

THE NEW EXPOSITOR

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE EXMORMON FOUNDATION



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A 12-Step Program for Recovering from Mormonism

By Richard Packham and Matthew P. Barnson

THOUSANDS of people suffering from the devastation of alcoholism have been helped by following the "Twelve Steps" developed by Alcoholics Anonymous. Many other programs dealing with recovery from drug addiction, overeating, and other addictive behaviors have adapted AA's Twelve Steps. Those leaving Mormonism usually are dealing with similar problems of recovery, and the following is an adaptation of the Twelve Steps for help in recovering from Mormonism.

1. I admit that I am powerless to change the fact that I have been Mormon for a good part of my life, whether because I was born to Mormon parents, or because I voluntarily converted.

2. I realize that I have within me the power to free myself from the harmful part of my Mormon past (with the help of a higher power if I believe in one), and that I am no longer bound by promises or covenants which I was induced to make based on the false promises of Mormonism.

3. I make to myself a firm promise to listen in the future only to reason, rationality, and factual evidence in making decisions about how I should live my life, rejecting all emotional appeals, guilt-inducing threats, myths, pretty stories, promises of castles in the air, and superstition.

4. I make a searching and fearless moral and intellectual inventory of myself with the purpose of recognizing in myself those weaknesses which induced me to remain Mormon for so long.

5. I itemize (preferably in writing) to myself and to a trusted loved one (and to a higher power if I believe in one) the specific reasons why I can no longer be Mormon.

6. I make the decision to do what is right, and to accept whatever the consequences may be for acknowledging the truth and living accordingly.

7. I begin working through each of my Mormonism-related problems of mind, body, relationships, and (if I believe in such a thing) spirit.

8. I make a list of those for whom it would be important to know of my decision and the changes I am making in my life, and prepare myself emotionally to discuss my decision with them all, realizing that many may react with hurt, anger, emotional outbursts, or other unpleasantness.

9. I discuss my decision with them (except in those cases where I think it would cause greater harm to do so than not) in a calm, friendly and loving way, without argument.

10. I continue to take personal inventory, and where I find artifacts of Mormonism, I carefully consider whether they should continue to be a part of my life, or whether I should discard them.

11. I seek out truth wherever I can find it, whether religious or secular.

12. Having had an awakening and renewal as the result of these steps, I try to be helpful to other recovering or doubting Mormons, and to practice these principles in all of my affairs.

A Message from the President

The October conference in Salt Lake City will climax an eventful year for the Exmormon Foundation. After two very successful terms, Lou Wagner stepped down several months ago as Foundation president, and in replacing him I realize that I am having some big shoes to fill. Another dedicated member whose services will be greatly missed is Matt Barnson, who is relinquishing his position as the Foundation's webmaster. Matt's many hours of service to the organization have been a major contribution, and his audio recordings of presentations at the annual conferences, which have been available on the Foundation website, have been appreciated by hundreds who were unable to attend the conferences in person.

A new member of our Board is Jarom Smith, whose enthusiasm and dedication are a welcome addition. He has been an active participant in ex-Mormon activities the past several years.

During the past few months a major undertaking of the Foundation has been the production of a documentary DVD which we hope will be completed in time for showing at the conference. Another project has been the inauguration of our quarterly newsletter, *The New Expositor*.

Having been among those who attended the first meeting of our group in Las Vegas in 1997, when it was just an informal get-together of a bunch of people with a common interest, I have been impressed with the Foundation's remarkable growth over the past ten years, and I am confident that it will continue to grow and provide companionship and support to those who have shared the often wrenching experience of leaving Mormonism.

Sandy Crain

DVD Project Nears Completion

Work on a DVD featuring a number of well-known ex-Mormons explaining why they left the church, is nearing completion. The DVD, commissioned by the Exmormon Foundation, is still unnamed as we go to press, but is expected to be completed in time for a showing at the October conference in Salt Lake City.

Among those interviewed in the DVD are **Simon Southerton**, DNA researcher; **Ken Clark**, former CES employee; **Bob McCue**, attorney; **Arza Evans**, retired professor, **Bill Gardiner**, clinical social worker; **Tal Bachman**, professional musician; **Tracy Bachman**, English convert; **Richard Packham**, retired teacher and attorney; **Jarom Smith**, former missionary; **Dennis Farley**, author and attorney; and **Sandy Crain**, president of the Exmormon Foundation. Several of the participants have served as bishops or held other positions of authority in the Church prior to their resignation.

When completed, the DVD will be available for purchase on the Exmormon website.

Mixed Reviews for September Dawn

The long-anticipated movie based on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, *September Dawn*, has met with mixed reviews. Roger Ebert awarded it a thumbs down, and Entertainment Weekly called it "...a plodding and highly questionable history lesson." The Boston Globe said, "...it only serves to remind us of one of the uglier chapters in American history."

On the other hand, MatchFlick gave it five stars, and Maxim's Peter Hammond said, "Despite awkward direction by Christopher Cain and uneven story-telling, *September Dawn* is often gripping and fascinating, packing a powerful punch particularly in later scenes as the tension escalates."

Perhaps the Seattle Times reviewer put it best: "*September Dawn* is well-crafted as a revisionist Western with a message. If the message is muddled, there's plenty of literature to clear the facts — or to make the matter even more bewildering for those seeking truth.

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How to Join or Donate

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. Dues (or donations) can be sent to Exmormon Foundation, c/o Brian Madsen, 4332 Coldwater Canyon #1, Studio City CA 91604.

Hear these speakers at the 2007 Exmormon Conference October 12 - 14, Salt Lake City

Bob McCue

Returning by popular demand after a stellar performance at last year's conference, Bob McCue will speak on "Damage Control, Healing, and Growth in Post-Mormon Relationships — Sisyphus, Icarus and the Holy Grail."

Brian Patrick

Noting the 150th anniversary of the darkest moment in Mormon history, Brian Patrick will show his film, *Burying the Past: Legacy of the Mountain Meadows Massacre*, and will discuss his experiences with Church authorities and with the Fancher family while filming it.

Art Vanick

As co-author of *Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?: The Spalding Enigma*, Art Vanick has been interviewed many times on radio programs about his book. F.A.R.M.S. has published a 130-page rebuttal to the book — which obviously stirred a lot of interest!

Dan Fischer, D.D.S.

Dr. Fischer, the dinner speaker Saturday evening, was raised in a third-generation polygamous family. After leaving the FLDS church he established The Lost Boys, to help boys, some as young as 13, who have been were kicked out and abandoned by polygamous families.

Bill and Mel Gardiner and Janet Jacobson

Bill Gardiner, a former CES employee, his wife Mel, who was raised in a family of 13 children, and Janet Jacobson, a convert at 18, a divorced mother of 5, will discuss ways to leave guilt behind and find a passion for life again after Mormonism. A question period will follow.

Raymond A. Hult

A retired FBI Special Agent and former Mormon bishop, Ray Halt is author of *An Agnostic View of Bothersome Mormon Doctrine*. A fervent follower for most of his adult life he decided to subject Joseph Smith to the credibility standards he used in his criminal investigations. .

Nannette Martin

After 27 years as a dedicated church member, Nannette suffered depression after trying to live the gospel, and tried the internet to find kindred souls. On learning the "real" history of Mormonism, she and her husband visited their son in the mission field to share their discoveries.

*For registration information, visit the Exmormon Foundation website
www.exmormonfoundation.org/2007Conference*

Hotel registration:
Embassy Suites Hotel
110 West 600 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101
Telephone : (801) 359-7800

Some Favorite Websites

There are many websites that are helpful for former believers who have left the LDS Church, or members who are considering doing so — or people who are just plain curious about Mormonism. Following are some of the more popular sites:

Recovery from Mormonism...Includes dozens of letters and articles relating to problems with Mormon doctrines and practices, and helpful advice for those making the transition out of the church.

www.exmormon.org

Richard Packham's website...Authoritative information and advice from one of the leaders of the Exmormon movement.

www.geocities.com/packham33

Exmormon Foundation...Information about activities of the Exmormon Foundation, and articles about various aspects of Mormonism

www.ExmormonFoundation.org

Bob McCue's website...Thoughtful observations about the Mormon mind-set by a former bishop.

www.mccue.cc/bob/spirituality.htm

Mormonnomore...Detailed advice on how to "resign" from the church, which is much more complicated than one would expect.

www.mormonnomore.com

Mormonism Pro and Con...Arguments in favor of Mormonism -- followed by answers to each of those arguments. Includes chapters from the book *A Friendly Discussion — Mormonism Pro and Con*.

www.mormonism-proandcon.org

Utah Lighthouse Ministry...Exhaustive research on nearly every aspect of Mormonism,

www.utlm.org

Post-Mormon Community...Emphasis on forming local groups of former members of the Church.

www.postmormon.org

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