Motivation, Behavior, and Dissension

by Allen Wyatt

Thomas W. Murphy, a University of Washington graduate student and nominal member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,[1] has made national news in recent weeks. In a story that reached the newswire of the Associated Press late on Friday, November 29, writer Patty Henetz reported that Mr. Murphy expected to "be excommunicated next week for articles he has written questioning the validity of the Book of Mormon."[2] Thus began the one-sided posturing to portray Mr. Murphy as an independent academic, singled out by the monolithic Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for persecution because he intelligently disagrees with its doctrinal issues.

During the nine days after the story first appeared, related stories appeared in numerous national and international media outlets, including the *Wall Street Journal,* KIRO radio (Seattle), the *Los Angeles Times, Newsday,* the *New York Times,* the *Guardian Unlimited* (UK), the *National Post* (Canada), and a whole host of regional and local papers. The Associated Press news story that started the flurry of coverage was initiated by Mr. Murphy after he met with his stake president,[3] Matthew Latimer, at President Latimer's request. According to Mr. Murphy, President Latimer expressed dismay that he had written an essay entitled "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics" that appeared with other similar essays in *American Apocrypha,* published in May 2002 by Signature Books. At the time of the meeting, President Latimer reportedly scheduled a Church disciplinary council for Mr. Murphy to consider allegations that he was guilty of apostasy, as evidenced by statements he made in the article.

The purpose of this paper is not to examine the conclusions reached by Mr. Murphy in his *American Apocrypha* article, or on the earlier draft of the paper that appeared at www.mormonscripturestudies.com, a Web site for dissident LDS essayists. Nor does this paper address Mr. Murphy's questions concerning "the lack of minority representation in church leadership, the church's political campaigns against women's and homosexual rights and 'excommunicating scholars who honestly confront problems with church history and doctrine,'"[4] many of which seem far afield from his areas of study or his published articles.

The scientific and cultural issues raised by Mr. Murphy have been addressed in the past by eminently qualified scholars, and they will continue to be addressed in the future. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ are routinely exposed to harassment akin to anti-Semitism from those with agendas that cannot be taken at face value. What is different in this situation is the strategic and purposeful manipulation of the media to paint a false picture of an embattled scholar being persecuted in his quest for truth by a repressive institution.

This paper examines inconsistencies in the behavior and apparent motivations of Mr. Murphy—using his own words and those of his co-conspirators—in relation to the Church of Jesus Christ and to his now-postponed disciplinary council. Specifically, the following areas are addressed:

- Words, Deeds, and Apostasy
- Abandonment of a Previous Loyalty
- Working with Ex-Mormon Activists
- Research for Hire?

As each area is examined, it becomes clear that Mr. Murphy is not as innocent as he would have us believe. It also becomes clear that Mr. Murphy is working closely with those who want to damage or destroy the Church of Jesus Christ.

Words, Deeds, and Apostasy

When considering whether someone is guilty of apostasy, it is not unusual to examine their words and deeds, as well as the motivation for those words and deeds.[5] Any charge of apostasy is serious. Webster defines *apostasy* as follows:

> **a|pos ta|sy** n., *pl.* –sies. Etymology: Middle English *apostasie,* from Late Latin *apostasia,* from Greek, literally, revolt, from *aphistasthai* to revolt, from *apo-* + *histasthai* to stand. 1: renunciation of a religious faith. 2: abandonment of a previous loyalty.[6]

Notice that apostasy is a charge leveled against the *actions* of an individual. Someone is guilty of apostasy if their *behavior* indicates they have renounced their religious faith, or if their *behavior* indicates they abandoned a previous loyalty. Thus, it is acceptable and, indeed, expected for the behavior of a person charged with apostasy to be examined. The Church of Jesus Christ does not have a formal concept of *heresy* (false belief), but only a concept of *apostasy* (false behavior). In the specific situation of Mr. Murphy, the problem isn't with the conclusions he reaches, but what he does with those conclusions is critical. His behavior, not his belief, is what is integral to apostasy.

When questioned by those in the media, Mr. Murphy asserts that it is his beliefs that are under scrutiny by the Church of Jesus Christ. Indeed, he chooses to characterize himself as one being punished for his thoughts. He told one reporter that President Latimer was "resolute in his duty to sever relations with intellectuals who publish materials contrary to the official positions of the church."[7] To another he pointed out that, "I felt I could think and be a Mormon at the same time, but I'm afraid I was wrong."[8]

The truth of the matter is that Mr. Murphy is certainly free to think on these matters any way he desires. The Church of Jesus Christ has no "litmus test" used to ferret out non-believers. The closest thing the Church of Jesus Christ has to such a test is the series of questions asked prior to an individual being granted a recommend to enter a temple. An examination of those questions reveals none that evaluate a person's feelings about the historicity of the Book of Mormon, about Lamanites, or about DNA research.

While the Church does not actively seek out and target non-believing members, it does not always stand idly by when a member stops being a *thinking non-believer* and becomes a *proselytizing non-believer.* In other words, when a member starts publicly promoting ideas that seek to justify their non-belief or encourage non-belief in others, the Church is within its rights to separate those persons from the body of the Church, based on "open and harmful apostasy."[9] In this regard the Church of Jesus Christ is no different than many other denominations, and in fact can be considered more tolerant than some who excommunicate for "heretical" thoughts. Why should the Church grant the imprimatur of membership to someone who proselytizes against it? Such an interpretation is not unreasonable to other Church observers, either.

> The religion does allow individuals to hold differing interpretations of the Book of Mormon, [Jan] Shipps said. "But once you begin to publish and your interpretation differs from not only the Book of Mormon but doctrinal positions generally, then you are flirting with disfellowshipment, or apostasy."[10]

In those instances where proselytizing non-believers demonstrate that they no longer believe as the Church believes, they can be rightly excommunicated from the Church. The reason? Apostasy—a renunciation of a religious faith.

Abandonment of a Previous Loyalty

One of the definitions of apostasy is an "abandonment of a previous loyalty." It is reasonable to assume that at one time Mr. Murphy felt loyal to the Church of Jesus Christ. He clearly identifies with a rich LDS background; he has implied as much in numerous interviews related to his disciplinary council. On at least one instance he stated, "I do value my Mormon heritage."[11] In another instance it was reported that Mr. Murphy "was raised Mormon in southern Idaho, still considers himself a Mormon and would fight excommunication."[12]

It appears that the recognition of Mr. Murphy's self-identification with the LDS is, at least in part, responsible for the postponement in his disciplinary council. In reporting to his supporters on his conversation with President Latimer, Mr. Murphy indicated

> [President Latimer] stated that my public expression that it was difficult for me had encouraged him not to make a hasty decision. He wants to take some more time to get to know me and invited me to have some more private discussions before taking any further action.[13]

Mr. Murphy's stated desires to associate himself with the Church seem to be at odds with his behavior, however. For instance, he indicates that he has not attended Church in almost a decade, choosing to withdraw in 1993 after the high-profile excommunications of several dissident scholars. In one interview Mr. Murphy identified with those scholars as his "philosophical peers."[14] If he sees dissidents as his peers, it seems odd that he should be dismayed when, by doing the same things they did, he achieves the same results they achieved.

So where is Mr. Murphy's loyalty? Is his loyalty to the church of his youth? Is it with dissident scholars? Or is it with those who would like to see the Church of Jesus Christ defamed, discredited, or destroyed?

Mr. Murphy is quick to assert a desire to be associated with the Church. In reference to his conclusions regarding the Book of Mormon, he states he "would really have liked to have had this discussion in seminary and institute class and Sunday school."[15] It seems improbable that his conclusions could be discussed in Church classes if he hasn't been to Church in almost a decade. An absence from the venue he seeks is certainly not conducive to discussion.

In addition, and more importantly, Mr. Murphy has taken *direct action* to aid those who consider the Church their enemy—the moral equivalent of a Jewish person aiding and abetting anti-Semitic groups. For instance, Mr. Murphy has cooperated with Living Hope Christian Fellowship of Brigham City, Utah. Like many anti-Mormon organizations, Living Hope claims that they "love Mormons" and only want the best for them. Buried within their Web site, however, is this telling remark:

> We are not fighting against LDS people; **we are fighting against the teachings of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.** We believe that these teachings are strongholds set up against the true knowledge of God found in the Bible. **It is our mission to tear them down** using the truth of God's Word in the hopes that some might be saved.[16]

Can someone "hate Judaism" but "love Jews?" Yet that is the equivalent of what Living Hope Christian Fellowship is saying. They sponsor a Web site called MormonChallenge, which hosts video clips of interviews with dissident or disagreeing geneticists concerning DNA and the Book of Mormon.[17] On August 5, 2002, Pastor Joel Kramer of Living Hope Christian Fellowship was contacted by Mr. Murphy. It was Mr. Murphy who initiated the contact with Pastor Kramer, not the other way around. He made himself available to this anti-Mormon group and granted them video interviews on August 7, 2002 while he was in Utah for the annual Sunstone Symposium.[18] These facts are recounted in an e-mail message that Pastor Kramer sent to Ed Decker, a long-time professional anti-Mormon from Washington state, on August 8, 2002. Decker reproduced the e-mail in his periodic *Saints Alive Newsletter.*[19]

Within a few days, excerpts of Mr. Murphy's video interview were posted at the Mormon Challenge Web site. These interviews didn't only discuss Mr. Murphy's ideas, but also his uniformly negative conclusions concerning the historicity of the Book of Mormon:

> We, as Mormons, were mistaken about who American Indians are and where they came from. We have based our beliefs upon the Book of Mormon, which we thought was an accurate ancient historical record. The genetic evidence has pretty conclusively shown that that is not possibly the case.
>
> Well, with all these problems, I think to be honest, we have to admit them. We have to stop pretending that they're not there. We need to stop looking for plausible reasons that the evidence doesn't exist, and I think we need to acknowledge a nineteenth-century origin of the Book of Mormon. That is, we can, I think, admit that Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon in the nineteenth century, and I, as a Mormon scholar, am not afraid to say that.
>
> I think the most difficult problem with a nineteenth-century view of the Book of Mormon is that we have to confront not just the possibility, but the almost inevitability, that Joseph Smith was attempting to deceive people—at least at certain periods of time. When he pretended to have actual plates, for example. It is pretty clear he was being deceptive at that time.[20]

Such statements are gratefully received by an organization (Living Hope Christian Fellowship) whose mission is to fight "against the teachings of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon" and "tear them down." That Mr. Murphy would actually initiate contact with Living Hope Christian Fellowship and help them work toward the fulfillment of their mission is puzzling for someone who expresses a desire to be associated with the Church of Jesus Christ. If, as Mr. Murphy claims, "he tried to work within the church structure, not openly oppose it,"[21] then why would he aid and abet those who *do*

openly oppose it? Mr. Murphy's actions are, at best, inconsistent with his stated desires. At worst they illustrate a duplicitous contempt for the Church of Jesus Christ. In either case, Mr. Murphy's actions are at odds with his statements to the media and he appears guilty of "abandonment of a previous loyalty."

Working with Ex-Mormon Activists

It is doubtful that the average graduate student would know how to mount a major media campaign within hours of being summoned to a disciplinary council for his apostate behavior. Yet, it appears that Mr. Murphy was able to do just that, as he tapped directly into the national exposure offered by a major news bureau. The story wasn't carried in a local Washington newspaper and then picked up by a national bureau; it *originated* at a national level. Such access to national media takes connections. Who could have arranged such immediate national exposure?

Perhaps part of the answer lies in where the story was filed with the news bureau; this allows us to see where the media contacts exist. The original story was filed under a dateline of Salt Lake City,[22] even though the story was actually breaking in Lynnwood, Washingon—over 850 miles away. In other words, someone with access to the national press offices in Salt Lake City had to break the story, not a lowly graduate student in Washington state.

Giving heed to the old adage that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" can make for strange bedfellows, indeed. Even though Mr. Murphy wants to be associated with the Church, his bedfellows include ex-Mormon activists, such as Steven Clark of Park City, Utah. Mr. Clark resigned from the Church of Jesus Christ in 1996[23] and has been active in anti-LDS efforts ever since.[24] Here we can begin to piece together the rest of the story concerning how news of Mr. Murphy was disseminated so expertly and quickly.

Mr. Clark and other hostile ex-Mormons like to congregate and share plans on Internet message boards. Mr. Clark posts messages under the pseudonym "cricket," and throughout the week following the scheduling of Mr. Murphy's disciplinary council, the messages were flying back and forth. Even officials at Signature Books were involved in mobilizing support against the Church of Jesus Christ. Ron Priddis, Managing Director for the publisher, issued an e-mail call for support at a "vigil in honor of Thomas W. Murphy" at the Main Street Plaza in Salt Lake City.[25]

Perhaps the complicity of Mr. Clark (an ex-Mormon), Mr. Murphy (a purported neutral scholar), and others can be best seen in a message posted by Mr. Clark shortly after the disciplinary council was postponed. Someone on the message board asked and commented, "So did anybody see the Murphy cancellation coming? I was BLINDSIDED!" Mr. Clark answered:

> I saw it coming from day one. Maybe I should be the prophet instead. When Tom and I first spoke and emailed about his church court, after he got his first invite from the SP[26] to "come to his office at the Stake Center", I told Tom to prepare himself for a last minute cancellation or postponement of the court due to the PR this was bound to generate.
>
> We also have a private email list for the organizers and supporters on the front lines of this and I warned this list repeatedly to be prepared for a let down and last minute delay. Got the email to prove it.
>
> I am not bragging, because anyone who has seen how the Morg[27] opperates [sic] in these matters knows that the institution is totally self serving—the individual be damned.
>
> They have pre-determined plans of action and contingency plans for negative PR. Especially the past five years since securing Edleman World Wide Public Relations as their consulting PR firm. Edleman specializes in "Brand" development and also emergency damage control.
>
> Watch the news for clues and signals about professionally managed PR damage control.
>
> We are giving them fits though because the Internet and cell phones allow for instant communication with the masses. For instance just a few minutes after Murphy's SP cancelled, the details of the story were out.
>
> Personally, I believe the next decade will see major shifts in policy and doctrine in a futile attempt to keep the Morg alive. The Old Timer GA's are still stuck in their ways and thought patterns they developed in their twenties and thirties. This inflexible calcified spirituality is killing the body of the Church.
>
> Hinckley's spry and active for a 92 year old but spiritually he's still back in the 1930's where control and obedience were mistaken for spirituality. You can't teach an old prophet new revelations.[28]

Note, again, the second sentence of this message: Mr. Murphy and Mr. Clark spoke together *before* Mr. Murphy had even talked to his stake president the first time. This would have been before the disciplinary council would have been decided upon, and certainly before President Latimer had let Mr. Murphy know a date, time, and place. It is unlikely that Mr. Murphy let his stake president know, in their meeting, that he was receiving direction and support from ex-Mormon activists. Such behavior on Mr. Murphy's part runs counter to the oft-repeated mantra of dissident scholars that they desire openness and free speech in the Church.

Note, as well, that Mr. Clark brags of their "private e-mail list for organizers and supporters." In other words, the announcement to the press—to the national media—was most likely orchestrated by Mr. Clark and others behind the scenes. Mr. Clark was in Utah, in close proximity to Salt Lake City, and could easily have contacted Ms. Henetz from the Salt Lake City bureau of the Associated Press. Mr. Murphy's impending disciplinary council wasn't objective news; it was a media event, manufactured by ex-Mormon activists in an effort to use modern media to help destroy the Church of Jesus Christ. (Notice Mr. Clark's expectation that "the next decade will see major shifts in policy and doctrine in a futile attempt to keep the [Church] alive." Activists work toward their expectations; these people want to bring down the Church.)

In talking to the media, Mr. Clark stated "Having one's character, spirituality and access to God publicly slandered is no light matter."[29] Slander, which cannot be done in secret, is a particularly serious accusation. The accusation falls apart, however, when one considers that the only one who made anything public in relation to his disciplinary council was Mr. Murphy himself. The only thing that the Church has stated is that there is no attempt on its part to expel academic dissidents[30] and that disciplinary councils are a local matter. The only thing that local officials have done publicly is to confirm Mr. Murphy's prior statements that a disciplinary council was first scheduled and then later postponed, and to confirm that they receive no direction from the Church regarding disciplinary councils.[31] Given the strategically orchestrated and one-sided nature of the comments relating to Mr. Murphy's disciplinary council, it seems that any potential slander could come from only one source—the one with which Mr. Clark is allied.

Research for Hire?

A review of Mr. Murphy's earlier contributions to LDS scholarship does not show any publications on the themes that are now so important to him—DNA, Lamanite origins, and the historicity of the Book of Mormon. From available records, it appears that this changed in 2000 when a dissident electronic journal (*Mormon Scripture Studies*) funded a research project for Mr. Murphy. According to his résumé maintained on the University of Washington Web site, Mr. Murphy did research into "native origins in Central America; implications of DNA research for Book of Mormon studies," and that it was funded by *Mormon Scripture Studies*.[32]

When Brent Metcalfe, one of the ex-LDS principals of *Mormon Scripture Studies,* was questioned about what it meant when Mr. Murphy indicated he was funded by his journal, he replied that funding sources "to help offset essayists' research expenses" are confidential, but that they generally "range from $250 to $2,500."[33]

When Mr. Metcalfe was further questioned whether Mr. Murphy had done the "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics" essay on his own initiative or if the essay had been requested by *Mormon Scripture Studies,* he responded:

> Yes, Tom wrote the essay at our request. (Though I should note that stipends could also help defray expenses previously incurred by a researcher.) With Tom's essay we were looking for a lucid synthesis of the ongoing work conducted by geneticists—and Tom delivered.[34]

There is a major inconsistency, though, with Mr. Metcalfe's statement that Mr. Murphy wrote his essay at the request of *Mormon Scripture Studies*—and the problem originates with Mr. Murphy himself. In statements to the press *after* he announced his anticipated excommunication, Mr. Murphy indicated that he was the one who "initiated the research to substantiate the claims made in the Book of Mormon."[35] If Mr. Murphy is correct in his assertion, then his claim of independence certainly has more validity than if Mr. Metcalfe commissioned him to write it for his journal. Unfortunately for Mr. Murphy, there is more evidence to support Mr. Metcalfe's claim concerning the genesis of the paper.

There is no doubt that the dissidents at *Mormon Scripture Studies* were more than happy with the investment they had made in Mr. Murphy's work. It is interesting, as well, that the essay done at Mr. Metcalfe's request was later updated and a revised version ended up in *American Apocrypha,* an anachronistically titled[36] collection of dissident essays edited by Mr. Metcalfe and published by Signature Books.

There is, of course, nothing morally wrong with a dissident publisher fully or partially funding the work of a dissident author. In addition, there is nothing wrong with that publisher choosing to promote and profit from the research of that author. What does seem disingenuous, however, is Mr. Murphy portraying himself as an independent scholar when the money provided by *Mormon Scripture Studies* gives the appearance of anything but independence. Those critical of the Church of Jesus Christ routinely discount or dismiss the work of scholars at BYU or FARMS,[37] in part because those critics feel that being on the payroll of a Church institution somehow compromises their "academic integrity." By their standard, shouldn't Mr. Murphy's work and conclusions be just as suspect?

Summary

In the Church of Jesus Christ, it is up to formal priesthood disciplinary councils to determine whether a member is guilty of apostasy. These councils are convened and conducted at a local level. The issues faced by such councils are difficult, as a person's future association with the Church often hangs in the balance. The future may hold such a council in store for Thomas W. Murphy; that decision is up to (and rightfully belongs with) his ecclesiastical leaders.

Whatever the future holds for Mr. Murphy, his behind-the-scenes behavior clearly indicates that he is not an innocent scholar being sacrificed at the hands of the oppressive Mormon Church for his intellectual integrity—that is a media persona carefully fostered by his supporters and activist friends. He is not a neutral academic observer whose professional views place him, à la Galileo, on the religious sacrificial altar. Nor is Mr. Murphy a patient scholar who has tried to work with and within the structure of the Church. His behavior leading up to the announcement of his disciplinary council indicates he is a willing, active supporter of and conspirator with those who would like to see the Church of Jesus Christ destroyed. Of course, you won't hear that information from Mr. Murphy or any of those working behind the scenes to support him; such Oz-like machinations were not meant to be part of the manipulation of the media that they have pulled off. Fortunately, the very strengths of the Internet that enable the conspiracy of disinformation to occur also leave the indelible footprints carefully documented in this paper.

Mr. Murphy's actions show he is all too willing to broadcast his ecclesiastical differences through the media, when he knows that the Church will not reciprocate for reasons of confidentiality. Mr. Murphy has placed himself at odds with the Church of Jesus Christ and taken specific steps to aid those who have a mission to tear down the Church. While attempting to claim the moral high ground of academic integrity, he has failed to notice that his bedfellows gave up any legitimate claim to that position long ago.

Further Reading

Hafen, Bruce C. "Disciplinary Procedures," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* edited by Daniel H. Ludlow. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992, 1:385–387. This is a concise yet complete treatment of how disciplinary procedures are handled in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Scharffs, Gilbert W. "Apostate," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* edited by Daniel H. Ludlow. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992, 1:59. Explanation of how people become apostates, based on their behavior.

"Apostasy, Personal," FAIR Web site, http://www.fairlds.org/apol/ai021.html. A collection of on-line references to articles dealing with personal apostasy. The site also contains hundreds of additional articles on a wide range of relevant LDS topics.

"Personal Apostasy," *We Believe,* edited by Rulon T. Burton. Salt Lake City: Tabernacle Books, 1994, 33–35. A collection of teachings by historical and current leaders of the Church of Christ on the topic of personal apostasy.

Notes

1. Mr. Murphy is currently completing his Ph.D. in anthropology. As he works toward his doctorate, he is employed as the head of a small anthropology department at Edmonds Community College, in Lynnwood, Washington. As will be demonstrated in this paper, Mr. Murphy admits he has not attended Church meetings in almost a decade.

2. Consistent with typical news publishing procedures, the AP story appeared in many publications—domestic and international—for several days following when it was posted. Most appeared under the headline "Mormon Scholar May Face Excommunication." For the purposes of this paper, we referenced the story that appeared in the *Austin American-Statesman,* online edition, at http://www.austin360.com, on November 30, 2002. See also the same story in the *Seattle Times,* under the headline "Mormon Scholar Predicts His Expulsion," at http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=mormon30m&date=20021130&query=134586805.

3. For those unfamiliar with the ecclesiastical structure of the Church of Jesus Christ, a stake president is a local leader that presides over a number of smaller local congregations. A stake, in the Church of Jesus Christ, has traditionally been compared with a diocese in the Catholic Church.

4. Patty Henetz, "Mormon Scholar May Face Excommunication," Associated Press newswire (November 29, 2002). In a later communication with his supporters, following the postponement of his disciplinary council, Mr. Murphy stated "I have heard that some of my supporters still want to hold a rally in Salt Lake City to bring attention to the racism and sexism in Mormon scripture and to object to homophobia and intellectual intimidation in the LDS Church. Kerrie, Jessyca, and I support those endeavors." (E-mail from Tom Murphy to supporters, posted by Brent Metcalfe on December 7, 2002, at Zion's Lighthouse Message Board, www.zlmb.com.) Kerrie and Jessyca are Mr. Murphy's wife and daughter.

5. Some readers may take exception to examining a person's behavior and motivation; some may even see such an effort as a prime example of an *ad hominem* attack, and therefore to be discounted as of no value. *Ad hominem* (Latin for "against the man") attacks are frowned upon in scholarly circles because they, in essence, attack the messenger and not the message. While scholars may feel comfortable separating the message from the messenger, in an instance of personal apostasy the messenger and the message can, and often do, become inseparably intertwined. Further, one could reasonably argue that the unacceptability of the concept of "attacking the messenger" is rooted in the implicit assumption that the messenger is nothing more than an innocent conveyer of truth. The problem in the case of Thomas Murphy is that he is not an innocent messenger, but the sole author of his message. Reasonable people can and have examined the same data that Mr. Murphy uses and arrive at totally different conclusions. Mr. Murphy's ecclesiastical problems would seem to stem not from the innocent transmittal of a data-rich message about DNA, but from his authorship and transmittal of conclusions based on that data.

6. See *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary,* Tenth Edition.

7. Eric Stevick, "EdCC Instructor, Mormon Faces Exclusion Over Articles," *The Herald* (Everett, Washington, December 3, 2002).

8. Scott Smallwood, "Mormon Scholar May Be Excommunicated for Questioning Belief About American Indians' Ancestry," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (December 3, 2002).

9. Bruce C. Hafen, "Disciplinary Procedures," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1:386.

10. Janet I. Tu, "Mormon Dissidents Rally Behind Scholar," *Seattle Times* (December 7, 2002). Jan Shipps is not LDS. She is professor emeritus of history and religious studies at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. She has written extensively on the Church of Jesus Christ.

11. Patty Henetz, "Mormon Scholar's Excommunication Hearing Postponed Indefinitely," Associated Press newswire (December 9, 2002).

12. Peggy Andersen, "Disciplinary Hearing for Mormon Writer Postponed Indefinitely," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (December 8, 2002).

13. E-mail from Tom Murphy to supporters, posted by Brent Metcalfe on December 7, 2002, at Zion's Lighthouse Message Board (www.zlmb.com). See also Henetz, "Mormon Scholar's Excommunication Hearing Postponed Indefinitely."

14. Atone Clark, "Murphy's DNA Claims Debated," *Ogden Standard-Examiner* (December 12, 2002).

15. Ibid. Seminary is a term describing LDS religion classes for high-school students. Institute is a similar course of study for post-secondary students.

16. Living Hope Christian Fellowship Web site (http://www.livinghopeministries.info/Why%20Challenge.htm), emphasis added.

17. The self-professed goals of www.mormonchallenge.com, highlighted on their home page, are two-fold: To communicate the history claimed within the Book of Mormon, and to compile and communicate a wealth of evidence provided by leading researchers. A footnote on the site explains what is meant by "leading researchers:"

> The education and research of each professional must specifically pertain to the scientific or historical subject matter covered. Self appointed or religiously appointed experts that lack the credentials and research experience for any given subject will not qualify for interview on MormonChallenge.Com

It is interesting that they contradict their own criteria for experts appearing on the site by including a short out-of-context clip of a generic statement by Gordon B. Hinckley, and juxtapose that with a portion of the interview with Thomas Murphy. President Hinckley obviously does not have the professional credentials professed as mandatory by MormonChallenge, and their editing on the clip does nothing but purposely pit a religious leader against an "LDS scholar."

18. That Mr. Murphy was in Utah for the Sunstone Symposium on this date was made clear in a personal conversation with him at a social event on the evening of August 7, 2002.

19. Mr. Decker operates Saints Alive in Jesus, an anti-Mormon ministry formerly known as Ex-Mormons for Jesus. The newsletter referenced can be found at http://www.saintsalive.com/newsletters/sept-oct2002/oct.2002nl.htm. The pertinent part from Pastor Kramer, re-

produced by Mr. Decker, is as follows. The editorial comments shown in this excerpt were inserted by Mr. Decker.

> On Monday afternoon *[ed: August 5, 2002]* we received an e-mail from an LDS anthropologist. He found out about us through the DNA scientist who we will be interviewing this Tuesday in California. We did an hour and forty-minute interview with this Mormon anthropologist yesterday *[August 7, 2002]*. It was amazing! God completely delivered this man to us as we had no idea he was out there. His name is Tom Murphy; he has a BS and MA degree in anthropology and is currently writing his doctoral thesis on the DNA issue and Mormonism.
>
> He openly admitted on camera that the recent genetic evidence proves that the Book of Mormon is a false document written by Joseph Smith [ed: and others] in the 19th Century. He also admitted that it proves that Joseph Smith openly and knowingly deceived people. With authority and sound reason he refutes every argument that Mormon scholars have attempted to explain the DNA problems they face. He refutes them both as a scientist and a Mormon. He also pleads with the LDS people and leadership to come clean in these areas. The interview was discovered, arranged and conducted in such a way that there is nothing that we can take credit for. It was all God! Praise Jesus!

20. Video interview with Thomas Murphy, hosted at www.mormonchallenge.com. This partial transcript is taken from the clip entitled "Dealing with Evidence."

21. Clark, "Murphy's DNA Claims Debated."

22. Henetz, "Mormon Scholar May Face Excommunication." A quick call to the Associated Press (December 16, 2002) verified that Ms. Henetz is a writer associated with their Salt Lake City bureau.

23. Tu, "Mormon Dissidents Rally Behind Scholar."

24. Steven Clark, along with a group of other ex-Mormon activists, sponsors an irreverent Web site that pokes fun at the LDS, Latter-day Lampoon (www.latterdaylampoon.com). The content of the Web site is more inciting than insightful, often crossing the boundaries of decency and taste. The purpose of the Web site is best summed up with this answer to the question "Why can't you just leave 'The Mormons' alone?", which appears on their site:

> Until the Mormon Church officially announces that it no longer holds itself up to the world as "the one and only true and living church" and "un-condescends" down to normal earthly human level, ceases its preposterous prophecies and burueacratic *[sic]* bigotry, it remains cannon fodder for blasts of skepticism, criticism, sarcasm and parody. (http://www.latterdaylampoon.com/FAQ/)

25. The e-mail, formatted in the form of a press release, was sent to Priddis' associates and acquaintances. A copy of the e-mail was eventually posted at http://www.exmormon.org/boards/w-agora/view.php3?bn=exmobb_recovery&key=1039118955&first=1039118955&last=1039209254.

26. Shorthand for "stake president," a reference to President Matthew Latimer, one of Mr. Murphy's ecclesiastical leaders.

27. Ex-Mormon activists are fond of referring to the Church of Jesus Christ as the "Morg," an epithet that reveals the contempt in which they hold members who are faithful to the Church of Jesus Christ. It is a contraction for "Mormon Borg," a reference to the assimilation-oriented species of the popular *Star Trek: The Next Generation* series, in which there are no individual thinkers, only drones that mindlessly conform to the will of the "collective." There are many similar code words used by dissident ex-Mormons, such as *BoMor* (Book of Mormon) and *TBM* (True Blue Mormon).

28. Posted December 8, 2002, at 6:28 am. See http://www.exmormon.org/boards/w-agora/view.php3?bn=exmobb_recovery&key=1039346897&first=1039369727&last=1039313438.

29. Henetz, "Mormon Scholar's Excommunication Hearing Postponed Indefinitely."

30. Tu, "Mormon Dissidents Rally Behind Scholar."

31. Ibid.

32. See http://students.Washington.edu/twmurphy/resume.html.

33. Personal e-mail correspondence, December 13, 2002.

34. Personal e-mail correspondence, December 14, 2002.

35. Clark, "Murphy's DNA Claims Debated."

36. Technically speaking, if one believes the *Book of Mormon* to be a nineteenth-century fictional work, it would be considered by scriptural scholars to be *pseudepigrapha.* The *Apocrypha* is a tightly defined library of books largely compiled during the inter-testamental period, during a fertile time of writing in Jewish history, between the return from exile in Babylon by the Jewish elite and Israel's conquest by the Seleucid Greek empire. Ironically, *Apocrypha* means *hidden things,* whereas *pseudepigrapha* means *false writings.* If the Book of Mormon is indeed what Latter-day Saints claim it is—divine scripture—it would be considered a type of apocryphal writing, not pseudepigraphal.

37. FARMS is an acronym for the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, a scholarly organization owned by an institute of Brigham Young University (BYU).

About the Author

Allen Wyatt, a technical writer and project manager by trade, is president of Discovery Computing Inc., a computer and publishing services company. He has written approximately 50 books explaining many facets of working with computers, as well as numerous magazine ar-

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Allen joined the Church of Jesus Christ as a pre-teen in 1968, and has lived in various wards and branches in Ohio, Indiana, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, California, and Arizona. Among other callings he has served—in no particular order—as Elder's quorum president (twice), YM president, bishopric counselor (two wards), branch presidency counselor, branch president, stake executive secretary, regional executive secretary, and ward mission leader.

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The Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research (FAIR) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing well-documented answers to criticisms of LDS doctrine, belief and practice. Seeking to assist the lay member and scholar alike to respond to intentional and well-meaning attacks on individual faith, FAIR helps publish articles and books that defend the LDS church, operates a Web site that receives thousands of visitors each day, and sponsors research projects and conferences that provide the LDS scholarly community an outlet for getting information into the hands of the average member. With a 501-C3 tax exempt status from the IRS, FAIR is funded by the generosity of its members and contributors, now grown to more than 2,000.

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