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THE INCREDIBLE CREED OF THE MORMONS

John Kenneth Weiskittel

"Bounce Back!"—a series of upbeat, highly professional-looking commercials—has been making the rounds on television. Each poses a problem viewers are likely to encounter at home, school or workplace, and shows how it can be solved with love and understanding. These commercials conclude with an address for a free tape flashing on the screen, while a cheerful young lady on the voice-over announces that the preceding message was brought to us by "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints... *The Mormons!*"

This wholesome image is one that the Mormons—or Latter-Day Saints, as they prefer to be called—have been enjoying in recent years. The perception is of patriotic, hardworking, clean-living, family-oriented Christians; of, as *The Los Angeles Times* (April 5, 1980) put it, "super-Americans...(who) appear to be 'more American than the average American.'" As former Mormon Ed Decker and coauthor Dave Hunt say in their study, *The God Makers* (Harvest House, 1984): "Mormonism seems as American as apple pie, and Mormons seem to be perfect citizens with their close families, high morals, patriotism, Boy Scout programs, Tabernacle Choir, and conservative politics."

Cultivation of this belief has not been easy, as can be seen from this quote in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* by one Samuel Taylor:

> As we became accepted by the outside world, after decades of vilification and ridicule...we went to work busily on a new public image, replacing the polygamous rebel with the gentle Saint who didn't use coffee...
>
> They (the Church leaders—JKW) concocted a never-never land of Mormonism that presented a lovely, if unreal, facade for the outside world to admire and converts to embrace. (cited, Decker/Hunt)

Prior to its "Bounce Back!" spots, the Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS)—the largest of as many as 100 Mormon sects and splinter groups—spent millions on multi-page ads that appeared in *Reader's Digest* a few years ago. Is this Madison Avenue-style public relations campaign a legitimate attempt to restore a reputation unjustly sullied, or was a 1982 *Denver Post* article nearer the truth when it contended that "the *Reader's Digest* image...is all done with mirrors"?

Trouble In The Promised Land

"This is the place," declared Mormon patriarch Brigham Young on July 24, 1847, when his advance party reached the Great Salt Lake valley. What began as a haven for an unpopular religious group is today Salt Lake City, Utah's capitol, hub of a metro area nearing a million in population (over 50 percent of the state total) and nerve center of the LDS's multibillion dollar world financial empire.

And make no mistake about who is in charge there. Even in his friendly study, *The Mormon Establishment* (Houghton Mifflin, 1966), Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Wallace Turner writes:

> ...Today perhaps less than half of the city is Mormon by self-designation...But the Mormons run the place. It is their city, just as Utah is their state. The pattern of life is set by the Saints. Every important action in Salt Lake City is shaped by the realization that the Mormons own the town.

Utah's largest private property owner is the LDS Church and among their holdings are the state's leading TV station and largest evening newspaper, the *Salt Lake City Deseret News*. ("Deseret" is the Mormon word for honeybee—Utah is the Beehive State.)

This sort of power and influence has a chilling effect on the lives of many area "Gentiles," as non-Mormons (including Jews) are called. (Seventy percent of Utah's population is Mormon.) When the *Denver Post* writer John Farrell began the feature story mentioned above, his assignment was "not an expose," but a look at life in Utah. The article, "Utah: Inside the Church State," took its final form, however, in the course of his 13 weeks there. Farrell found few "who were willing to speak openly." (Decker/Hunt) He concluded that the LDS Church "does not take kindly to dissent" and that the "majority of non-Mormons" view themselves as "victims of discrimination." Almost 20 years before this, Wallace Turner interviewed a Salt Lake City businessman who demonstrated this intimidation factor with a nonresponse: "I just don't want to talk about them. In my position they could ruin me if they wanted to do it. I can't afford to get them mad at me."

Other disclosures indicating a less-than-idyllic situation in Mormonland involve:

• Farrell's startling findings that belie the notion of strong LDS family life. Utah's divorce rate has always been *higher* than the national average, with 20 being the usual age for women to end marriages there. Of babies born in Utah, 50 percent have teen mothers and 70 percent of these are conceived out of wedlock (the most common interval between marriage and childbirth is seven months). "Salt Lake City has twice as many reported rapes as other cities its size across America." He also found that Utah, which ranks thirteenth among the states in child

abuse, has a child murder rate *five times* the U.S. average. The third highest cause of death there is suicide and its teen suicide rate is consistently above the national figure. And a 1973 government study found Saints more likely to abuse drugs (licit *or* illicit) than non-Mormons. (cited, Decker/Hunt)

• Attempts at suppressing "The God Makers," a documentary film that reveals LDS Temple secrets and that is based on the experiences of Ed Decker and Dick Baer, both ex-members of Mormonism's Melchizedek Priesthood. "There have been death threats against some of those who have dared to show the film. Mormons have demonstrated against the movie, tried to have it banned, and pressured television stations from airing it. Frequently they have tried to break up the showing or to disrupt the discussion afterward..." (Decker/Hunt) The LDS Church has purchased several video copies of the film but has not, to our knowledge, issued an official rebuttal.

• A controversial letter, allegedly written in 1830 by a disciple of Mormon founder Joseph Smith, states that Smith received the *Book of Mormon* not from an angel of God, as is the LDS teaching, but from "an old spirit (which) transfigured himself from a white salamander." The "White Salamander Letter," as it has come to be called, noted *Time* (October 28, 1985), "(b)ecause it implies that folk magic led Smith to his spiritual discovery,...has caused considerable consternation among Mormons, leading some to question their faith," and *Newsweek* (October 28, 1985) observed that "Mormon scholars are still divided over whether it is genuine." As we shall see, the links to occultism and brutality are by no means rare in Mormon history.

There is, a substantial difference between image and reality in what *The Los Angeles Times* calls "America's biggest, richest and strongest homegrown faith." It took the Mormons over a century to reach a million in membership; today the LDS Church counts 3.6 million members in the U.S. and 5.2 million worldwide. And yet, much of what we are to disclose here is kept back from the majority of those members by a hierarchy whose gigantic coffers they so faithfully fill with their tithes. We offer this study not only to inform our regular readers but also to help the average Mormon see beyond the contradictions of "official" LDS history and behind the closed doors of the Temple. (Less than 30 percent of Mormons are admitted to Temple rites; the rest attend open chapel services.)

What Is Mormonism?

If one reads, superficially and without care, LDS doctrinal papers prepared for "Gentiles," one could easily—but mistakenly—conclude that the Mormon creed, with its story of Christ visiting the Americas upon His Ascension and its claim to have "restored" His Gospel, is merely "an extreme form of Christian fundamentalism." (Decker/Hunt)

In an article for Leo Rosten's *Religions of America* (Simon & Schuster, 1975), the late Richard L. Evans, a member of the Latter-Day Saints' Council of Twelve, answered the question, "Are Mormon's Christians?," by saying: "Unequivocally, yes—both as in the name of the Church and in unqualified acceptance and worship of Jesus the Christ." He went on to enumerate common beliefs: the Trinity, Virgin Birth, sacrifical death of Our Savior, His literal Resurrection and the divine origin of the Bible. On the surface there seems to be no substance to the charge that "Mormonism is a modified form of paganism which is so carefully camouflaged with a facade of Christian terminology that it even deceives most Mormons." (Decker/Hunt) But we need to look more closely at the Evans piece to find out how far Mormonism, despite his assurances, deviates from real Christian dogma.

The first inkling of this comes when he writes about Joseph Smith. The authority to establish a new Church, Evans states, came to Smith neither from Scripture nor from any existing Church but "by direct divine bestowal." Furthermore, "(Mormons) look upon him as a prophet of God, in the same literal sense as they look upon other prophets of the Old and New Testament." Evans neglects to tell us that Smith based his new sect on a "divine revelation" that all Christian churches were "an abomination," and that the third LDS president, John Taylor, (whose teaching, as with all presidents, is held as revelation) called Christianity "hatched in hell" and "a perfect pack of nonsense...the Devil could not invent a better engine to spread his work..." (quoted, Decker/Hunt) We will later examine Joseph Smith's claim as prophet.

Although Evans says LDS doctrine affirms "the Godhead as three literal, distinct personalities," in truth it holds that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three distinct *gods* (or, rather, two and a half gods, since the Holy Ghost lacks a physical body). The Mormon teaching on the nature of God—summed up by its second president, Brigham Young, as "What God once was, we are now (that is, sinful men); what God is now, we shall be" (that is, second-rate gods under higher gods)—is nowhere to be found in Evans' statements. He is also evasive when he speaks of "the miraculous conception of Jesus the Christ." He doesn't mention that Young taught: "Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost," or that Joseph Fielding Smith, a descendant of the founder and the tenth LDS president (he served in the early 1970's), had declared: "The birth of the Savior was a natural occurrence unattended by any degree of mysticism, and the Father God was the literal parent of Jesus in the flesh as well as in the spirit" and "Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of man, and that man was God!" (all quoted, Turner) Other scandalous teachings on which Evans stonewalls include Brigham Young's pronouncement regarding Our Lord, as noted by William Whalen in *Separated Brethren* (Bruce, 1958):

> Jesus Christ is sometimes set up as a model for conduct but He receives little attention in the Mormon system. Jesus was a polygamist and Mary and Martha were two of (H)is wives, Young informs us. Esoteric meanings are attached to the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection which may mislead some Christian observers.

It is when Evans makes no attempt to couch his replies in

Christian terms that we are able to determine the true nature of his creed. On the matter of immortality he answers:

> Energy, matter, and "intelligence" *exist eternally* and are indestructible. And man himself has existed from the pre-mortal past and will continue, with his individual identity, into the endless eternal future. . . (emphasis added)

To this Whalen adds: "Mormon theology teaches that the god of this world is a man (probably Adam), a physical being, a polygamist. God did not create matter, which existed eternally (he 'organized' it), but he did create a tremendous number of spirits or souls." So, for the Saints there is no Creator or creation, as we understand those words, but only an incalculable succession of gods in an uncreated (or self-created) universe.

The more carefully one examines what LDS doctrine really says, the more one is drawn to agree with the Decker/Hunt assessment that "Mormonism's uniqueness is in the fact that it was the first really successful attempt to pass paganism off as Christianity; *and* it thereby set the pattern for much that is happening on a broad scale today." The remainder of this article will seek to confirm this through a closer look at practices (both open and hidden) advocated and carried out by Mormon leaders.

Joseph Smith, Prophet or Fraud?

The controversy over the "White Salamander Letter" is quite illuminating, not so much in whether the letter is authentic, but that some Latter-Day Saints Church scholars readily acknowledge it as such. For is it not peculiar that a sect identifying itself as Christian—even as the *only* legitimate Church of Christ—would consider an *occult* explanation for its origin as plausible?

Strange as it may seem to us, this very element of magic has been a part of Mormon lore from the start—an integral part. In 1826, the year before his *Book of Mormon* "revelation," the State of New York found Joseph Smith guilty on charges of being "a disorderly person and an impostor." (Keith Huntress, ed., *Murder of an American Prophet: Joseph Smith*, 1805-1844, Chandler, 1860) The fraud stems out of Smith's supposed ability to *divine* hidden treasures for a fee with the aid of what has been called a "seer stone" or "peep stone" or "magic stone." (see, also, Decker/Hunt and Whalen)

As for his celebrated "visions," Smith claimed the first occurred in 1820 when, at age 14, he was visited by God the Father and Christ. This First Vision, which is held as LDS gospel, had the boy being told that Christian Churches are "an abomination in His sight." (quoted, Decker/Hunt. Converts to Mormonism, before they are accepted, must aver that this happened.) There are reasons to suspect that this was an afterthought on the part of Smith because it was not published until 1842; Assistant LDS Historian James B. Allen admits that during the 1830's no "contemporary writings about Joseph Smith," "publications of the Church" or "journal or correspondence yet discovered mentions the story of the first vision." (quoted, Decker/Hunt)

The Latter-Day Saints Church stands or falls with what Smith called "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion"—the *Book of Mormon* (together with two of his other works, *Doctrines and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price*, it is regarded as equal to or *greater than* the Bible). In Smith's account an angel of God named Moroni visited him in 1827 and commissioned him to form the true Church and priesthood. Here we return to a tale of magic for, as Whalen writes:

> ...the angel gave him permission to dig near the top of Hill Cumorah (another Mormon name—JKW), near Palmyra, New York. There he unearthed a box of golden plates inscribed in "Reformed Egyptian." The obliging angel also supplied him with a pair of *magic spectacles* called the Urim and Thummin which enabled him to decipher the hieroglyphics. (emphasis added)

So, whichever version of Mormon mythos we apply to their holy book, the angel Moroni or the White Salamander spirit, the result is still the same: an unchristian excursion into occultism.

Richard L. Evans has written that Mormons regard the Bible as the Word of God "as far as it is translated correctly." Better that they use the same measure for their own American "scriptures" for, since 1830, in this "most correct" book there have been revisions totaling some 4,000 corrections. The present version of the *Book of Mormon* came into existence only after generations of more educated Saints touched up the original, removing the numerous grammatical errors, contradictions, gross absurdities and changes in Smith's beliefs. (Decker/Hunt) Despite the fact that the illiterate "prophet" dictated the book to others, including an unemployed school teacher, there were literally scores of places where grammatical errors were made: he used *was* instead of *were* (for example, "they was angry with me") and vice versa; the placement of *a* before verbs (for example, "he found Muloki a preaching"); *no* instead of *any*; etc., etc. (ibid.) It makes the most embarrassing theological slips: "the Son of God shall be born of Mary in Jerusalem." (quoted, Whalen)

Joseph Smith was no more the author of the *Book of Mormon* than was God. What bears that title is a pastiche from various extraneous sources. Among his plagiarisms was Ethan Smith's 1825 book, *View of the Hebrews*, which gave Smith the idea of Israelites divided into two warring factions. (Decker/Hunt) In an unpublished manuscript, B.H. Roberts, an LDS historian and General Authority, makes the incredible admission that Smith had indeed "supplemented" his book with material from the earlier work. (ibid.) *The Manuscript Found*, a novel about American Indians by a retired minister, Solomon Spaulding, was another source. Whalen notes that Spaulding left the original text at a print shop frequented by Sidney Rigdon, an associate of Smith whom some believe to be the *real* originator

of the cult.

Joseph Smith, the man who boasted that "God is my right-hand man," made at least *53* false prophecies, according to ex-Saint Dick Baer, including setting 1891 as the year that Christ would return to earth. (Decker/Hunt) Smith's "Book of Abraham," the part of the *Pearl of Great Price* that "proves" Negroes are sons of Cain, cursed by God and forbidden the priesthood (ban lifted 1978), was based on his translation of the papyrus accompanying a circus mummy. (The unanimous verdict of noted Egyptologists from two continents was that this was a "spurious translation."—Turner)

Smith's lack of knowledge of the language allegedly translated was dramatically shown when a Protestant minister handed him a Greek Psalter. "It ain't Greek at all," except a few words, the "prophet" observed. "What ain't Greek is Egyptian and what ain't Egyptian is Greek. Them characters are like the letters that were engraven on the Golden Plates." (quoted, Whalen) If Mormonism is built on belief in Joseph Smith as prophet and his books as latter-day gospels, then it is clearly on shaky ground and cannot stand.

Blood On "Saint"ly Hands

Utah is the only state that preferentially uses the firing squad to carry out its executions. The reason for this mode of death penalty must surely be because the State Legislature's Mormon majority has found in it a way to legally implement the doctrine of *blood atonement.*

Stated simply, the blood atonement doctrine was a teaching of early LDS leaders that held that Christ's sacrifice is ineffectual for certain classes of sin, such as murder, adultery, apostasy, interracial marriage (not sinful according to the Roman Catholic Church) and lying. Brigham Young said: "any man or woman who violates the covenants made with their God will be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it." (quoted, Decker/Hunt) That this was to be carried out, vigilante-style, by the Saints is evident in this passage of a Young sermon in which he calls on "the Lord to assist us in this, and every good work":

> I say, rather than that the apostates should flourish here, I will unsheath my Bowie knife and conquer or die. . . Now, you nasty apostates, clear out, or judgment will be put to the line, and righteousness to the plummet. (ibid.)

It was practiced in Utah prior to statehood in 1896 but it is believed to be secretly carried out even today since, as Decker/Hunt point out, former LDS president Joseph Fielding Smith recently called it "scriptural doctrine."

Another such doctrine was Joseph Smith's "spoiling the Gentiles," which permitted Mormons to raid, rob and kill non-Mormons. (Decker/Hunt) The local LDS bishop saw that this plunder was divided communally among the poor Saints, and a secret army, the Danites, was formed to do the raiding. (ibid.) This resulted in the "Mormon War" of 1838 in which Smith and his army surrendered to Missouri State Militia to charges of treason, murder, arson, burglary, robbery, larceny and perjury, only to escape and flee to Illinois. (ibid.)

The blackest page in Saint history, however, must be reserved for the infamous Mountain Meadow Massacre of 1857. A party of 120 people traveling from Arkansas to California was stopped in Utah by Mormon Bishop John D. Lee and his men, who promised to guide them through Indian country if they would only disarm. At Lee's prearranged signal ("Do your duty, men!"), every adult and older child was slaughtered and the youngsters kidnapped. (ibid., Turner, Whalen)

"We have the true Masonry"

The statement heading this section, made by early LDS Apostle Heber C. Kimball, would seem at odds with the Mormon Church's prohibition against membership in secret societies and with Wallace Turner's observation that "(i)n Utah, Mormons and Masons do not go together." This antipathy actually comes from the fact that what we are dealing with are two *rival* Lodges.

Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Heber Kimball and others were all Master Masons who had been evicted from the "Brotherhood." They took with them Lodge secrets and used them in LDS doctrine and practice. Smith's tale of the Golden Plates is almost identical to the Masonic "Enoch legend." This was brought out in a speech given by Dr. Reed C. Durham in 1974 to the Mormon History Association—and nearly caused his excommunication. (Decker/Hunt) Early development of the LDS Church, said Durham, was "inextricably interwoven with Masonry" and many of its beliefs and practices had their "genesis in connection with Masonic thought and ceremonies." He also alluded to a talisman Smith wore up to his death inscribed with the image of the Roman god Jupiter (identified as "Joseph's Masonic jewel," ibid.).

Ed Decker, former Mormon "Melchizedek Priest," further cites:

> ...the close similarities between Mormon and Masonic Temple ceremonies with secret names, penalties, blood oaths, grips and tokens, as well as many Masonic markings inside and outside Mormon Temples: the square, the compass, the beehive, the astrological symbols, the all-seeing eye of occultism, and the upside-down, five-pointed star, symbol of Satanism.

A Temple Mormon must swear on penalty of death never to divulge the secrets of the Temple rites that include a play that absolves Adam and Eve from sin and says Satan told them *the truth* in the Garden (a Masonic belief); a pledge to avenge the blood Joseph Smith (compare Masonic Hirman/Jacques DeMolay oath); and picture panels that ridicule Catholic priests and Protestant ministers (compare this with higher degree Lodge rituals of the Masons that desecrate crucifixes). Mormon

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Saint Anthony Mary Claret

Jill Wiesner

The earliest memory of Antonio Claret, who was born on Christmas Day in 1807, was of great sadness at the word "siempre" (forever). Lying awake at night at the age of five, he was tormented by the thought that those who "go into everlasting punishments...will have to suffer forever." The thought of any soul having to suffer "siempre" was unbearable to his gentle heart.

He planned to become a priest, to save souls. When he reached his teens, however, the poverty afflicting Spain as a result of the recent war with Napoleon was affecting his little town of Sallent, where his father Juan owned a cloth factory, and Anthony was needed in the family business.

As Anthony was not only a hard worker but a talented designer as well, his father sent him to Barcelona to learn the latest in manufacturing techniques. During the day Anthony worked for a large textile manufacturer and at night took courses at the school run by the Board of Trade. Though he was rapidly becoming an expert in his field, he was distressed by the thought that "my whole aim in life, my whole ambition, lay in my work at the factory." Even during Mass ideas for new designs intruded upon him and, as he resisted, "there came to my soul, in all their force, those solemn words of the Gospel: 'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?'"

After consulting a priest, Anthony approached his father for permission to apply to the seminary at Vich. Though it meant financial hardship his father told him, unhesitatingly, to "do God's holy will." In September, 1829, he was admitted to the seminary and was ordained five-and-a-half years later on June 13, 1835, the feast day of his patron, Saint Anthony of Padua.

As Padre Claret began his duties as assistant pastor in his hometown of Sallent, the storm clouds of political upheaval were gathering. In 1833, the death of King Ferdinand VIII had caused a civil war between the followers of his brother, Don Carlos, and the defenders of the rights of the king's infant daughter, Isabel II. Though the army and the treasury supported Isabel against the "Carlistas," her mother and regent, Maria Cristina, also accepted support from the anticlerical party, among whose members were Freemasons.

Though the struggle was primarily between two political factions, by 1837 the "Isabelinos" or "Liberals" were increasingly dominated by the Masons. Suppression of religious orders began, as did looting of monasteries and random murders of priests suspected of "Carlist sympathies."

The pastor of Sallent resigned in protest against the continual meddling of the government in Church affairs, and Padre Claret was chosen to replace him. The young priest's claims of inexperience, inability, even his small stature (he was barely five feet tall), did not dissuade his superiors, so he began his lifelong mission of inspiring others with his overpowering love for God.

His great concern for the salvation of souls grew into an ardent desire to become a missionary and he was given permission to go to Rome for training. After making the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius under the guidance of the Society of Jesus, he was admitted to their novitiate where he spent four happy months. However, a sudden, mysterious paralysis of his right leg convinced his Father Superior that "God brought you to the Society, not to remain in it but to learn how to win souls for Heaven."

At his superior's direction Anthony returned to Spain where the Bishop of Vich sent him to the war-ravaged town of Viladrau. His burning desire to "make God known, so that He may be loved and served by all," won over even the most hardened hearts. He worried about those who led sinful lives for, "as life has been, so will death be. I see how people live, how many of them...commit sin as easily as they drink a glass of water, just for diversion, or for a laugh." The sight of these unhappy souls "makes me cry out: My son, poor sinner, look out! You are falling into eternal fire! Stop! Do not take another step forward!"

From Viladrau he was sent throughout Catalonia and to the Canary Islands where the missions he preached were so successful that he began to plan for a missionary congregation that would multiply his efforts. Though the books he had been writing since 1843 had been helpful, he saw the need for more missionary priests. Since the Spanish government was currently tolerant of religion, he decided to present his plan for a congregation to the bishop immediately. He received enthusiastic approval for the congregation and its name: Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

From its inception on July 16, 1849 (the anniversary of the Christian victory over the Mohammedans at Las Navas), his congregation lived up to his definition of a Claretian:

> One on fire with love of God, who spreads this fire wherever he goes, and who ardently desires and proceeds by all possible means to inflame the whole world with the Divine Love. Nothing daunts him; he takes pleasure in privations, embraces all sacrifices, cheerfully welcomes all calumnies, rejoices in every torment. All his thoughts are concentrated on discovering how he can follow and imitate Jesus Christ in all his labors and sufferings, and how he can best procure the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

In August of 1849, Father Claret received the news that he had been appointed archbishop of the See of Santiago de Cuba—halfway across the world. Leaving his congregation with his prayers, Anthony Claret was consecrated bishop on the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary in 1850, after which he embarked for Cuba.

In Cuba Archbishop Claret had to contend with the evil of slavery and the resulting moral deterioration. Though, under Spanish law, slavery was illegal, Cuban authorities "overlooked" this restriction and carried on a lucrative slave trade with England and France. The previous archbishop had despaired over the widespread practices of concubinage and divorce and the lawless behavior of the numerous illegitimate offspring. But Archbishop Claret who, as a young priest, had told his bishop, "I should like to seal with my blood the virtues and truths which I have preached and taught," was undaunted by threats against his life and the calumnies directed against him.

The Cuban people responded to his guidance, abandoning their immoral practices. But not everyone was happy with the change in Cuba. At Holguin, on February 1, 1856, Archbishop Claret was attacked in a dark street as he and his party left church after an evening sermon. Though his face and arm were slashed to the bone, his life was saved by a sudden movement he made just as the assailant approached. He was unaware of having made such a movement and attributed his rescue to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Throughout his convalescence from his wounds he was filled with joy at the opportunity "to shed my blood for Jesus and Maria." The assassin, it was discovered, had been hired by a coalition which included Masons.

In 1857, Anthony was ordered back to Spain, as Isabel II, now queen, had requested that the archbishop—whom Cubans called "el santo" (the saint)—become her confessor and the instructor of her five-year-old daughter. Though the position would be, for him, a purgatory, he accepted it out of obedience to Pope Pius IX, who wrote him that he was needed for the "defense of the most holy Faith in Spain."

Claret exercised his holy influence throughout Spain. Once again assassins were hired by Spanish secret societies. Two would-be assassins were converted and fled the wrath of the societies. A third died suddenly while waiting in ambush.

While Anthony Claret held the fort in Spain, the enemies of the Faith were busy throughout Europe. In 1860—with the backing of Napoleon III, England, and International Masonry—a professional soldier of fortune named Garibaldi deposed the King of Naples and overthrew the Papal States. A new "consolidated Italy" was proclaimed, with Victor Emmanuel as its king. Pope Pius IX, now restricted to Vatican City, excommunicated everyone "guilty of participation in the rebellion, invasion, usurpation and other aggressions against the Church States."

Propaganda praising Italy's "new democracy" was feverishly circulated. In Spain, mounting pressure on Queen Isabel to grant recognition to the Kingdom of Italy was abetted, first by her prime minister, O'Donnell, and then by her husband, Francisco, who had been influenced by the Empress Eugenie while on a visit to France. Archbishop Claret told her she must not give in, that she should "die...with her honor, rather than stain it with so ugly a blemish." She turned to the Pope who warned her not to "recognize usurpations, and thus sanction the false doctrine of the deeds that follow." Nonetheless, Isabel eventually granted recognition to the Kingdom of Italy on July 14, 1864. On July 17, Anthony took leave of the queen.

A year later, however, at the request of Pope Pius IX, Anthony Claret returned to Isabel, as her government teetered on the brink of collapse. Though he was accused of being a "power-mad papist" who was blocking "progress," he stayed with the queen as she was deposed and sent into exile. When she abdicated in favor of her son Alfonso, Anthony was, at last, able to withdraw as her confessor and go to Rome to receive new instructions from the Pope.

His arrival coincided with the preparations for the Vatican Council I which was to be convoked on December 8, 1869. Anthony was assigned to do much of the research on which the resolutions would be based. Aware of the danger to the Church, he wrote: "May the Council prove the portal to shelter in the midst of the tempest which, already upon us, is increasing."

At the Council one of the priests who was present said, "Of all the prelates and other priests I saw entering the Council chamber, the most modest and edifying of all was Archbishop Claret." This was the battle Anthony had been preparing for all of his life. Eloquent in his defense of the Faith, and of papal infallibility in particular, he won the day against the agents of change. But the sly arguments of bishops and archbishops against the truths they had been ordained to uphold wounded him as calumnies against him never had. Finally, during one session, "...the nonsense, and even the blasphemies and heresies they uttered, roused my indignation and zeal to such a pitch that the blood rushed to my head in a cerebral attack."

He would never fully recover from the stroke which he had suffered. But this soldier of Christ fell victorious in battle. Even the vengeance of those whom he had defeated was thwarted, as their attempt to arrest him and return him to Spain for imprisonment was prevented by his Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who hid him at the Cistercian monastery at Fontfroide, France. There he died on October 24, 1870, with the words, "Jesus, Maria y Jose, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

On May 7, 1950, Anthony Mary Claret was canonized by Pope Piux XII. A century after his death, those of us who would stand firm in the defense of the holy Catholic Faith would do well to try to emulate his burning love for Our Lord and His Most Blessed Mother, as we ask for his powerful intercession to strengthen us in the battles to come. †

JOHN PAUL II AND FORMAL HERESY

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

John Paul II has occupied the Chair of Peter for well over eight years now. During that period his words and deeds on various occasions have brought on the charge of heresy against him from some traditional Catholics. Nor is this a farfetched charge by any means. On the contrary, it is a well-founded one. Certainly his support and promotion of the false and non-Catholic Declaration on Religious Liberty of Vatican Council II (a position condemned by Pope Pius IX) in itself provide reasonable justification for the accusation of heresy. There are other examples. And now we have the latest abomination: the false ecumenism and heretical religious indifferentism openly espoused by John Paul II at Assissi, Italy, on October 27, 1986, when he permitted the once-Catholic churches of Assisi to be used for pagan and other non-Catholic worship services, and even encouraged such worship. What more, pray tell, is needed to make John Paul II open to the legitimate accusation of heresy?

Some few months back an article appeared in a conservative, quasi-traditional publication of the Conciliar Church which voiced the opinion that John Paul II might be a material heretic. (To see even that admission in the publication in question was a bit of a surprise.) Now a material heretic may be described as one who, though objectively involved or engaged in heresy, is not guilty of the *sin* of heresy because of his lack of knowledge or because, we may say, he is "in good faith." A formal heretic, on the other hand, is a person who consciously and willingly and obstinately maintains a position which he knows to be heretical according to the mind of the Church. A Roman Catholic who is guilty of formal heresy thereby ceases to be a Roman Catholic.

Canon 2316 of the Code of Canon Law (1917) reads in part: "One who spontaneously and with full knowledge helps in any way in the propagation of heresy...is suspect of heresy." Can there be any question but that this is applicable to John Paul II? Canon 2315 gives the procedure to be followed regarding a person suspected of heresy and states that, if the cause of suspicion is not removed within a specified period of time, that person "shall be considered a heretic and be subject to the penalties for heresy." The procedure indicated would, in normal times, be carried out by the proper Church authorities. Since, however, the Conciliar Church is not Catholic, no binding action can be expected from that source. Nor, in any case, has such action, to my knowledge, ever been attempted by that Church.

To contend that John Paul II is, or may be, a material heretic but not a formal heretic is ridiculous for this is equivalent to saying that, although he has said and done things which are manifestly heretical, he is not guilty of heresy because he has not consciously and willingly and obstinately (pertinaciously) maintained a heretical position. In other words, he really means well and just doesn't know any better. Is not this utterly preposterous? The man who is supposed to be the head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, is not a formal heretic because of his ignorance of the teaching of the Church and what constitutes heresy? Incredible! If John Paul II is a material heretic, as he assuredly is, then he is likewise a formal heretic because he most certainly knows what he is doing! But a formal heretic is not a Catholic. Hence, John Paul II, since he is not a Catholic, is not a valid pope. He is the head of the Conciliar Church—the non-Catholic "pope" of a non-Catholic Church.

But what is to be said in answer to those who contend that, even though a person may be firmly convinced (as I most certainly am) that John Paul II is a non-pope because of heresy, that person must keep his conviction to himself and may not publicly make such a statement? An individual who openly declares his conviction that John Paul II is not a valid pontiff is (so the objection goes) assuming to depose the pope—and that is a judgment which only the proper authorities in the Church can make. In other words, the deposition of a pope must await the formal and definitive action of the Church. True enough. But is a Roman Catholic, be he priest or layman, who is absolutely certain of the invalidity of John Paul II, thereby forbidden to voice his conviction and the reasons for it in order to persuade and convince others? To maintain that this *is* forbidden makes no sense to me. Such a person is not deposing the pope but merely striving to make known his blatant record of heresy, a record which itself invalidates John Paul II. The following quotation is very much to the point:

> A pope can only be deposed for heresy, expressed or implied, and then only by a general council. It is not strictly deposition, but a declaration of fact, since by his heresy he has already ceased to be head of the Church... (Donald Attwater, ed., *A Catholic Dictionary*, Imprimatur: Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Macmillan, 1942, p. 412, "Deposition of a Pope")

So, only a General Council of the Church can formally depose a pope. Assuredly, then, those who hold that the Chair of Peter is currently vacant (the "sedevacantists") cannot depose John Paul II. But that does not mean, nor can it mean, that we must remain silent and ignore the glaring fact that, by his heresy, John Paul II "has already ceased to be head of the Church." Such is the stark and utterly woeful reality. The heretical record of John Paul II speaks for itself—and that record loudly and clearly declares that he is no more a valid pontiff than I am. Were I to remain silent on the matter, I am absolutely convinced that I would be seriously remiss in the fulfillment of my duty as a Roman Catholic priest and would be doing a grave disservice to the Roman Catholic Church. John Paul II is a formal heretic and, as such, he cannot be a valid pope. I await his formal deposition by a General Council of the true Church in the future but do not expect to see this happen very soon.†

Mormons (continued from page 4)

undergarments (to be worn for life) also feature Masonic symbols. (ibid. and Whalen)

Strange Christians These Mormons

Time and space have not permitted us to examine other aspects of Mormonism in depth. Temple marriages are "for eternity" and the dead are "baptized" by proxy. The polygamy that was a prominent feature of early Mormon history often involved the *seduction* of other men's wives by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other leaders. (Decker/Hunt) (It is well known that "fundamentalist Mormons" still have plural wives in isolated areas of the country; the January, 1987 issue of *Reason* magazine lists the number as high as 30,000 to 50,000.) Missouri is not only the LDS site of Eden but it is also the place where they hold that Christ and Smith will set up their joint reign. The earth, according to the Mormons, belongs to them; someday they will have theocratic rule over all.

For us it is undeniable that the Saints' theology is warmed-over paganism. That so many are deceived into believing it is Christian only shows how clever and mendacious are their Mormon leaders. †

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