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THE GODMAKERS II

UNDER FIRE FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT

A real controversy has been raging in Salt Lake City ever since the film *The Godmakers II* was shown at a local church. The reason the film created such a heated debate was that it openly accused the acting head of the Mormon Church, President Gordon B. Hinckley, of committing homosexual acts with another man and even with "feminine looking boys . . . about fifteen or sixteen years old . . . just little youngsters, babies." In addition, he was accused of consorting with prostitutes.

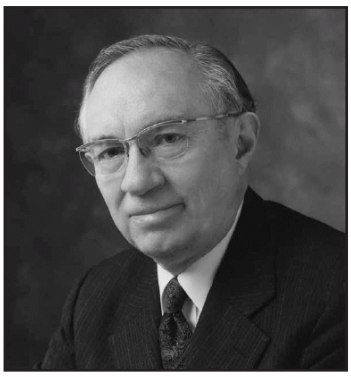
Lawsuit Threatened

On February 25, 1993, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported the following:

> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is threatening to take legal action against the producers of the anti-Mormon video "God Makers II." The video 'contains numerous false statements that violate the privacy rights' of Gordon B. Hinckley . . . said Salt Lake attorney Patrick A. Shea this month in a letter to Patrick and Caryl Matrisciana of Jeremiah Films Inc. The statements in question, relating to the personal conduct of President Hinckley, "are entirely false," said Mr. Shea, who is representing the LDS Church. . . . Ed Decker, who narrated the film and helped research and write it, said this is the first legal action the LDS Church has threatened against them.

Even before a lawsuit was threatened, a number of the important ministries to Mormons informed us that they would not carry the video because it was too sensationalistic in its approach. Dick Baer, a prominent critic of the Mormon Church, took issue with the contents of the film when he was interviewed by a newspaper:

> A local resident who played a major role in the production of a film a decade ago which classifies Mormonism as a mind-controlling cult is distancing himself from the just released sequel.



President Gordon B. Hinckley

> Richard D. Baer . . . says the follow-up to the 1983 movie . . . misses the mark. Baer says "God-Makers II" **is sensational and dwells on the bizarre**. Baer and Ed Decker . . . parted company in 1984, when Baer began his own organization to, he says, expose the radical differences between Mormonism and traditional Christianity. . . .
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> "Ed has a penchant **to sensationalize, embellish on facts and center on bizarre issues to try to shock people**," Baer says. "This film will **so turn Mormons off it will be difficult to even talk to them**."
>
> Baer is not the only LDS critic refusing to support the new film. For instance, Sandra Tanner, who has written many books about Mormonism, including one that convinced Baer to leave the church, is not endorsing "Godmakers II." (*The Sacramento Union,* Dec. 26, 1992)

As the article cited above indicates, Dick Baer did play a major role in the first film. The reader may remember that Baer was present with Ed Decker in the lengthy scene at the lawyers' office. Mr. Baer now operates Ex-Mormons and Christian Alliance, PO Box 530, Orangevale, CA 95662. In 1986, the Public Communications/Special Affairs Department of the Mormon Church prepared a list of ten "CRITICS OF THE CHURCH." Mr. Baer's name appeared in third place on that list. Because of Dick Baer's role in the first film and his extensive work with Mormons, his critical evaluation of *The Godmakers II* is very significant.

Careful Research?

Before looking at the charges against President Hinckley, we need to take a look at another part of the video that throws some light on the question of whether the material presented in the film was thoroughly researched. In discussing the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the narrator (Ed Decker) asserted:

"There is **strong evidence** that in 1824 Joseph Smith actually **had to dig up the body of his dead brother Alvin and bring part of that body with him to the Hill Cumorah in order to gain access to the gold plates** on which were written the Book of Mormon." To further illustrate this startling claim, a repulsive looking drawing of a skeleton is shown!

The truth of the matter, however, is that there is absolutely no evidence to support such an accusation. The idea that Joseph Smith would consider digging up his brother to obtain the plates actually came from the mind of document forger Mark Hofmann and was set forth by him in his infamous "Salamander letter." In Hofmann's forgery, the "old spirit" told Joseph Smith to "bring your brother Alvin [to the Hill Cumorah] Joseph says he **is dead shall I bring what remains** but the spirit is gone . . ." The rest of the letter, however, makes it clear that even Mark Hofmann did not go as far as Mr. Decker in saying that the spirit actually required Joseph to dig up his brother's body.

In 1987, Mr. Hofmann confessed to prosecutors that he forged the Salamander letter. He, in fact, was questioned about the very part of the letter that mentioned Alvin: "**Q:** What about, 'shall I bring what remains', talking about Alvin? **A:** Part of that was from **my own imagination** and part was from . . . different stories that I tied together" (*Hofmann's Confession*, 1987, pages 441-442). Although Hofmann believed that Joseph Smith was involved in magical practices, he was not able to come up with any evidence that Joseph Smith was commanded to bring his brother's body to the hill. Since Hofmann's confession that he forged the Salamander letter has been known for over five years, it seems hard to believe that anyone would still be maintaining that there is "**strong evidence**" that Joseph dug up Alvin's remains to please the spirit. In any case, the use of this discredited tale should alert the reader to be careful about accepting statements in *Godmakers II* without doing further checking.

Ed Decker and others who have brought accusations of immorality against President Gordon B. Hinckley claim that they have hard evidence to support the charges. Our examination of that evidence, however, raises many questions with regard to its validity. While we cannot say with absolute certainty that there is no truth in the accusations, on the basis of the evidence that we have examined, we find the charges difficult to accept. In fact, we find it hard to believe that they would be made public without some confirming evidence from more *reliable* sources.

Lest the reader should misunderstand our position, we do not wish to be considered apologists for President Hinckley or the Mormon Church. In fact, in the last issue of our newsletter we severely criticized Hinckley and other church authorities for suppressing the McLellin Collection from prosecutors in the Mark Hofmann case. Nevertheless, we feel that it is our duty to present our readers with well-balanced research on this issue. We are deeply concerned about such serious charges being made on evidence that seems questionable. We are very sensitive to this issue because we ourselves have been the target of very malicious stories circulated by members of the Mormon Church.

The evidence against Mr. Hinckley comes from four individuals. The first is Charles Van Dam. Mr. Van Dam made many serious charges against Hinckley in a video tape, made on July 17, 1988. He died of AIDS just months after making his statement. Van Dam maintained he had a homosexual relationship with Hinckley that lasted from "about 1964 to 1966." He also claimed that Hinckley was involved in sexual parties and "heavy drinking." Moreover, he charged that Hinckley was "a frequent customer" of prostitutes. Van Dam indicated that he procured prostitutes for Hinckley and that "he wanted wild, kinky girls. . . . Girls that wouldn't mind being tor___ tied up and things like that. He was a kinky man."

According to Mr. Van Dam, Hinckley would provide the used car lot he (Van Dam) worked for "a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand dollars at a whack" and that "a lot of it" went out to pay for the "girls and guys" involved in the sexual encounters. Finally, however, Hinckley was supposed to have warned Van Dam and others to flee from the state of Utah to avoid an investigation. Later, when Van Dam was in Denver, he received money from Salt Lake City that he felt "had to come from the church." He bought a liquor store and "two gay bars," and they were used as fronts to "launder" money for the people in Salt Lake. Eventually, however, the law caught up with Mr. Van Dam. He was called before a grand jury and "went to the penitentiary for telling the grand jury to hang it in their ear, that I wasn't going to testify against them Salt Lake people."

A careful examination of Van Dam's interview raises questions regarding his motive, reliability and competency. For instance, the video shows that he was rather bitter against the Mormon Church because he had been expelled from the church. When Van Dam was asked why he was excommunicated, he responded: "**Homosexuality**." Although this would not necessarily invalidate Van Dam's story, it does raise the question of revenge. Moreover, there is another element in Van Dam's story that seems improbable. He claimed that Gordon Hinckley, **the very man he had previously had sexual relations with, chastised him for his deviant behavior** just before his excommunication! Mr. Van Dam claimed that in 1969 or 1970, when he "went up to the Church Office Building to be excommunicated—for an interview," he found himself in the presence of Hinckley who rebuked him for his homosexual lifestyle. Van Dam claimed that he argued with Hinckley at that time: "I told him, I said, how can you . . . sit in judgment on me, when you're as big a queer as I am." Mr. Van Dam said that Hinckley refused to listen to his argument, and he was excommunicated. He went on to state: "They kicked me out of the city—threatened my life."

It seems very hard to believe that if Hinckley really had a homosexual affair with Charles Van Dam, he would turn right around and help engineer his excommunication. As strange as it may seem, Van Dam also maintains that the church was giving him money to keep him quiet. If this was really the case, why would Hinckley want to have him excommunicated and risk having the whole story come out? This does not make any sense.

One of the most disturbing portions of Charles Van Dam's story relates to another encounter he supposedly had with Hinckley before he was reprimanded in the Church Office Building. Van Dam maintained that when he was living in California, the following incident occurred: "I was just a deacon . . . they wanted to elevate me **to a priest**, and **in order to do that they've got to have a General Authority come down and interview you**, and he [Hinckley] came to the stake presidency and to the stake conference . . ." Van Dam went on to state: ". . . when I walked in and saw him there, I said, 'there is no way that this man is going to sit in judgment on me.' "

To those who are familiar with Mormonism, this is a preposterous statement. All worthy boys who are 12 years of age can be ordained deacons. At the age of 14 they become teachers, and when they turn 16 they are ordained priests. While the office of priest is a very important office in the Catholic Church, in Mormonism it is just the third step in the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood. Every boy who lives a worthy life is expected to become a priest. Contrary to Van Dam's statement that "a general authority" of the church has to "interview" those who would be priests, the interview is conducted by the local bishop

of the ward in which the candidate lives. The *General Handbook of Instructions*, 1983, page 29, makes it very clear that those who seek the office of "Priest, teacher, or deacon" are "INTERVIEWED AND ORDAINED . . . By or under direction of [the] bishop."

Since it is highly unlikely that any such incident could have occurred, a shadow of doubt is cast on the rest of Charles Van Dam's statements concerning Gordon B. Hinckley. With regard to Van Dam's moral character, his own interview seems to speak for itself. He acknowledged participation in criminal activity and admitted he refused to testify before a grand jury. His interview of July 17, 1988, contains no evidence to show that he had repented of his evil activities. In our opinion, viewing this video in its entirety severely weakens Van Dam's story. *The Godmakers II* uses short extracts from another interview, and, of course, none of the problems found in the first video are mentioned.

Another factor that needs to be considered when we look at Charles Van Dam's story is his mental state at the time he was interviewed. One of the problems associated with AIDS is that the patient can suffer from *dementia*. Dementia is defined in *The American Medical Association Family Medical Guide*, page 296, as "an incurable disorder of the brain in which there is a progressive loss of memory and other intellectual functions so that the mind gradually ceases to function normally and the affected person slowly becomes increasingly confused, incapable of sensible conversation, unaware of the surroundings and generally incapacitated." The *Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy*, 1977, page 1542, says that sometimes a person suffering from dementia "may embark on foolish and ill-judged, perhaps illegal activities . . ."

In the video interview, Charles Van Dam showed some signs of confusion in telling his story. The interviewer tried to explain why Mr. Van Dam was making confusing statements by admitting that he had "dementia." When he asked Van Dam to explain the disorder, he responded: "Well, it's a forgetfulness that comes with AIDS . . . you **lose contact in reality in remembrances** — in memory banks back years ago and then all of a sudden they'll come to you." While Van Dam was able to talk fairly well, his own admission about struggling with dementia raises the question of his reliability as a witness. *The Godmakers II* is completely silent concerning the fact that Charles Van Dam suffered from dementia. Moreover, it does not mention anything about his death.

We talked to three non-Mormons who were acquainted with Charles Van Dam before he made the video attacking Gordon B. Hinckley. None of these men seemed to have any personal knowledge about the accusations against Hinckley, and all of them felt that Van Dam was unreliable. One of them, who worked at a used car lot with Van Dam, said that he remembered Van Dam's wild stories concerning his criminal activities. At that time, Van Dam was not implicating the Mormon Church, but claimed he had been working for the Mafia in Chicago. This man felt that Van Dam was prone to telling tall tales.

In *The Godmakers II* three people were used to shore up the charges against Hinckley. These witnesses — Viola (Vi), Ben and Louie — all seem to be of questionable character. William Claudin was present when these individuals made the affidavits and has given us copies. These statements raise a number of problems that are not discussed in the film.

The first affidavit, dated Sept. 17, 1988, was given by Viola. In her statement she admitted she was having "an affair" with a married man who she said was Gordon Hinckley's friend. She maintained there were "very kinky" parties held at a "house on the East side" but she "would'nt [*sic*] take part in it, so, I would have ____ take me home. I knew it was time to leave before the kinky things started." This contradicts a statement by Van Dam in his video. He claimed that one night he came home to find a very wild bisexual party going on and that Viola was one of those he found on the premises. At any rate, she recalled that at one time Hinckley "was sitting next to me on a couch with a drink in one hand and his arm around a Girl with the other. . . . They then got up and went into a bedroom . . . I was much aware of the use of the rooms and what went on inside." Viola made it clear that prostitutes were present at the "kinky" parties. In his affidavit Louie said that "Viola was a favorite of the group . . ."

Viola apparently knew nothing at that time about a sexual relationship between Hinckley and Van Dam, but she said, "It does'nt [*sic*] surprise me **now** to know that Hinckley and Chuck were Bed partners."

Viola admitted that when "the heat started to come down," she "left Salt Lake." While she does not give the reason, in his video Charles Van Dam explained that he and his associates fled to escape the law

The second affidavit, dated July 8, 1988, was given by a man named Ben. According to Charles Van Dam, he was involved in the scheme to "launder money" in Denver. In any case, Ben claimed that "one night in particular Chas and I came to his house and found all the Bedrooms full — His Booze all drunk and two additional people . . . on his couch . . . Chas went Crasy [*sic*] — yelling [,] Screaming and telling the [expletive deleted] to get . . . out of his house. — I witnessed ____&____ _____ and Gordon Hin[c]kley running out the Door trying to Put on their pants over their temple Garments — By the Way."

Ben's statement that Charles Van Dam chased Gordon B. Hinckley out into the night under such embarrassing conditions certainly seems hard to believe. As strange as it may seem, Van Dam himself maintained that he did drive Hinckley out of the house in the manner described above.

This does not fit well with the rest of Van Dam's story. As noted earlier, he claimed that Hinckley was providing hundreds of thousands of dollars to support the car lot and the evil activities that were going on. In another place in the 1988 video he said that "the church was definitely involved" in the matter. In *The Godmakers II*, Van Dam related: "I was personally involved with the apostle Gordon Hinckley sexually. We became financially involved in a house at 2213 Lakeline Drive. We bought the house for a party pad, and Gordon Hinckley came up there all the time and I had to arrange women for him, I had to arrange booze for him."

In the 1988 video, Van Dam claimed that the money "was given to me" to buy the house that was to be used for sexual purposes and that finally "the church took it back, or someone took it back and they ended up selling it . . ." According to his own story, then, it was not really his house and he would not have the right to throw people out who were using it for the purpose for which it was intended. If Gordon Hinckley was really the benefactor, as Van Dam maintained, it seems highly unlikely that Van Dam would treat him in such a humiliating manner. In the video Van Dam portrays Hinckley as a Mafia-like person who would not hesitate to kill to protect his interests. If this were really the case, why would he allow Van Dam to run him off from the premises without retaliating in some way?

Ben's affidavit also raises an important question with regard to when these alleged sexual activities actually took place. Viola set the time frame in "the early to mid 1960's, namely **1964** thru **1967** . . ." Charles Van Dam said that his sexual encounters with Hinckley took place "about **1964** to **1966**." Louie's affidavit says that he partied "a lot" with Van Dam, "especially from **1964** to **1966**." Ben maintained that "Over a period of **2 1/2 to three**

(3) years the activities took Place . . . **The years of 1964 thru 1966 were the main years that this part took place in Chas Van Dam's hou[s]e** . . ."

Actually, nothing could have taken "place in" Van Dam's house during the year 1964, nor in the first eleven months of 1965, because the Salt Lake County Abstracts book and the real estate contract for the house show that it was not purchased by Van Dam until December 1, 1965. This, of course, does not rule out the possibility that these activities were taking place at the car lot or at other locations.

One very important omission in *The Godmakers II* is that it never gives any indication of when these sordid affairs were supposed to have taken place. The reason may be that the producers did not want viewers to know how long ago it was that these events allegedly occurred. If we can believe Van Dam's statement that they took place "about 1964 to 1966," then it is clear that **twenty-six to twenty-eight years have elapsed!** Although Mr. Van Dam was suspicious that Hinckley was still involved in sinful behavior, he furnished no evidence that this was the case. His story concerning the sexual transgressions ended in 1966. In fact, Van Dam admitted that in his last conversation with the church leader, he (Van Dam) was rebuked because of his homosexual behavior and told to "change my ways." *The Godmakers II* presents no evidence to indicate that Hinckley is engaging in sexual sin at the present time. Also we doubt the propriety of exposing sins that are alleged to have happened so many years ago on such unsubstantiated accusations.

In *The Godmakers II* Ed Decker said that Bill Claudin was responsible for the research on Hinckley. In a letter dated June 20, 1990, Claudin claimed he had "more recent" evidence against Hinckley: "An audio tape is available containing testimony from one of the **call girls** who regularly sexually serviced Gordon B. Hinckley during the more recent **late 1980's**. "The producers of *The Godmakers II* must not have put much stock in this witness because she is not mentioned in the video. The reason her testimony was omitted might relate to Hinckley's age. He was born June 23, 1910, and therefore would have been in his **late 70's** at the time. This, of course, makes her claim more difficult to believe.

As noted earlier, the last witness used in *The Godmakers II* was named "Louie." He also gave an affidavit on August 9, 1988. In the 1988 video the interviewer asked Mr. Van Dam if Louie was a "pimp." Van Dam replied, "Yes." In his affidavit Louie claimed he worked with Van Dam at the used car lot. While he said he saw Hinckley "probably 5-6 times" at the car lot doing business, he did not speak of Hinckley being involved in any evil practices. In *The Godmakers II* Ben said that Louie would bring prostitutes to Van Dam's house: "Louie would bring up four or five girls at a time bring them to the door. **Mr. Hinckley** amongst other people were there." Although Louie said that he saw "bishops" and other Mormons "going there or leaving there," he did not identity Gordon Hinckley as being at the parties. In his affidavit he confirmed that he did supply "girls — But **cannot say if he** (Hin[c]kley) was useing [*sic*] the girls." He went onto say: "I **never saw Hin[c]kley personally envolved** [sic] **with the women**[.]" Like Viola and Ben, Louie seemed to know nothing about a sexual relationship between Hinckley and Van Dam.

In *The Godmakers II* Louie claimed that he brought prostitutes to the "exclusive neighborhood in Salt Lake" and that "basically most of the girls they requested me to bring to them were **black girls**. And most of them were tall and kind of lanky." In her affidavit, Viola said: "I know that Louie brought the **black prostitutes** to the parties, he always had to go out and get them for the Guys. . . . _____ and **Gordon always seemed to like the Black women**." To those of us who are aware of the change of doctrine concerning blacks, it is very difficult to give credence to this accusation. During the 1960's Mormon Church leaders were denying blacks the priesthood and would not let them marry in the temple. In addition they were opposed to interracial marriage. Because of their "anti-black doctrine," which they attributed to God, they were openly criticized in the press. While almost anything is possible, it is very difficult to believe that one of the highest officials of the church would be carrying on with black prostitutes in front of a number of individuals who might betray him. Even if the prostitutes did not recognize him at first, they might see his picture in newspapers and on television. This hypocritical behavior would certainly raise the possibility of either exposure or blackmail.

The Godmakers II charges that there has been an "extraordinary media blackout" which "stopped the hottest story of the 80's concerning one of the top Mormons in the world." Actually, the truth of the matter is that the news media felt that the story was not credible. We were pressured to break the story in our newsletter about four years before *The Godmakers II* appeared. It was felt that if we published it, the controversy would be picked up by reporters. We refused the offer, and on Jan. 17, 1989 we published an attack against the story entitled, *A Statement Concerning Some Charges of Immorality Made Against a Mormon Leader*. Since we did not feel that it was right to reveal Gordon Hinckley's name, we referred to him only as "Elder Accused." Because of the sensitive nature of the subject and the fact that we might unwittingly add fuel to the fire, we did not advertise the publication. We did, however, give copies to various ministries working with Mormons and people who asked about the charges against Hinckley.

Steven Naifeh was also asked to break the story. The reader will remember that Naifeh co-authored *The Mormon Murders*, an anti-Mormon book referred to in the *Godmakers* video. Although Naifeh pulled no punches in his attack on Gordon B. Hinckley in the book, he informed us that he simply could not believe the evidence presented with regard to Hinckley's sexual improprieties and therefore had no interest in breaking the story.

In a "Special Update Report," printed in January 1993, Ed Decker candidly admitted that *The Godmakers II* "**is not a film to use in wooing Mormons**." In our opinion, the use of Charles Van Dam's story distracts from the **real** reasons why one should oppose Mormonism. To focus on unsubstantiated charges against one of the LDS leaders comes across as sensationalism. It seems to encourage Christians to approach Mormons with derision instead of compassion, and, as Dick Baer has stated, it will "**so turn Mormons off it will be difficult to even talk to them**."

The case against President Hinckley seems to be based on some very questionable statements. Since there is no hard evidence to support the accusations, we would advise all those working with Mormons to refrain from disseminating the story. Even if absolute proof should turn up, a Christian would still have to consider the fact that twenty-six to twenty-eight years have passed since the alleged offenses occurred and there is always the possibility that there was repentance and a change of life style during that interval.

If it could be established that the Mormon Church is secretly promoting a doctrine of polygamy, adultery or homosexuality, then it would undoubtedly be our Christian obligation to bring the evidence to light. As it is, however, we only have charges that one General Authority in the Mormon Church has engaged in sexual behavior that is forbidden by the church itself. Mr. Van Dam never suggested that Hinckley taught that this was church doctrine or that he had the approval of other members of the church hierarchy. While we feel that it is important to expose Joseph Smith's doctrine of polygamy which played an important role in the early history of the Mormon Church, we seriously question whether Christians should be involved in disseminating unsupported charges of immorality. ■

THE BOOK OF MORMON: ANCIENT OR MODERN

Joseph Smith claimed that in 1823 an angel appeared to him and stated that gold plates were buried in a hill near his home. The angel explained that the plates contained "an account of the former inhabitants of this continent," and that they also contained "the fullness of the everlasting Gospel." Four years later Smith received the plates, and began "translating" them "by the power of God." The translation was published in 1830 under the title of *The Book of Mormon*. After translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church—a church that now has over eight million members.

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt declared:

> The Book of Mormon claims to be a divinely inspired record. . . . If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, **calculated to deceive and ruin millions . . . if true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it: if false, no one can possibly be saved and receive it** . . .
>
> If, after a rigid examination, it be found an imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments on which the imposture was detected, should be clearly and logically stated . . . if investigation should prove the Book of Mormon true . . . the American and English nations . . . should utterly reject both the Popish and Protestant ministry, together with all the churches which have been built up by them or that have sprung from them, as being entirely destitute of authority . . . (*Orson Pratt's Works*, "Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon," Liverpool, 1851, pp. 1-2)

Our study of the Book of Mormon has extended over a period of thirty years and has led us to conclude that it is **not** an ancient or divinely inspired record, but rather a product of the nineteenth century. Mormon apologists, of course, have resisted the evidence set forth in our books, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*. Although the church itself has been completely silent concerning our work, L. Ara Norwood, Matthew Roper, John A. Tvedtnes, and a few other Mormon apologists have recently assailed our work. We have been preparing a response to these critics that will be available soon.

In the book, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4, 1992, Matthew Roper maintains that some of the nineteenth-century sources we suggested as possible sources for the Book of Mormon are rather weak (see pages 176-192). For many years we have maintained that at the time Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Mormon there were a number of books that claimed the Indians were the descendants of the ancient Israelites—an idea that is strongly set forth in the Book of Mormon. Mr. Roper acknowledged:

> The Tanners correctly point out that the Book of Mormon appeared at a time when many people believed that the Indians were descendants of the lost ten tribes. Books by James Adair, Elias Boudinot, Ethan Smith, and others are fairly representative of the early nineteenth-century literature which supported such an idea. The Tanners suggest that the Book of Mormon was just one of many such books (pp. 81-84). While it is true that general similarities or parallels can be drawn between these works and the Book of Mormon, I believe that the differences are far more significant. (*Ibid*., page 186)

A Striking Parallel

The reader will notice that in the quotation above Mr. Roper mentioned a book written by James Adair. This book, *A History of the American Indians*, was originally published in 1775. We have seen quotations from it in other books written in the nineteenth century, but never took the time to examine the book until we encountered a reprint published by Promontory Press. While we noticed that Adair's book presented "Observations, and arguments, in proof of the American Indians being descended from the Jews," and a great deal concerning their customs and history, at first we did not see anything that was too impressive. Toward the end of the book, however, we made the startling discovery that it had a portion so similar to the Joseph Smith's work that we could not escape the conclusion that Joseph Smith either had the book in his hand or a quotation from it when he was writing the Book of Mormon. On pages 337-378, James Adair wrote the following about the Indians:

> Through the whole continent, and in the remotest woods, are traces of their ancient warlike disposition. We frequently met with great mounds **of earth**, either of a circular, or oblong form, having a strong **breast-work** at a distance **around** them, made of the clay **which had been dug** up in forming **the ditch** on the inner side of the inclosed ground, and these were **their forts of security against an enemy** . . . About 12 miles from the upper northern parts of the Choktah country, there stand . . . two oblong mounds **of earth** . . . in **an equal** direction with each other . . . A broad deep **ditch** inclosed those two fortresses, and there they raised an high **breast-work**, to **secure their** houses from the invading enemy.

In the book of Alma, which is found in the Book of Mormon, we find some extremely important parallels to the writings of Adair in chapters 48, 49, 50, and 53:

> Yea, he had been strengthening the armies of the Nephites, and erecting small **forts**, or places of resort; throwing up banks **of earth round** about to **enclose** his armies . . . the Nephites were taught . . . never to raise the sword except it were **against an enemy** . . . they had cast up dirt **round** to shield them from the arrows . . . the chief captains of the Lamanites were astonished exceedingly, because of the wisdom of the Nephites in preparing **their** places **of security**. . . . they knew not that Moroni had fortified, or had built **forts of security** in all the land **round** about . . . the Lamanites could not get into **their forts of security**. . . . because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the depth of **the ditch which had been dug round** about . . . they [the Lamanites] began to dig down their banks **of earth** . . . that they might have **an equal** chance to fight . . . instead of filling up their **ditches** by pulling down the banks **of earth**, they were filled up in a measure with their dead . . . And [Moroni] caused them to erect fortifications that they might **secure their** armies . . . Teancum . . . caused that they should commence laboring in digging **a ditch round** about the land . . . And he caused that they should build a **breastwork** of timbers upon **the inner** bank of **the ditch**; and they did cast up dirt out of **the ditch** against **the breastwork** of timbers . . . (Book of Mormon, Alma, 48:8, 14; 49:2, 5, 13, 18, 22; 50:10; 53:3-4)

The thing that first struck us about the quotation from Adair's book was the four words, "**their forts of security**." These identical words are found in the book of Alma! It is interesting to note that these words are used only once in the Book of Mormon, Alma 49:18, and never appear in the Bible. The three words "**forts of security**" are found in 49:13, but are never found in any other place in the Book of Mormon or the Bible. The last two words ("**of security**") are never found together in the Bible and appear only seven times in the Book of Mormon. Except for one instance (3 Nephi 4:15), all of these are in the book of Alma. It would appear, then, that Joseph Smith latched on to some wording he did not usually use, and the evidence seems to indicate that the source was Adair's book.

The word "**breastwork**" (written as "breast-work" in Adair's work) appears twice in each of the references cited above. The Bible never uses this word, and it appears only three times in the entire Book of Mormon. The other occurrence is in Mosiah 11:11 and has nothing to do with military matters. It was used concerning a pulpit.

The words "**which had been dug**" are found in both extracts. This word combination is never found in the Bible or in any other place in the Book of Mormon.

Both the Book of Mormon and Adair's book contain the words "**the ditch**." Joseph Smith used this word "**ditch**" three times in the section concerning the Nephite fortifications but never used them again in the rest of the Book of Mormon. Both quotations use the words "**the inner**." These two words were used again in Alma 62:21, but do not appear in any other part of the Book of Mormon.

We find the words "**secure their**" in both works. This combination is never found in the Bible and appears only this one time in the Book of Mormon. The words "**an equal**" are found in both extracts. While they are found in one other place in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 29:38), they never appear in the Bible.

The three words "**against an enemy**" appear in both books. Joseph Smith only used them once in the Book of Mormon (Alma 14:14), and this combination never appears in the Bible. Adair uses the expression "mounds **of earth**." While Joseph Smith never used these exact words, he did refer to "banks **of earth**."

We find it extremely hard to believe that all of these similar word patterns could happen by chance. In addition to the material cited above, there are other similarities between the writings of James Adair and Joseph Smith. For example, the Book of Mormon claims that the ancient Jews who came to the New World were all "white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome . . ." (2 Nephi 5:21). Those who rebelled, however, were cursed with "a sore cursing . . . the Lord God did cause a **skin of blackness** to come upon them." Adair's book, likewise, talks of a change in skin color: "The Indian tradition says, that their forefathers in very remote ages came from a far distant country, where all the people were of **one colour** . . ." (page 194).

The Book of Mormon states that before the ancient Nephites left Jerusalem, they had been instructed by the "Lord" to bring with them some "**plates of brass**" which had the sacred Jewish scriptures engraved upon them

(1 Nephi 3:3). The plates were carefully protected by the ancient religious leaders and were apparently buried in "the hill Cumorah" along with many other plates (Mormon 6:6). This idea of brass plates being buried could have come from James Adair's book. On pages 178-179, we find this information:

> In the Tuccabatches . . . are two brazen tables, and five of copper. They esteem them so **sacred** as to keep them constantly in their holy of holies . . . *Old Bracket*, an Indian . . . gave the following description of them: . . . The shape of the two **brass plates** . . . [was] about a foot and a half in diameter.
>
> He said — he was told by his forefathers that those plates were given to them by the man **we call God**; that there had been many more of other shapes . . . and some **had writing upon them which were buried** with particular men; and that they had instructions given with them, viz. they must only be handled by particular people . . . He only remembered three more, which were buried with three of his family . . .

On page 122 of Adair's book, we find the words, "**for the space of three days and nights** . . ." This is very close to Alma 36:10, "**for the space of three days and** three **nights** . . ." It is also noteworthy that while Joseph Smith uses the words "month" or "months" sixteen times in the Book of Mormon, in one instance he uses the term "moons": ". . . **for the space of** nine **moons**" (Omni 1:21). On page 125 of Adair's *History of the American Indians* we find the following ". . . **for the space of** four **moons** . . .

We are convinced that Joseph Smith read a number of books and articles about the Indians — especially books equating them with the ancient Israelites. His own mother, Lucy Smith, tells that Joseph had a fervent interest in the ancient Indians before he received the plates from which he "translated" the Book of Mormon:

> During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of travelling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, **as if he had spent his whole life with them**. (*Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and his Progenitors for Many Generations*, 1853, page 85)

Cloud of Darkness!

Robert Williams, of North Wales, discovered an important parallel between the Book of Mormon and the Preface of the King James Bible. The Preface, of course, was written by the translators and was dedicated to "The Most High And Mighty Prince James . . . King Of Great Britain, France, And Ireland, Defender Of The Faith, &c." While the translators used words and combinations of words in the Preface which are found in the text of the King James Version, they also used language which is not in the biblical text.

If it could be demonstrated that the Book of Mormon contains word combinations peculiar to the Preface, which was not published before 1611, it would cast serious doubt upon the claim that it was written in ancient times by the Nephites. Mr. Williams found other parallels to the Preface and asked us to use our computer to make a more complete search. After completing the research, we felt that there was a strong possibility that Joseph Smith borrowed from it. In the Preface we find the following:

> . . . **clouds of darkness** would so have **overshadowed** this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk . . . the appearance of Your Majesty, as of the Sun in his strength, instantly **dispelled** those supposed and surmised mists . . . (The Holy Bible, Preface; as printed by the Mormon Church in 1979)

In the Book of Mormon we find two very strong parallels to this part of the Preface:

> . . . the **cloud of darkness**, which had **overshadowed** them, did not disperse . . . (Helaman 5:31)
>
> . . . the **cloud of darkness** having been **dispelled** . . . (Alma 19:6)

The reader will notice that there are some startling similarities: 1. The expression "clouds of darkness" or "cloud of darkness" is not found in the text of the Bible. 2. The word "overshadowed" does not appear in the Old Testament, and the New Testament cannot be appealed to as the source because the ancient Nephites did not have access to it. Joseph Smith, of course, did have the New Testament in his Bible. 3. The word "dispelled" is not found in the Bible and Joseph Smith never used it again in the Book of Mormon.

Another interesting parallel is that the statement in the Preface indicates that the appearance of King James, like "the **Sun** in his strength, instantly **dispelled**" the dark mists. The verse in Alma 19:6 was also written concerning a **king** whose name was Lamoni. It speaks of "the **light** which did light up his mind . . . yea, this **light** had infused such joy into his soul, the **cloud of darkness** having been **dispelled** . . ." The Preface speaks of both King James and Queen Elizabeth. Although Joseph Smith used the words *king* or *kings* 228 times in the book of Mosiah (the book that precedes Alma), he never mentioned a *queen* until the chapter in question, Alma 19, and while it appears a number of times in the book of Alma, it is not used in any of the other books found in the Book of Mormon. The word "queens" is used in the Book of Mormon, but it is obviously taken from a prophecy in the Bible, Isaiah 49:23, and is not related to any queens living during the period covered by the Book of Mormon.

In our book, *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, we demonstrated that Joseph Smith had a tendency to plagiarize different expressions from the Bible and then use them over and over again. For example, the phrase "the lamb of God" appears only in the New Testament, John 1:29 and 36. The Mormon prophet latched onto these words and then used them twenty-eight times in the book of 1 Nephi alone! He soon grew weary of them, however, and they only appear six more times in the rest of the Book of Mormon. Smith's inclination to grab onto expressions and then repeat them is also evident in his use of "cloud of darkness." He began using this term in Alma 19:6, and then repeated it over and over in Helaman 5:28, 31, 34, 36, 40-43:

> And it came to pass that they were **overshadowed** with a **cloud of darkness** . . . behold the **cloud of darkness**, which had **overshadowed** them, did not disperse . . . the Lamanites could not flee because of the **cloud of darkness** which did **overshadow** them . . . he saw through the **cloud of darkness** . . . the Lamanites said unto him: What shall we do, that this **cloud of darkness** may be removed from **overshadowing** us? And Aminadab said . . . You must repent . . . and when you shall do this, the **cloud of darkness** shall be removed from **overshadowing** you. . . . the **cloud of darkness** was dispersed. And it came to pass that when they cast their eyes about, and saw that the **cloud of darkness** was dispersed from **overshadowing** them, behold, they saw that they were encircled about . . . by a pillar of fire.

After this repetitious section of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith never used the words "cloud of darkness" again; instead he used the words "mist of darkness" or "mists of darkness." It is interesting to note that the word "mists" (plural) is not found in the text of the Bible, but it does appear in the Preface of the King James Bible. It is, in fact, in the very paragraph which mentions "clouds of darkness."

In addition to the parallels mentioned above, in our computer examination of the Preface we found forty-five word parallels (ranging from two to four words in a row) which are not found in the text of the King James Version. While many of them could have come from Joseph Smith reading other books or conversations he had with different people, since the Preface is only two pages long, we think that this many parallels could prove to be significant. The following are just ten examples: "rule and reign over" — "sacred word" — "because the fruit thereof," — "eternal happiness," — "it, nay" — "the immediate" — "itself abroad in the" — "great hopes" — "most sacred" — "did never." Most of the forty-five word combinations are found in the books Alma and Helaman — the very books which contain the parallel concerning the "cloud of darkness."

New Computer Study

On October 7, 1979, the *Provo Herald* reported that some Mormon researchers at Brigham Young University had turned to a computer in an attempt to prove that the Book of Mormon is genuine:

> Wordprint comparisons between the Book of Mormon and the known 19th century writings of Joseph Smith and Mr. Spalding show conclusively that neither of these persons, authored the book, the scientists say. . . . their research indicates that the book was authored by at least 24 different writers, and possibly more, whose styles bear no resemblance to that of Joseph Smith . . . or other 19th century writers whom they examined . . .
>
> One of the tests went so far as to indicate that "odds against a single author exceeded 100 billion to one," the statisticians noted in the report.

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for December 1979 we observed that the list of "24 Major Book of Mormon Authors Used in the Study," seems to be somewhat padded (see *The New Era*, November 1979, page 11). For instance, we find Isaiah listed as one of the authors. Since Isaiah is a book in the Bible and since the Book of Mormon itself acknowledges that it is quoting from Isaiah, we do not feel that it should be included in this study. If the researchers are going to include Bible authors as part of the list of "Book of Mormon Authors," they might as well add Moses, Matthew and Malachi (see Book of Mormon, Mosiah 13; 3 Nephi 12-14; and 3 Nephi 24-25).

The BYU researchers stretched the matter even further by including the "Lord" as "quoted by Isaiah" as part of the "24 Major Book of Mormon Authors." Also included in this list is the "Lord," "Jesus" and the "Father." It would appear, then, that the researchers created four "Book of Mormon Authors" out of the Father and the Son! On page 11 of their study in *The New Era*, the researchers admit: "Since the term Lord can refer either to the Father or the Son, we separated the words attributed to the Lord from those attributed to the Father or to Christ." This list of "24 Major Book of Mormon Authors," therefore, appears to be overstated.

In the same newsletter we noted that we were in favor of computer studies with regard to the Book of Mormon and would especially like to see a study showing the parallels between the King James Version and the Book of Mormon. We indicated that a good computer study would probably reveal *more* than 24 different authors in the book. In fact, we felt that it would probably find words written by Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, David, Solomon, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, Micah, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude, etc.

When we later did our computer research for the book,

Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon, we demonstrated that there were many quotations from New Testament writers that had been plagiarized by the author of the Book of Mormon. These extracts were found in portions of the Book of Mormon that were supposed to have been written before the time of Christ. For example, we found a good deal of material lifted from the biblical books of Matthew, Revelation, John, Romans, Luke, Acts, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Hebrews, Mark and other New Testament books.

In *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, page 170, Matthew Roper stated: "In their recent book, *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, Jerald and Sandra Tanner have presented perhaps the most extensive list of alleged plagiarism ever assembled by hostile critics of the Book of Mormon."

Our computer research with regard to the Book of Mormon does not agree with that done by the BYU researchers. While it is clear that there has been extensive plagiarism in the Book of Mormon, we believe the evidence shows that one style of writing pervades the entire book, and it is the same style found in Joseph Smith's other scriptural works.

Even some Mormon scholars have questioned the work of the BYU apologists. John A. Tvedtnes, a Hebrew scholar, who has taught at Brigham Young University, the University of Utah and the Brigham Young University Center for Near Eastern Studies, has publicly proclaimed that he does not accept the research. In a response to our work on the Book of Mormon, Tvedtnes spoke of "the stylistic computer studies of the scriptures done at Brigham Young University and in Berkeley, California." He then frankly stated: "I have my own reasons **for rejecting those studies**, however, and hope to express them elsewhere" (*Ibid*., page 229).

Recently another computer study of the Book of Mormon has come to our attention. It is entitled, "A Multivariate Technique for Authorship Attribution and its Application to the Analysis of Mormon Scripture and Related Texts." The research was done by David I. Holmes, a Senior Lecturer in Statistics at Bristol Polytechnic, and was published by Oxford University Press for the Association for History and Computing. In this article David Holmes explained that he used fourteen large blocks of text from the Book of Mormon (amounting to over 120,000 words), documents written or dictated by Joseph Smith between 1828 and 1833, three samples of approximately 10,000 words from the early revelations printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, text from the book of Isaiah and Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham. After Holmes finished his study, he was convinced that the claim of multiple authorship in the Book of Mormon was fallacious:

> The most impressive statistical analysis carried out on the Book of Mormon is that undertaken by Larsen, Rencher and Layton. . . . The authors conclude that their results all strongly support multiple authorship of the Book of Mormon yet their whole case rests on the assumption that the frequency of occurrence of non-contextual function words is a stylistic discriminator. The article claims that there is no resemblance between the authors of the Book of Mormon and the nineteenth century authors sampled, but the case rests on usage of words such as "unto, behold, yea, forth, verily, lest and nay" which would all naturally be prominent in an archaic biblical-type style, but could hardly be expected to occur with the same frequency elsewhere, even in the early nineteenth century. Against this background, the aim of my research is to complement historical and scientific studies into the authenticity of the Book of Mormon by subjecting it and related Mormon scripture to stylometric analysis. In this paper it is understood that a particularly effective measure for purposes of discrimination between writers is the vocabulary richness of a text. . . .
>
> We may summarize by noting that the analyses have shown that the Joseph Smith and Isaiah samples form distinct and separate clusters, whereas all other samples tend to cluster together. . . .
>
> The formation of the clustering observed here, provides evidence of the utility of the multivariate technique advocated by this study. . . .
>
> An important discovery is the fact that the samples of writings from the various prophets who purportedly wrote the Book of Mormon **do not form prophet-by-prophet clusters**. The dendrogram in Figure 2 shows that only the two samples from Alma display internal homogeneity . . . There appears to be no real difference between Alma's vocabulary richness and Mormon's vocabulary richness within the Book of Alma, a conclusion in direct contradiction to the findings of Larsen and the Brigham Young University team. This study has **not found, therefore, any evidence of multiple authorship within the Book of Mormon itself**. Variation within samples from the same prophet is generally as great as any variation between the prophets themselves.
>
> Two of the three "revelations" samples are also **indistinguishable from the Book of Mormon prophets**. . . . The dendrograms and principal components plots place the Book of Abraham text (AB) firmly in the main "prophet" cluster, its nearest neighbour being sample R1 from Moroni. In terms of vocabulary richness, clearly **the Book of Abraham is indistinguishable from the Book of Mormon prophets** and from samples D2 and D3 of Joseph Smith's revelations. . . .
>
> It is my conclusion, from the results of this research and the supporting historical evidence, that the Book of Mormon sprang from **the "prophetic voice" of Joseph Smith himself**, as did his revelations and the text of the Book of Abraham. We have seen that the style of his "prophetic voice" as evidenced by the main cluster of the textual samples studied, differs from the style of his personal writings or dictations of a personal nature. (*History and Computing*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1991, pages 14, 20-21)

David I. Holmes' statement that Joseph Smith's "prophetic voice" differs from that found in private writings

is of course to be expected. In his scriptural writings he was trying to make the wording sound ancient. Wesley P. Walters observed:

> In addition to borrowing biblical names and events, the Elizabethan style of the English King James Bible was adopted. Phrases from both the Old and New Testament were frequently borrowed by Joseph Smith. Wording such as "go the way of all the earth," (Mos. 1:9 / Josh. 23:14), "sackcloth and ashes" (Mos. 11:25 / Dan. 9:3), and "applied your hearts to understanding" (Mos. 12:27 / Pr. 2:2) are found throughout the book. Furthermore, even the material not derived from the Bible was cast into the King James style. Consequently there is a continual use of "thee", "thou" and "ye", as well as the archaic verb endings "est" (second person singular) and "eth" (third person singular). Since the Elizabethan style was not Joseph's natural idiom, he continually slipped out of this King James pattern and repeatedly confused the forms as well. Thus he lapsed from "ye" (subject) to "you" (object) as the subject of sentences (e.g. Mos. 2:19; 3:34; 4:24), jumped from plural ("ye") to singular ("thou") in the same sentence (Mos. 4:22) and moved from verbs without endings to ones with endings (e.g. "yields . . . putteth," 3:19). (*The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon*, by Wesley P. Walters, 1990, page 30)

Our own computer study of the Book of Mormon has certainly not been as sophisticated as that of David I. Holmes, but we have reached similar conclusions. We approached the problem from a different angle. After noticing that the same phrases of two or more words appear time after time throughout Joseph Smith's scriptures, we used the computer to identify hundreds of these groups of words and feel that they provide powerful evidence that the Book of Mormon, the Inspired Version of the Bible, the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price* were all the product of one mind.

B. H. Robert's Doubts

As unbelievable as it may seem to many members of the Mormon Church, the noted Mormon historian B. H. Roberts also came to believe that there was a strong possibility that Joseph Smith borrowed from books that were available to him at the time he wrote the Book of Mormon. Roberts, of course, was one of the greatest scholars the church has ever known. He not only prepared the "Introduction and Notes" for Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* (seven volumes), but he also wrote the six-volume work, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. He is also noted for his many works defending the Book of Mormon.

After studying Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*, published in 1825, Roberts listed eighteen parallels between it and the Book of Mormon. He wrote two very significant manuscripts which were suppressed for many years because of the fear that the contents would prove harmful to the Mormon Church. Fortunately, we obtained copies of both manuscripts and printed photographs from them in 1979. In 1980 we photographically reproduced both manuscripts under the title *Roberts' Secret Manuscripts Revealed*. The manuscripts were later printed by the University of Illinois Press in a hard-back book entitled *Studies of the Book of Mormon*.

In his secret manuscripts B. H. Roberts acknowledged that Joseph Smith himself could have written the Book of Mormon from the information that was available to him at the time. The deeper B. H. Roberts delved into the relationship between the Book of Mormon and books by Ethan Smith and Josiah Priest, the more his faith in the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon began to erode. In his second manuscript, "A Book of Mormon Study," B. H. Roberts really began to openly express his own personal doubts about the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. In the extracts which follow the reader will see that B. H. Roberts was seriously disturbed by many things he found in the Book of Mormon:

> One other subject remains to be considered in this division . . . viz.—was Joseph Smith possessed of a sufficiently vivid and creative imagination as to produce such a work as the Book of Mormon from such materials as have been indicated in the preceding chapters . . . That such power of imagination would have to be of a high order is conceded; that Joseph Smith possessed such a gift of mind there can be no question. . . .
>
> In the light of this evidence, there can be no doubt as to the possession of **a vividly strong, creative imagination by Joseph Smith**, the Prophet, an imagination, it could with reason be urged, which, given the suggestions that are found in the "common knowledge" of accepted American antiquities of the times, supplemented by such a work as Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*, would make it possible for him to create a book such as the Book of Mormon is. (*Studies of the Book of Mormon*, pages 243, 250)

> If from all that has gone before in Part 1, the view be taken that the Book of Mormon is merely of human origin . . . if it be assumed that he is **the author** of it, then it could be said **there is much internal evidence in the book itself to sustain such a view**.
>
> In the first place there is **a certain lack of perspective in the things the book relates as history that points quite clearly to an undeveloped mind as their origin. The narrative proceeds in characteristic disregard of conditions necessary to its reasonableness, as if it were a tale told by a child, with utter disregard for consistency**. (*Ibid*., page 251)

> There were other Anti-Christs among the Nephites, but they were more military leaders than religious innovators . . . they are all of one breed and brand; **so nearly alike that one mind is the author of them**, and that a young and undeveloped, but piously inclined mind.

> **The evidence I sorrowfully submit, points to Joseph Smith as their creator. It is difficult to believe that they are the product of history**, that they come upon the scene separated by long periods of time, and among a race which was the ancestral race of the red man of America. (*Ibid*., page 271)

These words did not come from the lips of an uninformed and bias "anti-Mormon" writer, but rather they are the carefully worded pronouncements of the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts — believed by many to have been the greatest apologist the church has ever produced. While Professor Truman Madsen, of the church's Brigham Young University, has asserted that Roberts was merely using "the 'Devil's Advocate' approach to stimulate thought," a careful reading of the material leads one to the inescapable conclusion that he was in the process of losing faith in the historical claims of the Book of Mormon. Why else would B. H. Roberts have made the comment concerning Book of Mormon stories which we cited above?: "**The evidence I sorrowfully submit, points to Joseph Smith as their creator. It is difficult to believe that they are the product of history** . . ."

In his earlier faith-promoting work, *A New Witness for God*, a three-volume work published in 1909, B. H. Roberts insisted that Joseph Smith did not have access to books from which he could create a "ground plan" for the Book of Mormon. In his secret writings, however, Roberts acknowledged that in *A New Witness for God* he

> did not take sufficiently into account the work of Josiah Priest . . . Priest himself, indeed, published a book . . . *The Wonders of Nature and Providence*, copyrighted by him June 2nd, 1824, and printed soon afterwards in Rochester, New York, only some twenty miles distant from Palmyra . . . this book preceded the publication of the Book of Mormon by about six years. At the time I made for my *New Witness* the survey of the literature on American antiquities, traditions, origins, etc., available to Joseph Smith and his associates, this work of Priest's was unknown to me; as was also the work of Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews* — except by report of it, and as being in my hands but a few minutes. . . . it is altogether probable that these two books . . . **were either possessed by Joseph Smith or certainly known by him**. . . .
>
> Moreover, on subjects widely discussed, and that deal in matters of widespread public interest, there is built up in the course of years, a community of knowledge of such subjects, usually referred to as "matters of common knowledge" . . . Such "common knowledge" existed throughout New England and New York in relation to American Indian origins and cultures: and the prevailing ideas respecting the American Indians throughout the regions named were favorable to the notion that they were of Hebrew origin . . . And with the existence of such a body of knowledge, or that which was accepted as "knowledge," and a person of vivid and constructive imaginative power in contact with it, **there is little room for doubt that it might be possible for Joseph Smith to construct a theory of origin for his Book of Mormon in harmony with these prevailing notions**; and more especially since this 'common knowledge' is set forth in almost handbook form in the little work of Ethan Smith . . . It will appear in what is to follow that such "common knowledge" did exist in New England, that Joseph Smith was in contact with it; that one book, at least, with which he was most likely acquainted, **could well have furnished structural outlines for the Book of Mormon**; and that Joseph Smith was possessed of such creative imaginative powers as would make it quite within the lines of possibility that the Book of Mormon could have been produced in that way. (*Studies of the Book of Mormon*, pages 152-54)

On page 192 of the same book, B. H. Roberts asked this question: "Could an investigator of the Book of Mormon be much blamed if he were to decide that Ethan Smith's book with its suggestion as to the division of his Israelites into two peoples; with its suggestion of 'tremendous wars between them'; and of the savages overcoming the civilized division led to the fashioning of chiefly these same things in the Book of Mormon?"

Roberts felt that "the likelihood of Joseph Smith coming in contact with Ethan Smith's book is not only very great, but **amounts to a very close certainty**" (page 235). Further on in the same chapter, B. H. Roberts made these observations:

> But now to return . . . to the main theme of this writing — viz., did Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* furnish structural material for Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon? It has been pointed out in these pages that there are **many things** in the former book that might well have suggested many major things in the other. Not a few things merely, one or two, or a half dozen, **but many; and it is this fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon origin**. . . .
>
> The material in Ethan Smith's book is of a character and quantity to make a ground plan for the Book of Mormon . . .
>
> Can such numerous and startling points of resemblance and suggestive contact be merely coincidence? (pages 240, 242)

We feel that all those who are interested in knowing the truth about the Book of Mormon should read B. H. Roberts' *Studies of the Book of Mormon*. Although the hardback edition was selling for $35, Signature Books has recently reprinted it in a reasonably priced paperback edition. We normally sell it for $14.95, but if it is ordered before June 30, 1993, the price will be **only $13.95**. In addition, we are having a sale on our book, *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*. It usually sells for $5.00, but is on sale for **only $4.00** a copy. Those who are interested in having a copy of both of these books (a $19.95 value) can obtain them for **Only $16.95** if ordered before June 30 (please remember to add 10% of total order or $1.50 for minimum postage and handling on mail orders).

IN THE MAIL

Extracts From Letters Received In 1992

"Last month, I entered the Missionary Training Center in Provo prepared to serve a full-time mission . . . Within two weeks, however, I discovered the MTC is nothing more than an institution for mind control. After realizing the eternal consequences of pursuing blind obedience of a man (the 'prophet'), I demanded to be excused from my 'calling' . . . Please rush me any information you have concerning the LDS Church. I want to correct my knowledge of 'truth restored.' " (Letter from California)

"My wife & I just finished reading your book 'Changing World of Mormonism' it is excellent, well documented, unbiased, just excellent! We have been 'Mormons' for 17 years. . . . I did not comprehend the degree of fraud & deception . . ." (Letter from Missouri)

"You have one lord & master and he is Satan. You are of contention and against the Savior . . . I will testify against you at the judgment bar — you will be held responsible . . . to avoid any contention I have not included my name. You only need to be told one thing and that is 'Satan Depart' . . . you are in it for the money. Is this not of Satan? I pray for you — !" (No address)

"Thank you for all the research you have done, for your wonderful courage . . . I am currently LDS — and am trying to get out. . . . My roots are deep so this has not been an easy decision . . . I am reading right now your books, 'Major Problems of Mormonism' & 'Covering Up The Black Hole In The Book of Mormon[.]'

"The more I read the more I look I feel — I have certainly been naive about so much." (Letter from Idaho)

"My wife and I have been members of the L.D.S. church for 18 and 14 years, respectively. In the last 5 years we felt we were standing still and going nowhere. Naturally we looked at ourselves first, then started to question a few things[.] It went from A to Z rather quickly and we found ourselves unable to continue with our callings, going to the temple, paying tithes, etc., but we still need answers that is why we have got in touch with you hoping you can enlighten us to the *truth* of many things. We have a strong belief in Jesus Christ and God the father, but after that well, we believe in the Bible & that[']s it. What first got us going was the fact Joseph Smith was a Mason . . ." (Letter from Australia)

"I left the Mormon Church 1 1/2 [years] ago after many years of activity — Your book 'Mormonism Shadow or Reality' proved to me it was *wrong*. . . . I've become a born again Christian and am so grateful that I've learned the truth before it was too late to do anything about it. I've asked to have my name removed from membership. . . . Again Thank you from the bottom of my heart." (Letter from Texas)

"O full of all subtility [*sic*] and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the lord! . . . I did not ask for your propaganda . . .

"People such as you who do not even have the brain that God gave geese are quite sick. May I suggest that before you do this again you become educated in Israel and in Hebrew so you don't sound like an illiterate idiot. Because I am not an uneducated child like you probably are. . . . you sick and perverted people need to worry about God's forgiveness." (Letter from Utah)

"How can I ever thank you enough for the truth that has set me free. I am also a former Mormon born and raised in the Church (5th generation) I am giving my life to my Lord & Savior tonight in a water baptism and I delight in studying the scriptures." ((Letter from Utah)

"I have been reading some [of] your tracts which you sent . . . I have come away from the Mormons and have turned my life over to Jesus." (Letter from Utah)

"Do not send any more of your publications to my home. I do not wish to be on a mailing list that publishes such ridiculous information that to me resembles the RAG MAGS one sees in department stores." (Letter from Tennessee)

"I[']m 20 years old, born under the covenant, as of February of this year, 'Apostate.' I removed my name from the records, and know from the Bible that I am Saved. I've started a little 'mini-ministry'. . ." (Letter from Arizona)

"I have seen you on video tapes from the John Amkerberg [*sic*] Show . . . Let me first thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the 'light and knowledge' that you have given me, my family, and my friends concerning Mormonism. I can't believe that I swallowed this false religion for so long. I thank My Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus for this awakening. . . . Please find two letters attached. One is our request for removal of our names from the Church records and the other is a standard letter I use to write to my other friends who are still taken with this false doctrine." (Letter from Florida)

"I first learned of the Tanner's work seven years ago. It has taken that many years for truth to sink in! . . . As a convert of 30 years you can appreciate my problem. . . . Thank you for your work and fight for truth." (Letter from California)

"We are subscribers to the *Salt Lake City Messenger*. My husband is an ex-Mormon and we were both raised in Salt Lake. One of my earliest recollections regarding information about 'the Church' not being true was hearing about your husband and you and how you were able to leave it. This was probably in the late 60's and was the first time I had heard that people could really leave. Your story made such an impact on me. We are ever thankful for your ministry because of the encouragement it gave me to search for the truth, years later my husband, and hopefully the impact we are now having on others for the Lord. . . . Your ministry is so important and we really appreciate receiving the *Salt Lake City Messenger*." (Letter from Texas)

"My husband & I recently . . . came onto a book . . . we noticed your names mentioned . . . we started to think seriously of having our names stricken from Church records. Finally, we decided to do a little more research, so we went to a Christian bookstore in Provo called His Place. . . . we noticed several books written by you. We bought a few of them *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality, Major Problems of Mormonism, 3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon* and *Flaws in the Pearl of Great Price*. Reading these books led us to check out some books on the Masons.

"Seeing all of the documented evidence against the Mormon Church through reading your books has completely changed our minds about the Church.

"Since our son, ____, was born, we've had some pressure from family members to have him blessed, but we had decided that instead of having him blessed as a member of the Church at such a young age, we'd wait until he was older & let him decide for himself what religion he wanted to pursue. Now thanks to you & your books, we can give him a chance to see what the Mormon religion is truly based on.

"We have been completely enthralled in your books since we got them, and have spent hours and hours studying them. We would like to receive your newsletter so we can keep up-to-date with your writings.

"Thanks to you, we've opened our eyes to what the Mormons are truly teaching us. Thank you so much for that. Please keep up the good work . . ." (Letter from Utah)

"I recently accepted the Lord Jesus Christ into my life. It will be three months ago on the 14th that I was saved. Before that time I was a Mormon. I almost went on a mission for the LDS Church. The Lord told me not to do it, I mean I had my call and I also went through the temple. . . . The last little while I have been having some problems with my family especially my parents. They just don't understand why I'm doing what I'm doing . . . It's really been hard on me, so I turn to my Christian friends for help and then I turn to [the] Lord for help because I know that what my friends can't help me with, He can. . . .

"I was just writing to see if you could give me any advice or any information on how to face the struggles that I'm having or just becoming stronger in Christ. If you could do that for me I would really appreciate it." (Letter from Idaho)

"We are on your mailing list for the 'Salt Lake City Messenger.' Please remove us from that mailing list. . . . I'm sorry that you feel such a need to spread blatant lies. A Christ-like attitude will get you farther in life." (Letter from Tennessee)

"As a former Mormon who has accepted Christ and is now studying for the ministry, I am very interested in receiving a list of any publications available through your ministry. Your book, 'The Changing Face [*sic*] of Mormonism' was pivotal to my decision to leave the LDS church. For sixteen years I struggled with the nagging suspicion that the church was built on a foundation of lies and fabrications — reading your book was the coup de grace to my tattered faith in a false prophet.

"Praise God that he has raised up people like you. Your courage, scholarship, and persistence is truly a 'lighthouse' to those of us who were chained to such a great deception. I eagerly await hearing from you and learning about how I can support your vital work." (Letter from California)

"I am a very thankful new Christian that has just come out of mormonism. I recently gave my heart to the Lord & now the battle is with my family." (Letter from Washington)

"Thank you for your ministry. I was a Mormon for seventeen years and my sweet wife was born and raised Mormon. . . . After the lessons by the missionaries, I honestly believed the Mormon Church was true . . .

"As an F-15 pilot for the Air Force, I left for a remote — tour in Iceland. On my way through Dallas, Texas, I stopped and went through the temple ceremonies by myself for the first time. Never before did I see the darkness and asked myself the question: What are we doing and why? After passing through the vail [*sic*] into the celestial room, I decided to sit and contemplate and pray about the rituals; before I even began, the Holy Spirit w[h]ispered in my ear, 'Leave, this is wrong.' I didn't know who the Holy Spirit was at the time, but that was too vivid and too real. I left and never returned . . .

"Separated by thousands of miles, came the trials of a struggling marriage cause by communication difficulties. At the point of failure, our dear gracious Father let me fall from the skys [*sic*] by letting me contract multiple sclerosis (M. S.). This meant the end of flying with the wings of man; but,

my new flight with the true Jesus is far more rewarding. . . . In 1991, the Air Force medically retired me at 100 percent disabled. My commander called me in three months prior to my retirement and relieved me of duty because of the difficulties I was having. He told me to go home and take care of my family matters. So I took care of the most important matter; our salvation.

"For three months, II Tim 2:15, Prov 15:28, I Thes 5:21, and John 8:32 was followed; I studied, proved, and sought truth. What I found was that the Mormon Church had the 'flavor' of Christianity but lacked substance . . . We now have the 'true' Jesus in our lives with the help of Christian ministries like yours bringing the 'true' Word to Mormons . . . The names of my family are pulled from the Mormon records and are now on the rolls of a 'Christian' church. Thank you for your help! !

"I am bringing God's Word to all our mormon friends and families. Christian cadets from the Air Force Academy are calling on my help in bringing truth to Mormon cadets leaving on missions. I may be medically retired, but I'm not dead! I will continue to bring the true word of God to mormons . . . Thank you for your ministry." (Letter from Colorado)

"I was a very active temple 'worthy' and temple attending Mormon for 15 years before starting to fully realize the corruption within the Church and even more recently how the occult played such a big role in its origins and practices. Interestingly, it wasn't until I was exposed to a lot of New Age things in CA and other psychic practices that the light started truly coming on for me about the Mormon Church. I still find myself struggling to unlearn or resolve what I was taught in the Church (Mormon). . . . I . . . have numerous Mormon acquaintances . . . I want to help reach many of them in the future *after* I get more stable and sure myself of my *new* and *true* knowledge of Christ and the actual facts surrounding the Mormon Church.

"Presently I am attending a Bible study meeting and a 'know your Bible' meeting as well as church with Bible believing Christians . . . I'm really seeing how much the Mormon Church distorted the Bible even as I read it on my own *without* Mormon footnotes & commentaries to do my thinking for me." (Letter from Nebraska)

"I received your letter yesterday and all your pamphlets and copy sheets today. I have finished reading them. I am sick at heart, that I could of been one of the millions that has fallen for this [i.e., Mormonism]. . . .

"I had even thought to ask you to take my name off the mailing list until these last two mailings. You have been very straight forward with me. That is not what I've gotten from the members. . . . How could I of not seen any of this? I have been studying this faith for 2 years. . . .

"My questions started hitting me when I purchased the book 'Gospel Principles.'. . . It's kind of like a lovely Christmas package all wrapped so beautifully but when opened the outer is more pleasant than the inner.

"I use to feel bad toward you because my new friends said that you was wrong. I want to ask your forgiveness and to say I am packing away everything I possess of LDS literature. . . .

"May God keep you in his tender care and guide your feet on the path to help others. . . . My prayers will be with you always." (Letter from Texas)

"You have been a blessing in my life and also in my wife's life in more ways than one. When I met my wife she was a devoted mormon. I was a christian that didn't know what God wanted to do with my life. I was concerned with many of the things she was saying as far as doctrine was concerned but I didn't know a good way of refuting them. That's when I bought '[Mormonism:] Shadow or Reality.' That is when I knew what God wanted in my life! I found myself studying the bible much more than just my devotion time and also slowly building a apologist library! At the same time I was witnessing to now my wife and after three months of phone calls (I lived in So. Cal. and she lived in Salt Lake City) she accepted Christ moved down to Cal. and later we got married! I am now . . . going to college and getting my philosophy degree, witnessing and studying on the way! Maybe I can start a Lighthouse up here! . . . You are in our prayers always." (Letter from Minnesota)

"Thank you so very much for the research and material you sent me in response to our telephone conversation. You were very kind and generous and I appreciate your personal concern. Just to have been able to talk with you and discuss briefly my personal situation gave me an abundance of courage that I need right now. . . .

"I feel ashamed and embarrassed to admit that I was once in the ministry, but over the years became callused to the effects the music ministry had on my life. . . . I saw so much good in the Church that I 'wanted to believe' the LDS story. I went for the 'whole enchilada.' My wife and I even went back to Nauvoo and the Carthage jail. I ate it up until it finally hit me after a few short visits to the Temple in L. A.

"If there is anything good that has come from this experience, I am now, for the first time in my life, 'sincerely hungry' to read the Bible with more interest than I ever had before. I read at least two to four chapters every day. I didn't read this much when I was in Bible School! Since the Church is still so visibly pres[e]nt in my life, it seems I have such a strong and urgent interest in reading and knowing more about the real truth of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church that has taken three years of my life. . . . God bless your efforts." (Letter from California)

Support the Lighthouse

When we first began our work with the Mormon people we had a very difficult time getting their attention. After thirty years of ministry in Salt Lake City, however, things have really changed. Some members of the LDS Church are now very hungry for the truth and seek us out. Many of these people are turning to the Lord.

If we are able to complete our new bookstore and offices this year, we will be able to reach many more people. The most important thing a person can do for our work is to pray that God will open the eyes of those that we minister to and that He would give us the encouragement and strength to continue.

Since we provide our materials at the lowest possible cost to our readers, the money we receive from our books and tapes only covers about half the cost of operating Utah Lighthouse Ministry. If it were not for those who provide donations to our ministry, we would be in serious financial trouble. We consider these people to be **a vital part of our team**. They are, in fact, making an important investment in the souls of people who have been misled with falsified information furnished by the LDS Church.

Utah Lighthouse Ministry is a non-profit organization that ministers to many people and provides support for **44 children** through World Vision. Those who are interested in helping our ministry can send their **tax-deductible** contributions to **Utah Lighthouse Ministry**, PO Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110. Contributions and orders can now be made over the phone (801 485-8894) [Web-editor: and over the internet] with Visa, MasterCard or Discover Card

Church Hides Documents From Prosecutors

In our last newsletter we revealed that Gordon B. Hinckley and other members of the Mormon hierarchy had important McLellin documents that they deliberately suppressed from prosecutors in the Hofmann murder-forgery case to save the church from embarrassment. We noted that the material was a "key piece of evidence" needed in the investigation. Later we published the book, *The Mormon Church and the McLellin Collection*, and showed that those involved in the case were disturbed by the church's attempt to cover up this important matter. We quoted the following from an article written by Lynn Packer:

> Lead prosecutor Stott, when informed about Turley's revelation, said **he should have been told**. "Certainly if the church had some McLellin diaries or documents that could have been included in what Hofmann had categorized as the ones he had, we certainly would have been interested in them." (*Utah Holiday*, November 1992, page 35)

On page 34 of the same article, Mr. Packer wrote. "Not knowing that church officials had found the McLellin collection **hurt the state's case**, according to Salt Lake County investigator Michael George. 'It goes to show elements of fraud and deception; from that standpoint, **its important**,' George said."

According to Packer, Judge Paul Grant, who conducted the preliminary hearing, was glad that church leaders "finally fessed up" that they had the McLellin collection. However, "Grant said the case **may have taken a different course had the church promptly disclosed**. He said a significant shift in public opinion against Hofmann might have prompted Hofmann's attorneys to enter plea negotiations before the preliminary hearing began, rather than after, as they did" (*Ibid*., page 36).

Gerry D'Elia, one of the prosecutors, was very disturbed by the church's suppression of the McLellin collection:

> "**I can't believe that nobody came forward with it**," says Gerry D'Elia . . . "It was a waste of our time and taxpayers' money." Mr. D'Elia believes the information would have helped prosecutors. Knowing the church already had the McLellin collection could have established Hofmann's motives. "Our biggest problem was the motive — **that goes to the heart of the case**," says Mr. D'Elia. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, October 31, 1992)

We have recently issued a 2nd edition of *The Mormon Church and the McLellin Collection*. In this edition we have modified our conclusions regarding the Oliver Cowdery history. In the 1st edition we reported that two Mormon officials made comments that indicated the church had that early history. Further investigation, however, leads us to conclude that these officials may have been mistaken about the matter. Those who already have the 1st edition can receive the relevant material free upon request.

Our new book, *The Mormon Church and the McLellin Collection*, examines William McLellin's charges against Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church. It contains important extracts from McLellin's unpublished papers. In addition, it has a great deal of material regarding the church's suppression of the collection. This book usually sells for $5.00, but if it is ordered before June 30, the price will be only $4.00. (Mail orders please add $1.50 minimum postage and handling.)

BOOKS AND TAPES

(Mail orders add 10% - Minimum postage $1.50)

Sandra Tanner Tape No. 3. Two radio interviews with Sandra. The first deals with the 1990 changes in the LDS temple ceremony. The second discusses problems in the translation of the Book of Abraham. **Price: $3.00**

Mormonism: The Christian View. A video narrated by Wesley P. Walters. Deals with Mormon history, doctrines, claim to authority, changes in doctrine and witnessing suggestion. **Price: $24.00**

By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri, by Charles Larson. Demonstrates conclusively that Joseph Smith did not translate the Book of Abraham from the Egyptian papyrus. **Price: $11.95**

John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat, by Juanita Brooks. contains very important information on the Mountain Meadows Massacre and Brigham Young's Cover-up. **Price: $15.00**

Theological Foundation of the Mormon Religion, by Dr. Sterling McMurrin. **Price: $9.00**

Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Re-Examined, by Rodger I. Anderson. Good response to LDS authors Hugh Nibley and Richard L. Anderson on early statements by Joseph Smith's neighbors. **Price: $9.95**

BOOKS AND TAPES

(Continued from page 15)

(Mail orders add 10% — Minimum postage $1.50)

What Hast Thou Dunn? by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. The story of how Paul Dunn, an Emeritus General Authority of the Mormon Church, deceived church members with false tales about his baseball career and war record. **Price: $2.00**

Christian Institute for Mormon Studies. Eight papers from 1991 conference. **Price: $6.95**

Divergent Paths of the Restoration, by Steven Shields. Brief history of over 100 churches and organizations claiming Joseph Smith as their founder. **Price: $14.00**

Mormon Polygamy: A History, by Richard Van Wagoner. Paperback (with index). **Price: $12.95**

Why We Left Mormonism**,** edited by Latayne Scott. Personal testimonies of eight ex-Mormons, including Sandra Tanner. **Price: $8.00**

Everything you ever qanted to Know About mormonism, by John Ankerberg and John Weldon. Paperback. **Price: $13.00**

New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable? by F. F. Bruce. A well-researched book by a Greek scholar showing the reliability of the translation of the N.T. **Price: $5.95**

Mere Christianity, by C. S. Lewis. Good defense and explanation of Christianity. **Price: $8.00**

Know What You Believe—A Practical Discussion of the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith**,** by Paul E. Little. **Price: $8.00**

Know Why You Believe—A Clear Affirmation of the Reasonableness of the Christian Faith**,** by Paul E. Little. **Price: $9.00**

Basic Christianity**,** by John R. Stott. A brief examination of the claims of Christ and our response to His call. **Price: $5.00**

Answering Mormons' Questions, by Bill McKeever. **Price: $5.95**

Mormons Answered Verse by Verse, by David Reed and John Farkas. **Price: $7.00**

Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon, by David Persuitte. Harback. **Price: $19.95**

Joseph Smith's Response to Skepticism, by Robert Hullinger. Shows that Joseph Smith himself authored the Book of Mormon to settle the theological arguments of his time. **Price: $18.95**

The 1838 Mormon war in Missouri, by Stephen C. LeSueur. Paperback. **Price. $14.95**

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