

Concerned Christians

June — July 2005



From the Executive Director:

What's the Reason?

For the thirty plus years I've been doing this ministry work, I'm frequently asked the question, what's the biggest reason people join and then leave the Mormon Church? The reason most join is because they see what appears to be family and church working together 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People want their family to be together not only in this life, but as the LDS church teaches, a family that can be together for eternity, ruling over their own planet as a god and goddess. Some see joining the LDS church as a way of reuniting with dead relatives. It's easy to convince those who believe in the Bible but don't know what it says.

What are the reasons people leave the Mormon Church? There are as many reasons given for leaving the LDS church, as there are people. Some have said the idea of man becoming a god and ruling over his own planet and the teaching that LDS can save the dead caused them to begin questioning. Many decide to leave because they feel like they have been lied to.

When Judy and I lived and worked in the South Pacific Islands of Samoa and Tonga we met people who said they joined because the Mormon church offered to let their children go to the LDS school for free instead of having to pay the government for school. When I explained to Mormons that this would be the same as selling your soul to the devil, they wanted no part in it and wanted out. I talked to young men who had joined because the LDS missionaries agreed to buy them bread or

cigarettes if they would agree to be baptized. Later they would go back to their traditional church.

Another major reason we often see people leave is because they have read Judy's book, Out of Mormonism. I don't say this because it's my wife's book. I say it because we get calls or letters from people just about everyday saying that they left because they had just read it; or because of it, they decided not to join the LDS Church. Just yesterday a Mormon man came into the office because he had just finished reading her book that he found in the trash bin. After we talked to him he decided to leave the Mormon Church and wanted a letter he could use to get his name off the records. He also asked Judy to sign his tattered and torn book.

The Mormon Church claims to be the fastest growing church in the world. That is absolutely not true! The Mormon Church has a fairly rapid growth in the third world countries but in the USA reports are that just as many go "out the back door as come in the front." One of the problems is that many people walk away from it but never go through the process of having their names removed from the records of the church. We have helped hundreds of people write their letters of resignation. We encourage this because it sends a strong message to the LDS church. In addition you can no longer be counted as a member and it stops visits to your house for tithing collection or visiting teachers

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Article Corrections	2
But, That's Just Your Interpretation	3
From the Mailbag	4
At a Church Where I Never Should Have Been	5
Another Case In Point	6
Witnessing Resources	7

EX-MORMON SUPPORT GROUPS

In Metropolitan Phoenix, there are two Concerned Christians support groups: Mesa in the east valley and Avondale in the west valley. Tucson also just started one. For times and directions to the location nearest you, call the Mesa office at 480-833-2537.

Weekly Prayer At Concerned Christians

We encourage all of our Metro-Phoenix friends to join us in prayer for our LDS neighbors, every Tuesday, 7:00-8:00pm, at our Mesa office, 525 E. Broadway Road (two blocks east of Mesa Drive, southwest corner of Broadway Road and Pioneer). Hosted by Duane Strohmeyer of Concerned Christians.



Page 2 THE CROSS

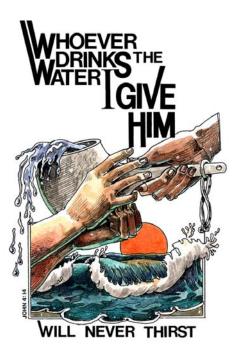
From the Executive Director:

What's the Reason?

(Continued from page 1)

trying to involve you in the church again.

However, the most important reason for writing this letter is that it is the "severing of the umbilical cord" or attachment to the Mormon Church.



Many times I've seen the relief come over the ex-Mormon because he or she is finally free. I frequently hear, "I feel like a ton of bricks has been taken off my back."

Getting people to agree to leave Mormonism means we have only done half our job. Now we have to make sure they truly understand the reason it's all wrong and to encourage them to begin studying God's word, the Holy Bible. We also encourage them to find a good Bible based Christian Church. Locally, we are able to recommend churches we are familiar with. It doesn't make any difference what denomination it is, as long as that church teaches that the Bible is the final and infallible word of God and that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father except through Him.

When God has directed our way and we see these changes come over people, we are fulfilled. Praise the Lord!

⊕ Jim Robertson

"Sacrament Meeting" Article Corrections

We have received several letters from LDS pertaining to the age and title of the lower or Aaronic priests. The youth who "bless" the sacrament are called "priests" and not "teachers." The priests are ages 16-17 or until they are ordained into the next priesthood level of Elder. The teachers are ages 14-15 and help to set up the sacrament.

We have also received several letters from LDS about our statement that women are not allowed to wear pants in the chapel. "It is not a rule but is frowned upon," one said. Another letter said that women wearing pants to sacrament

meeting would just "get dirty looks and you would have a strong feeling to run out the door really quickly," but it is not a rule.

While this is true, as with many "unwritten rules," enforcement varies and is mostly "social." The author's experience in her ward was having a guest asked by the bishop's counselor to experience sacrament meeting from the foyer because she was in pants. She found the same adherence to the "dresses only" policy in several other wards she attended over her lifetime as a Mormon.



525 E. Broadway Rd. Mesa, AZ 85204

www.concernedchristians.org (480) 833-2LDS

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 18 Mesa, AZ 85211-0018

Executive Director

Jim Robertson jim@concernedchristians.org

The Cross Newsletter Editor

Judy Robertson judy@concernedchristians.org

Assistant to the Director

Bob Betts

bob@concernedchristians.org

Office Assistant

Cheri Billingsley cheri@concernedchristians.org

Tucson Directors

Dan and LaVerne Eck (520) 797-2337 dan@concernedchristians.org

Northern Arizona Directors

Brad and Jennifer Melton brad@concernedchristians.org

Webmaster

Lloyd Sharp lloyd@concernedchristians.org

Newsletter Design

Steve Lee, Sr. steve@stevelee.us





June — July 2005 Page 3

"But, That's Just Your Interpretation!"

by Scott W. Bennion

As I have shared passages of the Bible with my family and friends who are Mormon, it has been my experience that those critical of God's Word will often exclaim, "But that's just your interpretation!" Of course, it is a matter of interpretation, but as one of my philosophy professors used to say, "The discussion doesn't end there, but that's where it begins."

We shouldn't shy away from interpreting God's Word; rather we should seek to interpret it the way it was intended by the author. Critics often suggest that one interpretation is no better than another, implying that all are equal and that no one can really have any assurance of what the biblical text means. This attitude is a reflection of our postmodern culture, which views everything as relative. What most people don't realize is that although there have always been those who disregard absolute truth, never before have we seen a culture like ours where relativity has become the norm, and absolutes have become almost unheard of.

What impact does relativity have on interpretation? It is not uncommon today for many people to read the Bible assuming that they determine the meaning of the text. For example, an LDS military chaplain explained his belief to me that the interpretation of scripture is only as profitable as it has meaning for his own life. We should apply scripture to our life. However, this application should be applied as it flows from proper interpretation and not be the means of interpretation. For example, when Paul wrote to the church at Corinth he had a specific message for them. Under the divine authorship of God, he was directed by the Holy Spirit to preach a specific message. To interpret and apply this message now, one should seek first to understand the details of Paul's preaching to the Corinthian church. An inferior form of interpretation is to take our life experiences in the 21st century and read them back into the text.

Here is an analogy based on a conversation with my parents. My mother is an incredible painter and poet who shares her work with others to bring healing to their lives. People apply her work to their own situations. But when it comes to interpretation, her work means what she said. The meaning applies to each person's situation, but the words of her poetry are not describing their situation specifically. My father exemplified a relative approach by suggesting that its okay for the person interpreting the work to find meaning in it based on where they are

coming from, and say that it describes *their* situation perfectly. I would agree that it is okay to find application this way, but it is poor interpretation at best. The intent of the creator's work is where we find the truest meaning. Why make such a big deal? One means of interpretation recognizes absolute truth and sees God as the ultimate Creator of scripture; whereas, the other sees interpretation as relative, emerging from the reader. As one studies the Word of God he or she should read it in context to find its meaning, then let the Holy Spirit bring application to his or her life.

Today we see a culture that does just the opposite. Our culture consists of many religions and philosophies, like Mormonism, that are man-centered. People determine what they think or feel is best, then go looking for "a truth" to support it. This type of interpretation exalts each man or woman as the supreme authority in his or her own life. I am surprised at how often I hear a Mormon say, "But, that's just your interpretation!" when he doesn't have an answer for my question. It seems it would show greater integrity to simply say, "I don't have a response," to what is being proposed.

Of course it is my interpretation, but just as others claim to have absolute truth, so do I. Let us as Christians take the time to interpret God's word carefully and not fall into the trap of relativism remembering the first three rules of interpretation: context, context, context. Then, share the application with your Mormon friends and family in love and boldness. We must look to God and His Word as the supreme authority in all matters of doctrine and practice. Mormon, take the challenge to examine your beliefs with us. It is not all relative. Our eternal lives depend on it. True love is modeled after Christ and an honest conversation is worth any amount of blood, sweat, and tears. It may be "just my interpretation," but that is only where the conversation begins.

["When interpreting God's Word, how does one determine the essentials of Christian orthodoxy?" The next article in this series will explain and define the difference between essentials and nonessentials as pertaining to salvation.]

Recommended Reading:

Knowing Scripture by R.C. Sproul

How to Read the Bible for all its Worth by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart



Page 4 THE CROSS



Dear Jim,

Thank you so much for finding out about a support group for us here in Tasmania, Australia. I will get in touch with them right away. It really means so much to us that you took the time from your busy schedule to help us. We thank the Lord for you and the work you are doing.

Tasmania, Australia

Dear Jim & Judy,

We pray that you keep doing what God is directing you to do. We appreciate you and yours and continue to pray for all of you at Concerned Christians. Please use the enclosed for whatever God directs you to.

Mesa, AZ

Dear Concerned Christians,

Your ministry is to unbelievers who are trapped in the lies of Mormonism. Please use the enclosed to minister to them. Also enclosed is an article about Biola University students that are being sent to BYU in Utah in exchange for BYU students. Are you aware of this? Biola advertised decades ago that it was training future Christian leaders. How much do they really know about Mormonism? Biola needs to be confronted!

Colorado Springs, CO

Hi,

Thank you for sending me the Concerned Christians paper. I really enjoy reading it. I thank and praise the Lord for everyone that is brought out of Mormonism. God is working everywhere these last days. It's so exciting to be alive today and see God at work.

Dear Concerned Christians,

We thank the Lord for your faithful witness to the Mormons & how you are helping many to find Jesus as their personal Lord & Savior. We always look forward to *The Cross.* It's a joy to read the testimonies of those who have come to the truth of Jesus Christ. The article "Sacrament Meeting" was very enlightening. I've often wondered what their service was like. May the Lord continue to bless you and all you minister to.

Mesa, AZ

Dear Judy, Jim & Bob,

Another month gone by, another *Cross* sent out, Easter is over, and then on to bigger and better days. Thanks again for all you do, all the people you reach out to, and those who respond! How elated you all must be with all the positive growth that comes from all your efforts! Thanks again and may God continue to give you all the strength you need to continue on your path.

Mesa, AZ

Dear Jim & Judy,

I appreciate what you are doing to save souls and I pray that each dollar I can send will help. Thanks for your work!!

Mesa, AZ

Dear Jim & All,

I really appreciate your efforts to help people out of Mormonism. We support you in prayer, but are unable to do it financially as we are 90 years of age and still active in the Lord's church.

Albany, OR

Dear Ones,

I first learned of your ministry at the *Discipleship Conference* in Phoenix in June 2003. I so much enjoy *The Cross* newsletter and rejoice that God has raised you up to preach the truth to people who don't know it. I'm sending a donation to help keep the work going. God bless you much!!

Phoenix, AZ

Dear Jim & Judy,

Continue to pray for our granddaughter and her husband who live in Salt Lake City. She was brain washed into Mormonism three years ago. Our hearts are broken but we rest on God's precious promises to bring her back to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We appreciate your prayers and the newsletter.

Columbus, NE

Dear Concerned Christians,

Thanks for *The Cross* newsletter, we enjoy it very much. Enclosed is a contribution and we trust it will help with your needs. May the Lord give you health and strength to carry on for a long while. We trust He will greatly bless your work.

Mesa, AZ

Concerned Christians,

I really appreciate the new "Testimony Corner" section of your newsletter. It helps give insight and knowledge in reaching out to Mormon friends and neighbors.

Logan, UT

Houston, TX



June - July 2005 Page 5

At a Church Where I Never Should Have Been, I Met Jesus by Karrie Browning

and he shall

As a faithful and active member of the LDS church, I grew up believing, based on Joseph Smith's testimony that all other churches were apostate churches, abominable in the sight of the Lord. Even with such a hefty allegation, I found myself accepting the invitation to attend a mainstream Christian church. Here are some reasons I shouldn't have been where I could be saved.

A paid ministry

The church in which I was saved had a full-time pastor who was paid by the church to preach. Neither ward leadership nor the laypeople that speak in LDS services are paid. I had learned to be highly suspicious of paid ministers. Payment somehow dilutes the motives of the minister and leads him to be easily swayed into false teaching.

...and formally-educated, at that

The pastor at the Christian church I attended had very strong ministerial credentials. Being a bible teacher was his gifting, a lifetime calling, as well as his profession. I was taught that the formal education of "sects" had institutionalized false teachings. Of course, this pastor was also lacking the "proper authority" of the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthood. Be of

Teaching from the Bible as 100% reliable

The church I was saved in clearly accepted the Bible as the infallible Word of God. The Bible is the main source for the pastor's sermons. He knew the Greek and Hebrew words. He knew the context. He knew the history and the culture. He taught it as plain and simple truth. I knew, "We believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly" (from LDS Articles of Faith No. 8). As a matter of fact, I thought the fallibility of the Bible was a given.

That's not the King James Version!

This pastor taught out of a Bible that I could actually understand. I should have been more suspicious than interested as we read from the New American Standard version. I was raised on the King James Version because it had been translated the least number of times, according to my many church teachers. They likened Bible translation to the children's game of "telephone," where the story gets passed from one person to another and the final message in no way resembles the intended message. Imagine how surprised I was to learn about the extremely reliable manuscripts available today, which is where the new translations come from!

Sunday school is "optional"

Part of remaining "worthy" in the LDS church is being a member in good standing and attending meetings regularly, including Sunday school. Attendance is taken and recorded at LDS meetings. I recall raising an eyebrow when I found out that Sunday school was optional at this Christian church.

Generally irreverent

The Christian church I attended was fairly conservative, but they had a full orchestra including drums, and of all things - they CLAPPED their hands! They clapped after singing, after a congratulatory announcement, after a solo and after a drama skit. At another Christian church I visited, they even shouted out things while the pastor was preaching! The people were dressed in Sunday best, bright colors, "business casual," or "come as you are." Even more surprising, I could wear shorts on those hot Phoenix Sundays!

Irreverent praying

your heart.

In this congregation, some people prayed with their eyes open! I peaked! They watched and listened and nodded, and said, "Amen." good courage Some even said things like, "Praise you

> Lord," or "Yes, Lord," during the prayer. Some raised their hands. They bowed, but I don't remember anyone positioning Psalm 27:14 properly like I was taught – arms folded across the chest, head bowed, eyes closed. They didn't even use the most reverent prayer pattern of King James' English with

Thees, Thys, and Thous, addressing the Lord as Heavenly Father, thanking him, asking for requests, then closing with, "I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

So there I was... in an "apostate" church week after week, clapping my hands and singing to irreverent songs that peeled away the layers of my heart, wearing what I wanted, missing Sunday school, and listening to a pastor tell me about God from a non-King James Bible. Then one Easter morning, I prayed this irreverent prayer, with my eyes open and fixed on a cross (an offensive instrument of death, I'd been taught in my LDS ward). I had heard this prayer for over a year, but this time I knew it was just for me. I received a free gift of salvation from a Jesus I had never known, who met me at a church where I never should have been.



Page 6 THE CROSS

Another Case in Point Why Concerned Christians Exists

The following example is a letter we received which further describes the deceptive lure of Mormonism, hence the reason why we exist:

Dear Concerned Christians:

April, 2005

I was born and raised in Utah and baptized LDS at the age of eight because all of my friends were doing it, and of course at that age you will do anything to be accepted. I did not come from a religious family, but my parents decided that if my brothers and I wanted to be baptized then they would let us. We never really attended church very much after we were baptized. I especially did not want to go after I had a "bishop's interview" in order to get a card to go to the stake dances. The bishop at the time knew that my parents smoked and in the interview, he discussed this and basically made me feel like it was my fault that they had not quit. He also asked if there was any sort of abuse in the home as a result of my parents not being "members." I was very offended by this whole process and as a result I did not get a card and was actually very relieved that they did not give me one. Another bishop made me feel the same way at an earlier age. There have also been other things that have happened to my family in regards to the LDS religion. Needless to say, I am very disgusted with this particular faith.

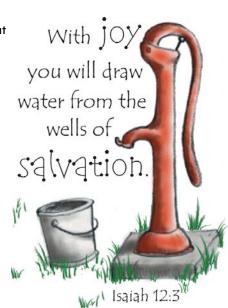
I am dating a guy pretty seriously that has never had any religion in his life — ever. At this time he is working for his dad, and there is a Mormon general contractor at work that has found him to be "easy prey." He has told my boyfriend that if he gets baptized LDS, then he *might* give them more work. He has also told him that if he is not baptized LDS, then he will definitely go to hell. I am very frustrated and concerned for him. My boyfriend has a very hard time telling people "no," and he also feels "obligated" to go along with him because this guy has taken the time to get the missionaries together to teach him about the LDS religion.

I read the book Out of Mormonism. I have also read Beyond Mormonism on the Internet. I have purchased the book The Godmakers and have read part of it in hopes to deter my boyfriend - I gave it to him to read. I have gotten him to postpone being baptized LDS at this time, but I think if his coworker were to push him a little harder, then he would go ahead with it.

I feel like I have talked to my boyfriend until I have no more breath. I told him my concerns about if we were to get married - that I would never convert back to the LDS religion because I think they are a huge cult and I do not approve of their temple ceremony. From what I have read, it violates the person, and it is very wrong to worship the devil, for lack of better words. I have also told him that the LDS believe that if you are not married to a temple-worthy spouse, then they encourage you to get divorced and they will find you a spouse that is temple-worthy. He knows that if we get married that I want to get married in my church. And he has told me that he can change religions at that time if necessary. I tried to explain to him that religion and God should not be treated like changing into a new pair of pants - that it should be taken more seriously than that. In my eyes he also is not willing to change his life enough to live by their rules and be a faithful member (he likes to drink coffee and have an occasional beer which, as you know, they do not approve of). He seems to think that once he is baptized, he can just go about his business and not go to church and they will never bother him again because his coworker doesn't live near him. He doesn't realize that tabs are kept on him no matter where he lives, and they will continue to bug him. He has voiced his opinion to me several times how he thinks that their religion is a bunch of lies, but yet still seems willing to possibly go through with being baptized.

I am very desperate to get any information that can help me to change his mind. Is there any suggestions that you may have for me? At this point, I am beyond desperation. I am very much appreciative of your time.

Sandy, UT





June — July 2005

From the Mailbag

(Continued from page 4)

Dear Concerned Christians,

I was referred to you through an acquaintance who visited my church at Berkley to inform the congregation of his mission work in Salt Lake City. Thank you for adding me to your mailing list, I just received "The Cross" newsletter. They're an encouragement and a great way of knowing what's going on within the Mormon mission field. Keep up the good work!

Corona, CA

Concerned Christians,

Thank you for all you do to spread God's word. You are a blessing to many and an inspiration to the same. God bless you all!

Gilbert, AZ

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Robertson,

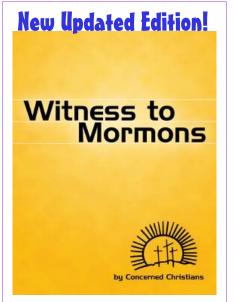
Enclosed is a gift toward the good work you are doing. I appreciate "The Cross" and all the efforts it takes to assemble and distribute it. Each issue is a blessing. I never was a Mormon, but my son has been a member for several years now. He will be returning from an LDS mission this fall. The information you provide is a pathway toward his true salvation! The seeds you provide allow me to do some planting and enables the Holy Spirit to open my son's mind to the truth. Many blessings to you all.

Aurora, CO

Concerned Christians,

Thank you for your hard work and all that you do. Please pray that my husband learns the real truth and comes to the Lord. You give me so much hope!

Peoria, AZ



The classic book on witnessing to Mormons is now available in a new edition. The essential tools for comparing Mormon doctrine with the Bible (and the LDS "scriptures") are retained and improved in this revised and updated edition.

Concerned Christians Witnessing Resources

You may go to our secure website at:

www.concernedchristians.org

for book and video descriptions, prices and to place your order. Or, call us to place an order, at (480) 833-2LDS [833-2537]. Just have your VISA or MasterCard handy when you call.

BOOKS BY CONCERNED CHRISTIANS' AUTHORS

Nout of Mormonism by Judy Robertson

UPDATED Witness to Mormons by Concerned Christians

False Prophesies of Joseph Smith by Jim Robertson and Dick Baer

Understanding My Mormon Friends' Faith and Mine by Judy Robertson

Amazing Mormon Quotes by Robert Betts

No Comparison by Concerned Christians

Basic Teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tract by Concerned Christians

Mormonism Tract Pack (13 tracts) by Concerned Christians

BOOKS BY OTHER AUTHORS

3,913 Changes in the BOM by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

An Address to all Believers in Christ by David Whitmer

An American Prophet's Record – The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith edited by Scott Faulring

An Examination of B.H. Roberts' Secret Manuscripts by Wesley P. Walters

Answering Mormon's Questions by Bill McKeever Archaeology and the BOM by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Beyond Mormonism by James R. Spencer

...by his own hand upon papyrus by Charles M. Larson

Changes in Joseph Smith's History by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Confessions of John D. Lee reprinted by Jerald and Sandra Tanner Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

God's Word: Final, Infallible and Forever by Floyd McElveen

Have You Witnessed to a Mormon Lately by James R. Spencer

Joseph Smith and Polygamy by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Joseph Smith Begins His Work, Vol. 1

Joseph Smith Begins His Work, Vol. 2

Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar

Joseph Smith's History by His Mother by Lucy Mack Smith

Joseph Smith's Plagiarism of the Bible by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Latter-day Saints: Where Did You Get Your Authority by Hal Hougey

Mormon Claims Answered by Marvin Cowan

Mormonism 101 by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson

Mormonism Exposed by William Swartzell

Mormonism, Magic and Masonry by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Mormonism, Mama & Me by Thelma "Granny" Geer

(Continued on back cover)



P. O. Box 18 Mesa, AZ 85211-0018





(Continued from page 7)

Mormonism: Shadow or Reality? by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Mountain Meadows Massacre, The by Josiah Gibbs

No Man Knows My History by Fawn Brody

One Nation Under Gods by Richard Abanes

Point by Point by Steven Lee

Quetzalcoatl - Jesus in the Americas by Eric Johnson



The Mormon Scrapbook: A Christians Guide for Reaching LDS

by Daniel Thompson

Triple Combination, The by Colleen Ralson

Use of the Bible in the BOM & Early Events

Reflected in the BOM by H. Michael Marguardt

View of the Hebrews by Ethan Smith

Where Does It Say That? compiled by Bob Witte

Why Egyptologists Reject the Book of Abraham

Reprinted by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

AUDIO

Understanding Your Mormon Neighbor by Jim Robertson

VIDEOS

DNA vs. the Book of Mormon (VHS or DVD)

Freemasonry: Darkness to Light (VHS only)

God Makers (VHS only)

Jim Robertson Talks to LDS Missionaries (VHS or DVD)

Joseph Smith's Temple of Doom (VHS only)

Mormon Dilemma (VHS only)

Mormonism: The Christian View (VHS only)

Temple of the God Makers (VHS only)

The Lost Book of Abraham (VHS or DVD)

The Secret World of Mormonism (VHS only)

Understanding Your Mormon Neighbor (VHS or DVD)

SPANISH MATERIALS

El Mormonismo y Yo por Thelma de Geer

Los Mormones: Sus doctrinas refutadas a la luz de la Biblia

por Marvin W. Cowan

DNA Contra El Libro de Mormón (VHS y DVD)

Los Creadores de Dioses el Templo Mormón (VHS sólo)

El Libro Perdido de Abraham (VHS y DVD)

Enseñanzas Básicas de La Iglesia de Jesucristo de Los

Santos de los Últimos Días (tratado)