

THE CROSS

Concerned Christians

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FIND FREEDOM IN JESUS?

BY ANDY POLAND
GENERAL MANAGER

My conversations with a new believer in Jesus and former Mormon, J. T. (name withheld to protect privacy), have renewed my joy and excitement about salvation with Jesus. I cannot tell you how good it feels to know that someone else has found faith in Jesus through personal interactions at Concerned Christians.

My conversation with J.T. brought back a flood of memories of when Jesus saved me 7 years ago. God had brought me to a point in my life when I would finally believe in the Bible as his preserved unchangeable word. As soon as I gained faith in the reliability of the Bible, my life changed dramatically. The first insight I received from reading the Bible came as a total surprise as I realized for the first time that I could not keep His commandments (Romans 7:18-19). I immediately felt a sense of futility because I recognized it was impossible for me to reach heaven. I knew I was not good enough. I became angry with God. "God if I am going to be saved, YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO SAVE ME!" I shouted to God. I expected God to reject me, but hoped that somehow I could find a way to escape punishment for my sins.

The next part of my transformation occurred when the scriptures were explained to me by Christians at the Thursday night former Mormon support group at Concerned Christians. At last, I began to understand the Bible's meaning and how it applied to me. One verse shared during our conversation, stood out to me. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written to you that believe on the

name of the Son of God; that you may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:11-13). Those words penetrated my heart. Suddenly I knew that if I believed in Jesus, I had eternal life starting right now. At that moment of awareness, I passed from death unto life. (See John 5:24)

What does this new life look like? The only way to answer that question is to show what I lost and what I gained from my new relationship with Jesus. I gave up three things when I shifted my trust to Jesus. The first was my sin; I could no longer carry the burden. The second was my trust in my personal righteousness. My trust in Christ's righteousness required that I surrender any and all trust in personal righteousness. (See Romans 10:1-4, Philippians 3:9) The third thing that I surrendered was personal glory. I learned that my goal of reaching godhood only belonged to God Himself.

I gained several things from my new relationship with Jesus. The first was certain peace and security in my salvation. I knew I was going to heaven and could not lose that hope. (See 1 Corinthians 3:14-15, Philippians 1:6, John 10:28) God also gave me power to keep His commandments and spiritual gifts to accomplish His tasks. I also found a deep appreciation and love for God. (See Luke 7:36-50) Unquestionably the smallest things I gained from God were the best. I found that my fear of punishment was gone and replaced with an ability to take pleasure in life. My constant fear and obsession with my daily sins had robbed me before, of the ability to enjoy life. I was so consumed with trying to figure out how to be perfect

that I had no time to smell the roses on the path of life. My new relationship with Jesus freed me to be happy in the smallest moments of the day.

As J.T. and I discussed his new relationship with Jesus, I could not help remembering how good God has been to me. As we talked, J. T. expressed his spontaneous desire to praise God for his mercy and power. A new excitement has entered J.T.'s life, new freedom, and hope. How sweet it is to be able to preach the good news of Jesus and find someone to share it with. "For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers" (Ephesians 1:15-16). †

We Get Letters!
Check out the Mailbag
on pages 3 & 4



And don't forget to check our website for a complete listing of resources for witnessing to Mormons.

www.concernedchristians.com



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In the Mesa, Arizona area?
Stop by our office and
browse through our display
racks for materials on
witnessing to Mormons
Monday—Friday office
hours are 9:00-5:30.

AMAZING QUOTES

From LDS Church Leaders:



“Studying the scriptures, praying regularly, and living the gospel of Jesus Christ are works of righteousness, and the Lord has revealed this wonderful promise: ‘He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come’ (*Doctrine & Covenants 59:23*).”

Elder Francisco J. Vinas,
Conference Edition
Ensign, May 2010, p. 106.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE:

The Apostle Paul despised his personal righteousness and gave it up for the righteousness that comes from God.

“...and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith” (Philippians 3:9).

“I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to obtain your goal by human effort?” (Galatians 3:2-3).

Concerned Christians Radio Program on KXXT 1010 - Mondays at 4 pm

Our radio broadcast is called, *Out of Mormonism* where you will hear testimonies of ex-Mormon Christians, and much more. If you are outside the Phoenix area, you can listen to prerecorded broadcasts online anytime via streaming audio.

Go to www.familyvaluesradio.net and click the flashing, red “ON AIR” (upper left-hand corner). Listen anytime to our podcasts: www.outofmormonism.com; or just go to our website for details: www.concernedchristians.com



BIBLE STUDY AT CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

TUESDAY NIGHTS AT 7:00 PM

LED BY STEVE WEBB

Learn how to help Mormons understand God’s word. If you are a Mormon and want to learn what Christians believe about the Bible, this class is for you also. See you on Tuesday!



While eating lunch at a sandwich shop a few days ago, I read my small bible at the table. An older gentleman was sitting at the table behind me. He suddenly exclaimed, "Wow, you can read that small print without glasses?!" We discussed that for a minute, and then he said, "Is that the scriptures you're reading?" I said, "Yes. Do you read the scriptures as well?" He said, "Yes... we are Mormon."

Now other diners were within earshot at nearby tables so I wanted to be careful with my words. I remained amazingly calm, for me, that is. I don't often have opportunities like this, and in hindsight I wish I would have done better with my response. I decided to stay on the subject which he brought up. I told him that I had heard Mormons do not consider the bible as being authoritative, and that Mormons believe the bible has been corrupted and it's unreliable because of translational difficulties. He said, "No that's not true. We use it as a manual alongside the Book of Mormon." Then he asked me, "Have you ever read the Book of Mormon?" I said that I have a copy of it at home, and yes I have "read enough of it" (voice trailing – to imply it didn't take much for me to find it not worth reading through). Still being careful with my words, I added that I also "know enough about Joseph Smith too" (implying – enough to recognize that I should stay away from him and his teachings). There, I had planted my seeds of doubt and thought I had said enough. After all, I was speaking to a senior citizen. He's probably heard it all already. I admit – I had my doubts that anything I could say would sway him. And I didn't want to take the chance of babbling, and having him possibly write me off as ill-informed. Better to keep

him guessing what my thoughts are, right? Maybe not.

In hindsight, my being the layout person for *The CROSS*, I have the benefit of having all of Andy's articles right at my fingertips and refer to them often, as he has given so much great advice on witnessing to Mormons (and Jim and Judy Robertson as well before Andy). As I think back to my brief, sandwich shop discussion, I wish I would have continued to say at least one more sentence in the limited time that I had to talk to this gentleman. Staying on the subject – perhaps something like this...

"Mormons claim the Book of Mormon is the most correct book on earth. But in this day and age, we know DNA evidence and archeologist's evidence has proven the Book of Mormon to be hopelessly flawed and it can't possibly be true." Of course he would have retreated to the "burning in the bosom" as proof of authenticity of the book. And I was mentally prepared with an answer for that as well, but due to my lack of general readiness, that part of the conversation didn't happen.

By this time, the man's wife had purchased their sandwiches and they took it "to go." The most important thing I learned from this encounter is to be prepared and to memorize several sentences in advance in order to be ready and to hopefully make a lasting impression on Mormons who have a false hope in their salvation. Thank you, Concerned Christians for the much needed reminders and encouragement! The Apostle Peter reminds us: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).



From the Mailbag



Dear Fellow Christians,

I was particularly interested in the story in your publication, "The Branch" concerning "Missionary Encounters." I was delivered from Mormonism at the age of 17 by our true and gracious God. It was a miracle as I am from a family of Mormons that began in Utah, who knew Brigham Young and worked to help build the temple. No one had contacted me to explain Christianity. I love my family, but I had to leave (I was an Aaronic Priest) because God put it on my heart that polygamy (my great grandfather had 2 wives) and multiple Gods were wrong. I wanted nothing to do with any religion until I married my wife. It wasn't until 10 years ago when we began attending a Bible based church that I realized that I was not a Christian, and gave my life to Christ. When Mormon missionaries visit, I present them with the facts of their history (most know little) and their belief. Their normal response is to bear their testimony and then have to leave because of an appointment. I bear my Christian testimony also. Mormons are wonderful people, but are taught to believe, without question, the latest interpretation of their leadership and to avoid discussing polygamy and multiple

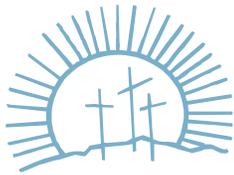
Gods. That is obviously misleading as these 2 things are required by their faith to reach the highest degree of glory in the next life. So, I applaud you for your efforts in missionary encounters. I pray that you have more opportunities to meet in similar circumstances with those considering Mormonism. God bless. ~ Auburn, CA

Dear Concerned Christians,

Thank you as always for your diligence in helping the Mormons. Please keep my family in your prayers as they are all still wrapped up in that religion. I am trying, but I need God's help. Here is our monthly donation to put towards what is needed most. Thank you. ~ Huachuca, AZ

Concerned Christians,

Just a quick note to thank you for your faithfulness in educating Christians on the facts of the LDS church. I first heard Jim speak at our church in Chandler and was "blown away" by the Mormon beliefs. I continue to read your newsletter some 15 years later after moving to the Houston area, just 6 or 7 miles from the temple here, and have been doing my best to educate those around me. If you are ever



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near Houston or would consider coming to Houston, we would love to have you come speak and enlighten our community! There are so many who don't know the true beliefs of the Mormon church and believe that they are just another Christian denomination. Thanks again for all you do! Love in Christ. ~ Houston, TX

Dear Concerned Christians,

Although I cannot be a regular monthly giver, I hope you can accept this small amount from time to time. I really do appreciate your ministry; I live in Mormon-saturated Gilbert and all of my kids' friends are Mormon. I read recently in the newspaper a huge article about the non-Mormon families of kids who get married in the temple and cannot invite their families to the wedding. I was very impressed that the newspaper published this article, as usually in a Mormon-heavy state you don't see very many negative things about the LDS church in the media, but this one was eye-opening and very damaging to their reputation at best! You may already know about this – there is a petition going around trying to get the LDS church to change their policy on family attendance at weddings. Anyway, thanks again for your ministry. ~ Gilbert, AZ

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are blessed by your radio program and thank God for your effective ministry to Mormons. May Jesus continue to bless

and enlarge your ministry. Love in Him. ~ Cave Creek, AZ

Andy / Bob,

I was just sitting here reading the newsletter and see where you need more funds for the radio show. Therefore, I re-opened the envelope I had just sealed and am including another check to help. Thanks for all that you do. ~ Mesa, AZ

Dear Concerned Christians,

Thank you for sending *The CROSS* and for all your work in leading Mormons to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You are a blessing to me, as I have family members in bondage to LDS teachings. I pray daily for their salvation. ~ Muenster, TX

Dear Concerned Christians,

Enclosed please find a check [CC deeply appreciates your gift]. We have lived in Utah for the past 8 years after living back east for almost 20 years. We recently sold our home and are moving back east. From the proceeds of the sale of our home, we felt impressed to send an offering. How appropriate to send proceeds from the sale of our home in Utah – "Mormon Country" to further the gospel of the true Jesus Christ in that state. Please put our funds toward the new radio program in Salt Lake City. We appreciate your ministry and enjoyed hearing Jim R. speak at our church over 8 years ago. God bless. Please update our address. ~ Murfreesboro, TN

