

Blacks Receive LDS Priesthood

Pressure Forces Mormon President to Issue New "Revelation"

Bruce R. McConkie, who now serves as an Apostle in the Mormon Church, made these remarks concerning blacks in his book *Mormon Doctrine*:

Negroes in this life are **denied the Priesthood**; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. (Abra. 1:20-27.) The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them. . . . **negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned**, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow therefrom, but this inequality is not of man's origin. **It is the Lord's doing**, is based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of the **lack of spiritual valiance** of those concerned in their first estate. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, pages 527-528)

However, in a broad general sense, **caste systems have their root and origin in the gospel itself**, and when they operate according to the divine decree, the resultant restrictions and **segregation** are right and proper and have the approval of the Lord. To illustrate: Cain, Ham, and **the whole negro race have been cursed with a black skin**, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as a **caste apart**, a people with whom the other descendants of Adam should not intermarry. (*Ibid.*, page 114)

Because of these teachings the *Los Angeles Times* for August 27, 1967, referred to the Mormon Church as "one of the few uncracked fortresses of discrimination." For eleven more years the Latter-day Saints continued to cling to a policy of discrimination. Church leaders claimed that the doctrine could only be changed by revelation from God. Finally, on June 9, 1978, the Mormon Church's *Deseret News* carried a startling announcement by the First Presidency which said that a new revelation had been given and that blacks would be allowed to hold the priesthood:

. . . we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the upper room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and **by revelation** has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. (*Deseret News*, June 9, 1978, page 1A)

Since we have probably printed more material critical of the Mormon anti-black doctrine than any other publisher, the new revelation comes as a great victory and a vindication of our work. We printed our first criticism of this doctrine in 1959. This was certainly not a popular cause to espouse in those days. (In fact, at one time a Mormon threatened to punch Sandra in the nose over the issue.) In November 1965 we published a *Messenger* which showed that a black man named Elijah Abel held the priesthood: in the early Mormon Church and that his descendants, who now pass as "whites," are still being ordained to the priesthood. This was an absolute contradiction to the doctrine taught by the Mormon leaders. Apostle Mark E. Petersen said that "If there is **one drop of Negro blood** in my children, as I have read to you, they receive **the curse**" (*Race Problems—As They Affect The Church*, page 7). The Church was never able to refute the serious accusation about Abel's descendants holding the priesthood, and this undoubtedly destroyed many Mormons' faith in the doctrine concerning blacks. For more information on this matter see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 267-272.

In 1967 the original papyrus from which Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Abraham was rediscovered. Immediately after the papyrus came to light we began publishing material which showed that Joseph Smith was completely mistaken in his purported translation. The papyrus was in reality a copy of the Egyptian Book of Breathings, a pagan text that had



President Spencer W. Kimball

absolutely nothing to do with Abraham or his religion. Since the Book of Abraham was the real source of the Church's teaching that blacks could not hold the priesthood, we called upon the Mormon leaders to "repudiate the Book of Abraham and renounce the anti-Negro doctrine contained in its pages" (*Salt Lake City Messenger*, March, 1966). For a complete treatment of the subject see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 294-369.

The translation of the papyrus by noted Egyptologists caused many of the intellectual Mormons to lose faith in Joseph Smith's work and consequently the Church's anti-black doctrine began to be more openly criticized by members of the Church. Some were even excommunicated because of their opposition to the Church's position.

Those of us who have criticized the Mormon Church for its racial teachings have been ridiculed for attempting to change the doctrine. Mormon apologist Armand L. Mauss wrote: "My plea, then to the civil rights organizations and to all the critics of the Mormon Church is: get off our backs! . . . agitation over the 'Negro issue' by non-Mormon groups, or even by Mormon liberals, is likely simply to increase the resistance to change" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1967, pages 38-39).

John L. Lund said that "Those who believe that the Church 'gave in' on the polygamy issue and subsequently should give in on the Negro question are not only **misinformed** about Church History, but are apparently unaware of Church doctrine. . . . Therefore, those who hope that pressure will bring about a revelation need to take a closer look at Mormon history and the order of heaven" (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pages 104-105).

On page 109 of the same book, Mr. Lund emphasized that "Those who would try to pressure the Prophet to give the Negroes the Priesthood do not understand the plan of God nor the order of heaven. Revelation is the expressed will of God to man. Revelation is not man's will expressed to God. All the social, political, and governmental pressure in the world is not going to change what God has decreed to be."

When Stewart Udall, a noted Mormon, came out against the Church's anti-black doctrine, Paul C. Richards responded:

The Church is either true or it isn't. **If it changes its stand** on the strength of the "great stream of modern religious and social thought," **it will be proven untrue**. If that happens, the more serious members would do well to join the Cub Scouts. It's cheaper and there is less work and less criticism. . . .

If the Church is true, it will hold to its beliefs in spite of its members. If it is false, more power to the easy-way-out philosophers who claim to know the "imperious truths of the contemporary world." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1967, page 6)

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for March 1970, we commented: "The Lord plainly reveals to us, as he did to Peter many years ago, that '**God is not respecter of persons**'" (Acts 10:34). To accept the anti-Negro doctrine is to deny the spirit of revelation. If we allow others to do our thinking on

this vital issue it could lead to violence or bloodshed. Because we felt that it was not right to put our trust in man, we separated our selves from the Mormon Church.”

As early as 1963 we printed a sheet entitled, “Will There Be a Revelation Regarding the Negro?” At the bottom of this sheet we predicted: “If the pressure continues to increase on the Negro question, the leaders of the Mormon Church **will probably have another revelation** which will allow the Negro to hold the priesthood.” In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 291-292, we pointed out:

If the Mormon Church should decide to change its policy and allow Negroes to hold the priesthood, it will not be the first time that Mormon doctrine has been revised to fit a changing world.

Twenty-five years before the Mormon Church gave up the practice of polygamy they were declaring that no such change could be made. In the *Millennial Star*, Oct. 28, 1865, the following appeared:

“We have shown that in requiring the relinquishment of polygamy, they ask the renunciation of the **entire faith** of this people. . . .

“There is no half way house. The **childish babble about another revelation is only an evidence how half informed men can talk.**”

As the pressure increased against polygamy, Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto (now claimed to be a revelation) which suspended the practice of polygamy.

BRIGHAM YOUNG MISREPRESENTED

We feel that the Mormon Church’s change on the doctrine concerning blacks is a very good move because it will undoubtedly help blacks obtain equality in Utah and will probably prevent much bloodshed and trouble. Nevertheless, we must point out that Brigham Young and other leaders have been misrepresented in order to make the change palatable to the Mormon people. For instance, the Church’s *Deseret News* would have us believe that the change was a fulfillment of a prophecy uttered by Brigham Young, the second President of the Church:

The announcement Friday fulfilled statements made by most LDS Church presidents since Joseph Smith that blacks would one day obtain the full blessings of the church, including the priesthood.

Speaking against slavery, Brigham Young once told the Utah Legislature, “. . . the the [*sic*] day will come when all that race (blacks) will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have.” (*Deseret News*, June 10, 1978, page 1A)

While it is true that Brigham Young believed that blacks would eventually receive the priesthood, he made it clear that this was not to happen until after the resurrection. The context of the speech which the *Deseret News* cites reveals that Brigham Young believed it would be a sin for the Church to give blacks the priesthood before the “last of the posterity of Able” had received it. He went on to say that if the Church gave “all the blessings of God” to the blacks prematurely, the priesthood would be taken away and the Church would go to destruction. This address is preserved in the Church Historical Department. Michael Marquardt has provided a typed copy which retains the spelling errors of the original. We extract the following from Brigham Young’s speech:

What is that mark? you will see it on the countenance of every African you ever did see upon the face of the earth, . . . the Lord told Cain that **he should not receive the blessings of the priesthood nor his seed, until the last of the posterity of Able had received the priesthood, until the redemption of the earth.** If there never was a prophet, or apostle of Jesus Christ spoke it before, I tell you, this people that are commonly called negroes are the children of old Cain. . . . they cannot bear rule in the priesthood, for the curse on them was **to remain upon them**, until the resedue of the posterity of Michal and his wife receive the blessings, . . . until the times of the restitution shall come, . . . Then Cain’s seed will be had in remembrance, and the time come when that curse should be wiped off. . . .

I am as much oposed to the principle of slavery as any man in the present acceptation or usage of the term, it is abused. I am opposed to abusing that which God has decreed, to take a blessing, and make a curse of it. **It is a great blessing to the seed of Adam to have the seed of Cain for servants, . . . Let this Church which is called the kingdom**

of God on the earth; we will sommons the first presidency, the twelve, the high counsel, the Bishoprick, and all the elders of Isreal, suppose we summons them to apear here, and here declare that it is right to mingle our seed, with the black race of Cain, **that they shall came in with with us and be pertakers with us of all the blessings God has given to us. On that very day, and hour we should do so, the priesthood is taken from this Church and kingdom and God leaves us to our fate.** The moment we consent to mingle with the seed of Cain **the Church must go to destruction,—we should receive the curse which has been placed upon the seed of Cain**, and never more be numbered with the children of Adam who are heirs to the priesthood untill that curse be removed. (Brigham Young Addresses, Ms d 1234, Box 48, folder 3, dated February 5, 1852, located in the LDS Church Historical Dept.)

The Mormon people are now faced with a serious dilemma; if they really believe Brigham Young was a prophet, then it follows from his statement that the Church has lost the priesthood, been put under “the curse” and is going to destruction! In spite of Brigham Young’s emphatic warning against giving blacks “all the blessings God has given us,” the present leaders have announced that blacks will now receive “all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords” (*Deseret News*, June 9, 1978).

After the First Presidency made their statement, many people became confused over the Church’s position on interracial marriage. It soon became apparent, however, that the Church’s ban on marriage to blacks had been lifted. Joseph Freeman, the first black man ordained to the priesthood after the change, indicated that he wanted to be sealed in the Temple to his wife who was not of African descent. Church spokesman Don LeFevre said that such a marriage would be possible and that although the Church did not encourage interracial marriage, there was no longer a ban on whites marrying blacks:

That is entirely possible, said Mr. LeFevre. . . . “So there is no ban on interracial marriage.

“If a black partner contemplating marriage is worthy of going to the Temple, nobody’s going to stop him—if he’s marrying a white, an Oriental . . . if he’s ready to go to the Temple, obviously he may go with the blessings of the church.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 14, 1978)

On June 24, 1978, the *Tribune* announced that

Joseph Freeman, 26, the first black man to gain the priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Friday went in the Salt Lake Temple with his wife and 5 sons for sacred ordinances. . . . Thomas S. Monson, member of the church’s Quorum of Twelve Apostles, conducted the marriage and sealing cerenonies [*sic*].

In allowing temple marriages between blacks and whites, the Church is completely disregarding what President Brigham Young referred to as “the law of God”:

Shall I tell you **the law of God** in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, **under the law of God, is death on the spot.** This will always be so. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, page 110)

The reader will notice that Brigham Young said that this “law of God” could never be changed. In 1967 the Mormon writer John L. Lund made these comments about Brigham Young’s statement:

Brigham Young made a very strong statement on this matter when he said, “. . . Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the **chosen seed** mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so.” God has commanded Israel not to intermarry. To go against this commandment of God would be to sin. Those who willfully sin with their eyes open to this wrong will not be surprised to find that they will be **separated from the presence of God** in the world to come. This is spiritual death. . . . It does not matter if they are one-sixth Negro or one-one hundred and sixth, the curse of no Priesthood is still the same. . . . To intermarry with a Negro is to forfeit a “Nation of Priesthood holders.” (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pages 54-55)

The Church Section of the *Deseret News* for June 17, 1978, says that “Former presidents of the Church have spoken of the day when the blessings of the priesthood would come to the blacks.” A quotation from a sermon by Brigham Young which appeared in the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7,

is cited, but when we go to the original book we find that it has been taken out of context. In this sermon Brigham Young plainly taught that blacks could not receive the priesthood until all of Adam's other children receive it:

Cain slew his brother . . . and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. . . . How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and **they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood** and the keys thereof. **Until the last ones of the residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favorable position**, the children of Cain cannot receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. They were the first that were cursed, and they will be the last from whom the curse will be removed. When the residue of the family of Adam come up and receive their blessings, then the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will receive blessings in like proportion. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, pages 290-291)

Brigham Young also taught this doctrine in other published sermons:

When **all the other children of Adam** have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, **and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity**. . . . he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 143)

And when **all the rest of the children have received their blessings** in the Holy Priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will then come up and possess the priesthood, and receive all the blessings which we now are entitled to. (*Ibid.*, vol. 11, page 272)

In 1949 the First Presidency of the Mormon Church issued a statement in which they cited Brigham Young's teaching that blacks cannot receive the priesthood until after the resurrection:

The prophets of the Lord have made several statements. . . . President Brigham Young said: "They will go down to death. And when **all the rest of the children have received their blessings** in the holy priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will then come up and possess the priesthood, . . ." (Statement by the First Presidency, as cited in *Mormonism and the Negro*, by John J. Stewart and William E. Berrett, 1960, Part 2, page 16)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who served as the tenth President of the Mormon Church in the early 1970s, taught that blacks would never hold the priesthood as long as "time endures":

Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he became the father of an inferior race. **A curse was placed upon him and that curse has been continued through his lineage and must do so while time endures**. Millions of souls have come into this world cursed with a black skin and have been denied the privilege of Priesthood and the fullness of the blessings of the Gospel. . . . they have been made to feel their inferiority and have been separated from the rest of mankind from the beginning. (*The Way To Perfection*, 1935, page 101)

In his book *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, page 188, Joseph Fielding Smith said that the bestowal of priesthood on blacks was "in the far distant future," and in a meeting held in Barratt Hall on October 11, 1958, he commented that "the Lord will, in due time, remove the restrictions. **Not in this world** but the time will come, . . ." (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 586).

N. Eldon Tanner, a member of the First Presidency who finally signed the statement granting blacks the Priesthood, was completely opposed to the idea in 1967:

"**The church has no intention of changing its doctrine on the Negro**," N. Eldon Tanner, counselor to the First President told Seattle during his recent visit here. "Throughout the history of the original Christian church, the Negro never held the priesthood. There's really nothing we can do to change this. **It's a law of God.**" (*Seattle Magazine*, December 1967, page 60)

Mormon writer John L. Lund claimed that if the President of the Mormon Church gave a revelation that blacks were to hold the priesthood,

members of the Church would accept it, but he emphasized that such a revelation would not be forthcoming because the "present prophets are in complete agreement with Brigham Young and other past leaders on the question of the Negro and the Priesthood":

Brigham Young revealed that the Negroes will not receive the Priesthood **until a great while after the second advent** of Jesus Christ whose coming will usher in a millennium of peace.

Revelation?

In view of what President Young and others have said, it would be **foolish indeed** to give anyone the **false idea that a new revelation is immediately forthcoming on the issue of the Negroes receiving the Priesthood**. . . . our present prophets are **in complete agreement** with Brigham Young and other past leaders on the question of the Negro and the Priesthood. President McKay was asked by a news reporter at the dedication of the Oakland Temple, "When will the Negroes receive the Priesthood?" He responded to the question over a national television network saying, "Not in my lifetime, young man, nor yours." . . .

Social pressure and even government sanctions cannot be expected to bring forth a new revelation. This point is mentioned because there are groups in the Church, as well as out, who feel that pressure on the Prophet will cause a revelation to come forth. It would be wise to emphasize that all the social pressure in the world will not change what the Lord has decreed to be. Let those who would presume to pressure the Prophet be reminded that it is God that inspires prophets, not social pressure. . . . It is not the responsibility nor the stewardship of any person on earth to dictate to the Lord or the Lord's servants when a revelation should be given. . . .

The prophets have declared that there are at least two major stipulations that have to be met before the Negroes will be allowed to possess the Priesthood. The first requirement relates to time. **The Negroes will not be allowed to hold the Priesthood during mortality**, in fact, **not until after the resurrection of all of Adam's children**. The other stipulation requires that Abel's seed receive the first opportunity of having the Priesthood. . . . Negroes must first pass through mortality before they may possess the Priesthood ("they will go down to death"). Reference is also made to the condition that the Negroes will have to wait until after the resurrection of all of Adam's children before receiving the Priesthood. . . . the last of Adam's children will not be resurrected until the end of the millennium. Therefore, the Negroes will not receive the Priesthood until after that time. . . . this will not happen until **after** the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. . . .

The second major stipulation that needs to be met . . . is the requirement that Abel's seed receive the opportunity of holding the Priesthood first. . . .

The obvious question is, "When will Abel's seed be redeemed?" It will first of all be necessary that Abel marry, and then be resurrected, and ultimately exalted in the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom so that he can have a continuation of his seed. It will then be necessary for Abel to create an earth for his spirit children to come to and experience mortality. These children will have to be "redeemed" or resurrected. After the resurrection or redemption of Abel's seed, Cain's descendants, the Negroes, will then be allowed to possess the Priesthood. (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pages 45-49)

On pages 109-110 of the same book, John L. Lund reiterates:

First, **all of Adam's children will have to resurrect** and secondly, the seed of Abel must have an opportunity to possess the Priesthood. These events will not occur until **sometime after the end of the millennium**.

As late as 1974 Apostle Bruce R. McConkie questioned the spirituality of Church members who believed it was time for a new revelation on the blacks. In a conference message delivered Oct. 4, 1974, Apostle McConkie said:

Am I valiant in the testimony of Jesus if my chief interest and concern in life is laying up in store the treasures of the earth, rather than the building up of the kingdom? . . .

Am I valiant if I am deeply concerned about the Church's stand on who can or who cannot receive the priesthood and think it is time for a new revelation on this doctrine? . . .

Am I valiant if I engage in gambling, play cards, go to pornographic movies, . . . (*The Ensign*, November 1974, page 35)

“BETTER LATE THAN NEVER”

Writing in the *New York Times*, June 11, 1978, Mario S. DePillis observed: “For Mormonism’s anti-black policy a revelation was the only way out, and many students of Mormonism were puzzled only at the lateness of the hour.” As far back as 1963, Donald Ira French, Jr., wrote a letter in which he remarked:

Sir: As an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it has long seemed incredible to me that a church with so much forward vision in social welfare and higher education can be so backward in its outlook on a segment of the human race that is also supposed to be among our brothers. . . .

The revelation that the church is talking about with respect to the Negro and the priesthood **should have been sought 50 years ago—not now when we are forced into looking for one. Even if a revelation should come now, we have compromised our position because it looks as if we have been forced into seeking it**, which will be true. (*Time*, November 1, 1963)

That the Mormon Church was forced into the revelation is obvious to anyone who seriously examines the evidence. In the books *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *Mormons and Negroes* we show that there has been a great deal of pressure exerted against the Church. For instance, athletic teams from the Church’s Brigham Young University have been the target of very serious protests.

In 1974 the Mormon doctrine of discrimination against blacks brought the Boy Scouts into a serious confrontation with the NAACP. The Boy Scouts of America do not discriminate because of religion or race, but Mormon-sponsored troops did have a policy of discrimination. On July 18, 1974, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

A 12-year-old boy scout has been denied a senior patrol leadership in his troop because he is black, Don L. Cope, black ombudsman for the state, said Wednesday. . . .

The ombudsman said Mormon “troop policy is that in order for a scout to become a patrol leader, he must be a deacon’s quorum president in the LDS Church. Since the boy cannot hold the priesthood, he cannot become a patrol leader.”

The Mormon leaders apparently realized that they could never prevail in this matter and a compromise was worked out:

Shortly before Boy Scout officials were to appear in Federal Court Friday morning on charges of discrimination, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a **policy change** which will allow black youths to be senior patrol leaders, a position formerly reserved for white LDS youths in troops sponsored by the church. . . .

An LDS Church spokesman said Friday under the “guidelines set forth in the statement, a young man other than president of the deacons quorum could (now) become the senior patrol leader if he is better qualified.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, August 3, 1974)

Mormon President Spencer W. Kimball “had been subpoenaed to testify” in the suit (*Ibid.*, October 23), but on November 7, 1974, the *Tribune* reported:

A suit claiming discrimination against blacks by the Boy Scouts of America was dismissed Wednesday in federal court . . . all parties to the suit . . . signed an agreement stating the alleged discrimination “has been discontinued.”

Since 1976 the Mormon Church has been repeatedly embarrassed by one of its own members who became alienated over the anti-black doctrine and decided to take matters into his own hands. On April 3, 1976, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

PORTLAND, Ore.—A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ordained a black into the priesthood Friday, saying he did so in an attempt to force a revision in Mormon doctrine about the Negro race.

Douglas A. Wallace, . . . first baptized Larry Lester, . . . in the swimming pool of a motel in northeast Portland. He then ordained Lester to the office of priest in the Aaronic Priesthood of the LDS Church. . . .

The rites were preceded by a news conference at which Wallace said he has long been bothered by the Mormon Church’s bias against blacks and he feels the time has come to challenge it. He said often all that is required to change a policy is for someone to break out of tradition. . . .

The president of the Portland-Oregon Mission of the church, Robert Seamons, said of Wallace’s actions:

“He is using the priesthood in an unrighteous manner and his action will have no validity because the president of the church has said that blacks are not to hold the priesthood.”

Wallace said he hopes there are no recriminations against him for his action, such as excommunication.

On April 13, 1976, the *Salt Lake Tribune* revealed that “Douglas A. Wallace was **excommunicated** from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Sunday for ordaining a black man into the church’s priesthood.”

After a confrontation with Church personnel at an April conference session, Mr. Wallace was ejected from the Tabernacle. Later he was served with “a court order barring him from attending conference” (*Ibid.*, October 4, 1976). Although we did not agree with some of Mr. Wallace’s ideas on religion, we did not consider him to be dangerous and we were rather surprised to notice the close surveillance the police kept him under when he walked along the public sidewalk outside of Temple Square. We were rather startled to see such a thing in Salt Lake City.

SHOOTING OF OFFICER OLSON

The Mormon leaders’ fear of the threat Mr. Wallace presented to the Church seems to have led to a tragic incident where a policeman was accidentally shot and permanently paralyzed. This occurred about the time of the Church’s conference held in April, 1977. On April 5, 1977, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

Mormon dissident Douglas A. Wallace charged Monday that a Salt Lake City police officer, shot early Sunday was keeping surveillance on him in a nearby residence.

Acting Police Chief Edgar A. Bryan Jr. **denied** it.

He said his men were **not keeping surveillance on Mr. Wallace**, a excommunicated member of the Church . . . but he would not say what the stakeout’s purpose was.

Officer David W. Olson remained in critical condition Monday at St. Mark’s Hospital, where personnel said he suffered a severed spinal cord from a single shot in the neck. The policeman was shot accidentally by his partner, . . . Wallace was staying at the home of a friend, Dr. John W. Fitzgerald, 2177 Carriage Ln. (4600 South).

He was in Salt Lake City to try to make an appearance at the LDS World Conference last weekend. Attorneys for the church, however, obtained a temporary restraining order . . . which prevented the dissident from visiting Temple Square.

“I have not committed any crime, and I don’t intend to commit any crime. I have been raised in the Mormon faith and I am a man of peace . . . This is not Russia; this is not Nazi Germany; there is no reason why I should be under surveillance of the police,” Mr. Wallace said.

The following day the *Salt Lake Tribune* related:

Ex-Mormon Douglas Wallace, who claims the wounding of an undercover police officer was done while police held surveillance on him, Tuesday afternoon said he will subpoena various high ranking police and sheriff’s deputies to establish the fact. . . .

Mr. Wallace said also, “It is clear from the evidence that we have uncovered that I was under surveillance. The police department’s denial of that simply compounds the wrong. Is this going to be Salt Lake’s sequel to the Watergate scandal?” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 6, 1977)

With Mr. Wallace and his attorney pressing them hard, the police were finally forced to admit the truth about the matter:

Salt Lake City police officers admitted Thursday that the accidental wounding of an undercover officer occurred during surveillance of Mormon dissident Douglas A. Wallace. . . .

Reports released Thursday by both the county sheriff’s office and the county attorney show that **six officers were on stakeout** around the John W. Fitzgerald home . . . where Mr. Wallace was staying.

The lawmen were paired up in three police vehicles and two of those were parked close together in opposite directions . . . (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 8, 1977)

Those who know Mr. Wallace find it strange that there should have been so many policemen on the surveillance crew watching him at 4:20 a.m. A subsequent story in the newspaper reported that the “lawmen . . . had been on duty for 16 straight hours, Chief Willoughby said” (*Ibid.*, April 15, 1977).

At any rate, Wallace claimed the Mormon Church was behind the whole affair: “Ex-Mormon Douglas Wallace Friday renewed his assertion that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was behind April police surveillance of Mr. Wallace that led to the accidental shooting of a Salt Lake City police officer” (*Ibid.*, September 17, 1977). Finally, David Olson, the disabled police officer, took exception to a press release issued by the Church. In a letter to the Editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 18, 1978, Mr. Olson made a direct attack on the President of the Church:

I would also like to thank Spencer W. Kimball for his **incorrect** press release concerning the police involvement combined with the LDS church's efforts to restrict Douglas A. Wallace from the temple grounds, specifically the Tabernacle, on April 3, 1977.

His denial of these actions is wrong. Any man who can take such actions and still call himself a prophet deserves more than I to be confined to this wheelchair.

Douglas Wallace filed lawsuits amounting to millions of dollars against the Mormon Church, and although he has not been able to prevail against the Church in the courts, the publicity surrounding the suits has caused the Church no end of trouble. We feel that his actions and the embarrassment they have caused the Church have played a part in bringing about the decision to have a new "revelation."

Another Mormon who has put a great deal of pressure on the Church is Byron Marchant. Mr. Marchant took a very strong stand against racism in the Church. The *Dallas Morning News* for October 20, 1977, reported:

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—The man who cast the first vote in modern history against a leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been excommunicated and fired as church janitor.

Byron Marchant, 35, of Salt Lake, is the second opponent of the church policy withholding the priesthood from blacks to be excommunicated in the last two years.

When Mr. Marchant tried to distribute literature at Temple Square at the next conference he was arrested:

Byron Marchant, excommunicated member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was arrested Sunday at 1:45 p.m. at Temple Square of charges of trespassing. . . . Marchant was requested to leave the church grounds after he offered literature to people waiting in line for admission to the 2 p.m. session of general conference, Mr. Gibbs said. J. Earl Jones, director of security for the Mormon church reportedly advised Mr. Marchant he was on private property and asked him to leave. When Mr. Marchant refused, Mr. Gibbs said police officers were contacted and Mr. Marchant was placed under arrest at approximately 1:45 p.m. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April, 3, 1978)

Mr. Marchant published a sheet in which he called for demonstrations against the Church's policy:

Next October Conference (1978) I will join all interested in a march on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. In the event that the Mormon Church decides to ordain worthy Afro-Americans to the priesthood this demonstration will be a sort of celebration. A demonstration of support. In the meantime, every person and/or group concerned about Utah Racism is encouraged to speak out and attend the October protest.

Mr. Marchant's threat of a demonstration at the next conference may have caused Mormon leaders to think more seriously about having a new revelation. The general authorities seem to have a real fear of demonstrations around Temple Square. Although Mr. Marchant is probably a peaceful man, the issue concerning blacks in the Mormon Church was so explosive that the slightest incident could have touched off a riot where innocent people could have been injured. We think that the Church was wise to change its policy before the demonstration.

However this may be, when the Mormon Church yielded Mr. Marchant dropped a civil suit:

Following Friday's announcement that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will allow blacks to receive the priesthood, Byron Marchant, longtime advocate of such a policy, dropped a civil suit filed against Church President Spencer W. Kimball Wednesday.

Marchant was suing President Kimball for not appearing as a witness in a case currently pending against Marchant. . . . Marchant was suing the Mormon Church president for \$100 for not appearing after being subpoenaed to testify in the case. Marchant's subpoena was quashed Thursday. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 10, 1978)

Another article in the same issue of the *Tribune* observed that "The last three years have also seen repeated attempts by church dissidents to subpoena Mormon leaders into court proceedings, with the central issue often related to the church's belief about blacks."

PROBLEM IN BRAZIL

Besides all the problems the Church was having with dissidents, it was faced with an impossible situation in Brazil. Even the Church's own *Deseret News* admitted that "A major problem the church has faced with its policy regarding blacks was in Brazil, where the church is building a temple. Many people there are mixed [mixed?] racially, and it is often impossible to determine whether church members have black ancestry" (*Deseret News*, June 10, 1978).

Mormon leaders have been aware of this problem for some time. Lester Bush, Jr., gave this revealing information in an article published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 41:

The decision to deny the priesthood to anyone with Negro ancestry ("no matter how remote"), had resolved the theoretical problem of priesthood eligibility, but did not help with the practical problem of identifying the "blood of Cain" in those not already known to have Negro ancestry. . . .

The growth of the international Church was clearly bringing new problems. Brazil was particularly difficult. Later that year J. Ruben Clark, First Counselor to George Albert Smith, reported that the Church was entering "into a situation in doing missionary work . . . where it is very difficult if **not impossible to tell who has negro blood** and who has not. He said that if we are baptizing Brazilians, we are almost certainly **baptizing people of negro blood**, and that **if the Priesthood is conferred upon them, which it no doubt is**, we are facing a very serious problem."

In a letter published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1967, page 8, Gary Lobb observed:

My studies currently in Brazil, . . . have led me to conclude that most Brazilians who are not second or third generation descendants of German, Italian, Polish, or Japanese immigrants, are probably descendants of Negroes. This is especially true among the lower and lower-middle classes which make up a large portion of L.D.S. membership in this land. . . . In some of the branches of the Church which my wife and I have attended here in Brazil, there **appear to be priesthood bearers who possess the essential characteristics of the Negroid races.**

The hypocrisy of the situation in South America was pointed out in 1966 by Wallace Turner:

A different thing is going on in South America where Mormon missionaries are pushing ahead full throttle. There the former careful selection to keep out "white Negroes" has been allowed to slide a little. . . .

"There is no question but that in Brazil they have been ordaining priests who are part Negro," said one careful observer. (*The Mormon Establishment*, 1966, page 261)

With the opening of the new temple in Brazil the situation would have turned into a real nightmare. Actually, the Mormon Church has the same problem in the United States. Patriarch Eldred G. Smith remarked:

I had a young lady who was blond, a[n]d no sign or indications visibly of the Negro line at all, but yet she was deprived of going to the Temple . . . We have these conditions by the thousands in the United States today and are getting more of them. **If they have any blood of the Negro at all in their line, in their veins at all, they are not entitled to the blessings of the Priesthood.** . . . No limit as to how far back so far as I know. (*Patriarchal Blessings*, Institute of Religion, January 17, 1964, page 8)

Time Magazine for June 30, 1958, page 47, pointed out Dr. Robert P. Stuckert researched the "conclusion that of 135 million Americans classified as white in 1950, about 28 million (21%) had some African ancestry." The Church's stress on genealogical research placed many members of the Church in a very embarrassing position. Many members of the Church discovered they had black ancestors and attempted to cover it up. Some however, faced the issue and yielded up all rights to the priesthood. The *Deseret News* Church Section for July 11, 1970, told of an interesting case:

Mr. and Mrs. John Lono Pea are an amazing couple. . . . he was set apart as genealogy secretary.

"I found out through my family telling me and in genealogy work that a grandparent was an offspring of one of the Negroes who migrated to Hawaii in 1820, through the slave trade.

"I have a sure testimony that what the Lord has said regarding the priesthood is true. I sent my genealogy to the First Presidency so there would be no chance of my getting the priesthood through any means except when the Lord wills it.

"I don't want to offend God by trying to have it because someone through the goodness of their heart, wants me to have it. . . ."

Unless there is another man in Hawaii with the name “John L. Pea,” there is reason to believe that Mr. Pea was mistakenly ordained to the priesthood and performed baptisms and other ordinances before his ancestry was discovered. The following is from a Council meeting held October 29, 1936:

Letter read from President W. Francis Bailey of the Hawaiian Mission stating that Brother William Pakale, a priest, and Brother **John L. Pea**, who have recently been discovered to be one-eighth negro, have heretofore officiated in **performing some baptisms and other ordinances**. President Bailey asks for a ruling as to what should be done in such cases.

After some discussion of the matter, Elder Stephen L. Richards moved that the matter be referred to Elder George Albert Smith, who will attend the approaching Oahu Stake Conference, with instructions that **in the event he should find that a considerable number of people are involved**, we assuming the authority was given to those brethren to officiate in these ordinances, **that ratification of their acts be authorized. In the event he should discover that there are only one or two affected, and that the matter can be readily taken care of, it may be advisable to have re-baptism performed.**

Motion seconded by Brother Ballard and unanimously approved. (Council Minutes, October 29, 1936, Bennion papers, typed copy; also cited by Lester Bush in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 141)

REVELATION EVADES REAL ISSUE

O. Kendall White, Jr., made these interesting observations six years before the revelation was given:

Since they believe in “continuing revelation,” Mormons have a mechanism that enables them to reverse previous positions without repudiating the past. This is illustrated in the resolution of the conflict over polygamy. Mormons never disavowed their belief in polygamy, but they discontinued the practice on the grounds that it conflicted with another belief involving support for “the law of the land.” That the church will invoke such a mechanism to resolve the racial issue is not too unlikely.

However, this approach has a serious drawback. It is the tendency not to acknowledge the errors of the past. While revelation could be used to legitimate a new racial policy and to redefine Mormon relations with black people, Mormons might still be unwilling to condemn the racism involved in their history. They might be inclined to argue that Mormons in earlier periods were under a different mandate than the one binding them. This obviously implies that the church is never wrong. Thus, change may come through the notion of continuing revelation, but the racist aspects of Mormon history will not necessarily be condemned. (*The Journal of Religious Thought*, Autumn-Winter, 1973, pages 57-58)

It would appear that the Church leaders have done exactly what Mr. White warned against—i.e., they have used revelation as a means of sidestepping the real issues involved. Mario S. DePillis pointed out that “the revelation leaves unsolved other racist implications of the Book of Mormon and the *Pearl of Great Price*—scriptures that are both cornerstones and contradictions” (*New York Times*, June 11, 1978).

One issue that the Mormon leaders now seem to be dodging is that concerning skin color. From the beginning Mormon theology has taught that a black skin is a sign of God’s displeasure:

We will first inquire into the results of the approbation or **displeasure of God** upon a people, starting with the belief that **a black skin is a mark of the curse of heaven** placed upon some portions of mankind. (*Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 3, page 157)

The Book of Mormon is filled with the teaching that people with dark skins are cursed:

... wherefore, as they were white, and exceeding fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people **the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them**. (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 5:21)

And the skins of the Lamanites were **dark**, according to the **mark** which was set upon their fathers, which was **a curse** upon them because at their transgression . . . (*Ibid.*, Alma 3:6)

In Mormon 5:15 of the Book of Mormon the following statement is made concerning the Indians:

... for this people shall be scattered, and shall become a **dark**, a filthy, and a loathsome people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, . . .

The Book of Mormon, however, predicts that the Indians will repent of their sins and become white:

... and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and delightsome people. (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 30:6)

Spencer W. Kimball, who gave the new revelation which allows blacks to hold the priesthood, seems to be a real believer in the teaching that God makes righteous people become “white and delightsome”:

I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people today as against that of only fifteen years ago. . . . they are fast becoming a **white** and delightsome people. . . . they are now becoming white and delightsome, as they were promised. In this picture of the twenty Lamanite missionaries, fifteen of the twenty were **as light as Anglos**; . . . The children in the home placement program in Utah are often **lighter** than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation. . . . There was the doctor in a Utah city who for two years had had an Indian boy in his home who stated that he was **some shades lighter** than the younger brother just coming into the program from the reservation. These young members of the Church are changing to **whiteness** and to delightsomeness. One regular elder jokingly said that he and his companion were donating blood regularly to the hospital in the hope that the process might be accelerated. . . . today the dark clouds are dissipating. (*Improvement Era*, December 1960, pages 922-923)

It is interesting to note that while Spencer W. Kimball believes that the Indians are to become “white and delightsome,” he has suppressed Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation on polygamy which commanded the Mormons to marry the Indians to make them white. We published this revelation in full in the book *Mormonism Like Watergate?* in 1974. The most important verse of this revelation reads as follows:

4. Verily, I say unto you, that the wisdom of man, in his fallen state, knoweth not the purposes and the privileges of my holy priesthood, but ye shall know when ye receive a fulness by reason of the anointing: For it is my will, that in time, ye should take unto you **wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white**, delightsome and just, for even now their females are more virtuous than the gentiles.

We seriously doubt that President Kimball will ever allow this revelation to be canonized in the *Doctrine and Covenants* since he feels that the Indians are being made “white and delightsome” through the power of God and has in the past discouraged intermarriage with the Indians. The Church Section of the *Deseret News* for June 17, 1978, gave this information:

In an address to seminary and institute teachers at Brigham Young University on June 27, 1958, President Kimball, then a member of the Council of the Twelve, said:

“... there is one thing that I must mention, and that is **interracial marriages**. When I said you must teach your young people to overcome their prejudices and **accept the Indians, I did not mean that you would encourage intermarriage.**”

Although the Mormon Church is now opening the door to temple marriages between blacks and whites, President Kimball is probably not too enthused about the matter. An endorsement of Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation encouraging intermarriage with Indians could now lead white members to seek marriages with blacks. Since blacks are no longer cursed as to the priesthood, the revelation might just as logically be interpreted that Mormons should “take unto you wives” of the Ethiopians or Nigerians “that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just, . . .”

For more documentation and verification of the 1831 revelation on polygamy see our book *Mormonism Like Watergate?* pages 6-14.

Another matter which the new revelation allowing blacks to hold the priesthood does not resolve is the teaching concerning pre-existence. In the past Mormon leaders have stressed that blacks were cursed as to the priesthood because of “unfaithfulness in the spirit—or pre-existence” (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 263-264). Should a faithful Mormon continue to believe that blacks were unrighteous in a pre-existent state? The Mormon leaders are silent concerning this matter. It will be especially interesting to see how Church leaders explain this matter to blacks in the Church. Monroe Fleming, far instance, was converted to the Church over 25 years ago. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained to him why he could not hold the priesthood, but since the new “revelation” he is being encouraged to be ordained. Now, was Mr. Fleming really unfaithful in a pre-existent state or did the Church leaders just make a mistake in

the past when they said he could not hold the priesthood? Church leaders should explain if they believe black babies born after the new “revelation” were inferior spirits in a pre-existent state. Now that they have abandoned the idea that blacks cannot hold the priesthood, they should explain if they are giving up some of their teachings on the pre-existence. They should also explain whether they are repudiating the Book of Mormon teaching that a dark skin is given by God as a “curse.”

By giving a “revelation” on the matter without explaining its implications, the Mormon leaders are leaving their people in a dense doctrinal fog. They should take a lesson from the situation that has developed since the Church gave up polygamy. Instead of actually repudiating the doctrine, President Woodruff said he received a revelation and issued the Manifesto which was supposed to put a stop to the practice. The Church retained Joseph Smith’s 1843 revelation on polygamy in the *Doctrine and Covenants* Section 132. Church leaders continued to teach that polygamy was a righteous doctrine, but since it was against the law, it should not actually be practiced. Because of their reluctance to come to grips with the real issue and repudiate the doctrine, the Mormon leaders left their people in confused state. Many Mormons have reasoned that since the Church teaches plural marriage will be practiced in heaven, they should practice it on earth. Therefore, in disregard to the Church’s Manifesto, thousands of people in Utah are living in polygamy today. The Church excommunicates those who are caught living in the practice, but since it retains the revelation on plural marriage in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the number of dissidents continues to grow.

Now, if the Church continues to hide behind a purported revelation on the blacks and fails to come to grips with its racist doctrines, thousands of people are going to continue believing these doctrines and the Church will be plagued with racism for many years to come. In 1960, Sterling McMurrin predicted:

... I really believe, if I don’t die in the very near future, I will live to see the time when this doctrine is dissolved. I don’t mean repudiated. The Mormon Church is like the Catholic Church, it doesn’t repudiate doctrine that at one time or another were held to be revelation or absolute truth. They didn’t repudiate the doctrine of Polygamy. I use the word dissolve, and I imagine by some technique they will dissolve the doctrine on the Negro, rather than repudiate it. (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 287)

Dr. McMurrin’s prediction seems to be coming true. The Mormon Church now appears to be in the process of trying to dissolve the doctrine through new “revelation.” This is the very thing which we warned against in our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 293:

The honest solution to the problem facing the Mormon leaders is not to have another “revelation,” but to repudiate the doctrine. They should admit that Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders taught doctrines that cannot be accepted as coming from God.

The reader will remember that Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, said that **slavery was a “divine institution,”** and that the Civil War could not free the slaves (See *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, page 250); however, the Civil War did free the slaves, and Brigham Young was wrong. . . .

Brigham Young said that if a person who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the Negro **the penalty is “death on the spot”** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, page 110). Obviously, the Mormons do not believe this statement by Brigham Young or they would be putting many people to death. Brigham Young called this **the “law of God”** and said that **“This will always be so.”** Now, if Brigham Young was wrong about this, what assurance have we that he was right when he said that the Negro could not hold the Priesthood? Why should we disregard this teaching, which Brigham Young called the **“law of God,”** and yet hold to his teaching that the Negro can not have the Priesthood?

Instead of continuing to cling to Joseph Smith’s Book of Abraham, the Mormon leaders should come to grips with the matter and acknowledge that it is a false translation of the Egyptian Book of Breathing. To come forth with a new “revelation” only compounds the problem.

One thing that should be noted about the new “revelation” is that the Church has failed to produce a copy of it. All we have is a statement by the First Presidency that says a revelation was received. Joseph Smith printed many of his revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* and other Church publications, and the Apostle Orson Pratt mocked the Catholics for not adding revelations to the canon:

... strange to say, none of their revelations are permitted to enter the sacred canon . . . Here, indeed, is a strange inconsistency! Even the

Catholic church herself, evidently places **no confidence** in the popes and bishops, . . . if she did, **she would have canonized their revelations** along with the rest of the revelations of the New Testament. . . . We can but conclude that it is all an imposition . . . (*Orson Pratt’s Works*, “The Bible Alone An Insufficient Guide,” page 39)

It appears that the Mormon Church does not intend to canonize or even make public the new revelation on the blacks. The *Salt Lake Tribune* for June 13, 1978 reported:

Kimball refused to discuss the revelation that changed the church’s 148-year-old policy against ordination of blacks, saying it was “a personal thing.” . . .

Kimball said the revelation came at this time because conditions and people have changed.

“It’s a different world than it was 20 or 25 years ago. The world is ready for it,” he said.

We seriously doubt that President Kimball will put forth a written revelation on the bestowal of priesthood on blacks. We doubt, in fact, that any such document exists. What probably happened was that the leaders of the Church finally realized that they could no longer retain the anti-black doctrine without doing irreparable damage to the Church. Under these circumstances they were impressed with the fact that this doctrine had to be changed and this impression was referred to as a revelation from God. In a letter to the Editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 24, 1978 Eugene Wagner observed:

... was this change of doctrine really a revelation from the Lord, or did the church leaders act on their own? Why don’t they publish that revelation and let the Lord speak in his own words? All we saw was a statement of the First Presidency, and that is not how a revelation looks.

When God speaks the revelation starts with the words: “Thus sayeth the Lord . . .” It seems when the Lord decides to change a doctrine of such great importance he will talk himself to the people of his church. If such a revelation cannot be presented to the members it is obvious that the first presidency acted on its own, most likely under fear of public pressure to avoid problems of serious consequences and to maintain peace and popularity with the world.

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 281, we included an account of an interview Michael Marquardt had with a member at the Genesis Group. According to Mr. Marquardt’s notes, “June 24, 1971 was the first time that the First Presidency and Twelve have prayed in this Temple about whether Black members of the Church should hold the Priesthood. The First Presidency and Twelve were **not in agreement** on the question. But they did agree that the Genesis Group should be formed.”

We will probably never know whether the First Presidency and Twelve reached a unanimous decision in June, 1978, but it is logical to believe that the majority had come to believe that the doctrine had to be changed.

Be this as it may, we feel that it is wrong to attribute such a revelation to God. It makes it appear that God has been a real racist for thousands of years, and that the Mormon leaders by “pleading long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the upper room of the Temple” have finally persuaded God to give blacks the priesthood. The truth of the matter, however, is that **“God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him”** (Acts 10: 34-35). It is the Mormon leaders who have kept blacks under a curse. They have continually and stubbornly opposed the advancement of black people, threatening and excommunicating those who differed with them on the matter. Finally, when their backs are to the wall, the Mormon leaders are forced to change their position. We would think that at this time they would fall down before God and acknowledge their wrong doing, but instead they proudly stand up as heroes and proclaim that because of their “pleading long and earnestly” on behalf of the blacks, God has changed the doctrine and decided to give them the priesthood. To claim a “revelation” at this point seems almost like mockery to God. Less than four years ago Apostle McConkie was claiming that it was unspiritual people who were “deeply concerned about the Church’s stand on who can or who cannot receive the priesthood and think it is time for a new revelation. . . .” Now members of the First Presidency admit that they have been “pleading long and earnestly” concerning the question. Dr. Hugh Nibley once claimed that “of all churches in the world” only the Mormon Church “has not found it necessary to readjust any part of its doctrine in the last hundred years” (*No Ma’am, That’s Not History*, page 46). The new revelation on the blacks is just another evidence of how Dr. Nibley has misrepresented the situation.

Sterling McMurrin made some interesting observations ten years ago:

He expressed belief the time would come when “the Mormon people for the most part will have to abandon their crude superstitions about Negroes because their children forced them to.”

But he said there will be those who will remember “with sadness and moral embarrassment the day when their Church could have done great things to hasten the achievement, but failed.” (*Ogden Standard-Examiner*, June 22, 1968)

IS THE PRIESTHOOD LOST?

The reader will remember that President Brigham Young once said that if the blacks were given all the blessings of the Gospel, the priesthood would be taken from the Church and it would go to destruction. Our research leads us to believe that the Mormon Church never had any priesthood to lose. Even David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, seems to have had some real reservations about the “priesthood”:

This matter of “priesthood,” since the days of Sydney Rigdon, has been the great hobby and stumbling-block of the Latter Day Saints. . . . Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church—until Sydney Rigdon’s days in Ohio. This matter of the two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, **all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon.** (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, page 64)

The question might well be asked, “If what David Whitmer says is true, how can Section 27 and other sections of the *Doctrine and Covenants* be accounted for?” Actually, these revelations have been changed from the way they originally read when they were first printed. David Whitmer charged: “You have **changed the revelations** from the way they were first given . . . to support the error of high priests. You have changed the revelations to support the error of a President of the high priesthood, high counselors, etc.” (*Ibid.*, page 49).

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 19, 22-25, we show through photographs of the first printing of Joseph Smith’s revelations that Whitmer was right when he charged that serious changes were made concerning priesthood, and on pages 177-182 we demonstrate that the

Mormon idea of “priesthood” is unscriptural. The Bible teaches that the old order of priesthood was fulfilled and that Christ Himself is our High Priest. It indicates that Jesus has “**an unchangeable priesthood**. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24-25).

The Bible also indicates that all Christians (not just men) are a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). In 1 Peter 2:5 we read that “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” The priesthood of the Old Testament has been fulfilled and now “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12).

IMPACT OF REVELATION

Some people believe that the Mormon Church is not sincere in opening the priesthood to blacks. We feel however, that even though the Mormon leaders have failed to face some important issues, they have made a major concession which will gradually weaken racism throughout the Church.

We feel that one of the important reasons the Church decided to confer the priesthood on blacks was that the anti-black doctrine was hurting missionary work. With the change in this policy, we anticipate that the Church will make many more converts. On the other hand, many members of the Church have become disillusioned because of the Church’s handling of the racial issue, and the new “revelation” has tended to confirm in their minds that the Lord had nothing to do with the whole matter. For those Christians working with Mormons, this may really prove to be an opening for effective witnessing.

For those who are interested in the subject of the anti-black doctrine we highly recommend our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* In this book we have devoted over 100 pages to the doctrine and Joseph Smith’s false translation of the Book of Abraham. In addition to this, on pages 582-85 we have printed the “Excerpts from the Weekly Council Meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Dealing with the Rights of Negroes in the Church, 1849-1940.” This important document throws a great deal of light on why the Church was finally forced to have a new “revelation.” ■

AMBUSHING THE TANNERS

Sales on our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* have now mounted to over 27,000 copies, yet the Mormon leaders have still made no official response. The LDS Church Historical Department did become involved in a secret plot to destroy the credibility of our book, but, as we shall show, the plan turned into a complete fiasco which brought great embarrassment to the Church.

A REAL COVER-UP

In December 1977 a 63-page booklet mysteriously appeared for sale at Zion Bookstore in Salt Lake City. It was an attack on our book and was entitled, *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*

The first thing we noted was that it was written anonymously—the author is listed only as a “Latter-day Saint Historian.” A careful examination of the pamphlet revealed that even the name of the publisher had been suppressed. When we tried to trace the source of the pamphlet we found a cover-up that reminds us of the Watergate episode. The whole matter, in fact, had all the earmarks of an intelligence operation mounted by the CIA or the KGB. “Deniability” seemed to be the name of the game. It was obvious that Zion bookstore was the distributor of the booklet. The name of the store might suggest that it is owned by the Church, but it is actually owned by Sam Weller. Although Mr. Weller has sold copies of our books for years, he has always been careful to keep them in such secluded places that very few people manage to find them. However this may be, when we asked Mr. Weller where he was getting copies of *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism*, he replied that he did not know! He said that it was all a very secret operation. He claimed that he had received a letter giving details of how he could handle the pamphlet, but that the writer was not identified. When we asked Mr. Weller to show us the letter, he replied that he would not because it was his own “personal property.”

It seemed logical to us that he must pay someone for the pamphlets, but when we asked him about the matter he replied that he had received them absolutely free. Since Mr. Weller received 1,800 free copies of the pamphlet we reasoned that they must have been donated by an organization or individual who had a great deal of money to spend.

So far we have been unable to trace exactly how Zion Bookstore received the pamphlets. According to one report, the books were first mailed anonymously to a post office box. From there they were transported to a publishing company near Redwood Road and were subsequently picked up by an employee from Zion Bookstore. Wilfrid Clark, who works for Sam Weller, maintained that he did not know anything about a publishing company picking up the books from a post office box. He said that all he knew about the matter was that Zion Bookstore received an anonymous letter containing a key to a room in a self storage company on Redwood Road. He claimed that he personally went to the company and picked up the booklets.

As we followed the tracks of this conspiracy to destroy our work, we found that they led right into the Mormon Church Office Building. Actually, it was more than a year ago when we first heard that something was afoot. We had a visit with a young Mormon singer who had some questions regarding Church history. He told us he held an appointment with a woman at the Church Office Building who claimed she had been part of a committee which was organized to evaluate our research. The committee worked on our material until they received an order from the Prophet—i.e., the President of the Church—that they were to desist from the project. We were unable to learn anything more about this purported committee, but one of the top Mormon historians did tell us in a telephone conversation in Dec. 1976 that a manuscript had been prepared to refute the allegations contained in our work. He was not sure if the Church would actually publish it, but the writing had been done.

One of the major clues which led to the discovery of the source of the pamphlet *Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s Distorted View of Mormonism* was an unpublished thesis by Richard Stephen Marshall. We were absolutely amazed at its contents. Three of the top historians in the Mormon Church are cited as making very candid statements concerning our work and other matters relating to the history of the Church. These three men were all assigned to write volumes in the Church’s new “sixteen-volume sesquicentennial history of the Latter-day Saints.” Two of them subsequently found themselves in trouble with the Church and were called in to answer for the statements attributed to them. At any rate, one of these historians really “spilled the beans” when he told that the Mormon Church

Historical Dept. had assigned a scholar to answer our work and that his manuscript would probably have to be published anonymously. We cite the following from Mr. Marshall's paper:

Recent years have seen the emergence of a new kind of anti-Mormon literature which uses Mormon historical records . . . to try to show that the Church was more human than divine. This new kind of literature is best typified by Jerald and Sandra Tanner and their Modern Microfilm Publishing Company. . . . They have been prolific since 1961 and have, at present, a world-wide reputation. This writer encountered materials published by them while living in Australia several years ago. Max Parkin, of the LDS institute of Religion at the University of Utah calls them "publishers extraordinary," and notes that one of their most recent volumes, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* is the finest, most comprehensive and hard-hitting anti-Mormon book in history. . . .

Many prominent Mormons have expressed a high regard for the work the Tanners have done. . . . T. Edgar Lyon, a Mormon historian and long-time teacher at the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah told this writer he thought the Church should subsidize the Tanners, although he said it tongue-in cheek.

Reed Durham using virtually the same words as Lyon said that he thought the Church should subsidize the Tanners because of all the historical research they do for it. He teaches a class at the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah on the problems of Mormon history called "Special Studies in Mormon History." He uses the Tanner's book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* as the text for the class. Formerly he would purchase copies of the book in quantity from Modern Microfilm through the Institute. Because it did not look very good for the Institute to be purchasing quantities of an anti-Mormon work, he now encourages his students to go down to Modern Microfilm and buy the book on their own.

Durham said he would like to write a book answering the accusations of the Tanners point by point. To do so, however, would require certain admissions that Mormon history is not exactly as the Church has taught it was, that there were things taught and practiced in the nineteenth century of which the general Church membership is unaware. He said that the Church is not ready to admit that yet. He also said that **due to the large number of letters the Church Historian's Office is receiving asking for answers to the things the Tanners have published, a certain scholar (name deliberately withheld) was appointed to write a general answer to the Tanners** including advice on how to read anti-Mormon literature. This unnamed person solicited the help of Reed Durham on the project. The work is finished but its publication is delayed, according to what Leonard Arrington told Durham, because they can not decide how or where to publish it. Because the article is an open and honest approach to the problem, although it by no means answers all of the questions raised by the Tanners, **it will be published anonymously**, to avoid any difficulties which could result were such an article connected with an official Church agency. (*The New Mormon History*, by Richard Stephen Marshall, A Senior Honors Project Summary, University of Utah, May 1, 1977, pages 57, 61 and 62)

The fact that an anonymous rebuttal appeared just seven months from the time Mr. Marshall wrote his paper seems like more than just a coincidence.

Unfortunately, Mr. Marshall's paper does not give the name of the author, referring to him only as "a certain scholar (name deliberately withheld) . . ." We did, however, remember our telephone conversation with the Mormon scholar (see above) and thought that he might have told us that D. Michael Quinn was the historian assigned to write the rebuttal. We began to do research in Dr. Quinn's writings and found a number of things in his M.A. thesis which led us to believe he was the author of the rebuttal. We thought that in light of the evidence he would surely confess his involvement. To our great surprise, however, he emphatically denied any connection with it. We were somewhat taken back by his firm and unyielding denial, and therefore decided to do further research. We spent some time examining Quinn's dissertation written at Yale University, a copy of which is found at the University of Utah library.

STONEWALLING

After examining Dr. Quinn's writings, we were rather certain that he wrote the rebuttal. Still, we did not want to be too hasty in rushing into print. His vigorous denials were still ringing in our ears, and we felt that it was unfair to accuse a man of such a cowardly act unless we had very good evidence.

The reader will remember that Richard Steven Marshall's paper gave information that indicated Leonard Arrington, Mormon Church Historian, was involved in the project even before May 1, 1977. We had a number of phone conversations with Dr. Arrington, and in every conversation he emphatically declared he did not know who the author of the rebuttal was and had absolutely no foreknowledge of the matter.

Everywhere we turned we met with the same response—an absolute stonewall. We knew that we had circumstantial evidence that Quinn was the author and that the project came through the Mormon Church Historical Department, but since everyone contacted denied the accusation our confidence was somewhat shaken. Then an unbelievable thing happened: while searching through a drawer for some samples of typewritten material we came upon a handwritten note we had made over a year before concerning the phone conversation we had with the Mormon scholar. Our note, written on or before December 12, 1976, confirmed that the author was "Michael Quinn[n]" and that the work was written "For Historians Office." The note also indicated that the Church "May not publish it." The handwritten note also contained what proved to be a very significant item—i.e., a statement that a man by the name of "David Mayfield" said the paper "had been done." We decided to call Mr. Mayfield and ask him concerning the matter. After all the stonewalling we had encountered we really expected to learn very little from Mr. Mayfield. To our great surprise, however, he turned out to be very honest about the matter.

Our first question to Mr. Mayfield was whether he worked for the Mormon Historical Department. He replied that he had worked there but was not working there at the present time. Then we asked him if he had seen Michael Quinn's paper in the typed form before it was published as *Jerald and Sandra Distorted View of Mormonism*. After hesitating slightly, he replied: "Yes." Then we asked if he was sure that it was the typed copy he had seen. The reply: "Yes." The third question we asked was whether it was about a year ago when he saw it. Mr. Mayfield also replied "yes" to that question. Then he began to get uneasy and asked to whom he was speaking. (He apparently thought he was talking to a Mormon who had been initiated into the secret.) Needless to say, he was not too happy when he learned who it was, although he was still very polite. He went on to say that he was told not to reveal the identity of the author because it was supposed to be an anonymous publication. We reminded him, however, that in his answer to an earlier question, he had already revealed the identity of the author. He had replied "yes" to the question of whether he had seen the typed copy of Michael Quinn's paper before it was published.

As soon as we had terminated the conversation with Mr. Mayfield, we called Dr. Arrington, Church Historian, and asked him if he was still going to stand by his story in the light of David Mayfield's admission. He emphatically replied that he knew absolutely nothing about the project and that the charges were completely untrue. Later that day Dr. Arrington called us and said he had checked with Mayfield, and that Mayfield told him he had made a mistake; it was another document that he had seen. We, of course, could hardly believe that Mr. Mayfield could have made such a serious mistake. In light of the handwritten note and the telephone conversation confirming the note, we could only believe that the Historical Department was behind the whole project. Nevertheless, Dr. Arrington continued to deny the whole matter. Later we called David Mayfield and asked him if he held told Dr. Arrington that he had made a mistake about the document. Mr. Mayfield did not support Dr. Arrington; he simply replied that he was "not going to comment" about the matter.

With this new evidence in hand, we called Michael Quinn. The reader will remember that Dr. Quinn had strongly denied the accusation when we first called him. This conversation was entirely different from the first. When we asked him if he was the author of Jerald and Sandra Tanners Distorted View of Mormonism, he replied that he would "neither affirm nor deny" the allegation. He explained that only a small number of Mormon historians were capable of writing the rebuttal. To affirm or deny the allegation would help us to limit the field, and since the author wished to remain anonymous he would not help us in any way. This, of course, was a long step from his original position. He had moved from an absolute "no" to the compromised position that he would "neither affirm nor deny" authorship. Now, if he had taken the position of refusing to affirm or deny at the first, he would have been in far better shape. As it is, Dr. Quinn has put himself and the Church in a very embarrassing position.

In an article entitled, "Doctrinal Cloak and Dagger," David Merrill told of talking to Michael Quinn about the rebuttal. He claimed that Mr. Quinn would "neither confirm, nor deny involvement or knowledge of the manuscript's origins" (*Utah Holiday*, February 1978, page 7). Gary James Bergera also talked to Quinn about the matter:

While neither affirming nor denying the charge that he wrote the attack, Quinn adds, "If they want to attribute [attribute?] me as the author, they're free to, just as long as they spell my name right." ("Jerald and Sandra Tanner," unpublished paper by Gary James Bergera, page 7)

The *Utah Historical Quarterly* for Winter 1973, page 70, informs us that Dr. Quinn has served as "a historical assistant with the Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The *Ensign* for August 1977, page 37, says that Quinn is "an assistant professor of history at Brigham Young University." BYU is of course owned by the Church. Since the whole operation was carried out in such a clandestine manner, we were not surprised to learn that Quinn has served as a "Special Agent, U.S. Military Intelligence, Washington, D.C. and Munich, Germany, 1968-1971." ("Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: A Prosopographical Study," M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1973, page 311)

Although we are convinced that Michael Quinn played the major role in preparing the rebuttal, others could have contributed. The reader will remember it was reported that a committee had been set up to examine our work. One Mormon scholar told us he was informed that an answer to anti-Mormon criticism was being prepared by the Church. He was taken into a room where "they picked my brain" for answers to the problems. He admitted that Dr. Quinn was involved in the project but did not identify the others.

Be this as it may, the fact that the rebuttal was published anonymously tends to destroy its credibility. We do not believe that most Mormons would approve of such a cowardly method of attack. In 1903, the noted Mormon historian B. H. Roberts publicly condemned an adversary for remaining anonymous:

Editor Tribune:—... when the challenge was accepted, the courtesy of debate would certainly require that the acceptance of the challenge should be **otherwise than from ambush**. I mean that **I am entitled to know the name of my opponent**, that I may judge somewhat of his character and standing. And why should the gentleman remain in cog? Is he ashamed to be known as engaging in such a discussion? Or is it a precaution he takes so that if his argument does not rise to the expectation of his friends, he may remain unknown behind the mystery of a single initial. . . . I need say nothing of his courage. (*Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, Salt Lake City, 1907, vol. 1, page 328)

Like B. H. Roberts, we feel that any challenge to our work "should be otherwise than from ambush." Chad Flake, a longstanding critic of our work, seems to agree about the matter:

"Here's a man who's writing to evaluate the Tanners, **yet he doesn't have enough gumption to put his name on it. The credibility of the pamphlet, as far as I'm concerned, is nil**," remarks Chad Flake, associate professor of library science and Director of Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU. ("Jerald and Sandra Tanner," unpublished paper by Gary James Bergera, pages 6-7)

That the Church Historical Department would publish the rebuttal anonymously is bad enough, but even worse is the fact that those responsible (Church Historian Leonard Arrington and Michael Quinn) would emphatically deny any connection with it. In the rebuttal we have been accused of dishonesty, yet those responsible for its publication will not admit their connection with it. In February, 1978, we challenged "Leonard Arrington, D. Michael Quinn and everyone else who was involved in this surreptitious plot to come forth and meet us in a public debate. We will even pay to rent the hall." So far all of the participants have remained silent about the matter.

Not only has the rebuttal been put forth in a dishonest manner, but also it contains serious errors and misrepresentations. We have written a response to it entitled, *Answering Dr. Clandestine: A Response to the Anonymous LDS Historian*. This 22-page pamphlet demonstrates how *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism* was traced back to Michael Quinn and the Church Historical Department and shows some of the glaring errors that it contains. We feel that our pamphlet has completely destroyed the credibility of the LDS Church Historical Department's response to *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*

One man who read the rebuttal to *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* wrote us a letter in which he stated: "If that pamphlet is the best the church has been able to come up with in the 6 years since *Shadow or Reality* was published, the church must be really desperate." The Mormon historians apparently believed they were going to deal us a serious blow with this rebuttal, but it has turned out to be an incredible blunder. In fact, if they were to have sat down and planned a method to promote our work they could have hardly come up with a better idea. It has only tended to increase sales of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and now that we have sold over 27,000 copies many people are asking why the Church has not prepared an official rebuttal. We believe it is because the Church leaders have no real answers to the problems and that any publicity that they give would only work to their disadvantage. In a letter written January 19, 1977, a spokesman for Deseret Bookstore wrote: "We do not plan a specific written response to the Tanner book. **Perhaps it does not deserve the dignity of a response.**" In a letter dated November 2, 1977, Francis M. Gibbons, Secretary to the First Presidency, dismissed *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* with this terse comment: "I have been asked to acknowledge your letter to Church Headquarters received October 27, 1977, and to explain that the book by Jerald and Sandra Tanner referred to in your letter is apostate material and has **no basis in fact.**"

We feel that the Mormon leaders will eventually be forced to come to grips with *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* In the pamphlet *Answering Dr. Clandestine: A Response to the Anonymous LDS Historian* we pointed out that "a representative of a major publishing company has written us a letter in which he said his firm is "vitaly interested in being the publisher of your materials." If an arrangement is worked out, we should have a distribution which is almost beyond our imagination." Since that time we have signed a contract with Moody Press to publish a condensed version of our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* Although it may take a year or two to actually get the book into production, it should get our work into the hands of thousands of people who would otherwise never hear about it.

At any rate, we feel that all of our readers should have both the unabridged edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *Answering Dr. Clandestine: A Response to the Anonymous LDS Historian*.

NOTICE: One free copy of *Answering Dr. Clandestine* will be sent with every order for *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* which sells for \$7.95 (\$9.95 in hardback). Special ends October 31, 1978. ■

HONESTY WITH MORMONS ON SPALDING

On June 25, 1977, the *Los Angeles Times* reported a very sensational story relating to the origin of the Book of Mormon:

Three Southern California researchers say they have new evidence that challenges the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, . . .

Based on the opinions of three handwriting experts, the researchers have declared that portions of the Book of Mormon were written by a Congregationalist minister and novelist who died more than 10 years before Joseph Smith is said to have received the revelations from God through golden plates.

Since we do not believe in the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, nothing could have pleased us more than to have seen the conclusion of the Californian researchers verified. Nevertheless, we had grave doubts about the new find, and after an examination of the documents we were forced to the conclusion that the discovery would not stand up under rigorous examination. In an article published in the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, David Briscoe wrote the following:

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — One of Mormonism's longstanding critics has joined the church in discounting conclusions of California researchers that the Book of Mormon was pirated from the writings of a 19th Century novelist.

Jerald Tanner, a Salt Lake City anti-Mormon publisher, says he was allowed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) on Thursday to see documents that convinced him novelist Solomon Spaulding could not have written part of the Book of Mormon manuscript. . . .

Tanner accompanied one of the Californian handwriting experts, William Kaye, to church headquarters Thursday, where they were allowed to see the original Book of Mormon manuscripts held by the church.

Church spokesman Don LeFevre said Kaye also examined a document which is the basis of part of another Mormon scripture, *The Doctrine and Covenants*.

That manuscript is clearly dated 15 years after Spaulding's death in 1816 and appears to have been written in the same hand as the disputed Book of Mormon manuscript, Tanner said.

He acknowledged not being a handwriting expert but said there are significant differences in the handwriting between the Book of Mormon manuscript and the Spaulding document that a layman can spot. . . . (*Ogden Standard-Examiner*, July 8, 1977)

After publishing *Did Spaulding Write the Book of Mormon?* in July, 1977, we received a great deal of criticism for not waiting until the California researchers finished their book before making an attack on the new theory. It was felt that after we examined all their evidence we might change our minds about the matter. The book was delayed for some time but finally appeared in November, 1977 under the title, *Who Really Wrote The Book Of Mormon?* After reading this book carefully, we must report that our feelings have not changed. In fact, we are more convinced than ever that we made the right decision. The evidence against the new Spaulding theory now seems to be overwhelming, and the California researcher's failure to deal with some of the basic criticisms leads us to the conclusion that they have no real answers to the objections raised. Although we have received some sharp criticism because of our stand on the Spaulding matter, we feel that it is based on very strong evidence and that it would be dishonest for us to compromise our position just to discredit the Mormons. We feel that all work against Mormonism should be based on reliable evidence which will meet the test of time.

When we made our first statement on the Spaulding matter, we felt almost like we were alone. The researchers were claiming their three noted handwriting experts had examined photocopies of the documents and all three agreed that twelve pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript were actually written by Solomon Spaulding. We felt better, however, on July 9, 1977, when the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that

One of three handwriting experts hired to check authenticity of the Book of Mormon has withdrawn from the assignment. . . .

He said he decided to withdraw after published reports that he agreed 12 pages of the Book of Mormon were written by . . . Spaulding. . . .

"That is not true," Mr. Silver said. "I have told news representatives that I could not say that without examining the original writings of Solomon Spaulding, not just the photocopies . . ."

The California researchers have implied that Henry Silver withdrew from the case because he feared for his life, but in a letter dated January 12, 1978, Silver himself stated:

As far as I am concerned I have never had any threat what-so-ever thrown at me in connection with the case, nor have I ever had a threat against me any time in my life. I never made at any time or any place any statement or even suggested a fear of being killed, in connection with the case, . . .

William Kaye, the second handwriting expert, supported the researchers in his letter of September 8, 1997, but one week after Mr. Kaye issued his statement, a big blow fell on the researcher's case. This was the final opinion of the third handwriting expert, Howard C. Doulder. In a letter dated September 15, 1977, Mr. Doulder stated: "It is my conclusion the handwriting in the name of Solomon Spaulding is NOT the author of the unidentified pages, . . . of the Book of Mormon." The *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1977, reported that when Howard A. Davis, one of the three researchers, was asked about Doulder's statement, he said:

"I kind of expected he (Doulder) would go negative on the thing because there have been so many death threats."

Asked if his life had been threatened during his investigation of the Mormon manuscripts, Doulder replied: "Not at all."

The researchers claim that Doulder's "second opinion contradicted his own first report" (*Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* page 175). Now while it is true that Mr. Doulder gave an opinion supporting the Spaulding theory before his final report, we must remember that he had only examined photocopies of the documents and had made it clear that this was not a final verdict. In a report dated March 4, 1977, Doulder stated:

Because I have examined machine copies and photographic enlargements and NOT the originals, I can only render a qualified opinion. . . .

A positive conclusion can be rendered only after an examination of all the original documents. (*Ibid.*, page 180)

The researchers have used the statements of the handwriting experts in a very clever way. They have photographically printed both the preliminary statements and the later statements. To the uncritical reader it would appear that they have five statements supporting their conclusion and only one against it. Actually, what they have is four preliminary statements (Henry Silver gave two preliminary opinions) and only two later opinions by those who have examined the original documents. What it boils down to, then, is that they have only one favorable statement by a handwriting expert made after he had seen all the documents. Two of the three handwriting experts no longer support their conclusions, yet in the face of this the researchers boldly assert that the "overwhelming weight" of the handwriting evidence supports their conclusion (*Ibid.*, page 176). Although we do not profess to be handwriting experts, we certainly cannot agree with the researchers on this matter. We feel that the evidence is strongly against their theory.

In their book the California researchers try to show that Sidney Rigdon stole Spaulding's manuscript from Patterson's Print Shop in Pittsburgh and that Rigdon visited Joseph Smith in Palmyra, New York, before the Book of Mormon was printed. Although Fawn Brodie feels that "The tenuous chain of evidence accumulated to support the Spaulding-Rigdon theory breaks altogether when it tries to prove that Rigdon met Joseph Smith before 1830" (*No Man Knows My History*, page 453), the California researchers claim to have new evidence on this matter. On page 119 of *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* we find a very surprising assertion:

1829 (June/July) Gap in Rigdon's o.i.
David Whitmer (founding Mormon)
testifies that Smith and Rigdon were together.

As soon as we read this statement we became suspicious that the researchers had nothing to back it up. When an inquiry was made, one of the researchers claimed that this statement had appeared in the book by mistake and that it would be corrected in the next printing. David Whitmer had not actually said Rigdon was present, but in a book by Preston Nibley, Whitmer had described a stranger and the description seemed to fit Rigdon. This story is found in *The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon*, pages 70-71:

When I was returning to Fayette, . . . all of us riding in the wagon, a very pleasant, nice-looking old man suddenly appeared by the side of our wagon and saluted us with, "Good morning," . . . We returned the salutation, and, by a sign from Joseph, I invited him to ride if he was going our way. But he said very pleasantly, "No, I am going to Cumorah." . . . as I looked around inquiringly of Joseph, the old man instantly disappeared. . . . He was, I should think, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches tall and heavy set, about such a man as James Vanleave there, but heavier; his face was as large, he was dressed in a suit of brown woolen clothes, his hair and beard were white, like Brother Pratt's, but his beard was not so heavy. . . . It was the messenger who held the plates, who had taken them from Joseph just prior to our starting from Harmony.

Since Sidney Rigdon was only 36 years old at the time, we do not think that he could be described as an "old man." At any rate, David Whitmer (one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon) would never have testified that Smith and Rigdon were together in 1829. In his booklet, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, page 11, David Whitmer plainly stated:

Neither Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris or myself ever met Sydney Rigdon until after the Book of Mormon was in print. I know this of my own personal knowledge being with Joseph Smith, in Seneca County, N.Y., in the winter of 1830, when Sydney Rigdon and Edward Partridge came from Kirtland, Ohio, to see Joseph Smith, and **where Rigdon and Partridge saw Smith for the first time in their lives.**

The Spaulding manuscript story is a myth; there being no direct testimony on record in regard to Rigdon's connection with the manuscript of Solomon Spaulding.

If the researchers had been able to back up their assertion that David Whitmer testified Smith and Rigdon were together in 1829, we would have been very impressed. As it is, however, we are only left with statements which were made by other people many years after the events described. We do not think that this testimony is of any real value.

On pages 190-199 of their book *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon*, the California researchers use Dee Jay Nelson and Wesley P. Walters as witnesses against the truthfulness of Mormonism. It is interesting to note, however, that both these men reject the idea that Spalding actually penned 12 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript. In fact, Wesley P. Walters, one of the most noted researchers on Mormonism, has come out with a very critical review of *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* He has provided us with a copy, a version of which is published in *Contemporary Christianity*, Winter 1977-78. We extract the following from Wesley Walter's review of the California researchers' book:

This work brings together a great deal of painstaking research, collecting evidence from hard-to-find books and old newspapers to build a circumstantial case for the 140 year-old theory that the Book of Mormon is traceable to a now-missing manuscript written by a Congregational minister named Solomon Spalding. . . . The case is built entirely upon circumstantial evidence from testimonies of persons who had knowledge of events at various stages in the proposed chain linking Spalding to Rigdon to Smith. In general, the later the testimony, the more detailed and specific it becomes in affirming these connections, the witnesses' memory apparently improving with age.

A new feature in the research team's presentation of the theory is that there were *two* lost manuscripts of Spalding's novel instead of one. According to the older theory it was thought that Rigdon had simply *copied* the manuscript left by Spalding at the printer's and that it had subsequently been returned to the Spalding household where his wife and daughter reported seeing it in the family trunk after his death in 1816. On the basis of a very late testimony . . . the authors of this book maintain that there was a second copy of Spalding's work, one which had been prepared for the printer and which, according to Miller, needed only a title page and a possible preface to ready it for publication. They further maintain that Rigdon actually *stole* this copy from the printer's office and gave it to Joseph Smith who used it to produce the Book of Mormon. . . .

This theory seems apparently confirmed with the sensational discovery by the researchers that twelve pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript appear to be in the handwriting of Spalding himself. . . . When looked at carefully, however, this discovery raises so many knotty problems and conflicts in regard to the theoretical reconstruction in the first part of their book, that it actually tends to discredit it. . . . While the handwriting appears quite similar to Spalding's there seem to be some obvious differences to anyone who looks at it carefully. Furthermore, the manuscript of one of Joseph's revelations is in the handwriting of a scribe whose writing, to the layman's eye, looks more like the Book of Mormon portion attributed to Spalding than the undisputed samples of Spalding's handwriting itself. This shows that someone whose handwriting was very much like Spalding's was one of Joseph's scribes in the 1830 period. . . . If the Book of Mormon manuscript does contain the actual handwriting of Spalding, then the facts preclude identifying that manuscript with the printer's copy stolen by Rigdon. This is evident from the fact that the twelve manuscript pages attributed to Spalding are part of twenty pages on identical paper stock. The four pages that precede the "Spalding" block of material and the four that follow are in the known handwriting of identified scribes of Joseph Smith, Jr. This would mean that at least eight pages *without text* were sent to the printer by Spalding along with his manuscript. What is even more inexplicable is that two of the four pages immediately before the twelve "Spalding" pages have page-titles, summarizing the page's content, in the same apparent "Spalding" hand, while the content of the pages themselves is written in the known handwriting of those serving as Joseph's scribes in 1829. Why would Spalding send a printer blank pages with page-titles at the top of two of these, followed by twelve pages of manuscript, the first page of which starts in the middle of a sentence (viz., "and I commanded him in the voice of Laban. . ."=1 Ne. 4:20c)? This makes no sense at all and can hardly be regarded as a printer's copy. Moreover, Joseph Smith must be regarded as having composed and dictated the material on the blank pages sent by Spalding, and or having done this in the same vocabulary and style as the "Spalding" portion. Furthermore he succeeded in filling these blank pages with no indication of either crowding or coming up short and even connected smoothly into the incomplete sentence of Spalding without a hint of discontinuity. Anyone that clever could just as easily have composed the entire content himself. In any event, the fragmentary nature of the alleged Spalding material makes it impossible to connect this with any printer's copy that might have been stolen by Rigdon.

There is one final consideration that is really fatal to the identification of the twelve pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript as being the actual writings of Spalding himself. When Joseph was producing the Book of

Mormon he met with a very disastrous event. Mrs. Harris, the wife of his financial backer, managed to get hold of 116 pages of the opening portion of the Book of Mormon manuscript and never returned them to Joseph Smith. Had Joseph been dictating from a manuscript provided for him by Rigdon, it should have been easy for him simply to have read off the same portion again. Likewise, even if he had read his translation from the words God had caused to appear on his Seer Stone . . . it should also have been no problem for God to restore the lost pages in identical words. However, it seems more likely that Joseph had simply dictated his material as it came to his mind. This meant that he could not reproduce word-for-word what he had already dictated on those 116 missing pages. The way out of this embarrassing predicament was given in a "revelation" in which he was informed that there was a second set of plates and that the Lord knew that those who had taken the 116 pages had altered the words so that, even if Joseph had been able to give the identical wording, they now would not agree with his original copy (it is not explained how such changes could be made on a pen and ink page of that period without being detected). Therefore, the Lord instructed him to take the second set of plates that had been provided for just that situation and translate the material covering the same period from them. References to that second set of plates appear, therefore, in the part of the Book of Mormon which replaced the purloined manuscript, explaining that it was for "a wise purpose" that this second set was being made. One of the passages mentioning this second set of plates that rescues Smith from his problem occurs right in the middle of the section said to be in the handwriting of Spalding (=1 Ne. 9). This makes sense if Smith dictated it, but there is no explanation why Spalding should introduce a second set of plates into his story where it serves no purpose.

The writers have failed to explain how these facts correlate with the theory they present in the first part of their book. How can the preoccupation with religious topics in these twelve pages be explained when Spalding's novel was said by the earliest witnesses to have had little religious content? How can twelve manuscript pages preceded by blank pages with only page-titles over two of them be considered a part of a completed printer's copy? . . . Why should Spalding introduce, with no apparent need for it in the plot, a second set of plates, just where Joseph would need so badly a second set of plates to avoid being discredited by his inability to reproduce the identical words of the missing 116 pages? Until the researchers can provide some reasonable and satisfying correlations, backed by some kind of dependable evidence, their book will continue to make interesting reading but their proof must be regarded as highly questionable.

Wesley P. Walters

We feel that Wesley Walters' arguments against the new Spalding theory are irrefutable, and we cannot understand how the California researchers can continue to cling to their idea in the face of Walters' criticism and the evidence we present in *Did Spalding Write The Book Of Mormon?* We feel that all those who are using the new Spalding theory in dealing with Mormons should be open-minded enough to examine the other side of the question. In *Did Spalding Write The Book Of Mormon?* we not only provide photographic evidence that Spalding did not pen twelve pages of the Book of Mormon, but we also reprint Spalding's only extant manuscript so that the reader can compare its style and story with the Book of Mormon. ■

THE "MORMON WILL"

In our publication *Howard Hughes and the "Mormon Will"* written in May 1976, we demonstrated that in spite of the fact that several prominent handwriting experts endorsed the so-called "Mormon Will," the internal evidence proved it was a forgery. Two years after we wrote this pamphlet the *Salt Lake Tribune* (June 9, 1978) reported: "A district court jury Thursday rejected the 'Mormon Will' of Howard Hughes as a fraud. . . ." Although we knew that the Mormon Church had called a press conference to announce the discovery of the will, we were surprised to learn that it was paying part of the court costs for the trial of this bogus document. The *Salt Lake Tribune* for June 7, 1978, revealed: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a statement Tuesday saying is [it?] is 'neutral' concerning validity of the purported Howard Hughes will, but **is sharing court costs in Nevada**."

On the subject of the "Mormon Will" it is also interesting to note that Henry Silver, the handwriting expert who was certain the will was genuine, is the same man that the Spalding researchers first contacted. ■