

***WHERE DO I GO FROM
HERE?***

Survival After Mormonism

*By
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Acknowledgements

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Jessica, Leisel, Rebekah and Joseph: Thank you for loving me and standing by me through all the tough times. You are truly gifts from a loving God.

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*Dedication: To Jesus Christ, the Lord and love of my life.
May your name be glorified through my words.*

*“I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness,
Because You have seen my affliction;
You have known the troubles of my soul,
And You have not given me over into the hand of the
enemy;
You have set my feet in a large place.”
--Psalm 31: 7, 8*

Introduction

I was an active, devout Mormon for thirty-eight years. At the time I left “The Church”, my husband was the bishop of our ward. After I accepted Jesus Christ and became a born-again Christian, I asked, “Where do I go from here?” My wonderful new Christian friends encouraged me to read the Bible, pray and go to church. That was great advice, but there was more to my question. “Where do I go from here?” was also asking them how I should deal with the emotional upheaval, rejection and loss of security in my life. As much as they wanted to, my fellow believers could not understand what I was going through or what I would face as an ex-Mormon Christian.

I hope that by explaining my struggle, it will make yours easier. I didn’t sail through the transitions perfectly; I made some very good and some very bad choices. Once you leave the Mormon Church and take a stand for Christ, you are an avowed enemy to Satan. He doesn’t play fair and he will use anyone or anything he can, including your own weaknesses, to destroy your witness. He can easily be defeated in the spirit, but not in the flesh. Unfortunately as a Mormon, I dealt strictly in the flesh because I didn’t have a relationship with the one true God. Learning to walk in the spirit takes time and experience. I’m still learning!

Leaving Mormonism isn’t enough; there is a real God whose truth will set you free from hurt, disappointment, and bondage of every kind. Seek Him!

Chapter 1

IT BEGINS

As a Mormon for 38 years, I was fully committed and certain that I belonged to God's only true church upon the earth. I was always very actively involved. I held leadership positions in my church as a youth, and was even asked to teach Primary when I was 13 years old. Even then I took religion very seriously. As I got older, I attended seminary from grades 9 through 12. I always received A's. When I was 18, I went to Brigham Young University, took all the required religion courses there, and graduated with my B.S. degree in Elementary Education after three years. I had taken a "Missionary Prep" class at BYU, and fully intended to go on a mission. I began teaching school with the plan that I would save for that mission. Instead, I met the man I would marry--the man who met all of my criteria—the most important being that he was a very active Mormon who had served a mission.

We began living the Mormon dream. We were both active in the church, we held many positions, paid a full 10% tithing, prayed as a family twice a day, individually twice each day, and before meals. Our home was clean, and the four children we eventually had were well cared for and mannerly. All of our family and friends were Mormon, and we really didn't associate with too many other people; we didn't have the time or desire. As life went on, I became more and more exhausted from trying to be the perfect wife and mother. It was up to me to meet everyone's needs, and if I worked hard enough, I was sure that one day my needs would be met.

I was trying to do everything my church had taught me I needed to do to gain eternal life, so why wasn't I happy? Church leaders told us that we should be the happiest of all people because we had a fullness of the gospel; we were select and privileged. Only Mormons would inherit the Celestial Kingdom where God dwelt. Why did I keep feeling that no matter how hard I tried, I would never be perfect enough to get there? What was wrong with me? My husband became the Bishop of our ward. We now had a sort of prestige—yet I was miserable. Why didn't I enjoy temple work? Why did I feel that all the genealogy I did was fruitless? Why did I feel I was working myself to death, but getting no closer to God? I remember praying one day and asking God to help me find out who I really was because I didn't know anymore. I just knew that somehow I wasn't the person He wanted me to be.

After taking several years off from my career to raise my four children, I went back to teaching school. I had several little children in my class from Christian homes. I was amazed that they would bring up the subject of God or the Bible. I thought only Mormon children were taught that well. Every Wednesday these little children would go across the street after school to Awanas. I began to see just how committed their families were to their beliefs. I became friends with one particular Christian family. We gradually began to visit about religion over the next three years, but my attempts to convert them to Mormonism were futile.

One night I was asked to baby-sit for this family. The littlest daughter had gotten hurt, and her father needed to take her to the hospital. While they were gone, I noticed a beautiful Bible in the living room. As I picked it up, one of the children told me that I couldn't look at it; Mormons weren't allowed to read it. I said, "Oh yeah? Watch me." I put the children to bed and began thumbing through their Bible. There were lots of cross-referenced scriptures dealing with Mormonism. When my Christian friend got home, I began to quiz him about his opinion of Mormonism. In the conversation I became increasingly disturbed, and finally pinned him to the wall with the question, "Where do you think Mormons will go when they die?" He was a little reluctant, but told me that they would go to Hell. I was shocked! I asked him, "You think I'm going to Hell?!" I had worked all of my life to do the right thing, to be perfect, to help my neighbor—this neighbor—and he thought I was going to Hell! Although he tried to be very kind about it, I was so angry and hurt that I nearly began to cry. I left feeling very confused and thinking that my friendship with this family was finished.

The conversation kept nagging at me. I was sure he was wrong, and yet I felt compelled to know more. I attempted to explain this feeling by telling myself that with more knowledge, I would be able to prove this man wrong and convert his family to Mormonism. So, I began asking questions. The answers were very unsettling. He knew far too much about Mormonism. He knew things I had never been taught. Every time I tried to prove him wrong, I found out he was right. My investigations were disturbing my husband, so I withdrew my friendship from this family for a time. I was even more miserable because I had too many questions that needed to be answered. Eventually, I couldn't stand the "not knowing" and initiated more dialogue. My friend told me about a class that was starting up at his church. It taught the difference between orthodox, biblical Christianity and Mormonism. I wasn't too interested—it scared me to even think about going into a different church. This Christian family kept encouraging me to go. Finally I relented, just to stop them from pestering me. Since the class was held on Sunday mornings and our church was on an afternoon schedule, I could go to both. I was going there to set the pastor straight about my church--having faith that he would embrace Mormonism along with his entire congregation!

The longer I attended this class, the more troubled I became. I ordered books, studied late into the night, and spoke of my findings with my husband and Stake President. My husband didn't have any answers for my questions, and told me that he wouldn't study with me because he didn't want to go through the Hell that I had been going through. My Stake President told me that he didn't have to study to find the truth—he had faith. I was an emotional wreck. I would take long walks, pour out my heart to God, and just sob. What if Mormonism wasn't God's truth? What would I do? My husband was the Bishop. What would everyone say? I had to get away; away from the Mormons and away from the Christians. This was between God and myself, and I was determined that I would study and pray until He told me what to do.

By this time, my husband and I were receiving professional marriage counseling. The problems had been years in coming, but my searching for truth had aggravated the situation greatly. I told the counselor that I needed some time away from everyone. He

agreed with me, and so I planned a 5-day trip to Stanley, Idaho. I made my motel reservations and began gathering study materials, my scriptures, etc. That's when I found out that my Christian friends' church was going on a retreat during the same five days, and that they were only going to be about 20 miles away. I nearly cancelled my plans! I didn't want to be near anyone Christian or Mormon! My friends finally convinced me to go to one seminar at the retreat. I decided that before I could even consider leaving Mormonism, I had to know if there was something better out there. If not, why leave—even if it wasn't the one true religion?

The seminar was impressive. I was amazed at how well Christians knew their Bible. The songs they sang were very different from the ones I had grown up singing in the Mormon church; these songs were full of life and touched me greatly. I was so impressed that I attended nearly every session during the retreat. The speaker at the retreat happened to be an ex-Mormon! In between and after these sessions, I put in long hours of study. I had never studied so hard in my life—I felt as if my life depended upon it. There was just so much damaging evidence piling up in front of me against the Mormon church—well documented, historical and theological evidences. I felt as if my entire world was falling apart. The more I learned about Joseph Smith, the more I realized he couldn't possibly have been a prophet of God. And yet, I kept trying to make the pieces fit on the side of Mormonism. It HAD to be right. I couldn't possibly have been wrong for so many years! I kept searching, studying, fasting and agonizing. Toward the end of my stay in Stanley, I simply fell apart in my motel room one day. I went down on my knees before God and I cried and cried. I told Him that I knew the Mormon church was not His church. I knew that I had been worshiping a God that didn't exist. I begged Him to forgive me, and told Him that I accepted the true Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for me. I asked God to please come into my life. I told Him that no matter what happened to me, I would renounce my former faith and become a true Christian—but would He please bring my children out of the Mormon church?

I called my husband, who was getting ready for a 5-day fishing trip, and told him of my decision. He was kind, yet very disturbed. A few days after I arrived home, my Stake President came to visit. In the course of our discussion, I asked him to take my name off the church records. He told me he couldn't do that without holding a church court. When I asked why, he said, "Because you're too high profile; we can't just let you go." My husband was the bishop of our ward, and I knew too much. I was an educated, thirty-eight year old woman who had just spent the past several months researching the history and doctrines of the Mormon church. For the first time in my life, I had dared to read beyond the selected and approved materials the church had spoon-fed me all of my life. I received my B.S. degree in education from Brigham Young University, where I was taught how to research and distinguish between slanted, biased information and fact. In using these skills, I found that there was an incredible amount of damaging information regarding Mormonism, and much of it came from church histories, discourses and teachings of the prophets. In researching, I disregarded any information that looked to be from a source hostile to the Mormon church. I looked at documentation and checked as much of it as I could.

I learned, among other things, that the Bible had not been mistranslated, but had been protected and preserved as the inerrant word of God (See Appendix A). When I saw how accurate and reliable the Bible was, I knew I could trust it to be God's word. I then realized that the Mormon church teaches faith in a Jesus different from the Jesus of the Bible (See Appendix B). Only the Jesus of the Bible promises salvation through faith in His name. I had the wrong Jesus—one who did not exist--so I did not have salvation. Through study and research, I learned that the Mormon church was not the only true church, nor did it have any biblical priesthood authority (See Appendix C). Research showed me that Joseph Smith was not a prophet, but a charlatan (See Appendix D), and the Book of Mormon was his literary creation (See Appendix E).

My Stake President asked me if I still believed Joseph Smith to be a prophet of God. I told him that I did not. That's when he handed me a letter announcing a church court to be held in my behalf that very night! I was able to postpone this court for one day, as I wanted time to prepare for an event that truly terrified me. The letter read:

Dear Sister Heiner:

This letter is to inform you of the upcoming Disciplinary Council to be held in your behalf on the 26 August 1998 at 9:30 p.m. The council will be held in the High Council Room of the Paul Idaho Stake Center.

This council is being held in your behalf because of your conduct against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, namely, apostasy. A disciplinary council seems to be the only way to help you repent, and to protect and safeguard the purity and good name of the church. Your membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints will be considered.

Please be aware that a Disciplinary Council is a council of love and we as a Stake Presidency will be fasting for you, and to have a closeness with our Father in Heaven so that we will know of his desires concerning this matter. We would like to encourage you to fast with us if you desire. It is not mandatory that you attend this disciplinary council, but we would encourage you to do so if you desire.

You may, if you so desire, bring any witnesses with you to speak in your behalf. May the Lord bless you to realize the importance and seriousness of this Disciplinary Council. We want you to know that we love you.

Sincerely Yours:

*M. Gene Hansen
Stake President*

Chapter 2

“LET’S GET ON WITH IT”

Was this real, or simply a nightmare that would disappear when I woke? How did I ever get here?

“We can just forget this whole thing and go home. No mention will be made of it. All you have to do is tell me that you know Joseph Smith was a true prophet,” explained my Stake President. As I sat in his office, grieving husband at my side, and a room full of Mormon priesthood leaders ready to convene a church disciplinary court in the next room, I heard myself say, “Let’s get on with it.”

So there I was, ready and willing to go through with a church court. At first I was terrified. I had been a devout Mormon; I fulfilled my callings and supported those in authority over me. I had not committed any grievous sins, and yet I was being called before a church court for disciplinary action. I had never liked being in the spotlight, and here I was, about to stand in one of the biggest. Fortunately, several of my new found Christian friends were praying for me that night. About an hour before this council began its court, a great calm settled over me and I knew everything would be alright.

As I entered the High Council room, I noticed that there were approximately seventeen priesthood leaders sitting around a large conference table. My husband and I were asked to be seated in chairs apart from but facing the table. These chairs were shorter than the others, and so everyone was literally looking down on us. My husband could only weep. When I was asked if I had anything to say, I stood and shared two of the many problems I had encountered in my study of the Mormon church. I gave them references and documentation they could check for themselves. At the end of my speech I read the following:

I must admit I am confused about why I have been brought before a disciplinary council of this church. The letter I received states: “This council is being held in your behalf because of your conduct against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, namely, apostasy. A disciplinary council seems to be the only way to help you repent, and to protect and safeguard the purity and good name of the church.”

1st: My conduct against this church. I have not been immoral or dishonest in anything I have done. I have not openly opposed the church, nor have I gone to my friends and tried to persuade them to oppose church doctrine or church leadership.

2nd: This council is supposed to be the only way to help me repent. What would you have me repent of—searching for truth? All I have done is to study, to search, ponder and pray as I have always been taught to do by this church. If you say I am an apostate because I have done this, then in all fairness, you must warn every member of this Stake that their membership is in jeopardy if they read anything contrary to what this

council feels is appropriate. But I do believe that is censorship, and not in line with the teachings of Christ.

3rd: This council feels they must protect and safeguard the purity and good name of the church. All I have done is to search for truth. 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” I didn’t think that truth needed to be protected; that it could stand on its own. Truth never falls. It is only a lie that needs to be protected and safeguarded.

I, too, have been fasting, as was encouraged in the letter I received. As you can see, I have also not brought any witnesses with me. My life has been my witness and should protect my good name. You are also witnesses that I have lived a good, moral and upright life. You know as well as I do, that with an excommunication from the church, comes a certain negative stigma. I do not feel my name or my conduct in my life deserves that stigma. Therefore, I am requesting that my name be taken off of the church records without an excommunication. I have done nothing wrong—God knows it, and all of you know it. Thank you.

I was then bombarded with questions. What did I plan to do with the material I had found? (This question was asked several times.) If a Christian pastor offered me money, would I speak at his church and tell his congregation what I had learned? Had I taken off my holy garments? Had I told anyone else about the information I had found?

When the interrogation was over, I declined staying for their verdict. My husband and I left to return home. On the way he stopped weeping, looked at me and said, “You were so convincing”. Later that evening, a letter was delivered to our home which said:

Dear Sister Heiner

The purpose of this letter is to inform you in writing of the decision of the Disciplinary Council that was held on your behalf on 26 August 1998, at the Paul Idaho Stake Center.

The decision of the Council is that your name be removed from the records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints because of apostasy. May you realize that this action is necessary for you to completely repent and be forgiven.

You do have the right of appeal this decision. If you do desire to appeal this decision, you will need to write to the Office of the First Presidency of the Church.

All privileges of membership are denied, including the wearing of temple garments and the payment of tithing and other contributions. You may, if you desire, make such payments through a member of your immediate family who is in full standing in the church, providing that all receipts are written in the name of the family member.

In general, you will be treated as any other non-member of the Church. You are not entitled to speak or offer a public prayer, partake of the sacrament, sustain or vote against Church officers, participate in any way if in attendance at meetings, hold a temple recommend, hold any office in the Church, or attend any meeting of Church officers. You may, however, attend Church meetings in the consolidated schedule and we encourage you to do so.

We encourage you to repent and live the gospel standards to prepare yourself for baptism in the future. You will need to seek forgiveness from your Heavenly Father through sincere repentance. We want you to know that we will be happy to help you in any way possible. We pray for you and your family. We hope that you and your husband can work through this and you will know, as we know, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is true. Joseph Smith truly is a prophet.

Sincerely Yours:

*M. Gene Hansen
Frank N. Hunt
Ronald B. Nielsen*

This was my official exit from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—the Mormons.

Chapter 3

AN EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

As I studied my way out of the Mormon church, I stayed in a perpetual state of denial. I kept researching, hoping to find out that the Mormon church was what I believed it to be. Oddly enough, even after I formally left the church, I continued to study and research—hoping to find out that somehow Mormonism could still all make sense.

During this time I struggled with depression, and vacillated from feelings of joy and excitement, to feelings of intense anxiety and fear. One minute I was praising God for saving me from Hell and feeling freer than ever, and the next minute I was terrified of what would happen to me. This emotional rollercoaster was aggravated by a number of things: a self-identity crises, rejection, persecution, demonic oppression, loneliness, temptation, guilt and fear.

Self-identity Crises

My self-identity crises lasted for about a year. The way I viewed others, myself and the world all revolved around believing the Mormon church was God's one true church, and that I was part of an elitist group, chosen before I was born because of my faithfulness in a pre-earth life. Who was I now? Everything and everyone had been categorized in my brain. Suddenly there were no categories and I was left doubting my ability to perceive anything correctly. After all, I had been deceived once. I had lived and promoted a lie for thirty-eight years. How could I now trust my perception; I didn't even have a perception! I felt lost. I questioned my own sanity and the sanity of others. I needed someone to reassure me that my feelings and questions were normal. I understand now that I had to lose all sense of perception so God could replace mine with His. I was used to being able to fix things, and I wanted my mental confusion fixed immediately. God wanted me to learn to wait on Him; to live through experiences which would mold and shape my perceptions correctly, bringing me closer to Him and His desires for my life.

How did I survive this period of time?

- Prayer--just crying out to God with complete honesty about how I was feeling helped immensely. It took awhile for me to feel free enough to do this—complete honesty and abandonment of inhibitions. I had never felt free enough before to talk to God as a friend. He already knew my thoughts, so I might as well speak directly and honestly to Him. I didn't have to use the King James language, I didn't have to be kneeling down, and I didn't have to try to impress God; I could pray at any time, at any place, in any position, and with any attitude.

- Continued study and research into Mormonism reinforced that I was right to leave. I wasn't a nut case. No matter what my Mormon family and friends thought, the facts bore me out to be right—not them.
- Attending a Bible study class at a Christian church was a tremendous help. There were so many twisted and distorted doctrines floating around in my head. My Bible study class helped me to sort and sift through the mess in order to get to the truth. Through this, God began building a new and secure foundation for me; one based on truth.
- Finding another ex-Mormon to communicate with was such a blessing. I found a woman in my community who was about to officially leave the Mormon church. We had so much to talk about as we shared our common experiences. I would leave our times together feeling uplifted and refreshed. God had given me a friend that could understand me.

Rejection and Persecution

After nearly seventeen years of marriage, my husband told me I had ruined his life and he filed for divorce. One day he left the house without putting away his briefcase. I glanced into the open case and saw notes he had written for a child custody hearing. He named some of my dearest Mormon friends and claimed that each one of them would testify that he was a better parent. A Stake President from another area was willing to testify that because I had left the church, I was no longer a stable parent. Suddenly the people who had previously told me that I was a great mom, were now willing to side against me because I had left the Mormon church; I couldn't possibly be a good mother if I wasn't a Mormon. To make matters worse, the judge who would hear the child custody case was an active Mormon. According to these same notes, some of my Mormon colleagues at work were planning to force me to transfer to a different job site the next year.

Two of my four children thought I was Darth Vader from the “dark side”. One daughter was spying on me for her father, my friends pulled away from me, my mother was angry at me, and the rest of my family thought I had taken leave of my senses. Mormons I knew who previously liked and respected me, now looked upon me with disturbed expressions of disgust or confusion. Some of my colleagues at work stopped talking to me. Two Mormon women, during separate incidences, confronted my fourteen year old daughter. One of them told her that she had no respect for a woman (me) who would tear apart her family. Another woman told my daughter that she had no respect for me because I was having an affair. My ex-husband was getting a great deal of sympathy and began telling people that I had left the church because I was having an affair with a Christian man. At least one member of the high council spread that rumor as well. I have made some really stupid mistakes in my life, but having an affair during my marriage wasn't one of them. It never happened. I was also accused of having joined a cult. It felt like the Mormon community was watching and waiting for me to make

mistakes so they could devour me with criticism. After all, how dare I worship God according to the dictates of my own conscience?

How did I survive the rejection and persecution?

- Finding an ex-Mormon friend was such a help. I could talk to her and we would compare war stories. She understood everything I was going through emotionally, and we would end up laughing about situations and attitudes instead of crying over them.
- Christian friends listened to and prayed for me. Entire church bodies would pray for me. I felt their prayers and was strengthened by them continually.
- Prayer--releasing the hurt and pain was absolutely necessary. When I did this, God would bless me with peace and understanding; I would feel His great love covering and protecting me. When I tried to bear the burdens alone, I would sink into depression.
- Praising God for what He had done in my life and thanking Him in advance for what He was about to do to deliver me from the situation I faced, released an amazing power! The burden of the trial would lighten, and it seemed to go away much quicker than when I would indulge in a pity party.
- Reading and exercising faith in the scriptures brought me great solace:

Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”

Isaiah 41:10 “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

Isaiah 43:2 “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.”

Psalm 27:14 “Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord.”

Psalm 34:19 “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.”

Romans 8:28 “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

2 Corinthians 4:8,9 “we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;”

Philippians 4:6,7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 4:12,13 “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.”

Demonic Oppression

Demonic oppression began when I started studying Mormonism in depth. I would be lying in bed and suddenly it felt like a great wall of blackness would hit me. I couldn't move, breathe or scream. My eyes would be open, but I could see nothing but darkness; a darkness so heavy I could feel it. I thought I was going to die. I would cry out in my mind, “God help me!” and the darkness would leave. When I left the Mormon church, I told a pastor about these experiences. He helped me understand what was happening to me; these attacks were demonic. Satan wanted to destroy me. The pastor suggested I leave a light on at night, as demons love the darkness, not the light. I eventually had no fear of these oppressive attacks, nor did I continue to leave on a light. I knew that all I had to do was to call on God and the darkness would leave. As soon as I quit fearing them, the attacks stopped. At other times, and occasionally still, I feel the presence of evil around me. I get a creepy, goosebumpy feeling which leaves as soon as I command it to do so in the name of Jesus Christ.

I didn't think that Satan was very powerful. He didn't bother me much as a Mormon because I wasn't a threat to him; he already thought he had me signed, sealed and delivered to Hell. When I became a Christian, I suddenly became a major enemy and he hasn't left me alone since.

How did I get through this demonic oppression?

- Prayer helped me recognize when I was experiencing a demonic attack. These attacks weren't always in the form of the “black wall”. Some demonic attacks produced negativity, anxiety and depression in my mind. I learned that through prayer, these attacks could be squelched; I didn't have to suffer with them for long periods of time.
- Scripture study reinforced God's love and desire to help me through any and all situations. It also helped me to see that nothing is more powerful than the God I serve!

- Staying close to the Lord was vital. I could defeat Satan through the spirit, but not through the flesh—my own strength. If I suppressed the spirit by living in rebellion to God, Satan would overcome me in the flesh and wreck havoc in my life. Whatever I fed—spirit or flesh—grew stronger. I recognized that I couldn't overcome Satan alone; I needed the Lord.
- Refusing to fear what God had given me power to cast out brought relief. I didn't have to fear demonic attacks because I could easily cast them out in the name of Jesus. They were defeated when I quit fearing them.
- Keeping Christian music playing throughout the day really discouraged the demons. I never felt them near when Godly music was permeating my home.

Loneliness and Temptation

Those who leave the Mormon church with their spouses, are truly blessed. As a divorced, single mother, I experienced a great deal of loneliness. Not only did I lose a husband, but now my children were gone half of the time. My old friends had nearly all abandoned me, and I was just beginning to meet and make new Christian friends. Some of the ways I chose to fill those empty hours helped a lot.

- Researching Mormonism reinforced my decision to leave.
- Yard work gave me great pleasure and needed exercise.
- Writing about my experiences helped me to confront and heal from them.
- Walking released a lot of tension and helped me feel better physically.
- Visiting with and encouraging my ex-Mormon friend brought me as much encouragement as I gave to her.
- Putting in extra hours at my job enabled me to be very organized and spend less time working when my children were with me.
- Studying Christianity and attending Christian events helped me begin a new self-identity and meet some wonderful people.
- Attending Bible study classes cemented Christian theology in my mind.
- Witnessing to Mormons brought me great joy as I sensed the presence of the Lord.

- Listening to Christian music comforted and encouraged me.

Unfortunately, Satan preyed upon and had a field day with my loneliness. I had no idea how powerful he was or what he could do to help me mess up my life or destroy my witness for Christ. I didn't know what it meant to live in the spirit and not in the flesh; I lacked experience and understanding. I take full responsibility for my mistakes. Yes, I was naïve, but I made some bad decisions; decisions I knew to be wrong. Most of these bad decisions came through the temptations I faced in dealing with men. I had spent a lifetime catering to Mormon men because they held the "priesthood". I learned at a very early age that men were superior to women because they had this "priesthood". They were given special privileges and opportunities that I was denied because I had been born a girl. I was to follow their priesthood authority without question. God therefore, would direct me through men. For some reason, I wasn't worthy to have God direct me one on one. I saw men being fawned over, catered to, and nearly worshiped simply for their maleness.

When I left the Mormon church, I still carried around the mindset of male superiority. My self-worth hinged upon whether or not a man thought I was valuable. So when I suddenly had more men vying for my attention than I could handle, I was elated. These men claimed to be Christians, so I disregarded the "red flags". They took away the loneliness, but I found myself compromising my standards to please them. For example, one man liked to drink socially. Before I knew it, I had become the designated driver for a group of people who drank too much and lived very worldly lives. I was uncomfortable with this arrangement, but I didn't want to lose the adoration of the man I thought loved and valued me. I began to wonder if my ideas about the Christian lifestyle were too strict; he thought they were. The lines became fuzzy as I tried to keep one foot in the world and live out my Christianity.

God knew how to get my attention. He took everything away from me that kept me from a relationship with Him. I had begun to regard the relationships I had with men as more important than my relationship to God. I showed this by spending less and less time with God and more and more time with men. I was more willing to accommodate a man than I was to accommodate God. I was relying on these men to fill my needs instead of God. Consequently, God allowed disaster after disaster in my personal relationships. I was left with emotional scars I will carry for the rest of my life; scars which have become helpful reminders of pain I intend to avoid in the future. The good news is that God forgives quickly and completely (1 John 1:9)!

Guilt and Fear

Satan continually tried to induce me to live with guilt for my past failures. I learned, however, that God brings conviction, not guilt. Christ did not come to condemn the world but to save the world (John 3:17). When I have sinned and Satan begins with the guilt, shame and condemnation, all I have to do is:

- Rebuke those thoughts in the name of Jesus, and remind Satan that the sin has been covered by Christ's blood.
- Forgive myself for having made a mistake.
- Get on with my life and quit looking back. Before God saved me, He knew the mistakes I would make; He saved me anyway. He accepts me just the way I am and will change me in His way and in His time.

Living with guilt should not be the way of life for a Christian. God wants us to have an abundant life, and we can't have that if we are burdened with guilt and shame from the mistakes we have made.

Mormonism teaches guilt and shame. Before I was even eight years old, I had been taught enough to know that I was expected to be perfect. When I was six or seven, I had a Sunday School teacher who told our class that if we didn't sit quietly, we would be damned. The night after I was baptized (at age 8), my sister and I were lying in our beds talking. I remember telling my sister that my sins had been washed away and I was going to be perfect—no mistakes. Shortly after, I used a slang term in responding to something my sister said. I was devastated; I had just been baptized and already I was impure with sin. My sister could tell how upset I was, and she told me that she would pray and ask God to put that sin on her instead of me.

As I got older, this perfectionism doctrine was continually reinforced by such teachings as the following:

“ . . . So in the celestial kingdom, **we must be worth in every point**, or we fail to receive the blessing. . . **Every law must be obeyed**, and **no member of the Church can have a place there unless he is in full accord**. . .” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 3, pages 26-27, 1960)

“ . . . Repentance means not only to convict yourselves of the horror of the sin, but to confess it, abandon it, and restore to all who have been damaged to the total extent possible; then **spend the balance of your lives trying to live the commandments of the Lord so he can eventually pardon you and cleanse you**.” (Spencer W. Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 200)

“ . . . However, one of the untrue doctrines found in modern Christendom is the concept that man can gain salvation (meaning in the kingdom of God) by grace alone and without obedience. This soul-destroying doctrine has the obvious effect of lessening the determination of **an individual to conform to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel, such conformity being essential if the sought for reward is in reality to be gained**.” (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pages 670, 671)

I didn't stand a chance of growing up with a good self image. I couldn't feel good about myself if I wasn't perfect; I couldn't be perfect, so I could never feel good about myself. How could God love and accept me when I was unable to obey Him in all things?

This perfectionism doctrine is straight from the pit of Hell. Christ would never have needed to shed His blood for people who could be perfect (Romans 3:23). Don't let Satan trap you with guilt and shame. God's way is conviction, not condemnation.

Guilt for sin was not the only "guilt" I felt. I had let my family down. I was the weak link in the Mormon chain. Some of my ancestors were among the first Mormon pioneers; one was even murdered for his beliefs during the Haun's Mill Massacre. God helped me to realize these feelings were displaced loyalties. Pride in my Mormon ancestors had been built upon the false assumption that they had brought the one true gospel into my life. I had no obligation to further promote a lie or to feel guilty for having disassociated myself with my family's religious beliefs. God was breaking the chains of bondage in my family line through me. I was the pioneer.

Along with guilt, Satan bombarded me with fears when I left the Mormon church. I was afraid of what people would think about me, afraid of providing financially for my children and myself, and afraid of the consequences of breaking my temple covenants. I had taken blood oaths in the temple. I wondered if something terrible would happen to me. Could there possibly be a secret group of Danites left over from Brigham Young's time who continued to kill ex-Mormons? I realized as time went on that God was in control of everything. As I grew in my relationship to Him, I came to understand that it didn't matter what anyone else but God thought about me. Not only did I understand it, but I felt it as well. Whether or not there were still Danites in the land, I didn't need to fear. No one could hurt me until God's plan for my life was completed. When I burned my temple garments, I felt as if a 500 pound weight lifted off my body immediately. There was no power in a lie that had held me captive for 38 years. God had set me free! To survive despite my many fears, I had to stay close to the Lord through:

- Prayer and supplication for courage.
- Studying God's word to build my confidence in God's provision.
- Acting in faith—no matter how terrified I might be.

I allowed my self-identity crises, rejection, persecution, demonic oppression, loneliness, temptation, guilt and fear to trap me on an emotional rollercoaster for quite some time. This happened because I kept looking at the circumstances instead of Jesus. And yet, it took time to learn to trust in Jesus, so the rollercoaster rides were inevitable, if not necessary, in teaching me how and why to trust in Him. Even now, I will occasionally go for an unnecessary ride on that rollercoaster. It's tough staying off of it because the flesh wants to react to circumstances it views as threatening, instead of giving the stress, fear or anxiety over to the Lord and trusting that He will work out the situation. We can live joyful, Christian lives if we'll just stay off of that miserable rollercoaster!

Chapter 4

ANGER

About one year after leaving Mormonism, I went through a time when I felt angry at almost everyone and everything. This anger was stirred by emotions I had repressed—some of them for years. At first I felt guilty; I was still living with the mindset that negative emotions should not be expressed. The junk had to come out, and God was forcing me to deal with a painful past; it was the only way I could be free of it.

I felt like the Mormon church had taken thirty-eight years of my life. I wanted them back! All the long, tedious hours I had spent doing temple and genealogical work meant nothing. All the hours I had spent preparing lessons for children and youth only furthered the Mormon deception. I had spent years trying to be everything and do everything the church had expected of me. I had come close to physical and emotional collapse trying to please the Mormon church. And it was all for nothing! I had been defrauded out of tens of thousands of dollars in tithes and offerings. If I had known I belonged to a religious cult I would never have given them a dime! I wanted my money back!

The Mormon church had promoted itself as the only way to salvation:

“There is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”
(*Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, pp. 1-350*)

What if I had died and found myself in Hell instead of some “kingdom”? How dare the Mormon church put me or anyone else in that kind of jeopardy! I thought about all the years I had spent beating myself up for not being able to live up to the standard of perfection the Mormon church leaders demanded. How dare they do that to my self-esteem! I thought about that lying, womanizing, talisman carrying, so-called “prophet” Joseph Smith. Oh how I wished I could get my hands on him! I thought about the selfishness of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young in promoting polygamy for their own personal gratification. I thought about all the murders Brigham Young was responsible for and the lives he ruined when he ruled as the “God” of Utah.

Hundreds of hours of my life had been wasted sitting through boring meetings which only took me away from my family and any free time I might have had. I was angry at having been trained to follow the “prophets” blindly. I was angry at all those teachers and leaders who taught me to believe in lies because they hadn’t taken the time to check things out. I was angry at myself for believing the lies and for not checking things out earlier. I was angry at myself for teaching so many children, including my own, about a Jesus who didn’t exist. I was angry at my ancestors for embracing and promoting a lie to their posterity. I was angry because of the way I had been treated when I left Mormonism; those people were supposed to be my friends! I was angry at the Mormon general authorities, for all the years I spent buying into their lies. I was angry at everyone who thought I was crazy, because I knew I wasn’t! I was angry at all the people I spoke to who didn’t care enough to take the time to search for the truth about

Mormonism. I was angry at my ex-husband for all the lies he told about me and for all his attempts at control and manipulation during and after our marriage. I was angry at my parents for not protecting me from the lies of Mormonism. I was angry about my childhood, about my marriage, about the way men had used me all of my life, and about how difficult it was to be a Christian. Believe it or not, I actually spent some time being angry at God for allowing me to be raised in a dysfunctional, Mormon home. That's a lot of anger!

How did I survive the anger stage?

- Prayer--I had to tell God exactly how I felt about everything—true and total venting. I had to be brutally honest with myself and with God.
- Allowing myself to grieve took time and was painful. The weeping, crying and sobbing helped wash away the pain I was holding inside. I didn't want to relive those incidences that hurt me, but it was God's way of taking the junk out of my life.
- Reading and meditating on scriptures about forgiveness helped me come to a better realization that forgiving others was the only way that I could ever heal.
- Giving the burdens to God was the final release. This was difficult for me. It meant I had to forgive and put the past behind me forever—trusting that God would “make things right” in His own way and in His own time.

Life had not been kind to me, but I didn't want to live the rest of my life full of anger. God took away the anger and replaced it with an intense love and compassion for the Mormon people. He opened my mind to see that He had allowed me to be raised as a Mormon for a reason; so that I could be a witness for Him to the Mormon people. How else could I ever understand them? I had to allow myself to grieve for all the years I had lost. Through the raging and the crying, God brought me peace.

Chapter 5

Wounded Hearts

When I first came out of Mormonism, I didn't know what anyone could do to help me. Having lived through the experience, I'd like to share with you some very meaningful ways that Christians can help you, as an ex-Mormon. (Give this list to your pastor and Christian friends when they ask how they can help.)

Supporting Ex-Mormons

- Be there for them. Send uplifting cards, notes or scripture to them.
- Pastors need to be available for counseling. Ex-Mormons will be dealing with differences in doctrines, how to interpret scriptures biblically, family problems, emotional problems, etc.
- Sit by them at church; put your arm around them; give them hugs.
- Invite them to attend a Bible study. This will help them understand God's word instead of what they have been programmed to believe.
- Call them on the telephone; just listen, listen, listen and love, love, love.
- Show compassion. You may not understand what they are going through, but be available as a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on.
- Never be judgmental or critical as they struggle to walk with the Lord. Be there to encourage and to praise.
- Be their replacement family and friends if need be. Love them unconditionally.
- Be helpful in explaining Christian terminology and doctrines with which they may not be familiar.
- Help guide them away from the "wolves in Christian clothing".

It can be very frustrating being an ex-Mormon. I struggled with leaving behind false doctrines and replacing them with the truth. I struggled with guilt because of where I had been and what I had done in my Mormon life. I didn't comprehend at first, the grace of God; I was still trying to function in a "works" mode. I was reluctant to trust again. I became a little abrupt and challenging when I heard unfamiliar Christian doctrines; I wanted proof. I felt insecure in my knowledge of the gospel and it was quite unnerving for me to be considered a "baby Christian".

Ex-Mormons need a safe, secure, loving Christian church body—especially during the first critical year when they come out of Mormonism. As an ex-Mormon, you may act a little crazy after coming out. Be patient with yourself; surround yourself with Christians who are loving and supportive. Coming out of Mormonism is like having been in a cage all of your life, and suddenly you are free—so free, that you may be tempted to go a little too far with that freedom.

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

I'd like to give you an example of the kind of "caged" life a friend of mine lived as a Mormon. To protect her identity, I'll call her Sara.

Sara was the fourth of eight children born to very well-respected Mormon parents. Sara's mother dressed her children in rags even though her husband owned a very lucrative business. Instead of spending money on the children, she spent their money buying every Mormon church book that was ever published. Sara's mother was constantly going to church meetings. One day when Sara was very young, she ran after her mother, crying, because she didn't want her mother to leave her again. Sara's mother got in the car and began to drive off—hitting Sara and knocking her down. Sara's mother got out of the car, picked her up, took her inside the house and told her she would be fine. Then she left for her meeting. All the children in Sara's family were ignored or neglected because Sara's parents were too busy attending church meetings. Sara learned that the "church" was more important than anyone or anything.

Sara's parents would often call their children derogatory names. Sara had no self-esteem. She and her siblings had to be perfect so that their parents would look good to the Mormon community. However, the children could never be good enough; they were too skinny, too fat, not smart enough, etc. When Sara's parents got angry with her as a teenager, they would pull her hair, scratch her, scream at her, and kick her. One night Sara's younger sister came home late from a date. Sara's father broke down the bathroom door and beat her sister black and blue. Later, after this same sister had left home and was twenty years old, Sara's parents beat her up at her apartment because they believed she was having sex with someone.

Sara had some learning disabilities, so her parents told her that she would never be capable of doing anything besides working at a factory. They told her to grow up, get married and not to worry about a career. Her parents were continually pushing her to get married. Sara's mother demanded that she date anyone who asked her out. One time a very unattractive, slightly retarded young man asked her to go out. Sara did not want to date him. Her mother said, "He comes from a good family; he'll make a good husband." Later, this young man's father, a regional Scout director, was accused by six boys of molestation. Nothing was done about the allegations.

Sara remembers when a Mormon school teacher was accused of sexually touching a girl in Utah. He came to Sara's town and was accused by three girls of sexually touching them. He was dismissed as a teacher, yet remained as a Sunday School teacher of young children. Another time, a High Priest was accused of having molested his three stepdaughters for years. One of the stepdaughters filed a complaint against him. He never went to court, retained his church membership, his wife stayed with him, and the church left him in as a High Priest. Sara claims the Mormon church left him alone because he had a lot of money and paid a lot of tithing.

Sara's married sister had a young, Mormon teen girl come to live with her family. This girl's Mormon father and brothers had been sexually molesting her. The father was

a school teacher. No one ever told the school or the church. Sara remembers another time when a Mormon father molested all five of his daughters; fortunately he went to jail. Sara's father insisted that she bathe with him until she was six years old, even though Sara desperately fought it. On the day of Sara's baptism (8 years old), her father insisted that she go into the men's bathroom with him so he could dress her.

Sara's fourteen year old brother was sent to a very difficult BYU survival camp. The director tried to molest him. Other boys had accused the director, but nothing was ever done. Sara remembers her mother running after this same brother with a knife. This brother was taken, repeatedly to a relative's house where he was beaten and cruelly treated by other boys. Sara's parents knew about the situation but allowed it to continue. One time, Sara's father admitted that the way he had gotten her oldest brother to stop crying as an infant was to "slap him across the head enough to knock him out".

Sara's mother took her to the doctor every year; only her. She was too skinny, too depressed, hated to be touched and cried at night. She was very fearful. Her parents' answer to this problem was to lock her in her bedroom and let her cry herself to sleep. There were no consistent rules and no set bedtime at Sara's house. Children were up until midnight on many school nights.

Sara eventually married a man who was unfaithful to her during their courtship and marriage. Her husband told her only once that he loved her. He never told her that she was attractive, or ever gave her a compliment about her appearance. One time, she wanted to buy some intimate lingerie. Her husband told her that it would be a waste of money on her. He complained about her housekeeping and excluded her from his activities with family and friends. When there was barely enough money for groceries, he went out and bought a snowmobile. Some weeks he worked eighty hours. Weekends were spent with his buddies. He never went to school or church activities while they were married. Sara spent her entire married life begging for intimacy, which her husband rarely and reluctantly gave. She kept having babies, hoping to fit in at church, and to feel loved. However, she didn't pay enough tithing nor did she attend church regularly enough to ever be fully accepted.

When Sara began attending a Christian church, she was suddenly visited by Mormon missionaries, the Stake President, visiting teachers, home teachers, etc. She had been ignored for years before that time. Sara's mother started coming over to her house and would rub her hand on Sara's arm or leg to determine whether or not she was still wearing her temple garments. It seemed that suddenly everyone knew everything about Sara's life. Her mother told her she was not a worthy Mormon because she didn't pay tithing; only Sara's bishop was supposed to know that information.

After Sara officially left the Mormon church, her parents threatened to take her children away from her. Sara's husband physically and emotionally abused her. He would pull her hair, and push her out of the way when he was talking to friends. He pushed her into a closet, pushed her down on the couch, left bruises on her arms, dragged her down the hall, slammed her against the car, slammed her into the garage door, shoved

her to the ground, and smashed a cookie in her face. He told her she was ugly on Christmas Day. Another day he grabbed her and pulled her inside the house, and threw her on the floor. Then he dragged her toward the door—twisting her leg, and calling her filthy names in front of their six children. That day, however, Sara’s neighbor heard her screaming, came over and told her husband to leave her alone. Sara then filed a complaint and got a restraining order. When Sara’s mother found out about the restraining order, she was angry with Sara!

Sara’s husband’s affairs were tolerated and overlooked because he had not left the church. Her parents blamed the breakup of Sara’s marriage on her because she had left the church. Sara’s parents would come over at midnight, screaming and yelling at her, terrifying her. “You belong to the church of Satan; you’re Satanic!” they would scream. Sara’s Mormon neighbors began spying on her—telling her parents everything she did, who came over to her house, etc. These same neighbors turned her into Health & Welfare for child neglect (she went grocery shopping and left the children with one of her teenaged children).

Sara’s parents would say things to her like, “What you are doing in the name of Christianity is just what the devil and all his angels want you to do.” “You have dishonored your family.” Sara had to go on welfare because her husband provided her with very little financial support when he moved out. Her parents told her not to expect any financial help from them because she had left the church. Sara’s mother tried to keep her from taking the children to “Logos”, because it was a “satanic influence”. Her parents told her she should just leave her children with her ex-husband and move far away; she was an embarrassment to the family. They would not help take care of her, but they would financially support her ex-husband. Sara’s parents would repeatedly tell her children what a bad mother she was for leaving the Mormon church.

The Mormons have an Article of Faith which says: “We believe in worshiping all mighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege—let them worship how, where, or what they may.” Apparently this doesn’t apply to exiting Mormons.

Sara officially left the church four years ago. She is still struggling emotionally and financially, but I have seen some incredible changes in her personality. God has and will continue to heal the abuse, low self-esteem, phobic fears and insecurities that keep her and other ex-Mormons bound in open cages.

I believe that healing is a lifetime process. Just when I think God has really cleaned things up inside me, some other repressed memory or emotion will rear its ugly head and I know it’s time for me to do battle. I’d like to be healed immediately of everything offensive in my life, but would I learn as much that way? Would I have compassion for others who struggle? I don’t think so. God is wiser than I am. He will heal the wounded, caged souls in His perfect timing, in His perfect way and with His perfect love.

Chapter 6

BEWARE OF THE CULTS

Historically, many people have added to or subtracted from the Bible in order to promote their own ideas and agendas. Religious cults begin this way; a self-proclaimed leader distorts the teachings of historical Christianity and sets himself up as the ultimate authority on God. Many people who join cult groups are highly intelligent and would never consider themselves to be cultists. Cult leaders are powerful and deceptive. They are masters at manipulating their followers through the use of mind control techniques; techniques which distort truth and turn a leader's twisted perception into reality for an entire group of people.

Sun Myung Moon (The Unification Church), Marshall Herff Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Trousedale (Heaven's Gate), David Koresh, Jeffrey Lundgren, Jim Jones and Joseph Smith are all examples of cult leaders. Each one turned away from biblical Christianity and began a cult group based on personal interpretation of scripture. Each one claimed to have had divine revelations or visions. Each one used behavior, information, thought, and emotional control to govern their followers.

Behavior Control. Cults have a rigid schedule for their members. Free time is restricted because of the demands put upon their people. Activities and fellowship revolve around the cult group, thus isolating their followers. Individualism in thought, behavior, dress, etc. is discouraged. The leader does the thinking for them. There is a chain of command, and obedience to the leader is top priority; his word is followed without question. Doubting or questioning is discouraged or even punished. Cult leaders set many strict rules for their followers, yet the leaders view themselves as above the laws and rules of society as well as those they set for their followers. These groups are usually preoccupied with recruiting new members and/or making money.

Information Control. Cult members are told that the majority of their reading should be cult-related. They are not to read or study anything which is critical of their leader or beliefs. Members spy on each other and report infractions or negative comments made about the cult leader. Members are told not to associate with ex-members or critics. By controlling information, cult leaders disable people from finding out the truth about the cult or the leader. Denying information keeps members from making sound judgments. New recruits are told general information which attracts them to the cult, but the insider doctrines are unveiled gradually as a person gets more deeply involved in the cult and less likely to break away.

Thought Control. Cultists have been taught that any information given to them which is critical of their doctrines or leaders, is simply an attack on the cult. They are trained to automatically disbelieve any criticism, no matter how reliable the source. Members are taught techniques which keep them from entertaining or thinking about anything negative in regard to the cult or their leader. Since the cult doctrine and leaders are promoted as perfect, any problem that arises is assumed to be the fault of the cult

member. The cultist learns to blame himself and work harder. Thought control effectively blocks out any feelings that are not in harmony with the group doctrine.

Emotional Control. Members are told that they are an elitist group and yet at the same time, the cult leader uses guilt and fear as effective tools to keep his followers under control. Happiness consists in suffering for a cause, following a leader, recruiting new members, and status within the cult. Loyalty and devotion are the most highly respected emotions of all. Cultists are not allowed to feel or express negative emotions except toward outsiders. Members are taught that they should not be concerned for their own needs, but always think of the group and never complain. Confession of past sins or wrong attitudes is a device cult leaders use for emotional control. Guilt and confession reinforce the insecurities of the members, while elevating the cult leader. Cultists live with fear, guilt and shame. They feel guilt and shame within the cult because they can never meet the standards of perfection set for them. They fear leaving the cult because they have been taught to fear anyone outside the cult. Cultists are told that if they leave the group, they will be lost and defenseless, and terrible consequences will befall them. Cultists feel that there is no security outside the group. When anyone does decide to leave a cult, the former love they received turns to anger, hatred or ridicule.

(To check my sources and for further information on cults: “Combating Cult Mind Control”, by Steven Hassan—international expert on cults; “Cognitive Dissonance Theory”, by Leon Festinger—psychologist; “Deception, Dependency & Dread—The Conversion Process”, by Michael D. Langone—Ph.D.; “Conditions for Thought Reform”, by Margaret T. Singers—Ph.D. Check the internet for these and other resources regarding cults.)

Cults are easy to join, but difficult to escape. They look very good on the outside—they may be involved with charitable work, they may promote virtuous lifestyles, etc. Deep within the center of each cult, however, lies a deceptive, controlling center--the cult leader-- who steals away the minds of his members and turns them into sheep who are willing to blindly follow his/her questionable leadership and doctrines. A cultist’s perception becomes so distorted, that he/she is unwilling to listen to anything which contradicts the cult’s beliefs; the cult leader’s perception has become the only truth.

As Mormons, we belonged to a religious cult. We lived and promoted a twisted and distorted Christianity. The only way to avoid being taken in again, is to hold all doctrines and leaders up to God’s proven word in the Bible. If religious leaders or doctrines contradict those in the Bible, the group cannot be Christian, regardless of their claims. Religious cults, such as those headed by Moon, Applewhite, Koresh, Lundgren, Jones, and Smith, have common elements or “red flags” which set them apart. If the leader of a group displays the majority of the following characteristics, it is very likely that he/she is a cult leader.

1. Leaders are charismatic.
2. Leaders demand and receive unquestioning loyalty, and discourage questioning, doubting and dissention.
3. Leaders set many strict rules to which they alone are above keeping.
4. Leaders claim elite status (prophet, Messiah, etc.).
5. Leaders isolate their followers (physically, socially, or emotionally).
6. Leaders claim that they have a special mission to fulfill.
7. Leaders believe they are above the laws and rules of society.
8. Leaders mislead followers into believing that the ends justify the means.
9. Leaders use guilt and promote confession of “sins” to reinforce the insecurities of others and elevate themselves.
10. Leaders demand that their members spend excessive time devoted to meetings or activities.
11. Leaders dictate many things to their members, such as how to think, act, feel, type of clothing worn, food that may or may not be eaten, hairstyles, etc.
12. Leaders promote and are deceptive in recruiting, money-making tactics, etc. (Withholding or distorting information, and outright lying).
13. Leaders promote an “us versus them” mentality in regard to the government, and may even build their own military group and arsenal.
14. Leaders promote their group as elite or special—set apart from the rest of the world.
15. Leaders promote obedient members with positions of authority or rewards, while demoting or punishing disobedient members.
16. Leaders encourage members to report negative attitudes or actions of other members.
17. Leaders teach members to disbelieve any information which is critical of the group or leader, and to disassociate themselves with ex-members or anyone else who is critical of the group or leader.
18. Leaders tell members that their salvation is dependent upon their involvement with the group or leader.
19. Leaders are obsessed with their members’ sexual purity.
20. Leaders are often involved in extramarital sexual liaisons.
21. Leaders use fear to control their members.
22. Leaders discourage individualism, and promote rigid rules and regulations.
23. Outsider vs. Insider Doctrines

As ex-Mormons, we are susceptible to further cult influence. Rules, regulations, and absolute authority figures have been a way of life to us. Cult leaders thrive on people who want a leader to direct their lives. Freedom in Christ is more difficult, because *we* are responsible to get that direction for ourselves from an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ. We have to make certain that the freedom we have gained is not thrown away by aligning ourselves with yet another cult.

Chapter 7

IT'S TIME TO PRAISE GOD

Disassociating myself from the Mormon church was the best decision I ever made. Although it has brought with it many trials and heartaches, the blessings have been incredible! This final chapter is my way of praising God by sharing with you a few of the extraordinary things that God has blessed me with since I put my faith and trust in Him.

When I left the church in August 1998, I did not have a job. I had taken a year off from teaching school because of marital problems. I thought that if I quit working and devoted myself more fully to my husband, perhaps our marriage would get better. My husband started talking about divorce and I realized that I should get a job—just in case. Teaching contracts had already been signed and there were no open positions in any of the school districts close to my home. I didn't know how I would be able to support my children if my husband divorced me, so I prayed and asked God to help me find work. One month after school started, I received a telephone call from the principal at my former place of employment. He told me that enrollment was greater than expected and that he needed two more teachers. I was asked to teach 2nd grade. Shortly thereafter, my husband filed for divorce, but I had a way to support my children because God had provided for me and my children in our time of need.

After my husband filed for divorce and moved out of the house, he decided to withdraw financial support from the children and I. My salary would not cover all the expenses, especially since I now had attorney fees to pay. I sat my children down and told them that there was no money for anything extra. In fact, we were going to have to live on our food supply in the basement—no treats for awhile. I told the children that I knew God would provide for us. Within about two days, I received a large tax refund in the mail that was not expected for at least another month. It not only paid for groceries, but paid off my attorney as well! God had again provided for our needs.

My husband wanted to fight me for custody of our four children. He had friends of mine who would testify for him, as well as a Stake President from another area. Suddenly I was no longer a good parent; I had left the Mormon church. The judge was also a Mormon. I felt like I had absolutely no chance of keeping my children, and it broke my heart. I had practically raised these children by myself. I had given up my career to stay home with them. I loved them more dearly than I had ever loved anyone. What would I do without them? I prayed and prayed. Some time later, my husband and I had a discussion about child custody. I told him (as my pastor had counseled) that I was looking forward to my day in court. As soon as my husband saw that I was no longer afraid, he backed down. He gave me primary custodial care and we divided our time with the children equally. We did not go to court. God defeated my enemy!

After my husband filed for divorce, he began spreading rumors about me throughout the community. I felt that God was leading me to write a letter to many

family members and friends, explaining to them why I had left the Mormon church. This letter turned into a 30-page paper full of documentation and references. I sent this paper to 50 different addresses. My hope was that it would not only clear my name, but be a witnessing tool. It didn't seem to affect any of the people I sent it to, but Christians began asking for copies of the paper to send to their Mormon friends and family. A couple of Mormon people who had not received a copy asked for one. God promoted that paper and it went all over the United States and even as far as Australia. This was such a blessing to me. I needed to do something for the God who had saved me from an eternity in Hell. I needed to promote the truth to the Mormon people. God met my unspoken needs.

My children were a real source of concern to me. When I left the church, two of them thought I had gone crazy and they wanted nothing to do with Christianity. My continual prayer was for their salvation. Within one year, each of my children had accepted the Lord and turned their backs on Mormonism. My daughter who was the most opposed to Christianity was the first one to accept Christ. God answered my prayers!

Finances have been difficult. As the children got bigger, so did their expenses. I made a few financial mistakes (handling the finances was very new to me) and got myself into some debt. A teacher's salary does not go very far, even with the help of child support. I was faithful to pay tithes, and somehow, each month we were able to pay the bills. God provides for us even when we make mistakes.

Last year my oldest daughter had to have her fifth heart surgery. My daughter and I were to fly to the Mayo Clinic, get our housing squared away, get to appointments in a city we were unfamiliar with, etc. I was nervous, but we prayed. Everything went well. I expected that we would have at least some minor complication during or after surgery, as we had experienced complications each time before. The surgery went perfectly—absolutely perfectly! In fact, we came home early!!! One month later this same daughter got married to the youth pastor of our church. God is the great healer and provider!

The last experience I'd like to share was one of the worst and one of the best of my life. It concerns my youngest daughter who was living with her father at the time of this incident. One night, my daughter's JV basketball team had an away game. The team arrived back at the high school at 10:00 p.m. My daughter got into her car, but never returned home that night.

I received a telephone call from her father at 7:30 a.m. the next morning. No one knew where to find my daughter. Telephone calls had been made, the police had been contacted, but my daughter was still missing. I lived an hour away, so I decided that until we knew more, the best thing our family could do was to pray. We did. I prayed off and on all during the day. I was so scared, but I knew that God knew where my daughter was, and that no matter what happened, He would make it all turn out for good. I knew

all these things, but as a mother with a missing child, my heart was breaking as I battled mental images of what might have happened to her.

Night came, and by this time we had received conflicting police reports, and conflicting reports from the friend who had last seen my daughter. I was despairing and literally at my breaking point. I went into the bathroom to take a shower and was about to allow myself a total breakdown, when the spirit of God hit me powerfully. In my mind, a voice told me to get ready to go get my daughter. Instantly the fear and anguish were replaced with purpose and the strength of God. I no longer felt fearful or anguished. I told my husband of two months what God had told me. As soon as we made it to the town where my daughter had disappeared, we went to the police station and insisted that they immediately question the friend who had last seen my daughter. My husband insisted that we be allowed to go as well. We were given everything we wanted, except that we had to wait down the road while the police officer questioned my daughter's friend. It was after 11:00 p.m. by this time.

During the questioning, the police officer said that the thought had come to him to check an embankment my daughter may have driven off, as she was unfamiliar with the road. We drove to the embankment. The officer told us to wait in our car while he checked things out. I watched him shine his flashlight and then start climbing downward. Within a minute, we saw police cars coming from every direction. We were scared. We knew they had found my daughter and that we were about to know—one way or the other—what had happened to her. My husband asked me to stay in the car until he found out what was going on. I stayed in that car for about ten seconds and then I started toward the police cars. My husband met me and told me that they had found my daughter and that she was alright. A police officer helped me down the steep embankment where I saw my daughter trapped in her car. She spoke with me and I was able to kiss her and hug her—carefully. All she could remember was that she had awakened and it was cold and dark. She was hurt and unable to get out of the car, but she had been able to cover herself with a blanket. When she tried to call with her cell phone, her minutes had run out. We found out later that her phone would have worked if she had dialed 911. By the time the medical personnel got my daughter out of the car, she had been sitting there for 24 hours.

We were able to piece together what had happened after my daughter left her friend's house. The police said she must have been traveling at least 50-55 mph when she hit the guard rail. Instead of crushing her, the rail acted like a ramp. Her car sailed 170 feet through the air and landed 35 feet down below the highway, in a marshy, weedy mess. If the car had landed two feet further to the right, she would have hit deep water and probably have drowned in her car. That night, January 25th, we had uncommonly warm weather. If it had been colder, the doctors told us she would have gotten frost bite and possibly have died from hypothermia. And yet, it was cold enough to stop her head wound from bleeding.

My daughter sustained a pelvic fracture, another fracture in her tailbone area, a fractured neck bone, torn ligaments on her left ankle, a lacerated and bruised kidney,

liver, spleen and lungs, and a head wound three inches long that went to her skull. And yet, with all these injuries, she did not require any surgery! Every injury healed on its own. Only God could have done this! When my daughter was in the hospital, I would pray over her each day. Every time I asked God to strengthen her or to help her dizziness to subside when she was having physical therapy, God came through. God never left my daughter or me during this crises. He will never leave or forsake any of His children under any circumstances.

God has been so good to me! I love Him so much and want to spend the rest of my life serving Him in whatever way I can. Mine is not a perfect life, it is a blessed life! Giving up Mormonism seems like such a small price to pay when I look back on the past five years and see what God has done for me.

Leaving Mormonism isn't enough; you must seek a relationship with Jesus Christ—the biblical Jesus. The Bible is the proven, infallible word of God! The Jesus of the Bible promises salvation through faith on His name. You may feel tempted to disbelieve everyone and everything after having been deceived by Mormonism. Don't fall into that trap—it's Satanic. There is a God and His truth is in the Bible! How incredibly blessed we are to have such a loving God to protect us, to direct us and to forgive us. You can accept Christ as your Savior by:

- admitting you are a sinner,
- believing that Christ died for your sins,
- confessing your sins, and
- asking Jesus Christ to come into your life.

God's greatest blessings will begin to pour down upon you in measure too great to believe! You will be "born again" and your salvation will be secure. Your life—the one you were meant to live—will begin. As you grow in your relationship to God, you will feel His presence. There is no greater "high" than to feel the power of God fall upon you. You will see His hand working in your life and your gratitude will be greater than words could ever express. God bless you as you begin the greatest, most incredibly satisfying journey of your life!

White-Washed Sepulchers

*Glistening, beautiful, masterful illusion of peace.
Pleasing to the eye, it lures me within.
I cannot see clearly for it is dimly lit,
But all who dwell inside assure me that it is more glorious than I can imagine.*

*I forge a life within surrounded by the stony, cold walls built from secrets and sins of my
embraced heroes.
I am surrounded by a death I cannot see;
Enslaved within a white-washed tomb.*

*I am taught how to act
But the dead cannot teach me how to act out of love because they know nothing of love.
I am taught what to believe
But the dead cannot make me believe that I am valuable or loved.
I am taught to disregard myself and my needs,
But the dead refuse to see that I have needs that must be met.*

*Day after day, years go by as the dead teach me a life in which I am preparing myself for
burial with them.
I cry out for love, for something, anything, to fill the empty, painful pit in my soul, but no
one hears.
I am surrounded by the security of a lifetime of insecurities.
Mine is a legacy of death left to me as an inheritance from the dead.
I see no escape and I despair of life.*

*A light breaks through and I see that the one who has always loved me is beckoning for
me to leave the white-washed caverns of Hell.
“I will be your family. I will love you and care for you. There is life in me,” He gently
whispers. “Trust me.”
His hand reaches down and I clutch it desperately—knowing that I will surely die if I stay
in this place.*

*Suddenly, warmth and sunlight explode around and inside me. The weight of death lifts
from me and I am free!
I stumble in my walk with you, for these are new legs I am traveling with. You never
leave me—you never cast me off.*

*You are all I have ever needed. Thank you for teaching me to love. Thank you for letting
me experience what it means to be loved.
I owe you everything. Without you there is no life.*

Appendix A

The Bible is unique in so many ways. Its theme and purpose are consistent from Genesis to Revelations. This is quite remarkable when you consider that the Bible was written over a 1500-year span (1400 B.C. – 100 A.D), by 40 different men, on three continents (Europe, Asia, Africa), in different places such as the wilderness, dungeons, palaces and cities, and written in three languages (Hebrew and Aramaic—Old Testament, and Greek—New Testament). Yet despite all this, the Bible is consistent and harmonious.

The circulation and translation of the Bible are unique. This book has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. It was the first book translated, and has been translated and retranslated more than any other book in existence. Currently, the Bible has been translated into more than 2,200 languages!

The Bible is unique in its survival. The Jewish people preserved these manuscripts as no other. Only certain special classes of men in their culture were allowed to preserve and transmit these documents. These men were expected to do so with perfection. They actually counted the letters, syllables, words and paragraphs to make certain they had copied everything correctly! In comparison with other ancient writings, there is by far more manuscript evidence for the Bible than for any other piece of classical literature. For example, there are over 24,000 manuscripts in existence today which show how accurately the New Testament has been transmitted—copied and recopied down through the ages. Scholars list the accuracy of the New Testament at 98 – 99%. The book with the next greatest number of manuscript evidences is Homer’s “Iliad”, with fewer than 650 Greek manuscripts.

The problem with the Old Testament was that before 1947, the oldest complete extant (existing) Hebrew manuscript was dated at around 900 A.D. Many changes could have occurred during this period of time. However, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, manuscripts were found which scholars dated at before the time of Christ. In fact, every book of the Old Testament has been found within the Dead Sea Scrolls except the book of Esther. Scholar after scholar has stated that the manuscripts they have studied show that the standard Hebrew Bible we have today lines up within 95% to these ancient manuscript writings. The variations they found consisted of slips of the pen and variations in spelling. What does this mean? It means that the Old Testament we have today is the same Old Testament that Jesus quoted from. If there had been errors in it, wouldn’t He have fixed them instead of quoting from them?

The Bible is unique in its prophecies. It is the only book in which is found a large number of prophecies relating to individual nations, to Israel, and to all the peoples of the earth. Every prophecy in the Bible—excluding end time prophecies yet to be fulfilled—has come to pass. Think about it. One hundred percent accuracy! There are over four dozen prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. Some of these include His virgin birth, His birth in Bethlehem, His genealogy as a descendent of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, His coming from the tribe of Judah, His betrayal, manner of death and

resurrection. The chances of one person fulfilling each one of these prophecies is astronomically impossible! And yet, each one was fulfilled in Christ.

Archaeology has shown the Bible's history and geography to be accurate. This book is absolutely incredible! Archaeological artifacts have never contradicted any statement in the Bible. Not only do we have all the above evidences (and more) for the reliability of the Bible, but we have God's promises to preserve His word:

Isaiah 40:8	“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”
Matthew 5:18	“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”
Matthew 16:18	“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
Matthew 24:35	“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
Luke 16:17	“And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.”
1 Peter 1:25	“But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

In summary, the Bible has not been mistranslated (from one language to another) or transmitted incorrectly (taking a document from one time period to another). All the evidences prove quite the opposite. Dr. Gleason Archer, in his book, “Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties,” has stated:

“There is a good and sufficient answer in Scripture itself to refute every charge that has ever been leveled against it. But this is only to be expected from the kind of book the Bible asserts itself to be, the inscripturation of the infallible, inerrant Word of the Living God.”

People I have encountered who claim the Bible has not been correctly translated, and is, therefore, full of errors, simply have not done their research. They have relied upon statements made by others, instead of checking out the facts. My experience has been that people who claim the Bible to be full of contradictions are:

- a) not familiar with the Bible or historical Christianity.
- b) taking scriptures out of context.
- c) exaggerating or distorting the facts.

- d) mixing the doctrines of men with holy scripture.
- e) failing to recognize figurative language contained in the Bible.
- f) lacking a knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages, from which the Bible was translated.
- g) trying to make the Word of God fit into their perception of truth, which may be at odds with God's truth.

We have God's authenticated, proven word in the Bible, and it is our obligation, once we know how reliable it is, to hold all other beliefs and opinions up to its truth.

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Appendix B

GOD(S) OF MORMONISM

- 1. Material (a physical body of flesh and bones)**
--Joseph Smith, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 6, p.3
--Mormon Doctrine, p. 278
- 2. Mortal (a time when He didn't exist)**
--Orson Pratt, "The Seer", 1853, p. 132
--Mormon Doctrine, p. 321
- 3. Changeable, Evolving**
--Wilford Woodruff, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 6, p. 120
--Brigham Young, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 11, p. 286.
- 4. Physically localized (is in one place at a time)**
--Mormon Doctrine, p. 319
- 5. Polygamous**
--Orson Pratt, "The Seer", Nov. 1853, p. 172.
--Brigham Young, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 1, pp. 50, 51
- 6. Polytheistic (thousands of Gods)**
--Mormon Doctrine, pp. 576-577
--Doctrine and Covenants 132:20

GOD OF THE BIBLE

- 1. Immaterial (spirit)**
--Jeremiah 23:24
--John 4:24
--1 Timothy 6:16
- 2. Immortal (has always existed)**
--Psalms 90:2
--1 Timothy 1:17
--1 Timothy 6:16
- 3. Immutable (doesn't change)**
--Malachi 3:6
- 4. Omnipresent (many places at one time)**
--Jeremiah 23:24
- 5. Celibate**
--no mention anywhere in the Bible that God the Father was married.
- 6. Monotheistic (one God)**
--Isaiah 43:10-11
--Isaiah 44:6, 8
--Isaiah 45:5, 6, 14, 21
--Isaiah 46:9
--Deuteronomy 4:35, 39
--Mark 12:32
--Romans 3:29, 30
--1 Corinthians 8:4
--Ephesians 4:6
--1 Timothy 1:17
--James 2:19

GOD(S) OF MORMONISM

- 7. Tritheistic (3 Earth Gods—Father, Son and Holy Ghost)**
--Mormon Doctrine, p. 319

- 8. Exalted, Saved Man**
--Joseph Smith, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 5, p.3
--Mormon Doctrine, pp. 321, 742

- 9. Eternally Progressing in Certain Attributes**
--Wilford Woodruff, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 6, p.120
--Brigham Young, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 11, p. 286

- 10. Feminine Counterpart (heavenly mother)**
--Mormon Doctrine, p. 516

- 11. Adam, Once Considered God**
--Brigham Young, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 1, pgs. 50, 51

- 12. Jesus, Begotten by Elohim's Physical Intercourse with Mary**
--Brigham Young, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 8, p. 115
--Mormon Doctrine, pgs. 546, 547

- 13. Polygamist Jesus—Probably Married to Martha and Mary Magdalene**
--Orson Hyde, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 2, p. 210
--Brigham Young, "Journal of Discourses", Vol. 11, p. 328
--Orson Pratt, "The Seer", Nov. 1853, p. 172.

GOD OF THE BIBLE

- 7. Trinitarian (3 personages = 1 God)**
--John 14: 7, 10-11
--1 Peter 1:2 (The Father is God.)
--John 20:28 (Jesus is God)
--Acts 5:3, 4 (The Holy Spirit is God.)
--Matthew 28:19
--1 John 5:7

- 8. Eternal Deity**
--Numbers 23:19
--Hosea 11:9
--Romans 1:22-23

- 9. Eternally Immutable in All Characteristics**
--Malachi 3:6

- 10. No Feminine Counterpart**
--no mention anywhere in the Bible of a feminine counterpart

- 11. Adam, A Creation of God**
--Genesis 1:26, 27

- 12. Jesus Begotten Supernaturally by the Holy Spirit**
--Matthew 1:20

- 13. Jesus Celibate**
--no mention anywhere in the Bible that Jesus was married

GOD(S) OF MORMONISM

14. Jesus Christ—Firstborn spirit child of Heavenly Father. Brother of Lucifer. Brother to all mankind. Existed with mankind in a pre-existent state.
--Mormon Doctrine, pgs. 129, 192, 193

GOD OF THE BIBLE

14. Jesus—Has always existed as God
--John 1:1
Lucifer was an angel, not a brother
--Ezekiel 28:13, 14, 15
Mankind is a creation of God, not brothers or sisters.
--Genesis 1:26, 27
Did not live in a pre-existent state with man—mankind did not exist spiritually first.
--1 Corinthians 15:46, 49

**The LDS Church News reported: “In bearing testimony of Jesus Christ, President Hinckley spoke of those outside the Church who say Latter-day Saints ‘do not believe in the traditional Christ. No, I don’t. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak. For the Christ of whom I speak has been revealed in this the Dispensation of the Fulness [sic] of Times’” (June 20, 1998).*

Christians are followers of Jesus Christ—the Jesus of the Bible. Mormons have been taught to trust in a different Jesus. Both Jesus’ are both born in Bethlehem, died on the cross and were resurrected. But Mormonism has added things to the character and teachings of their Jesus which are not Biblical—thus changing who Jesus is.

“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him . . . For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; **for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness;** whose end shall be according to their works.” (2 Corinthians 11:4, 13-15)

Appendix C

First of all, let's research the word "church". The New Testament—wherein the word "church" is found—was translated into English from Greek. The Greek word for "church" is Ekklesia; Ek meaning "out" and kaleo meaning "to call". The "church" therefore, is the people who are called out as believers in Christ. The "church" is the body of believers, not an institution or organization. The Mormon church teaches that unless a church is specifically called "The Church of Jesus Christ", it can't be the true church. Other requisites include that the true church must have the same organization (apostles and prophets), as did Christ's original church (see Mormon Doctrine, p. 139). Let's see how the apostle Paul addressed the "church" in his letters to them.

1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the ***church of God*** which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

2 Corinthians 1:1 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the ***church of God*** which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia."

Ephesians 1:1 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to ***the saints which are at Ephesus***, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:1 "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all ***the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi***, . . ."

Colossians 1:1, 2 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, To ***the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse***: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 1:1 "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto ***the church of the Thessalonians*** which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Thessalonians 1:1 "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto ***the church of the Thessalonians*** in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The apostle Paul did not use a specific name to address the "church". Christ's "church" is the body of believers, not a specific organization. Paul was concerned, however, with making certain that the gospel was being taught accurately. The name of a church will not tell you if it is a true Christian church, but the teachings taught therein will identify it quickly.

The Mormon church teaches that Christ's "church" had the same officers and organization as the Mormon church has today. Let's check it out, using the Bible as our accurate and reliable source of truth. Nowhere in the Bible do we see the following offices which the Mormon church has within its organization: the quorum of the First Presidency, Assistants to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, the first seven Presidents of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric.

Apostles: There was only one man chosen to fill the vacancy in the original twelve apostles from which Judas fell. In Acts 1:21-23 we can see there were certain qualifications that an apostle had to meet. **One called as an apostle must have accompanied Jesus and have been a witness of his resurrection** (Acts 1:21-26; 5:32; Luke 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:8). Paul claimed that he was the last person to see the risen Christ and to receive an apostolic calling (1 Corinthians 15:8). Now consider for a moment, the building of a house. A house needs a solid foundation. Once a foundation is built, there is no need to build another foundation. The house is built from the one foundation up. Ephesians 2:20 says, "And are built upon the foundation *of the apostles* and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;" The scripture doesn't say, "built upon the foundation *of apostles* and prophets, . . ." This scripture tells us that Christ's church is built upon **the** foundation (singular foundation) of **the** apostles (singular group). This foundation never needed to be rebuilt because the Bible tells us in Matthew 16:18:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

In order for Christ's church to have been taken off the earth (making a second foundation of apostles necessary), the gates of Hell would have had to prevail, making God a liar.

Prophets: "***For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.***" (Matthew 11:13)

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." (Luke 16:16)

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" (Hebrews 1:1-2)

These scriptures indicate that there was not a designated "prophet" after John the Baptist. There have been men and women who have been given the gift of prophecy since that time (Acts 13:1, Acts 15:32, Acts 21:10-11, Acts 21:9, Acts 2:16-18). The calling as prophet—spokesman for God—is different than the gift of prophecy. In the past, God spoke through a prophet. Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that now God speaks through His Son, Jesus Christ. The Mormon church has a "prophet" when the word of God tells us we no longer need one.

High Priests. The duty of the Jewish High Priest was to offer sacrifices for sins. (Hebrews 5:1) Leviticus 8 tells how these sacrifices were to be made for sin, and how Aaron and his sons were called and consecrated as High Priests. The Mormon High Priests do not follow this biblical pattern. Hebrews 7 tells us that ***Christ was the last High Priest and continues as High Priest forever***—there is no need for others to be ordained. Christ offered a sacrifice for sin once for all when he offered up Himself. Why would we continue to need a High Priest when Christ made the last, ultimate sacrifice for sin?

Seventies. “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.” (Luke 10:1) This scripture speaks of a time when Christ sent out seventy witnesses or missionaries. ***There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate this is an office of the priesthood***, or that this was ever repeated.

Elders. Titus 1:5-6 gives the qualifications for an elder: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be ***blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly***.” Unmarried Mormon males are ordained Elders before they can serve missions, even though the Bible teaches that an Elder must be a married man. The Mormon church does not follow the biblical guidelines for the office of Elder.

Patriarch or Evangelist. In the Mormon church, the patriarch gives blessings to members of the church. He seals blessings upon them and pronounces their lineage. However, ***there is nothing in the New Testament about the need of a Patriarch***. There is nothing that indicates that an evangelist is another term for Patriarch. Evangelists are preachers of God’s word (2 Timothy 4:2-5).

Bishops: “For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” (Titus 1:7-9) See also 1 Timothy 3:1-7 for qualifications of a Bishop.

Priests: ***The New Testament does not list the office of priest as part of the church.*** And yet, young Mormon men, aged 16, qualify for this “office”. Priests were no longer needed after Christ became the last, ultimate sacrifice.

Teachers. The Mormon church ordains boys at the age of 14 to be teachers. The New Testament speaks of teachers: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, ***the same commit thou to faithful men***, who shall be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

Deacons. Mormon boys as young as 12 years old are ordained as deacons. “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless “. . . ***Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.***” (1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12) Twelve year old boys are not normally husbands and fathers.

Pastors. Ephesians 4:11 speaks of pastors. ***The Mormon church does not have any pastors.*** Instead they claim that a pastor is the same as a bishop even though the Bible lists them separately.

Regarding the above “offices”, I have found the following information: ***Brigham Young didn’t believe that boys should be Deacons*** (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, p. 89); ***Brigham Young ordained his own sons to be Apostles when they were 18 and 11 years old*** (“Church Chronology”, Compiled by Andrew Jenson, Assistant Church Historian, Salt Lake City, 1899, p. xxvii); ***Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor to Brigham Young, ordained his boy a High Priest when he was only about 6 years old*** (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 10, pp. 370-372).

The Mormon priesthood and its offices have changed repeatedly over time. If you want to do your own research, there is a fascinating book filled with excellent and accurate documentation. The title is: “The Mormon Hierarchy—Origins of Power” by D. Michael Quinn (Ph.D. from Yale University).

There is nothing biblical about the Mormon priesthood. ***When Christ shed His blood, making an atonement once and for all, the Aaronic Priesthood was no longer needed*** (Hebrews 7-10). The whole purpose of the Aaronic Priesthood was to act as mediator between the people and God in regard to sin. These were the men who offered up the animal sacrifices for the people, which sacrifices acted as a covering for sin. Christ was the last, ultimate sacrifice for sin. Secondly, ***in order for a man to hold the Aaronic Priesthood, he would have to be a Jew who was a literal descendant of Aaron--of the Tribe of Levi*** (Hebrews 7:5; Exodus 28:1, 29:9,44; 31:10; Numbers 3:1-10). Jesus did not meet this qualification, and yet every Mormon male does?

The Melchizedek priesthood could never have been given to Joseph Smith because Christ alone holds it forever (Hebrews 7). The Melchizedek priesthood can only be held by one person at a time. This priesthood is a saving office that only Christ could hold. ***There is no mention anywhere in the New Testament of believers having the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthoods conferred upon them.***

Just because a church uses the name of Jesus Christ in its title, does not make it Christ’s one true church. The “church” is the body of believers who are following Christ, not an organization or institution. For the “church” to be true, the people must be learning and teaching true principles as set forth in the Bible. Distorting “offices” or

“priesthoods” from those in the Bible would indicate that a “church” is not following Christ, but promoting the views of its leader.

Appendix D

God has given us ways to determine whether or not someone is truly a prophet of God. In Deuteronomy 18:20-22 we are told about one of these ways:

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? **When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken,** but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.”

If I am going to presume to speak for God, to be His prophet, then every single one of my prophecies must come to pass. If I am wrong about even one of them, I am a false prophet. If we are to believe the testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet, then we need to check his prophecies for accuracy—100% accuracy.

Joseph Smith wrote a letter to N.E. Seaton, on January 4, 1833. He stated: “And now I am prepared to say, **by the authority of Jesus Christ**, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; **pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land**, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country . . . flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, **for there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things**, which I have spoken, fulfilled.” (History of the Church, Vol. 1, pp. 315-316) *This never happened.*

“Verily **this is the word of the Lord**, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, **which temple shall be reared in this generation. For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord**, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house. (Doctrine & Covenants 84:4-5) *This revelation was given in September of 1832. It has now been over 170 years since Joseph Smith prophesied that the temple would be built in “this generation” in the western boundaries of the state of Missouri (Independence). The people of that generation never did return to build a temple, and one still does not exist there today.*

In 1835, Joseph Smith prophesied that the second coming of Jesus Christ was near, and that 56 years would wind up the scene. (History of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 182) (See also: Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, Vol. 2, pp. 128-129) *If this had been a true prophecy, Christ would have returned in the year 1891.*

In 1829, when the Book of Mormon was being printed, more money was needed to finish it. Joseph Smith and other church leaders had been waiting on Martin Harris to sell his farm to raise the money needed. After some time, Hyrum Smith and others became impatient and wanted to raise the money another way. Hyrum said it had been suggested that some of the brethren go to Toronto, Canada to sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon. Hyrum convinced Joseph to inquire of the Lord. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the seer stone and received a revelation instructing some of the brethren to go to Toronto, Canada and sell the copyright. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed to sell the copy-right.

B.H. Roberts (noted LDS Church Historian) has stated, trying to justify the above revelation:

“The revelation respecting the Toronto journey was **not of God**, surely; **else it would not have failed**; but the Prophet, overwrought in his deep anxiety for the progress of the work, saw reflected in the ‘Seer Stone’ **his own thought**, or that suggested to him by his brother Hyrum, **rather than the thought of God** . . . in this instance of the Toronto journey, **Joseph was evidently not directed by the inspiration of the Lord.**” (A Comprehensive History of the Church, Vol. 1, pp. 164-165) *There is no way to justify this “mistake” being made by a man claiming to be a prophet of God.*

“I will say here, that I could tell you other false revelations that came through Brother Joseph as mouthpiece, (not through the stone) but this will suffice. Many of Brother Joseph’s revelations were never printed. The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed.” (An Address to All Believers in Christ, by David Whitmer, 1887, p. 31)

On October 15, 1843, Joseph Smith stated: “**I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God of Israel**, anguish and wrath and tribulation and the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from the earth await **this generation, until they are visited with utter desolation.**” (History of the Church, Vol. 6, p. 58) *Another false prophecy.*

Joseph Smith made at least 53 false prophecies of which I am aware. For a list of these prophecies, write to:

H.I.S. Ministeries International
P.O. Box 900415
Sandy, UT 84093

Or, you may access this information at www.hismin.com/53FlsPro.htm. Check out the references for yourself. There is no way of escaping the fact that Joseph Smith made many false prophecies.

Matthew 7:15, 16 tells us of another way to discern a true prophet from a false prophet:

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. . .”

The fruits of an apple tree are apples, not pears. The fruits of Christ “tree” would reflect the teachings of Christ. The fruits of an evil tree would distort the teachings of Christ. God would never command a prophet to speak in opposition to His established word; to contradict His holy scriptures.

Biblical teachings about the nature of God were drastically changed by Joseph Smith. The God of the Bible is not the God of Mormonism—Gordon B. Hinckley admitted the same. Listed below is one of many other examples wherein Joseph Smith’s church is in contradiction to biblical teachings.

Genealogy: The Mormon church has spent millions of dollars maintaining one of the world’s greatest genealogical societies. There are hundreds of millions of names and data about people who have lived in the past which are available for study. The reason for this genealogy, is so that work can be done for the dead in Mormon temples--baptisms, endowments, sealings. Mormons believe that 1 Corinthians 15:29 promotes baptism for the dead as a biblical teaching. The apostle Paul said:

“Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.” (1 Timothy 1:4)

“But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain.” (Titus 3:9)

“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) (Psalms 49:7, 8)

The Bible tells us that genealogies are pointless, and that no one can do redemptive work for another person. The scripture in 1 Corinthians 15:29 says, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?” Throughout 1 Corinthians, Paul refers to the Corinthian believers and himself using first-person pronouns (“we”, “ye”, “I”). But when he comes to 1 Corinthians 15:29—the verse dealing with baptism for the dead—Paul switches to the third person pronoun (“they”). Paul is referring to people other than Christians in Corinth. Paul seems to be disassociating himself from the group practicing these proxy baptisms. There is no mention of baptism for the dead anywhere else in the Bible. The Bible contains no specific authorization of this doctrine, or of endowments and sealings. Christ does not mention them, nor do any of the apostles, save Paul, who makes only an indirect reference to baptism for the dead.

There are no examples in the Bible where God tells one of His prophets that it is permissible to lie. God’s prophets do not lie about His truths. In this regard, we must ask, “Did Joseph Smith ever lie about what he claimed were God’s truths?”

In the beginning, the Mormon Church did not believe in plural marriage. In the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, printed in 1835, section 101:4 states:

“ . . . Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.”

However, even before this 1835 statement, Joseph had already married one plural wife, Fanny Alger. At the time Joseph Smith recorded the revelation on plural marriage, in 1843, he had twenty-eight plural wives. There could possibly have been more. The data shows that 33% of Joseph Smith’s wives were teenagers—14 to 20 years old. Another 27% were 21 to 30 years old. In Joseph Smith’s peer group, ages 31 to 40, the percentage was 24%. Only 6% were ages 41-50, and 9% were ages 51-60.

Eighteen of Joseph’s wives (55%) were single when he married them and had never been married previously. Another four (12%) were widows. The remaining eleven women (33%) were married to other husbands with whom they were living, when Joseph Smith married them. All together, before Joseph Smith died, there is documentation that shows he was married to at least thirty-three women besides Emma.

In the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, printed in 1835, section 101:4 states: “**All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled . . .**” Joseph Smith was not following his own doctrine.

Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants today states that the revelation on plural marriage was **recorded** on July 12, 1843. But, before 1890 it read “**given**” July 12, 1843. Joseph F. Smith (Journal of Discourses Vol. 20, p. 29 in 1878), in order to justify the fact that Joseph Smith had already married many plural wives before this revelation came out said:

“To put this matter more correctly before you, I here declare that the principle of plural marriage was not first revealed on the 12th day of July, 1843. It was written for the first time on that date, but it had been revealed to the Prophet many years before that, perhaps as early as 1832.”

Regardless of the above statement, the fact is that the following statements by Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith were given at the same time plural marriage was being practiced:

“But, for the information of those who may be assailed by those foolish tales about two wives, we would say that **no such principle ever existed among the Latter-Day Saints, and never will**; this is well known to all who are acquainted with our books and actions, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants; and also all our periodicals are

very strict and explicit on that subject, indeed far more so than the bible.” (Joseph Smith, Millennial Star, Vol. 3, p. 74 in 1842)

“All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled. Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: **we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband**, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.” (Joseph Smith, “Times & Seasons”, Vol. 3, p. 909 in 1842)

“. . . Whereas brother Richard Hewitt has called on me to-day, to know my views concerning some doctrines that are preached in your place, and states to me that some of your elders say, that a man having a certain priesthood, may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here: I say unto you that that man teaches **false doctrine, for there is no such doctrine taught here; neither is there any such thing practiced here**. And any man that is found teaching privately or publicly any such doctrine, is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the High Council, **and lose his license and membership also**; therefore he had better beware what he is about.” (Hyrum Smith, “Times & Seasons”, Vol. 5, p. 474 in 1844)

“As we have lately been credibly informed, that an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints, by the name of Hiram Brown, **has been preaching Polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines**, in the county of Lapeer, state of Michigan.”

“This is to notify him and the Church in general, that **he has been cut off from the church, for his iniquity**; and he is further notified to appear at the Special Conference, on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges.” (Joseph Smith, “Times & Seasons”, Vol. 5, p. 423 in 1844)

Despite Joseph F. Smith’s reasoning, Joseph Smith was lying to the public about Polygamy, which he later called the “most Holy Principle.” This fact alone would disqualify Joseph as being a true prophet because true prophets would never lie about God’s doctrines of salvation. For more information on this topic:

“In Sacred Loneliness The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith”
--Todd Compton/Signature Books, Salt Lake City
(Todd Compton, Ph.D., among other noteworthy achievements, is the recipient of a Best Article Award from the Mormon History Association.)

If a prophet of God translated ancient writings from one language into another, claiming that he did so with the power of God, wouldn’t you assume that the translation would be correct? Let’s examine Joseph Smith’s ability to translate “The Book of Abraham.”

On July 4, 1835, Michael H. Chandler was in Kirtland, Ohio, exhibiting his collection of four Egyptian mummies. (History of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 235) Several of the brethren in the LDS Church were very interested in this exhibit because of the ancient writings written on papyri which had been found with the mummies. These brethren paid Mr. Chandler \$2,400.00 to purchase the entire exhibit. These men then presented it to Joseph Smith. (History of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 236)

“. . . with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I [Joseph Smith] commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.—a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth.” (History of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 236)

Along with the translation of the papyri, Joseph Smith also prepared an alphabet and grammar of the Egyptian language. The Saints felt that if Joseph Smith could decipher Egyptian characters from the papyri, it was further evidence that he was a prophet of God.

As the translation of the Book of Abraham papyrus continued, its contents began to justify the newer doctrines that Joseph Smith had recently introduced into the church, such as: eternal progression, plurality of Gods, the pre-existence of spirits, and priesthood authority.

Up until the year 1799, when the Rosetta Stone was discovered, Egyptian hieroglyphics could not be understood. After many years of dedicated work on the Rosetta Stone, scholars were able to decipher Egyptian. In Joseph Smith’s day, however, very few people in the world had any understanding of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Although the Saints had no one to check the authenticity of the translation, they believed that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and could truly decipher this ancient language.

When the Saints left Nauvoo after the death of Joseph Smith, and headed for the Salt Lake Valley, the papyri stayed behind in the possession of Emma Smith. Although the original papyri stayed with Emma (Joseph’s widow), copies of the facsimiles (pictures from the papyri) had been made and were taken, along with Joseph’s translation of the Book of Abraham, to Utah.

The facsimiles and Joseph Smith’s accompanying explanations were printed in the Pearl of Great Price and many copies made their way to England. In 1856, one of these pamphlets turned up in the Louvre in Paris. M. Theodule Deveria was shown this booklet and was asked to comment on it. Deveria was a pioneer in Egyptology. As he studied the facsimiles, he recognized these pictures as being common funerary documents. He had seen many of these before. Enough of the writing was legible so that Deveria could decipher the names of different Egyptian gods and goddesses. Deveria

claimed Joseph Smith's explanations of the facsimiles were nonsense. ("A Journey to Great Salt Lake City", by Jules Remy, 1861)

In 1880, the Book of Abraham was officially recognized as scripture. In 1912, Rt. Reverend Franklin S. Spaulding, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, sent copies of the facsimiles from the Book of Abraham to leading scholars of Egyptology, asking them for an assessment of the interpretations. The eight Egyptologists and Semitists who responded were in agreement as to the interpretations. The following are a few of these scholars' names and comments:

Dr. Arthur Mace, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.
"Joseph Smith's interpretation of these cuts is a farrago of nonsense from beginning to end," and he added that "five minutes study in an Egyptian gallery of any museum should be enough to convince any educated man of the clumsiness of the imposture;"

Dr. A. H. Sayce, Oxford England.
". . . difficult to deal seriously with Smith's impudent fraud," he wrote. "Smith has turned the Goddess into a king and Osiris into Abraham."

James H. Breasted, Ph.D., Haskell Oriental Museum, University of Chicago.
". . . very clearly demonstrates that he (Joseph Smith) was totally unacquainted with the significance of these documents and absolutely ignorant of the simplest facts of Egyptian Writing and civilization."

W. M. Flinders Petrie, London University.
". . . the attempts to guess a meaning are too absurd to be noticed. It may be safely said that there is not one single word that is true in these explanations."

Church spokesmen charged the scholars with using erroneous criteria; faulty methods, and questionable motives. Mormon writer John Henry Evans said that the only way scholars could accurately test Joseph Smith's ability to translate Egyptian would be to examine the original papyrus, or a copy of it, from which the Book of Abraham was translated (Improvement Era, Vol. 16, February 1913, p. 343).

In 1966, Dr. Aziz S. Atiya, a professor of Arabic Studies from the University of Utah found the Joseph Smith papyri in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. On November 27, 1967, the Salt Lake City Deseret News announced:

"NEW YORK—A collection of pa[p]yrus manuscripts, long believed to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871 was presented to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here Monday by the Metropolitan Museum of Art . . ."

"Included in the papyri is a manuscript identified as the original document from which Joseph Smith had copied the drawing which he called 'Facsimile No. 1' and published with the Book of Abraham."

Members of the Mormon church were very excited. There was no doubt as to the authenticity of the papyri. The reverse sides of the paper to which the papyri had been glued, contained, among other things, drawings of a temple and maps of the Kirtland, Ohio area. Now that the original document was accessible, the Church could prove that the arguments of the critics were faulty. The papyri were turned over to some of the Church's top scholars at BYU for translation.

Dr. Sperry and Dr. Clark from BYU recommended a professional be consulted to work on the papyri. LDS leaders were not comfortable with having a non-Mormon doing the translation. Dr. Hugh Nibley of BYU was given the job of studying and translating the papyri. Nibley knew he was not a qualified Egyptologist. Nibley asked Dee Jay Nelson, a Mormon elder who had been involved in the study of Egyptology for 20 years, to help him. In January 1968, they began to examine the original papyri and the papyri photographs.

As he was translating, Nelson discovered something which disturbed him greatly; not only did the papyri (including facsimile no. 1 and the small sensen fragment) NOT contain the Book of Abraham, but there was no connection at all between their contents and Abraham. They were ordinary Egyptian funeral documents. Nelson sent the results of his work to the LDS Church. The Church declined publishing his findings. Dr. Nibley praised Nelson's work, calling it a "conscientious and courageous piece of work," and pointing out that it supplied students with "a usable and reliable translation of the available papyri that once belonged to Joseph Smith." (Brigham Young University Studies, Spring 1968, p. 247)

When the Church refused to publish his work, Nelson submitted it for publication elsewhere. At this time, the editors of "Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought", decided to get a number of renowned Egyptologists to give their interpretations of the Joseph Smith papyri.

Dr. John A. Wilson (University of Chicago), confirmed that all the fragments were funerary texts.

Dr. Klaus Baer (University of Chicago) and Professor Richard Parker (Brown University), each agreed in all essentials with Nelson.

Egyptologists have dated the papyri at after 500 B.C., fifteen-hundred years or more later than Abraham's time. (John A. Wilson in "Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought", Summer 1968, p. 70)

Thomas Stuart Ferguson, was a stalwart defender of the Mormon faith. He established the New World Archaeological Foundation at BYU, wrote "One Fold and One Shepherd", and co-authored the book "Ancient America and the Book of Mormon". Ferguson stated in a letter he wrote dated March 10, 1971: ". . . Since 4 scholars, who have established that they can read Egyptian, say that the manuscripts deal with neither Abraham nor Joseph—and since the 4 reputable men tell us exactly what the

manuscripts do say—I must conclude that Joseph Smith had not the remotest skill in things Egyptian—hieroglyphics. To my surprise, one of the highest officials in the Mormon Church agreed with that conclusion when I made that very statement to him on Dec. 4, 1970—privately in one-to-one [c]onversation”

Mormon writer, Klaus Hansen remarked: “To a professional historian, for example, the recent translation of the Joseph Smith papyri may well represent the potentially most damaging case against Mormonism since its foundation” (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1970, p. 110)

Another document related to the Book of Abraham was Joseph Smith’s “Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language”. It had been brought from Nauvoo and had been in the Church Historian’s fireproof vault in Salt Lake City. Late in 1965, a microfilmed copy of the entire work was obtained. By 1966, the first photo reprint of the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar was produced. Grant Heward submitted this work to professional Egyptologists for examination. I.E. Edwards, Keeper of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities, said the whole work was, “largely a piece of imagination and lacking in any kind of scientific value.” Dr. Labib Habachi, and Richard A. Parker (Department of Egyptian Antiquities, British Museum) also declared Joseph Smith’s “Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar” to be fraudulent. (For more information: “. . . by his own hand upon papyrus”, by Charles M. Larson)

What would you think of a man who claimed he was superior to Christ? Would God call a man like this to be a prophet? The following statement was made by Joseph Smith:

“I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet.” (History of the Church, Vol. 6, pp. 408, 409)

Prophets of God do not give false prophecies, promote non-biblical teachings, lie about sacred doctrines, mistranslate ancient writings, and think they are superior to Christ.

Appendix E

In order for the Book of Mormon to be considered the word of God, it should be able to stand up to the same tests as does the Bible. Archaeology confirms the historical accuracy and reliability of the Bible. Can the same be said for the Book of Mormon?

For years, rumors have been circulating throughout the LDS church claiming that archaeology backs up the Book of Mormon. The Smithsonian Institute and the National Geographic Society reject archaeological claims made concerning the Book of Mormon. The Smithsonian still sends out the following statement:

1. “The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.”

2. “The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World—probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice Age—in a continuing series of small migrations beginning about 30,000 years ago.”

Anyone may request a copy of the entire statement by writing:

Public Information Officer
Dept. of Anthropology
National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

The National Geographic Society stated:

“. . . Neither representatives of the National Geographic Society nor, to my knowledge, archaeologists connected with any other institution of equal prestige have ever used the Book of Mormon in locating historic ruins in Middle America or elsewhere.”

This statement can be verified by writing:

National Geographic Society
1145 17th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-4688

One of the most well-known authorities on the New World is Michael Coe. He has stated:

“Mormon archaeologists over the years have almost unanimously accepted the Book of Mormon as an accurate, historical account of the New World peoples between about 2,000 B.C. and A.D. 421. They believe that Smith could translate heiroglyphs,

whether ‘Reformed Egyptian’ or ancient American, and that his translation of the Book of Abraham is authentic. Likewise, they accept the Kinderhook Plates as a bona fide archaeological discovery, and the reading of them as correct. Let me now state unconditionally that as far as I know there is not one professionally trained archaeologist, who is not a Mormon, who sees any scientific justification for believing the foregoing to be true, and I would like to state that there are quite a few Mormon archaeologists who join this group . . . The picture of this hemisphere between 2,000 B.C. and A.D. 421 presented in the book has little to do with the early Indian cultures as we know them, in spite of much wishful thinking . . .”

“The bare facts of the matter are that nothing, absolutely nothing, has ever shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the Book of Mormon, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere.” (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1973, pp. 41, 42, 46)

M. Wells Jakeman, Professor of Archaeology at BYU has stated:

“ . . . the Book of Mormon peoples . . . had cultures of mainly sedentary type, which—as proved by the results of archaeological excavation throughout the world—invariably leave behind extensive material remains!”

“ . . . Consequently, even if the Book of Mormon peoples had been mainly nomadic—which we have seen they were not—a great deal in the way of material remains or archaeological traces of their existence would have had to be expected . . .”

“ . . . it is inconceivable—and contrary to world-wide archaeological experience—that such civilizations could ever have existed without leaving some identifiable remains.” (The University Archaeological Society Newsletter, BYU, March 30, 1957, pp. 1-7)

Dee F. Green, a Mormon archaeologist stated:

“The first myth we need to eliminate is that Book of Mormon archaeology exists.” (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1969, pp. 74, 76-78)

The most compelling evidences of the fictional nature of the Book of Mormon, from an archaeological view, are the things which have not been found.

Plant Life

There are four major crops mentioned in the Nephite records. These are:

- Barley
- Figs
- Grapes
- Wheat

No evidence has been found to support the existence of these plants. The existence of numerous non-Book of Mormon plants (maize, lima beans, tomatoes, squash, etc) has been supported by abundant archaeological findings.

Animal Life

There are many animals mentioned in the Nephite records.

- Ass
- Bull
- Calf
- Cattle
- Cow
- Flocks
- Goat
- Herds
- Horse
- Ox
- Sheep
- Sow
- Swine
- Elephants

“Evidence of the foregoing animals has not appeared in any form—ceramic representations, bones or skeletal remains, mural art, sculptured art or any other form. However . . . evidence has been found in several forms of the presence in the Book-of-Mormon times of other animals—deer, jaguars, dogs, turkeys, etc. The zero score presents a problem that will not go away with the ignoring of it. Non-LDS scholars of first magnitude--some who want to be our friends--think we have real trouble here. That evidence of the ancient existence of these animals is not elusive is found in the fact that proof of their existence in the ancient Old-World is abundant. The absence of such evidence . . . is distressing and significant, in my view.” (Quest For The Gold Plates—Thomas Stuart Ferguson’s Archaeological Search for The Book of Mormon, by Stan Larson, p. 246)

Metals

- bellows
- brass
- breast plates
- chains
- copper
- iron
- ore
- plows
- silver

- swords
- steel

“Metallurgy does not appear in the region under discussion until about the ninth century A.D. None of the foregoing technical demands are met by the archaeology of the region proposed as Book of Mormon lands and places. I regard this as a major weakness in the armor of our proponents and friends.” (Quest For The Gold Plates—Thomas Stuart Ferguson’s Archaeological Search for The Book of Mormon, by Stan Larson, p. 257)

The following two books are great references for further study concerning archaeology and the Book of Mormon:

1. Studies of the Book of Mormon, by B.H. Roberts
2. Quest For The Gold Plates—Thomas Stuart Ferguson’s Archaeological Search for The Book of Mormon, by Stan Larson

Both B. H. Roberts and Thomas Stuart Ferguson were Mormons in good standing within the Mormon church. Yet each came to realize that the Book of Mormon was a fictionalized account. The Book of Mormon fails the archaeological test.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the over 24,000 extant New Testament manuscripts have shown the Bible to be incredibly accurate. How accurate is the Book of Mormon? Have there been many changes?

Most of the 3,913 changes in the Book of Mormon are related to the correction of grammatical and spelling errors, but there are some that alter the meaning of the text. According to Joseph Smith’s own testimony, there should not have been any reason to make changes in the Book of Mormon. He stated that when he and the witnesses went out to pray concerning it, “We heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, ‘These plates . . . have been translated by the power of God. **The translation of them which you have seen is correct . . .**’” (History of the Church, vol. 1, pp. 54-55) On another occasion Joseph Smith stated that he “told the brethren that **the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth . . .**” (Ibid., vol. 4, p. 461)

David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses made this statement, “I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. **One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.** Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God and not

by any power of man.” (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, pg. 12.)

“Saturday, Feb. 25, 1881 . . . Heard Joseph F. Smith (the sixth president of the church) describe the manner of translating the Book of Mormon . . . **Joseph did not render the writing on the gold plates into the English language in his own style of language as many people believe, but every word and every letter was given to him by the gift and power of God . . . The Lord caused each word spelled as it is in the book to appear on the stones in short sentences or words, and when Joseph had uttered the sentence or word before him and the scribe had written it properly, that sentence would disappear and another appear. And if there was a word wrongly written or even a letter incorrect the writing on the stones would remain there . . . and when corrected the sentence would disappear as usual.**” (Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, p. 168 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society).

The four most important changes Joseph Smith made in the Book of Mormon are related to the doctrine of the Godhead. A significant change was made in 1 Nephi 13:40. In the 1830 edition it was stated that the very purpose of the Nephite records was to make known that **Christ is the Eternal Father**: “. . . These last records, . . . shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, **that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and Savior of the world** . . .” (Book of Mormon, 1830 ed., p. 32) In the current Utah edition, 1 Nephi 13:40, three words have been interpolated: “These last records, . . . shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people that **the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father**, and the Savior of the world . . .” Similar changes concerning the Godhead were made in three other places in the text of the Book of Mormon.

An important change concerning the name of a king was made in the book of Mosiah. In the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, p. 200, we read: “king **Benjamin** had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings . . .” In modern editions this has been changed to read: “. . . king **Mosiah** had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings . . .” (Mosiah 21:28) From chronology found in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 6:3-7 and 7:1), it would appear that king Benjamin should have been dead at this time. The name, therefore, was changed to Mosiah.

It is interesting to note that even the statement by the Eight Witnesses to the Book of Mormon has been altered. In the 1830 edition the last page contained this statement: “. . . Joseph Smith, Jr. the **Author and Proprietor** of this work, has shewn unto us the plates . . .” In modern editions it was changed to read: “. . . Joseph Smith, Jun., the **translator** of this work, has shown unto us the plates . . .”

Alma 32:30 before 1981 had only 32 words, but in the new edition, it contains 67 words. The original edition had 67 words. One of the most frequent mistakes in the first edition of the Book of Mormon was the use of “was” instead of “were.” The following are extracts from the first edition in which “was” has been changed in later editions to “were”:

“ . . . Adam and Eve, which was our first parents . . .” (p. 15)

“ . . . the bands which was upon my wrists . . .” (p. 49)

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“ . . . the priests was not to depend . . .” (p. 193)

“ . . . those that was with him.” (p. 195)

“ . . . there was many . . .” (p. 209)

“ . . . I had much desire that ye was not in the state of dilemma . . .” (p. 241)

“ . . . they was angry with me, . . .” (p. 248)

“ . . . there was no wild beasts . . .” (p. 460)

Another common mistake in the first edition was the use of the word “is” when it should read “are.” The following are extracts from the first edition in which the word “is” has been changed to “are” in later editions:

“ . . . there is save it be, two churches . . .” (p. 33)

“ . . . the words which is expedient . . .” (p. 67)

“ And whoredoms is an abomination . . .” (p. 127)

“ . . . here is our weapons of war . . .” (p. 346)

Another mistake in the first edition was the use of the word “a” where it was not necessary. In the following extracts “a” has been deleted in later editions:

“ . . . as Ammon and Lamoni was a journeying thither . . .”

“ . . . he found Muloki a preaching . . .” (p. 284)

“ . . . had been a preparing the minds . . .” (p. 358)

“ . . . Moroni was a coming against them . . .” (p. 403)

The extracts that follow are from the first edition; the word “no” has been changed to “any” in later editions:

“ . . . have not sought gold nor silver, nor no manner of riches . . .” (p. 157)

“ . . . they did not fight against God no more . . .” (p. 290)

“ . . . neither were there Lamanites, nor no manner of Ites . . .” (p. 515)

(To check on these references: “Joseph Smith Begins His Work,” Vol. 1, Book of Mormon 1830 First Edition, by Wilford C. Wood)

The Book of Mormon is supposed to contain the fullness of the gospel” (D&C 27:5; 135:3). Joseph Smith said, in speaking of the Book of Mormon: It is “the most correct of any book on earth, and **the keystone of our religion**, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.” (History of the Church, Vol. 4, p.461) Mormon Doctrine, p. 333 says that **the highest laws and ordinances are contained in the Book of Mormon**. If this is true, why were the following doctrines and

ordinances not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, but rather added with the creation of additional Mormon scripture?

- Pre-existence
- God is an exalted man
- Plurality of Gods
- Celestial marriage
- Plural marriage
- Organization of the church
- Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods
- Three degrees of heaven
- Temple rites
- Baptism for the dead
- Sealings
- Sacred garments
- Word of wisdom
- Men and women can become Gods

The Bible is linguistically accurate. The languages it was originally written in were the actual languages being spoken in those regions at that time. How does the Book of Mormon rate? Dr. John McLaughlin (Linguist, Utah State University) states that there is evidence of between 800-900 different languages which have or are being spoken on the American continent for the last few centuries. Among all of these languages, there is absolutely no evidence that shows the Hebrew language origins which are claimed by the Book of Mormon (DNA vs. The Book of Mormon, www.livinghopemministries.info). The Book of Mormon fails the linguistics test.

In addition, DNA studies have proven that there was no Hebrew migration to the Americas as is stated in the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. The American Indians are not of Hebrew/Israelite descent. DNA has shown that American Indian DNA is found in populations of people from Asia. These facts can be confirmed by the following experts:

Dr. Stephen L. Whittington (Anthropologist, University of Maine)
Randall Shorridge, Ph.D. (Molecular Biology, University at Buffalo, N.Y.)
Thomas Murphy (Mormon Anthropologist and Scholar)
Simon Southerton, Ph.D. (Molecular Biologist)
Dr. David Glen Smith (Molecular Anthropologist, University of California at Davis)
Dr. Dennis O'Rourke (Molecular Anthropologist, University of Utah)
(DNA vs. The Book of Mormon, www.livinghopemministries.info)

You might claim that there were witnesses to the Book of Mormon, therefore it must have come from God. In all fairness, we need to research the character of these witnesses so that we may discern the reliability of their testimonies.

Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris claimed that an angel of God showed them the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. Eight additional witnesses claimed to have seen the plates, although they saw no angel.

There are two statements in Mormon publications which seem to indicate that these witnesses had some doubts.

“Some of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, who handled the plates and conversed with the angels of God, were afterwards left to doubt and to disbelieve that they had ever seen an angel.” (Brigham Young—Journal of Discourses, Vol. 7, p. 164)

A poem appeared in the Mormon publication “Times and Seasons” in 1841:

“Amazed with wonder? I look around
To see most people of our day,
Reject the glorious gospel sound,
Because the simple turn away,
Or does it prove there is no time,
Because some watches will not go?

...

Or prove that Christ was not the Lord
Because that Peter cursed and swore?

**Or Book of Mormon not his word
Because denied, by Oliver?”**

(Times and Seasons, Vol. 2, page 482)

Some of the most damaging statements against the Book of Mormon witnesses, have come from Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders. Joseph Smith gave two revelations in which Martin Harris (one of the three witnesses) was called a “wicked man”. (Doctrine and Covenants 3:12-13; 10: 6-7)

Apostle John A. Widtsoe made the following statement concerning Hiram Page (one of the eight witnesses):

“Hiram Page (1800-1852), appears to have been somewhat fanatical. He found a stone through which he claimed to receive revelations, often contrary to those received by Joseph Smith. For this he was reprimanded.” (Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth, page 58)

Joseph Smith admitted that Hiram Page (one of the eight witnesses) gave false revelations, and that the Whitmers (four of the eight witnesses) were believing in these false revelations. (History of the Church, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 1, pp. 109-110)

Martin Harris (one of the three witnesses) was in trouble with the Church quite often.

“The council proceeded to investigate certain charges presented by Elder Rigdon against Martin Harris; one was that he told A.C. Russell, Esq., that Joseph drank too much liquor when he was translating the Book of Mormon; and that he wrestled with many men and threw them; and that he (Harris) exalted himself above Joseph, in that he said, ‘Brother Joseph knew not the contents of the Book of Mormon, until it was translated, but that he himself knew all about it before it was translated.’

“Brother Harris did not tell Esq. Russell that Brother Joseph drank too much liquor while translating the Book of Mormon, but this thing occurred previous to the translating of the Book; he confessed that his mind was darkened, and that he had said many things inadvertently, calculated to wound the feelings of his brethren, and promised to do better.” (History of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 26)

George Albert Smith (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 7, pages 114-115) speaks about a widespread apostasy from within the church which included “. . . One of the First Presidency, several of the Twelve Apostles, High Council, Presidents of Seventies, the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, Presidents of Far West, and a number of others standing high in the Church . . .”

The three witnesses were excommunicated. Martin Harris accused Joseph Smith of “lying and licentiousness.” Joseph Smith (Elders’ Journal, Aug. 1838, p. 59) accused Martin Harris of “. . . swearing, lying, cheating, swindling, drinking, with every species of debauchery, . . .” (Elder’s Journal, August 1838, p. 59)

In 1838, Oliver Cowdery accused Joseph Smith of adultery, lying and teaching false doctrines. Joseph Smith gave testimony against Oliver Cowdery, claiming that a “non-member of the Church by the name of Sapham had told him in Kirtland that a warrant had been issued against Oliver ‘for being engaged in making a purchase of bogus money and dies to make the counterfeit money with.’ (A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri From 1836 to 1839, page 146)

“Evidence to support the final charge, namely, that Oliver was guilty of retaining bank notes after they had been paid and had forsaken the cause of God to seek after ‘the beggarly elements of the world,’ was also abundant. Joseph Smith, for example, testified that Cowdery had informed him that he had ‘come to the conclusion to get property, and that if he could not get it one way, he would get it another, God or no God, Devil or no Devil, property he must and would have.’ Joseph Smith also claimed that Oliver told him that since he had been dishonestly dealt with by others, it was his intention in the future to deal dishonestly.” (A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri From 1836 to 1839, page 147)

David Whitmer, just before his death, published “An Address to All Believers in Christ” in which he stated:

“If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe 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 should it be done unto them.” (An Address to All Believers in Christ, by David Whitmer, 1887, p. 27)

Martin Harris changed his religious position eight times during his life in Kirtland, Ohio. (Improvement Era, March 1969, p. 63)

Mormon writer E. Cecil McGavin stated that: “Martin Harris was an unaggressive, vacillating, easily influenced person who was no more pugnacious than a rabbit His conviction of one day might vanish and be replaced by doubt and fear before the setting of the sun. He was changeable, fickle, and puerile in his judgment and conduct.” (The Historical Background for the Doctrine and Covenants, p. 23, as quoted in an unpublished manuscript by LaMar Petersen)

If we are to believe that all eleven witnesses to the Book of Mormon were men of perfect integrity, then we must also believe they had just cause to disassociate themselves from the Mormon church. If we are to believe the derogatory remarks made about these witnesses by Joseph Smith, then these witnesses definitely lack credibility.

In the LDS Church Almanac, it states that the three witnesses viewed the plates **in a vision**. (Deseret News 1993-94 Church Almanac: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (SLC: Deseret News, 1992) pg. 338. See also Orson Pratt’s statement about David Whitmer’s experience in “Journal of Discourses”, Joseph F. Smith, ed. (1854-86; reprint, SLC: BYU Press, 1967, 7:29. Also D. Michael Quinn, “Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power” (SLC, in association with Smith Research Associates, 1994, pg. 10)

Martin Harris, after being asked, “Did you see those plates with your naked eyes?” told John Gilbert (the printer who set up the majority of the type for the Book of Mormon), “No, I saw them with a spiritual eye.” Harris later answered the same question of an attorney who came to Palmyra. He said, “I did not see them as I do that pencil-case, yet I saw them with the eye of faith; I saw them just as distinctly as I see anything around me—though at the time they were covered with a cloth.” (As related to J.A. Clark, who was then in Palmyra. See “Gleanings by the Way”, pp. 256-7.)

On April 15, 1838, Harris stated publicly: “He never saw the plates with his natural eyes only in vision or imagination, neither Oliver or David and also that the eight witnesses never saw them and hesitated to sign that instrument for that reason, but were persuaded to do it . . . (Harris later) said that he never should have told that the testimony of the eight was false, if it had not been picked out of (him) but should have let it pass as it was.” (Letter from Stephen Burnett to Lyman E. Johnson. A copy of this letter is located in the Joseph Smith Collection in the LDS Church Archives. Quoted in David Persuitte, “Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon”, Jefferson, N.C.: MFarland & Co., 1991, p. 96.)

Thomas Ford, Governor of Illinois, knew several of Joseph Smith’s key men. They told Governor Ford that the witnesses were “set to continual prayer, and other spiritual exercises.” Then at last “he assembled them in a room, and produced a box, which he

said contained the precious treasure. The lid was opened; the witnesses peeped into it, but making no discovery, for the box was empty, they said, ‘Brother Joseph, we do not see the plates.’ The prophet answered them, ‘O ye of little faith! How long will God bear with this wicked and perverse generation? Down on your knees, brethren, every one of you, and pray God for forgiveness of your sins, and for a holy and living faith which cometh down from heaven.’ The disciples dropped to their knees, and began to pray in the fervency of their spirit, supplicating God for more than two hours with fanatical earnestness; at the end of which time, looking again into the box, they were now persuaded that they saw the plates.” (Thomas L. Ford, “History of Illinois”, Chicago, 1854, p. 257)

We have a real problem here. Not only has Joseph Smith been shown to lack credibility, but so do his witnesses. The Book of Mormon fails archaeological, linguistic and DNA tests. There have been nearly 3,913 changes made in the Book of Mormon—not just spelling and grammar, but mistakes which alter the meaning of the text (see “3913 Changes in the Book of Mormon”, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, www.utlm.org/booklist/ordertitlelist.htm). Finally, the Book of Mormon does not contain a fullness of the Mormon gospel—that fullness was added later in the form of “revelations” given to Joseph Smith.