



E-MAIL [bill@exmormonsforjesus.org](mailto:bill@exmormonsforjesus.org)

WEB [www.exmormonsforjesus.org](http://www.exmormonsforjesus.org)

NEWSLETTER ~ MAY/JUNE 2012

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OUR FAITH WILL WORK BY LOVE OR IT WILL NOT WORK AT ALL

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### FROM CHAR'S DESK

The Ex-Mormons for Jesus Information & Visitors Center has just celebrated its' 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the City of Orange. We had a wonderful time of visiting with our friends, old and new, who attended the Open House. We recalled the glorious day when we opened our first Center on April 27, 1987 at 226 W. Chapman Avenue where we were located for over 22 years. This location was sold so we temporarily moved next door to 240-A West Chapman in September of 2009. In March 2011, we moved to our present location at 1107 E. Chapman Avenue, #206.

We look back over these past years with awe and wonder at all of the Mormons God has saved and delivered from bondage, all of the people He has kept from going into bondage, and the opportunity to minister to those as they are exiting from Mormonism at our Support Group meetings each month. We thank and praise Him for the privilege of being His servants and pray He will continue to use us and the Center for His glory for many more years to come.

### CONCERNING RELIGIOUS DIVISION

Mormons are taught that there can only be "one true church" (denomination), and of course they believe that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS for short) holds that title. In his book, "Mormon Doctrine", Bruce R. McConkie stated: "*The true gospel of Jesus Christ was restored to earth in the last days through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith. It is found only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*" (p.334). Another quote from the late LDS prophet, Gordon B. Hinckley, stated: "*The*

*Lord said that this is the only true and living church upon the face of the earth with which He is well pleased [see D&C 1:30]. I didn't say that. Those are His words. The Prophet Joseph was told that the other sects were wrong [see Joseph Smith-History 1:19]"*. ("Ensign", June 2004, p.3).

What they do not seem to understand is that no Christian pastor (or his flock) would ever make that claim for they know that the "true church" are *people*, born-again believers, and these may be found in a variety of different Christian organizations. Many Mormons are also unaware that some sixty-plus LDS splinter groups sprang up after the death of Joseph Smith. Of that number, about sixteen are still in existence today. Following is a partial example:

The "Reorganized Church" (today known as the Community of Christ) is the second largest of these break offs. They followed Joseph Smith's son, Joseph Smith 111 (actually Emma, Joseph's wife, until Smith number three was old enough). These were particularly bitter toward Brigham Young as they claimed he is the one that originated the doctrine of polygamy and the doctrine of men becoming gods. There is, however, a wealth of documentation that prove that both of these doctrines came from their founder, Joseph Smith.

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Thank You

Another group are the “Strangites”, named after James Strang. He claimed that an angel appeared to him on the very day that Joseph Smith died and anointed him to be Joseph’s successor. He also produced a letter from Joseph that supposedly designated him as the next president of the church. Many of the influential Mormons of the day followed Strang as well as two of the LDS apostles and William Smith, the prophet’s brother. They deny the virgin birth, the atonement of Christ and the authority of the Utah Mormon prophets.

Another group are the “Hedrickites”, also known as the Church of Christ, Temple Lot, centered in Independence, Missouri. Their most outstanding feature is that they own the very spot that Joseph Smith dedicated as the site of the New Jerusalem Temple (the Utah LDS group have made many offers to purchase this piece of land but to no avail). A Hedrickite, named Fetting, formed another group known as the Church of Christ, Fettingite. He claimed he had been visited by John the Baptist in 1930. They differ very little from their mother church, the Hedrickites.

The “Bickertonites” were founded by Sidney Rigdon (an early LDS leader who also served as a scribe and spokesman for Joseph Smith) and one of his followers, Bickerton. This group has endured four splits. Among other things, they do not believe in the practice of polygamy or baptism for the dead.

The “Fundamentalists” are the ones we may have seen in the news over the last couple of years. They still practice the doctrine of polygamy and consider themselves the defenders of the true faith because the Utah church gave in to the pressure of the government to abandon the practice. While the main church in Utah gave up practicing polygamy for now, they still believe in the doctrine as stated in their scripture (D&C 132) and believe they will practice it in the hereafter.

We need to help our Mormon acquaintances come to know that God never called us to belong to a “one true church”, but rather to a one True Savior. It is such a blessing to know that people from a variety of denominations have answered that call and belong to Him -- Jesus is our unity. Thank You Lord!

## “RECEIVING FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

In going through some old Ensign Magazines (an official Mormon publication), I came across an article entitled “The Blessings of Sharing the Gospel” (Oct.1985, pp 49-54). Basically, it covered some of the many blessings a Mormon would receive when they agreed to go on a full-time mission for their church. It covered such blessings as “Joy”, “Peace of Conscience”, “Growth in Knowledge of the Gospel”, etc. Fine and dandy, but then about half way through the list I was shocked and amazed to read that the forgiveness of their sins was also a promised blessing if they agreed to serve:

*“President Spencer W. Kimball stated: ‘The Lord has told us that our sins will be forgiven more readily as we bring souls unto Christ and remain steadfast in bearing testimony [of Mormonism implied] to the world, and surely every one of us is looking for additional help in being forgiven of our sins.’” (p.51)*

*“One of our modern Apostles, Elder George G. Richards, promised: ‘In the name of the Lord I want to promise you that in the acceptance of the mission call and the dedication of yourself to the work, the Lord will forgive you of past transgressions, and you can start out life with an absolutely clean sheet.’ Who wouldn’t want to claim that promise?” (p.52)*

WOW! Where is *that* “promised” in the Bible? Of course it isn’t because the Bible clearly tells us our good works will NOT save us: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*” (Eph.2:8-9 NAS, also see Rom.3:27-28, 11:6; Gal.2:16, 2:21, 5:4; Phil.3:9; Titus 3:5-7, etc.).

So if good works won’t bring forgiveness of sins, what does? Hebrews 9:22 tells us “*...without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*” The good news (gospel) is that the blood of Jesus (and *only* the blood of Jesus) pays for our sins: “*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace*” (Eph.1:7, NAS – also see Rom.3:24-26, 5:9; Col.1:20-22, 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

It is so disconcerting and sad to see Mormons being manipulated in this way. But what is even sadder, is seeing them being diverted away from finding the REAL blessing of forgiveness from their sins through the shed blood of Jesus. Satan is very happy as long as they are busy trying to *work* their way into a right relationship with God. In Romans 10:2-4, the Apostle Paul was speaking of the Jews but this passage of scripture is also a perfect fit for the Mormons:

*“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”*  
(NAS)

### CITATIONS OF CONCERN (From LDS Leaders)

*“Thus, the Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture. It speaks of God, of Christ, and of the gospel. It records the terms and conditions whereby salvation comes. And it does it all with a plainness, clarity, and perfection that **far surpasses the Bible.***

*“The Bible of the Old World has come to us from the manuscripts of antiquity—manuscripts which passed through the hands of **uninspired men who changed many parts to suit their own doctrinal ideas. Deletions were common, and, as it now stands, many plain and precious portions and many covenants of the Lord have been lost.** As a consequence, **those who rely upon it alone stumble and are confused** and divide themselves among many churches, all based on that interpretation of the Bible.*

*“On the other hand, the Bible of the New World, as I choose to designate the Book of Mormon, has been preserved for us by a divine providence which kept the ancient record in prophetic hands...We, of course, believe the Bible **as far as it has been translated correctly, but we place no such restriction of the Book of Mormon...**”* (“The Ensign”, Dec.1985, p.55, all emphasis mine)

Mormonism’s problems with the Bible started when

Joseph Smith began preaching his own brand of religion. As could be expected, his contradictions, additions, and deletions from the Bible stood out like a sore thumb and became troublesome. It therefore became obvious that the Bible’s authenticity would have to be discredited, and Mormonism, through their scriptures (e.g. Nephi 13:26-28) and teachings, have been working to that end ever since.

As most Christians know, our Bible is trustworthy beyond any shadow of doubt for those who have bothered to do an even cursory study on the subject. For any who would like more information, please contact our Center and ask for the free tract, “The Bible—Why Should I believe it?” and/or the DVD, “The Bible vs The Book of Mormon” (a donation to cover postage would be appreciated). As Christ followers, we must “...be ready always to give an answer to every man...” (1 Peter 3:15) and be able to defend against such blatantly false statements such as those from our Mormon friends.

### READERS COMMENTS

*“Greetings Bill & Char – Thank you for your devotion to our Lord & Savior in helping to free Mormons and other cult members. I’m thankful to the Holy Spirit in leading you to write the column on a “Familiar Spirit”. I encountered two young Mormon men in my parking lot the other day and felt this spirit and until I read your column I couldn’t understand what I was feeling at the time but knew it was foreign. May God truly meet your financial needs [in] His new house for those who seek His refuge and want to know the Truth. In Him – D.G.”*

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*“Hello, Just wanted to say thank you for this ministry. I wish I could have found it 16 years ago when I was leaving 30 years of Mormonism behind. It was a hard journey leaving the church, as it cost me my marriage, (wife divorced me so she could find a priesthood holder to get her into Heaven) and family dis-owned me for months. (I am back on good terms with all family now). Thank you again, you are a great help to many I am sure. Ray”*

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*“Hello, I am married to a Mormon woman that was raised that way since she was 3 months old. Her Dad was a Bishop and a High Counselor. We’ve been*

*married for almost 20 years and have 5 great kids. I am a Baptist. My greatest wish in this life is that she would come to know the Lord. God is working in our family as 2 of our sons accepted Christ this year. We are afraid to tell my wife for fear that she may go off the deep end. (They've been raised Mormon much to my dismay). I've tried to reach her but she is so engrained (sic) in the church that it appears nothing will change her mind. Please pray for her...Thank you so much for your help! Mike"*

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*"Hello, I was raised Mormon but I no longer believe the Mormon religion is true. I'm looking for a true comparison between Mormonism & Protestants beliefs...I really want to be able to show my Mormon friends the difference between the two religions..I don't believe in Joseph Smith & I feel like the Mormons have turned Joseph Smith into a God & he is no God as far as I'm concerned. This is difficult for me since my entire family is Mormon. Please help me with some factual information to compare the two religions, thank you. In His Love, J.M.*

## **UTAH'S SUICIDE PROBLEM**

Every year that I [Kurt Van Gorden] train new mission workers, I tell them about the high suicide rate among the Mormons. In the mid-1970's, I remember telling prospective missionaries that they must take this work seriously, because there will be Mormons whom they speak to this year who will not be around next year, due to suicide. That hits hard. Defenders of Mormonism brush off these statements and portray

## **EX-MORMONS FOR JESUS**

**P.O.BOX 489**

**ORANGE, CA 92856**

## **CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

County, though, ranked very high nationally for abuse of prescription antidepressant drugs and there was an unusually high rate of suicides...In discussing this with ex-Mormon thinkers, I believe that it is safe to say that much of this is directly related to Mormonism's overt pressure for human perfection. The pressure to be humanly perfect and work for your celestial salvation and church duties is so strong that some people break under the stress.

The pharmaceutical company, Eli-Lily, has admitted that it dispenses 62% more Prozac in Utah than in any other state. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has released new (2011) data on Utah's depression and "suicidal thinking". Utah has consistently led the nation by ranking in the top ten states for suicides. Utah's women commit suicide four-to one over the number of women in other states...

(Reprint from Utah Gospel Mission - May 2012)

## **SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS**

We hold monthly support group meetings at 7:30 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month. These gatherings include a mini-lesson, testimony of an ex-Mormon, a question and answer time, and refreshments. All are welcome - those who have a burden to reach the Mormons, those who want to learn more, those who need support, and the Mormons themselves. The address is 240 W. Chapman Avenue in Orange and we look forward to seeing you there.

Utah as a happy place...We discovered that Utah

