

THE NEW EXPOSITOR



APRIL 2008

THE “CALM” NETWORK

BY DIANNE ORMOND



Formed one year ago in March, the CALM network (Community After Leaving Mormonism) has experienced phenomenal growth, coordinating meetings of various ex-Mormon groups along the Wasatch Front in Utah. We asked Dianne Ormond, co-founder of the network, to tell us about it.

Upon leaving the LDS church, many former members lose social contact with their Mormon neighbors, friends and family. There may be interaction on internet boards, of course, but there is also a desire for personal friendship, so many ex-Mormons have formed groups to meet socially. Following the Exmormon Conference in 2006, several of us recognized a need to coordinate such meetings, bringing people together on a regular basis for fun, and to help them find support as they make their way out of a Mormon way of life.

We maintain an e-mail list to which we send updates every Tuesday. We also send our calendar of events to ten newspapers and three Yahoo groups, and we post on seven websites and a blog. Through word-of-mouth, newspapers, and from people reading online postings, we have people every week requesting to be added to the e-mail list. At one time we considered including activities outside of Utah, but it was too much to keep track of, so currently our focus is publicizing within Utah.

Announcements of activities are gathered from many sources, including personal contact, e-mails, and online postings. People also suggest fun activities they would like to do. Davis and Utah Counties organize activities at least once a month, and often more frequently. Southern Utah has a monthly speaker, and Cache Valley has a weekly dinner.

CALM sponsors activities to accommodate various tastes

and needs, singles and families, young and old, social and scholarly. Most events are geared to just having fun and making personal connections. They have included such things as picnics-in-the-park, book clubs, lectures, karaoke, snow tubing, s'mores around a campfire, video viewings, parties, playgroups, laser tag, discussion groups, wine tastings, movies, Wendover trips, ladies nights, fireworks, watching meteor showers, and various types of barbecues, luncheons and dinners. There are also several spin-off groups such as community clusters, mature ladies, playgroups, young singles, and dinners with new friends. Attendance ranges from 8 to 120, depending on the activity.

New people are always welcome at our events. Those desiring to be on the CALM list should send their e-mail address to CalmSupport@gmail.com.

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FOUNDATION MESSAGE

NEW BOARD ELECTED & AN OPEN REQUEST

As is customary, we are announcing the new Exmormon Foundation board following our annual election. We would like to thank those who took the time to cast their votes and for those who put their hats in the ring for this election. We would also like to express our profound appreciation for two parting board members who have served the needs of the Foundation for the past several years. Ken Roach as Membership Secretary and Brian Madsen as the Foundation Treasurer. Both gave of their time and talents in helping keep this little ship of ours afloat.

Unlike the Mormon Church, we are an all volunteer organization with no paid "clergy" and everything accomplished by the Foundation is through hard work, caring and most important, the generous volunteering of time and talents.

Our new board this year is as follows:

Chad C. Spjut, President
 Sandy Crain, Vice President
 Kathleen Jones, Secretary
 Dianne Ormond, Treasurer
 Nathan Kennard, Membership Secretary
 Sue Emmett, Conference Chair
 Tom Donofrio & Jarom Smith

We have a great board this year, and personally I am very excited to work with everyone on the projects which lie ahead.

Now that I have announced the new board, I would like to get down to more important matters, that of the Foundation and the direction and focus for the future. I am writing this as an open invitation to you to tell us your thoughts and ideas regarding the present organization and what you would like to see the Foundation do and become. I personally would like to see the Foundation membership more involved in what happens with the Foundation and the direction you would like to see us pursue. Since rejecting any claim to my former Mormon revelatory powers, it is now not uncommon for me to seek the counsel and advice from others and this is something I am asking of you.

Please let us know what you think of the Foundation now, and in the spirit of Exmormon authenticity, please be open and candid in your ideas and comments. We are very interested in knowing what we have done well, and where we could use improvement. I would also like to know why you pay your membership dues each year. What makes you want to be a part of this organization, and how can we continue to earn that support from you and gain that trust and support from others?

In the scheme of things, we are a very small organization, but our potential for reaching out and being an organization of support and comfort is tremendous. In that vein of thought and action, there have been several websites and organizations which have grown as a means of reaching out to those who are questioning or who have left Mormonism behind. We would like to see those bonds strengthened between our varied organizations to be more effective in reaching out in love and support for those who need it, and as a source of information and direction for those seeking a way out of the maze of Mormonism.

With the increasing prevalence of the internet worldwide, we are now in the process of re-designing our website to be more user friendly and offering a means of greater connectivity for all things exmormon. We are aware that not everyone uses the internet in their day to day activities, but there are ever greater numbers who are utilizing the power of this modern wonder to escape the clutches of Mormonism through the vast amount of information available to them with only a few clicks of a mouse. My personal exit from Mormonism was made possible by the power of this readily available information and connectivity.

In closing, I want to thank you for your continued support of the Foundation, and with your ideas and input I believe we can move the Exmormon Foundation into an ever increasing position of effectiveness in the lives of Exmormons everywhere.

Sincerely yours,

-Chad C. Spjut

MORMON CHURCH SUSPENDS MUSICIAN FOR CRITICISM



Peter Danzig, a viola player in the Orchestra at Temple Square, has chosen to resign from the Church rather than face almost certain excommunication for disagreeing publicly with

(Peter and Mary Danzig, (Paul Fraughton / The Salt Lake Tribune)

Mormon Church leaders. Danzig's troubles began in 2006 when BYU adjunct professor Jeffrey Nielsen lost his job for writing in the Salt Lake Tribune that he believed the LDS Church was wrong to urge support for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Danzig wrote a letter to the newspaper criticizing BYU's action against the professor.

"I wish to express to Jeffery Nielsen that I admire his courage and that I stand with him," he wrote. "I was troubled that my church requested that I violate my own conscience to write in support of an amendment (marriage) I feel is contrary to the Constitution and to the gospel of Christ."

In his letter Danzig mentioned that he played in the orchestra, which is open only to Mormons in good standing. He was suspended from the orchestra for one year.

During 2007 he tried to get church leaders to alter the ban, but was unsuccessful. Finally, in December he and his wife Mary, who was a violinist with the orchestra, resigned from the church rather than face expulsion.

He says, "In hindsight I could have used some different language, but what I wrote expressed the feelings of my heart. I have seen the church abuse too many, including my family, without anyone daring to speak out. It is important to me that the silence about this abuse end."

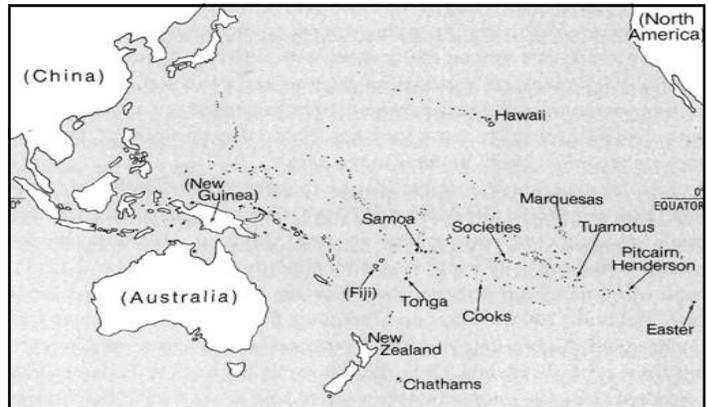
"It's wrong to criticize the leaders of the church, even if that criticism is true."

-Elder Dallin Oaks, PBS Documentary 2007

NEW DNA RESEARCH SHOWS POLYNESIANS CAME FROM ASIA

New DNA research confirms that the ancestors of Polynesians were from Asia, not from the Americas, as some Mormon writers have suggested.

The study, supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, and the National Institute of Health, involved DNA research from 41 Pacific populations. It established that the Polynesians and Micronesians were closely related to Taiwan aborigines and East Asians, and supports the view that the migrating seafarers originated in Taiwan and coastal China at least 3,500



years ago. This would appear to disprove a tradition among Mormons that the Polynesians were descended from Nephites who supposedly sailed to Polynesia in a ship built by Hagoth.

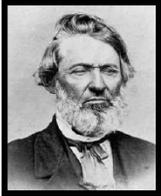
The research was directed by Jonathan S. Friedlaender, professor emeritus of biological anthropology at Temple University. He said the evidence "solves a number of issues about the migration and settlement of Pacific people." The scientists examined more than 800 genetic markers known to be useful in distinguishing human ancestry, including mitochondrial DNA, passed down through females, and the Y chromosomes in males. The findings were published in the online journal Public Library of Science Genetics.

Further research to confirm the history of the Pacific diaspora, Dr. Friedlaender said, would require an expansion of genetic tests among people in the Philippines and Indonesia, regions that the migrants presumably passed through after leaving Taiwan more than 3,500 years ago, ultimately reaching as far as Hawaii and Easter Island.

*BOOK REVIEW***THE RENEGADE APOSTLE**

The William E. McLellin Papers: 1854-1880 Edited by Stan Larson and Samuel J. Passey, Signature Books, \$39.95

Reviewed by Richard Packham



Not many Mormons will recognize the name William E. McLellin (sometimes spelled M'Lellin, McLellan, McClellan), even though he was an early convert to the church (1831) and a member of the first quorum of apostles. He is mentioned several times in revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. The fact that he left the church in 1836 is undoubtedly the reason he is relatively unknown and ignored by modern Mormons.

McLellin's name became prominent again in 1985, however, when Mark Hofmann, a successful dealer in old Mormon documents, announced that he had located McLellin's long-lost papers, and suggested that the writings of this early apostate would throw considerable light on early Mormonism. Many Mormons (and Mormon leaders) were concerned that the "McLellin Collection" would cause the church some embarrassment, as had other documents that Hofmann had found (the "Salamander Letter" and the "Joseph III Blessing," for example). Efforts were made to raise the money to acquire this collection on behalf of the church. Soon, however, Hofmann was exposed as a forger and murderer, having set off three bombs in Salt Lake City to divert attention from his forgeries.

During the course of the murder investigation it was learned that the church had already acquired a number of papers from McLellin, and investigators learned the location of the rest, having been preserved privately by a family in Texas whose ancestor had befriended McLellin in his old age and had been entrusted with his writings and letters.

In addition to McLellin's actual notebooks, letters, and some items published during his lifetime, the editors have included six long essays by scholars about McLellin and his importance. These articles are perhaps the most interesting part of the book, although differing among themselves both in point of view and in their conclusions. One essay, by RLDS historian Richard P. Howard, characterizes McLellin as a "stormy petrel," wild and vacillat-

ing. Another characterizes him as unable to change as the church received "further light and knowledge." D. Michael Quinn's essay, on the other hand, criticizes him for changing his mind too much. It is not often one gets to compare the drastically different interpretations by historians looking at the same materials.

The most readable essay is the account by newspaper reporter Dawn House, telling how she located the family in Texas who had the bulk of the papers. It reads like a detective story.

The notebooks and letters that make up the bulk of the book provide a valuable picture of Mormonism in the early 1830s and how, at least in McLellin's view, it drastically changed. McLellin gives compelling reasons for his loss of confidence in Smith and his church: the unscriptural idea of two priesthoods; the dubious late account of the priesthood restoration by angels (which McLellin says he had never heard of); the deletion of the name "Christ" from the name of the church in 1834; the major revision of the revelations when they were published; the absence of any divine endowment in the Kirtland temple (McLellin recounts it as a drunken orgy); the Kirtland Bank scandal; the failure of Zion's Camp (which McLellin attributed to its violation of the earlier revelation enjoining peace); the Danite expulsion of dissenters from Missouri; and so on.

McLellin firmly believed that Smith was a fallen prophet after 1834, but he also staunchly believed in the divinity of the Book of Mormon until his death, just as did his good friend David Whitmer. He continued to believe that God would eventually re-establish the true Church of Christ.

By their very nature, the notebooks and letters tend to be repetitious reading. After reading half a dozen times the account of the wild excursion by church leaders and their women from Kirtland to Cleveland, where they smashed up a restaurant and a carriage in their drunkenness, one begins to skim for something new. In a dozen places McLellin expounds on why there should be no Aaronic priesthood in the church. We have, repeated in notebooks and letters a dozen times, his arguments against polygamy and his reports of Smith's adulteries. As casual reading the repetition makes for tedious going, but as a historical source, this collection is extremely valuable.

McLellin remained vitally interested in Mormonism, but rejected every form of it that developed in the decades after his leaving the original church. It is clear from these readings that few modern Mormons would recognize the church that McLellin joined.

BOOK REVIEW**BROTHER BRIGHAM**

By D. Michael Martindale

Publisher: Zarahemla Books \$16.95

Reviewed by Dennis C. Farley



With apologies to the author of *Brother Brigham*, I cannot with good conscience recommend this book to the readers of *The New Expositor*. The staccato rhythm of the prose, numerous sentence fragments, inane Mormon clichés, and insipid similes were so distracting that I would not have finished reading the book had I not committed to do so.

At the risk of revealing the plot of the story let me summarize. A descendent of Brigham Young has a young bride and two children. He has assumed the name of C.H., rather than go by Cory Horace Young. His childhood imaginary friend was Brigham Young. Because of his heritage and pride, he believes what is contained in a patriarchal blessing promising that he will do something special for the world. As he is mowing his lawn one Saturday the ghost of Brigham Young appears to him, and gives him precise directions to a backpack full of money located in the west desert of Tooele County. Apparently the \$150,000 is enough for our hero to do whatever special thing Brigham has in mind.

He finds the money, takes it home, and shows it to his wife, who has enough intelligence not to believe a ghost had given him the money. She thinks he might have stolen it, but does what all young submissive Mormon brides do when confronted with an implausible story — since she cannot imagine her husband would lie, she prays with all her heart *to know that it is true*. Besides, she reasons, since Brigham's ghost told him where to find the money and he did find the money there, Brigham's ghost must have directed him!

In his next appearance, the ghost tells C.H. that he is destined to be the next prophet, and that in the meantime he is to restore polygamy. Using fraudulent temple recommends he and his bride-to-be are married in the temple. He later takes a third wife, and the ghost demands that they consummate the marriage immediately while he watches. This is too much for even C.H., and he refuses. He then learns that one doesn't anger a ghost without consequences. A bunch of evil

spirits appear; Brigham's face becomes quite contorted, revealing that—horror of horrors—he is *not* really Brigham Young, but an evil spirit from hell! The evil spirits jump inside of C.H.—literally—and have to be exorcised by the bishop, using priesthood powers.

Brother Brigham is a story for gullible TBMs who have been taught to believe evil spirits really exist and will crawl inside of you if you don't follow all of the teachings of God's only true church. Be afraid—be very afraid--—that there are people in the world who actually believe this.

“We are now officially as a church coming completely clean on the Mountain Meadows Massacre. We don't try to hide it, we tell it in all its bloody gory truth. And we don't say it was someone else's fault. It was our fault.

-Richard Bushman

HOW TO JOIN OR DONATE TO THE FOUNDATION

Membership in the Exmormon Foundation is open to everyone interested in Mormonism.

Annual dues are \$20 per person, or \$35 for two persons at the same address.

The Foundation is an IRS Tax-Exempt Organization, and all donations made to the Foundation are fully deductible as charitable gifts. We welcome contributions of any size, and commit to using the funds carefully and efficiently in advertising our presence and supporting people in their journey out of Mormonism. Donations or dues can be sent to:

The Exmormon Foundation
c/o Dianne Ormond, 957 North 910 East
Orem, Utah 84097-3448

TAKING THE OTHER ROAD

WHEN COUPLES CAN'T AGREE ABOUT MORMONISM

By Ed Bliss

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood," wrote Robert Frost. *"...and I — I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."*

And it's quite a difference indeed when the subject is Mormonism. It's a common problem: A man and a woman, both True Believers, fall in love and marry. Then one of them leaves the church but the other still believes, and although they still love each other, suddenly their whole world is shattered.

In some churches it doesn't matter much. "I'm a Baptist, you're a Methodist, but hey, we both worship the same God, so no big deal. One of us can switch, or we can work out a compromise, or we can just ignore the differences. No problem."

But for a Mormon couple it isn't that simple. There is the matter of Celestial marriage, the question of raising the kids to go on missions, the burden of tithing, the distress of being ostracized by relatives, and many other problems that don't lend themselves to compromise. Consequently, a frequently asked question on ex-Mormon websites is "How do I get my spouse to change — or at least to understand my point of view?"

A recent plea for help on one website put it this way: "Does anyone have any ideas on how to get a wife who is very devout to see the truth? I've known since I went to the temple before my mission that the church was not true... But how do I convince my wife? This is not something that I can just walk away from and have her support. She will freak out. She is very 'Molly Mormon.' I'm talking Relief Society President, reads scriptures and texts daily. Any help will be GREATLY appreciated."

Here, in condensed form, is how one former member responded to that plea:

"I am the wife of a TBM [True Believer Mormon]. My husband is a BYU graduate, a returned missionary, a high priest at 33 — an as good as they come Mormon man. About 9 months ago I came to the conclusion the church wasn't based on truth and broke the news to him then. I learned that it is a huge loss to the spouse (and possibly the

kids, as in my case), and that you have to be *patient*. My advice is for you to give your wife the space to mourn, because there are going to be big changes in her life. People raised in the church really don't know what to think if their 'big plan of happiness' is disturbed. If it's not written in a lesson manual, or by a general authority, they don't know what to do.

"But the thing *you* can do is just to continue loving her, and don't belittle her beliefs. Even when you're completely flabbergasted, disgusted or disappointed by what she believes, you have to respect her still. Try to focus on what you have in common, and why you fell in love in the first place. Prove to her that you still have morals, a family focus and ethics. She's probably going to expect you to turn into an undisciplined monster, now that you don't have 'the truth' to tell you every move you should make. and what you should say, think, feel, drink and wear!"

"I have found that it feels wonderful to be free from the overpowering influence of the church. Since leaving, I'm happier and more light-hearted than I've been in years; Life is good again; I have time for creative outlets and I am proving each day to my family that leaving the church was definitely right for me. I don't push my ideas onto my family, and I definitely don't want them to do it to me, either! We are all here trying to live our best lives, right? Good luck on your journey!"

Here is another response, again from a wife:

"I used to be exactly who your wife is. I was not only Relief Society President, but Stake RS, as well — gung ho in every principle and belief they spoon-fed me. There was no way I would ever leave my wonderful, true church...but my husband, a returned missionary *did* leave. It was subtle at first. He said he didn't 'feel good,' and avoided attending his meetings. He would turn down callings, saying his job kept him too busy, but I knew something was wrong. You just don't *do* that in the church!"

"When I finally confronted him about it, I thought I was going to die when he told me he no longer believed. I needed his testimony to sustain my own! He said he would never stop me or our children from going, but he just could not be untrue to himself any longer.

“For a week or two I went into a tailspin. I prayed. I cried. I lamented my choice in a mate (but I *loved* the man!). How could he throw the truth and me away so easily? (Of course it *wasn't* easy, but it seemed like it to me. He actually had struggled with it for several years — alone, and in silence.)

“We resolved it for a short time (after a crying jag he could no longer stomach) by him telling me, ‘If you believe it so much, please find a way to convert me back. Read everything you can find that I have read that convinces me the church is not true, and then disprove it to me. I *want* to believe. I just can't.’ That is exactly what I did. I read every piece of literature I could get my hands on, vowing I would find the fallacy in each and lead him back to the fold. I finally discovered what he had found (it was a long, hard, agonizing journey)...that the church just could not possibly be true.

“Before this I only read church-sanctioned books—the standard works, the approved study manuals. I ‘avoided the very appearance of evil’ in my study, mainly because I didn’t *want* to have doubts. They were creeping in, but I saw that as my own weakness. However, when I began my quest, I was sure if I read the ‘anti’ literature with a pure heart, God would show me the fallacies contained therein and help me on my mission to reestablish my husband's testimony and strengthen my own. And of course as the study continued I *was* shown the fallacies.

“I know not all stories will end like ours did (and we will always struggle with our TBM families). There are broken marriages and broken hearts over this issue, but I have to give my husband credit for never pushing, never arguing with me about my beliefs. He just encouraged me to ‘win him back’ in the fight.”

So there you have it. Sometimes changing a spouse’s beliefs will be impossible, but with tact and patience it can often be done. It’s worth a try. If it doesn’t work just remember that well-known prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

“The truth which makes men free is for the most part the truth which men prefer not to hear.”

— *Herbert Agar*

LETTERS TO THE EXPOSITOR

I was very impressed with the most recent edition of "The New Expositor"... I congratulate you for a great periodical tailored for former Mormons.

— *Robin Hardy*

I enjoy reading *The New Expositor*, but have one question, which must have occurred to a number of your readers: How does Chad Spjut pronounce his name?

— *J.J. Richmond*

Rhymes with dispute. It's of Swedish origin

While in Utah I read the January 2008 edition of *The New Expositor* and thoroughly enjoyed it. How many editions come out in a year?

— *Jim Blan*

We publish quarterly. The New Expositor goes to all members of the Exmormon Foundation, and is sent without charge to a number of groups of former Mormons. Donations to assist this effort are appreciated.

Richard Packham did an excellent job on his analysis of Mormon membership numbers in your last issue. All of the contributors to the New Expositor are doing excellent work!

— *Tom Donofrio*

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Editor's Note: We welcome letters. If you would like to comment on anything in our publication or suggest subjects for future consideration address your comments to Editor, The New Expositor, P.O. Box 384, Lompoc CA 93436, or e-mail us at newsletter@exmormonfoundation.org

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P.O. Box 384
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Regional and Local Exmormon Groups

In the past several years a number of local and regional groups of former Mormons have been established. Some of them meet weekly, some monthly, and some sporadically. Some of the ones listed below are just getting started. For information about a specific group, including the e-mail address of the contact person, visit: www.postmormon.org and click on Our Community.

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|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Alaska | Houston, Texas |
| Arizona | Idaho Falls, Idaho |
| Australia | Las Vegas, Nevada |
| Cache Valley, Utah | Mt. Carmel, Utah |
| Calgary Canada | North Idaho |
| Charlotte, NC | Ogden, Utah |
| Chesapeake, VA | Pocatello, Idaho |
| Colorado Springs/Denver | Portland, Oregon |
| South & North Davis County, Utah | Sacramento, California |
| Ecuador | Salem, Oregon |
| Edmonton, Canada | San Diego, California |
| France | Sanpete County, Utah |
| Hampton Roads, VA | Seattle, Washington |
| | Sanpete County, Utah |
| | Southern Utah |
| | Sweden |
| | Tacoma, Washington |
| | United Kingdom |
| | Utah County |
| | Utah State University |

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