



## HELPING THE NEEDY TO SAVE THE LOST

BY ANDY POLAND

What is the number one problem for a Mormon who is leaving Mormonism? For many, the biggest problem is the inability to trust anyone who claims to be following God. When I came out of Mormonism I wanted to know if I could believe in Christianity, but I certainly did not give my trust easily to any church or person who claimed to be a Christian. In fact, if you claimed you were a follower of Jesus, I would make you prove it to me before I would believe you. What was I looking for? I wanted to know if you really lived a good Christian life and tried to keep the commandments.

My first encounter with a pastor, in my search for true Christians, took place at Central Christian Church. Pastor Cal stood before the congregation and began describing what it meant to have a true relationship with Jesus. He said that a true relationship with Jesus changes a person's behavior. He went on to say that someone who has God living inside their heart should want to do good things, to do the will of God. They should seek to keep the commandments of God, and hate to enter into sin.

I was amazed by the teaching of Pastor Cal. It surprised me that Bible believing Christians would think of following God through seeking to do his will. As a Mormon, I often thought that today's Christian said they believed in God, but then lived any way they wanted to after that. And now that I had left Mormonism, I did not want to trust any "false Christian" who claimed to know God, but did not live the way that God taught us to.

I have seen that many former Mormons feel the same way. They want to see the truth of our beliefs through our

actions. It is not enough for them to hear our "criticisms" of Mormonism; they want to know if there is a good reason to be a Christian. They are asking the question constantly, "Are these Christians genuinely following Christ, and are they demonstrating love, as Christ did?"

Jesus himself taught us how we can know a true Christian. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" John 13:34-35. Jesus said by the love we show others, that everyone will know we are his followers. Jesus also taught that we should show honor to the Father by our actions. "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" John 15:8.

Jesus was passionate about doing what God wanted him to do. A primary command that God gave us was to care for those in need. "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked" Psalm 82:3-4. Indeed, Jesus was so passionate concerning the poor among Israel; he detested the practice of the Pharisees in the Temple. The Pharisees had devised a way to make money from the sacrifices offered by the people at the temple. They had set up moneychangers to help "purify" the offerings made. A person would come with their offering (a bird, lamb, or other animal specified in the law, or even bring money to donate). The moneychangers would tell the attendee that their money or animal was unclean, and that they needed to use "temple

money" or "blessed" animals instead of their offerings. They would then be forced to exchange their money or offerings at a lucrative exchange rate for the Pharisees. Jesus, upon hearing of the extortion of the moneychangers, took action: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" Matthew 21:12-13. Jesus not only wanted to help the poor, but he demanded that they were merciful to the poor in the worship places.

After understanding God's passion about helping the poor, my search for true Christians should include looking for those who practice caring for the poor as a part of their regular walk to follow Christ. Therefore, one of the ways I can convince a former Mormon that Concerned Christians is an organization that follows Christ's teaching is to show them that Concerned Christians is engaged in helping the poor as a ministry, as well as teaching the differences between Mormonism and Biblical instructions.

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# “AMAZING QUOTES” FROM LDS CHURCH LEADERS

“Divine grace is needed by every soul in consequence of the Fall of Adam and also because of man’s weaknesses and shortcomings. However, *grace cannot suffice* without total effort on the part of the recipient. Hence the explanation, “It is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do*” (2 Nephi 25:23). [italics emphasis added]

LDS Bible Dictionary (www.LDS.org)



Biblical Response:

Ephesians 2: 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Clearly, the LDS definition of “grace” is a false definition, and is effectively, anti-grace.

In his book, *Mormon Doctrine*, the late LDS apostle, Bruce R. McConkie taught quite the opposite, that “Salvation in the celestial kingdom of God, however, is not salvation by grace alone. Rather it is *salvation by grace coupled with obedience* to the laws and ordinances of the gospel” (p. 670).

As the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Ephesus, salvation is through faith, not of ourselves, not of works, but is the gift of God. True grace from God is undeserved and unearned. Praise the Lord.



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How important it is not only to believe the teachings of the Bible, but to put them into practice because Jesus said they would know us to be his disciples through our genuine love and concern for others. Notice that Jesus did not say that they would know we were true Christians through our knowledge of true biblical teachings. Often it is our knowledge of Bible truth that causes people to hate us. Why? Because the Bible teaches men about what things they should not do. No one wants to learn that they are a sinner. I believe it is the reason why Jesus said “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” John 15:18. Jesus often challenged men to keep the commandments and pointed out how they fell short of meeting the mark of perfect obedience.

Unfortunately, our exuberance to share the differences between Mormonism and Biblical teachings has caused Mormons to interpret our love for God as hatred against Mormons. Often those leaving Mormonism are afraid to seek answers from our ministry because they categorize us as a “hate group.” My desire is to modify and enhance our

image through serving not just Mormons with their transition out of Mormonism, but through acts of kindness and helping those in need. For that reason, Concerned Christians has opened a food bank, and planted a large garden to harvest and help the poor. We invite everyone to participate with us as we show our love for Jesus through service to others.

Already after three months of helping people with food from our food bank, we have begun to see fruit in a spiritual sense. Two separate families have begun to attend our Tuesday night Bible study. One of them had been investigating Mormonism and nearly became a member. So God has indeed blessed our physical efforts with spiritual rewards. I hope the readers of *The CROSS* will join me in prayer as I pray that God will continue to bless our efforts to proclaim Jesus as we continue to show love for those in need.

Thank you God for the hope You have given us, please help others to see Your hope in our eyes and come to seek You as a result of our love. Amen.



Without exception, I have never seen a verse of the Bible used by Mormons to support LDS doctrine that wasn't taken out of context. I'm not just talking about your average Mormon next door, but also LDS leadership. In a recent LDS conference talk, LDS apostle Jeffrey R. Holland gave a talk that began with an excerpt from Mark chapter 9:

<sup>17</sup> And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; <sup>18</sup> And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. <sup>19</sup> He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. <sup>20</sup> And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. <sup>21</sup> And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. <sup>22</sup> And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. <sup>23</sup> Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. <sup>24</sup> And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Now, there are five more verses to the story, which I will address shortly. But, the focus of Mr. Holland's talk, interpretation and commentary was verses 23-24. (You may read the entirety of his talk at <http://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/04/lord-i-believe?lang=eng>).

My observation is that Mr. Holland took significant liberties with this story, such as claiming, "This man's initial conviction, by his own admission, is limited. But he has an urgent, emphatic desire in behalf of his only child. We are told that is good enough for a beginning."

Actually, Jesus said nothing about the father's "urgent, emphatic desire" being "good enough for a beginning." Indeed, Jesus took what faith the father had, as good enough for the ending, which was Jesus' exorcism of the evil spirit from the father's son. Surely, the father's unbelief was resolved at the sight of his son's sudden and permanent release from spirit-possessed torment.

Mr. Holland then goes on to quote from the *Book of Mormon*, "Even if ye can no more than desire to believe," Alma [32:27] declares, "let this desire work in you, even until ye believe."

This is where those five omitted verses (Mark 9:25-29) from Mr. Holland's talk would have served his audience well, instead of the *Book of Mormon* he quoted. Jesus addressed His disciples, who had failed at casting out the evil spirit. Did Jesus tell either the father or His disciples, anything like the "Alma" solution of "Even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe"? No. Jesus told the disciples, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

The "Alma" solution: To somehow let your desire work in you until you believe. Jesus' solution: Go to God in prayer and fasting.

Space does not allow me to give further examples of Mr. Holland's liberties with interpretation. But, he saved the worst for last. With the above Mark 9 story as the backdrop, Mr. Holland twisted it into emotional pleas for believing the LDS church is true:

"Brothers and sisters, this is a divine work in process, with the manifestations and blessings of it abounding in every direction, so please don't hyperventilate if from time to time issues arise that need to be examined, understood, and resolved. They do and they will. In this Church, what we know will always trump what we do not know. And remember, in this world, everyone is to walk by faith."

"A 14-year-old boy recently said to me a little hesitantly, "Brother Holland, I can't say yet that I know the Church is true, but I believe it is." I hugged that boy until his eyes bulged out. I told him with all the fervor of my soul that belief is a precious word, an even more precious act, and he need never apologize for "only believing." I told him that Christ Himself said, "Be not afraid, only believe," a phrase which, by the way, carried young Gordon B. Hinckley into the mission field. I told this boy that belief was always the first step toward conviction and that the definitive articles of our collective faith forcefully reiterate the phrase "We believe." And I told him how very proud I was of him for the honesty of his quest."

Pray for the Mormons, that they see the truth of Jesus' teachings, despite the wanton twisting of them. †



## Summer Donation Drought



By Bob Betts

It happens every year... June, July, August and September, when donations are down and Concerned Christians struggles to pay the bills. If you live anywhere that's as hot as the Metropolitan Phoenix area, then you know that cooling bills go way up. And water too, if we're going to keep living things alive in our Mesa Food Bank garden where we grow organic fruits and vegetables for the poor and needy. The poor and homeless get hit the hardest as the temperatures soar to 105 – 115, or higher, at times.

So, every year we remind you, our supportive newsletter recipients, of how much more we need your financial support during the crucial Summer months. We wish it wasn't so. But, if you can send a little extra to help Concerned Christian make it through the summer, you know we would be so appreciative.

May the Lord richly prosper you, as you give sacrificially to Concerned Christians, whatever your purpose in your heart. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" 2 Corinthians 9:7.



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## Letters— From the Mailbag

**FROM SPRING GREEN, WI:** Thank you for the encouragement and information all these years. I have never been a Mormon, but after hearing Jim and Judy over 5 years ago, Mormons have been on my heart since. Your newsletter has been an invaluable tool in equipping my family to be able to understand, and with God's help, reach our Mormon acquaintances. Please accept this small contribution and know that we are praying for you and LDS daily.

**FROM CARMICHAEL, CA:** Just a note of encouragement. I hope and pray that ALL your needs will be met. Thank you for the work you do.

**FROM the internet, via e-mail:** I am an Ex-Mormon. Joined Mormonism in 1996, served a mission in 2002 and left Mormonism last year after I found out that its teachings are based on fraud and lies. I have been enjoying your website as it has been a great help to me. A few days ago, my testimony was published on a popular web site. I will provide the link later. I look forward to hearing from your organization. It is my fervent prayer that God will continue to bless your ministry as you help others come to Christ!

**FROM PHOENIX, AZ:** Thank you for *The CROSS* newsletter. We have used the articles to teach our children the differences between Mormonism and true Christianity. They have many friends and teachers at school who are Mormon and although they may appear to be Christian on the surface, the differences in doctrine are plain to see. My daughter even had a teacher tell her that he wanted her to get to know a Mormon student better so she could convert to Mormonism and then they could date and eventually marry! I know she is prepared to defend her faith and reject Mormonism thanks in part to information we get from your newsletter!

**FROM COLUMBUS NE:** I appreciate *The CROSS* as it helps me to learn more about Mormonism and gives me hope. Continue to pray for my granddaughter who was brainwashed into Mormonism by her husband now of 8 years. He told her, "We believe what you believe." She was baptized and active in the Baptist faith before she met this Mormon. My comfort is Jeremiah 32:11. I pray God will continue to bless the mission of Concerned Christians, and that many Mormons will find the true Jesus through it.