



LYING FOR THE LORD

KEN CLARK



“The right to lie in the service of your own interests is highly valued and frequently exercised.” – *Nero Wolfe*

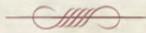
Update and Revised November 14, 2012

Colorized PDF file formatted May 17, 2014

C·O·N·T·E·N·T·S

PREFACE

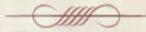
3



LIST OF PREVARICATIONS BY
CHURCH LEADERS

(NOS. 1-22)

5



LIST OF DECEPTIONS TO PROTECT
THE PRACTICE OF POLYGAMY

(NOS. 23-124)

13



DISHONESTY RE: BLACKS AND
THE PRIESTHOOD

(NOS. 125-131)

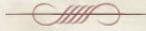
36



MORE DISHONESTY

(NOS. 132-152)

38



MY CONCLUSION

44



PREFACE

I began this list when I was a full time employee of the LDS Church Education System (CES). I worked as a Seminary Principal/teacher, Institute teacher/Director, and Stake CES Coordinator from 1975–2002. My last assignment was brief. I signed a Letter of Agreement with CES to serve as the Director of the Pullman, Washington LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to Washington State University in July 2002. I resigned from CES a month later. I carry fond memories of the students, ward leaders and others I grew to respect in the LDS Church. I started this list in an effort to defend the church from its detractors.

As an informal defender, I discovered that those accusing the church leaders of being dishonest sometimes had the facts on their side (when I took the time to check). I guessed there may have been occasional isolated examples of premeditated deception but it was not a pattern or standard practice.

My belief was that those who accused church leaders with deception were deceivers themselves. But as I read more church history my list leaders' prevarications grew, and at some point it occurred to me that Joseph Smith established a pattern of institutionalized deception.

Evidence presented in this list establishes that when the church or its leaders needed protection, it was, and is, okay to fib, deceive, distort, inflate, minimize, exaggerate, prevaricate or lie. You will read quotations by church leaders who admitted that deception is a useful tool to protect the church and its leaders "when they are in a tight spot," or "to beat the devil at his own game." They admit engaging in moral gymnastics; that God approves of deception — if it's done to protect the "Lord's Church" or "the brethren."

D. Michael Quinn called the use of deception by LDS church leaders, "theocratic ethics." (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, p. 112) Dan Vogel in his excellent work, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*, described Smith as a pious deceiver. Smith used deception if in his mind; it resulted in a good outcome. Smith believed he knew when God approved of lying. For example, Smith wrote that God commanded the prophet Abraham to lie to protect himself and his wife Sarah from harm (Abraham 2:23-25).

Smith believed God also approved of murder if it was for a good cause. He wrote in the Book of Mormon that Nephi was inspired by God (1 Nephi 4:6) to deceive and murder his uncle to obtain an Israelite history. In Missouri, Smith and his counselor Sidney Rigdon, threatened to kill Mormons who disagreed with Smith's commands (Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, Chapter 3, "Theocratic Beginnings," pp. 79-103).

Deception came naturally to Smith. Before assuming his role as prophet, he operated confidence schemes. He guaranteed clients that he could see underground treasure using a magic stone in the bottom of his hat. Gullible "clients" paid him to locate treasures using this vision-in-the-hat method. (He never found anything.) Smith's arrest, trial and conviction in Bainbridge, NY for fraud in 1826 documented his activity. He was found guilty of glass looking. The modern term for Smith would be a con artist. (Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*, pp. 82-86).

Excellent historical works record Smith's deception and the deception of other LDS leaders. A list of authors and their work, who are nevertheless charitable to Smith are:

- Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe*.
- Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 2004.
- Richard Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, Second Edition, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 1989.
- D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 1994.
- D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, Signature Books, Salt Lake City, 1997.
- Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, Vintage Books, NY, 1995.
- B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*, University of Illinois Press, 1992. (The essay on Lying for the Lord in Hardy's appendix is masterful and yet compassionate.)
- Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK 2002, offers insight into the minds of other church leaders who used deception effectively too.
- An excellent online list is the online book by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism* at <http://www.utlm.org/navonlinebooks.htm>; and
- Richard Packham's excellent piece entitled, "Mormon Lying." <http://home.teleport.com/~packham/lying.htm>

LIST OF PREVARICATIONS BY CHURCH LEADERS

(NOS. 1–22)

Below is a list of notable prevarications by church leaders. Some rate higher on the “deceit-scale” than others. The list is not exhaustive, and offers only a sample of some of the best known incidents of deception. Each of the incidents is referenced with the secondary source. It’s easier for the normal reader to locate information in this way. The footnotes provided in the secondary sources will provide you with the references for primary sources if you wish to review them.



The official version of the First Vision by Joseph Smith, fashioned in 1838, nearly 20 years after the event, was unknown to church members until published in 1842. It evolved after years of creative editing. It describes a more spectacular and miraculous event than earlier versions of the same event. The 1832 account is the original handwritten version and lacks the spectacular claims. The early version does not mention God the Father as one who appeared to Smith, or the religious excitement that motivated Smith to pray, persecution by unbelievers, being attacked by the devil, being told not to join any apostate Christian Churches by Jesus; and he was not called to restore a church and serve as its Prophet in the earliest version. The 1832 “vision” resembles a common Christian epiphany where he imagined Jesus forgiving his sins. Church leaders suppressed the contradictory and less impressive version for over a century. (James B. Allen, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, pp. 29-45. See also Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, pp. 24-25; and *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pp. 148-166) <http://www.mormonthink.com/firstvisionweb.htm>



The LDS church consistently describes in sermons and paintings, the visitation of an angel named Moroni (pronounced More-oh-nye) to Joseph Smith on September 21, 1823. Moroni is pictured floating above Joseph or next to his bed, alone in his bedroom. The pictures do not accurately portray Joseph’s five brothers that slept in the same room with him. A restored Smith house is used for LDS tours showing the small room and only two beds for six brothers. Nothing resembling the actual sleeping arrangement is hinted at in the church’s official literature and pictorial recreations of the scene. It would seem inconceivable to most investigators (and perhaps many members) that Joseph’s brothers sleeping in the same room and bed would not have been awakened by the events as described by Joseph. The inaccurate depictions and lesson manuals are an attempt to make the event seem more believable. <http://www.mormonthink.com/moroniweb.htm>



The LDS Church permits members and others to believe that the *History of the Church* was written by Joseph Smith. Smith dictated the history of the church to a scribe but was killed before completing the project. The Joseph Smith History was completed in August 1856 by historians who wrote it as if it was written by Joseph. Brigham Young required the historians to write it that way. Sixty percent of the history was written after his death. The church consciously led members believe that the official history was written by Joseph Smith. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1971, pp. 466, 469, 470, 472) In the middle of the 20th century after the deception was pointed out by critics, the church admitted it.



When something in the official *History of the Church* proved embarrassing, such as the **Kinderhook Plates hoax, where Joseph was tricked by pranksters who created fake metal plates that Joseph claimed were authentic, ancient Egyptian plates; the practice was/is for LDS apologists to claim that a scribe or someone else must have written the embarrassing section instead of Joseph Smith himself.** They claim

therefore that the embarrassing episode cannot be trusted. This contradicts their claims that Smith's revelations are authentic, though written by scribes. (Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Shadow or Reality?* Chapter 7, "Changes in the Joseph Smith History," pp. 126-142)



The famous Rocky Mountain Prophecy (the prediction that Salt Lake would be the place the saints would settle after leaving Nauvoo, Illinois) was a later addition to the official church history and not predicted by Joseph Smith. Despite the fact it is not true; the church presented it as such for more than a century. The 'Rocky Mountain Prophecy' was added after the Mormons arrived in Utah. (*The Changing World of Mormonism*, p. 406)



A fundamental change is the name of the angel who, it was claimed, appeared in vision in Joseph Smith's bedroom. In the history as it was first published by Joseph Smith, we learn that the angel's name was Nephi: "He called me by name and said ... that his name was Nephi" (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, p. 753). In modern printings of the *History of the Church*, the name was changed to "Moroni" (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 11).

"The original handwritten manuscript shows that the name was originally written as "Nephi," but that someone at a later date wrote the word "Moroni" above the line (see photograph in *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?* p. 136). The book *Falsification of Joseph Smith's History*, page 13, authors demonstrated that this change was made after Joseph Smith's death. An examination of the duplicate copy of the handwritten manuscript, Book A-2, provides additional evidence that the change was not made during Joseph Smith's lifetime. This manuscript was not begun until about a year after Smith's death. Like the other manuscript (Book A-1), it has the name "Nephi" with the name "Moroni" interpolated above the line.

"It is interesting to note that Joseph Smith lived for two years after the name "Nephi" was printed in the church's official publication *Times and Seasons*, and never published a retraction or correction. In August, 1842, the *Millennial Star*, published by the church in England, also printed Joseph Smith's story stating that the angel's name was "Nephi" (see *Millennial Star*, vol. 3, p. 53). On page 71 of the same volume it reads that the message of the angel Nephi ... opened a new dispensation to man..." "The name was also published in the 1851 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* as "Nephi." Walter L. Whipple, in his thesis written at BYU, stated that Orson Pratt "published *The Pearl of Great Price* in 1878, and removed the name of Nephi from the text entirely and inserted the name Moroni in its place (reprinted in *The Changing World of Mormonism*, Chapter 13, pp. 409-410)."



Official Mormon histories have omitted references to Joseph Smith's drinking and use of tobacco to create a more favorable impression of their prophet, who if living today (2007) would be unable to pass a worthiness interview and earn a temple recommend in the church he founded. (*Changing World of Mormonism*, pp. 413-414 and Chapter 18 of the same online book) "Joseph tested the Saints to make sure their

testimonies were of his religion and not of him as a personable leader. Amasa Lyman, of the First presidency, related, ‘Joseph Smith tried the faith of the Saints many times by his peculiarities. At one time, he had preached a powerful sermon on the Word of Wisdom, and immediately thereafter, he rode through the streets of Nauvoo smoking a cigar. Some of the brethren were tried as was Abraham of old.’” (“*Joseph Smith as an Administrator*,” Master’s Thesis, Brigham Young University, May 1969, p. 161. Quotation found in *The Changing World of Mormonism*, p. 31)



Leonard Arrington, the official LDS Church Historian for nearly a decade (1972-1982) lamented the suppression of truthful Mormon history in favor of a faith promoting version. Six years previous to his appointment as church historian, Dr. Arrington wrote: “It is unfortunate for the cause of Mormon history that the Church Historian’s Library, which is in the possession of virtually all of the diaries of leading Mormons, has not seen fit to publish these diaries or to permit qualified historians to use them without restriction.” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1966, p. 26) Leonard Arrington was demoted in 1982 transferred from the church historians office to BYU because of his refreshing honesty; he was a threat to the faith promoting history the church insisted he support (*Deseret News*, Church Section, July 5, 1980; <http://library.usu.edu/Specol/manuscript/Arrington/LJHA1/bio.html>). The church does not report accurate unflattering historical facts about its origins and leaders to the membership or the world, unless forced to by published disclosures of deception.



Joseph Smith claimed that God revealed truth directly to him. He declared that God, Jesus and angels appeared in person. Sometimes they spoke in an audible voice, and sometimes they spoke in a quiet voice or feeling in his mind and heart — D&C 8:2; 9:7-9. He made arrangements to publish a collection of revealed truths in the *Book of Commandments* but offended Missourians who destroyed the printing press in 1833 before the venture was completed. A few copies were saved. Two years later he published another version with original revelations revised and more revelations added and called it the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Apologists claim that added material was only to make the revelation seem clearer to the reader. (Melvin J. Petersen “*A Study of the Nature of and Significance of the Changes in the Revelations as Found in a Comparison of the Book of Commandments and Subsequent Editions of the Doctrine and Covenants*,” Master’s thesis, BYU, 1955, typed copy, p. 147) Those close to Joseph and the process of revising the “revelations” make a different claim.

David Whitmer, a close associate of Smith’s, was perhaps the most vocal opponent to the revisions; many that contradicted earlier revelations. He considered the original revelations to be God-inspired. He questioned the revised revelations which coincidentally granted all power and authority to Smith. (Letter written by David Whitmer, published in the *Saints’ Herald*, February 5, 1887) Current LDS members are unaware of the significant revisions. They do not know that the meaning of some of the “revelations” was reversed. David Whitmer and others raise the question of whether Joseph Smith received revelations from God or whether they originated in his own mind. If Mormons continue to insist that JS was inspired by God, critics might ask, “Which God? — the one who revealed the first revelations, or the one who revealed the later ones that contradicted the first?” (David Whitmer, see *An Address to All Believers in Christ*. Also *The Changing World of Mormonism*, online book, Chapter 3, <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech3.htm>)



Joseph made a career of retrofitting earlier revelations to make it appear as if church doctrines and practices were revealed by God incrementally, logically and sequentially, as described by the official history of the LDS church. He and apologists refer to this process of revising God's written word as continuing revelation. Others call it theological innovation, revelations of convenience, or creative imagination.

Smith also made contradictory revisions to the original doctrines in the Book of Mormon, as his theological views evolved. (1 Nephi 3 pp. 25, 26, 32 in the 1830 [original] version. Compare changes to current Book of Mormon version in 1 Nephi 11: 18, 21, 23, 40)



Joseph Smith created the Mormon Priesthood after organizing the church, but official church lesson materials do not include these troubling facts. His priesthood innovations were an extension of the practice of revising revelations to match his evolving theological ideas. LaMar Petersen explained, "The important details that are missing from the "full history" [of priesthood restoration] of 1834 are likewise missing

from the *Book of Commandments* in 1833. The student would expect to find all the particulars of the Restoration in this first treasured set of 65 revelations, the dates of which encompassed the bestowals of the two Priesthoods, but they are conspicuously absent.... The notable revelations on Priesthood in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Sections 2 and 13, are missing, and Chapter 28 gives no hint of the Restoration which, if actual, had been known for four years."

"More than four hundred words were added to this revelation [on priesthood] of August 1829 (Section 27 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*). The new material added the names of heavenly visitors and two separate ordinations. The *Book of Commandments* listed the duties of Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons and refers to Joseph's apostolic calling but there is no mention of Melchizedek Priesthood, High Priesthood, Seventies, High Priests, or High Councilors. These words were later inserted into the revelation on Church organization and government of April, 1830, making it appear that they were known at that date. But they do not appear in the original, Chapter 24 of the *Book of Commandments* three years later. Similar interpolations were made in the revelations known as Sections 42 and 68." (*Problems in Mormon Text*, by LaMar Petersen, pp. 7-8. See also Gregory A. Prince, *Power on High: The Development of the Mormon Priesthood*, Signature Books, 1995. D. Michael Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, Chapter 1, "The Evolution of Authority." *The Changing Story of Mormonism*, Chapter 16)



Mormons' official publications remove critical references to Joseph Smith's activities as a con man. Documents discovered in 1971 by Dr. Wesley Walters in Norwich, New York, verify that Joseph Smith was a "glass looker" and that he was arrested, tried and found guilty by a justice of the peace in Bainbridge, New York, in 1826 for this criminal activity.

LDS historian Dr. Francis W. Kirkham, refused to believe that Smith was a disreputable con man, who bilked people out of money with promises to find buried treasure through the use of a peep stone in a hat. He wrote, "If such a court record confession could be identified and proved, then it follows that his believers must deny his claimed divine guidance which led them to follow him.... How could he be a prophet of God, the leader of the Restored Church to these tens of thousands, if he had been the superstitious fraud which 'the pages from a book' declared he confessed to be?" (*A New Witness for Christ in America*, vol. 1, pp. 385-87 and pp. 486-87; and *The Changing World of Mormonism*, Chapter 4, "Joseph Smith and Money Digging." See also *Shadow or Reality?* pp. 35-36).

Hugh Nibley, famous dissembling LDS apologist also stated, "...if this court record is authentic it is the most damning evidence in existence against Joseph Smith." Dr. Nibley's book also states that if the authenticity of the court record could be established it would be "the most devastating blow to Smith ever delivered." (Hugh Nibley, *The Mythmakers* p. 142. See also *The Changing World of Mormonism*, Chapter 4, "Joseph Smith and Money Digging.")

In the 1826 court record Joseph Smith confessed that "for three years" prior to 1826 he had used a magic stone placed in his hat to find treasures or lost property. Mormon histories insist that a heavenly messenger revealed the presence of gold plates on September 21, 1823 to an innocent Joseph Smith, at the same time he was actually conning overly optimistic treasure seekers out of their money. Smith also swore that gold plates were buried in a hill near his Palmyra, New York home. He continued these deceptive practices for at least three of the four years after God was supposedly preparing him to receive the gold plates. According to apologists Kirkham and Nibley, these facts completely undermine the credibility of Mormonism's first prophet and founder. (Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*, Signature Books, 2004, pp. 80-86)



Official church histories refuse to supply the details of Smith's deception or the court records convicting him of glass looking. Church leaders insist that "some [historical] truths are not very useful" and they aggressively prevent attempts to publish a full and truthful history of Mormonism's actual origins. (Boyd K. Packer, "The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect," 1981, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 259-271)



LDS Historians are threatened and sometimes excommunicated if they publish an objective history rather than a faith promoting version (if they are employed for the church). Packer cited above, referred to objective histories of Mormonism as "disease germs." Most ethical historians regard deliberately inaccurate histories to be disease germs instead. (Ostling, Richard and Joan, *Mormon America*, pp. 351-370. *One Nation Under Gods*, Richard Abanes, pp. 417-419.) (See also **Grant Palmer** and http://www.i4m.com/think/grant_palmer.htm)



Joseph Smith claimed that he discovered gold plates with strange engravings, and special spectacles called "Interpreters." The LDS Church teaches members and investigators that he found a Urim and Thummim used to translate the golden plates. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urim_and_Thummim) This claim is not true.

In an 1885 interview, Zenas H. Gurley, the editor of the RLDS Saints' Herald, asked David Whitmer if Joseph Smith had used his peep stone to translate the plates. Whitmer, who offered his home to Smith and acted as a scribe for part of the translation of the Book of Mormon, replied that Smith gave the Interpreters back to an angel and used a peep stone or "Seers Stone" to **translate the Book of Mormon**; one that he had found while digging a well. It was an ordinary rock but Smith claimed it gave him the ability to see buried treasure. (*The Changing World of Mormonism*, pp. 80-83)

Martin Harris, who also acted as a scribe, lost the first **116 pages** of the Book of Mormon translation. He confirmed that Smith testified that the angel Moroni took back both the plates and the Interpreters. He claimed that the angel later returned the gold plates, but not the Interpreters. Harris confirmed that Smith stared at a rock placed in a hat to produce the present-day Book of Mormon.

(<http://mit.irr.org/translation-or-divination>) (To see actual photographs of Smith's favorite rocks, see pp. 324-325 of D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, revised and enlarged, Signature Books, SLC, 1998)



William W. Phelps first suggested in 1833 that perhaps the seer stones were the Urim and Thummim of the Old Testament (*The Evening and Morning Star*, Jan. 1833).

This lent more credibility to Smith's story. Historians for the church rewrote the historical accounts to make it appear that from the beginning the Interpreters or Smith's peep stone was referred to as the Urim and Thummim. This is more tasteful in the minds of some than referring to the instruments used to translate the Book of Mormon as "the peep stone Joseph found while digging a well." (*The Changing World of Mormonism*, pp. 80-83. See also comment by B.H. Roberts in *Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1, p. 129)



Official Mormon histories are not forthcoming about the statements by the three and eight witnesses respectively, who claim to have seen Smith's gold plates and handled them. The faith promoting histories do not inform investigators or members that their experience was one that took place in their imaginations or as they called it,

"spiritual eyes," "eyes of our understanding," "a supernatural vision," or "visions of the mind." Martin Harris (one of the 3 witnesses) testified publicly on March 25, 1838 that "none of the signatories to the Book of Mormon saw or handled the actual physical plates." He also indicated that Joseph prepared an affidavit beforehand and asked the witnesses to sign it. But because they had not seen a physical object, only a vision of them, some balked. They were finally persuaded by Joseph to sign.

David Whitmer also told Zenas Gurley Jr. on January 14, 1885 when asked if the witnesses actually touched "the real metal," "We did not." The witnesses handled "the plates" in a vision only, according to Whitmer. Such is the power of imagination. (Grant Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*, Chapter 6) There are other significant problems with the story of the 3 and 8 witnesses described by Palmer, for those interested in reading more.



The eight witnesses did not all imagine seeing the plates or angel at the same time as the church leads people to believe. The plates were imagined in two groups of four, not all 8 together as popularized in church paintings. (*Deseret Evening News*, 6 Aug. 1878, Letter to the editor from P. Wilhelm Poulson, M.D., typed transcript, p. 2) Only David Whitmer and perhaps Oliver Cowdery imagined the angel together. Martin

Harris removed himself from the group and did not imagine seeing the angel until some three days later. (Grant Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*, Chapter 6. Anthony Metcalf, *Ten Years Before the Mast*, n.d., microfilm copy, pp. 70-71) <http://www.exmormon.org/file9.htm>



The LDS Church misrepresents the method by which Joseph Smith authored the Book of Mormon. Quite unlike the explanations and images offered to members in official church publications, Joseph Smith never had gold plates in view when "translating," nor did he use an Old Testament instrument called the Urim and Thummim. (*The Changing World of Mormonism*, pp. 84-85)



Smith's "translation" method was the same he used to con people into believing he could locate subterranean treasure. He put his favorite magic rock in a hat, pulled the hat over his face, and rested his elbows on his knees, to read the English words and sentences that God placed on the stone, according to Smith's faithful scribes. These faithful scribes said the imaginary plates were never in view, in the same room, or often never in the house, when Smith was "translating." (Emma Smith, *The Saints' Herald*, May 19, 1888, p. 310; and *Saints' Herald*, November 15, 1962, p. 16. Martin Harris, *Historical Record*, by Andrew Jensen, p. 216. David Whitmer, *An Address To All Believers In Christ*, p. 12. Grant Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*)



This may explain why nothing ancient appears in a book that is supposed to be of ancient origin. It may also explain why large sections of faulty King James text are plentiful, and why virtually nothing Smith described about the life of ancient inhabitants of America is correct. Despite Apostle Russell M. Nelson's talk to a small, select group admitting that Joseph used the stone-in-the-hat method to **translate the Book of Mormon**, he failed to give sufficient salient details such as the fact that the plates were often never in the same room as Smith; and he never consulted the plates during his supposed translation. This begs the question which the church avoids: Why all the fuss about a set of golden plates and magic peep stones — including the threat of death to anyone who saw the plates without permission — if they were not in view and he did not use them as a reference? (Russell M. Nelson, "Adapted from an address given 25 June 1992 at a seminar for new mission presidents, Missionary Training Center, Provo, Utah," can be found at http://www.mormoncurtain.com/topic_russellmnelson.html#pub_-777766216)



The church suppressed damaging information that a general authority, considered to be the church's foremost expert on the Book of Mormon, admitted that Joseph Smith had the resources, imagination and ability to author the Book of Mormon. Brigham H. Roberts (1857-1933), an LDS General Authority (Council of Seventy) doubted that the Book of Mormon is a translation of ancient scripture, after researching troubling questions. Elder Roberts uncovered extensive evidence that Joseph Smith borrowed the basic plot and many details from other books. This evidence — long suppressed because it is considered harmful to the Mormon Church — is presented in detail in three essays by Roberts, now published as *Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992).

Some observations from B.H. Roberts' work:

It has been pointed out in these pages that there are many things in the former book [Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*] that might well have suggested many major things in the other. Not a few things merely, one or two, or half dozen, but many; and it is this fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon's origin ... The material in Ethan Smith's book is of a character and quantity to make a ground plan for the Book of Mormon (*Studies*, p. 240).

... was Joseph Smith possessed of a sufficiently vivid and creative imagination as to produce such a work as the Book of Mormon from such materials as have been indicated in the preceding chapters ...? That such power of imagination would have to be of a high order is conceded; that Joseph Smith possessed such a gift of mind there can be no question (*Studies*, p. 243).

[Roberts quoted J. Smith's mother's history of Joseph.] During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of travelings, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them (*Studies*, p. 243).[Joseph Smith recited the scenes well before his claim that gold plates existed with the same "history" of America.]

[Roberts concluded] These evening recitals could come from no other source than the vivid, constructive imagination of Joseph Smith, a remarkable power which attended him through all his life. It was as strong and varied as Shakespeare's and no more to be accounted for than the English Bard's (*Studies*, p. 244).

LIST OF DECEPTIONS TO PROTECT THE PRACTICE OF POLYGAMY

(NOS. 23–124)

The next section deals primarily with purposeful deception by church leaders to protect the practice of polygamy. The practice instigated an almost constant stream of untruths, lies, or prevarications. It also introduced the practice of systematic character assassination. Some apologists have excused the leaders' dishonesty, and praised them instead for their extreme dedication to a principle they believed was revealed by God. This kind of apologetic logic would praise those who strap bombs to their bodies or fly airplanes into skyscrapers driven by fanatical dedication to their particular religious beliefs.



One of Joseph Smith's first experiments with adultery began with a teen-age girl named Fanny Ward Alger who worked in the Smith home as a maidservant. William E. McLellin, Mormon Apostle, indicated that Emma Smith "looked through a crack and saw the transaction" in the barn. (Richard Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, 2nd edition, Signature Books, 1989, pp. 4-11)

The affair led to a severe rift between loyal follower Oliver Cowdery and Joseph. Cowdery referred to Smith's indulgences with Fanny Alger as "A dirty, nasty, filthy affair." Church leaders and loyal defenders avoid linking Smith with his adultery by calling it an authorized "plural marriage." Todd Compton, author of, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, 2nd edition, notes that in February or March of 1833, when Joseph was 27 and Fanny Alger 17, he had sexual relations with her. After Emma found out about Joseph's secret love affair, she turned Fanny out of their house, where she had been working as a servant. (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 34-36) It has been noted that calling it a marriage instead of an affair raises more disturbing questions. Polygamous marriages were not legal in Ohio, the man who performed the ceremony had no authority to perform the illegal marriage, and Smith had not claimed any "revelations" or authority directing him to enter into polygamous marital arrangements in 1833-1835.



The LDS Church led by Joseph Smith, canonized monogamy as God's marriage arrangement and then did an about-face, adopting polygamy as God's recommended mode of marriage (D&C 42:22-24 and 132). Rumors about the Fanny Alger affair and rumors of another affair with Vienna Jacques, led to the development of an "Article on Marriage" in 1835, to convince members and non-members alike that Mormons were as Christian as others, and did not engage in abominations like polygamy. LDS leaders presented it to the general assembly of the church on August 17, 1835 and the Article was canonized as scripture and placed in the Doctrine and Covenants where it remained until 1876. It acknowledged that the church [Joseph Smith] had been "reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy" and declared that "we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband..." (Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe*, Doubleday & Co. Garden City, NY, 1984, p. 67) The question arises again: Which of Joseph's revelations was "inspired," the one recommending monogamy or the one recommending polygamy?



Joseph Smith institutionalized the practice of lying, so church leaders could deny the practice of taking multiple wives and keep Smith out of legal trouble. Sober-faced lies permitted leaders to deceive with a clear conscience; believing that God permitted and even encouraged lying to protect the principle of plural marriage.

An article from the 1886 *Deseret News* listed the code words and the rationale for their use. When accused of practicing “polygamy” Joseph and Hyrum denied it because it was different than “*celestial marriage*” and “*a plurality of wives.*” Polygamy was after all, a doctrine of men and the devil. “*Celestial marriage*” was different Smith reasoned, because it was a holy doctrine revealed by God. Joseph wanted followers to believe that the two terms were completely dissimilar. Other code words were, “*eternal marriage,*” “*the divine order of marriage,*” “*Holy order of marriage,*” “*living up to your privileges,*” “*new and everlasting covenant,*” and “*a different view of things.*”

If accusers did not frame their allegations using precisely the right terms, the leaders felt justified in prevaricating. If the accusers framed their words perfectly, the leaders lied anyway. Their view was that it was more important to live the higher law — loyalty to the Prophet — than to expose the truth to Gentiles. A prominent feature of Mormonism is that loyalty trumps honesty. (Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, p. 113. See also B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*, University of Illinois Press, 1992, p. 365.) For an excellent treatment of loyalty and obedience vs. honesty see the following:

http://i4m.com/think/leaders/mormon_loyalty.htm

http://i4m.com/think/leaders/come_clean.htm



Vienna Jacques of Nauvoo heard rumors about “spiritual wifery.” She wanted Emma to ask Joseph “if the rumors were true. Was “spiritual wifery” a doctrine of the church?” Emma asked and relayed Joseph’s answer. Vienna reported, “he, [Joseph] had told her [Emma] to tell the sisters of the [Women’s Relief] society ... “the whole idea was absolutely false and the doctrine an evil and unlawful thing.” Joseph was secretly practicing plural marriage at the time. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 114)



Contrary to the traditional LDS claim that the first wife had to first give her consent in order for her husband to take another wife, Emma Smith was unaware of nearly all of Joseph’s “marriages” to other women. Eliza Snow, secretary to Emma in the Relief Society organization, as well as Sarah Cleveland, Emma’s counselor, who was legally married to John Cleveland, were secretly married to Joseph, and Emma knew nothing about the marriages. According to Newell and Avery, “To live as a secret wife to a friend’s husband demanded evasion, subterfuge, and deception.” (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 119)



Joseph Smith secretly married 17 year old Sarah Ann Whitney in August 1842 without Emma’s knowledge or consent. He had no intention of confessing his conduct to Emma. He wrote to her parents who approved of the marriage, “The only thing to be careful of is to find out when Emma comes, then you cannot be safe, but when she is not here, there is the most perfect safety... Burn this letter as soon as you read it.” (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 125)



The *Times and Seasons*, August 1842 published an article defending Joseph. It quoted church scripture, the Doctrine and Covenants. "... We declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband. We know of no other rule or system of marriage." The purpose of the article was to deny that Joseph had taught John C. Bennett the concept of spiritual wifery, after Bennett seduced several women in Nauvoo under the guise of God-inspired polygamy.

Many of those who signed the declaration of monogamy were secretly practicing polygamy. Joseph had taught Bennett the principle, and the signatories knew it. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 128) Mormons used the term *spiritual wifery* (the ungodly form of plural marriage, in their minds) as an excuse to deny the charges. But faithful Mormons used the term themselves to describe the "right" version of polygamy before and after their exodus to Salt Lake. (B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*, University of Illinois Press, 1992, p. 365)



Joseph deceived Emma when he married two other women (probably Martha McBride Knight and Ruth Vose Sayers) without her knowledge or consent in the winter of 1842-43. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 134 and note 13)



Joseph secretly proposed to 19-year-old Nancy Rigdon in Nauvoo in 1842 when Smith was 36 years-old. She declined, so Joseph recruited another LDS woman to convince Nancy. She rejected that attempt too and insisted that she be permitted to leave the locked room.

Smith dictated a letter and tried to convince her that God revealed the practice, and a commandment to take multiple wives. Part of his letter read like a manifesto for situational ethics that modern LDS leaders condemn: "That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire." Nancy showed the letter to her father, Sidney Rigdon. When Sidney questioned Joseph about it, he denied the whole affair. Joseph admitted to it only when Sidney showed Joseph his letter. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 119, and Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 2nd edition pp. 32-33)



Martha Brotherton, an 18 year-old convert from England, emigrated to Nauvoo, Illinois in 1842 with her parents. Brigham Young approached Joseph Smith to ask if he could add Martha as another plural wife. Smith agreed and called a meeting with Young and Martha. She knew nothing of the agreement between them beforehand. Her parents were not informed or invited, though she would be regarded as a dependent minor today.

After Smith and Young made great efforts to persuade her, Martha refused. They encouraged her to lie to her parents and keep their proposal a secret and tried again to convince her to accept Brigham's proposal. Martha finally appealed to them through tears and pleading that she be given time to think about the offer.

After being sworn to secrecy and permitted to leave the room, Martha revealed everything to her parents and wrote the events while the important details were fresh in her mind. She told others in Nauvoo about the episode before the family boarded a steamboat bound for St. Louis. She published her account in a St. Louis newspaper (*St. Louis Bulletin*, July 15, 1842, p. 2).

Smith, stung by the article, immediately denied that the events Martha described took place. He also issued false affidavits and statements that labeled Martha not only a liar, but also an apostate and “mean harlot.” Smith used lies to commit character assassination when he thought the situation warranted it; no matter how young his victim was. (Arza Evans, *The Keystone of Mormonism*, Keystone Books Inc., 2003, St. George Utah, pp. 20-21.)



Joseph Smith circulated false, lurid stories designed to blacken the character of others he considered enemies. Lies and character assassination convinced gullible members that Smith’s character was unimpeachable and rumors of his adultery were unfounded. In an article in the church publication, *Messenger and Advocate* (June 18, 1845) Sidney Rigdon acknowledged that Parley P. Pratt, advised church leaders how to support Smith, and advised that “we must lie to support brother Joseph, it is our duty to do so.”



Zeruiah Goddard, signed a false statement vilifying Sarah Pratt. It was added to other slanderous and libelous statements as part of a smear campaign against Sarah; orchestrated by Smith after she refused his advances. Goddard confessed to Sarah years later that Hyrum Smith (Joseph's brother), “came to our house with affidavits all written out, and forced us to sign them. Joseph and the Church must be saved, said he.

We saw that resistance was useless, they would have ruined us; so we signed the papers.” Church leaders felt comfortable breaking civil laws to promote polygamy, were willing to lie to protect polygamy, and willing to resort to character assassination in the form of slander and libel, against any who exposed Joseph’s secret, unjustifiable behavior. (Richard Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, 2nd edition, p. 34 and Footnote 12, p. 38)



On March 4, 1843 Joseph deceived Emma when he secretly married 19 year-old Emily Partridge. Emily was happy to comply and said, “Of course I would keep his secret.” At some point, Emma weakened and gave Joseph, Emily and Eliza Partridge as plural wives. She may have misunderstood, and believed that Joseph would never consummate the marriages. Joseph participated in the fake ceremony, but neglected to tell Emma that he had already secretly married the two sisters some time before. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 138)



On May 1, 1843, Joseph deceived Emma and others when he married 17 year-old Lucy Walker while Emma was away in St. Louis. Lucy admitted that Emma was not present and she did not consent to the marriage; “she did not know anything about it at all.” (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 139)



Without Emma’s knowledge or consent, Joseph secretly “slept” with young Emily Partridge according to her own testimony under oath. She testified that she “roomed” with Joseph while Emma was somewhere else in the house on the night of their second marriage. Some experts are convinced Emma did not understand that Joseph would have sexual relations with the two sisters Emma presented to him. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 144)



For information indicating that Joseph consummated his multiple marriages, despite LDS apologists’ protests to the contrary, see http://i4m.com/think/history/joseph_smith_sex.htm



According to Benjamin F. Johnson, living in Ramus, Illinois, on May 16, 1843 Joseph shared a room with the “daughter [Eliza] of the late Bishop Partridge.” He did it without the knowledge or consent of Emma, or members of the church. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 145) Current members of the church refer to his kind of lie as a sin of omission.



Joseph deceived Emma and the members of the church when he proposed to 14 year-old Helen Mar Kimball as a plural wife. She agreed to marry Joseph because he told her that it “will ensure your eternal salvation and exaltation and that ... of your father’s household and all of your kindred.” She remarked, “I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward.” She later admitted that she may have been deceived by her parents as well as Joseph. She stated, “I would have never been sealed to Joseph, had I known it was anything more than a ceremony.” It is mind-boggling that Joseph Smith placed the responsibility for Helen’s salvation and the salvation of her family, squarely on her young shoulders; in order to persuade (coerce?) her to submit to his bizarre proposal. She was 14 years and 11 months old. Modern Fundamentalist polygamists have been convicted for using identical tactics. (*Mormon Enigma*, pp. 146-147; *In Sacred Loneliness*, p. 499)



Joseph Smith persuaded some women and girls to marry him by convincing them that he had been commanded by an angel with a drawn sword to take multiple wives. “Joseph was commanded to take more wives and he waited until **an angel with a drawn sword stood before him** and declared that if he longer delayed fulfilling that command he would slay him.” – Hyrum Smith, **Elder Benjamin F. Johnson’s Letter to George S. Gibbs, 1903** (link can be found at http://i4m.com/think/history/angel_sword.htm) One is reminded of the old line used by inept hustlers trying to pick up girls, “I work for the CIA!”



Joseph’s polygamous activities were unknown to the vast majority of the saints in Nauvoo because of his public and private prevarications. He publicly denied that he practiced plural marriage, showing the ability to consciously mislead his devoted followers without remorse. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 147, and *Mormon Polygamy*, pp. 20-21) When Joseph was confronted about being married to other wives in Nauvoo he protested, “What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.” In fact, he was sealed to dozens of women at the time. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 365)



Cyrus Walker defended Joseph in court after an arrest. In exchange, Joseph promised to deliver “the Mormon vote” to Cyrus (a Whig) when he ran for Congress. Joseph reneged on his promise by stating that Hyrum had received a revelation to vote for the opposition party (Mr. Hoge, a Democrat). Joseph testified that Hyrum had never received a false revelation, and in effect, directed the church members to vote for the candidate that Hyrum supported instead of Cyrus Walker. Cyrus did not forget Smith’s antics. Cyrus and others in the party (the Whigs) vowed to drive the Mormons out of the state. Official versions of church history fail to reveal Joseph’s duplicity. (*Mormon Enigma*, pp. 148, 151. Also *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, George D. Smith editor, Signature Books, 1995, p. 114)



Joseph privately told William Clayton to keep a particular plural wife knowing that the membership would be troubled about it if they found out, since most of the saints believed Joseph's repeated denials about polygamy. Joseph cautioned Clayton that if "they raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging and probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptize you and set you ahead as good as ever." (*An Intimate Chronicle*, p. 122) Members of the church are unaware that fake church discipline and excommunication were effective methods of deception used to shape public perception, and maintain control of the flock.



Official Mormon histories fail to inform readers of the competition to get as many plural wives as one could. William Clayton, secretary to Joseph Smith wrote on August 11, 1843 that with regard to marrying additional wives, Joseph told him, "You have a right to get all you can." (*An Intimate Chronicle*, p. 115) Those who accuse Smith of treating women like chattel use this incident as evidence. Other examples exist in the speeches of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, made after the saints migrated to the West.



After receiving a promise from Joseph that he would stop the practice of polygamy (a lie), Emma Smith publicly announced that Joseph supported only the traditional standards of Christian marriage — one husband and one wife — as stated in the Doctrine & Covenants. However, he secretly confided to some that he had no intention of keeping his promise to Emma. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 175) William Clayton recorded in his journal that "Joseph told me that since E[mma] came back from St. Louis she had resisted the P[riesthood] in toto and he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake.... He however told me he should not relinquish anything." (*An Intimate Chronicle* p. 117); Emma had apparently threatened Joseph with divorce in order to prevent the practice of plural marriage, so Joseph lied to keep her from divorcing him. Official LDS curriculum and histories portray Joseph and Emma as a happy married couple.



In August 1843, Emma discovered that sixteen-year-old Flora Woodworth was carrying a gold watch that Joseph had given her. Emma realized the implications and demanded that Flora give the watch back. Smith reprimanded her, but Emma refused to be quiet in the carriage ride home. William Clayton said that Joseph had to employ "harsh measures" to stop her complaining. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 159) It also raises the question of whether or not Joseph used both physical force and lies to avoid divorce. (*An Intimate Chronicle*, p. 118)



The official history of the church states that the Relief Society was officially disbanded in 1844 shortly after being organized, "due to the various calamities that befell the saints." Those writing the official history as well as the leaders of the church knew it was actually disbanded because Emma Smith was an outspoken opponent of polygamy. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 175) Joseph's public discourses and written ones (a letter from the presidency and an article entitled, "*The Voice of Innocence*," written by W. W. Phelps with Joseph's supervision), denied that polygamy was part of the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints. These documents were read in Relief Society meetings in Nauvoo and recommended as the standard by which saints should conduct themselves. Joseph needed to silence Emma and take away her forum. She quoted his denials as evidence that polygamy was not an inspired principle and not practiced by Smith. (*Mormon Enigma*, p. 175) Official histories refuse to tell the real story.



Official Mormon histories, though aware of the marital arrangements, withheld information about Joseph's polygamous marriages — namely that nearly a dozen of his first polygamous wives were legally married to other men at the time of their marriage to Joseph (polyandry). They have never admitted that Joseph practiced polyandry. (Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, Signature Books, 1997 Introduction. See also

http://www.i4m.com/think/history/Joseph_Smith_mens_wives.htm) Church instructional manuals often portray early church leaders as monogamists, and refuse to disclose their penchant for deception.



Official Mormon histories deceive readers by failing to point out that Joseph exercised poor judgment, to say it most kindly, in choosing his friends and other church leaders. William Clayton's journal entry for May 16, 1843 records the following: "President J[oseph] said that the way he knew in whom to confide, God told him in whom he might place confidence." Many of Joseph's closest associates and those he trusted most brought damage to him and the church. John C. Bennett of Nauvoo was a classic example, yet Mormon histories reject the opportunity to fully investigate these inconsistencies, choosing instead to portray Joseph as the noble prophet who could discern the intentions of peoples' hearts. (*Intimate Chronicle* p. 102)



Official Mormon histories have portrayed plural marriages as being as normal and as affectionate as monogamous marriages. Some may have been. However, Zina Diantha Huntington, when interviewed by a journalist from the *New York World*, in 1869, drew a distinction between romantic love and plural marriage. Commenting on women who were unhappy in their polygamous marriages, she said they "expect too much attention from the husband and ... become sullen and morose..." She insisted that the successful polygamous wife, "must regard her husband with indifference, and with no other feeling than that of reverence, for love we regard as a false sentiment; a feeling which should have no existence in polygamy." Lucy Walker, who had been sealed for time to Heber C. Kimball, after the death of Joseph Smith said, "There was not any love in the union between myself and Kimball, and it is my business entirely whether there was any courtship or not... It was the principle of plural marriage that we were trying to establish, a great and glorious true principle." (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 108, 466-467)



Joseph lied about lying when the *Expositor* was published in Nauvoo, accusing him of lying. During the city council debate over some allegations made in the *Expositor*, Joseph declared that he had not kept the doctrine of polygamy secret but had taught it openly. This was patently false. William Clayton recorded that Emma Smith told him "it was the secret things which had cost Joseph and Hyrum their lives." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 367) Joseph's inability to spin so many yarns at one time eventually cost him his life.



Smith practiced polyandry but this fact is not published in official church instructional manuals. Brigham Young continued the practice after the martyrdom of Smith. In a particularly compelling example, which the church would understandably wish to suppress, Young wanted Zina D. Huntington Jacobs. Smith had taken her as a plural wife with her husband Jacob's consent while six months pregnant in October 1841. Henry Jacobs believed that "whatever the Prophet did was right." Zina and Henry continued to live together as husband and wife though she would belong to Joseph Smith in eternity. (*Mormon Polygamy*, p. 45) It gets more bizarre.

During the Mormon trek west, at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa Brigham declared to Henry Jacobs, “the woman you claim for a wife does not belong to you. She is the spiritual wife of brother Joseph, sealed up to him. I am his proxy, and she, in this behalf, with her children are my property. You can go where you please, and get another but be sure to get one of your own kindred spirit.” (Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* 2nd Edition, p. 44)

Young, using his authority as the Lord’s mouthpiece on earth, ordered Jacobs to leave and go to England, to serve a mission for the church. Brigham took Zina. Henry was sick and his low spirits robbed him of his health. He loved Zina and wrote letters expressing his love for her.

Astonishingly he also remained faithful to Brigham Young. In a letter he wrote, “I do not blame any person or person, no — May the Lord our Father bless Brother Brigham and all pertains unto him forever...tell him for me I have no feelings against him nor never had...” (*Mormon Polygamy: A History*, p. 45). The trappings of plural marriage are cited as one reason the LDS church is still viewed by many as a cult. Polygamous behavior in LDS history resembles or even surpasses the exploits of Warren Jeffs, who was arrested and convicted for his crimes.



Lying became such an integral practice with the Latter-day Saints, church leaders instructed members how to lie about polygamy, according to the testimony of members given under oath. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 365)



Loyalty was more important than honesty in the early church, and is still considered more vital than truth. Joseph’s instruction to the Twelve in 1839 was that above all else, “do not betray your Friend.” He frequently reminded members that they should honor friendships above all else even to death.

Currently, members are reminded often, under the guise of obedience to God, to “exhibit unquestioning faith,” code words for blind loyalty and obedience. (Elder Robert Oaks, “*Believe All Things*,” Ensign, July 2005, page 30; http://www.i4m.com/think/leaders/mormon_loyalty.htm)

The bold commandment to avoid critical thinking, abandon healthy skepticism, and blindly obey church leaders is another reason some outside the LDS church view it as a cult. Many mainstream religious groups encourage critical thinking and questioning beliefs and practices.



While the Danites (a Mormon vigilante group) were active in Missouri (1838) Justus Morse described how he and others were directed to help out a friend by lying; and to “do it with such positiveness and assurance that no one would question our testimony.” The greatest of evils according to Joseph in an 1839 address to the 12 were “sinning against the Holy Ghost and proving a traitor to the brethren.” Smith confided that he deceived the saints by keeping secrets from them because they were “little children” unable to “bear all things now.” Joseph counseled the Relief Society Sisters not to be overzealous in their search for wrongdoing and to be charitable toward the accused, after counseling them to seek out evil-doers months earlier. Stories about adultery and spiritual wifery especially aggravated him. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 365-366)

One would think that sexual predatory practices, raping and sexually assaulting teen aged girls in Nauvoo would have caused him to list this sin as one of the most abominable. Since he was engaged in the practice of preying on teens, it likely did not occur to him.



In a well-publicized debate between John Taylor and a Protestant minister in 1850, John Taylor denied that the Mormons practiced polygamy. At the time, he was the husband of multiple wives. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 367) In a public discussion in Boulogne-Sur-Mer, France, he claimed, "... I shall content myself by reading our views of chastity and marriage, from a work published by us, containing some of the articles of our Faith. Doctrine and Covenants, page 330 ... Inasmuch as this Church of Jesus Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again" (Tract published by John Taylor in 1850, p. 8; found in *Orson Pratt's Works*, 1851 edition. Found in *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pp. 261-262).

Taylor knew that the real revelation on marriage was the one on plural marriage, but refused to admit it to his audience.



Orson Pratt admitted that when called upon to defend the practice of polygamy, he deliberately misled his listeners. He did not consider this to be lying. It was done to protect a law higher than man's misguided laws. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 367) Official LDS histories are not forthcoming about the role of lying as a defense for polygamous marriages.



Charles W. Penrose, Apostle and Counselor to two Presidents of the Church, admitted that after Joseph Smith's death, certain facts about him were purposely withheld from church publications "for prudential reasons." Expediency became a more important virtue than honesty; deception was accepted as a necessary tool, while grass roots members were commanded to be honest and disciplined for dishonesty. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 367) Currently LDS historians are excommunicated precisely because they have written honest histories. <http://www.exmormon.org/mormon/mormon420.htm>



At the Mountain Meadows Massacre September 11, 1857, 120 innocent men, women and children as young as eight years old, in an Arkansas wagon train party were murdered in cold blood by Mormon church leaders and members. Amasa Lyman and George A. Smith, Mormon Apostles, accused members who wanted to honestly testify to the facts of the case of stooping "to betray and expose their brethren into the hands of their enemies." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 367)

To Mormon leaders, anyone who cooperated with law enforcement authorities investigating the murders was guilty of the sin of betrayal. Betrayal was worse than the massacre of 120 innocent men, women and children in the minds of Apostles Smith and Lyman. The events of 9-11-2001 are eerily similar to 9-11-1857. Both acts of senseless murder were the result of fanatical and unquestioning obedience to religious authority. (Will Bagley, *The Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, pp. 157, 176-177)



Lying was so prevalent as an institutional practice among church members during the 1860's-1880's, that John D. Hicks alleged that when "polygamists were prohibited from voting, the Mormons promptly swore that they were not polygamists; when those who taught or practiced polygamy were discriminated against, everybody immediately became silent on the subject; and when members of organizations which advocated polygamy were denied the ballot, they withdrew...

from the Mormon Church" to become eligible to vote. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 368) This is reminiscent of the fake excommunication Joseph proposed to William Clayton in Nauvoo mentioned above.



Mormon "children in theocratic, territorial and polygamous Utah were taught to lie about family relationships, their parents' whereabouts, and even their own last names." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 368) Mormon parents are conscientious about teaching their children to be honest and to unquestioningly obey the LDS prophets and local leaders. (Apostle M. Russell Ballard, "His Word Ye Shall Receive," *Ensign*, May 2001, p. 65) http://www.i4m.com/think/leaders/mormon_loyalty.htm



In a letter to President John Taylor in 1887, Charles W. Penrose, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, expressed concern that "the endless subterfuges and prevarications which our present condition impose ... threaten to make our rising generation a race of deceivers." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 368)



While lobbying on behalf of the First Presidency in Washington, in 1887 for Utah statehood, Franklin S. Richards and John T. Caine prevaricated stating that polygamy was a "dead issue" in Utah and that it wouldn't be revived. They attempted to explain away the church's position on polygamy by saying that plurality was not a commandment and that "celestial" and "plural" marriages were not the same thing.

This was wholly untrue yet their conduct received approval from the First Presidency. Apostle John Taylor admitted to church members in Nephi, Utah that the statements made in Washington were a "d--d lie." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 369) Duplicity on the part of church leaders was not reserved only for those outside the church. It was served up to members as well. Current members are not informed in *official church histories* of the numerous lies promulgated by their revered prophets and apostles.



When explaining whether recommends were being issued to members to marry polygamously, one church authority said that "he no longer gave recommends for marrying plural wives but gave them for obtaining *whatever blessings the Lord might bestow.*" He used these code words to subtly affirm that indeed recommends for plural marriage were still being issued, after assuring the American public that they weren't. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 370)

Current members are encouraged to practice evasive missionary techniques when dealing with difficult questions from skeptics because they "need milk before meat." These are 20th and 21st century code words that encourage modern-day Mormons to practice lying by omission. Missionaries (formal and informal) routinely are taught to disregard the principle of informed consent.



The Manifesto of 1890 prohibiting polygamy, was in fact another attempt to dupe the U.S. government and to some extent, ordinary church members into believing that the LDS church intended to comply with the mandate of the government to abandon polygamy. Church members at that time generally fell into two groups: (1) those who believed that the leaders only pretended to give in to government pressure to obtain statehood, and (2) those who believed that the Manifesto was necessary as a hedge against discovery of the true facts about polygamy in Utah.

Church leaders believed that if once given statehood, polygamy could be legalized by creating a provision for it in the new state constitution. A fervent belief in a strict interpretation of states' rights, fed their illusion. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 370) That church leaders chose to aggressively pursue lying as a strategy is unfortunate.



Thomas J. Rosser was a missionary in Wales in 1908. He asked his mission president Charles W. Penrose if the 1890 Manifesto banning plural marriage was a revelation from God. Making “no” into a long answer, Penrose replied, “Brethren, I will answer that question, if you will keep it under your hats. I Charles W. Penrose wrote the manifesto with the assistance of Frank J. Cannon and John White... Wilford Woodruff signed it to beat the devil at his own game.”

The Manifesto, authored by Penrose, was submitted to a committee — Judges Charles S. Zane, C.S. Varian, and O.W. Powers, (nonmembers). The wording was changed slightly and the document was recopied by a clerk named Green. (Samuel Taylor, *The Rocky Mountain Empire*, New York, NY, MacMillan, 1978, p. 35)

Official LDS histories and curriculum lead ordinary members to believe that the Manifesto was a sacred communication from God to church president Wilford Woodruff. The curriculum materials do not inform members that ample documentation exists to prove that the 1890 Manifesto was one more trick to beat the devil (federal government), as Penrose suggested. It was anything but sacred communication between God and the LDS prophet. (D. Michael Quinn, *LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985)



In 1903 Wiley Nebeker of Afton, Wyoming wrote to Apostle John Henry Smith complaining that the church made use of deceit and duplicity to further the practice of polygamy, while assuring the federal government that church leaders no longer condoned the practice. He wrote, “To be plain, while I am fully converted to the belief that this is a true principle, I am not converted to the idea that the Lord justifies deceit and falsehood.” He did not believe saints ought to be forced into “apologizing to our own consciences.” In response, Apostle Smith perpetuated the dishonesty by serving up more disinformation. Rather than address the central issue of lying, Smith told Nebeker that the doctrine was true but no longer being practiced. This was a calculated lie. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 371)



Florence, a daughter of Anthony W. Ivins asked her mother why her father seemed so upset following a meeting of the Apostles and the First Presidency. Her mother told her that President Smith had said something in the meeting that greatly disturbed her father. President Smith said, he “would lie any day to save [his] ... brother.” Florence said that it was her opinion that her father was troubled over the remark for

the rest of his life. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 372) LDS histories refuse to be forthcoming about the important role that lying and duplicity played in church governance.



Deception as a management tool was frequently discussed in the leading councils of the church so leaders were counseled not to record notes from meetings in their personal diaries. President Joseph F. Smith was afraid that someone might read the diaries of George Q. Cannon and Abraham H. Cannon and use the information against the church. To this day, the church leaders refuse to allow researchers to examine the unabridged, uncensored diary of George Q. Cannon because of damaging evidence, proving that Church leaders did engage in institutionalized, systematic deceit. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 372)



After the 1890 Manifesto banning plural marriage, it appears that at least 250 plural marriages were performed despite repeated denials on the part of the church leadership. The church's current misinformation policy is effective because church members today and the media are still more likely than not, to believe that the Manifesto was a good faith effort on the part of church leaders to terminate the practice of polygamy. John Henry Smith is alleged to have remarked that the Manifesto was only "a trick to beat the devil at his own game." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, p. 13. *Solemn Covenant*, p. 392) Church histories do not provide this information to ordinary members.



During the 1890's the church tried to answer the criticism of opponents that a theocracy existed in Utah and church leaders controlled all elections. So leaders instructed members to pretend to align with different political parties. George Q. Cannon was asked about the degree of honesty in this strategy. He said that the potential political gains that could be achieved made sincerity irrelevant in this case. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 372) The church motto seems to have been, "act sincere even if you don't mean it." Official church histories choose not to provide this information to inquiring members.



Matthias F. Cowley stated in a hearing before the Quorum of the Twelve in 1911, that he had been chastised for asking for permission to pre-date post-1890 plural marriages to make them appear to have occurred before the Manifesto. He said he was trying to follow the "training I have had from those over me," which was to act with duplicity without asking for permission, in order to preserve the image of plausible deniability for the church hierarchy. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 373) Plausible deniability is an important tool used by current church leaders.



Ironically, after claiming that he had been taught to lie by previous leaders, Matthias F. Cowley also claimed "I am not dishonest and not a liar and have always been true to the work and to the brethren... We have always been taught that when the brethren were in a tight place that it would not be amiss to lie to help them out." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 373) The ability to compartmentalize reached its peak in the minds of church leaders who idolized Joseph Smith and who jostled with the federal government over polygamy. Currently, church history and curriculum writers continue to follow the same recipe for success. They refuse to tell the truth about church history, leaving out uncomfortable truths that would require them to answer members' questions about the character of past LDS leaders. By refusing to publish unvarnished church history and curriculum, leaders and members can deny knowledge about unsavory historical truths, while pretending that those episodes did not occur.



Related to the above quote, Cowley quoted a member of the First Presidency who he said had taught him that “he [the member of the First Presidency] would lie like hell to help the brethren.” (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 373) Many observers wonder if the same ethic is still in place today.



Despite consistent denials that church leaders demanded complete and blind obedience, members were commanded that they should subordinate their judgment to that of their priesthood leaders. Leaders dictated matters from the most trivial to the most profound and far reaching. In fact, men refusing to go on missions were once told that they should anticipate relinquishing their wives for refusing to obey the Brethren. This is at odds with the claim by modern leaders and apologists that members of the LDS Church have always been counseled to exercise their own agency and think for themselves. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 373) This tension exists currently between one’s individual agency and the church’s demands for blind obedience, loyalty and conformity.



Modern leaders of the church have used general conference as a platform to condemn the practice of situational ethics. Yet Joseph Smith’s letter to Nancy Rigdon sent to convince her to become a plural wife is the epitome of situational ethics. It said, “That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire.... But in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted.”

Mormons often translate teachings about unquestioning obedience, and treating leaders as infallible into: “You don’t question things. If the leaders suggest it, you obey and you will be blessed.” This principle and practice tends to relegate honesty to a lower priority than blind obedience and conformity to Church leaders. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 374. *Mormon Polygamy*, p. 32. For excellent examples see http://www.i4m.com/think/leaders/mormon_loyalty.htm)



Henry S. Tanner explained that when he was forced to lie to protect himself or the church then the word he spoke (lies told to civil authorities under oath) had no binding power. He believed that the Mormons would be regarded by God as having made no promises nor be accountable for lies told to protect the church. Tanner and others blamed the government for making them lie. Lying was elevated from duplicity and degraded communication to a religious duty. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 374-375) Modern church history is silent regarding this practice.



Carl A. Badger, who was not a church member, acted as a friend and counselor to the church leaders during the Smoot hearings (1903-1907). During those hearings it was discovered that the church leaders had lied and deceived the federal government about its intentions to rid the church of polygamy for decades. Badger concluded that the church had decided that some things were more important than honesty. He said that the result was moral confusion. George D. Kirby, writing in the *Improvement Era* in 1910, admitted as much when he answered charges that Mormons were deceitful. He wrote that there might be “truth in the charges.” (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 376) Current LDS histories reject the suggestion to be forthcoming about church leaders’ dishonesty and duplicity.



United States Senators participating in the Smoot hearings where church leaders repeatedly and systematically lied under oath, determined that the decision to lie to protect polygamy and church leaders' practice of it, ultimately led to charges of casuistry, secrecy, and moral contradiction. Many concluded that Mormon leaders consistently stood for honesty as long as their own affairs were not involved — or when it was convenient. A gentile expressed it this way, "When any of us [non-members] sin ... we sin for our own sakes." But when a saint lied, it was done "for Christ's sake." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 376)



The Salt Lake Tribune was at odds with the LDS church's duplicity in the late 19th century as it related to polygamy and the Church's control of civil government. Adding to the disgust of *Tribune* editors was that the church claimed to be the Lord's special vessel of truth, but so often refused to live up to the honor. *Tribune* editors rejected the claim that institutionalized lying and deception was necessary to protect the Lord's church. The paper claimed something hard to refute; that it was impossible "for a Mormon Elder to be a new polygamist without at the same time being a liar." Church leaders compounded the problem by claiming that they had always been honest. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 377) Current LDS leaders face the same problem.



Mormons were inventive in their ability to distort the truth and at the same time, convince themselves that they were honest. B. Carmon Hardy has written, "In addition to semantic usages such as union and sealing, thus permitting denials of plural *marriage*, reference has also been made to instances involving the marrying of two wives on the same day; reliance on the fact that women were always *sealed* to men, allowing their husbands to deny that *they* had married polygamously; use of proxies; marrying a new wife legally, after the death of a prior legal spouse, while maintaining relationships with earlier plurals; the performance of ceremonies at sea or in foreign countries; and resort to concubinage. The variety of ruses employed will never fully be numbered." (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 377) Modern church history and curriculum continue the duplicity by refusing to fully admit to the lies of the past leaders.



John Taylor claimed to have received a revelation in 1886. He declared that God revealed that those wishing to inherit the highest degree of the celestial kingdom must continue to live the principle of plural marriage, no matter what pressure was brought to bear against them by the federal government and its laws. Ironically, modern polygamists point to the same divine revelation as their commission to carry out the dictate of the Lord's anointed, in order to keep plural marriage alive until the millennium. They also use lies, deception and codes to mislead law officers. Dorothy Allred Solomon confessed, "Although we were reared to treasure truth and cling to the light, our way of life was filled with secrets." This readiness to deceive has been referred to as "Mormon logic." Sometimes they "disobey a lesser law to keep a higher one."

Another irony is that modern members are highly critical of the tactics of the modern polygamists, who borrowed the tactics from Mormon polygamists in the 1800's. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 378)



One subtle way of deceiving government agents was for church members to say that the *church* had abandoned polygamy. But individual priesthood leaders might still take new wives. Thus the rationale was that though the *church* had abandoned the practice, *the priesthood* had not. This allowed church leaders to act in a dual role—either as corporate spokesman or individual priesthood holder. At least as far back as

President John Taylor, it was understood by some that the responsibility for encouraging plural marriage had been taken from the church and extended to everybody “upon his own responsibility.” (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 378-379) This reasoning is why polygamy among fundamentalist Mormons is alive and well today.



Apostle John W. Taylor married Janet Maria Wooley as his third wife only four days after the Manifesto banning plural marriage was presented and accepted in general conference. They married in a carriage in Liberty Park at night in Salt Lake City. The family intentionally backdated the marriage date to 10 October 1889. Apostle John W.

Taylor married Rhoda and Roxie Welling on 29 August 1901 (11 years after the Manifesto). The ceremony was performed at the Taylor home in Farmington, Utah. Joseph F. Smith, who was acting as a counselor in the First Presidency, gave permission. The subterfuge was regarded as virtuous and necessary by church leaders. (*Solemn Covenant* pp. 206-207) Lying for convenience’ sake was strikingly similar to lying for Christ’s sake.



Apostle Brigham Young Jr. took a plural wife the year before the 1890 Manifesto was published and another in August 1901, despite President Woodruff's insistence (in the Manifesto-1890) that no such marriages had been solemnized prior to its publication. He must have known better, because Young was president of the Quorum

of the Twelve Apostles. Later, during a historical debate over B.H. Roberts’ attempt to take his seat as an elected representative to the U. S. House of Representatives, Brigham Young Jr. publicly asserted that President Snow’s denials regarding the continued practice of polygamy in the church after the Manifesto were true. Lying for the Lord knew no bounds.



Brigham Young Jr. was quoted as teaching that he had “naught but contempt for all forms of hypocrisy or deceit.” His half-sister said of him, “He can keep still but must not deceive.” Mormon leaders developed a blind spot when it came to their own dishonesty. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 207-208) Current leaders maintain blind spots when it comes to honesty in the 21st century.



Apostle Marriner W. Merrill took a plural wife in the Logan Temple in 1901, well after the Manifesto was accepted as binding upon the church. He denied under oath in front

of the Senate committee investigating Reed Smoot that he had married Hilda after 1890. Though the committee possessed solid evidence that he was lying he continued to insist that he was telling the truth. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 208) Perhaps consistency was more important than honesty. These tactics turned the public against Mormons.



The son of Wilford Woodruff, Abraham Owen Woodruff, married 18 year-old Eliza Avery Clark as a plural wife in 1901 (11 years after his father presented the Manifesto). She was previously engaged to a young man living in Wyoming where she resided with her family. After Apostle Matthias F. Cowley persuaded her to marry

Woodruff, she broke her engagement and consented to marry Woodruff. Cowley performed the ceremony in Preston, Idaho. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 208-209) Modern church members might be stunned to learn of the disregard for the law demonstrated by church leaders. In a modern members' mind it would conflict with the covenant to obey the laws of the land. (D&C 134:1 "We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them....")



Apostle Rudger Clawson married a plural wife in 1904 (14 years after the Manifesto had been accepted as binding on the church). He married Pearl Udall as a second wife with his wife's consent. Apostle Marriner W. Merrill spoke directly to younger members of the Quorum of the Twelve and advised them not to neglect the opportunity to build up a kingdom for themselves (a euphemism for polygamy).

Clawson took the command from his superior seriously, though it meant contradicting the Manifesto. After the marriage, Merrill counseled young Clawson to mislead those looking for evidence of post-Manifesto plural marriages by writing misleading entries in a diary, or simply neglecting to record them. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 211) One waits for modern church leaders to denounce the practice of *institutional lying*.



Abraham Hoagland Cannon (an LDS Apostle) married Annie Cannon after President Woodruff gave him consent to do so, in 1894, four years after the Manifesto declared an end to all plural marriages. Annie was taken as a concubine. Apparently church leaders had considered this practice from 1843 on when the revelation to Joseph about plural marriage mentioned that the Lord approved concubinage. Modern

church history refuses to admit that this practice—adultery—was part of the church's practice of plural marriage.



Church leader, George M. Cannon suggested the concubinage method of plural marriage to Abraham Cannon (his son) and said, "I believe in concubinage, or some plan whereby men and women can live together under sacred ordinances and vows until they can be married." He insisted that such relationships must be kept secret until the government changed its laws. He added that concubinage would open up a

way to take care of "our surplus girls" as well as fulfill the command to multiply and replenish the earth.

Despite protests by contemporary Mormons that polygamy established high standards of decency and morality, and was different than adultery or keeping mistresses, Cannon's behavior proves otherwise. Fifteen lines are cut out of his diary for October 1894, three days after his visit with Annie and Uncle George Q. Cannon, where the suggestion regarding concubinage was made. Though Annie lived to be 79 years of age, there is no record of her having been married. She is said to have accompanied Abraham Cannon on numerous excursions and she refused a proposal for marriage from prominent LDS member, Heber Bennion. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 214-215)



President George Q. Cannon appears to have entered into a concubinage-like relationship with Amelia Madsen one year before his death and well after the Manifesto was presented. She was past child-bearing age. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 215)



Joseph F. Smith performed a secret marriage for Abraham H. Cannon and Lilian Hamlin. The four (Abraham and Lilian, and Joseph F. and a wife) traveled by train to California. On the way to Catalina Island by boat, the marriage was solemnized on the vessel. LDS Leaders believed that solemnizing marriages on water permitted them to say they had not performed marriages “in” the U.S. — or “on U.S. soil.”

Abraham contracted an ear infection on the trip and after returning home to Salt Lake died. Before expiring he confessed to Wilhelmina, his first wife that he had married Lilian Hamlin and she presumed that Joseph F. Smith had performed the ceremony since he was the only authority of the church present.

Nevertheless, during the Smoot hearings Joseph F. Smith consistently denied having performed the marriage. Those who have investigated the facts have little trouble dismissing Joseph F. Smith’s denials as pure prevarications. To further confuse those who might be interested in the marriage, Joseph F. Smith traveled under the assumed name Orson Smith, a code name for his own person. It allowed Smith to deny that he (Joseph F. Smith) performed the ceremony. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 219-220) Many a children wish that they had the ability to use such clever deception after getting caught with a hand in the cookie jar!



Apostle George Teasdale married a plural wife, Marion Scoles secretly in October of 1897. His diary entries for the 23rd to the 28th of October are missing. These are the dates when the couple traveled together and were married. He later married another wife, Letitia Dolly Thomas on 17 May 1900. Both marriages occurred after the 1904* Manifesto banning plural marriage.

Teasdale divorced Lillias Hook, a former wife to try avoid scandal, because the *Salt Lake Tribune* had begun to investigate the matter. President Joseph F. Smith told the Smoot committee that Lillias had never been a real wife to Teasdale — only an elderly housekeeper. She had been sealed to Teasdale in name only as a favor to her, Smith told the committee.

To the contrary, Lillias was only 35 when she was married to Teasdale, hardly elderly. She was 8 years younger than Teasdale. Teasdale’s divorce complaint from Lillias stated that she was unable to have sexual intercourse. Yet he remained married to her for decades before divorcing her. Incongruously, the records of the Twentieth Ward in SLC where Lillias lived, list one George Vivian Teasdale, born on 11 June 1896, and name George and Lillias Teasdale as the parents. (*Solemn Covenant*, 221-226) Church apologist and history claims that no plural marriages took place after the 1904* Manifesto. And they refuse to tell investigators about the long history of deception; a violation of the ethical principle of full disclosure. There is a credibility gap that the LDS church continues to keep in place, while wondering why the American public sometimes refers to their church as a cult, similar to Scientology. [*1890?]



Bogus divorce in order to mislead legal authorities was acceptable. The logic was that if a fake divorce was necessary to live the higher law of polygamy it was justified. Also, Mormons believed that *earthly* divorce was not binding in heaven anyway. In the eyes of the Lord, the couple was still married. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 226-227)



Ninety year-old President Wilford Woodruff took a new plural wife in 1897, one year before his death. He married Lydia Mamreoff von Finkelstein Mountford who was 49 years-old. She was a guest lecturer in Salt Lake City, having been invited by James E.

Talmage. President Woodruff was captivated by her. She was baptized in February 1897. They traveled together to California and used assumed names when registering in a hotel in Portland, Oregon. Between 20 and 22 September 1897, they were married while sailing back to Portland from California. At the time, Mountford was the legal wife of Charles Edwin Mountford. This would not be the first instance of plural marriage to a woman still legally married. Joseph Smith practiced that concept at least 11 times (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pp. 15-23). It has always been postulated that whatever others did after the Manifesto, President Woodruff had honored the “revelation.” The marriage was later solemnized by proxy in the Salt Lake Temple in 1920, making the illegal marriage valid and honorable in the eyes of Mormon leadership. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 228-232)



The LDS leaders’ constant use of prevarication turned friends against them. Theodore Schroeder, once friendly to the Mormons became a bitter enemy when he discovered the extent of the deceit used by church leaders and members alike. In 1897 he wrote essays exposing the continued practice of polygamy, despite denials issued by the church. He set out to prove that the church had consistently lied about its involvement with polygamy since the Nauvoo period. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 246)



B.H. Roberts admitted taking plural wives as late as April 1890 during the Smoot Hearings, contradicting President Woodruff’s statement in the Manifesto that no such marriages had taken place in the year preceding the Manifesto. Roberts was probably lying about the year he married his last plural wife, Dr. Milford Shipp. She was still legally married and lived with her husband until 1892. The marriage to Roberts most likely occurred in 1894. Roberts managed to expose both he and President Woodruff as deceivers at the same time. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 247)



When B.H. Roberts was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives after Utah became a state, the House voted to exclude him because an investigation revealed that Roberts was engaged in polygamous marriage and that one of his wives had married him after the Manifesto. Since it was a clear violation of the law of the land, and he and the LDS leadership had ignored society’s legal code, he was declared unfit for office. Seven million citizens signed a petition demanding that Roberts be denied his seat and it was presented to Congress. Those considered enemies by church leaders were provided a national platform to advertise abundant evidence of dishonesty on the part of Mormon Church leaders and members. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 249, 250) Official church histories and curriculum neglect to inform members and non-members of this and related incidents. Nor have they denounced the deceptive practices.



Reed Smoot was elected to the United States Senate in 1902 and federal lawmakers protested immediately. He was sworn into office in March 1903. But government authorities feared that Smoot was a polygamous sympathizer, though not a polygamist himself. It was also a well-established fact that the church had engaged in deception for decades to evade the law. Because of the church’s reputation for dishonesty, the Smoot investigation lasted more than 3 years (1904–1907) and resulted in over 3,000 pages of sworn testimony. The scope of the inquiry broadened to include the history, theology and culture of Mormonism itself. If the citizens of the U.S. doubted the honesty and veracity of the Mormon leaders and their people before the hearings, afterward they did not doubt due to mountains of testimony and documented evidence. The Mormons were guilty of unending prevarication. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 251) Mormon histories and curriculum have never admitted to leaders’ past duplicity though it would be the

honorable thing to do. Failure to admit to past duplicity continues to serve as a source of embarrassment to many members of the LDS church, interested in studying church history.



President Joseph F. Smith was the first witness called and placed under oath to tell the whole truth before the Smoot investigation. His testimony may have been the most damaging. He pled incredible ignorance concerning the polygamous activities that he personally permitted and encouraged. Yet he admitted to fathering children by five (5) wives since 1890, after the Manifesto had been issued.



President Smith categorically denied that Presidents Woodruff and Snow had authorized polygamous marriages after the Manifesto in 1890. He knew that to be false. He went on to say that he had not heard anyone “advocate, encourage or recommend” plural marriages since the Manifesto. This was false. U.S. leaders and citizens joined with the LDS members in disbelief that President Smith would blatantly lie under oath-denying what others plainly knew to be true. One witness suggested tongue in cheek that President Smith was using his words differently than the way most people use them. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 253)



Mormon apologist histories complain about the “persecution” heaped upon President Smith at the hearings by unscrupulous legislators, and praise his honorable and dignified responses. The truth is: the constant stream of duplicity and lies increased the public’s hostility toward Mormons. Most were disgusted with the Mormon Prophet, Seer, and Revelator who refused to come forth with a degree of honesty while under oath before the Senate hearings. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 253-254)



George Reynolds antagonized hearing participants when he lied about knowing that his own daughter had married Benjamin Cluff (president of the Brigham Young academy) as a plural wife. He made the fantastic claim that since the Manifesto was issued 13 years prior, he had never spoken to anyone either for or against the practice. Reynolds had to be persuaded by Smoot to refrain from testifying that though his daughter was married, he knew nothing about it. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 253-254)



Under oath at the Smoot hearings, Apostle Hyrum M. Smith, son of President Joseph F. Smith testified that he had no recollection of the subject of polygamy being discussed in any of the meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Then he contradicted himself by assuring the committee that if the subject was discussed, the Twelve were urged to stamp out the practice. Both statements were lies. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 254)



Church leader Francis M. Lyman lied under oath when he told investigators that although everyone else in Utah was aware of continued cohabitation with plural wives, Senator Smoot was unaware of the practice. The interrogator followed that response and inquired if Smoot was uninformed about the state he was supposed to represent. Lyman contradicted himself by stating that Smoot was probably better informed than anyone else about domestic practices in the state he represented. To make matters worse, Lyman claimed that he was being guided by the Spirit of the Lord in his responses. When the interrogator asked Lyman if he was blaming the Lord for the contradictions (lies) within his testimony, Lyman had no reply. He added later that polygamy was a mystery of the kingdom. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 254)

108

Under oath, Apostle John Henry Smith testified that he couldn't remember his own birth date, as well as other easily recalled facts about his life that he claimed he could not recollect. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 254) These and other episodes in church history are virtually unknown to ordinary Mormons.

109

Apostle Marriner W. Merrill swore that he had taken no plural wives since the Manifesto, though it was widely known that he had taken one in 1901 (eleven years after the Manifesto). (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 254)

110

Senator-to-be Reed Smoot, testified that he had no knowledge that "any apostle or any member of the Presidency" had taken a plural wife since 1890, except for the cases he learned of at the hearings. This was demonstrably false as later testimony by Smoot proved, when he contradicted himself. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 255)

111

Under oath at the Smoot hearings, President Joseph F. Smith testified that church inquiries into polygamous marriages or the arrangement of plural marriages by church leaders in Salt Lake was an issue delegated to the local units to investigate. He did this despite being one of those, along with other church leaders, who orchestrated the marriages. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 255)

112

President Smith promised under oath to arrange for church leaders to cooperate and appear before the Smoot hearings to testify about the issue of polygamy in Utah. Yet, after returning to Salt Lake, he wrote to Senator Burrows that several apostles could not travel to the hearings on account of ill health. He wrote that he could not persuade Apostles Taylor and Cowley to appear. These excuses qualify as pre-meditated deceit.

President Smith had the power to require the apostles to appear. To compound the deception, Teasdale and others who supposed to be suffering from fragile health took several long journeys (Mexico, Arizona and Canada), and the trips had no ill effects on their health. In fact, Teasdale traveled to Mexico and Canada to run beyond the grasp of the interrogators at the Smoot hearings. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 256-257)

113

Church leaders attempted to persuade Anthony W. Ivins to sign an affidavit that they knew to be categorically untrue. Being a rare LDS man of conscience, Ivins refused to sign it. The purpose of the document was to certify that no plural marriages occurred in Mexico after the Manifesto. Most members are unaware that church leaders pressured others to lie. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 257)

114

Because of the damaging testimony at the Smoot hearings, public perception of the Mormons was that they and their leaders were liars. Smoot wanted the leaders to take steps to repair the damage they had caused. Consequently, President Smith read a statement that compounded the problem of negative perception. The statement denied that plural marriages had been performed in the church after the 1890

Manifesto, and denied that new plural marriages were being performed. Both statements were false. In fact, he had sanctioned many marriages since the Manifesto. He also stated that those who had had marriages solemnized since the Manifesto were subject to excommunication from the church. This was also a lie. Finally, Smith blasted the committee for accusing church leaders of being dishonest. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 259-260) One may as well lie in big bunches, if one is determined lie.



Apostle Francis M. Lyman sent a message to Apostle Teasdale and admitted that plural marriages performed after the 1890 Manifesto (issued to convince the outside world that the practice had been stopped) had shaken the confidence of the members in their leaders. He also admitted to Teasdale that church leaders were perceived to be dishonest and untrustworthy because of their deception in the Smoot hearings. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 261) Current LDS apologists are reluctant to admit dishonesty on the part of their leaders, or they find creative ways to characterize their behavior as noble and praiseworthy; as if they had no choice. Prophets who claim to commune with God, and direct the only true church on earth, are placed on pedestals as models of virtue. Current church members assume that LDS leaders were/are men of principle.



After the Smith Manifesto (1904) denying that plural marriages were being performed, and that those participating in them would be excommunicated, church leaders ordered Anthony W. Ivins in Mexico, to quickly marry at least two couples who had intended to marry polygamously before word of the statement was officially taken personally to outlying Mormon settlements. This action contradicted the letter as well as the spirit of the statement read by President Smith in the April 1904 conference. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 261)



When many federal government officials became weary of the church's lies, deception and cover-up of the true facts involving polygamy, Democrats considered placing an anti-polygamy plank in the 1904 national platform; to propose an amendment to the constitution prohibiting polygamy. Church leaders entered a damage control mode and scurried to placate the leaders of the nation. It was suggested that Apostles John Taylor and Matthias Cowley be offered as sacrificial lambs, to create the idea in Washington that the church was serious about stamping out the practice of polygamy. Leaders resorted to more deception out of habit.



Both men (Apostles Taylor and Cowley) were assured that the fake disciplinary action was only a temporary separation from the Quorum of the Twelve, in order to appease lawmakers in Washington. After being told that President Smith himself would quickly reinstate them, they finally agreed to be cut off as members of the Quorum of the Twelve. On October 28, 1905 their fake removal was announced. The two apostles were not the only two leaders who had participated in the practice after the Manifesto of course. The leaders miscalculated, never intending to: (1) abandon polygamy, or (2) cut off those actively practicing polygamy.



President Joseph F. Smith did not keep his word to Apostles Taylor and Cowley. They were never reinstated due to the public pressure to convince lawmakers that their punishment was real. Both were cut off from the church in 1911, because church leaders finally made up their minds to abandon polygamy. Some church members thought that the authorities had gone too far to placate the government while others were relieved. Lies and deception about polygamy divided the members into at least two camps: (1) maintain the practice despite government penalties, or (2) rid the church of the practice. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 261-266)



After the Smoot hearings, and after dropping Elders Taylor and Cowley from the Quorum of the Twelve and the church, LDS leaders became serious about putting an end to the practice of polygamy. When members were caught, the church councils began to discipline them as they claimed they had been doing decades earlier. Joseph W. Summerhays was apprehended and charged with illegally entering the practice. He identified President Joseph F. Smith as the church leader who gave him permission to take another wife. President Smith denied the charge. Those leaders eager to excommunicate Summerhays were stunned that President Smith likely gave his consent, but blatantly lied about it, so it was decided to drop Summerhays from his church position rather than excommunicate him. Smith refused to admit his considerable role in keeping the practice alive. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 291)



President Smith addressed the practice of polygamy in the April 1911 conference and once again affirmed that the church was keeping its word regarding the cessation of plural marriages, including the punishment of those found practicing it. However, Senator Reed Smoot knew differently. He tried to persuade President Smith to actually do what the church told the government—that it was doing—take action against those who were engaging in the practice. He sensed what President Smith didn't. Americans would not tolerate polygamy any longer. He wrote, "If there is another investigation I do not know how [our] present position will be justified We are in a bad position for an examination or investigation." Contrary to what the leaders were telling the government, they were still reluctant to stop the practice or bring action against those who engaged in it. (*Solemn Covenant*, p. 294)



Church leaders did not hesitate to deceive when they engaged in Post-Manifesto marriages well after 1904. While members resided in Mexico, their leaders promised them eternal rewards for taking other wives and refusing to be intimidated by government threats. When they moved to the United States, they were treated with humiliation and disgust by fellow members who were embarrassed to be associated with those breaking the law. One member took his wives into New Mexico from Texas and was accused of white slavery. Another member attended a church meeting in the states with his plural wives and quickly became the object of scorn. The leaders' double tongued approach to plural marriage led to confusion and disillusionment among its members. Practicing polygamous fundamentalists learned from LDS leaders that deception is no sin if you're protecting polygamy. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 296-297)



Church leaders deceived its members when they redefined the term "celestial marriage." Until the 1880's it had referred exclusively to plural marriage. To mislead government authorities, leaders claimed that "celestial marriage" meant only a marriage that survived death; though they never subscribed to this meaning themselves. During the Smoot hearings leaders used this deceptive maneuver to mislead investigators.

This deception proved helpful in Idaho where the constitution prohibited those practicing or teaching "celestial marriage" from voting. Yet, as late as 1904, leaders privately used the term "celestial marriage" to refer to polygamy. In order to distance itself from polygamy, the church finally adopted the new meaning of "celestial marriage." Modern active members do not understand that "celestial marriage" originally referred to polygamy alone. Current church leaders perpetuate the deception. (*Solemn Covenant*, pp. 297-298)



A member of the First Presidency organized a legislative strategy committee to influence legislation in 1896. It informed member legislators that the committee's action "must be obeyed." Newspapers later informed its readers that the committee was operational. Ed Ivins, reporter for the Salt Lake *Herald*, questioned each member of the committee, trying to confirm the existence of the committee. He said, "Every Mormon General Authority told partial truths and downright misrepresentations" during this episode. In other words, they denied the existence of a committee that they knew existed. (Edward Leo Lyman: Mormon Leaders in Politics, *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Fall 1998, pp. 46-49)

DISHONESTY RE: BLACKS AND THE PRIESTHOOD

(NOS. 125–131)

125

The church’s official position on blacks and the priesthood was that it was a doctrine revealed to Joseph Smith by the Lord. For decades missionaries issued this standard message when answering investigators’ questions. There is no evidence that Joseph Smith ever received a revelation denying black Africans the priesthood. On the contrary, Elijah Abel, a black man, was ordained a Seventy, and Joseph likely permitted the ordination of at least one other black member to the Mormon priesthood. (Lester E. Bush Jr. *Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical View, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 8, No. 1, Spring 1973)

126

Brigham Young formally instituted the ban on priesthood to males with African blood. In an address before the territorial legislature on January 16, 1852, Wilford Woodruff recorded that Brigham said that persons having “one drop of the seed of [Cain] ... in him cannot hold the priesthood and if no other Prophet ever spake it before I will say it now...”

Young also went further and declared that if a white person should marry a black person, they would both be required to give their lives in blood atonement (including any offspring that resulted in the union) in order to be forgiven by God for their sin (equal to murder in seriousness). (Lester E. Bush Jr. *Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical View, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 8, No. 1, Spring 1973 and Lester E. Bush Jr. and Armand L. Mauss Editors, *Neither White nor Black, “Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview,”* Signature Books, Midvale, UT, 1984. pp. 68, 89-90)

The church has never admitted that Brigham Young invented the policy based on Young and others’ personal prejudices, common to that era. In fact current leaders and apologists try to convince those ignorant of Mormon historical practices, that the church has always been sensitive to those with brown skin.

127

The church’s doctrine and practice of denying those with African blood the priesthood until 1978 resulted in a negative public image for the church and its members. To defend themselves, church leaders claimed that the doctrine was never the result of racial prejudice. This is contradicted by numerous statements of its leaders. Brigham Young taught that blacks were created to be slaves, they “were naturally designed for that purpose, and [their] capacities are more befitting that, than any other station in society.” He reiterated that they “are naturally designed to occupy the position of ‘servant of servants’.” He cautioned that members should not “elevate them, as some seem disposed, to an equality with those who Nature and Nature’s God has indicated to be their masters, their superiors ...” (Lester E. Bush Jr. *Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical View, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 8, No. 1, Spring 1973)

128

Brigham Young signed into law acts legalizing Negro and Indian slavery, in his capacity as Territorial governor. While it can be argued that many whites felt this way during the 1800's, one is reminded that the Mormons claim that God engages in direct communication and inspires their leaders. (Lester E. Bush Jr. Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical View, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 8, No. 1, Spring 1973)

When LDS leaders spoke, it was the equivalent of God speaking (Doctrine and Covenants 1:38). Brigham Young's statements do not reflect ideals that are more equitable and compassionate than the ignorant, prejudice demonstrated by other ordinary 19th century humans. In fact Young's/God's statements do not rise to the level of the enlightened few who sought equal rights and social justice for all.

129

Further evidence of Mormon prejudice against African Americans can be found in the Utah legislature's refusal to pass public accommodation and fair employment bills on at least four occasions between 1945 and 1951. Utah joined the nation in discriminating against blacks in hotels, restaurants, movie theaters and bowling alleys—they were not allowed to associate with whites. (Lester E. Bush Jr. Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical View, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 8, No. 1, Spring 1973)

130

In Washington DC some church Relief Society women objected to sitting beside "two colored sisters who are apparently faithful members of the church." The First Presidency responded to the situation by suggesting that the two "colored sisters" be "discretely approached" and told to sit in the rear of the chapel or far on the other side away from others. (*Neither White nor Black*, edited by Lester Bush and Armand Mauss, pp. 68, 89-90) It could be argued that the god Mormons worshipped was racist, if they insist it was god who instituted the priesthood ban.

131

Apostle Mark E. Petersen made these racist statements. "It isn't that he [the Negro] just desires to go to the same theater as the white people. From this, and other interviews I have read, it appears that the negro seeks absorption with the white race. He will not be satisfied until he achieves it by intermarriage. That is his objective and we must face it. We must not allow our feeling to carry us away, nor must we feel so sorry for negroes that we will open our arms and embrace them with everything we have. Remember the little statement that we used to say about sin, 'First we pity, then endure, then embrace.'" (Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, August 27, 1954. Found in *Shadow or Reality?* p. 279.) LDS apologists insist that Petersen was not offering official views of the LDS leadership. However, LDS leaders have never offered an official repudiation of Petersen's statement.

MORE DISHONESTY

(NOS. 132–152)

132

Telling the truth in the church’s official histories has been branded as disobedient and disloyal by more than one LDS leader. In 1976 Elder Ezra Taft Benson defined true historical accuracy as “slander and defamation.” He warned Church Education System (CES) employees and historians about trying to “inordinately humanize the prophets of God.” He further commanded CES employees, “If you feel you must write for the scholarly journals, you always defend the faith.”

The same employees were instructed not to buy journals and books and periodicals from “known apostates, or other liberal sources.” Finally, he commanded CES employees to keep those same materials off their office bookshelves. (Lavina Fielding Anderson, “The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology.” Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, p. 11)

When Mormons declare to the world that all members may freely express their views about Mormon leadership and history, they may be ignorant of the facts or trying to deceive their audience. Views not in keeping with a faith promoting theme are not welcome.

133

On February 26, 1980, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson gave an address at Brigham Young University entitled *Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet*. In it, he taught that the prophet “is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything,” and “the living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works,” and “The prophet will never lead the church astray,” etc. When asked if Elder Benson’s speech was an accurate reflection of church doctrine, public communications spokesman, Don LeFevre, said that it was accurate. Yet, he denied a newspaper report that stated that the president of the Church “is God’s prophet and his word is law on all issues-including politics.” It is hard to believe that LeFevre’s first statement is true, and then reconcile it to his second claim. Mainstream Protestant Denominations often find Mormon leaders’ demands for blind obedience to flunk the cult-smell-test.

134

Members and leaders use standard denials when asked if the LDS Prophet is infallible. But President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency wrote a message in the August 1979 *Ensign* that stated emphatically, “When the prophet speaks the debate is over.” The editors of the *Ensign* neglected to mention that when a church magazine made a similar statement in the late 1940’s, President George Albert Smith denied that it was a true statement (in a private letter to a Protestant minister). (Lavina Fielding Anderson, Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue*, pp. 11, 13) In practice, **LDS prophets** are treated as if they are infallible.

Members of the LDS church submit to temple recommend interviews and tithing settlement, to determine if they are full tithing payers. The author was told by more than one priesthood leader that I did not pay enough tithing based on my income, and it would cost me my job with the LDS church education system. I paid on my net instead of my gross income.

Temple recommend interviews inquire of members: “Do you sustain the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator and as the only person on the earth

who possesses and is authorized to exercise all priesthood keys? Do you sustain members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators? Do you sustain the other General Authorities and local authorities of the Church?" "Are you morally clean?" (http://www.lds-mormon.com/new_temple_questions.shtml) To "sustain" in LDS parlance means to do what they say. This kind of regular member interrogation is non-existent in mainline denominations. Some outsiders cite this kind of control as indicative of cult-like tactics.



Boyd Kirkland wrote *Building the Kingdom with Total Honesty*. It's found in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* Volume 31, Number 3, Fall 1998, "Letters to the Editor." In it he recounted his experience with leaders' deception about the Adam-God doctrine when Spencer W. Kimball was the church president. He learned that lying was the method the church used as standard operating procedure to keep from losing its members. After discovering that the leaders of the church were deliberately deceiving him he asked, "Wasn't there concern that some might be dismayed and disillusioned by their church leaders' lack of candor? ... they said, in essence, 'If a few people lose their testimonies over this, so be it; it's better than letting the true facts be known, and dealing with the probable wider negative consequences to the mission of the church.'" (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/boyd.shtml>) It isn't often that leaders are so candid about routine dishonesty within the ranks of the hierarchy.



D. Michael Quinn, faithful Mormon historian, published an article that documented approximately 250 plural marriages that occurred after the 1890 Manifesto, with the authorization of the leaders of the church ("LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages," 1890-1904, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 1985, pp. 9-105). A stake president confiscated Quinn's temple recommend as a result of the article. He admitted to Quinn that he had been told to say that it was a local decision, though Elder Paramore, a general authority (a Seventy), who gave the instructions to the stake president, was acting on instructions from several apostles. He also warned Quinn that it probably was a first step to having him fired for not holding a valid temple recommend. A valid temple recommend is a condition of employment for those who teach for BYU and the Church Education System. Most mainline denominations do not excommunicate faithful historians for living up to the academic ethical standards of telling the truth. (Anderson, Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue*, p. 25)



After publishing their award winning book about Emma Smith, wife of Joseph Smith, Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell were blacklisted from speaking in church meetings. The instructions to local leaders came by telephone from church headquarters. Many misrepresentations included false accusations that the authors were peddling their book at sacrament meetings and firesides. In fact, only one author had spoken at one sacrament meeting after the publication of the book and never sold a book herself. She even asked those introducing her NOT to introduce her as the co-author of the new book. The charges though untrue were never recanted. (Anderson, Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue*, p. 25) Regarding faithful members as enemies and anti-Mormons because they tell the truth about Mormon history is less than commendable, but a consistent practice of the LDS church hierarchy.

138

Former BYU professor David Knowlton, in a television interview that aired August 16, 1992, (KXVS, Channel 4) in Salt Lake, said, "I'm ashamed, frankly, of a church that doesn't want to tell the truth. I'm ashamed of institutional lying." His comments stemmed from the church's denial, then admission that a committee existed within the church that keeps files on the activities on its members. It sends the files to local church leaders with instructions to interrogate them about their commitment to the church. The committee is active currently. It is called Strengthening the Members Committee and spies on members of the church. Again, the modern LDS Church vehemently attacks those who refer to the Mormons as a cult, yet they continue to practice cult-like (Big Brother) control. (Anderson, Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue*, pp. 46-47).

139

Despite assurance from Elders James E. Faust and Russell M. Nelson that files kept on members of the church are not secret, requests by several members to see their own files are denied. (Anderson, Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue*, p. 50) This is an example of dissembling General Authority Mormon-speak and more cult-like behavior. If Mormons do not want the outside world to regard them as equivalent to Scientologists, they could resist the urge to spy on their own members and discipline them for telling the truth. (Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology." Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, p. 11)

140

Current LDS apostles are refreshingly honest about ordering church members to be dishonest. They have ordered those who are employed by the church to suppress the truth about Mormon history. Truthful Mormon history is considered anti-Mormon. (Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology." Vol. 26 No. 1 Spring 1993, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, p. 11)

141

Apostle Boyd Packer declared, "There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not."

"Some things that are true are not very useful." (Boyd K. Packer, "The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect," 1981, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 259-271) He threatened and warned Church Education System Employees to suppress historical information when teaching LDS students.

142

Mormon Apostle Dallin Oaks said, it's one thing to criticize the head of a corporation of person in government but "It is quite another thing to criticize or depreciate a person for the performance of an office to which he or she has been called of God. It does not matter that the criticism is true." (Dallin H. Oaks, "Reading Church History," CES Doctrine and Covenants Symposium, Brigham Young University, 16 Aug. 1985, p. 25. Also see Dallin H. Oaks, "Elder Decries Criticism of LDS Leaders," quoted in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Sunday August 18, 1985, p. 2B.) This was another salvo fired over the bows of Church Education System employees, warning them not to teach LDS students the whole truth about Mormon history.

143

Apostle Russell M. Nelson said, “Indeed, in some instances, the merciful companion to truth is silence. Some truths are best left unsaid....Any who are tempted to rake through the annals of history, to use truth unrighteously, or to dig up “facts” with the intent to defame or destroy, should hearken to this warning of scripture:” He then quoted from the Romans 1:17-18 — a threat to the ungodly to beware of the wrath of God. (Russell M. Nelson, “Truth-and More,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1986, p. 69) The message from current leaders is clear. Pretend that the LDS leaders are infallible, blindly obey and conform. For easy access to these and other statements see http://i4m.com/think/leaders/mormon_loyalty.htm)

144

Past president Gordon B. Hinckley stated to journalist and authors, Richard and Joan Ostling, that he didn’t know very much about the fundamental Mormon doctrine that God once lived as a mortal; and claimed, “I don’t know that we teach it.” He insisted that his remarks to reporters, which appeared in print, were taken out of context and that he was misquoted.

Richard and Joan Ostler wrote *Mormon America*, and included in their book Hinckley’s denials as well as the transcripts of the interview with President Hinckley. The taped transcripts clearly indicated that President Hinckley’s remarks were not taken out of context nor was he misquoted. (Richard and Joan Ostling, *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise*, Harper One, Revised Edition, 2007, p. 301. Also <http://mit.irr.org/dodging-and-dissembling-prophet>; for a partial transcript of the *Time Magazine*, Aug. 4, 1997 article and letter to the prophet's office to ask if Hinckley was misquoted. A similar remark can be found in *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 13, 1997, p. 3/Z1.) This is reminiscent of denials offered by professional athletes and politicians who regret making statements to the press, after getting caught by their own words.

145

Apostle Dallin Oaks wrote this in the church’s official magazine. “A different principle applies in our Church, where the selection of leaders is based on revelation, subject to the sustaining vote of the membership. In our system of Church government, evil speaking and criticism of leaders by members is always negative. Whether the criticism is true or not, as Elder George F. Richards explained, it tends to impair the leaders’ influence and usefulness, thus working against the Lord and his cause.” (Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, “Criticism,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1987, p. 68)

146

Many doctrines which were once taught by the LDS church, and were fundamental, essential and “eternal,” have been abandoned to avoid public embarrassment: (a) plural marriage, (b) Adam-God doctrine, (c) The Law of Consecration, (d) Africans cursed and denied the Mormon priesthood, and (e) blood atonement (certain sins require death, and shedding one’s own blood).
(<http://home.teleport.com/~packham/tract.htm>)

When asked about plural marriage, by talk show host Larry King, Gordon Hinckley said, “I condemn it, yes, as a practice, because I think it is not doctrinal...” (Larry King Live on September 8, 1998 see <http://packham.n4m.org/lying.htm>) The Doctrine and Covenants Section 132 is LDS canon and proves that polygamy is a doctrine. The doctrine has never been rescinded, though the practice has been temporarily suspended. Hinckley and apologists fail to point out that Joseph F. Smith stated unequivocally, “I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that every man in this church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall be damned, I say I understand it

to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that. (Journal of Discourses 20, pp. 28-31.) A host of other church presidents and apostles bore equally strong testimonies.



Hinckley and others continued to perpetuate another myth connected to Mormon polygamy. Knowing otherwise, Hinckley and other apologists stated that only 2, 3 or maybe 5 percent of Mormons ever participated in the practice (Larry King Live on September 8, 1998 see <http://packham.n4m.org/lying.htm>). It is more likely that the number is closer to 20 - 30 percent. It's difficult to measure because in order to retain one's status as a leader in the church, polygamy was a requirement. For the members in general, the number practicing polygamy varied according to location, but was certainly more than 2, 3, or 5 percent as Hinckley knew. (<http://signaturebookslibrary.org/?p=425>)



In a press conference referring to the newly constructed monument at Mountain Meadows in October 1999, President Hinckley made the following statement regarding the tragedy: "Indians and white settlers accompanied by a few Mormons participated in a massacre of the Fancher Wagon Train." He also mentioned that the truth about the massacre may never be fully uncovered. His remarks failed to accurately summarize the events; prevarication by omission. Mormon settlers led the attack and murdered 120 men, women and older children by shooting them at point blank range after deceiving them, disarming them and promising them safe passage. There were no non-Mormon white settlers, as Hinckley's nebulous statement led his audience to believe.



Hinckley also failed to mention that Brigham Young and others organized a massive cover-up to evade prosecution. They destroyed or hid documents that would undoubtedly have led to the truth. They ordered members who had knowledge of the gruesome affair upon pain of death, to keep quiet and not cooperate with investigations of the murders. Church leaders and archivists to this day reserve the right to deny access to records they consider embarrassing because they reveal too much.



Juanita Brooks authored the seminal work on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and a biography of John D. Lee, the man who ultimately was convicted of murder and shot by firing squad for participating in the massacre. Brooks offered Bishop Philip Klingensmith's account of the oath that participants took to cover up the murders. He said the oath was "to the effect that each of them promised before God, angels, and their companions in this circle, that they would never under any conditions speak of this action to anyone else or to each other, and if any did so, he would suffer his life to be taken. This was done in the name of God and for His glory." (Juanita Brooks, *John D. Lee*, p. 221. See also Arza Evans, *Keystone of Mormonism*, Chapter 18.)

Hand wringing and statements by church leaders expressing regret because, "we will never know what really happened here [at Mountain Meadows]," are not credible. We will never know the whole truth because the church will never permit free access to the historical records.



Helen Radkey is a genealogical researcher devoted to issues associated with LDS Church. She is also an author. Since 1999, Ms. Radkey has reported on the failure of the agreement signed by LDS leaders and Jewish organizations in which the Church promised to halt its proxy baptisms for deceased Jews. The practice continues, despite denials by the Mormon leadership... In 1995 the Mormon Church signed an agreement to cease its practice of baptizing deceased Jews who were not “direct ancestors” of members of their faith and listing them in the IGI. Despite the agreement, Ms. Radkey learned in 2005 that the LDS church had not kept its word. LDS leaders indicated that they were trying to define the term, “direct ancestor.” (http://www.mormoncurtain.com/topic_helenradkey.html)



The LDS church continues to deceive the public about vicarious baptisms performed in behalf of Adolf Hitler and Eve Braun. “Current IGI TM Addendum temple ordinance entries for Mr. [Adolf] Hiedler (Hitler) show that Hitler was “baptized” by Mormons on September 30, 1993, and “endowed” on April 27, 1994, in the Jordan River Temple, Utah... Eva Anna Paula Braun, born in Munich, Bavaria, Germany, on February 7, 1912, was “baptized” by Mormons on October 16, 1964, and “endowed” on February 5, 1965, in the Los Angeles Temple. She had been “sealed” to her parents some time prior to 1970. This information is current and is easily accessible in the IGI TM Addendum, in which file Ashton stated that no information was available for either Hitler or Braun.” (http://www.mormoncurtain.com/topic_helenradkey.html)

MY CONCLUSION

More examples of deception could be added to the list. But it already meets the definition of overkill. This is due to the constant artful prevarications and denial of Mormon polemicists. It's necessary to paint an unmistakably clear picture, which leaves one open to the charge of being insensitive. Mormon critics can't win. Either they don't present enough facts to establish their case, or the presentation of too many examples and voluminous documentation constitutes cruelty. It's a fine line. The LDS Church engages in deceit and dishonesty when it feels the need to protect its image, but complains when their deceit is made public. For another superb site on lying see Richard Packham's excellent essay on Lying for the Lord. <http://packham.n4m.org/lying.htm>

Do I mean to imply that a "fibs list" indicates that the Mormon Church is the only religious institution who has engaged in lies and deceit? No. History tells us a different story. However, not many other religious organizations claim to be Christ's *only* true and restored church on the face of the earth, with God-chosen living prophets, seers, and revelators who will never lead the church astray. In addition, some religious denominations admit wrong doing after the fact.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1295/is_n9_v59/ai_17292781

Research on lying indicates that everybody fibs. University of Massachusetts psychologist Robert Feldman researches lying. He has found that lying "boils down to the shifting sands of the self and trying to look good both to ourselves and others." Feldman says, "It's tied in with self-esteem. . . . We find that as soon as people feel that their self-esteem is threatened, they immediately begin to lie at higher levels." (Robin Loyd, "Why We Lie," Live Science, Posted 15 May 2006)

http://www.livescience.com/health/060515_why_lie.html

Those who describe themselves as the most moral, lie too. One study found that a sense of moral superiority can lead to unethical acts, such as cheating. "In fact, some of the best do-gooders can become the worst cheats. For example, somebody could rationalize cheating on a test as a way of achieving their dream of becoming a doctor and helping people. In the study, detailed in the November issue of the Journal of Applied Psychology, researchers find that when this line between right and wrong is ambiguous among people who think of themselves as having high moral standards, the **do-gooders** can become the worst of cheaters." (Jeanna Bryner, "**Oddly, Hypocrisy Rooted in High Morals,**" *LiveScience Staff Writer, LiveScience.com*, Posted Thursday, November 15, 2007, 7:55 am EST)

The purpose of this exercise is to point out the pretense of LDS leaders and members who sometimes insist, probably as a result of overzealousness, that Mormons are more moral than the rest of "the world." Contrast the moral indignation expressed by Mormons about dishonesty and immorality in "the world," with the behavior of their leaders. It places them neatly in the "pot calling the kettle black" category. When the Mormon Church portrays itself as "the" moral authority because it is the "only true church on the face of the earth," then it will be monitored closely to see if it lives up to its claims. Mormons might be better off to admit that their church is a man-made institution and their leaders are merely mortals doing the best they can — flying by the seat of their pants like the rest of us. Sometimes we lie to avoid uncomfortable situations or maybe we just want to look good. This includes LDS leaders and members. The rest of us admit to it.

Excuses such as, “the church leaders are only human,” will be ignored because we will recall Church President Gordon B. Hinckley’s article for the October 1990 *Ensign*, entitled, “We Believe in Being Honest.” In it he warns readers that lies can spread “like a disease that is endemic” even when one uses deception for a worthy cause. Hinckley proclaimed, “How cheaply some men and women sell their good names!” He is included on this list as a member of the “Deceivers Club” (as are the rest of us in the human race). He authored the book called, *Standing for Something*. I used to joke about a book that should have been written titled, *Sitting for Nothing*. If you condemn those who lie, and then lie to LDS members and the public at large, it opens you up to this kind of sophomoric amusement.

Noted LDS historians D. Michael Quinn and B. Carmon Hardy have written compassionately and humanely as they describe the history of Mormonism, and the use of deception as a useful tool to manage the minds of its adherents and public perception.

Hardy, recognizing that LDS public discourse routinely used fake denials and deception called it “pretzled language.” He quoted Apostle Matthias Cowley who said, “I am not dishonest and not a liar and have always been true to the work and to the brethren.” Cowley later admitted, “We have always been taught that when the brethren were in a tight place that it would not be amiss to lie to help them out.” (Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, pp. 373, 374)

In my effort to defend the church from detractors I learned that members get excommunicated precisely because they publish the truth, and refuse to adopt lying, deception, or suppression of facts as an ethical standard. Loyalty is more important in the LDS church than honesty. I found this out the hard way while teaching for the Church Education System. Honesty was referred to as undermining the testimonies of the youth, or undermining the authority of the prophets.

D. Michael Quinn, excommunicated in 1993 said, “The tragic reality is that there have been occasions when Church leaders, teachers, and writers have not told the truth they knew about difficulties of the Mormon past, but have offered to the Saints instead a mixture of platitudes, half-truths, omissions, and plausible denials. Elder [Boyd K.] Packer and others would justify this because “we are at war with the adversary” and must also protect any Latter-day Saint whose “testimony [is] in seedling stage.” But such a public-relations defense of the Church is actually a Maginot Line of sandy fortifications which “the enemy” can easily breach and which has been built up by digging lethal pits into which the Saints will stumble. A so-called “faith-promoting” Church history which conceals controversies and difficulties of the Mormon past actually undermines the faith of Latter-day Saints who eventually learn about the problems from other sources.” (*On Being a Mormon Historian*, A Lecture by D. Michael Quinn, Associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University, Before the Student History Association, Fall 1981; *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, edited by George D. Smith, 1992) See also http://www.utlm.org/booklist/titles/onbeingamormonhistorian_ub057.htm)



<http://www.mormonthink.com/personalstories/kenclark.htm>