

THE NEW EXPOSITOR

--THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.--



Spring 2007 Edition I

A New Endeavor

Welcome to the first edition of The New Expositor, newsletter of The Exmormon Foundation!

On June 7, 1844, The Nauvoo Expositor was published by William Law. The next day, the Nauvoo City Council authorized Joseph Smith, mayor of the city, "to abate," the nuisance which was "The Nauvoo Expositor." Joseph Smith then gave orders to have the city marshal abate the nuisance which they did by illegally destroying the printing press without due process, which is to say that it was done unconstitutionally. Subsequent events led to the imprisonment of and eventual murder of Joseph Smith, Jr.

Of course, The Exmormon Foundation does not wish for any murders or any destruction of printing presses. Our goal is simple: It is to let others know that there is a life after Mormonism. Our intent is to do so by letting people know that others who have been in Mormonism have stepped beyond it. Great comfort can come from knowing of them.

If you or people you know are afraid to leave Mormonism, are afraid that if you depart Mormonism you will lose your families, at the very least, know that above all, you are not alone. My best wishes to you always,

Lou Wagner

Former President, The Exmormon Foundation.

The Expositor, Old and New



For those unfamiliar with Mormonism, the name of this newsletter may be puzzling, but as Lou Wagner has noted above, the original Expositor played a key role in Mormon history.

Ironically (although many Mormons are not aware of it) the Nauvoo Expositor was not published by anti-Mormons or gentiles, but by men who believed that the Book of Mormon was true, and that it had been translated by Joseph Smith from plates given him by the angel Moroni. However, they also believed that Joseph Smith was a "fallen prophet" who had strayed from the truths that had been revealed through him, and that he was living in sin. They especially objected to the fact that he and several other Church leaders had secretly married plural wives -- while publicly denying that they were doing so.

The publication told of women "in foreign climes" who were induced to "embark upon a voyage across waters to glorify God," but who were told by the prophet that they should become spiritual wives, but that "we must keep those blessings and pleasures from the world."

So the Expositor was destroyed by the Church not because it was lying, but because it was telling the truth -- at a time when the Church leaders were determined to keep the truth hidden! The full text of the Nauvoo Expositor can be seen at:

<http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/nauvoosexpositor.htm>

How the Exmormon Foundation Came to Be



By Richard Packham

Since I am the person who originally set up the Exmormon Foundation in 2001, I have been asked to write a short history of the Foundation and how it came to be.

I would like to tell you that, being troubled in my mind about the course I should take, I retired to a small grove of trees near my home, and, having knelt down in fervent prayer, I saw a pillar of light descending upon me, in which were two glorious beings, and....

No, I can't tell you that. First of all, that isn't the way it happened at all. And secondly, no one in his right mind would believe a cockamamie fairy tale like that

Actually, I was not involved at the very beginning. The Foundation grew out of Eric Kettunen's website, now known as www.exmormon.org. Eric had started his website in November 1995 and called it "Recovery From Mormonism." He and his wife had left Mormonism just over a year previously. In March of 1996 he added a rudimentary e-mail list to the site, which soon had over two hundred subscribers.

Exmormons who had found Eric's website and e-mail list soon wanted to get together personally, and one of the subscribers organized a weekend gathering at a small hotel in Las Vegas in February of 1997. About 65 people came from all over the country. A tradition had started. The Exmormons returned to Las Vegas annually after that, in February, for the conferences that came to be called "X98," "X99" and "X2K." I joined Eric's e-mail list in the spring of 1997; my first Exmormon conference was X98.

At the 1999 conference a small group tossed around ideas for setting up an actual organization, since all these gatherings had been ad hoc, with no assurance of continuity, no legal standing, no agreed-on goals or agenda.

At the 2000 gathering it was announced that a corporation had been set up by one Exmormon in Nevada, and he offered it to

the group. Unfortunately he had set it up as a business corporation, not as a non-profit, and it had no by-laws, no provision for memberships, and no provision for finances. Although a board of directors was formed, it split up after only a few months when it appeared that the organizer's intention was to provide himself employment and to assume control of Eric's website. That corporation is now defunct. Everyone was discouraged.

The meeting in February 2001 was once again organized by private individuals, again in Las Vegas, again financed by individual organizers advancing their own money to secure a hotel venue. The next conference was also an ad hoc affair, in October of 2001, the weekend of General Conference in Salt Lake City. It was finally becoming painfully obvious that some structure was needed.

After that October conference it dawned on me that somebody simply had to bite the bullet and do something — any committee would have taken months to accomplish anything. So, with my legal experience, I simply took it upon myself to incorporate the Exmormon Foundation as a non-profit corporation in Oregon (my home state). The fee was \$20, which I paid and credited as my dues as the first member. I drafted the Articles of Incorporation, I drafted tentative By-Laws, and announced to the Exmormon community that the Foundation now existed, and invited people to join and to volunteer to serve on the initial board. The response was very gratifying. We quickly had a board of directors, who elected officers and ratified the by-laws. I was elected as the first president, and during that first year, because we were still so small and because it was more convenient, I also served as treasurer, secretary and membership secretary.

Sue Emmett took over as president the second year (I declined to run, primarily due to age and fatigue) and also did double duty as chairman of the conference planning committee. The third year of the Foundation's history was marked by the quick resignation of two successive presidents, and I was persuaded to rejoin the board and to complete their unfinished term. Since then Lou Wagner has served admirably as president, supported by a hard-working board.

As the Foundation grew it became clear that we needed to be declared a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, so that contributors (in the United States, at least) could claim their contributions as charitable deductions. I was able to do the extensive paperwork for the application, and the Foundation was declared tax-exempt in May 2003.

The annual conferences have remained the major activity of the Foundation, held now annually in October in Salt Lake City. Each conference has seen tremendous increases in attendance, many people attending for the first time. As the conferences have grown in size they have attracted considerable media coverage, both in Utah and elsewhere. Beginning in 2005 the proceedings have been streamed to the Internet, with the result that thousands from all over the world have been able to tune in. And since the presentations are archived on the Foundation's website (www.ExmormonFoundation.org) they are always available.

As an organization that is run entirely by volunteers, with no paid staff, no office headquarters, no source of income except dues and contributions, the Foundation has achieved much and can only be expected to grow and prosper. The original by-laws and organizational structure seem to be working well, with very minor modifications. I am glad to have been able to be a part of the Foundation's beginning.

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On Leaving the Fold

By Robert Baumgardner

When leaving Mormonism many ex-Mormons experience a feeling of lost identity -- a lost sense about who they are and how they fit into the world. Mormonism is so central to one's thoughts and feelings that the change can be profoundly upsetting.

The story of Mormonism was "our" story. We were part of it, and it was part of us. Thus it isn't unusual for ex-Mormons to experience periods of anxiety, depression and uncertainty about their decision to leave. Although they can no longer accept the church, they miss some aspects of it.

However, just as the "official" history of Mormonism is not the whole story or even the true story of the church, the image we had of ourselves as Mormons wasn't necessarily the true image of who we really were. Much of our real nature was suppressed, hidden, or ignored. The feelings of guilt, dependence, shame, and fear that are often engendered by Mormonism can stifle our real essence. We must find a way of developing a new, more authentic and enlivening sense of who we are -- and who we are becoming.

As a therapist and marriage counselor, I have found that getting thoughts and feelings down on paper can often help a person develop a new perspective, helping them see their situation in a different light. So what I suggest is the following:

Take a piece of paper and draw a line down the center. On the left side put the heading, "The Old Me." On the right side, "The New Me."

On the left side list the beliefs and events that shaped your self-image, both positive and negative, during the period when Mormonism was central in your life. What made you like you were? To what extent did you stifle your inner self in order to comply with someone else's idea of what you should be and do? Do you think of your old self as being authentic or phony? Did you strive for perfection, and then feel guilt and shame because you failed to achieve it, as so many Mormons do, or were you willing to settle for a more reasonable goal of improvement? Did you let fear be your primary motivation? Were you too timid to express your honest feelings and doubts about Mormonism and some of its teachings?

On the right side of the page list the positive things that have happened -- or are going to happen -- to the New You since your "declaration of independence." Do you feel more freedom, now that you don't have an "authority" sitting constantly in judgment of you? Do you feel more authentic? More honest? More at peace with yourself? More independent? What are the goals that your new self-image is going to produce, and how do you intend to pursue them?

And what are your values? Some of them, of course, will be related to Mormonism -- after all, every religion has positive values -- but some of them will be quite different. What are the things that really matter to you? What do you want your life to look like in a year or five years or ten years, given the changes that you are making?

Making this kind of self-analysis, and doing it on paper, can help

you to set your own course, and can be a powerful way to break free of the domination of the Mormon church, in which your own identity may have been hidden. This process can help you free yourself to live a more varied, interesting and truthful life.

Robert Baumgardner is a former convert to Mormonism. He resigned from the Mormon Church in 1989 after nearly 14 years of membership, which included missionary service, temple marriage, and graduation from BYU. He is a marriage and family therapist.

The October Conference

By Sue Emmett, Conference Chair



Plans are already moving along for our next annual Exmormon Foundation Conference.

Once again, we will be meeting at The Embassy Suites in Salt Lake City. The dates are October 12-14, 2007.

This is a wonderful venue for the conference — not only does the hotel provide great service, we've been told by the conference manager that the staff loves having

our group there!

The agenda for the weekend is already shaping up to be interesting, enlightening, and healing. Already committed as presenters are:

Art Vanick, one of the authors of *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* — *The Spalding Enigma*;

Brian Patrick, producer and director of the first documentary done on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, who will show his film and discuss his experiences while researching and producing it;

Bob McCue, who spoke last year and is coming back for Act II, much to the delight of those who felt he didn't have enough time last year!

In addition to these presenters, there are some other things coming together that will greatly enhance the conference. Mark your calendars for another wonderful weekend!

How You Can Help

The Exmormon 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. You may make a donation by sending a check to:

Brian Madsen, Treasurer,
The Exmormon Foundation,
4332 Coldwater Canyon Ave. #1,
Studio City, CA 91604-1470.

Regional and Local Groups

There are a number of regional Exmormon groups that meet annually, monthly, or sporadically. Following are the ones of which we are aware. If you know of others, or have corrections, email us at ed529c@verizon.net.

Arizona Women's Yahoo Group
Shelli Vaughn
webmomma@cox.net

Arizona
Meets monthly
Janet Nash janet_nash@yahoo.com
or 480-786-9043
or Tom Donofrio truthvrseerror@hotmail.com
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AZ-Exmos>

Cache Valley
Meets every Sunday evening
jeff.ricks@postmormon.org

California
Meets several times a year at different locations
escapefrommoism@hotmail.com

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Caexmo>
New England
dennygotout@yahoo.com

Ogden
Bill Gardiner
wgardi1095@yahoo.com

Pacific Northwest Yahoo Group
Sue Emmett
sue97062@aol.com
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ExmormonsNW>

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carlos.antonio.burrell@gmail.com

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