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NEWSLETTER ~ SEPT./OCT. 2016

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



FROM CHAR'S DESK

This past week, I have been listening to a tape by Granny Geer (who wrote the informative book, "Mormonism, Mama & Me.") She tells how, as a Mormon, she sat in a little Baptist Church and the preacher kept asking, "Won't you please accept my Jesus?" That was the day that Granny did accept the Jesus of the Bible and was wonderfully "born again."

Oh, how I wish we could go to all the Mormons we know and love and ask them this important question, "Won't you please accept my Jesus?" It is so simple that even a child could do it. I pray that God will humble the LDS heart and give them the grace to ask the Biblical Jesus into their heart. They will never be the same again!

Jenell's Jots & Tittles

WHY EVANGELIZE?

Why do non-profit ministries like Ex-Mormons For Jesus, along with a multitude of others, dedicate their time (and often at their own expense) to reach the unsaved? Some people say you can't change anyone's mind, just leave them alone. Well, one reason is that our Bible tells us there are only two places where one can go after death – heaven or hell: "*And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*" (Matt.25:46 NAS)

Let us look at what the Bible tells us about Hell. It is a term that in common usage designates the place of

future punishment for the wicked (unsaved). Words such as "fire and brimstone", "black darkness", "unquenchable fire", "eternal fire", etc. are used. How could anyone disregard these graphic images and not try and save them from that awful fate? I am so glad a friend cared enough about my eternal destiny to witness to me some 30 plus years ago.

In Luke 16:19-29, Jesus tell us a story about a rich man (who only cared about himself) and Lazarus (a poor man who longed to be fed crumbs from the rich man's table). They both died and Lazarus was carried away to Abraham's bosom. But the rich man went to Hades (Hell) and was in torment. He cried out and said, "...*have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.*" (NAS). Jesus informed him that no one could cross over to the other place.

Another very important reason to evangelize is that **Jesus Himself** tells us to: "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...*" (Matt.28:19 NAS). And if one is a Christian, how can he love his neighbor as he loves himself (Matt.22:36-39, James 2:8) if he doesn't make every effort to bring others to come to know this blessed salvation and amazing grace that our merciful Lord offers?

BEING BOUND BY MORMONISM (How & Why)

We often get asked, "why is it so hard for people to leave the Mormon faith, even when they see all of the deception?" Or, "does the LDS leadership know the truth and if so, why would they continue to perpetuate

the lie?" In answering a Mormon who asked these types of questions of him, Jim Spencer ("Through the Maze" www.beyondmormonism.com) gave an excellent response which I will share as follows:

*Dear Brian, I do have some insight on this question. It goes like this: I do believe Joseph Smith was spiritually deceived. **First** of all, he was heavily into "Folk Magic," what we would today simply call witchcraft...**Second**, There is reason to believe he was psychologically unwell.*

But Smith's involvement in witchcraft does not address your primary question. It merely provides a basis for the answer. Joseph Smith, indeed, introduced a terribly flawed theology...Here is the simple answer. They believe the Joseph Smith story! But why would intelligent men and women continue to subscribe to a story and theology which has so many obvious holes in it?

For example, there were no Nephites! Modern DNA proves that no Jewish blood flows in Native Americans (other than that introduced recently through intermarriage in modern times). There are a thousand other rational proofs arguing against the Book of Mormon and Mormon theology, as you, yourself, are beginning to understand.

These True Believers are caught in the double-bind in Mormonism. A double-bind is a dilemma in communication in which an individual (or group) receives two or more conflicting messages and one message negates the other—a situation in which, if they succeed at responding to one message, they fail with the other; the person will be put in the wrong however they respond...

Mormons grow up aculturated to Mormonism. And they are not free to leave. If, by contrast, I am a Baptist, and I decide to be a Methodist, my family will not see me as a betrayer. Many very dedicated and knowledgeable Mormons have confessed to me that they understand the system does not work, but that because of their marriage, their kids, their position in the Church, their position in the community – they are not free to leave...

A recently returned missionary told me, 'Well, even if it

is wrong, won't God look upon my good intentions and give me a pass?' Of course, that is yet another question, but for this short note it demonstrates the young man's search for a way of reconciling the double-bind. How can I give Mormonism up without giving up my entire life? I had to make that decision when I left Mormonism. Most of those who discover Mormonism to be wrong [find it] nearly impossible to give up his/her family unless he discovers what is Right! Those who come to understand the biblical Jesus and His offer of salvation will have the courage to do that...

Another helpful insight regarding the perplexing question of why Mormons stay in their faith when there is so much evidence against it, comes from Thomas Stuart Ferguson, a man believed by Mormons to be a great defender of Mormonism. Mr. Ferguson devoted about twenty-five years of his life trying to prove the Book of Mormon through archaeology. This endeavor, however, became the catalyst for him losing his faith in Mormonism. The following letter is from Mr. Ferguson to a couple who had also lost faith, but was in a dilemma as what to do about it:

Dear Mr. And Mrs. In the December issue of Reader's Digest is an article on the importance of myths to the human family. People must believe in something. (Otherwise we face the abyss of death and extinction.) Mormonism is probably the best conceived myth-fraternity to which one can belong...

Why not say the right things and keep your membership in the great fraternity, enjoying the good things you like and discarding the ones you can't swallow (and keeping your mouths shut)? Hypocritical? Maybe. But perhaps a realistic way of dealing with a very difficult problem. There is lots left in the Church to enjoy—and thousands of members have done, and are doing, what I suggest you consider doing. Silence is golden – etc. Precious few believers will you change—no matter how the evidence mounts. They believe because they want to believe...So why try to be heroic and fight the myths – the Mormon one or any other that does more good than ill?

Perhaps you and I have been spoofed by Joseph Smith. Now that we have the inside dope – why not spoof a little back and stay aboard? Please consider this letter

confidential – for obvious reasons. I want to stay aboard the good ship, Mormonism – for various reasons that I think valid. First, several of my dearly loved family members want desperately to believe it and do believe it and they each need it. It does them far more good than harm. Belonging, with my eyes wide open is actually fun, less expensive than formerly, and no strain at all...Kindly do not quote this letter and please do not cite me. Your confidence will be appreciated. I have tried to help you as best I can...

Sincerely, Thomas Stuart Ferguson

It is sad to read that Mr. Ferguson thought that believing in the Mormon myth “does more good than ill” or being a Mormon does “far more good than harm”. Obviously, only someone who is not saved could be of that mindset, for Jesus said it is truth that sets one free (John 8:32). Of course the real truth *is* Jesus – “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*” (John 14:6 NAS). And as Jim Spencer said, when one comes to know the True Jesus, only then will they have the strength and courage to forsake all that is not of Him.

CITATIONS OF CONCERN (From LDS Leaders)

“...Joseph’s revealed knowledge of the eternities led him to replace the word create in Genesis 1:1 with the more appropriate word organize, thus dismissing the idea of ex nihilo, or out-of-nothing, creation. The Prophet further clarified that the phrase ‘in the beginning God created’ is better rendered, ‘the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods.’” (“The Ensign”, August 2002, p.35, my emphasis)

RECOGNIZING A “FAMILIAR SPIRIT”

As most of you know, Joseph Smith supposedly received some gold plates out of the ground in New York State. It is these plates that Smith says he translated into English which then birthed the Book of Mormon. Mormons are taught to view the following

scripture as a fulfilled prophecy regarding that event: “*And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a **familiar spirit**, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.*” (Isa.29:4 KJV)

But when read in context, and with a little further study, we can see that this prophecy is being given to “Ariel” (vs.1), which is a reference to the city of Jerusalem and can not be referring to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon by any stretch of the imagination.

The reference to a *familiar spirit* in that verse is also seen by Mormons as a positive thing (e.g. familiar like its so-called counterpart, the Bible). However, a little closer examination of scripture shows something quite the opposite! Leviticus 20:6 tells us: “*And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a-whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.*” (KJV, also see vs.27, Deut.18:9-12, and Isa.8:19). So we can see that anyone or anything that deals with a familiar spirit is a medium, one who is on friendly terms with demons and is an abomination to the Lord.

Yet in view of the evidence, it is not difficult to acknowledge that a “familiar spirit” **does** sadly accompany the Book of Mormon. You see, many Mormons testify that in their reading of this book, they received some kind of manifestation, such as a burning in the bosom (D&C 9:8), but they mistakenly believe this to be of the Holy Spirit rather than a “familiar spirit” because they do not know how to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1 NAS).

We have conversed with many Mormons who know that there are serious problems with their religion, but still won’t/can’t break away because of some sort of “testimony” that they have received when reading the Book of Mormon. The following LDS article gives an example of Mormonism’s indoctrination into this mind set and the early age they are subjected to it:

*“Youth of all ages, even infants, can and do respond to the **distinctive spirit** of the Book of Mormon. Children may not understand all of the words and stories, but*

they certainly can feel the “familiar spirit” described by Isaiah (Isaiah 29:4; see also 2 Nephi 26:16)...” (May 2010 “Ensign”, p.42, my emphasis).

In 2Tim.2:15 we are told to study and accurately handle the word of God, which obviously Mormonism has failed to do in its interpretation of Isa.29:4. One last scripture that is quite pertinent to this topic is found in 1Tim.4:1: “*But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to **deceitful spirits** and doctrines of demons.*” Please join us in prayer, that our Mormon acquaintance’s will heed this warning and be set free from the influence and bondage of the enemy!

CORRESPONDENCE

The following email is very insightful as to what many Mormons (and investigators) go through. From: S.H.

I was not born into the Mormon church. I went up to school and the missionaries came over to my apartment and I met with them for quite a while (a couple of years). I really hoped the church was true but I never got that confirmation that it was. I did everything I was told to do, read the Book of Mormon, prayed, went to church, had a calling, read my scriptures ... etc. I remember people telling me that it was because I was doing something wrong and that I didn't really have a sincere desire, when that could not have been further from the truth. I wanted more than anything for the church to be true. I came to the point where the missionaries kept pressuring me (one even started yelling at me saying how she was scared for me if I didn't get baptized that next week).

I had done extensive research on the church and its history. There were a lot of problems that bothered me (that's why I met with the missionaries for so long). I came to the point where I started to know more than the missionaries and in our lessons I would be teaching them things. But, even with knowing all of that I still thought that joining the church was the right thing to do. I felt like there was always an answer to questions I had if I was just patient enough. I would ... pray about a question I had and open up my scriptures to find what I thought to be an adequate answer.

Anyways, I got to a point where a lot of things just started going wrong and I got really confused. I couldn't figure out if these things were happening because the church was true and my faith was being tried or if the church really wasn't true. I was praying daily, begging and pleading with God to let me know what was right. One day I ended up going to an Adam's Road concert and I heard their testimonies about leaving the Mormon church and I felt like I could relate to so much of it. I felt like they were describing myself as times. Afterwards, I knew that concert was the answer I had been waiting years for. I also read Lynn Wilder's book “Unveiling Grace” that she gave me a copy of and afterwards I felt that there was no way the church could be true.

I have known people who were convinced the church wasn't true and [then] they go back to it. It saddens me, although I can understand why. The more I read the Bible the more I realize the inconsistencies. Also, there are so many messed up things that the church does that looking at the whole picture, all of the little things add up to be too much for me. For example this one guy I know was in the MTC and was told that if you didn't have a testimony or if it was weak, to tape record it and to play back to yourself over and over again until you believed it and could say it with a strong conviction....

It has helped me to be able to talk to others who feel the same way because being surrounded by all Mormons all the time I felt at times I would start to go backwards. I saw that you have monthly meetings? Is it possible that I could attend?

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

We hold monthly support group meetings at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. The address is 671 N. Poplar Street in Orange, and we look forward to seeing you there. Call if you have any questions.

**ALL GIFTS DONATED TO EMFJ ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED AS WELL AS YOUR PRAYERS FOR THIS MINISTRY -
THANK YOU**

