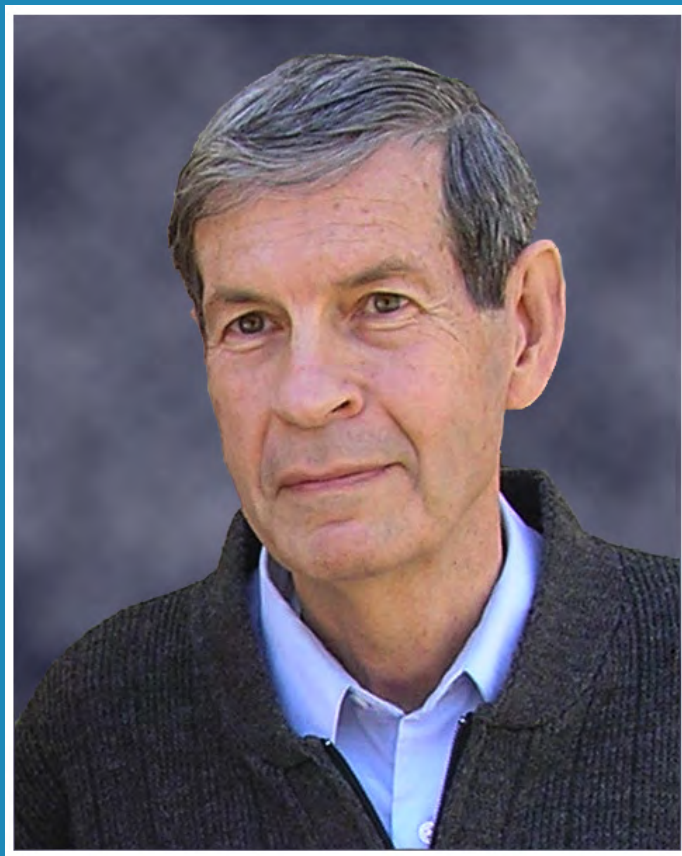


# JERALD TANNER'S TESTIMONY



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**Utah Lighthouse Ministry**  
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In the fifth chapter of Mark we find the story of a man possessed with unclean spirits. This man was wild and lived among the tombs. Verse 5 says that he was “always night and day among the tombs and in the mountains crying out and cutting himself with stones.” Fortunately, Jesus had compassion on him and cast out the evil spirits. The people later found the man “sitting clothed and in his right mind.” When Jesus was about to leave the area the man wanted to go with him. The 19th verse, however, tells us that Jesus would not allow this. He said to him, “go to your home, to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and had mercy on you.”

Although I have not literally lived among the tombs or cut myself with rocks, I can really relate to this story. In a spiritual sense I have lived among the tombs of sin and have cut myself with the rocks of selfishness, hatred and pride. The Lord, however, provided a way of escape from the miserable life I had created through my own foolishness. Like the man who was delivered from the demons, I feel that I must tell how much the Lord has done for me.

In relating my story I will be using a number of quotations from the Scriptures. I have not used any particular version of the Bible but have consulted a number of versions, and in the case of the New Testament, used the Greek text as a guide.

I was born in a farm house on the border of Provo, Utah in 1938. Provo, of course, is the home of the Mormon Church's Brigham Young University. My grandfather had once taught at that school and my father graduated from BYU a few years before I was born. The University's motion picture studio was built on the land next to the farm on which I was born. My uncle, whom I was rather close to, later lived on the farm. He had a good job at the BYU Library and became

bishop of the ward in which the farm was located. My mother came from a strong Mormon background. She had some serious health problems which stemmed from an airplane accident she was involved in when she was 16. Her boyfriend had hired a pilot to take them for a ride. Unfortunately, the plane went out of control, and just before they plowed into a brick building, her boyfriend threw himself in front of her. Both he and the pilot were killed and she was rushed to the hospital in extremely critical condition. She was not expected to live and the Mormon elders were called in to pray for her. One of them prophesied that she would not only recover, but that she would live to perform a wonderful work for the Lord. That she survived and was later able to have children was considered a miracle by the family.

Although my father and mother were not active Mormons, my mother encouraged me to participate in the church and looked forward to the day when I would go on a mission. When I was still a child we moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where my father worked as a weather forecaster. A few years later we moved back to Utah and my father worked for the Weather Bureau in Salt Lake City. While I lived and attended school in Salt Lake, I usually worked on the farm during the summers. My grandparents lived in Provo, just a few miles from the farm, and I would often stay at their house. One of my early memories is riding back and forth from the farm with my grandfather in his Model T Ford. The Model T had become quite rare by the 1940s and people would often stare as my grandfather drove down the highway at 15 or 20 miles an hour almost always looking straight ahead.

My grandmother was a devout Mormon and used to tell me how her mother almost starved to death when she came across the plains pushing a handcart. One thing that my grandmother told me that really made an

impression on me was that the only way a person can find true happiness is in helping others. My grandfather certainly provided an interesting link with the past. He was a child when Brigham Young was still serving as president of the church. His father was a polygamist who served as bishop of the Third Ward in Provo. One of the stories that I heard a number of times when I was a child was how my great-great grandfather, John Tanner, who was considered to be rather rich, helped the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith when he was in financial trouble.

By the time I reached the age of eight I was absolutely convinced that Mormonism was the only true church on the face of the earth and I was baptized. Later, I remember being told that a certain man in the neighborhood had been excommunicated from the church and was possessed by the devil. I firmly believed this and was fearful of getting too close to his house. I felt that a person would almost have to be possessed of the devil to leave "the true church." So strong was my conviction that I was greatly shocked to hear a boy in Sunday School say that he didn't know for certain that the church was true. I felt that it was strange indeed for a person to be a member of the Mormon Church and yet not know it was the only true church.

As a boy I remember when George Albert Smith, the 8th president of the church, spoke in our ward. Harold B. Lee, who later became the 11th President of the Church, lived within about half a block of our house on 9th West. I felt that the leaders of the church were divinely inspired men who had direct revelations from God.

I realize now that the church which I was born and raised in did not really preach the gospel. While good morals were stressed, and Christ mentioned, I was given the impression that man was naturally good and that I could work my way into God's kingdom. In other words, I was taught that I had the power within myself to live a righteous life and that I could be saved by my own righteousness. The Apostle Paul described the predicament that I was in: "For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).

At that time, however, I sincerely believed that the church I was a member of was the only true church that had authority to do God's work and that I was being taught the truth. I remember that at one time I went to the Salt Lake Temple and was baptized in behalf of the dead. I believed that I was helping those people obtain

exaltation by bringing them into the Mormon Church. Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president of the church, once was baptized for all the signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Wesley and Columbus as well as many other prominent men. He, in turn, baptized a "brother McCallister" for "every president of the United States, except three." According to Mormon theology, all those who accepted this work are now members of the Mormon Church.

I was rather religious until I was twelve or thirteen years of age. But religion without salvation is a very cold thing, and I soon began to lose interest and to search elsewhere for happiness. I decided that I wanted to become a magician, so I began to build a magic act. I spent much of my time and hundreds of dollars on this act. My life seemed to center around the act, and I was sure that it would bring me happiness, money and everything I desired. During this period I saw the noted magician Harry Blackstone and decided that I wanted to build the largest magic act in the world. As my mind began to focus in on this objective I began to realize how my own selfish desires could lead me to do things which were not right. At that time I had a friend who was studying magic with me. The two of us entered into an agreement that I would perform my act at the school assembly that year and that he would give his performance the next year. I was successful in my endeavor and was very pleased with the result. The following year I was asked to join the traveling assembly. My response, of course, should have been that my friend would give his act in my place. Instead of revealing the agreement I had made with him, I accepted the position. Consequently, he did not have a chance to even try out for the position. Naturally, this caused some very bad feelings and led to a termination of our friendship. After that I continued to work on the magic act and got to the point that organizations were calling me to perform and some were offering money for the performance. At that time I only knew of one professional magician in Salt Lake City. He did not seem to have a very large magic act and I felt that I could eventually overtake him and have a good business in Salt Lake. From there, I reasoned, I could begin my travels throughout the United States.

As I began to grow older, however, I could see that the life of an entertainer is usually very unhappy. The bright lights and applause do not satisfy the emptiness within a person's heart. This emptiness can only be filled with the presence of God. In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis maintains that there is no real happiness apart from God:

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God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.

The pleasures and honors of this world are like a mirage. When we see them in the distance, they appear as a lake of water which we think will bring refreshment and satisfaction to our souls, but as we approach them, we find that the satisfaction we had hoped for disappears, and our souls are left thirsty. Paul Tournier expressed it this way:

. . . the thing one possesses always seems less attractive than the thing one has desired. The excitement of desire has lent magic coloring to the coveted object, but almost as soon as it has been obtained it loses its brilliance.

In an interview, Barbara Streisand, a noted actress and singer, admitted that success has not brought her the happiness she desired:

Q. How does the reality of success measure up to your childhood dreams of glory?

A. It doesn't come close. It hasn't come anywhere near it. The dream—you never achieve it and that's what's depressing. The excitement of life lies in the hope, in the striving for something rather than the attainment. I'm a practical person—to me it's a real drag that you can't hold success in your hand like a hard-boiled egg.

What Barbara Streisand said is certainly true. I was later to learn that money, fame or pleasures are but cheap substitutes for the reality of having fellowship with a personal God. Since I did not at that time have fellowship with God, I was seeking happiness in other ways. The magic act did not bring me real joy so I eventually gave it up. It was at this point in my life that I really entered into a black period. It is apparent to me now that I was walking in spiritual darkness. The Apostle Paul mentioned this condition in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4:

But if also our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

My eyes had certainly been blinded by the god of this world. I knew nothing of joy and peace, only of sin and unhappiness. The condition I was in is described perfectly in Titus 3:3:

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

In looking back at the situation I found myself in, I can see that I had no one to blame but myself. The treatment I received at home was very good. My parents never mistreated me in any way, and I felt no reason to be jealous of anyone in the family. My mother was always there to comfort me, and in times of trouble bent over backwards to encourage and help me. My father was generous and offered to give me a college education. The only thing he asked from me was that I do a reasonable amount of work. As I have already indicated, the Mormon Church did not really present the message I needed to hear. Nevertheless, I cannot complain about the treatment I received from the people. There were many good and sincere people in the ward I attended, and I cannot remember anyone deliberately trying to hurt me. On the contrary, I always felt welcome at the church. When I was 12 years old I was ordained a deacon in the Mormon Church.

In spite of my upbringing, at the age of 14 I began to drink. I still remember the first time I became intoxicated. What fun it was to forget my problems and just have a good time. I felt as free as a bird. Before I had found some escape from reality by attending about two shows a week, but after I started to drink, I felt I had found something much more satisfying. Instead of spending my money on movies, I decided to use it to buy alcoholic beverages and cigarettes. My life was completely miserable. I hated school and did not want to be at home. I always had to be on the go. If I had to stay home, I would immediately run to what one author refers to as the plug-in drug, TV, to keep myself from having to face reality. During this period I suffered a great deal with depression. Charles L. Allen wrote:

Hiding from God is the most miserable experience the human soul can experience. Peace with God is the most blessed experience.

I found this to be true. While I wanted God's blessings, I felt embarrassed about my sins, and I found it harder and harder to pray. I can remember one night I felt that I should pray, but I found it impossible to face God, for I knew I had sinned against him. I was in bondage to my own sin. Jesus once said:

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. . . truly, truly I say to you that everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin, and the slave does not remain in the house forever, but the son remains forever. If, therefore, the son makes you free, you are really free. (John 8:34-36)

I was truly a slave to sin. Myron Augsburger wrote the following:

To escape it all becomes an obsession, and the many attempts at escape are dead-end trails that only emphasize the hopelessness of man's plight. The sinner is held in an Alcatraz from which there can be no self-arranged flight. But Christ has come, and the prison of shadows has been diffused with light. The shackles of the heart have been unlocked with the key of love, and the house of bondage has been left as a roadmark of the past.

My life was centered around my own selfish desires. What I thought would make me happy just tended to make me feel worse. I found the love of self to be the most miserable thing in the world. As the years went by, I found that drinking began to lose its thrill. It took more alcohol to get the same effect. Finally, it seemed that there wasn't even pleasure in drinking. This is the way it is with all the sins of the world. At first they appear to satisfy, but as time goes by and we keep partaking of them, they lose all their glamour and bring only frustration and misery. In Isaiah 57:20-21 we read:

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.

I certainly had no peace, and I had no purpose in life. Neither did my friends have any real purpose for living. I remember that one night I was riding in a friend's car. After we passed some rather large trees that were growing at the side of the road, he told me that he had contemplated suicide by running the car off the road and into those trees. He said that the temptation was very strong, but he had not yielded because he felt he had no right to take my life also. Another night the driver of the car I was in became intoxicated and lost control of the car. We ran off the side of the road and tipped over. Still another night I ended up in jail, and the next day a friend who had spent the night in the same cell, told me that he was going to change his life. I had no intention at that time of changing mine, however. That night I got drunk again. I continued this way of living for some time. Finally, I decided that I would try to change. I quit drinking for some time, but my attempt ended

in dismal failure. When I was about 18 years of age I was working part time at a candy company. One of the young men who was working with me challenged me to read the Book of Mormon. Although I had believed it was from God since I was a child, I had never sat down and read it through. When I did, I was fascinated with its contents and began to think seriously about getting active in the church. The bishop encouraged me, and said that I would be made an elder if I continued to come to church. As I began to study about Mormonism I ran into an article concerning the Reorganized LDS Church in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The article indicated that it was a break-off from the Utah Mormon Church. Since I had never heard of the Reorganized Church, I asked my mother about it. She informed me that it broke off from our church because of the practice of polygamy. Prior to this I had read the compilation of Joseph Smith's revelations known as the *Doctrine and Covenants* and had become rather confused when I got to the 132nd Section. My grandmother had taught me that polygamy was only practiced to provide homes for an excess of women in the early Mormon Church. The revelation to Joseph Smith, however, indicated that it was a divine commandment which was very important. It said nothing about a surplus of women in the early church.

In any case, I decided to attend a meeting of the RLDS Church. I went to a mid-week service, and it was there that I met a man by the name of James Wardle. As strange as it may seem, Mr. Wardle just happened to have one of the largest private libraries on early Mormonism, and he invited me to look over his collection. In the years that followed, his library proved to be invaluable to my research. While I attended the RLDS Church just out of curiosity, one member of the church pointed out something that really confused me. This was that the revelation on polygamy was not printed until the Mormons were in Utah. While Joseph Smith was at Nauvoo, Illinois, he never publicly taught the doctrine; in fact, he published material against it. He called it a false and corrupt doctrine and even excommunicated a man by the name of Hiram Brown who practiced it. Original copies of the Mormon paper, *Times and Seasons*, printed in 1844, which contained this information, were brought out of a safe and shown to me. In the face of the evidence, it was impossible for me to deny the serious implications of the matter. The Reorganized Church claimed that the denials furnished proof that Joseph Smith never taught plural marriage at all. Later on I was to learn that notwithstanding the

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fact that Joseph Smith publicly denied polygamy, he did give the revelation and secretly practiced it at Nauvoo. At the time, however, I could not conceive of the idea that Joseph Smith could be involved in such duplicity. Consequently, the Reorganized Church's position appealed to me.

Sometime later, James Wardle gave me a booklet written by Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer. I felt that it would be very important to read the testimony of an eye-witness to the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. At that point I came face to face with reality, and I did not like what I saw. David Whitmer charged that Joseph Smith made serious changes in his revelations in between the time they were first published in the *Book of Commandments* in 1833 and when they were reprinted in the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1835. I could not believe such a serious charge against the Prophet and I tossed the pamphlet down in disgust. After throwing it down, however, I began to think that perhaps this was not the right way to face the problem. If David Whitmer was wrong in his criticism of Joseph Smith, surely I could prove him wrong. So I picked up the pamphlet and read it through. I found that I could not prove Whitmer wrong, and that the revelations Joseph Smith gave had, in fact, been changed. I later went to Independence, Missouri, and saw a copy of the original *Book of Commandments*, which confirmed David Whitmer's statement that the revelations had been changed. (The *Book of Commandments* is one of the rarest Mormon books. It is now valued at about \$50,000.)

As I read David Whitmer's booklet, I learned that Whitmer himself had left the Mormon Church and had become instrumental in setting up a new church which proclaimed that while the Book of Mormon was true, Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet who had given false revelations. Whitmer's group not only rejected polygamy but also most of Joseph Smith's other revelations. At that point I was really confused. Here were three groups of people who all claimed to be believers in the Book of Mormon but they differed significantly in their doctrines. On top of all this, I learned that there were still other groups that had broken off from the Mormon Church. Some of these groups were based in Missouri.

The Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith claimed that he once prayed to know which of the churches was right. I had a similar need. While I felt that the Catholic and Protestant churches were all wrong, I needed to know which of the churches which claimed to be based on

Joseph Smith was the true church. I felt that the only way to find out the truth was to go back to Missouri and visit the various groups. Consequently, when I was 19 years old I set out in my 1948 Chevrolet believing that God would lead me to the true church. I started one night on the 1,200 mile journey, but by the time I reached Wyoming I found myself in the midst of a blinding snowstorm. It was very discouraging, but I decided to keep going. Finally, the storm broke and I drove on through the night. Early the next morning my water pump gave out and the car overheated. Fortunately, I was just entering a town at that time and was not stranded on the highway. I had four different problems with my car on that trip, but each time I was either in or near a town. The following morning just at sunrise I was driving through Kansas and encountered a sign which read: "Christ is the way." This really encouraged me as I continued on the journey. John 14:6 later became one of my favorite verses:

Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me.

I continued on until I arrived in Independence, Missouri, where I visited two offshoots of the Mormon Church. Both of these groups were known as the Church of Christ. These churches, of course, had no connection with the large Protestant group known by that name. Instead, they took their name from the Book of Mormon which mentions the Church of Christ. One of these churches is known as the Church of Christ, Temple Lot. A representative from this group was kind enough to open the safe and get out the original *Book of Commandments* so that I could have a look at it. The Church of Christ, Temple Lot, is located near the headquarters of the Reorganized Church.

While I really wanted to visit the churches in Independence, my main goal was to contact a woman in Richmond, Missouri, who was a granddaughter of Book of Mormon witness Jacob Whitmer. I had read that she was a member of David Whitmer's church. I was able to locate her and found her to be friendly and talkative. Although she was probably over 90 years old, she had a good memory. She told me that she could remember seeing David Whitmer in his bed just before his death working on his booklet, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*. This booklet, of course, had motivated me to travel to Missouri. Although she treated me well, it was obvious she was not interested in seeing David Whitmer's church survive. She told me, in fact,



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that there was only one other person alive who was a member of that group. This was another woman who was also advanced in age. From this it was obvious to me that the church David Whitmer labored to build up would be nothing but history in a few years.

This was a great disappointment to me, and I was rather discouraged as I drove back to Independence. As I indicated earlier, when I first arrived in Independence, I visited two groups known as the Church of Christ. Although I had received a good reception at the Church of Christ, Temple Lot, I did not feel led to return there. I did have some interest in the other Church of Christ, which was sometimes known as the Lukites. The pastor was a woman by the name of Pauline Hancock. She had come out of the Reorganized Church some years before and had done a great deal of research regarding early Mormonism. Mrs. Hancock and other members of the church had a microfilm camera and made photographs of many of the important Mormon documents they could get access to. The research which this group had done later proved to be a great help to me. They freely gave me many photographs of important Mormon documents, and I have used them in a number of publications.

What impressed me most, however, was not their research but the love they had towards each other and even people outside their group. In John 13:34-35 we read:

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Although I had known many fine and loving people in the Mormon Church, I had never seen anything like this in my life. They were different from any people I had ever met. It was almost as if I had stepped back into the first century and was meeting with the original disciples of the Lord. In John 15:11 we find these words of Jesus:

These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full.

The joy in the hearts of this people was so obvious that I could not miss it. It was evident that they really loved the Lord and had dedicated their lives to serve him. I had been used to hearing a great deal of talk about Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church, but these people were praising God continually. Their conversation as well as their singing was very moving. They told how God had delivered them and given a peace that

passes all understanding. It was at this church that I first heard the true message of Christ preached so that I really understood it. The sincerity of the people made a very deep impression on me. They had something in their lives which I knew I did not possess. While I was convinced that they were right, I was not quite ready to turn my life over to God.

As I studied and thought about the matter it became very clear to me that all of us are born with a sinful nature. In Romans 3:23 we read:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

In Mormonism we had been taught that almost everyone will eventually make it into one of three kingdoms of heaven. The Bible, however, made it clear that I was in danger of losing my soul if I continued in my sin. I found the following in Romans 6:23:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Before I set out for Missouri, I realized that I had committed many sins. I still felt, however, that I had the strength to change my own behavior and live a righteous life. I didn't understand how spiritually weak I really was. The Apostle Paul made this observation in Roman 5:6: "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." In the 8th verse of the same chapter, Paul wrote: "But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Before I set out on my journey, I had been convinced that the church I was raised in was in error and it was only a matter of finding the one "true church," and then living a good moral life that would be pleasing to God. What I had learned in Missouri completely changed my way of thinking. Instead of focusing on the errors of the Mormon Church and searching for the "true church," I now had to take a hard look at my own heart and realize how completely undone I was before God. I was a sinner in desperate need of a Saviour. I could perhaps compare my life to a car which seemed to have a miss in the engine. At first I felt that it just needed some new spark plugs or a tune-up. The truth of the matter, however, was that it needed a major overhaul of the engine. In other words, I needed a completely new life within. This was explained to a religious leader by the name of Nicodemus in John 3:3:

Jesus answered and said to him, truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

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It is sometimes very difficult to face the truth about one's self. I came back to Salt Lake City with a heavy heart and continued to live under the burden of sin. In December of that year I received a great deal of encouragement. I had not been accustomed to mailing out Christmas cards, and since I did not send them out, I did not expect many from other people. That Christmas, however, I received a flood of cards from the people in the church in Missouri. I was overwhelmed by that display of love. As the months passed since I returned from Missouri, I became fully convinced of the depravity of the heart of man. My own sinful heart convinced me. During those months I was tempted in directions I never thought possible. I began to feel that I would probably end up in the gutter if I did not surrender to the Lord. Even worse than this, however, was the fear of eternal consequences. That is, that I might die in my sins and be banished from the presence of God forever. Jesus Himself gave this warning in John 8:24:

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he you will die in your sins.

From the evidence that I had seen, it was obvious that there was no neutral ground. Finally, I decided that I would return to Missouri and surrender myself to the Lord. Snow was still on the ground when I arrived in Independence. I rented a room in a cheap hotel in the center of the city and then made contact with the church people. They welcomed me and while I told them that I had a hotel room they made it clear that someone would take me in. Fortunately, the Lord had already prepared the way. A family by the name of Moore allowed me to stay with them for an entire month. They had had a son who became rebellious and died in a terrible automobile accident not long before. They felt that the Lord had sent me as sort of a replacement for their son. Consequently, I was welcomed into the family and treated with great kindness. During that month I was taught a great deal about the ways of the Lord and was able to see Christian love in action. It was at this point in my life that I looked to Jesus Christ and my life was miraculously changed. I passed from a life of sin and misery to one of peace and joy. In Ephesians 2:1-7 the Apostle Paul gave a very good description of what happened to me:

And you being dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the

flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as others. But God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses made us alive with Christ, by grace you are saved—and raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

When I received Jesus into my heart I passed from death into life. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul describes it this way: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, the new has come." The power of God completely changed my life. My desires for the sins and pleasures of this life began to disappear. At last I had found freedom, and my life began to be filled with peace and joy. I had been given direction and a purpose for living. In 2nd Corinthians 5:15 we read:

And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again.

As long as I lived unto myself I was miserable, but when I turned to Jesus I found joy unspeakable. Myron Augsburger wrote:

Too many people have never discovered the real joy of living, of the heartbeat of love, the thrill of integrity, the satisfaction of service, or the wonder of worth. Some are caught between the fear of death and the fear of life. Of the two the latter is the most serious, for fear of life makes daily existence a living death.

Myron Augsburger goes on to say:

When God changes a man He makes him anew. The heart is now the throne of God and the ego knows it.

Augsburger also commented:

The awareness of the contemporary Christ involving Himself in our lives, being unashamed to call us brethren, standing as the Captain of our faith, permeates our personalities with the radiance of His own. Such a fellowship makes the whole life aglow with His presence.

In the Bible, John 10:10 we find Jesus making this statement:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, I have come they may have life and they may have it abundantly.

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I had been very fearful of surrendering myself to the Lord. I felt that it was a frightening step into the dark. Even though I could see the joy in the faces of the Christians I had come to know, I still felt that I would be giving up so much that it would be very difficult. I later found out that many of the things I felt were giving satisfaction were the very things that were keeping me from the wonderful joy that God alone can give. I discovered that the invitation given in Matthew 11:28-30 is true. In these passages Jesus says:

Come unto me all you who labor and are overburdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

I should perhaps state that I did not receive any outward sign from God when I first committed myself to Him. In other words, my conversion was not like that of the Apostle Paul when he was struck down and Jesus appeared to him in a bright light. I had, in fact, been anticipating such an experience when I came up out of the waters of baptism. While nothing like this happened, I began to walk by faith and to feel the spirit of God working in me and helping me with my life. Jesus told of this experience in John 14:23:

Jesus answered and said to him, if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.

I should probably point out that even after I became a Christian, I continued to believe in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. While some may consider this a contradiction and claim that belief in the Book of Mormon would make one an orthodox Mormon, the truth of the matter is that the Book of Mormon itself does not teach the unique doctrines which separate the Mormon Church from other churches. These doctrines come from Joseph Smith's later revelations published in the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price*. The Book of Mormon actually is far closer to Protestant theology than it is to Mormonism. It quotes large portions of the King James Version of the Bible almost verbatim and agrees remarkably well with the doctrinal teachings of Protestant theologians. While I can no longer believe it was translated from gold plates or that its story about Christianity in America before Columbus is true, from a doctrinal viewpoint I cannot find a great deal wrong with it.

In any case, I believed the Book of Mormon at the time I joined the Church of Christ, and even though

I now realize I was in error, I was trying to do the right thing. In 1962 I rejected the Book of Mormon as scripture and about 10 years later, after Wesley P. Walters discovered definite proof that Joseph Smith was tried as a glass looker in 1826, the church I had joined in Missouri also laid the book aside. In Utah, Sandra and I joined the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church and have been going there for many years.

As soon as I returned from Missouri I encountered a real test of my faith. I had been going with a Mormon girl on and off for a couple of years prior to the time that I began to search for God's will. She was very moral and devout in her faith in the Mormon Church, and therefore I had done my best to hide my double life from her. I had become very serious about her and after I turned my life over to the Lord I firmly believed that she would eventually see the truth and that we would be married. When I returned from Missouri I felt that she would be happy to know of my conversion to Christ and the changes that were taking place in my life. I met with her at her home soon after I returned and desired to discuss the matter with her. To my surprise, she confronted me with one question: Did you join the church back in Missouri? When I responded in the affirmative, she made it clear that unless I came back into the Mormon Church, we would have to end our relationship. Since I sincerely believed that God Himself had led me out, there was no way that I could compromise or give her the slightest hope that I would change my mind. I was completely devastated by her decision and left her house almost in a state of shock. As I got into my car the tears began to flow freely. Strange as it may seem, however, as I drove toward my home I had the most powerful experience of God's love that I could ever imagine. In the midst of my tears and sorrow it seemed as if the presence of God entered the car. While I did not see anything with my physical eyes nor did I hear anything with my ears, I knew that the Lord Himself was present with me. He assured me that everything would be okay and that I just needed to trust him. I had never experienced anything like this in my life. In just a matter of seconds my heart had been changed from the deepest sorrow one could imagine to the greatest joy imaginable and I poured out thanks and praise to God. It was at this time that I began to really learn the reality of the scriptures concerning God's peace. In John 14:27 we read:

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid.

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Again in John 16:33 we find the following:

These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

From that point in my life I became certain I had a very personal relationship with the Lord, and although I still had problems, I now had a living God working in me and encouraging me to go on. Jesus expressed it in this way:

And I will ask the Father and he will give you another comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it is not able to see him neither to know him. But you know him, for he remains with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you. (John 14:16-18)

Since the Lord had given me a wonderful confirmation that he was going to work everything out, I assumed that the young woman would eventually change her mind and that we would be married. Within a week she stopped by my house to give me a picture of Christ she had painted. This was an encouragement to me, and I continued to pray she would change her mind. Eventually we did start going together again and had good discussions about our religious differences. One evening, however, I visited her at a dry cleaners where she was working. She indicated that she had something important to tell me. This was that God had shown her that He had prepared a very special woman for me and that she must step aside. Even though she was a very devout Mormon she seemed to be saying that she recognized God was working in my life and that He had a chosen vessel already picked out for me who would be my spiritual companion.

At the time I did not feel that this was a message from God, and I continued to believe and pray that the Lord would change her mind. Her parents were extremely good Mormons who wanted her to break up with me and attend Brigham Young University. Not long after this she enrolled at the school. I continued to correspond with her, and that Christmas I received a card from her that gave great encouragement to me. Consequently, I still continued to believe that we would eventually be married. In March of 1959, however, I received a letter which made it very clear that the relationship was over. It was from a young man who said he was now her boyfriend and that he wished I would quit sending her letters. After reading the letter I was very angry and

wanted to send back a reply that would in some way hurt him. Before I could do this, however, the Lord quieted the storm within my heart and showed me this would be contrary to his will. The message was very clear: I was to make no response and just trust the Lord to work out whatever He desired to do. Although the situation was very difficult to understand, I yielded to the Lord's will.

Sometime previous to this I had started a series of meetings in the basement of my home. I felt that I was not capable of preaching, so I played tape recordings I had received from the church in Missouri. James Wardle, the RLDS man with the large library on Mormonism, attended and provided names of others who would be interested. There were probably only five or ten people who attended most of these meetings. About a week after I had received the letter which contained the final blow, I was preparing for one of these meetings. A woman who had been married to one of Brigham Young's grandsons had become somewhat interested in the meetings. At that time her granddaughter, Sandra McGee was visiting her. Sandra, who was a great-great granddaughter of Brigham Young, was brought up in the Mormon faith, and was a faithful member of the church. She had come up from California to spend some time with her grandmother and see her boyfriend at BYU. On the night that I was to hold the meeting, Sandra's grandmother invited her to attend a meeting which she described as being something like a Mormon fireside. Sandra immediately picked up on the word "like" and became suspicious that it was not really a conventional Mormon meeting. Nevertheless, out of curiosity she decided to attend. Although I thought that she was a beautiful young woman, I felt that she was probably too rich and sophisticated to have any interest in me. Later I was to learn that she had a wonderful personality, was very down to earth and anything but rich.

After the meeting was over, I thought that I would probably never see her again. To my surprise, she later called me on the phone and invited me to come to her grandmother's home to discuss my religious views with her. When I met with her I showed her copies of sermons by her great-great grandfather, Brigham Young, and she was shocked by some of his teachings. In her family Brigham Young was held in very high regard and it was very difficult for her to reconcile his actual sermons with what she had always been taught about him. I also showed her how Joseph Smith's revelations had been altered and she and her grandmother made their own study of the changes. We began to study together on a

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regular basis and I realized that I was falling in love with her. By this time she knew that her relationship with the young man who was attending BYU would not work out and they had broken up. One night I brought over my tape recorder to play a tape that I thought would be beneficial to her. The tape recorder had always worked good before and worked fine the next day, but for some reason I was unable to get it to function that night. Fortunately, the conversation turned to marriage and before the evening was over we were engaged. I firmly believed that God had sent Sandra into my life, and since she told me that she wanted to be a Christian, I felt that it would be pleasing to the Lord for us to be married. At this point in my life I would advise couples contemplating marriage to be certain that they have both accepted Christ and to have a time of counseling with a pastor or qualified person before taking such a serious step. At that time, however, I was only a babe in Christ and was not acquainted with anyone in Salt Lake City with whom we could consult. We were married in June 1959, and fortunately Sandra fully gave her heart to the Lord a few months after we were married. In her written testimony she states:

Early one morning (October 24, 1959) I decided to listen to the radio for a while. I turned to the Christian radio station and listened to a sermon. The minister was preaching on the great love of God and the mercy offered to us through Jesus Christ. Nothing ever struck me with such force. I opened my heart to God and accepted Christ as my own personal Savior. The Holy Spirit flooded my soul with such joy that I wept for over an hour. After the sermon the station played this song—

I love the Christ who died on Calv'ry,  
For He washed my sins away;  
He put within my heart a melody,  
And I know it's there to stay.  
In my heart there rings a melody,  
There rings a melody with heaven's harmony;  
In my heart there rings a melody,  
There rings a melody of love.

This song fully describes the way I felt. How glorious to know Christ died for my sins so I could have a new life in Him.

After 28 years I still love Sandra very deeply and I just thank God for sending her into my life. When God poured out his spirit upon me while I was driving my car and told me that everything would be all right, I was really expecting Him to answer my prayer in another

way. I understand now, however, that He had something even better for my life than I could have imagined at the time. Ephesians 3:19-21 says:

And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do infinitely more than all we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, to all generations forever and ever, Amen.

In Matthew 7:7-11, Jesus told of the great value of prayer in the life of a Christian:

Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you, then, who are evil, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father who is in heaven will give good things to those who ask him.

I have learned that when God does not seem to be answering our prayers immediately it does not mean that He does not hear us. He may, in fact, be preparing an answer that far transcends what we originally felt was necessary. And, many times, if he gave us what we desired it would turn out to be harmful to us.

Like all couples, Sandra and I have had some disagreements and adjustments to work out. Nevertheless, God has really blessed our marriage, and I have never felt that it was a mistake or desired a change. Sandra, in fact, has been a real joy to live with and I am very thankful for her companionship and especially in times of testing. We have three grown children—April, Dennis and Teresa—whom we love very much. We thank God for His help in raising them in these difficult times, and ask that He would be glorified through their lives.

Sandra and I were married in California and spent most of our first year in North Hollywood. Except for some problems we had with people over our religion, this was a very peaceful and happy time. I was working as a machinist at the time, but we wished to have some sort of ministry. We bought an expensive tape recorder and planned to have a Christian radio show. This was apparently not God's will because the letter to the radio station was lost in the shuffle and was never answered until after we left California.

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One thing that did happen while we were in California which seemed to set the course of our life's work was that we decided to send out some typewritten sheets explaining why Sandra had left the Mormon Church to some of her friends. Although I had had a printer run off 500 copies of a critique I had written in 1959 concerning the Mormon claim that Blacks were cursed by God and could not hold the priesthood (a doctrine that has since been changed), I had no real experience with printing. If Xerox copies had been available at the time, we would have probably used that process. Sandra, however, informed me that she had some experience running a mimeograph machine. We purchased a cheap machine and made a number of copies of material that explained problems we had encountered in Mormon theology and the wonderful change Christ had made in Sandra's life.

In 1960 we left California. Our original intention was to move to Missouri, but instead we chose to return to Salt Lake City. While we were in California I had a fairly good job in a machine shop, but when we arrived in Utah I found that I had a difficult time getting into a machine shop. I did not have too much experience, and also the managers seemed to feel that since the wage scale was lower in Utah than in California, I would not be satisfied with the wages. Even though I said I would take less, they seemed to be fearful that I would not stay.

One shop that I applied at was very unusual. Instead of pictures of women hanging on the walls as in many machine shops, it had pictures of the General Authorities of the Mormon Church. When the owner of the shop found out that my name was Tanner, he got rather excited and pointing to a picture of the First Presidency of the Church, asked if I was related to N. Eldon Tanner. I replied that I was, but that I was no longer a member of the church. His enthusiasm cooled and I knew that I had no chance of obtaining the job.

After about 5 months of unemployment I finally found a job in a machine shop in Centerville. In December of 1960 we moved into a duplex on the west side of Salt Lake City. The rent was only \$40 a month and we felt very fortunate to get it.

Sometime during 1960 a member of Sandra's family felt that the Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards might be able to straighten Sandra out and an appointment was made with him. I accompanied Sandra to Apostle Richards' office. Although I had brought photocopies of rare Mormon documents which I hoped Mr. Richards would look at, he obviously had no interest

in considering anything I had to offer. Furthermore, it became apparent that he was displeased that I had accompanied Sandra to his office.

He became rather disturbed and finally looked at me and said the following in a very stern voice:

I'm warning you, don't start anything against this church!

Needless to say, the meeting did nothing toward bringing Sandra back into the Mormon Church. We had both received good treatment by our bishops and others when we presented our questions to them. We were both, therefore, rather shocked to find a man at the highest level of the Church who was so defensive.

Although I now view Apostle Richards' threat as only an attempt to intimidate me, at the time I took it very seriously and wondered what method he might use to stop me from expressing my critical views. Apostle Richards later threatened to sue us if we continued to use quotations from his great-grandfather's journal. Since we knew he had absolutely no legal grounds for action against us, we told him we would welcome a suit. We continued to print the extracts, but Richards never followed through with his threat.

I was just in my early twenties when Apostle Richards warned me about opposing the Mormon Church. I had read how Joseph Smith had ordered the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, a newspaper that exposed his involvement in polygamy. Moreover, I had read many accounts of "destroying angels" existing in the early Mormon Church who actually put dissenters to death. While I feel that I now have irrefutable evidence that these things did occur in the past, I have not found a shred of evidence that shows the Mormon leaders are linked to anything like this at the present time. At the time Apostle Richards directed his warning to me, however, I was not certain that these practices had ceased to be a part of Mormonism. While this meeting with Apostle Richards did cause me to grow somewhat weak in the knees, it made me realize more than ever that the Mormon leaders had something to hide from their people and that I should become actively involved in bringing the truth to light. Since I am basically a cowardly sort of person, I entered into the work with fear and trembling. There were only a limited number of ministries directed toward Mormons at the time, and very few people engaged in original research critical of Mormonism.

At that time the idea of challenging the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City itself seemed to be a scary undertaking. My fears were not decreased in any way by some of my well-meaning friends. One man who had worked for the Mormon Church's radio station in Salt Lake told me that I must immediately obtain a gun because there was no way that the church would allow me to continue my activities—I would be put out of business one way or another. Another friend advised me to obtain an oversized hose so that I could put more water on the fire when they tried to burn us out. My own mother, who by that time had come to doubt Mormonism, was terrified at what we were doing and used to bring us suggestions on how to prevent assassination. Even within the last year a policeman has offered to provide protection without charge in his off-duty hours. These fears, of course, are not groundless. Even though I have no reason to believe the church itself would plan an assassination, there are fanatics and unstable people in all churches, and there is no telling what these people will do if their religion is criticized. Furthermore, there are a number of polygamous groups which have broken off from Mormonism. These people are known as Mormon Fundamentalists. The great majority of the Fundamentalists are peaceful people just like the Mormons. Some of them, however, hold so strongly to the doctrine of Blood Atonement, which was originally taught by Brigham Young, that they will kill in the name of the Lord. A number of assassinations have been committed by these people since we started our ministry. At one time, a member of one of these groups spoke with me at our bookstore. He said that the group that he had joined had restored the Council of 50, a secret organization Joseph Smith formed in Nauvoo, Illinois, just before his death. He also claimed that his group had marked out certain people who must be assassinated so that the Kingdom of God could be set up on earth. He did not threaten me in any way, nor did he mention the names of the people that must be eliminated. Nevertheless, the conversation didn't make me feel very good. Since I was opposed to both polygamy and the unique teachings of Joseph Smith, I thought that the Mormon Fundamentalists would certainly view me as an enemy and those who strongly believe in Blood Atonement might take some action.

Sandra and I discussed the risks involved in criticizing Mormonism, and she commented that if the worst were to happen we would die knowing that what we were doing was right in God's sight. This all sounded very good in theory, but I guess I had so great a love

for life that it was very difficult for me to put myself in God's hands and completely relax. It was very hard to sleep under these circumstances and I seemed to hear almost every strange noise in the night. The sound of a car stopping by our house would instantly bring me to my feet so that I could take the supposed adversary by surprise and prevent injury to my family or the house. I had often read the scripture which says "perfect love casts out fear," but I could not seem to get the victory. During the last few years, however, God has given me a real peace about the matter. As it says in 2 Timothy 1:7:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.

As I indicated earlier, Sandra and I mimeographed off some information on Mormonism to give to her friends. When we moved to Salt Lake City, we continued mimeographing material and passed it out without charge to anyone who was interested. Our mimeograph machine gave us so much trouble that we finally decided to get a new one. The model we wanted had a motor and cost \$500. This was a lot of money for us in those days and we had to finance it. We were rather startled to learn that the distributor worked through Zions Bank on financing. At that time, the Mormon Church held the controlling interest in the bank. We decided to take a chance and allowed the company to submit our application to Zions Bank. Fortunately, the financing went through and we were able to turn out far better copies at an increased rate per hour.

Some time after we moved to Salt Lake City, Eugene Wilson, who used to run a book store uptown, suggested that he would be able to sell some of our mimeographed publications if we would put a price on them. While we really didn't want to charge for the publications, we knew that we could not distribute a large number of them unless we received some compensation to pay for the paper. We, therefore, put a small price on the items.

In 1963 we published a full size book on the mimeograph machine. It was known at that time as *Mormonism—A Study of Mormon History and Doctrine*. We later enlarged and revised it and printed it on a Multilith press under the title, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* It turned out to be a real success and tens of thousands of copies were distributed throughout the world. We have recently published the fifth edition of this book.

During our early research, we discovered that the most important evidence against the divine authenticity of the Mormon Church is not found in bitter anti-Mormon

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books. Instead, it is derived from the early writings of the Mormons themselves. The old diaries, letters and books published by the church contain devastating information which cannot be explained away by saying it came from bitter apostates. It was clear also that the church was doing its best to hide important historical documents from its people. I felt that it would be a good idea to start a microfilm business and provide films and photocopies to people. I reasoned that people would bring in rare books, letters and journals for copying and that they might allow us to have a microfilm copy of these documents if we gave them a discount on the work. From these films copies could be made for other people. I learned that a used microfilm camera was for sale at a local microfilm company, but that the price was \$1,200. If we could raise \$300 the company would sell it to us on time. The man in charge knew what kind of documents I was thinking of reproducing, but he really wanted me to get into the business because the Mormon Church was continually putting pressure on his organization concerning the reproduction of controversial Mormon material. He felt that if I set up a company which did this type of work, he could direct his customers to me and save a lot of hassle with the church. Unfortunately, I did not have the \$300 to make the down payment. I was working at the time with a young man who was extremely poor. His father had died and I knew that he was sending most of the money he earned to his mother to support the family. He had told me that he was eating only one good meal a day so that he could send more money home. Consequently, I would not have felt right about asking him for any money. However, in the course of a conversation I was having with him, I told him of my idea to set up a microfilm business but that it was looking a little doubtful because of a lack of money for a down payment. He began to get excited about my plans for the new business. Then he told me that he had decided to go to a meat cutting school and that his uncle was sending him a loan of about \$300 to pay for his schooling. In checking with the school, however, he found that it would allow him to make payments monthly. He suggested, therefore, that I should take the money and repay him monthly the same amount the school would charge him. I agreed to this and was able to make all of the payments. Just after I made the last one he was electrocuted on a construction job he had taken. Because of his help we were able to buy the camera, and in 1963 we set up our new organization which we named Modern Microfilm Company. This was

only a part time operation at first because we needed the money from my full-time job to get it off the ground.

Not long after obtaining the microfilm camera, an exciting new possibility opened up. I learned from a friend who was in the microfilm business that a new process had been developed in which a microfilm could be used to create a master which in turn could be used on an offset press. This would mean that hundreds of copies of a document or book could be reproduced rapidly on ordinary paper at just a fraction of the cost of a photocopy. I could immediately see the possibilities for our work. Instead of spending untold hours in developing prints (which were rather expensive), we could sell limited printings of a large number of books and manuscripts at a very reasonable price. Moreover, many microfilms of rare Mormon books and handwritten documents were already available and others could be obtained from libraries or individuals for a reasonable fee. The only thing that stood in our way was the money to purchase an offset printing press. We were impressed with a Multilith, Model 1,000, which we looked at. We agreed that if our federal tax refund arrived within a certain time period we would make a down payment on a machine. It did arrive, and we decided to go through with the deal. Unfortunately, however, our salary was rather low and since we still owed for the microfilm camera, the company would not approve the loan. The salesman suggested that we try a bank. The only bank we had established credit at was Zions Bank through the purchase of the mimeograph machine. Although it seemed like a rather gloomy prospect, we decided to apply for the loan. I met with one of the vice-presidents at the Mormon bank. Fortunately, he seemed to be totally unaware of our activities with regard to Mormonism. Although I never mentioned anything about the contents of the documents I would be printing, I explained to him how the microfilm process could be combined with a printing press to provide rapid reproduction of material at a price much below that charged by those who used the traditional method. I knew that if he asked concerning the type of documents I was thinking of reproducing, I would have to tell him the truth and there would be little chance of getting the loan. Fortunately, he never asked the question that could have sunk the project. In fact, he became very excited about the plan. He said that although he would certainly not approve of giving us a loan of almost \$2,000 under normal conditions, the idea was so good and he was so confident that it would succeed that he was going to grant the loan.



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Although we had never had any experience with an offset press, we obtained one and began to learn to print by the trial and error method. After some disastrous results, we finally learned enough about the process so that we were able to get some reasonably good copies. By this process we were able to disseminate a great deal of important material about the church. Some of the country's largest libraries became customers and even some of the church's most noted scholars began to order our reprints on a regular basis.

When we first moved back to Salt Lake City, we never thought anything about a full-time work with Mormons. In fact, before we were married I had gone to a special school and trained to be a machinist. I assumed this would be my life work. My first job in Utah lasted for about half a year and then I was laid off. I immediately found another job in a machine shop, but it was extremely dull. Finally, I decided to apply at a shop which made very precision aircraft and missile parts. I presented myself as someone who was interested in something with a challenge. I said that I did not care for production work, but desired a variety of jobs that required creativity. Unfortunately, I sold myself too well. I was told that I was exactly the type of person they were looking for, and that the other company had been insulting my intelligence by paying me such a miserable wage. A good wage was offered to me, and I went to work with the new shop. I immediately realized that I had made a mistake. While I had been accustomed to working in tolerances of a thousandth of an inch, I was now asked to work in ten thousandths of an inch. The slightest mistake could prove disastrous at these close tolerances. Even the temperature could affect the measurements and make an expensive part into a piece of worthless metal. Furthermore, the blueprints were very difficult to understand and I found it extremely hard to know how to proceed. Moreover, I had a boss who was not very helpful and at one time when I came to him with a problem, he said that he did not want to come out into the shop and hold my hand. I should figure it out for myself. One night when I came to work, he picked up a part I had spent the previous night making and threw it away, saying that it wasn't anything but a piece of junk. After that I came into the shop with fear and trembling, and the pressure caused by my mistakes and lack of experience was so great that I could not function properly. One night the boss made some critical comment concerning my work. Not quite understanding I asked if he meant that I should leave the shop. His reply was that I should not only leave the shop, but I

should get out of the trade entirely. He said that I was so inept that he could get any man off the street and in a short time he could train him to be a better machinist than I was. He went on to say that I might do well at some other trade, but that I would never make it as a machinist. Since I had spent a year in school and had tried very hard to learn the trade, this came as a great disappointment to me. In Romans 8:28 we read:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.

At that time, I couldn't see that anything good could possibly come out of the situation, but now I realize that God had something much better for me in the future. In the meantime, I did find another job in a machine shop. The work was not nearly as complicated as the previous job and I was able to relax and do much better. Even so, I realized that I did not have the natural mechanical ability that is essential to make a good machinist. Nevertheless, I continued working at this job for two years. By that time the new idea concerning printing from masters made from microfilms was bearing some fruit. Although it was obvious that it could work into a full-time operation, we simply did not have enough capital to buy the paper and supplies we needed to carry us through the first few months of the transition. I decided to approach Zions Bank again and ask for a loan. The same vice-president who had granted the other loan listened to my plea. Like before, he indicated that we were way over extended, but because he believed in the idea he would go along with the loan. He mentioned that he drove past our house every evening on the way home from work and that he intended to stop by and see exactly how the operation was working out. For some reason he never made it, which was, of course, a great relief to me. As I look back on it, it is certainly ironic that our operation was launched by the Church's own bank! At a later time, when we were far better off financially we again made a request for a loan. Although I do not know whether it was because money was tighter at that time or whether officials at the bank had discovered what we were printing, the loan was denied and we ceased doing business with Zions Bank. The church later sold its controlling interest in the bank.

As our work began to grow, we could see that the house we were renting was too small for our operation. We were doing much of our work on the kitchen table. We found an excellent home on the east side of town and the woman who owned it was willing to give us

an unbelievably good deal. The transaction was just about to be consummated when she decided to back out. Although it was a real disappointment at the time, we learned again that "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose." We have since come to realize that we would never have been able to get it commercially zoned and would not have been able to carry out our operation there. The realtor felt bad about what had happened and tried exceptionally hard to find us another house. Finally, he took us to an old house on West Temple Street. The Mormon temple is located less than 2 miles from this house on the same street. It was an ideal location for a business and was very large. We have since enlarged it even more so that it has 13 rooms. Besides all the room in the house, it has a 3 car garage with an upstairs. It was in rather poor condition in some respects and no one else seemed to want it. For us, however, it was everything we needed and the price was only \$14,200. When we were looking at the other house Sandra's parents had given us \$1,000. We had since used this money to pay off some of our debts and we had no money to make a down payment. After thinking the matter over, we decided that we no longer needed the microfilm camera. We had found that most of the items we wished to reproduce were already available somewhere on microfilm and if not we could pay someone else to do the job. The company from which we had obtained it bought it back for \$700 and this was just enough for a down payment on the house. We moved in with payments of only \$119 a month and this included taxes and insurance.

In 1977 we took an important step forward when we purchased an A.B. Dick 1600 press. This machine produces good quality printing directly from a book or original manuscript without going through a microfilm process at all. Furthermore, it prints twice as large a sheet of paper at a more rapid rate than the older press did. In addition to all this, it automatically changes masters while the machine is still going. We felt that we really needed this press, but when we went to obtain it, we had trouble getting the financing. It was a \$27,000 machine and the bank we went to turned down the loan. I felt so strongly that we should have the loan that I mustered up the courage to go back to the bank and ask that the loan be reconsidered. The official at the bank then began to ask me some very pointed questions such as: if we had any savings or stocks and bonds. When I replied no, he responded that he was now certain that

he had made the right decision in denying the loan. He indicated that he did not know this before, and that this information made the loan totally out of the question. As I was sitting in the bank I saw a garage door on a nearby home swinging open in the wind and I remembered the statement that the Lord opens the door and no man can shut it. Even though I was rebuffed by this official, I was still convinced that we should have the machine. Fortunately, we have a woman in our church who is a real prayer warrior, and she had a burden to pray for this request. Sometime later I was surprised to receive a phone call from the same official at the bank. He said that he had been thinking about the matter and wanted to come have a look at our business. He came over and after looking at our operation, he stated that we had underestimated the value of our home on the application we had filled out for the loan. On this basis he decided to grant the loan.

The new press speeded up our operation and made it possible for us to print many more publications. Since this machine completely eliminated the need for microfilm, it made our name Modern Microfilm a misnomer. This was finally corrected in 1983 when we founded a non-profit organization known as Utah Lighthouse Ministry.

During our early years as Modern Microfilm Company, we were constantly struggling with financial problems. One thing that really helped was when Wesley Walters, a minister, and Jerry Urban, an airline pilot, each decided to give us \$30 a month. Without that regular support we would have found it very hard to have made it through that difficult period. Since that time, we have received some sizable donations from a number of people. While we received our largest donation during the time we were fighting off a lawsuit, the one that I remember most came during a time of real discouragement. We were getting behind on our bills and were very confused about what we should do. One day, however, we received a cashier's check for \$5,000 from an anonymous donor. We had been earnestly praying about our financial condition when the gift arrived, and we were elated that we were able to pay off some pressing bills that we owed.

One of the biggest boosts we received to our work as far as publicity is concerned came in a very strange way. In 1965 a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter from the *New York Times* by the name of Wallace Turner stopped by our bookstore to get some information. He obviously had no interest in writing about our work, but

while he was present a young Mormon convert, who was very excited, came rushing into the store. He had previously read our book concerning the changes in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* and had decided to check the original handwritten manuscripts at the Church Historian's Office. He was told that those manuscripts were not available at that time because they were being microfilmed. He learned later, however, that this was untrue—the manuscripts had, in fact, been microfilmed years before he was given the false story. He was so upset about the matter that he could hardly contain himself. He told the reporter that our work had changed his mind about the truthfulness of Mormonism and that the church had deceived him. As he left the house he was still extremely excited. Although Mormons often come to us and tell us that our literature has convinced them that they should leave Mormonism, we seldom see someone so wrought up over the matter. That it would happen at exactly the time that a *New York Times* reporter was present seemed to be very providential. Mr. Turner then decided that he should interview us and so the three of us went into the living room to talk. In the middle of our conversation, another man came to the door. It turned out to be a Mormon Fundamentalist who was actually living in polygamy. Although many people in Utah today will openly admit they are living in polygamy, in the mid-60s there was a real fear of prosecution, and this was the only man we knew at the time who was willing to publicly admit he was living in polygamy. I told him that I would not be able to talk to him for a while because we were in the middle of an interview. He asked who was interviewing us, and when I told him it was a reporter from the *New York Times*, this made him even more interested. He then asked me if he could join us in the living room. I was reluctant because I felt he might waste time arguing concerning his right to practice polygamy. I consented, however, and we went into the living room where Sandra and Wallace Turner were talking. As it turned out, Mr. Turner was very interested in interviewing a practicing polygamist. Therefore, it all worked out for the good. He published a series of articles in the *New York Times* in 1965 and later wrote an entire book on the LDS Church under the title, *The Mormon Establishment*. He had Sandra and I read his manuscript before it was published in 1966. Wallace Turner devoted a number of pages to our work and talked very favorably concerning our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*

Because of the space he gave to us in his book, many people throughout the country became interested

in our work. As I look back on it now, it seems ironic that the two men who showed up unexpectedly at our house on a summer day in 1965 would have played a part in bringing so much publicity to our work.

When we first published our major work on Mormonism in 1963 some people felt that a large publisher should print it for us. A local Christian bookseller wrote to Moody Press, recommending that they publish it. The response was that there would not be "250 to 300 people in the U.S. who would be sufficiently interested in a work of this kind to buy it." Fortunately, our friend Jerry Urban did not share this pessimistic view. He worked for a number of years trying to get scholars to help him convince Moody Press to reconsider. His efforts finally proved successful, and in 1980 Moody Press brought out a condensed version of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* under the title, *The Changing World of Mormonism*. By 1982 we were able to announce that about 50,000 copies of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and the condensed version by Moody Press had been sold.

Over the years we have been able to print some of the rarest Mormon manuscripts, diaries and books as well as many works critical of Mormonism. We photographically reproduced *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* which demonstrated beyond all doubt that the Mormon prophet was completely mistaken in his translation of the Egyptian papyri he obtained in 1835. What Joseph Smith claimed was the Book of Abraham was in reality a pagan funeral text known as the Book of Breathing. We also printed some of Joseph Smith's diaries which had been suppressed by the Mormon Church for almost a century and a half. Many people thought that the church would take legal action to stop our publications. Although two of the LDS Apostles sent us letters saying that they would sue us if we did not stop publishing certain documents, no action was ever taken.

While the church itself did not initiate any suits, a Mormon scholar with the support of Brigham Young University's Religious Studies Center did bring us into court. This man, who had been given special privileges in the Church Archives, had copied extensive quotations from the diaries of Joseph Smith's private secretary William Clayton. Clayton, who was a very devoted Mormon, had recorded some extremely revealing information concerning Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy and other matters which were very embarrassing to the church. Although the Mormon scholar had been very careful to keep the material out

of the hands of critics of the church, he allowed three people to have a copy. One of these individuals stored his copy in an office at BYU which was also used by a Mormon bishopric. A member of the bishopric looked through the Clayton material and became so interested that he duplicated it and copies were widely circulated at the church's university. We felt that the Clayton material was so important that we printed it under the title *Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered*. On May 7, 1983, we were surprised to receive a summons to appear in court. The Mormon scholar who had originally copied the extracts from the Clayton diary claimed we had violated a copyright which he held in the Clayton writings. The suit asked for up to \$50,000 plus the costs to the plaintiff. In the June 1983 issue of our newsletter, the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, we said that the suit could not possibly be successful because it was based on the erroneous assumption that a Mormon scholar could copyright the writings of William Clayton. We pointed to this very plain Statement in Section 103 (b) of Title 17, U.S. Code:

The copyright in a compilation or derivative work extends only to the material contributed by the author of such work, as distinguished from the preexisting material employed in the work, and does not imply any exclusive right in the preexisting material.

Since the plaintiffs notes were composed of extracts from "preexisting" material, we argued that he could not claim a copyright. In a later issue of the *Messenger* we stated:

Fighting this lawsuit will cost thousands of dollars and a great deal of time, but we feel that it will all work out for our good. The publicity surrounding it has already helped our work a great deal. Some of those who oppose our work have been hoping that the suit will drive us into bankruptcy, but we feel that it will have just the opposite effect. As Joseph told his brothers who had sold him into Egypt, "... ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Genesis, 50:20)

Before the trial my deposition was taken by the plaintiff. In my testimony I said that I felt that we had an extremely strong case and would take it to the Supreme Court of the United States if necessary. At the time I made that comment, I felt that we would obtain an easy victory in the federal court in Salt Lake City. I knew that we would be appearing before a Mormon judge,

but I felt that he would be fair and dismiss the suit as groundless. One of the first actions we took was to summon the President of the Mormon Church to appear with the original Clayton diaries which were stored in the First Presidency's vault. The plaintiff had alleged that some dates and short comments which appeared in the typescript were his own, and therefore subject to copyright. We wanted to see the original diaries and determine whether there was enough of the plaintiff's own material added to the typescript to give him any kind of legal basis for copyright on those items. The best evidence concerning this matter was the original diaries. The Mormon Church, of course, fought the production of the diaries because of the fear that some embarrassing material would leak out. At a hearing that was held over the issue, the church's lawyer argued:

I represent an organization that is very concerned about parties attempting to frame issues through which its own private materials may be discoverable. It has no desire to submit to the scrutiny of the parties.

The Judge agreed with the Mormon Church and the subpoena was quashed. Although I wish the judge had ruled otherwise, I didn't feel that his decision in this matter necessarily showed prejudice. He did, in fact, get the plaintiffs lawyer to agree that if the original diaries were not going to be made available to us, he would drop any claim of copyright on the dates or short comments that were supposed to have been added in the typescript.

When the actual case came before the Judge in March 1984, he announced that we were correct in saying that the plaintiff had no copyrightable interest in the notes. Instead of dismissing the case, however, the Judge turned right around and awarded the Mormon scholar \$16,000 for what he said was "unfair competition" and damage to the scholar's reputation. Since the decision seemed to have no basis in law, it was apparent that either the Judge had no understanding of the case or that he was prejudiced against us. In taking our deposition and at the time of the trial itself the plaintiff's lawyer seemed to try to capitalize on the religious issue. He asked questions to make it clear that we had left the Mormon Church and were publishing sensitive church documents. This probably created a great deal of prejudice against us in the mind of the Mormon judge.

In any case, in addition to his award of \$16,000 damages, the Judge said that we could no longer sell the publication *Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered*. Just

four days after announcing the ban, however, the Judge began to have doubts about the wisdom of his decision to enjoin the publication, and on April 10, he held a hearing and completely reversed his original decision with regard to the injunction.

Although we felt that we had won the battle as far as the continued publication of the book was concerned, we were convinced that the judge's decision concerning "unfair competition" was completely wrong, and we appealed it to the 10th circuit court so the case would be heard by a panel of three judges. In the *Messenger* for September 1984 we again said that we would take the case to the Supreme Court if necessary to vindicate the right of freedom of the press guaranteed to us in the Constitution. The copyright law made it very clear that state laws were preempted if a case was tried as a copyright case. The Judge, however, completely ignored this when he applied the state law concerning unfair competition. He was, in effect, making his own law to help suppress archival material.

During the trial I had the feeling that the Judge was prejudiced. The day before he made his decision against us, I was out walking. As I was thinking about the whole matter, I suddenly had a strong feeling that he would rule against us, and that we should appeal and obtain victory in a higher court. Immediately I began to envision the fact that we could place a large ad in the newspaper and appeal for public support in fighting this miscarriage of justice. The next morning as we came into court, our lawyer was very happy. He was certain that we would win the case. He had been studying a case that was almost identical to ours which clearly indicated that without proof of a copyright violation the case would have to be completely dismissed as groundless. The day before the Judge had said that both lawyers should make comments that morning concerning the case before he made a ruling. Instead of following the program he himself had laid out, the Judge suddenly announced that he had decided we were guilty and that the plaintiff should receive \$16,000 in damages.

It was one thing to have the feeling that the Judge would rule against us, and quite another to face the reality of the decision and the Judge's lecture against us. By the time the Judge finished his tirade, I was almost in a state of shock. I was completely exhausted and could hardly bear the thought of continuing the struggle for justice. I had spent a great deal of time and energy preparing for the trial and thinking up questions for Mormon officials and scholars we examined in both depositions and at the trial. The whole thing was

a tremendous strain on Sandra and myself, and we certainly didn't relish the thought of taking the matter to a higher court. Fortunately, my friend Wesley Walters talked with me and said that his church had recently appealed a case and that the lawyers usually handled all the work in appeals. This encouraged me to go on with the matter. One thing that bothered us was the lack of money to make our appeal. We found that we were not only facing at least \$10,000 to make the appeal but we would have to immediately come up with the \$16,000 judgment and put it into a saving's account with the opposing lawyers name on it. We could have mortgaged our house to obtain the money, but instead the Lord moved and donations came in to cover both the judgment and the appeal.

With regard to the newspaper ad I had envisioned, we also had enough money to publish it. Moreover, we were even able to publish it in the Mormon Church's own *Deseret News*. This was something we could have never imagined would happen. The *Deseret News* had turned down our adds time after time in the years prior to the announcement of the judgment against us. At that time, however, the church's newspaper made a serious blunder. It had printed a story concerning our defeat and had included an erroneous statement that court documents showed we had stolen the William Clayton extracts from an office at Brigham Young University. The truth of the matter was that the testimony given at the trial itself proved that we obtained the extracts in a legitimate manner from a Mormon scholar who lives in Salt Lake City. The publishers of the *Deseret News* knew that it would be considered libel if the statement was not retracted. A representative of the paper was very kind about the matter and admitted the reporter had not obtained the information from court documents but rather from hearsay. Consequently, it was decided that the church's paper would either make a retraction or allow us a chance to respond. We chose the publication of a two-thirds page ad which not only corrected the *Deseret News'* error but told of the injustice we had suffered under the hands of the Mormon Judge. In addition the ad appealed for help from the public and offered copies of *Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered* to the readers. The same ad also appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

The appearance of the ad infuriated both the plaintiff's lawyer and the Judge himself. As unbelievable as it may seem, we were ordered back into court to face the wrath of the Judge. Our only offense was that we had exercised our Constitutional rights in continuing to sell

*Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered* and had criticized the decision of the court. The Judge claimed that he was astounded to learn that we were continuing to sell the William Clayton extracts after his ruling. The truth of the matter is that the Judge knew that we were going to continue to sell *Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered* when he reversed his decision on the injunction. In fact, he had agreed to the suggestion that we would pay the plaintiff a certain sum for each additional copy sold if the higher court ruled against us. In spite of his earlier statements, the Judge accused us of continuing "unlawful acts," using "crafted, misrepresentation" and flaunting our "defiance of the court." He tried to make it appear that we were without principles. Although he had previously tried murderers, extortioners and all kinds of criminals in his court, the Judge said that he was "not used to dealing with the kind of people" that we were. He threatened that if we dared to publish another ad he would try to punish us. He also said that when the case came back to him for his final decision he might award the plaintiff many times the \$16,000 damages he had originally assessed.

In spite of the Judge's long harangue against us, he did not dare restore the injunction against the book which he had originally proposed. We viewed his threats as nothing less than an attempt to keep us from exercising freedom of speech. Therefore, we continued to sell and advertise the William Clayton material.

It was December 1985 before the 10th circuit court of appeals finally ruled on the case. In the ruling, the three judges said we were correct in our assertion that the district court erred in awarding damages because those claims are preempted by the federal copyright statutes. On the last page of the decision it was stated: "The case is reversed and remanded for further proceedings consistent with this opinion."

We thought that this would end the matter, but instead the plaintiff appealed the case to the Supreme Court. Finally, on October 6, 1986, the Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States wrote that the request that the Supreme Court hear the case had been denied. Our victory in the 10th circuit court of appeals, therefore, became final and our three-and-a-half-year nightmare was finally over.

Even though we won the case, our legal bills mounted to somewhere between 30- and 40,000 dollars. Fortunately, the Lord provided the money needed through donations and we were able to meet all the bills. If this suit had occurred earlier in our ministry, it could have had a devastating effect on us.

For many years the Mormon leaders have used people's ignorance of the copyright law to keep embarrassing material from coming to light. This suit threw important light on this critical matter. Our research disclosed that the church leaders had been very secretive about their possession of the Clayton diaries and had kept them safely locked up in the vault of the First Presidency. The Mormon scholar who sued us had obtained his extracts from another scholar who had helped make a typescript of the diaries without permission from the First Presidency. The whole operation was done in such a clandestine fashion that two Mormon scholars perjured themselves when we questioned them (see our book *The Tanners on Trial* for photographic evidence concerning the false testimony).

The man who brought the lawsuit originally testified that he received the Clayton extracts from the Church Archivist, Donald Schmidt and seemed to be implying that the church had special manuscript rights on the Clayton diaries which had been transferred to him. The whole thing broke down, however, when we discovered that the extracts were really obtained from another historian whose identity had been carefully covered up. Furthermore, it became obvious that the church had no copyrightable interest in the diaries anyway. These rights could only be transferred in writing by William Clayton or his heirs. The church had nothing to show it had any manuscript rights, and when we asked the Church Archivist to tell us if the church claimed a copyright on the diaries, the church's lawyer would not let him answer the question. Our victory in this suit will probably open the way for the publication of many other important documents by people who have previously been intimidated by the church's claim of special manuscript rights.

Although the lawsuit was really a strain on me, I have no bad feelings with regard to the plaintiff, his lawyer or the Judge. I just thank God that it is all over. As the Apostle Paul once said:

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed to us.

One of the major testings of my life had no relationship whatever with our work on Mormonism. Through it I learned a great deal about both the power of evil and the way we can counter it through prayer. Sometime during 1978 I began to feel somewhat dry in my Christian life and concluded that God was moving

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upon me to step out to perform some additional service. I didn't know exactly what it was he was calling me to, but I was praying about the matter. Then one day my car broke down and I was forced to walk down main street. I was so deeply involved in thought as I was walking along that I didn't even notice that I was passing by a car lot which was run by the Kramers, a family who had been responsible for a great deal of Christian work in Salt Lake City. Suddenly I was startled by a voice calling my name. I turned around and saw Don Kramer, a Christian friend I respected very much who had been very helpful to me in the past. He introduced me to a man who was with him. That man turned out to be the director of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake. We only talked for a few minutes, but after it was over, I began to get a strong feeling that God wanted me to donate some time to the Mission. Inside I rebelled because I had an aversion to working with people on skid row. I finally told the Lord that I would, but I didn't take any positive step to seal the decision. Some time passed and although I thought a lot about it, I always found a reason why I was too busy to make contact with the Mission. Then one day it seemed like God was telling me either get in touch with the Mission or you never will. Finally, with great reluctance, I yielded to the Lord's will. I called up and said I would be willing to do dishes or whatever they would have me do. The offer was accepted and I began working a couple of hours a day in the kitchen. At that time the Mission was in a sad state. Conditions were so unbelievably bad in the kitchen that it made me feel slightly sick. Since that time things have really changed and I really enjoy the meals prepared at the Mission.

At that time the mission was on 2nd South in the midst of the red light district. It was composed of a number of old buildings which were very deteriorated and filled with mice. The buildings were considered such a fire trap that they were finally closed down by the fire department. The move to close the mission down, however, turned out for good because by that time the mission had just enough money to acquire a good building between 4th and 5th South on 400 West.

Besides the bad conditions of the kitchen and buildings at the old mission, one thing that bothered me very much was the potential for violence. I knew I was working with many men who had been in prison and that some had killed other people for one reason or another. Although those who stay at the mission are asked to turn in their weapons, one never knows when someone may be carrying a knife or a gun. Because

of this, any altercation can become very dangerous. Drugs and alcohol can often bring suppressed anger out into the open. When tempers flare at a mission, which they often do, almost anything can happen. I have always hated violence. Even verbal arguments bother me a great deal. Consequently, I had to pray that the potential for violence did not drive me away. Not too long after I started going to the mission I was asked to take charge of the mailing list for the monthly newsletter. In addition I was asked to become a member of the Board of Directors.

One day I was left alone in the office rooms with a staff member who was tending the front office. Someone came in the front door and was asking some questions which seemed to agitate the man I was working with. The discussion finally got so heated that I rushed into the front office. I arrived just in time to see the staff member grasp a good sized rock which was used as a paper weight from off the desk and charge toward the other man. I felt responsible that a staff member was about to attack the man and somehow got the courage to step in between them. I arrived just in time and as I made contact with the man with the rock in his hand he seemed to melt like butter. He became as gentle as a little child and began to apologize for his anger. Since he was larger than I was and completely out of control I was amazed at the sudden change. He later told me that he planned to use the rock to knock the man through the large glass window in the front office. I felt very fortunate when I later learned that he had broken someone's arm in a fit of anger.

Another time a distress call came from the contact office which was in another building. I knew that one of our staff men was in trouble and that my help was needed. I thought that someone was probably trying to kill him and I was scared to death. I found the staff man with a club in his hand and another man grasping a robber hose. They had already been battling and the one man had previously been armed with a section of tailpipe from off a car. At the time I arrived they were threatening each other and it appeared they might go to blows again. I came up to the man with the club and gently put my hand on his arm. This worked rather well and I was able to get him calmed down enough to withdraw from the fray. At the same time someone was getting the other man under control. After his antagonist departed, the staff man was still very angry. He began to pound the desk and the walls with his fists and to yell at me concerning how foolish I and other Christians

were to believe in non-violence. In a state of great excitement he showed me a collection of mug shots he had of criminals who might be in the area. He pointed out that these men were armed and very dangerous, and that in his position in the contact office he was the one who would see them first. I had to admit that his job was dangerous and we later tried to work out some safeguards for him. The physical violence apparently erupted during a verbal argument when he saw the other man reach suddenly for his pocket. He believed he was trying to draw a knife and struck him to the floor. The police were unable to find any evidence that the other man had a knife, so it is possible that the staff man had overreacted because of fear. In any case, the Lord gave me such a peace during the time the man was yelling at me, that I was able to answer him in a very calm and concerned way. I just pray that the Lord will continue to give me that type of composure under all circumstances. As it says in Galatians 5:22-24:

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

On still another occasion a man was firing a gun at the building. I immediately called the police and within just a few minutes the police were there with rifles and were closing in on the area. It was a terrifying thought to think that within a few seconds someone might be dead because of the phone call I felt compelled to make. Fortunately, no more shots were fired and the man apparently escaped around the back of the building.

Regardless of these experiences and the conditions at the old Rescue Mission, I began to develop a real love for the work and the men we were working with. I found there are some very good people out on the street who have been trapped by various misfortunes in their lives. Some have mental problems and are not really able to function on a regular job. Others have brilliant minds and can do very well on a job, but they have a problem with alcohol, drugs, restlessness or temper. I was absolutely amazed at the amount of talent among the transient population. Many of these men are very friendly and desire to help other people. At one time the men at the mission supported two needy children in other countries. I was surprised at the amount of money these men, who had so little, would donate. I thought of the story in the Bible about the woman who gave a very

small amount into the treasury, and yet Jesus said that she had given more than anyone because she had given the money she had to live on. The others had merely given what was over and above.

As I developed a love for the men, I found that this created another problem I had not anticipated. After a person has invested a lot of time and effort trying to help an individual, it can come as a great shock if that person falls back into the world. In mission work this happens very often because the people we work with are usually used to running from their problems and when things get rough they will often leave in the middle of the night or when no one is observing them. The first experience I had with this was right after I came to the Mission. One night the staff manager left with the small amount of money he was in charge of and was never seen again. I became very good friends with the new staff manager. He claimed to be a Christian and was very upset with the man who was formerly in his position. He told me that he could not understand how anyone could steal God's money in the way his predecessor had done. Some time passed by, and then one day I came to the mission and found that the money had disappeared again and the new staff manager was missing. I was completely devastated. I simply could not believe it, and even went so far as to think there was a possibility that someone got rid of him and ran off with the money. That I would fall back on such a theory shows how hard it was for me to accept the reality of what had happened. Usually, of course, the men who leave suddenly do not take any money. Nevertheless, it is hard to see them go in this way, and it often discourages me and I wonder what they are doing with their lives. I feel that people who are in full-time rescue mission work suffer a great deal with this problem and really need a lot of prayer and encouragement from those on the outside. This problem still bothers me today, but I have learned to try to leave the men in God's hands and to realize that just because a man leaves the mission in this way doesn't necessarily mean that it is the end of the line. Some have returned after being absent for years. One man recently traveled clear from Florida to get back on the mission's spiritual training program.

The change that Christ can make in a person's life is truly phenomenal. We had a man by the name of George with us for some time. We became friends and he told me of his past life. He said he hated people and at one time had strangled an old lady to death just for the fun of it. He spent years in confinement and finally



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was released and came to the mission seeking help. In a letter he wrote to the director after he left, he said that the day he came to the mission he was thinking of killing himself if he did not find help there. Fortunately, he was taken on staff and became a Christian. The change in his life was truly remarkable. He was a large man and as strong as an ox, and often had the unpleasant task of removing unruly people from the mission. As I was leaving the building one day I noticed that George had just escorted a man out who was intoxicated and very belligerent. He was cursing George and challenging him in every possible way to fight. Instead of accepting the challenge, George just walked quietly away. After observing this, I thought how fortunate the man was that George had become a Christian, for he would not have had the slightest chance against him. He would have been almost as helpless as the old woman if George had wanted to kill him.

One of the best experiences of my life happened when I met a man by the name of Herb Davis at the mission. He came into our prayer meeting and desired prayer for cancer of the lung. He had previously had one lung removed and had just received word from the doctor that it had spread to his other lung. The Lord did not choose to remove the cancer, but a few days later he did something far better for Herb; He removed the stony heart that he had and gave him a heart of flesh. In other words, Herb became a Christian. He had been an alcoholic most of his life, but God gave him deliverance from the bottle. We continued to pray for him but his body became weaker and weaker. Nevertheless, Herb wanted to serve others and he continued to work even though he could hardly stand up. Finally, he could no longer take care of himself and he was placed in a rest home where he could get medical attention. A number of the men at the mission had become good friends with him and decided to visit him. Because I was not used to being around people who were dying, I had a difficult time forcing myself to go, but I felt that I should help encourage him at this critical time in his life. When we arrived Herb was extremely happy to see us, and was thrilled to get a few items from the mission which he needed. Although he was dying, it was obvious that Christ was living within him. Even though he had a great deal of pain, he had a joy that was sustaining him through the trial. He had no earthly possessions or family and no future in this life, but he had happiness and eternal life springing up from within him. In John 4:13-14 we read:

Jesus answered and said to her, whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never be thirsty again, but the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

In John 6:27, Jesus said:

Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life which the son of man will give you, for on him has God the Father set his seal.

In Herb's hour of greatest need he found his strength in the living God. In John 6:35 we find the following:

And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.

We prayed with Herb and he just thanked God for the mission and for the wonderful salvation he had found in Christ. When we finally left him, I thought that it was ironic that I had mustered up all my strength to come and encourage Herb, but as it turned out he had encouraged me. The visit worked out so well that we decided to bring the prayer meeting up to the rest home once a week. Herb continued to lose weight and went down to under a hundred pounds. While his emaciated body grew weaker all the time, he still radiated the joy of the Lord when we visited him. He said that the prayer meeting was the highlight of his week. The last time that we visited him he was almost too weak to pray out loud, but he told us that he was constantly praying to Jesus in his heart. Herb died the day we were to make our next visit. While I was sad that I would no longer see him, my heart was full of joy because I knew that he had received the ultimate healing—an eternal place in the Kingdom of God. The brief period in which I knew Herb Davis was an uplifting experience in my Christian life. The fact that he had so little in life and knew that he was going to die a painful death and yet had such rejoicing in his heart was truly a source of inspiration to me and many others. Jesus once said:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy and thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Herb truly had his treasures stored up in heaven and was ready to go to his inheritance.

## *Jerald Tanner's Testimony*

Earlier I spoke of a major testing in my life. This occurred in 1981 when it seemed that Satan himself endeavored to completely destroy the Rescue Mission. At the time I was still serving on the Board of Directors. One day the Director of the mission introduced me to a man whom he had hired to direct public relations. Since it requires a great deal of money to run a mission and we always seemed to be short on funds, this appeared to be a good idea. I thought at first I was being introduced to a man the director had previously told me about who had experience in fund raising with the Salvation Army. Unfortunately, this did not turn out to be the case. This man had come in with a bogus resume saying he felt God had directed him to help the mission. The resume was not really checked out at the time, but later it was discovered that his claim to have been in the radiology department at a local hospital was untrue. It was actually his ex-wife who worked there. At any rate, after he came to work for us, we were impressed with his zeal for the work. Nevertheless, the financial condition of the Mission did not really seem to improve. The majority of the Board of Directors finally decided that we needed a new director to turn things around. At this time I learned that the public relations man had his eyes on the director's job. Before the director was actually removed, an investigation was made into the activities of the PR man. A number of things were discovered. For instance, we had paid his airfare from Salt Lake City to Denver to obtain a grant from the Gates Rubber Company. When we talked to the company officials, they claimed that they had never heard of him and no grant would be coming. It became obvious that we had been deceived and that he really went to Denver for other reasons. He also told us that he contacted St. Regis Paper Co. in New York and that they were sending a check for \$5,000 to the mission. Officials from the company said they were not planning on sending us any money and they had never heard of our PR man. We learned also that he had talked a widow in Salt Lake City into making out a check to him for \$1,000 so that he could buy some parts from a wrecked airplane and resell them for a great deal more than he had paid. The woman was to receive her money back and the mission was to receive all the profits. What happened, of course, was that neither the woman nor the mission received any money. Further investigation revealed that he was wanted for the theft of a car from a car lot in Ogden, and the same night he had stolen the car, another man's house was robbed. This man had always suspected that the individual who stole

the car also robbed his house. An attempt was made to arrest the mission PR man for the car theft, but the owner of the car lot had moved out of state and could not be located. A detective in Ogden told me that they had a very good case against the man, but with no one to press charges, prosecution was impossible. This man had previously served time in prison, and it was obvious to me that he was still a con man.

With the financial condition of the mission growing worse all the time and other serious problems developing, I could see that it was very likely that the director would be forced to leave and that the PR man might in some way convince the Board of Directors to hire him as director of the mission. I strongly advised that the director fire the PR man immediately before he could do any more damage to the mission. He agreed and terminated the man on July 17, 1981. On July 20, the director of the mission was himself removed by the Board of Directors. The Board, however, did not accept the firing of the PR man, but agreed to investigate the matter. The President of the Board personally assured me that an investigation would be made and that if even one of the charges made against the man proved true, he would be terminated for good. Since I believed the men I worked with on the Board were good Christian gentlemen, I was certain that they would be persuaded by the evidence and that we could go on peacefully with the work of the mission. I was later to learn that I had really underestimated the power of the individual I was dealing with. It seemed as if he had some type of supernatural help to extricate himself from almost any type of situation. He apparently told the President of the Board that the charge of car theft was in reality a check charge for which he had already served time in prison. I later obtained absolute proof that it was a felony charge for the theft of a Pontiac and that it was filed in the Ogden City Police records.

At the time the Board met to consider the fate of the PR man, I did not have the hard evidence on that matter. In a written response to my accusations which was prepared for the Board, this man threatened me with a lawsuit if I continued to state the accusations against him. With regard to both the St. Regis Paper Co. and the Gates Rubber Co. he failed to provide any names of people he contacted at these companies, and he did admit that "The Gates Rubber Co. matter was not handled in the most correct way, nor was it presented to the Board in the most honest totally forthright way."

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He acknowledged he had received \$1,000 from the widow, but provided no evidence that he had used it to buy airplane parts. He claimed that even though the note was 2 months over due he was intending to pay the money back soon. This, of course, he never did.

I arrived at the Board meeting with confidence that when the other members of the Board received all the facts, they would know that we were dealing with a criminal who must be dismissed. Instead, I found myself faced with a group of men who felt that I was being vindictive against the man. They acknowledged that he had made some mistakes but felt that we should be forgiving. My position was that it was more than just mistakes. The actions were clearly those of a con-man. One of the Board members did acknowledge that if he had done the same things on his job in the secular world, he would be fired. Nevertheless, when it came time for a vote, all of the members of the Board with the exception of myself voted to retain him. It was evident that they had been sold a bill of goods by this smooth talking PR man. I was absolutely shocked by the vote. I had previously been assured that if even one of the charges against the man proved to be true, he would be immediately dismissed. As far as I could determine, he did not clear himself of any of the charges. I told the Board that I could not possibly continue as a member of the Board if a criminal was allowed to remain in a position where he solicited contributions and handled the mission's money. I was then accused of being cowardly and trying to jump ship when the mission was in bad financial condition. I could see that it was futile to try to debate the matter any more. I asked if it was possible to still continue working at the mission as just a volunteer, and although one board member seemed to be opposed, I was allowed that privilege. I shook hands with all the board members and left the meeting totally defeated. It seemed that everything that I had been working on at the mission for the past three years was about to be totally destroyed. The man who was serving as mission chaplain at the time had come to work for us because I had asked him to. He was one of the most dedicated Christians I had ever met and had a great love for the people on the street. I had also encouraged my own daughter, April, into coming on staff. She was to direct the women's work which we were planning on establishing. She had raised all her own support and her services were free to the mission. We felt that we had some good Christians on staff and could build a real family atmosphere at the mission that would bring many to put their trust in Christ.

It was with great sorrow that I went to pick up my daughter the night of the Board's decision. I tried to dry up my tears, but I found it almost impossible to tell her what had happened. I was having a hard enough time myself trying to understand why God let this happen to us, and was in no condition to try to explain it to my daughter. She, of course, was crushed when I told her the bad news.

Things turned from bad to worse. The President of the Board had personally assured me that there was no way that the PR man would become director of the mission. Nevertheless, within a few weeks I was greeted with the terrible news that this man had now become the new director. I was so shocked I hardly knew what to do. I felt that it was impossible for me to continue my volunteer work at the mission under these conditions, and in a letter dated August 26, 1981, I told the Board the following: "It would be impossible for me to work on a newsletter which promoted a man as director whom I cannot trust."

My daughter also resigned her position and a good portion of the staff left. Still, even after all this, I continued to support the morning prayer meeting at the mission. I came down to the mission every day but Sunday. This was a very tense time. I knew that the new director hated both me and the prayer meeting. He had, in fact, told the chaplain that it was a waste of time and had encouraged him to dispense with it. Whenever I got near the mission I had a fear of the new director. It seemed to me as if he had been specifically sent by some evil power to try to completely remove Christianity from the mission. Although he had never threatened me physically, I also feared his strength. He was a large man, over 200 pounds, and was very muscular. I knew that he was a very angry man inside and I prayed for God's protection. One morning as we were holding prayer meeting we heard a loud verbal fight breaking out in the hall. We disbanded the meeting and ran out into the hall to see who was causing the disturbance. There we found the new director and a carpenter threatening each other with physical violence. The director was apparently upset by the workmanship on a door. The carpenter was much smaller than the director but had a hammer in his hand. This did not deter the director in any way, and just as they were on the verge of going to blows, the chaplain stepped between them and the director stomped off up the stairs in a very defiant manner. He later fired the chaplain and made the outlandish claim that he was mistreating the men. I had never seen the chaplain mistreat anyone in all the

time I had known him. In fact, he would sometimes take money out of his own pocket to provide hotel rooms for those who couldn't get into the mission. The chaplain's Christian life undoubtedly put the new director under so much conviction that he felt he had to remove him. Although I knew that the director was trying to get rid of the chaplain, I encouraged him to stay as long as possible to keep some Christian influence in the mission.

At the same time that the director was undermining the chaplain in the eyes of the Board, he was also working behind the scenes to have me completely removed from the mission premises. He told the Board members that I was stirring up dissension among the staff by criticizing the decisions of the Board. This charge was completely untrue. I was not causing any trouble at all. In fact, the only contact I then had with the staff was at the prayer meetings and both the chaplain and myself made it a point not to involve these men in controversy. I knew that there was nothing that the men could do to improve the situation, and they certainly had enough trouble with their own problems. Our prayer meetings were strictly for prayer and giving the men encouragement.

One day the Board was meeting, and we were praying for them in another room during their meeting. I later found out that as we were praying for them, they were making a decision to completely remove me from the mission. The next morning (October 1, 1981) I was met by a member of the staff at the front door of the mission. He was about 6 foot 4 inches tall and must have weighed around 275 pounds. He claimed, in fact, that he had been a professional football player and I felt that he was probably telling the truth. In any case, he informed me that I was no longer welcome on the premises. You can imagine my surprise. After volunteering my services for almost 3 years to build up the mission and then to find myself cast out was one of the saddest experiences I ever had in my Christian life. I knew that the only reason I was barred was because the director had lied about me to the Board. My daughter was also forbidden to enter the building even for prayer and the new director finally succeeded in getting the prayer meetings canceled altogether.

The story does not end here, however. The new director became dissatisfied with the Board of Directors. Although I was not there to actually witness what happened, he apparently found out that the mission was organized in a rather unique way. Although the Board of Directors outwardly ran the mission, there

was actually a group of 3 men who originally set the mission up. Although these men were at that time in the background, they really had all legal power over the mission. The new director, therefore, seems to have set out to undermine the Board in the eyes of these men. They were finally so upset that they moved in and suddenly overthrew the Board of Directors. As I understand it, the police were even called to remove a member of the Board of Directors from the building. There was talk of legal action, but the Board apparently came to realize that this was the way the mission was incorporated and there was nothing they could do about it. Since that time, the mission rules have been rewritten so that the Board of Directors is the final authority.

The man who was serving as President of the Board at the time of the Board's downfall told me that he had gradually come to realize that the new director was indeed a con-man, but by then it was too late to do anything about it. The mission director now had an entirely new set of men over him and he was able to keep them in the dark for some time.

I presented the information concerning the director to the three men who had taken over control of the mission and felt that I had done about as much as I could possibly do. I had even talked to a detective concerning the widow who was defrauded of \$1,000. He indicated that it appeared to be a clear case of fraud, and the woman could press charges. I told him, however, that this would be impossible. She knew she had been swindled, but had no desire to pursue any kind of legal action. Since I was no longer on the Board of Directors, there was nothing I could legally do to stop the man. At that time I was seriously tempted to publicly expose the whole thing to the news media. I really felt that I could win the battle, but then the thought struck me that it could entirely destroy the mission because of its serious financial condition. I thought about the people who would be forced out into the street if the mission folded. Although my pride was badly wounded and I really wanted to retaliate, I came to the conclusion that I would have to leave it to God to work things out.

I continued to seek the Lord about the matter and finally after a year had passed I was reading the book of John one morning. I believe that I was reading the 14th chapter, verses 13-14:

And whatever you may ask in my name this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

## *Jerald Tanner's Testimony*

After reading the verses, I told the Lord that it had been a year since I had first asked him to deliver the mission and nothing seemed to be happening. To my surprise, a little later that same morning I received a phone call from a man who did the printing for the mission. He was inquiring as to whether I could come down to the mission and help get the newsletter mailed out. I wondered how this could be since I was banned from the premises. He explained that the director had been dismissed and that a new director from California would be taking over soon. I said that I would be willing to help. I soon learned, however, that I had a real fear of returning. Just to go near the building where I had been hurt so deeply caused a flood of bad memories to return. I prayed, therefore, that if the Lord wanted me to return, He would give me special encouragement to face the situation. When I finally got the courage to return, I was greeted with an exceptionally warm welcome and the encouraging words that were given to me started the healing process. Since that time the Mission has been under good leadership, and all the old wounds have been healed. We have a daily time of prayer and I often thank God for the privilege of being there.

Sometime after I came back, a policeman came looking for the PR man who had become director and caused so many problems. He said that the man was wanted in two states. It has recently been reported that he is serving a prison term in a neighboring state.

The reader may wonder why the Lord did not answer our prayers at the first. I really do not know all the answers, but I feel that this severe test of my faith was allowed for a purpose. In 1 Peter 1:6-8 we find this:

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while there may be grief in various trials. That the proving of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes, though by fire it is tested, may be found to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Whom not having seen you love, though now not beholding him, but believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

In chapter 4, verses 12-13, Peter commented:

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes on you to test you as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ. That also in the revelation of His glory you may be extremely joyful.

Although I still struggle with the old nature, I feel that the trial I went through taught me a great deal concerning self control. During the affair some of the Board members became very angry with me. If it had not been for the Lord's help, I probably would have responded in the same way. I could see, however, that they were being misled by the PR man into believing that I was causing division among the staff. When I met in prayer with the staff, the Board of Directors felt that I was actually sowing discord so that the men would defy their decisions. It seemed like everything I did was misinterpreted. Therefore, I had to step back and view the matter from the perspective of the Board members. I felt that even though they were deceived, they honestly believed what they were doing was right and that they were trying to save the mission. Under these circumstances, and with the false information they were getting, it is no wonder that they were upset with me. Instead of responding back with anger, the Lord wanted me to treat them with kindness. He helped me to do this, and today I count all of these men as my friends. It seems that all of us are misunderstood in our Christian lives at one time or another, yet the Lord commands us to go on loving one another and to strive for peaceful solutions. I have certainly made plenty of mistakes in my own Christian life, and therefore I have no right to condemn others. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus asked this question:

And why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, allow me to remove the speck out of your eye, and behold you have a log in your own eye? Hypocrite, first remove the log from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

The longer I am a Christian the more convinced I am that these words are the key to unity. It is very easy to point our fingers at someone else, but the Lord wants us to look at ourselves before we try to straighten others out. As the Apostle Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 11:28: "But let a man examine himself . . ." While it may be true that people we deal with may sometimes be unreasonable and abusive, we still must remember that Romans 12:18 admonishes: "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peacefully with all men."

One of the most important lessons I learned through this experience is that we are up against a very powerful and clever enemy and that we do not have the slightest chance of winning unless we depend wholly upon God's strength and wisdom. As the Apostle Paul expressed it:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the trickery of the Devil. For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against world rulers of this present darkness, against spiritual wickedness in the heavens. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

There was absolutely nothing I could do in my own strength to reverse the situation. All of my human wisdom was of no help when it came to putting down the impostor. I believe, of course, that I had a moral obligation to withstand the evil, but I did not have the power in myself to prevail. In His infinite wisdom, God used his own methods to bring down the transgressor. As it says in the 37th Psalm, verses 1-2:

Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass. And wither as the green herb.

God has his own timetable to answer our prayers. Sometimes the wicked seem to prevail for a season, but in the end the righteous will triumph. In verses 9-11 of the 37th Psalm, David wrote:

For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, They shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look diligently for his place, But it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

With regard to the man who caused all the trouble, the Lord has given me the power to forgive him. I know that he has already suffered a great deal for his sins. I have no desire to see him suffer the consequences of his acts and would be happy to see him in the family of God.

I now feel that my experience with this man and other con-men at the mission prepared me for one of the most puzzling episodes of my life—that is, my confrontation with the notorious White Salamander of Mormonism.

It all began in 1980 when the Mormon Church announced that one of its members, Mark Hofmann, had found a sheet of paper which purported to be Joseph Smith's own copy of the characters from the golden plates which he translated as the Book of Mormon.

Church scholars and leaders accepted it as authentic and I had no reason to question its validity. The church gave Mr. Hofmann about \$20,000 worth of items from its archives in exchange for the transcript. A year later Mark Hofmann came up with another sensational find—a document in which Joseph Smith designated his son as his successor. The church again gave Mr. Hofmann about \$20,000 worth of trade items for this document. All scholars, Mormon and non-Mormon, accepted the document as genuine.

I first became acquainted with Mark Hofmann in 1980 after he discovered the purported transcript of the Book of Mormon characters. Mr. Hofmann came to our store and discussed the discovery. Although he had served as a Mormon missionary in England, it soon became evident that he did not fully trust the Mormon leaders. He said, in fact, that he was suspicious that the church might be bugging his phone. He did not claim, however, to have any real evidence about the matter.

In the years that followed our first visit, Mr. Hofmann would occasionally visit our bookstore and tell of the remarkable discoveries that he was making. In the later part of November 1983 I first heard that Mark Hofmann had a letter which was supposed to have been written by Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris. It was dated October 23, 1830, and was addressed to W. W. Phelps. When I learned of the contents of the letter, I realized that it could deal a devastating blow to the Mormon Church. Sandra and I had previously written a book entitled, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*. In this book we presented strong evidence that Joseph Smith was involved in money-digging and magic. Martin Harris' letter seemed to provide new and exciting evidence which supported our thesis. This letter is known as the Salamander letter because Martin Harris was supposed to have written that Joseph Smith claimed when he went to get the gold plates for the Book of Mormon, a "white salamander" in the bottom of the hole where the plates were buried "transfigured himself into a "spirit" and struck him 3 times.

Fortunately, I was able to obtain some revealing extracts from the letter and was preparing to print them in the March 1984 issue of the *Messenger*. I was very excited that we at Utah Lighthouse Ministry would be the first to break this important story to the world. It was while I was in the midst of compiling evidence to support the authenticity of the Salamander letter, that I made a discovery that shook me to the very core. I found that the account of the transformation of the white salamander into the spirit was remarkably similar to a statement

E. D. Howe published in *Mormonism Unveiled*. This book, written four years after the date which appears in the Harris letter, told of a toad “which immediately transformed itself into a spirit” and struck Joseph Smith. Even more disconcerting, however, was the fact that other remarkable parallels to the Salamander letter were found just two or three pages from the account of the transformation of the toad into a spirit (see *Mormonism Unveiled*, pages 273, 275 and 276).

Some years before I had encountered similar evidence of plagiarism in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*. The Mormon Church leaders had always proclaimed that this History was actually written by Joseph Smith himself. My research, however, led me to the conclusion that the largest portion of it had been compiled after his death. Although it is true that Joseph Smith's diaries and letters were used, I found that later Mormon historians had also taken large portions of newspapers and diaries written by other people and changed them to the first person so that readers would believe that they were authored by Joseph Smith himself. In agreement with my conclusions, Mormon scholars later admitted that over 60% of the *History* was compiled after Smith's death (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 127-135).

In any case, parallels I had discovered between the Salamander letter and *Mormonism Unveiled* reminded me very much of the work I had done on Joseph Smith's *History*. Although what I discovered about the Salamander letter was not conclusive proof that it was a forgery, it was certainly suspicious. It seemed, in fact, to throw a real monkey wrench into all my plans concerning the publication of the letter. Since I knew that it was very unlikely that anyone else would spot these parallels and realize their significance, there was some temptation to keep the matter to myself. I knew, however, that God knew what I had seen, and I began to feel that He had shown me these unpleasant facts to warn me against endorsing the letter. Furthermore, I knew that I would never be satisfied if my case against Mormonism was based on fraudulent material. It was clear, therefore, that there was only one course of action which I could follow—that is, print the whole truth in the *Messenger*. In the March 1984 issue, therefore, we raised the question of forgery by printing the title, “Is It Authentic?” Under this title we wrote:

At the outset we should state that we have some reservations concerning the authenticity of the letter, and at the present time we are not prepared to say that it was actually penned by Martin Harris. The serious implications of this whole matter, however, cry out for discussion. If the letter is authentic, it is one of the greatest evidences against the divine origin of the Book of Mormon. If, on the other hand, it is a forgery, it needs to be exposed as such so that millions of people will not be misled. We will give the reasons for our skepticism as we proceed with this article.

As soon as I noticed that there were problems with the Salamander letter, I began to realize the serious effect this could have on the study of Mormon history. Prior to Mark Hofmann's appearance on the scene, the documents we had used in building our case against Mormonism seemed to have a good pedigree. For instance, the Joseph Smith Papyri were rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1967. Although officials at the museum did not acquire the papyri until 1947, they had been aware of the collection since 1918. The papyri could, in fact, be traced back to the Smith family. The documents which proved that Joseph Smith was tried as a “Glass Looker” in 1826 could be traced back to a jail in Norwich, N.Y. Two men, in fact, signed affidavits that they were discovered in the basement of the jail. Joseph Smith's “Strange Account” of the First Vision, as well as his diaries, could be traced directly to the Church Historical Department where they had been preserved.

When Mark Hofmann came on the scene everything seemed to change. Hofmann was vague about where his finds were coming from, and no one seemed to think of questioning his veracity. The *Deseret News* for October 27, 1985, said the Hofmann's “reputation regarding documents was impeccable, and his friends in the historical circle defended it.” It was only after I began to have doubts about the Salamander letter, that I realized that Hofmann was not providing pedigrees for his discoveries. With regard to the Joseph Smith III Blessing, Hofmann only said that it came from a descendant of Thomas Bullock. When we pressed Hofmann to reveal which descendant (there must be hundreds), he refused to be of any help. Lucy Mack Smith's 1829 letter, Joseph Smith's 1825 letter and Martin Harris' 1873 letter all seemed to have no pedigree. In the case of the Salamander letter, I did learn that Hofmann claimed that it came from a man by

the name of Lyn Jacobs. I also found out that Hofmann and Jacobs were working together in the document business. Since the documents were all coming from these two men, it was necessary to focus in upon their backgrounds.

Although the money involved in the sale of Mormon documents would provide a sufficient motive for forgery, I began to wonder if there might be some sort of plan or even conspiracy to control the direction of Mormon history by this method. Sandra and I began an investigation concerning the authenticity of the documents Mark Hofmann was selling the Mormon church and other collectors. In this inquiry we obtained information from Washington, D.C. and ten different states. We even interviewed a convicted murderer at the Utah State Prison.

By August 1984 I was convinced that the evidence against the Salamander letter cast a real shadow of doubt on all the important discoveries Mark Hofmann had made since 1980. On August 22, 1984, I printed the first part of the pamphlet, *The Money-Digging Letters*. In this publication I made it clear that all of Mark Hofmann's important discoveries since 1980 were under investigation. I also indicated that the more we investigated the Salamander letter, the more questions we had about its authenticity. In this publication I demonstrated that the contents of the letter were out of character for Martin Harris. In addition I called upon Mark Hofmann to reveal the pedigree of the Salamander letter and other documents he claimed he had discovered.

The day following the publication of *The Money-Digging Letters* (August 23, 1984), Mark Hofmann came to our home and had a long talk with Sandra. He seemed very distressed and hurt that we, of all people, would question his discoveries. He had expected opposition might come from those in the church, but he was amazed that Utah Lighthouse Ministry had taken a position which was critical of him. Mr. Hofmann tried to explain that he could not reveal the source of the Salamander letter because he had sold it to Steven Christensen. With regard to the Joseph Smith III Blessing, Hofmann indicated that he had given the Mormon Church an affidavit which stated where he had obtained it. He could not reveal the source to the public, however, because the member of the Bullock family from whom he had purchased the document also had important papers concerning Brigham Young's finances that would be embarrassing to the church.

Sandra felt that Mark Hofmann was almost to the point of tears as he pled his case as to why we should trust him. Sandra later told me what Hofmann had said, but his explanations did not satisfy me.

On August 25, 1984, the *Los Angeles Times* reported concerning our suggestion that the Salamander letter was a forgery, and on September 1, 1984, the *Deseret News* said that "Jerald and Sandra Tanner suspect the document is a forgery . . ."

To my dismay, on April 28, 1985, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that the noted document examiner Kenneth Rendell proclaimed that the Salamander letter was authentic. Even the Church Section of the Mormon-owned *Deseret News* (April 28th) published an article entitled: "1830 Harris letter authenticated." At a meeting of the Mormon History Association, church scholars Dean Jessee and Ronald Walker told of their research which confirmed the authenticity of the letter. The most noted Mormon scholars seemed to completely accept the letter's authenticity.

When the Mormon Church published the Salamander letter it was stated that Mark Hofmann's friend Lyn Jacobs originally discovered it in New York. After some trouble I was able to reach Jacobs on the telephone and asked him where he obtained the Salamander letter. He replied that he could not tell me. I responded, "What are you trying to hide?" While Mr. Jacobs was polite, he still refused to give me any information about the letter.

On August 24, 1985, Sandra and I had the very rare opportunity to speak with both Mark Hofmann and Lyn Jacobs at the Sunstone Theological Symposium. I asked Mr. Hofmann some very pointed questions that related to the Salamander letter. The answers he gave did not satisfy me, and I felt that Hofmann knew that I did not believe what he was saying. At one point he looked at me with a sad and fearful expression on his face. He seemed to be deeply troubled. It was almost as if he were trying to say, "Please believe what I am telling you." Unfortunately, I could not believe his answers. They did not square with the facts that I already knew. At the time of this confrontation, Hofmann and Jacobs both continued to maintain that Jacobs had discovered the Salamander letter. Mr. Jacobs was later to testify in court that he fabricated this story. He had actually obtained the letter from Mr. Hofmann.

During the year 1985, I found myself feeling almost entirely alone. As I have already noted, the results of physical tests had been released which indicated that the Salamander letter was authentic. Moreover, the Mormon



History Association and almost all the top Mormon scholars endorsed the letter, and even the church itself had published it and indicated that it had been "authenticated." Besides all this, strong psychological pressures were being exerted by both Mormons and anti-Mormons to bring Sandra and I into conformity with the experts. We were told that when the research on the letter came out we would really have egg on our faces. The newspapers were also carrying stories concerning how the long-lost Oliver Cowdery history might provide support for the Salamander letter.

Although the scholars accepted the Salamander letter as genuine and felt that I was being unscientific, to me the letter just did not have the ring of truth. Even though it supported my views on Joseph Smith's participation in magic and money-digging, to me it sounded too tinny and contrived to accept as genuine. I had to ask myself this question: If the Mormons brought out a letter which was supposed to have been written in 1830 which said that Joseph Smith saw both the Father and the Son in 1820, and this letter had strong parallels to sources printed at a later date and also contained elements which seemed foreign to the purported author, would I keep silent about the matter? The answer, of course, is no. I would proclaim these findings to the world.

Nevertheless, the thought haunted me that if I was wrong about the Salamander letter, then I could be wrong about some of the most important work I had done on Mormonism. I prayed many times to the Lord to know whether the letter was authentic. Although I had deeply committed myself to the forgery theory, I told the Lord that I would be willing to swallow my pride and publicly apologize to Mark Hofmann and the Mormon scholars if He would show me some good evidence that the letter was truly authentic. The answer I received was the same as when I had sincerely prayed that God would show me some evidence of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon—that is, a total silence. I, therefore, had to rely on the circumstantial evidence I had uncovered in my investigation. In my opinion the evidence against the letter was very strong, but still it was not the hard evidence required to convince historians or the police. In the pamphlet, *Mr. Boren and the White Salamander*, I told of my frustration: I indicated that I had been handicapped by secrecy and went on to say that if I had investigative power like the FBI or could subpoena documents, I could force Mark Hofmann or Lyn Jacobs to reveal where the Salamander letter came from.

By the summer of 1985 I felt that I had almost exhausted all my human resources. Although I had prayed about the matter from the beginning, I began to fervently seek God's help. Then a remarkable thing happened. A young man at the mission felt the burden of prayer and began to pray with me. He became extremely interested in my problem with the documents and prayed earnestly that God would just open up the way so that the truth about the matter would be revealed. In my wildest imagination I would never have thought that an investigation that would lead to the truth concerning Mark Hofmann's documents would be set into motion by the explosion of three bombs. Although I do not believe that God planned the bombings (they undoubtedly came from the wicked heart of man), the result as far as the documents were concerned seemed to me to be a real answer to prayer.

As I went to pick up my mail at the downtown post office in Salt Lake City on October 15, 1985, I noticed that the east side of Main Street was blocked off by the police. Later I was to learn that a murder had been committed at the Judge Building—less than a block from where I obtained my mail. Steven F. Christensen, a Mormon bishop had picked up a box in front of his office which turned out to be a "booby-trapped shrapnel bomb." The amount of gun powder used in the pipe bomb together with the nails which were taped around the outside of the pipe insured that Christensen would not survive the blast.

It soon became apparent that the victim was the same man who bought the notorious "White Salamander Letter." Later that morning another package exploded, killing Kathleen Sheets. This package was addressed to her husband J. Gary Sheets who was also a bishop in the Mormon Church. Mr. Sheets had helped fund research that authenticated the Salamander letter. Since Sandra and I had been the first ones to print extracts from the Salamander letter, we became somewhat concerned about our safety. The next day a bomb exploded in a car less than two miles from our house. Mark Hofmann, who sold the Salamander letter to Mr. Christensen, was critically injured in this blast. By this time we began to seriously consider the possibility that there was a systematic conspiracy to wipe out those who were bringing out information which was embarrassing to the Mormon Church. Because of our connection with the Salamander letter we were deluged with phone calls from the news media and others who were concerned about our safety or just wanted to find out what was going on in Salt Lake City.

CBS news wanted to do an interview with Sandra for the morning news and she was told that she would be picked up in a limousine at 3 or 4 in the morning. They later called up and for some reason canceled the interview. They did, however, use part of an interview with me on the evening news. At any rate, on the night of the 16th I felt like I was almost in a state of shock. An employee who had seen me after I learned of the explosion in Mr. Hofmann's car, said that my face had turned white. In the middle of the night I perceived that a car had pulled into our driveway and I saw someone headed for the porch. I rushed to the door thinking that if it was someone sneaking up on the porch with evil intentions, I could swing the door open fast and possibly catch him off guard. Then the thought hit me that I shouldn't open the door because if it was someone planting a motion sensitive bomb by leaning it up against the door, it would fall into the house and explode at my feet. Just then Sandra called out that it was a limousine in the driveway. Immediately, we both realized that it was the limousine CBS planned to use to pick up Sandra. The driver had not been told that the interview had been canceled, and in the excitement of the day we had forgotten all about it. It all seems rather funny now, but at the time it seemed to be a very serious matter.

The next day the *Deseret News* reported a surprising development. This was that Mark Hofmann was considered not just a third victim but also a prime suspect in the killings of the 15th. The police were convinced that Mr. Hofmann was transporting a bomb which was meant for someone else when it exploded. Later they came to conclude that Hofmann was involved in selling forged and non-existent documents and that he murdered to prevent his deceitful operations from being uncovered. Many people, however, insisted that Mark Hofmann was innocent of the bombings and claimed that the Salamander letter was an authentic document. Finally, on January 23, 1987, this argument was shattered when Mr. Hofmann entered into a plea bargain and admitted that he had killed Steven Christensen and Kathleen Sheets and that the Salamander letter was indeed a forgery. The Judge recommended that he spend the rest of his life at the Utah State Penitentiary.

Before the murders I had no reason to fear that Mr. Hofmann was especially dangerous, but I knew that any time a person sets out to uncover fraud there is danger of retaliation. From what we have now learned, it appears that Sandra and I were in a dangerous situation.

Mr. Hofmann has confessed that the very reason he killed Christensen was to prevent the exposure of his fraudulent dealings. The thing that probably saved us from his wrath was that hardly anyone believed what we published. While we had always felt that we could die by the hand of an assassin, we never considered the possibility that a well-mannered man like Mark Hofmann, who professed to be friendly to our work, could pose a threat to our lives. We just thank God that he was not triggered by the exposés that we published.

Prior to the bombings I had complained because I did not have "investigative power like the FBI." After the murders, however, it became apparent that Mark Hofmann was the subject of an intensive investigation. In the *Salt Lake Tribune* for November 18, 1985, Mike Carter wrote:

The investigation is one unparalleled in Utah law-enforcement history. The number of agencies involved and the manpower assigned to work the case is unprecedented.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Salt Lake City Police Department, the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, the Salt County Attorney's Office and the FBI. A U.S. Grand jury also heard testimony concerning the case, and the laboratories of both the FBI and the Secret Service were used to perform tests on the documents. Mr. Hofmann's car, home and safety deposit boxes were thoroughly searched and many documents were confiscated by the police.

My friend had specifically prayed that some experts on documents would take an interest in the Salamander letter. In the months that followed the bombings some of the top experts in the country were called upon to examine Mark Hofmann's documents and the ink that was used in their production. It is doubtful that many documents have ever received such careful scrutiny at the hands of experts. Microscopes were carefully focused on the most important documents, and it was discovered that the ink had been artificially aged with chemicals. As a result, Mr. Hofmann was charged with selling forged documents. The Salamander letter and ten other documents were officially listed as forgeries, and investigators believe that many other items were also forged. Those who are interested in learning more about the forged documents and the murders may be interested in a book I have written on the subject. It is published under the title, *Tracking the White Salamander*.

As I have indicated earlier, the White Salamander problem was one of the most puzzling episodes in my life. It was a long and lonely battle. Now that it is over, I can see how the Lord has really used it to help our ministry. It has also given me even more confidence in prayer as the most important method to solve problems. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul admonishes: "Pray without ceasing." Just before the crucifixion Jesus warned:

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.  
The spirit, indeed, is willing but the flesh is weak.  
(Matthew 26:41)

In the years that have passed since we began our work, God has really blessed our efforts. Many who have been Mormons have come into our bookstore, called us on the phone or written us letters telling how they have come to know Jesus in a personal way. Some have even entered into the ministry. When we first started out, there was not a great deal of interest among Christians in helping Mormons. The work was very slow and discouraging. Today, we find thousands of people throughout the world who are laboring to bring Mormons to the Lord. I personally believe that if the Lord tarries and Christians are faithful, there will be a real harvest and tens of thousands of Mormons will turn to the Lord. Prayer, of course, is the real key. In Matthew 9:37-38 we read the following advice which Jesus gave his disciples:

Then he said to his disciples, the harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few. Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he might send out laborers into his harvest.

Besides our interest in ministering to Mormons and rescue mission work, Utah Lighthouse Ministry also has a burden for orphans and the poor of the world. At the present time we are providing support for 100 children through the World Vision program. I just pray that the Lord will really increase this part of our work.

When I look back over my life, I feel very thankful that the Lord came into my heart and has given me opportunities to serve Him. If He can do this for a cowardly and self-centered person like me, I am sure that He can help anyone. I feel, in fact, that the Lord has some special service for everyone who wishes to follow Him. While some are called to the ministry, most of us are better suited to serve in other capacities. We can help in churches, hospitals, prisons, rescue missions or other places where God may lead us. I have even

heard of a woman who was completely hospitalized for years, and yet she was able to write encouraging letters which brought many people to know the Lord. And then, of course, there is the example of Joni. She is a paraplegic, yet she manages to run a ministry of love from a wheel chair which has deeply touched the lives of thousands of people.

It seems to me that we are often too complacent in our views concerning Christian commitment. Some people, in fact, feel that just an intellectual consent that Jesus is the Christ is sufficient for salvation. The scriptures, however, teach that the devils believe there is a God, but that they have no salvation. In James 2:19 we read: "You believe that there is one God, you do well. Even the devils believe and tremble." The word "believe," then, must mean much more than just consenting intellectually to the fact that Jesus is the Christ. In the Introduction to *The Amplified New Testament*, we find the following information concerning the meaning of the word "believe":

What does the word "believe" mean? It is extremely important, for multitudes are pinning their hope of heaven upon it. Yet that word long since ceased to convey, if it ever did, the sense of the original.

Webster's long definition of "believe" includes such synonymous expressions as, "to place credence . . . apart from personal knowledge; to expect or hope . . . to be more or less firmly persuaded of the truth of anything, to think or suppose." In this sense, most people believe in Christ—that he lived; that He was a perfect man Who sincerely believed Himself to be the Son of God, and that He died on the cross hoping to save sinners. But this is by no means the meaning of the Greek word which twenty-two New Testament versions out of twenty-four consulted render "believe." Yet they do do because there is no single better word in the English.

The Greek word is "pisteuo," and means, "To adhere to, cleave to; to trust, to have faith in; to rely on"—which summed up in, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," means an absolute personal reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Intellectual belief is not enough; we must completely rely and trust in Christ. D. Shelby Corlett wrote the following:

Faith is more than a mere mental assent to truth. There is no more moral saving benefit in a mere mental acceptance of the truth that Jesus is the Son of God than

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in the mental acceptance of some scientific truth. Faith is the going out of the whole inner life toward God. We do not believe in Him unless we act on it, unless we give the whole life to Him. To believe in God is a definite attitude of the heart, a surrender, a decision, an acceptance, something active and continuous, bringing a state of confidence and trust in Him.

A sailor relies and trusts in his compass. It shows him in which direction to sail to arrive at his destination. If a sailor ignores his compass and goes in a different direction, we would know that he does not really believe in it. To truly believe in Christ a person must commit his life to Him. We must rely upon Him and follow where he leads us.

A man may claim he believes in honesty, but if he continually steals people's money and possessions, we know that he does not have a sincere belief. We would, in fact, consider such a person to be a hypocrite. The same is true of a person who claims to believe in Christ but walks contrary to His teachings. This is made very clear in 1 John 1:6-7:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Again, in chapter 2, verse 4, of the same book, John cautions: "He who says I have known him and does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him." In Hebrews 5:9 we read: "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him."

The obvious implication of this verse is that those who disobey and walk contrary to the ways of the Lord do not have eternal life. Jesus Himself confirms this in Matthew 7:21-23:

Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven but he who does the will of my father who is in Heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many works of power in your name.

And then I will declare to them, I never knew you, depart from me you who practice evil.

To say we believe in Christ and to refuse to walk in His ways is far more foolish than to claim to believe in a parachute and yet jump out of a plane and neglect to pull the rip-cord. Another comparison might be to a

man who professes to believe in the value of a lifeline, but refuses to cling to one when it is offered to him in the middle of a turbulent sea. In effect, the Bible teaches that we are all lost in a raging sea of sin hundreds of miles from shore. God has offered us a lifeline in Jesus Christ. If we refuse to hold fast to it and try to swim to shore on our own strength, we will perish because we can never swim that far.

When I came out of Mormonism, I had some problems with the doctrine of being saved by grace. I have already stated that the Mormon Church teaches that man is naturally good and that we have the power within ourselves to live a life which is pleasing to God. The Mormon leaders do say that Christ saved us, but they believe that this only means that He made it possible for us to be resurrected. Anything beyond this is achieved through our own works. The Bible, however, clearly teaches that we are saved by grace. In Titus 3:5 we find the following:

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of a new birth and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

The expression "saved by grace" means that we are saved by "the free mercy of God." In other words, salvation is a gift and cannot be earned by our good works. In Ephesians 2:8-10 we read:

For by grace you are saved, through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not of works lest anyone should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Notice that the Apostle Paul says that there will be good works. These works, however, come from God working in our hearts. Paul explains this in Philippians 2:13:

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

Since it is God working in us to produce the good works, we have nothing at all to boast about. This is why Jesus said that even if we did all things we were commanded to do, we would still be unprofitable servants. This is found in Luke 17:10:

So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say: we are unprofitable servants, we have only done our duty.

Truly, it is only by God's grace that we are saved. In Romans 3:27 the Apostle Paul said: "Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded." C. S. Lewis expressed it in this way:

But even the best Christian that ever lived is not acting on his own steam—he is only nourishing or protecting a life he could never have acquired by his own efforts.

Lewis goes on to say:

... the Christian thinks any good he does comes from the Christ-life inside him. He does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us; just as the roof of a greenhouse does not attract the sun because it is bright, but becomes bright because the sun shines on it.

In his recorded sermon "The Cross and Forgiveness," Myron Augsburger made these comments:

When we discover our sin to be rebellion against God rather than simply a few moral deviations which can often be rationalized, we discover that right relation with God is dependent upon removal of the barrier between us. Should we attempt to remove that wall by our own abilities we discover that the pride that would do it ourselves rather than receive of His grace has, in turn, made the wall even higher. There is no way around the wall of rebellion, nor can one by works climb above the wall of self-righteousness. The only answer is to come to the cross where God has laid Himself bare to us, where all of our pretense at goodness crumbles into a shambles at our feet. Then alone we can look into the face of One who graciously offers forgiveness.

The Apostle Paul declared:

But indeed I also count all things as a loss because of the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith. (Philippians 3:8-9)

Contrary to what many people think, the law was not given to save mankind. In Romans 3:20 we read:

Therefore, by the works of the law no flesh is justified before him, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

But the listener may ask, if no man can be saved by keeping the law, why was it given? The answer is found in Galatians 3:19-25:

Why, then, the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made, and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator implies more than one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? certainly not. For if a law had been given which was able to bestow life, then righteousness would have been by the law. But the scripture has imprisoned all people under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ may be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were guarded under the law being shut up to the faith that was about to be revealed. So that the law was our teacher until Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come we are no longer under a teacher.

In other words, the purpose of the law is to show us that we are sinners and that we need to turn to Christ for His salvation. The Ten Commandments cannot save anyone; they can only show us how evil we really are. There is nothing wrong with the law, but there is something drastically wrong with us. We are sinful; therefore, the law condemns us.

When Jesus was asked which was the most important commandment, he replied:

... you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment, and the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40)

If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that we have broken these commandments. Who on earth can truthfully say that he has not broken the first and most important commandment? We are all guilty before God, and the Apostle James warned:

For whoever keeps all the law, but stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. (James 2:10)

The Apostle Paul says that the whole world is under the judgment of God (Romans 3:19). Charles L. Allen made this statement:

There are five objects of worship which multitudes today have put before God: wealth, fame, pleasure, power and knowledge.

We must all admit that, at least to a certain extent, we have placed other things before God, and therefore we have broken the first and most important commandment. Jesus taught us that our basic problem is that we have a sinful heart. We need to be changed from within. One of the Ten Commandments is: "You shall not murder."

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Jesus, however, said that murder is the result of hate in our hearts:

You have heard that it was said to those of old: You shall not murder, and whoever murders shall be liable to judgment. But I say to you, that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment, and whoever shall say to his brother, Raka, shall be liable to the counsel, and whoever shall say you fool, shall be liable to hell fire. (Matthew 5:21-22)

The important thing, then is to have hate removed from our hearts, and then we will not even think of murder.

Another of the Ten Commandments is: "You shall not commit adultery." Jesus made the following statement concerning this commandment:

You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

Again we see that Jesus is trying to show us that we must not have lust in our hearts. The outward acts of adultery and murder come from evil thoughts within. The seeds of evil lie deeply hidden in our hearts, but Jesus came that he might destroy this evil and give us hearts filled with love. The Psalmist once said:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

The trouble with most of us is that we tend to compare ourselves with others instead of God. The Scriptures teach that we must turn our eyes to Jesus. If we allow him to reign in our hearts He will fill us with His love, and Paul says that love is the fulfilling of the law. When we turn to the Lord, the law is no longer an outward thing which condemns us; instead, God writes His righteous laws in our hearts. In Hebrews 8:10 we find the following:

For this is the covenant which I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. Placing my laws in their mind and upon their hearts I will inscribe them. And I shall be to them for a God, and they shall be to me for a people.

In the 15th chapter of John, verses 1-6, Jesus makes it plain that we are only as branches and that our righteousness flows forth from him:

I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes so that it will bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Dwell in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine and you are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is cast out as a branch and dries up and men gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned.

These verses not only show us the source of our spiritual strength, but they also warn us of the perils that await us if we try to live without the indwelling Christ. If we have made a real commitment to Jesus Christ and He is living inside, our lives will bear good fruit. The thought of continuing in open sin will be abhorrent to us. As the Apostle Paul expressed it in Romans 6:1-4:

What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound. Certainly not. How shall we who died to sin continue to live in it. Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death. Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.

In verses 15-16 of the same chapter, Paul warns:

What, then, are we to sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Certainly not. Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey? Whether of sin to death or obedience to righteousness.

Again in Galatians 6:7-8, Paul says:

Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh, will from the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life.

My prayer is that the Lord will use what I have written to bring many people to himself, and also that even some who have known the Lord and have fallen away may be restored to full fellowship with Him. Jesus' invitation of forgiveness is for everyone. In Matthew 16:24-26 Jesus informs us that our soul is worth more than the whole world:

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Then Jesus said to his disciples, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Many people will not become Christians because they fear that the Lord will ask them to give up too much. The truth is, however, that the Lord only asks us to give up the things that will hurt us or make us unhappy in the long run. True happiness comes only when we submit ourselves to the Lord. There is only misery in self-love. In Colossians 3:2 we read: "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." The Apostle John wrote:

Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God remains forever.

In Romans 12:1-2, the Apostle Paul gives this advice:

I appeal, therefore, to you brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Almost 2,000 years ago, Pilate asked the question, "What, then, shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" Each one of us faces this same question today. Because of his desire to be popular with the Jewish leaders, Pilate allowed Jesus to be crucified. According to the Lord, there is no neutrality. In Matthew 12:30 Jesus said:

He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Speaking to those who rejected Jesus, the Apostle Peter said that they had denied the Holy One and had desired a murderer in his stead. He further charged that they had killed the prince of life, whom God raised from the dead. We are all confronted by this same choice. We can allow Christ to reign as king of our lives, or we can continue to walk in our own ways until we crucify the Prince of Life in our heart.

In John 8:12, Jesus described Himself as the very light of the world:

Then Jesus spoke to them again saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.

As a burglar fears a policeman with a flashlight, so people seem to fear that the righteous light of Jesus Christ will expose their sin and selfishness. Jesus says that people actually love darkness rather than light. In John 3:16-21 we read:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be reproved. But he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be clearly seen that they have been done in God.

It is my belief that all those who put their trust entirely in Christ and walk in his ways will never be disappointed. Of all the decisions I ever made in my life, receiving Jesus was by far the most important. I do not know where I would be at this time if I had not made that decision. In fact, I am not certain that I would still be alive. I do know, however, that I would be completely miserable if I had not come into the family of God. To know the Lord in a personal way for almost thirty years has been a wonderful experience. While I do not know what the future holds, I do have many words of encouragement from the Bible. In Philippians 1:6, I find the following:

Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

In 2 Timothy 1:12, I read:

For which cause I suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have entrusted to him until that day.

## *Jerald Tanner's Testimony*

In Romans 8:38-39, the Apostle Paul gives these reassuring words:

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Beyond this life I am really looking forward to the enjoyment of heaven. Not only do I believe that sorrow, pain and fear will be absent in heaven, but I also feel that we will live in a state of perfect joy which is beyond our ability to comprehend at the present time. 1 Corinthians 2:9 contains the following:

But even as it is written, eye has not seen nor ear heard nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him.

C. S. Lewis wrote the following in his book, *The Problem of Pain*:

Be sure that the ins and outs of your individuality are no mystery to Him; and one day they will no longer be a mystery to you. The mold in which a key is made would be a strange thing, if you had never seen a key; and the key itself a strange thing if you had never seen a lock. Your soul has a curious shape because it is a hollow made to fit a particular swelling in the infinite contours of the divine substance, or a key to unlock one of the doors in the house with many mansions.

Lewis goes on to say:

Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand.

While people often argue about what it will be like in heaven, the Bible does not go into any great detail. In response to a question by Nicodemus, Jesus said:

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If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things. (John 3:12)

My personal feeling is that it will be so pleasant in heaven that we just cannot imagine it now. I like to think of the happiest times in my life as just a preview of what is to come. I feel that only God knows what will bring us the greatest joy, and that he will provide that for us throughout eternity. I just hope than many of those who read this booklet will humble themselves and let Christ come in and reign in their hearts so we may all meet as part of the family of God in the Kingdom of Heaven. As it says in the hymn,

When we all get to heaven,  
what a day of rejoicing that will be.  
When we all see Jesus,  
we will sing and shout the victory!

For those who are interested in learning more about Christianity, Sandra and I have prepared a book entitled, *A Look at Christianity*. This book lays out our reasons for believing in Christianity. It also deals with some of the historical and archaeological evidence regarding Christianity as well as some of the criticism raised against the faith.

For those who would like to find out more concerning the problems in Mormonism, we recommend our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* We also publish a newsletter concerning Mormonism which we will send free upon request. Our address is: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1358 S. West Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84115.

As I have indicated earlier, Utah Lighthouse Ministry is a non-profit organization which depends on gifts from those who support our work. More important than money, however, is the prayer support we receive. We certainly need your prayers that we will be faithful in our ministry and that God will bring many to Himself.