

SYLVIA'S CORNER

POLYGAMY

No one talked about it, but they sure practiced it. Not many equated it with Joseph, but he was the one who actually began it. No one admitted it publicly, but it may have been the reason for Joseph's death. After all, his wife denied that it ever took place. I am speaking about the hushed-up practice of polygamy.

When I was a Mormon, I was told that Joseph died a martyr by the hands of a mob at Carthage Jail in 1844. It was explained to me that the people who killed him were opposed to his doctrine and political influence. Could it be, however, that Mr. Smith died because anti-Mormon people were opposed to polygamy? If you go to the library, you will find that he had 43 documented wives at the time he was alive.

Emma Smith, Joseph's first wife, claimed that the "secret thing" destroyed her husband. On the other hand, she also claimed that she was his only wife, so go figure! It seems like she was talking out of both sides of her mouth.

As a Mormon I was told that the practice of polygamy had a distinct purpose. I was also told that because of the journey to Salt Lake City being in such harsh conditions, polygamy was instituted to re-populate their group under the leading of Brigham Young, but it is a little known fact that the whole thing began with Joseph. At the time of his death, there were actually many of his followers practicing it. They added up to the amount of 154 polygamous men married to 549 polygamous women, giving birth to around 750 children.

Joseph had a counselor by the name of William Law. He claimed that Mr. Smith was having an affair with a teenage orphan while at his house. This exposure created quite a scandal! It was later found that Joseph had secretly married both that girl and her sister the year before. Mr. Law suddenly found himself excommunicated! When the Nauvoo Expositor spilled the beans about the practice of plural marriage, Smith, in the position of Mayor, had the paper

destroyed, but only after many of the papers were distributed. This exposure may have very well contributed to Joseph's demise. It obviously angered many people.

Plural marriage was not popular in Nauvoo. It really was not popular anywhere. It was discontinued in 1890 so that Utah could become a state, and except for a few fringe groups, it is not practiced today. It is not now sanctioned by the Church. The concept of plural marriage in the next life is a doctrine not talked about too much in the Church today, but if a man re-marries and both wives have been to the temple to be married to the same man, he believes that he will be married to both of them in the life to come.

This disturbed me greatly when I first heard about it, but I was assured that as a first wife, I had to give my permission to my husband before the second wife could marry him. What a strange doctrine this is. A further investigation of Church history will confirm what I have said. Don't just believe me, do your own research. Yes, there were instances in the Old Testament where people had more than one earthly wife. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines, but it certainly did him no good. It turned him away from the Lord and directed him to other gods.

In the Garden of Eden, God created one man and one woman. Woman came from one rib. It was not Eve and Patricia and Susan and Nancy, etc. etc. That is not what God had in mind. Could it be Joseph's demise was for another reason than that which we were primarily taught. Let's give it some thought.