

One Fold

Acceptability of Abortion

An article in the May 31 issue of *America* cites a recent survey indicating that 81 percent of American Protestant clergy believe abortion is acceptable "under certain circumstances." The figure for the general public was 62 percent. Interestingly, 24 percent of the Catholic clergy condoned abortion "under certain circumstances," while 74 percent adhered to the church's official position that abortion is always unacceptable.

NCC Report

The Governing Board of the National Council of Churches met in May and issued a number of recommendations, including:

an end to all acts of violence by the PLO and acceptance of the existence of Israel;

cessation of new Israeli settlements on the West Bank or Gaza Strip;

an end to the U.S. military assistance for the junta in El Salvador;

the formation of a religious fact-finding visit to Guatemala to investigate charges of human rights violations.

RLDS Conference

Great-grandson of Joseph Smith, Jr., President Wallace B. Smith presided over the April conference of the 220,000-member Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Serious division was avoided when two controversial moves were tabled: the ordination of women was deferred indefinitely, and affiliation with the National or World Councils of Churches was voted down.

In 1968 then-president W. Wallace Smith announced the time had come to build a temple complex on the original 61-acre Temple Lot in Independence. According to *Christianity Today*, plans were undertaken in 1974 and over \$2 million has been raised, but the future of the project is uncertain. President Smith is quoted as saying, "We're not entirely sure what the role of the Temple should be. We have not defined all its functions. We need to consult with and inform our people about it." It is clear, however,

that the temple services will not be those of the LDS Church. Speaking of the Mormons, Reorganized church historian Richard Howard is quoted in *Christianity Today* as saying, "They live in a different universe. We have different doctrines of God, the world, you name it. The only thing we have in common is our historical origin, and we even interpret that differently."

Seminary Protests Mormon Ad

The entire faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission has sent a letter to *Reader's Digest*, protesting the publication of LDS ads. Citing truth in advertising laws, the professors complained, "We wince when we see that reputable *Reader's Digest* has been manipulated as an instrument for the proselytizing strategy of the LDS. . . . *Reader's Digest* should separate itself from the spread of this heresy."



Church in Receivership

In the 1880s the U.S. government confiscated all property of the Mormon Church in excess of \$50,000 because of its role in promulgating the illegal practice of plural marriage. Now, another church has been forced into receivership by the state of California.

On January 3, 1979, a court-appointed receiver walked unannounced into the Pasadena headquarters of the Worldwide Church of God, accompanied by officials from the attorney general's office, private attorneys, and armed police. The receiver fired a church secretary on the spot and threatened other employees with arrest if they resisted. Dozens of cartons of church records were hauled off by the officers who failed to leave a receipt for what was taken.

The receiver and his assistant moved into the top floor of the church administration building and occupied it for seven weeks. Payment on all outstanding checks was stopped. All of the church's ministers throughout the world were ordered not to send any money to the founding pastor general, Herbert W. Armstrong in Tucson. Donations were to be sent only to the Pasadena headquarters, where the receiver would impound it.

According to *The Christian Century*, the receiver was appointed to conserve the church's assets because of alleged misappropriation of funds, but the receiver (who is paid \$150 an hour) and his helpers have cost the church over \$200,000.

The church, supported by the National Council of Churches, the American Civil Liberties Union and other groups, has appealed the receivership to the U.S. Supreme Court. California's attorney general has also asked for a court order to remove Armstrong and his right-hand man, Stanley Rader, from the church's board of directors and to disqualify them from serving on the board of any other charitable organization in the state. They are charged with "siphoning off the property and assets of the church, and appropriating them to their own personal use and benefit, on a massive scale, amounting to several million dollars per year."

Pending the outcome of litigation, Armstrong has formed a new corporation, the "Herbert W. Armstrong the Apostle of the Church of God and His Successors," and rehired several ministers and other employees fired by the receiver. Worldwide Church assets in California cannot be transferred to the new organization pending decisions of the court.

Churches Resettle Refugees

The recent flood of Cuban and Haitian refugees has strained the resources of state and local agencies, and churches have responded to the call for help. The U.S. Catholic Conference's Immigration and Refugee Service reported it was ready to resettle 500 Cuban refugees a day at each of the three refugee centers. The agency handles about 65 percent of the Cuban refugees. The Episcopal Church, through its Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, spent \$44,500 to finance seven freedom flights, airlifting 800 former political prisoners. Florida Methodists sponsored two flights and helped with six more sponsored through Church World Service.

Editor's Note:

We received a copy of the following letter; the original was sent to the publisher of the book, *Journal of Joseph, Council Press.*

Regarding Advertisement

I am in receipt of advertising copy for your *The Journal of Joseph: The Personal Diary of a Modern Prophet*, by Joseph Smith, Jr. Your ad, numbered "380 T" and measuring 5 1/2 by 11 1/4 inches, states that this is a new book—"Already the fastest-selling LDS book of 1980." The claim is made in this ad that the "book is exactly what the title says it is—the personal journal of Joseph Smith, Jr.," and goes on to say that "the original documents are in the archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." One could reasonably conclude from such copy that this "Journal" might be the authentic article, and a very good buy at about 10 bucks postpaid.

However, knowing that Dean C. Jessee, Senior Research Historian with the Church Historical Dept., is currently charged with preparing such holographic material for publication and had said nothing about the Smith diaries when I spoke to him here recently, I decided to drop around to the local Mormon Bookstore in order to check on the possibility that your ad was simply hype; i.e., false and misleading advertising designed to help sales.

Of course, you know what I found, and you may already have received some complaints from knowledgeable

customers. For the Bookstore did indeed have copies of your so-called *journal*, and it proved to be a compilation of entries not from the original sources, but rather from a later, edited version. I did not take time to discover which of B.H. Roberts' editions of *The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1st ed., 1908-1912/2nd ed., 1948-51) you employed to create your bogus "journal," though copyright on the 1st edition has long since lapsed. The original materials are available for public viewing on microfilm in the LDS and RLDS archives, and they do not comport with the sham-journal which you have published.

Had you frankly announced your actual sources for this "journal" on the book

itself and in your advertising copy, that would have been one thing. Instead, you have perpetrated a hoax which will only prolong recovery from such nonsense in the past. For your lack of candor, if not sheer greed, you owe each purchaser an apology and an offer of restitution. Moreover, each publication carrying your ad should print a retraction or disclaimer in a prominent place. Paid for by you, of course. Over and above that, I hope that your repentance will include sorrow for having duped your fellow Mormons—and for perhaps bringing them, once again, into disrepute with their enemies (surely the anti-Mormons will get some mileage from this!).

Robert F. Smith
Independence, Missouri

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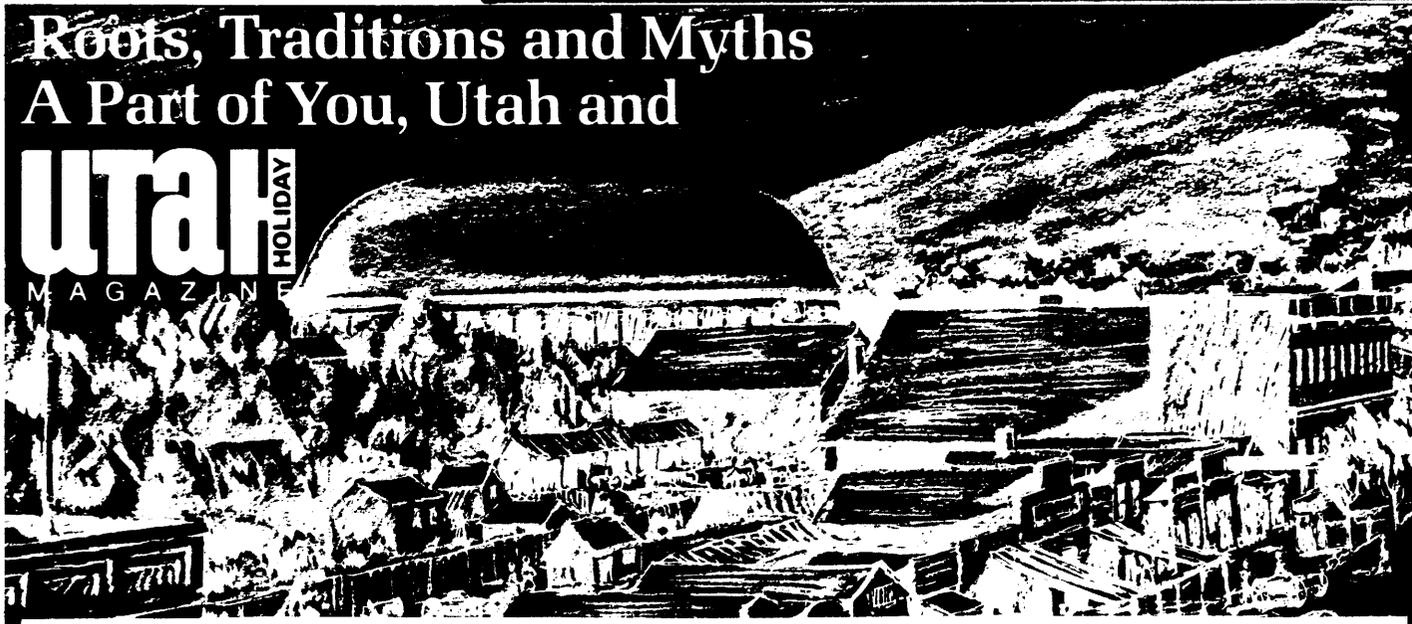
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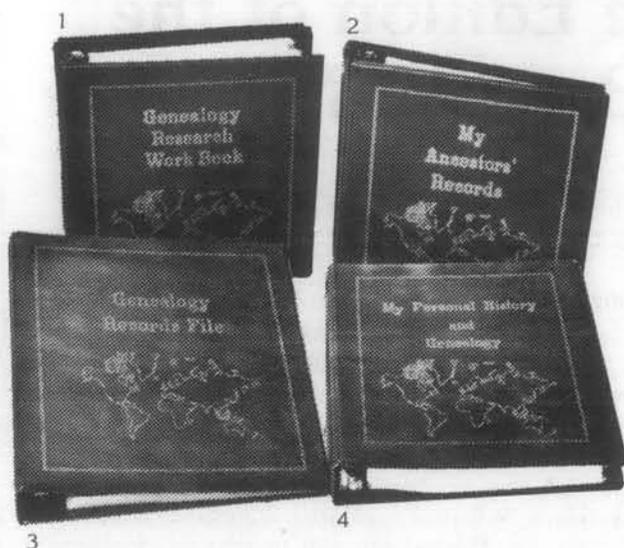
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In commemoration of this special anniversary, Deseret Book Company plans to produce, in limited quantities, a facsimile edition of the 1830 Book of Mormon. This edition will match, as closely as possible, the paper and binding of that first edition. The type itself will be reproduced from a first-edition copy of the Book of Mormon, and will be authentic in every detail.

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