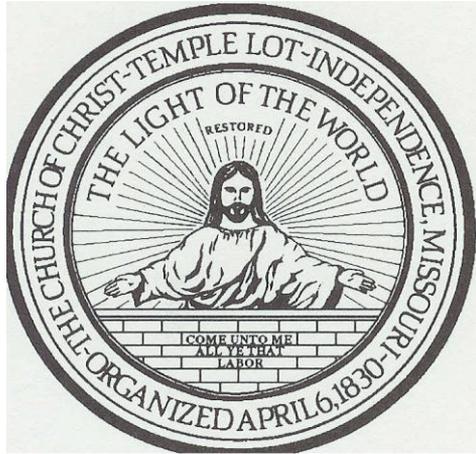


A LATTER DAY APOSTASY



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The carnal disposition of mankind, seeking to improve upon God's plans for the Church of Christ, prevails in the latter days even as in ancient times, including the New Testament Church.

"How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" Lamentations 4: 1.

Structural innovations in the church restored through Joseph Smith and others began at a much earlier time than is generally supposed. Of course, they are not considered to be innovations by the dominant bodies which have developed from the little body of 1829-30. Such is the course of trusting in the arm of flesh, rather than an implicit faith in the doctrine and callings of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost.

A significant indication as to the development of a latter day apostasy is revealed through the prophet Jeremiah:

"Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert (a naked tree/marginal reference at Jer. 48:6, w.a.s.), and shall not see when good cometh; but shall in;. habit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited" Jer. 17:5,6.

Further, he said:

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their

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means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. 5:30, 31.

Thankfully, the latter day apostasy will not be a complete departure from the faith so as to cause God to totally reject the church as in ancient times. This is revealed in the second chapter of Daniel, who prophesied of a stone being cut out of a mountain without hands which would eventually become a great mountain to fill the whole earth (see vs. 34, 35). This stone was to be the kingdom of God which is to stand forever. It was brought about through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith as a modern prophet and seer, laying the groundwork for the Church of Christ organized in 1830.

There came to be so great a trust in Joseph Smith as a prophet of God that they failed to do as did our worthy brethren in ancient Beria:

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" Acts 17:11.

Neither did some of our forbears consider the Lord's admonition through his prophet Isaiah:

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" Isa. 8:20.

Most certainly, the law to which we are committed is the gospel of Christ as found in the New Testament of the Bible; and the testimony to that gospel is provided in the teachings of the Book of Mormon. **If** they (whoever professes to advance the

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kingdom of Christ) are not found to be in harmony with those two records, there is no light in them; the light is clouded by doctrines not of God.

Nephi saw the general corruption of the churches in the last day, and we are not amiss in seeing it revealed in the latter day Restoration faith, as well.

"Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach.. false, and vain, and foolish doctrines, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark; and the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them. Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted. Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted; and their churches are lifted up; because of pride, they are puffed up. They rob the poor, because of their fine sanctuaries; they rob the poor, because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek, and the poor in heart; because in their pride, they are puffed up. They wear stiff necks and high heads; yea, and because of pride, and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray, save it be a few, which are the humble followers of Christ; Nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err, because they are taught by the precepts of men" 2 Ne. 12:12-17, Independence Edition; LDS 2 Ne. 28:9-14.

With these views relative to a latter day apostasy, we submit the following items which do not accord with the standard as found in the Bible and Book of Mormon:

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PRIESTHOOD STRUCTURE (The Ministry)

- (1) A **first presidency** of one or more above the twelve apostles, and over the Church. (This would provide for a spiritual dictatorship, just as with the papacy).

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets..." 1 Cor. 12:28.

- (2) **High Priest**, an ordained office, placed above the Elders. (An Elder is a high priest because he holds the high priesthood, or the Melchisedec priesthood, the priesthood after the order of the Son of God, but he is not ordained a High Priest; he is ordained an Elder-see Alma 9:69-73; 10:1-7.)
- (3) **Patriarch**, to give patriarchal blessings. (An ordained office not found in the New Testament Church, neither the Book of Mormon Nephite Church.)

Out of these has risen the several priesthood orders or councils with their respective presidencies; a hierarchical multiplication of ministerial function and exaltation.

DOCTRINAL INNOVATIONS

- (1) God was once a man as we are, having a body of flesh and bone. Christ became a man, and was created in the image of His Father in heaven; yet his pre-existence was in a spirit form, just as he appeared to the brother of Jared, long before his appearance in the flesh.

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"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" John 4:24.

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Num. 23:19.

"For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" Mal. 3:6.

- (2) Heavenly Mother. This concept has not a shred of scriptural evidence, and is only based on the above assumption of God having flesh, and that the creation process of man must have been a sexual relationship.
- (3) Men to become gods. God has all power; is a creator; is worthy of worship. Not so with men. We may become gods only in the sense of attaining to eternal life, of living forevermore, as children of God. (See Ps. 82:6 and John 10:34.)
- (4) Baptism for the dead. This is only referenced in 1 Cor. 15:28, which does not support it as a doctrine of Christ. Some of them at Corinth practiced it, but did not believe in the resurrection; hence, a foolish, vain doctrine. Baptism is a personal commitment to Christ, ruling out a proxy baptism. The command of Christ for baptism of men applies only to those who hear the gospel, and can make choices for themselves; little children and they who are without the law are excepted-see Moroni 8:25-27; LDS Moroni 8:22,23.
- (5) Celestial Marriage; Marriage For Time And Eternity. When the Sadducees tried to trap Jesus as to marriage during the resurrection, He said: *"...in the resurrection they neither marry nor*

are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" [Matt. 22:30]. Angels are unmarried; therefore, in the resurrection, mankind will not be in the marriage state. The contention that the marriage may be performed in mortality and extending to the immortal state is of human conception.

- (6) Polygamy, or Plural Marriage. The Book of Mormon plainly declares it an abomination in God's sight [Jac. 2:33 and Al. 5:35; LDS Jac. 2:24 & Al. 7:20]. By this last text, God will not consider something an abomination at one time and it not be so at another time. The fact of Jacob [for instance] and his sons having more than one wife was a matter of their ignorance. He blessed them in spite of their error, not because of it; and nowhere in the Bible or Book of Mormon is there commandment permitting it. God, raising a righteous seed, comes by obedience to His word, and not because of sexual relations [see Mos. 8:38-43; LDS Mos. 15:10-11].

(7) Lineal Priesthood. It is only in regard to the Mosaic Law that lineal priesthood is a factor. This was changed under the Gospel Law as we find in Heb. 7: 12: *"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the law."* The Melchisedec Priesthood was re-instituted with the advent of Christ (ibid., vs. 17-22), and thereafter, we can find no scriptural evidence to support lineal descent in the priesthood. This certainly precludes a lineal descent in a first presidency within the Church, which in itself is an unscriptural provision arranged in the early church in the 1830's.

- (8) **Women in Priesthood Ministry.** Nowhere in the Bible or Book of Mormon is there provision for ordination of women to the priesthood. This is sufficient to reveal the matter as a serious deviation, and evinces a lack of divinity in the call. The Lord

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condemns it in general terms: "*As for my people...women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths*" Isa. 3:12.

- (9) **Open Communion.** This is so plainly forbidden in the Book of Mormon that it is astonishing to know of some who disregard the matter, permitting any who claim a belief in Christ to receive the emblems of His body and blood; nor do they consider the matter of worthiness of persons or of their belief in Him. This attitude presumes a faith toward Christ by the very presence of the person in the congregation, and further that all such are truly a part of the body of Christ, His Church. It disregards an apostasy of the ancient church, and the consequent restoration of that body and priesthood authority by the special act of God in the latter days. "And if it so be that he repenteth, and is baptized in my name, then shall ye receive him, and shall minister unto him of my flesh and blood" 3 Nephi 8:62; LDS 3 Ne. 18:30.

These are the more significant deviations in church structure and doctrine from that of the simple, beautiful provisions in the gospel and kingdom of Christ.

We are informed in latter day revelation that "the elders, priests and teachers of this church, shall teach the scriptures which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the FULLNESS of the gospel" (Book of Commandments 44:13; RLDS D&C 42:5; LDS D&C 42:12).

This harmonizes beautifully with Ezekiel's prophecy of the "*stick of Judah*" and the "*stick of Joseph*" being "*one in mine*"

hand" (referring to the Bible, Book of Mormon and the Lord-chap. 37:19). Of course, the term, "fullness" means all, or complete, and rules out additional points of doctrine as might be envisioned by men.

This is not to militate against the principle of continued revelation from God, an absolute necessity in the true Church of Christ. Prophecy is a spiritual gift, and not confined to one person, or requiring one to be ordained as a prophet.

For the sake of expediency in the infancy of this latter day Church of Christ, the Lord used Joseph Smith to receive revelations for the Church. Sad to say, many thought there should be a revelation on practically every aspect of the Church's development, and practically demanded it of Joseph Smith. Hence, many things were given to satisfy the appetite; and so "idols" of heart developed. Therefore, in some cases, the Lord answered them according to their idols (see Ezek. 14:1-9), and in others, human imagination provided for things not of God.

Organizational And Doctrinal Changes Related To The Church Of Christ Headquartered On The Temple Lot

- (1) Church name. We have, after several years of uncertainty in the 1850's, reverted to the original name as had April 6, 1830, when first organized: Church of Christ; the name given through revelation and in consonance with the Nephite Church after Christ appeared in America.

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- (2) The offices of First Presidency (President) and of High Priest had continued in the Crow Creek Branch under Granville Hedrick, but have since been rejected as unscriptural according to the New Testament Church. For the same reason, this body has never had a "*patriarchal*" order.
- (3) One-person-God doctrine repudiated, which is contrary to many scriptures in both the Bible and Book of Mormon, with none to truly support it.
- (4) Messages purported to be from "John the Baptist." After having received the first few messages for awhile, the Church has repudiated them for suspicious content:
 - a. Claim that he is the "*messenger of the covenant*" (Mal.3:1). (This messenger is Jesus Christ-Isa. 42:6; 49:7, 8.)
 - b. Those validly baptized to be re-baptized. (There is one true baptism into Christ-Eph.4:5.)
 - c. Claim that he is the prophet of whom Moses spoke. (This prophet is Jesus Christ-3 Ne. 9:60, 61.)
 - d. Claim by a few who, having withdrawn from the Church, said that the Church of Christ was established anew in 1929. (This cannot be since Daniel prophesied that the "stone cut out without hands" [the kingdom of God; Church of Christ/ Dan. 2:34,35,44], was to **continue** and to consume all the kingdoms portrayed in that vision. This began in 1830 with the organization of the Church of Christ at that time).
 - e. There were affirmations by several in this Church that the present fourth Message given through Otto Fetting was not really

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the fourth, which prophesied that the Catholic pope would move his headquarters to the U. S. and that Alfred Smith (a Catholic candidate for the national presidency), would be the next president; that **real** fourth message having been spoken to them by the true author of the messages: Fetting.

While the messages contain details of the projected temple to be built on the Temple Lot, there were other members of the Church who received valid similar and additional revelations which were used in preparation for the temple plans, such as apostles A. M. Smith, T. J. Jordan and C. L. Wheaton. Apparently there was a satanic counterfeit in the Fetting messages.

Jesus said that:

"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" Matt. 13:41.

The *"things that offend"* are false doctrines and human innovations in the churches of the latter days, of which none are entirely clear. There was to be a *"church of the Lamb of God"* in the last days (see 1 Ne. 3:220-222), and we are persuaded that this Church of Christ shall be the nucleus of it.

According to a revelation as found in the Book of Commandments 4:5 (which has been deleted from the same revelation as shown in D&C 5), the Restored Church of Christ was to be just like the New Testament Church, both in doctrine and organization:

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"And thus, if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will put down alllyings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts, and envyings, and strifes, and idolatries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniquities, and I will establish my church like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old" (emphasis mine, w.a.s.).

The Church of Christ is not made up of perfect beings. There may still be errors of belief in the minds of some members. However, the Church is determined now, as it was in the days of Granville Hedrick, to find and cling only to that which is true and of God according to the scriptures in the Bible and Book of Mormon.

Literature which is explanatory of our beliefs and practice may be obtained freely upon request. Address: Church of Christ (TL), P. O. Box 472, Independence, MO 64051. Phone: (816) 833-3995.