

## **I Never Once Questioned My “Church”**

Even at the young age of eleven, I began to see the contradictions and problems with the Mormon-accepted scriptures, but never once did I question the validity of the Mormon church. After all, from the time I could remember, I was told this was the only true church on the earth today, why would I question it?

Seeing how polygamy had destroyed my family, I didn't like that particular doctrine, yet I still loved the Mormon church. I believed the LDS church was true, but I knew it was time I got a “testimony” of its truthfulness for myself.

I was taught that I could know the Mormon church and the Book of Mormon was true and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet if I prayed about it. So obeying the instructions I was given that if I asked God with a sincere heart if this was true, then I would receive my answer from the holy spirit. I knelt down and prayed, being assured that if I asked in faith, I would receive my answer.<sup>38</sup> I then had the experience of having a “burning in my bosom.” This is a supernatural manifestation that Mormons teach is the holy ghost testifying to the truthfulness of Mormonism. It is interesting to note in the Bible, Jesus says that when the Holy Spirit is come, He will testify of Jesus Christ. (John 15:26) **NOT** a religious denomination.

## **My Zeal Continued to Grow**

I now had a testimony of my own; my belief that this was the only true church was even stronger than before. As I got older, my zeal to serve in the Mormon church continued to grow. When I was a teenager, I was able to go to the Salt Lake Temple to be baptized for the dead. Mormonism teaches that in order to get into the celestial kingdom, (the highest level of the 3 degrees of the Mormon heavens) you must first be baptized into the Mormon church. For those who have died without a Mormon baptism, someone has to stand in for them and be baptized by proxy.<sup>39</sup> This is the majority of the work performed in the LDS temples. I looked forward to this with great anticipation. Before I was allowed into the temple, I had to be interviewed by my bishop. He asked me several questions about my commitment to the LDS church, if I had been paying my tithes and if I had kept the word of wisdom which I abstained from coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and caffeine.<sup>40</sup> He also asked me several personal and embarrassing

questions about my morality. Yet I sat facing him, looking him in the eyes, knowing that I could truthfully answer these questions because I had kept myself morally clean.

What a sobering occasion for me as I walked through the temple doors knowing that I was one who was counted worthy to be doing work for the dead.<sup>41</sup> I was then baptized by immersion for about 20-30 dead people at a time.

### □□□□ **My Seminary Teaching**

When I was in the ninth grade, I was able to take my first year of LDS seminary. Almost every public junior high and high school in the state of Utah has an LDS seminary building adjacent to the school where the students are allowed time to go learn Mormon doctrine.

I enjoyed this very much. During my sophomore, junior and senior years, I also took seminary where I was in the class presidencies. This was a great opportunity to get trained in the Mormon teachings.

One day during my seminary class, we had a guest speaker. He was dressed like a Catholic priest but we were told he was a Baptist preacher. He told our class that we needed to be saved by grace and quoted Ephesians 2:8-9 from the Bible, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

This was the first time I had heard these verses. I jumped up and quoted a passage out of the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 25:23, which states, "...it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." I told him that we have to do everything we can, and what we can't do, grace fills in. We had to work to get ourselves into heaven. The sacrifices that Jesus made on the cross were only for our physical resurrection.<sup>42</sup> If we wanted to get into the celestial kingdom we had to earn our own way.

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### □ **Loved My Religion**

I debated with him on the Mormon teachings about salvation and exaltation into godhood. After our discussion, he said that he could see that what I was saying was the truth and that he must be converted to Mormonism. I was commended for my excellent proselytizing tactics and told I would make a good missionary. This boosted my confidence in my religion and myself.

It was only after class that I found out the man was really a returned Mormon missionary only playing the part to help train us. It didn't matter to me. I was happy knowing that I had succeeded in my first big lesson in converting people to the LDS faith.

□□□□ **I loved my religion and was very self-righteous.** I lived my religion to the fullest, loving the idea that my husband and I could someday be exalted to a god and goddess in heaven, thinking that I was well on my way to accomplish this. I was very proud to be a Mormon and I thought very highly of myself. There was no doubt in my mind that I would reach the celestial kingdom. I knew that I had been living up to the standards set forth by the LDS church. I attended church, paid my tithe, kept the word of wisdom, I was baptized for the dead and I dated only after the age of 16 and then it was only group dating. I was keeping myself morally clean so I could get married in the temple.

The goals I had set for myself were some that I knew I could achieve. The only man I wanted to marry would be a returned Mormon missionary and as righteous as I thought I was. We would go to the temple to be sealed together for eternity. Mormon doctrine claims that if a couple has a celestial or temple marriage they will be married throughout eternity and continue to procreate and fill their own world. Civil or marriages performed outside the temples are until death or divorce only.<sup>43</sup>

It was my desire that my husband and I would continue to advance our positions of responsibility and prestige until eventually he would become the "prophet" and I would be the "prophet's" wife. This was a position I knew I could fill.

Throughout my life, I had been told I would be exalted, earning my own place in heaven, so I continued to work hard to insure my place in the highest level of Heaven.

### ☐☐ ☐☐☐ My Dreams Crashed

When I was a senior in high school, I met my future husband. He was not what I intended to marry. In fact, he was just the opposite. I met him one day when my Sunday school teacher (who was a returned Mormon missionary) was seeing going into a house which was designated off limits to my girlfriends and I because boys who drank and did drugs partied there. We knew we needed to rescue our teacher, so my friends and I went up to the house. There we saw our teacher smoking and drinking. I couldn't believe it.

We were met by four other boys who also were Mormon and three of them just happened to be in my ward. They were all smoking, drinking, and doing drugs. I just assumed these guys needed someone to get them back into the LDS church and I thought I was just the one to do it.

This is how I met Richard. He was one of the boys who was drinking and doing drugs. I like him instantly, but I knew if I were to date him, he would have to conform to the standards of the Mormon church. I then made it my duty to try to mold him into the perfect Mormon man I wanted him to be.

My girlfriends and I continued to spend time with them until we all became very good friends. At first it was easy for me to resist and refuse the alcohol and drugs. ☐ **But eventually my resistance wore down.**

Several of my ward members accused me of doing things with these guys and this made me mad. Up to this point I had never drank, taken drugs or even kissed Richard. But slowly, my high moral standards started to decline. Instead of molding Richard into what I wanted him to be, he began to reshape me. I started to drink. Not very much at first, then it go to where I couldn't wait for the weekends so we could get drunk.

### I Graduated Into a Free Fall of Sin

I finally graduated from high school and did not have to under the watchful eye of my seminary teacher and classmates. **I was sliding downhill fast.** I didn't stop at alcohol; I also

tried speed and cocaine. Richard and I went to the bars to dance and drink. I knew I was no longer the righteous girl I once thought I was. My dreams and goals were quickly slipping out of my reach.

I started attending cosmetology school during the day and working at night. All the while, I was falling deeper in love with Richard. Occasionally, he would go to our ward with me, when his hangovers weren't too bad, which wasn't very often. I had stopped the drugs, but was still drinking. **I kept falling deeper into sin, although I never realized I was sinning against God.** I only thought I was being disobedient to the Mormon church.

As time went by, I eventually found out I was pregnant. My life became unbearable. Several people in my ward turned their back on me, others could only say, "I told you so." Some were nice, but not very many. Richard and I had been engaged for over a year and I thought our getting married would help bring back some of the respect I wished for. But we had been having some problems. I was stubborn and still wanted my temple marriage and **I blamed Richard for all of my failed dreams.**

Richard despised me for feeling trapped into marriage and I resented him for everything that had happened to me. Because of this, we did not get married. Here I was, an unwed, pregnant Mormon girl. This was not how my life was supposed to turn out. How could this have happened to me?

### □□□□□ I Cried Myself to Sleep

I finished cosmetology school and didn't want to do hair anymore, so I got a job in a day care. My heart broke as I took care of children who came from broken homes, for now, this was the same fate facing my own child.

Richard and I saw each other once in a while, but our families didn't make it any easier on us. Mine dislike him, his disliked me. **I cried myself to sleep night after night;** hating the circumstances which had brought me to this deep despair.

I only attended my ward once in a while now. I could not stand to see everyone's looks of pity and disappointment.

Finally after nine long months, I had my baby. How I wished that in the hospital before she was born, Richard and I would have been married, but it didn't happen. We had a beautiful little girl and I was now a single mother. Fear gripped my heart as I wondered how I could take care of my daughter.

My family was very good to me during this time. They helped me and gave me all the love and support I needed. But it wasn't enough. I wanted a husband and I wanted my daughter to know her father.

Richard was buying his own home so I moved in with him. He was a good father, but our living together did not solve any of our problems; it only made them worse. I had stopped drinking when I found out I was pregnant and was now trying to pull my life together.

**Life was miserable for all of us.** I had sunk so low into sin that I could hardly stand myself. Gone were the days when I considered myself good enough to be a goddess over my own world.

Richard and I knew something needed to be done about our situation, so we got married. I wanted to have a big and beautiful wedding but we just appeared before a Justice of the Peace. Richard had gone to a party the night before we got married and got drunk, so drunk that he barely arrived at the courthouse that morning because he had a hangover.

Once again, this was nothing like I had envisioned for myself. **It was awful.** A few of our family members came but the day turned out to be a big disappointment for me. No beautiful dress, no bridesmaids, no walking down the aisle, no celebration, nothing fancy; just simply saying "I do" to a man who could barely stand up.

Life together was still terrible when I found out I was pregnant again. Richard and I still didn't like each other very much but we were trying to make things work.

During this pregnancy, while I was about 5 months along, **Richard's life started to change.** He started to act differently. He stopped doing cocaine and marijuana. As soon as he came home from work he didn't run to the refrigerator for a beer. Instead he would say to me, "God loves you." This was not like him. My husband, who used to be more concerned with getting his next drink, was now telling me that God loved me.

### □□□□ **Oh, Such Hurtful Words**

I started to think that maybe was finally willing to try to take me to the temple where our family could be sealed together forever. I thought it was all of my work in trying to get him to be a good Mormon that was now finally paying off. But then one day when Richard came home from work, he said something that altered the course of my life forever. He said, "Cindy, the Mormon church is not true, I cannot stay in it, and I want you out of it, too."

**Never had anyone spoken such hurtful words to me.** The mere thought that my church might not be true outraged me. Who did he think he was to say this to me? How dare he even utter such words to me after he had crushed all of my dreams?

Life in our house became worse. Everyday when Richard would come home from work, he wanted to talk about the Mormon teachings. He would ask me questions about the early LDS doctrines. These were things I had never heard of such as: **the Jesus of Mormonism not being conceived by the Holy Ghost or born of a virgin, but conceived by a physical relationship between the god of Mormonism and his spiritual daughter Mary;**

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**the fact that Joseph Smith had several "first" visions<sup>45</sup> and that his prophecies had failed.**

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This was what Richard wanted to discuss with me. I was irrational, only responding with my testimony of the truthfulness of the LDS church. I did not have any answers as to why the doctrines had been changed or why the

**Book of Mormon had almost 4000 changes made to it since it first came out in 1830**

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or why the Book of Mormon which is supposed to be the "most correct" book on the earth, **does not contain the major doctrines of the Mormon church**

. I could not answer why

**the Mormon church does not use the Inspired Version of the Bible that Joseph Smith wrote.**

The only thing I could tell him was that he needed to talk to the Mormon missionaries, as I was not as smart as they were.

How could the LDS church not be true? After all, it contained the name of Jesus Christ right in the title of it. Everyday was the same thing. I couldn't wait for Richard to leave the house to go to work so I could be left alone. It would have been fine with me if he would have never come home. But each night he did and always to the same thing, more talk and more questions.

### Life with Richard became Unbearable

Everyday Richard would bring me home literature about the problems with the Mormon teachings. I was so angry; telling him it was all Anti-Mormon literature, never taking the time to read that it was all **material taken out of LDS sources**. Biblical Gospel tracts were dispersed throughout so I would find them. He brought movies home for me to watch and tapes for me to listen to. I was going crazy; I could not stand it anymore. I was mad at Richard all the time. I did not want to live like this any longer.

But the most remarkable thing that occurred during the time was the change in Richard. Even though I hated him and was so angry at him, I could see how he was changing. He no longer listened to rock music, he stopped cursing, his want for alcohol ceased and he had a genuine love for our family. He was no longer angry all the time. He was a different person.

Richard had been working with a man who was a Christian and he had been showing Richard the changes in the LDS teachings and talking to him about the Bible and the Jesus Christ of the Bible. **Richard** had realized his need for the Saviour. He had stopped trusting in himself and his religion and **had received the Lord Jesus Christ** into his heart and life as his personal Lord and Saviour and was born-again becoming a Christian.

□□□□ **But still I hated my husband.** Life with him was terrible. I had just had our second child, another beautiful girl, when I decided I couldn't live like this any more. I was so angry with Richard for telling me that the Mormon church was not true, after all, he had been raised Mormon all of his life, too. Some of the **leaders of our**



ward

came to

our house and

**counseled me to leave him**

and to find someone who was a faithful Mormon who would be willing to take me to the temple. I decided this would be the best thing for everyone involved. I found a name, number and address of a divorce lawyer and was going to end this marriage.

### □□□ I Will Prove Richard Wrong

The only vehicle we had was a truck with a stick shift which I had a hard time driving. I sat in the truck with the lawyer's address in my hand, ready to go, but I couldn't put the truck in reverse to get out of the driveway. I was furious. I was so angry by this time that the only thought that came to my mind was that I could not leave with Richard thinking he was right. I had to prove to him that the Mormon church was true. Then he would have to apologize to me for all these months of misery. A new plan started to form in my mind. I would find the answers to all of the questions he had asked and **show him that I was right and he was wrong.**

I went to the library and checked out every book I could find on the early LDS church history and doctrines. I studied during all of my spare time trying to find something that would support my claims. The more I studied, the more I realized how little I really knew about my religion. **Instead of finding the answers** I was looking for, **I found more questions and problems.**

I saw how some of the major doctrines had been changed. When polygamy was given it was essential to salvation, 48 and not it was no longer required.<sup>30</sup> Adam was the god of Mormonism at one time and it was called scripture by Brigham Young

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and now it is called false doctrine by the twelfth "prophet" of the LDS church, Spencer W. Kimball.

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The black people at one time were called an inferior race

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and told they were unworthy and unable to hold the Mormon priesthood.

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Yet on June 9, 1978, in the Deseret News, Spencer W. Kimball, announced that by "revelation" the black people could now hold the Mormon priesthood. (Also found in the Official Declaration -2) Although my dad, after studying the early church doctrines became a polygamist, I did not know what I should do.

## Which “prophet” should I follow?

I read many prophecies that Joseph Smith made that did not come to pass. The one that really scared me was, after **Joseph Smith gave a revelation** that the copy-right of the Book of Mormon would be sold in Canada but his

**prophecy failed completely,**

his explanation was,

**“Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.”**

(An Address To All Believers In Christ by David Whitmer, pp30-31) And I was trusting my eternal existence on someone who did not even know who his revelations were coming from.

I read how the blood atonement doctrine was put into actual practice, and how people lost their lives by having their throat slit from ear to ear to allow their blood to be spilled to atone for their sins. 53 And in the temple ceremony, all those who participate make oaths to remind themselves of what will happen to them if they reveal the secrets that are performed in there.

During one part of the temple ceremony, the participants are instructed to place their green, fig leaf apron around their waist which

**Lucifer just revealed was an “emblem of his power and priesthoods.”**

I read about **Joseph Smith’s** history, of his claim of “knowing more than all the world put together,” and his

**Jesus.**

**boasting of doing greater things than**

56 I learned how he was involved in the occult by using divining rods and claiming to use a seer stone in translating the Book of Mormon .

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However, the thing that scared me the most, after I really started to read the Christian Gospel tracts and my Bible, was that I realized the **Mormon church’s teachings and the Bible do not go hand in hand**

like I had been taught. Mormonism was in direct opposition to what the God of the Bible has spoken. I did not dare tell Richard of my discoveries just yet. I was scared. What was I trusting in for my eternal life? I did not know what to believe.

References:

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- 44 Journal of Discourses vol. 8 p. 115; Doctrines of Salvation by Joseph Fielding Smith, vol. 1 p. 18; & The Gospel Through the Ages Milton R. Hunter, p. 120
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- 50 Church News, October 9, 1976
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- 52 Mormon Doctrine by Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, p. 527
- 53 Confessions of John D. Lee, 1880, pp. 282-283
- 54 What's Going On In There? by Chuck Sackett
- 55 Journal of Discourses, vol. 6 p. 5
- 56 History of the Church, vol. 6 pp. 408-409
- 57 Book of Commandments 7:3 (now known as the Doctrine and Covenants) & An Address To All Believers in Christ by David Whitmer, p. 12