the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and acknowledged to me that he signed the foregoing instrument as the incumbent of Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and that the said Thomas S. Monson acknowledged to me that said corporation executed the same.



Pat R Fought  
Notary Public in and for said State

DATE: 07/09/2015  
Receipt Number: 6050432  
AMOUNT PAID: \$17.00

Photo of Utah Certificate of Authority for the Corporation of the President signed by Thomas S. Monson.

## EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS AND EMAILS

**March 2017:** Thank you for your thoughtful answers to my questions. I am still struggling, I suppose to let go of my fleshy nature and trust in God. It's so hard to have my mind renewed to get rid of the "self" control one I have basically had over my life and let go and let God reign. I basically need a mind transplant, after 60 years of seeing through the lens of Mormonism. Christian beliefs are ever so much more simple than the complicated ins and outs of Mormonism. Christian truths are so clear and simple, that it is hard for the indoctrinated Mormon mind to grasp that all we need is Christ, and let go all the pride and self-righteous works that elevate which one has held to for so many years. Thank you for taking time to steer me in the right direction. God bless.

**March 2017:** I just finished reading "The Changing World of Mormonism" which I found in a used book store. Well done. It is amazing to me—the honesty and sincerity evident in the Tanners' work.

I was raised in the Mormon religion. Parents, grandparents and three great grandparents were all LDS. My great-grandfather \_\_\_\_\_ migrated to Utah from England in 1863 as a Mormon convert from England.

In 1981 I was excommunicated from the LDS church while serving in the US Army in Germany. I wasn't attending church and the local elders came by, also military men, and questioned me. They wanted to know if I supported the then President Kimball as a "prophet." "What has he prophesied?" I responded. "Tell me one thing and I'll say he's a prophet." They got angry, had their bishop's court and excommunicated me in absentia as my military duties did not allow me to attend.

So, all those generations—over a 100 years of Mormonism—down the drain because I had the audacity to ask, "What has he prophesied?" It was an honest question as my reading of the Bible told me a true prophet can be determined from a false one by what he has prophesied. But even to be a false prophet, one has to prophesy something. (Just like to be considered a composer of music, one has to compose something.)

I just bring this to your attention because I admire thechutzpah the Tanners have shown in asking similar questions and going full steam ahead with this.

I went on to convert to Judaism while in the Army and became very active in synagogue life, studying Hebrew in order to pray and read the Torah in Hebrew. I am especially glad that the Tanners were able to find a new way of faith as well.

[Editor: Our book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, can be read on our web site.]

**April 2017:** I have also enjoyed listening to you via podcast. I started the process of leaving the church two months ago. It has been a rough road, including a peace bond against a member who was trying to forcibly convince me to stay. I am still going through the process of having my name removed from the Church records and believe even though it seems like a long process it will be worth it. . . . I really just wanted to thank you, Sandra, you are a gift from God. It does not go unnoticed.

**April 2017:** As you know, I sent in my resignation from the church Saturday. I did it through Quitmormon.com, which makes it easier. I filled out the form, and had to really go through the facts once again before pushing the submit button. Once I did, I was at peace.

After that, I accepted Jesus as my Savior. I am so grateful for His bringing me out of the LDS church, to truth. However, there is a lot of deprogramming to be done.

I attended two services yesterday. I am visiting the different churches . . . Still have a few more to visit. . . . I have been working through 8-10 books at once, to get me out of mormonism. Interestingly, it was not the Bible that I used to pull me out, but the LDS teachings, through their scriptures, prophets, doctrine, foundation, with some Bible verses. Now I need to focus on learning God's word.

**April 2017:** It is too late for Jerald and it may be too late for you. You have led thousands astray many people astray and you have been led astray by Lucifer/The Devil/Satan, your MASTER!

RETURN into the Faith of your ancestors. There was a prophet of God in your ancestry and rather than continue your "ministry," cease to persecute The Church led by Jesus and escape from apostate Christianity, both the children (Protestants, most of them) and the mother of Harlots The Great and Abominable Church aka The Catholic Church, who keep their members from the truth or be led to serve Satan by you, the daughter of lies, who leads you away from the True Church by your MASTER the DEVIL!; AFTER A FALSE CHRIST, and another gospel far from the original Christian church, restored by God and angels thru Joseph the prophet and others. As Jesus said, your creeds are an abomination to Him. What will you do when you learn the truth and are sent to join Jerald in Spirit Prison, along with Ed Decker and Walter Martin? While Joseph The Seer and Brigham The American Moses are in Paradise sending missionaries unto others such as those you blinded and not unto such as you and Jerald, who have willfully rebelled and might even be A Son and A Daughter of Perdition! Repent, repent and don't procrastinate the day of your repentance until it is everlastingly too late. The 2nd Coming of Jesus and the so-called cults, LDS, 7th Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witness will be caught up into the Clouds while you are LEFT BEHIND and the real cults such as the Tanners, the Deckers and the Martin's are revealed from the house-tops!!!!!!

RESPECTFULLY . . . The Prophet Joseph Smith's cousin, Who unlike you, is TRUE to Jesus' Church

**April 2017:** I'm 32, and I'm still an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A few years ago, I started having questions because there were some aspects of our history that didn't seem to add up for me. I found your interviews with John Dehlin (Mormon Stories) which I found tremendously fascinating. I was in Salt Lake in December 2015. I purchased a copy of "Mormonism: Shadow or Reality."

**April 2017:** Thanks so much for this Website [www.UTLM.org]. Ever since the Mormon Church purchased a major shopping mall in Utah I have become a little disillusioned with the direction of the Church. I have been inactive for a while now while I try and figure things out.

Three main questions persist with me. Why now nearly 200 years later were we told about Joseph Smith's 40 wives? Also Has the Latter Day Saints Church now become a Tycoon Money making Empire which is totally against Gods Principles? Finally the Prophet Paul says we Man has never seen God nor Is it possible to see Him. But Joseph Smith claims he did see God.

**May 2017:** I live in \_\_\_\_\_ England, joined the LDS Church in 1978 because of nothing more than an impulsive reaction. The message of the restored church of Jesus Christ sounded great at the time. I never had a 'spiritual' witness as to the truth of The Book of Mormon. In fact, every time I read The Book of Mormon I was aware that it was a nonsense book. I will say that the essays you have written and put on your website have opened up a whole new critical analysis on many points arising from the "Black Hole" in The Book of Mormon. You will have worked out that I no longer have any allegiance to the LDS Church and its doctrines. Thank you for your superb website and thank you for your dedication and perseverance to the truth in the heartland of Mormonism.

**May 2017:** In 1962, my late wife and I lived in "Zion," Independence, Missouri. We were active second generation members of RLDS.

We were visited by two LDS missionaries, who were skilled to work in Independence, where RLDS members were already believers in many Mormon basics.

Basically, they dwelt on Joseph Smith's origin of certain doctrines, that are not used and are denied by RLDS. We went to the RLDS history library in Independence and asked for some early publications of the Nauvoo period, but we were denied the use of these and others. So we ordered Publications from the Huntington Library and from your early sources. We bought a microfilm reader and ordered a lot of film from yours and other locations.

In short, we did not accept LDS membership, and we promptly exited the RLDS, because of the cover-up and their denial of the obvious.

We were shunned by most our friends. But our trauma was not as acute as some LDS member exits. RLDS was Mormonism-lite, and shortly after our exit, we were transferred out of the area.

Thank you for your services and continue your good work.

**May 2017:** I think that your ancestors might be sad and disappointed that their sacrifices for you to have been in vain. The pioneers who died on the way were valiant to the end. You are wasting away the days of your probation. Repent before it is too late!!! . . .

You are clever like Korihor, the Anti-Christ of Book of Mormon fame. I hope you don't end up like him. I wish you all the best, after all, you are my sister. Repent ye, repent ye, for the day of reckoning is nigh and it may very well be in my lifetime or maybe even yours as well. Surely you do not want to be left behind, like those who will not heed the revelations about the Second Coming of our Savior, even Jesus Christ given in The Bible, The Book of Mormon and the teachings of each of the prophets of Jesus' Latter Day Saints, in this, The Church of Jesus Christ.

**Utah Christian Radio AM 820**

**May 2017:** I didn't see your stated compilation [on our web site]. But whatever doctrinal point of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints that you find contrary to your personal biblical interpretation, that is your prerogative, but you should move on with your life!

We only repeat what we believe The Savior stated to Joseph Smith, specifically as to which church to join when teenager Joseph was searching to join one of the existing Christian churches of his day, namely:

"I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." [LDS *Pearl of Great Price*]

So, one asks sincerely if The Lord spoke these words to Joseph. The answer comes depending on the profound sincerity and intention to learn of the petitioner. This message itself reveals that The Savior of the world is not happy with false creeds (not its members) that misrepresent Him and His doctrine.

**May 2017:** Thank you for all your work. My wife and I recently lost our son and she no longer believes in the [LDS temple] sealing power. She feels god would not require temple rituals to be with a child. . . . we really want to raise our kids with gospel values. . . . Also we got a NIV bible and wondering if that's a good way to read gods word? We are so new at this but are trying to navigate. Thank you.

**May 2017:** Your dedication to biblically attack every aspect of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has embedded in it the mentality of "I'm right you're wrong," which is the message and ultimate goal of your website.

What you should espouse is personal sincere scripture study and sincere prayer and let the Spirit guide! This Spirit never leads the children of men to attacks and condemnation of others. I believe you already knew this!

**May 2017:** I have greatly admired the work you have selflessly done to bring the truth and the light of Christ to so many. You have been instrumental in helping me find the courage to altogether leave the LDS church. . . . My parents joined the church in Ireland and like many emigrated from Belfast to Canada . . . I grew up in the church, was married in the Salt Lake Temple, raised my five children in the church and held numerous callings, including gospel doctrine teacher and member of the high priest's presidency. The usual. . . . I became acquainted with the work of Jerald and Sandra Tanner, Fawn Brodie, Richard Bushman, Michael Quinn, Dan Vogel, and Grant Palmer to mention a few.

Sandra, one might think that my faith crises would cause me a great deal of sadness and a feeling of loss. However, because the example of people like you, those who have left the church and discovered the true Christ; it has been a positive thing. . . . May God continue to bless you and keep you.

**June 2017:** After spending 2012-2013 investigating the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I found my faith in Christ. I stepped away from the church knowing Jesus was more than a brother and so much more satisfying than all the romanticized



proclamations, doctrine, or prophecies of the LDS church. . . . Your ministry is one of the first resources I found as I questioned my faith. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

**June 2017:** You probably don't remember me but we met at your book store back in Dec. . . . My wife and I have been lifelong temple going Mormons. We raised our four kids to be faithful Latter Day Saints. Our oldest daughter just returned from her mission earlier this year and she is still strong in her faith with the lds church.

Anyway to my story. Today we attended two services one Christian and the other lds. The only reason we went to the lds church was because our daughter asked us to attend her friends mission homecoming talk. What I found interesting was the Christian service was about Christ's final words and Him paying our sin debt in full. There is nothing we can add to what He did for us. We learned that we can't earn our way or contribute to what He did for us. In the lds service this elder gave his talk and shared a story about how we must do our part and endure to the end. Basically saved after all we can do. He went on to say that whatever we don't get done Jesus will do the rest. But we must do our best.

I'm so thankful to have found God's grace. It was an interesting comparison today. We are still learning every day and it is remarkable to us that the differences are so clear. I thank you and others in this movement for your knowledge and resources that are provided. I don't think I could have made this transition without them. When I first started to question Mormonism I was well on my way to becoming agnostic. I praise God for showing me the way.

**June 2017:** I'm new to biblical Christianity but I am so grateful to learn about the true God. In January I was a very faithful and active super-mo. Then I confronted my husband when I saw he was collecting very old books on Mormon history and doctrine. I had always thought our relationship was pretty close to perfect and completely honest. As it turned out, he had learned years ago about the truth of Mormonism but was too afraid to confront me because I was so incredibly invested and genuinely thought I would leave him over it. I was floored and upset, both that he "lost his testimony" and that he would hide something so big from me. Of course I'd never leave him. So out of respect I heard him out.

It was so painful and confusing to hear what he was saying. Hours and hours per night after the kids went to bed, for at least a week. My brain at first would not let anything sink in. I rationalized it all away because that's what I was trained to do, until one night I just broke and had an embarrassing core meltdown. For months the issues paralyzed and consumed me. I was less of the wife and mom than I should have been. My mind was always elsewhere. I cried and prayed and read . . . During this ordeal my sweet husband would ask me, "would you rather not have known?" And though I was never bitter toward him my answer was consistently "yes." I was happy and familiar with life as a Mormon. And now it's all gone. I didn't mean to hurt him with my answer but being honest is a big deal to me, so there it was.

But today is a very big day for me. This is the text I sent to my wonderful husband. "When I thought I was happy as a Mormon, now I am both happy and free. Being healed by my savior through his love as I really come to know him and his teachings. I can't get enough of the bible. I feel so clear. There is

no longer a shelf that I put contradictory teachings of the gospel on. Now I follow the pure gospel of Jesus."

**June 2017:** Thank you so much for teaching truth in regards to the Mormon Church. And, I thank God you know Jesus Christ. After five months of requesting my name be taken off the membership rolls it is finally completed! I celebrate this! More importantly I celebrate the true Jesus and His love for me. Now I attend a Bible and Christ believing and teaching church. Thank you for your help and being a blessing to me.

**June 2017:** I met you in July of 2016. I drove from \_\_\_\_\_ to your bookstore. When I arrived you were in a meeting with two gentlemen. You asked me how you could help me and I told you in front of them I had just finished listening to your Mormon Stories podcast. I was unsure why I was there in your bookstore other than I knew I had to meet you for myself and I had found for myself the history of the church wasn't what I thought it was. The two gentlemen smiled almost knowingly as if they understood very well what was happening to me.

You spent the next hour or so answering all questions I had about the Mormon church. You answered until I said I was done. I believe you would have sat with me till the evening had I asked for it.

Since our visit much has occurred. Much of it has to do with the impression upon meeting you. You were the first ex-mormon I met. You are more genuine than all the local and the few general leaders I have met all put together.

Since this time I began a sacrament-only attendance in September of 2016, I stopped attending church all together in November, and I resigned my membership in March of this year. I sent in my paperwork to quitmormon.com on my birthday, \_\_\_\_\_. Best present ever. I simply want to thank you for the part you played in freeing me from a real estate corporation. Thank you for your time that day.

**July 2017:** I remember very clearly the first time I saw your book, [*Mormonism*] *Shadow or Reality*, Sandra. I was in the library of the Presbyterian church downtown. I was with a friend and I started reading and I kept saying, "Is this true?" It's the first time all of my bad feelings about Mormonism were vindicated. I was raised Mormon but hated it. Until I saw your book I always felt guilty—like there was something wrong with me.

**July 2017:** I would like to inform you that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has actively renounced polygamy and does not practice it and hasn't for more than a hundred years. Though it does say it in what we call the Doctrines and Covenants, we do not believe it to be as correct as the Book of Mormon. Even though there are still sects of the church that still practice it, the church has said many times that they are not part of the church.

I would also ask you politely to please take down the section of your site that describes temple ordinances in detail. We believe them to be very sacred. Out of respect, we do not talk about them publicly.

Thank you for reading my feed back and (hopefully) making changes to show your unbiased view on the church.

**September 2017:** We were out at the prison last evening . . . and an older inmate said that he became a believer (about 10 years ago . . .) after seeing literature from [Utah] Lighthouse ministries! (he had been LDS for many years . . .)

**October 2017:** I'm an Englishman who was brought up LDS but left Mormonism and became Christian in the late 90s, in the early days of internet outreach to Mormons. Your website and other materials, along with the support of Luke Wilson at Mormons in Transition ([irr.org/mit](http://irr.org/mit)) went a long way to guide me out of Mormonism and into faith in Jesus. For this, I thank you and praise God! It led to some difficult times, being the first of my family to confront these issues openly with my believing parents and it still can be uncomfortable twenty years later! But I know that I made the right choice, thanks to the work of you and others with the same heart to share real Christianity with Mormons (as well as the truth about LDS history).

At the age of 20, in 1998, having stopped believing in Mormonism and becoming a Christian a year earlier, I made my one and only trip to the USA and visited Utah and Wyoming. Obviously, I took the time to visit your bookstore and I bought a copy of *No Man Knows My History* (which I had to sneakily pass on to my brother because he had wanted a copy!) I'm sure you were in the store but I didn't know for sure that it was you at that time. Now, having a better understanding of how your life of bringing truth to Mormons has gone, I wish I had stopped to talk to you properly, rather than just to pay for the book!! E-mailing you today is the next best thing I can do, nearly 20 years later!

So thank you for the work you and Jerald have done all these years. Who knows, I may have lived a life tied to the demands of the "God of Mormonism" otherwise! I admire your passion for getting the truth out to Mormons and for the life of service you have offered.

**October 2017:** I will put your name on the prayer role [of the LDS temple].

**October 2017:** Some years back, my life was changed after reading a Master Outline of the New Testament AND one of your books [I was married to a Mormon at the time], *The Changing World of Mormonism*. It is the most underlined book in my collection.

**October 2017:** I want to thank you, the more you bash the lds church the more I know it's true. You are funny.

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## APOSTLES AND SEVENTIES DISCIPLINED SINCE 1900

**John W. Taylor:** Ordained apostle, age 25, 1884, resigned 1905, excommunicated 1911, died 1916, blessings restored posthumously 1965.<sup>1</sup> Taylor was the son of LDS President John Taylor, third president of the LDS Church.

Both Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley were forced to resign in 1905 due to their continued practice and support of polygamy. "From 1900 until the disposition of the Smoot case in 1907, the Mormon question was again before the nation's eyes. This burst of renewed inquiry was to reveal that not only had polygamous cohabitation continued but, more disturbing, the performance of new polygamous marriages, including some by apostles, had taken place as well."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *2009 Church Almanac*, Deseret News, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> "The Taylor-Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History," *Utah State Historical Quarterly* (Winter 1980), vol. 48, no. 1, <http://digitalibrary.utah.gov/awweb/awarchive?type=file&item=35162>

**Matthias F. Cowley:** Ordained apostle, age 39, 1897, resigned 1905, priesthood suspended 1911, restored 1936, died 1940.<sup>3</sup> His son, Matthew Cowley, became an apostle in 1945. (See John W. Taylor entry.)

**Richard R. Lyman:** Ordained apostle, age 47, 1918, excommunicated 1943, rebaptized 1954, died 1963.<sup>4</sup>

Lyman evidently entered into a secret plural marriage. "This is first plural marriage of current general authority since 1905."<sup>5</sup> Son of Apostle Frances M. Lyman and his polygamist wife, Clara C. Callister.

**George P. Lee:** Sustained First Quorum of Seventy, age 32, 1975, excommunicated 1989, died 2010.<sup>6</sup>

He was the first Native American to be made a Seventy. Lee charged the LDS authorities with being "vain men bent on dislodging Indians from their rightful place in Mormon theology."<sup>7</sup> He was later charged with sexual abuse of a minor.<sup>8</sup> He also taught the doctrine of polygamy.

**Paul H. Dunn:** Sustained in Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, age 52, 1976-1980, named emeritus General Authority in 1989 after being censured for telling false/exaggerated stories in his sermons.<sup>9</sup> (See free book offer on back page.)

According to the *Deseret News* Dunn wrote, "They have censured me and placed a heavy penalty upon me. I accept their censure and the imposed penalty, and pledge to conduct my life in such a way as to merit their confidence and full fellowship." Church spokesman Don LeFevre said Saturday that the nature of the penalty is "an internal matter, and we don't discuss such matters" publicly.<sup>10</sup>

**James J. Hamula:** Sustained First Quorum of Seventy, age 51, 2008, excommunicated 2017.

While the LDS Church does not generally discuss the reasons for excommunication, according to the *Deseret News* it was made clear that "Tuesday's action was not due to disillusionment or apostasy on the part of Hamula."<sup>11</sup> This would mean that it was for some form of moral lapse. In time, after sufficient repentance, Hamula would be able to rejoin the church.

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<sup>3</sup> *2009 Church Almanac*, Deseret News, p. 92

<sup>4</sup> *2009 Church Almanac*, Deseret News, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> D. Michael Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, (Signature Books, Salt Lake City: 1997) p. 819.

<sup>6</sup> *2009 Church Almanac*, Deseret News, p. 110.

<sup>7</sup> *Deseret News*, (Sept. 10, 1989), <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/62992/church-explains-excommunication-to-navajos-as-lee-seeks-a-rebirth.html>. See also <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no73.htm>.

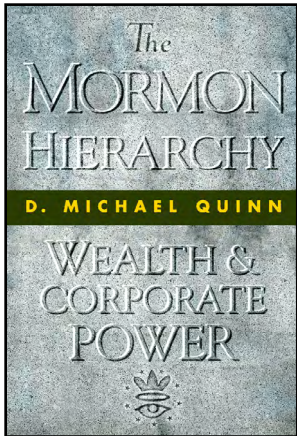
<sup>8</sup> *Salt Lake City Messenger*, no. 91, [http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no91.htm#THE\\_FALL\\_OF\\_GEORGE\\_P.LEE](http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no91.htm#THE_FALL_OF_GEORGE_P.LEE).

<sup>9</sup> *Salt Lake City Messenger*, no. 78, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no78.htm>

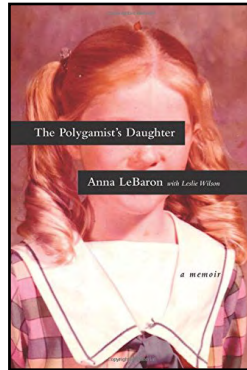
<sup>10</sup> "Elder Dunn Offers Apology for Errors, Admits Censure," *Deseret News*, (Oct. 27, 1991), <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/190407/elder-dunn-offers-apology-for-errors-admits-censure.html>, retrieved Oct. 27, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> "LDS Church leaders release, excommunicate Elder James J. Hamula," *Deseret News* (Aug. 8, 2017), <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/865686362/LDS-Church-leaders-release-excommunicate-Elder-James-J-Hamula.html>

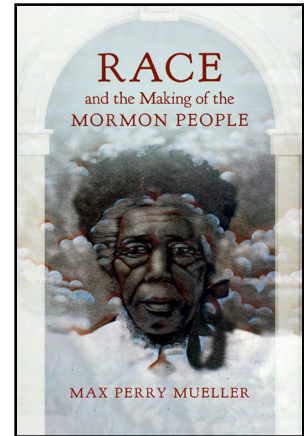
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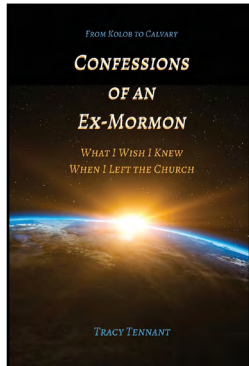
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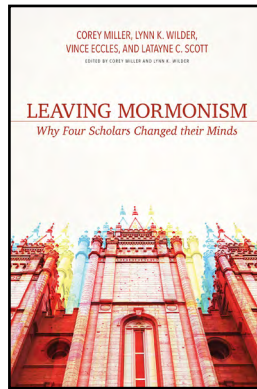
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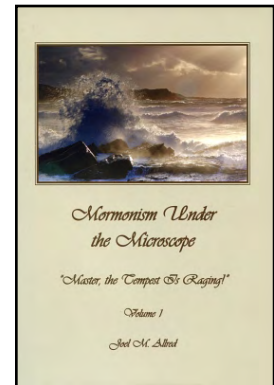
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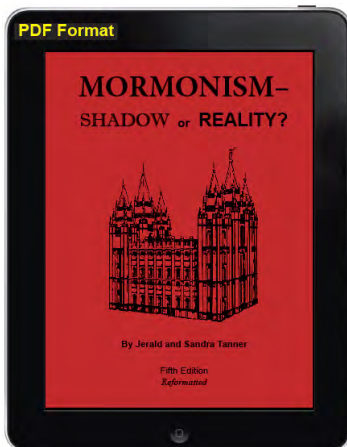
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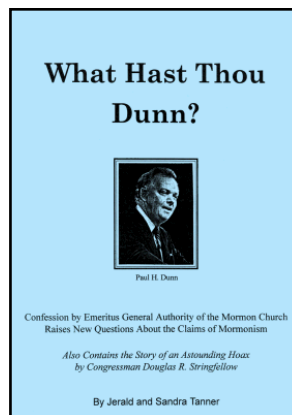
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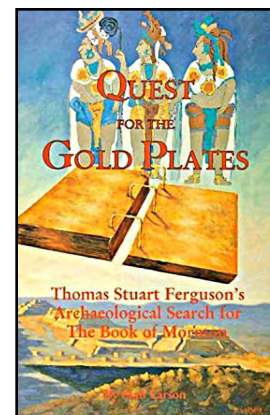


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