

Manti: The "Gathering Place"



The Mormon Temple in Manti, Utah dominates the approach to the city. Set on Temple Hill, the building was dedicated by Mormon President Lorenzo Snow, May 21, 1888. It was the third temple to be completed, following those in Logan and St. George, and prior to the Salt Lake Temple. Manti is thought by some, particularly the leadership of The True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of the Last Days (TLC), to be a special place—the only city properly designated as an official “city in Zion”—by Brigham Young.

I went to Manti in early April to scout out the possibility of doing a meeting there this summer. My host for the day was Pastor O. Jay Swanson who previously had aided me by working up a cross reference between the 1830 Book of Mormon and the *Golden Bible* of M. T. Lamb. We spent the day driving around town. I managed

to meet John Harmston, the son of Prophet and President of TLC, Jim Harmston. John, is also a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of this small, interesting Mormon sect. I also met the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as well as a former member of the TLC.

Manti is remarkable because of TLC and other Fundamentalist/Polygamists sects of Mormonism. I have been studying these groups intently during recent months. As I reported in an earlier newsletter, polygamy and its twin wife/child abuse, has dominated the news in Utah for two years. I want to repeat what I said in my most recent newsletter:

Wherever we find polygamy in America we also find violence. Not every polygamist clan is violent, but all too many are. Violence is a

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Update on Wife No. 19

I mentioned in the last newsletter that we had completed the transcription of *Wife No. 19*, by Ann-Eliza Young. That announcement was a trifle premature. Though the text is complete, I had not yet imported the type in the page layout program. I had forgotten that there are more than 100 line drawings in this 600+ page book. To replicate the book as closely as possible to the original, I want to include the line drawings. This means I have to scan them in and insert them into the text — a somewhat



lengthy process. So, I am guessing I need another month or two to finalize this project. The book will then be available free on the Internet and in bound form for around \$20.00.

In reading this book again, I am struck by the forceful nature of this work. Ms. Young was born to Mormons in Kirtland, Ohio in the earliest days of Mormonism. Her father and mother were close to both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and were with them during the Missouri War as well as in Nauvoo. Ann-Eliza made the trek across the plains to the Salt Lake Valley. Her father took up polygamy and

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handmaiden of polygamy. There are two reasons: Early Mormonism was violent by nature; polygamy is an emotion-charged sexual perversion.

I also believe that Fundamentalist Mormonism has something to teach those of us who have an interest in Mormonism. *Because, in the final analysis, Fundamentalist Mormonism is the True Mormonism.* The Mormon Church we normally think of is the ten million member Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). But in fact, that organization is apostate from True Mormonism. By that I mean that the LDS Church has forsaken many of the so-called “plain and precious truths” revealed by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Any one who objectively examines what happened in 1890 when the LDS Church “abandoned polygamy” must see that it did not really do so. In fact, to this day, all Mormon groups retain the belief that polygamy will once again be instituted for all worthy Mormons.

WHY BOTHER WITH FUNDAMENTALIST MORMONS?

If Mormon Fundamentalism is as I say, the True Mormonism, then we must not allow it to be obscured by LDS public relations and tap dancing. We must hold the feet of Mormonism to the flame of truth to reveal it for what it is. Only then will Evangelical Christians have the motivation and the ammunition to carry on the work of evangelizing Mormonism. I do not exaggerate when I say that such work has fallen on hard times. The Evangelical Church is much less apt to evangelize Mormons today than it was ten or fifteen years ago.

Today many Evangelicals are double-minded as to whether or not Mormons even need to hear the Gospel message. My

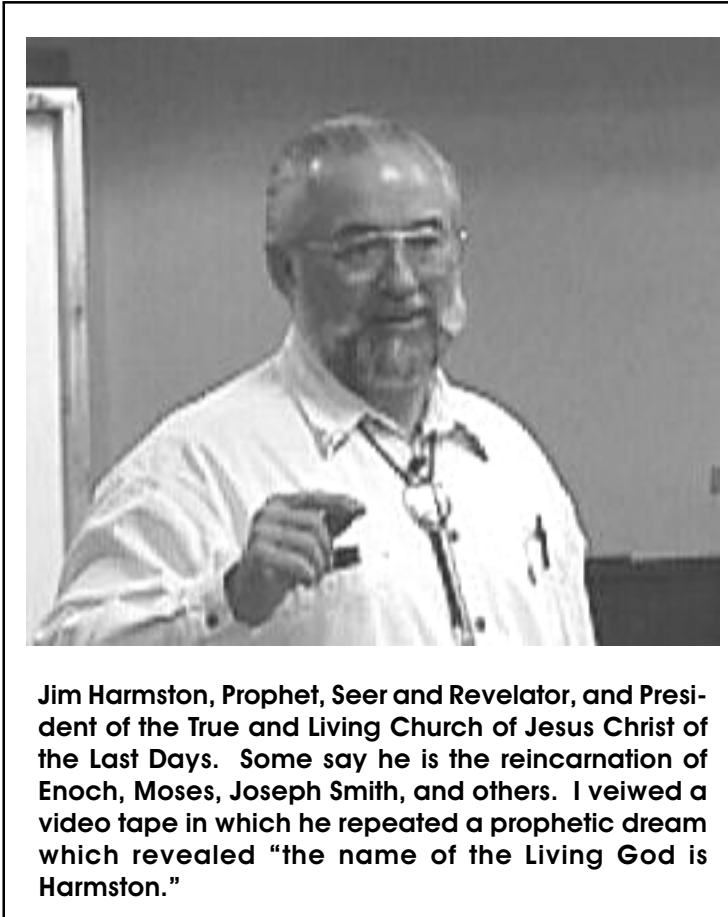
most recent newsletter mentioned the foggy thinking of one Evangelical pastor in Provo who apparently believes that a major problem with Mormonism is that Christians are full of hatred towards Mor-

love. We need to go back to the admonition of scripture found in I Corinthians, chapter one:

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

It may be possible that we will have to convert Mormons to True Mormonism before we can convert them to True Christianity. I mean that as long as we allow the LDS Church to define itself publicly one way and privately another, how can we hope to have true conversation? It is hard work to patiently insist that Latter-day Saints own up to their true doctrine. And, don't get me wrong, I am not saying the average Mormon is lying and deceiving. I think he or she is probably confused. Standard operating procedure in Mormonism calls for the sheep to be obedient and not ask penetrating questions. Our job as evangelists is to help them ask the right questions.



Jim Harmston, Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and President of the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of the Last Days. Some say he is the reincarnation of Enoch, Moses, Joseph Smith, and others. I viewed a video tape in which he repeated a prophetic dream which revealed “the name of the Living God is Harmston.”

mons. I responded by saying, “The problem with Mormonism is *not* Christianity!” God help us. When evangelism is reduced to being nice and loving while at the same time the doctrinal declarations of Christianity are minimalized, we are on the road to a bloodless message which contains no conversion power. I repeat, *it is the preaching of the cross of Christ which has power to convert, not human love.* We do, indeed, speak the truth in love, but we must *speak the truth.* And speaking truth means expressing verbal points which describe the differences between the gospel of Mormonism and the Gospel of Christ. Whenever we have that discussion, Mormons have a chance to be born again. Without the doctrinal discussion, we produce only mushy human love and positive thinking—what some of us used to call “sloppy agape.” Real love is tough

A RECENT BLESSING

A few weeks ago I was asked to come to a meeting of Evangelical pastors in Emmett, Idaho. These brothers had, within the past couple of years, reformed the men's pastoral association. The association had followed the normal path of most Christian denominations—a slow liberalizing which leads them away from their evangelical roots. The situation finally came to a head when a local Mormon Bishop managed to be officially included in the pastoral association for more than three years. Of course the liberal Christian pastors could see nothing wrong with that. But clear thinking prevailed and the group adopted a set of doctrinal statements which effectively excluded not only the Mormon, but the liberals.

But these men still were not sure how to address Mormonism in their churches. They recognized that many of their parish-

ioners could not figure out why we can not just ignore the Mormon/Christian debate. As I talked with the men on an early Tuesday morning, they outlined their dilemma. They said they did not believe their people were ready for a full-fledged Mormonism Seminar. Rather than run ads in the paper and invite the public to hear the issues debated, they asked if I could come and talk to their people and explain *why* Mormons could not be considered—as a group—to be Christians.

It was a smart move on their part. We met on a Sunday night and Christians from six churches gathered together for a standing-room-only meeting. We had, I believe, about 300 people present. To a man, the pastors said the meeting was one of the best things they had done together for the community. Now that they had their people on board, they decided we could



Assembly Hall of the TLC

Pastor Swanson, of “four or five people.” We are talking about those the pastor has met in seven years who would be considered born again as defined by most Evangelicals. The rest of the population are traditional Mormons and Jack Mormons, members of the TLC cult, and a

smattering of non-believers of various stripe—Secularists, New Agers, Agnostics.

But what is different about Manti is this: the Mormon Church has been seriously challenged. A debate has raged there for a number of years now as the TLC has proselytized regular Mormons into fundamentalism. Every TV tabloid show in the nation has trouped through Manti interviewing the cult lead-

ers, as well as disaffected members, and those who have lost their husbands, sons, wives, and daughters to polygamy. While TLC is small—the President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles told me they were about 300—it represents 10% of the town’s population.

There have been discussions in Manti between regular Mormons and others—that is very unique. Although the official Mormon Church position is to avoid all dialogue and dissent by “taking the high road of non-discussion,” when people are losing their kids and spouses, you can bet interaction is occurring. *This is exactly what is not happening in the rest of the United States.* Mormons are not talking to people who have a different viewpoint.

Of course the missionaries are talking to potential converts in the privacy of the convert’s homes, but there is no longer public discussion as there was, say, ten years ago. I used to do 150 nights of meetings a year. Christian churches were excited to mount a discussion. And men like Ed Decker and myself won hundreds of people to Christ as a result of those discussions.

Because of the existing conflict in Manti, I thought it might be possible to get a discussion going there. I soon discovered that the official position of the TLC was “no comment.” I was told that they have officially closed the doors to the outside world. They are not seeking to make any more converts and they are not granting any more interviews.

Two reasons account for their closed mouths: First, they suffered tons of negative publicity when the TV tabloids were passing through. There were interviews



Pastor Jay Swanson and his wife, Diane, have been in Manti for seven years

now have another meeting and talk specifically about how to reach Mormons. Praise the Lord!

BACK TO MANTI

There is another element in Manti that interests me. This town of 3,000 people has a Christian population, according to

with weeping women whose husbands had trekked off to imbibe in polygamy, often leaving large families behind. Jim Harmston was called Jim Jones and law enforcement worried (and still do) that violence might erupt within the cult or between TLC and the community. Rumors of stockpiled weaponry and plans to lay siege to the Manti temple floated throughout Sanpete County.

As a result of the decision to cut off discussion with the outside world, I will not be having a debate with Jim Harmston. Nevertheless, we cannot discount the fact that discussion has occurred in Manti. The downside, as pointed out by Pastor Swanson, is that the people are exhausted. They are “argued out.”

So, how would I arrange a meeting in Manti which would draw a crowd? Who

would come to a meeting in, say, the library basement, in Manti? The short answer is “probably nobody.” But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try to reach out there. I am praying about how to do something there yet this summer, and I ask you to pray with me about how to touch at least a few people there.



Utah’s Checkered Legacy

Those of us who live in Mormondom know that the 24th of July is a bigger holiday than the 4th of July. But do we know why? Of course we know that Brigham Young, on that date, looked down Emigration Canyon and out across the Salt Lake Valley and proclaimed he had found safe haven for the Saints.

And safe haven was needed. The

rule of Mormonism. Many prophecies predicted the doom of the United States and the supremacy of the Theocracy led by Joseph Smith. For decades after Joseph Smith was killed, all temple Mormons took an oath to “avenge the blood of Joseph Smith upon this Nation, and teach our children to do the same.”

The Church literally was at war with the citizens during its season in Missouri. And when they made it to Utah, they were on the brink of a civil war with the United States of America. In fact, President Buchanan, in 1858, sent troops to Utah. Never before had the United States mustered such a force.

When Brigham Young took over Utah, he ruled with an iron fist. He was the civil leader as well as the religious leader. Those who dared to stand up to him were exiled or murdered through the mandate of Blood Atonement. So vicious was the antagonism the Mormon leaders felt against gentiles, that when a wagon train from Missouri passed through Utah,

Brigham ordered that they be detained and slaughtered. He had his lieutenant, John D. Lee, convince a party of Indians to pin the settlers down and surround them. They laid siege to the train for several days. Then Lee entered the camp under a flag of truce and told the unfortunate Missourians that he could guarantee them safe passage through the Indian lines. Of course, they had to surrender their weapons. After they did that, Lee and his men killed every man, woman, and all (except

a very few) children.

This event, The Mountain Meadows Massacre, has an important place in history. The foul deed, until the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building by Timothy McVeigh in Oklahoma City, stood as the greatest massacre of Americans by Americans in our history (excluding the Civil War).

So Mormonism indeed has an unfortunate legacy which continues to play itself out today. Child abuse, polygamy, restriction of women’s rights, and the oppression of dissenters is common fare. Note the following statistics from my web site:

- The divorce rate in Utah is higher than that of Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey.
- The murder rate in Utah is higher than it is in New Hampshire, Iowa, and North Dakota.
- The rape rate is higher in Utah than New York, California, and Virginia.

These statistics are from the U. S. Census Bureau.

Mormonism is an authoritarian system that does not offer its adherents acceptance before a forgiving God. Rather it puts them on a treadmill of self-improvement—a stairway leading nowhere.



Don’t forget to visit our websites at:

**www.mazeministry.com
and
www.yrulds.com**



This monument at the site of Camp Floyd states that President James Buchanan assembled the largest troop concentration in the history of the United States prior to the Civil War.

Saints had been hounded from New York to Ohio to Missouri to Illinois and finally to Utah. They had been thrown out of each of those places by the local citizenry because of their beliefs and practices. There is plenty of blame to go around—both for the Mormons and for the Gentiles. Suffice it to say that Mormons felt they were strangers in America. Do not overlook, however, that Mormonism was not requesting to practice its faith quietly at home. No, it was out to change the world and to bring all civil authority under the

The Wives and Children of Ervil LeBaron, 1925-1981

Delfina Salido	Marilu Vega (died)	Joy Marston	Anna Mae Marston		Lorna Chynoweth missing since 1987	Christina Jensen	Rosemary Barlow		Linda Johnson	Deborah Bateman	Vonda White (in prison for murder)		Teresa Rios	Yolanda Rios (murdered 1983)	Rena Chymoweth (killed Rulon Allred)
Sylvia	Esa		From Previous Marriage	From Ervil	Andrew	Tabitha	From Previous Marriage	From Ervil	From Ervil	(son)	From Previous Marriage	From Ervil	Gladys	Sandra	Erin
Esther	Jorge (disappeared 1983)		David	Kathleen	Jaqueline (Tarsa-wanted for murder)	Shoshanna	Douglas	Joseph Nathaniel	Thomas Anthony	(son)	Craig	Marisha	Norma	Danny	John Ryan
Sarah	Patricia		Edward	Heber (in prison)	Aaron (Mo-in prison for murder)		Annalee	David	Cynthia		Audrey	Nathan	Jenny		
Alice	Benjamin		Ramona	Marilyn			Ellen	Eva	Richard		Evelyn		Bertha		
Lillian (suicide? 1989)	Virginia		Fay	Celia							Janet				
Arthur (murdered 1983)	Ruben			Anna	Natasha (Tasha)										
				Hyrum	Andrea Monique (Niki)										
				Adine	Bridget Veronica (Jessica)										
					Jared										
					Joshua										

Note:
 There certainly are more people in this list who have been murdered and probably others on this list are guilty of murder. For example, those of you who saw God Maker's II will remember a pretty woman who said that if she were to die, you could be sure she had been murdered. That woman is Lillian, daughter of Ervil and Delfina Salido. She was found dead. Her death was ruled a suicide, but insiders are convinced she was murdered.



Ervil Morrel LeBaron as a young Mormon Missionary

Recovering from Mormonism

Ervil LeBaron was raised in a polygamist Mormon sect in Mexico. His brother, Joel, founded the Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness of Times in 1955. Ervil was appointed to be the Patriarch of the Church. After parting with his brother over doctrinal issues, Ervil formed the Church of the Lamb of God. Eventually he began to preach that he was the head of all civil authority in the earth. He eventually ordered the murder of his brother, Joel, and, throughout the 1970's, ordered as many as 30 others killed, including at least one of his own children. He was convicted of masterminding the murder of rival polygamous leader Rulon Allred. He died in prison in 1981, at the age of 55. Even after his death some of his followers continued to kill those Ervil had put on a hit list.



David and Nathan LeBaron Finding Christ

Note:

Subsequent to taking the picture at the right, I have met one more of Ervil's sons, one of his widows, and am in correspondence with another son.

Being raised in a small, mobile, and murderous sect is bound to lead to emotional scarring. All of Ervil's wives and children have paid a price for the doctrinal errors which led him to such extremes. My last newsletter told of my relationship with Nathan LeBaron, a young Christian who is on fire for Christ. This last week I had the privilege of meeting his half-brother Dave, who is just now coming to know Christ. Nathan and I hope to be able to reach more of his siblings and perhaps even some of the widows of Ervil.

Dear Mr. Spencer

Letters and emails

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I couldn't believe all the books and the video tape you sent me. I was deeply overwhelmed by your generosity. I fully intended to pay for the books that I ordered, so I would like you to accept my contribution to your ministry. I can't thank you enough for your books that you have written.

I had always been told that you didn't ask questions, you just accepted that the Mormon Church was true and the "only" true church on the earth. I am so saddened by my parents and sisters who so blindly continue to be deceived and participate in the temple ceremonies. I was shocked to find out what the whole meaning of the temple ceremony was really all about.

I had only gone to the temple six or seven times in the one year that I had received a temple recommend. I never knew exactly what they were saying or really what any of it meant. I just followed along. I was more intrigued at the way people looked than paying any attention to what was really going on. I always felt uncomfortable in the temple and knew something just wasn't right. I now know that the Lord was with me the whole time.

I had given my life to Christ three years ago while watching either the 700 Club or some Christian program on TV. My fifteen year marriage was falling apart and I was scared. I continued to watch the Christian programs (John Hagee was my favorite) on TV and listen on the radio. I knew that God was changing me in some way, but I didn't yet know how. I just assumed I was supposed to go back to the Mormon Church and "do it right." I had been away from the Church since I was eighteen, it had been twenty years.

My parents were converts when I was three and so I was baptized when I was eight. I never paid attention to the Church when I was growing up either. I always dreaded going and when I got there, my one sister and I would hide in the bathroom, or go out to the car. I am now convinced the lord was working on me from the very start.

Anyway, after counseling with the Bishop, I filed for divorce but had to wait six months before our daughter was out of school for the year. I continued to go to church every Sunday and even had my daughter baptized! I moved here (Boise) in June of 1998 and continued to go to church for the next year-and-a-half. For some reason I wanted to find out more about the Church and was starting to have doubts. I attended some singles dances and let me tell you, the guys that go to those things are "LOSERS!" I felt like a loser my-

self sitting along the wall on chairs waiting for a "good Mormon" guy to ask me to dance. How pathetic now that I look back. I wouldn't have ANY of them!

I went to the library and was directed to your first book, *Beyond Mormonism: An Elder's Story*, and a host of other books of testimonies of other ex-Mormons. I read one after another for three weeks straight day and night. I couldn't get enough and things just started clicking and making sense! I went to the library again just a week and a half ago and again was directed to your books *Mormonism's Temple of Doom*, *Whited Sepulchers*, and *Have You Witnessed to a Mormon Lately?* Those books prompted me to call you personally and write a letter of resignation to the Bishop, the Stake President, and the President of the Church. I want to break the emotional ties of EVERYTHING that has to do with Mormonism. I am totally convinced that the Mormon Church is one of Satan's churches and I don't want any part of it.

As I mentioned to you before, my daughter and I have been attending Capital Christian Center on Fairview. I wanted a non-denominational church to go to, as I'm not ready to "join" another church at this time or maybe never. I'm very sorry to see so many decent, loving people just jump into an organization with blind faith and never question anything.

This journey had made me question and seek the answers to everything I feel is important in my life. I am thankful to the Lord every day for opening my eyes to the truth and for people like you that are willing to tell the truth and expose evil. I hope that I will find a nice Christian man that will have my daughter and me, and who loves the Lord first. I pray that you and your family will be richly blessed and safe. I thank you again for your generosity and time.

Sincerely,

Susie and Holly

Dear Mr. Spencer:

I thank you again for calling me this evening to see how things are going. This stuff is all new to me so I hope I can get my message across to these Mormon people. Man, it's like trying to get out of a gang!! I did not realize how difficult this might be! I'm sending you a copy of a letter I wrote and I quoted your words exactly. I didn't know what to say myself, so I

was glad to use your words

I decided after speaking to you tonight, that I would write to the Bishop again and hopefully put an end to this nightmare! I'm sending you a copy of the letter I wrote him, just to keep you up on what's happened.

I continue to be amazed and in awe of my "NEW" found Jesus Christ and I have confidence that I can go forward with faith and courage. Thank you again for your support and generosity

May God bless you always,

Sincerely,

Susie and Holly

. . .Wife No. 19

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she, herself was eventually a polygamous wife of Brigham Young. She watched as her parents became discouraged with Mormonism (but stuck with it).

Eventually she became a Christian and divorced Brigham Young, a very risky thing to do in Utah during the time of Blood Atonement. But she was encouraged by a Protestant minister and his wife. She found courage in God. In time she not only wrote a fascinating insider's report of life in Utah, but she traveled throughout the United States telling her story.

She writes with great objectivity and with a clear eye and strong voice. She is not at all unkind to the Mormon people whom she regards as under the spell of charismatic leaders who know full well the deception they practice. I have not read anything which projects a more complete picture of what it must have been like to live under the strong hand of the Mormon Church in its early years.

Her story, however, is not simply history. It offers an extremely valuable and insightful look into Mormonism. There is much here for us who want to understand what makes people continue in a system which, from the outside, appears so palpably false and unsatisfying. Those who have ever asked themselves "What makes intelligent people stay in a system like this?" will benefit from reading this book.