



# Why Mormon Truth Matters

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A Letter to a Mormon Apologist - Dr. Terryl Givens  
By Dr. John Dehlin

#WhyMormonTruthMatters

# My Background

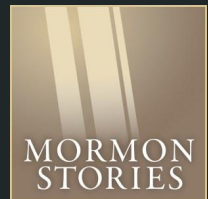


- 6th generation Mormon. 46 years in church.
- Ph.D. in Clinical and Counseling Psychology.
- 20 years counseling with well over 30,000 Mormons and Ex-Mormons in faith crisis.

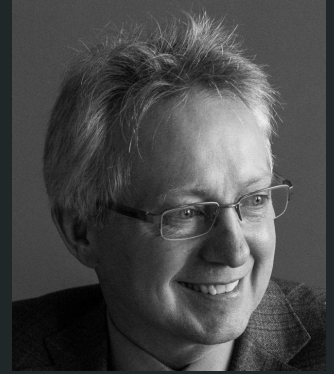
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Why Mormon Truth Matters:  
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# A Few Disclaimers:



**NOT My Intention:**  
To shame Terryl Givens.



People are usually the  
victims of broken systems.  
Remember...it's systems, not  
people.

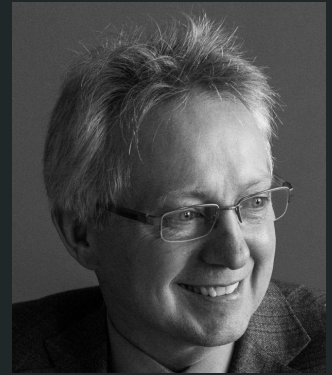


## **My Intention:**

To provide sincere feedback  
to help Terryl Givens and  
other Mormon apologists (and  
the church) do less harm to  
members in faith crisis.  
Less family strife and divorce.



I have reached out to Terryl Givens to have a direct, confidential conversation, and am hoping to hear back from him.





# Sunderland Stake Fireside



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We should carefully consider the ethics of suggesting to a questioning sister missionary (from a position of power) that her legitimate questions do not matter.







# #whymormontruthmatters



89.7K views



@becca  
walker  
creates



TikTok

@beccawalkercreates

# Ethical Considerations with This Response

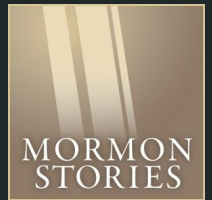
- Are you a trained therapist or counselor?
- Were you in a position of power over this young woman?
- Should you have been validating her vs. questioning her?
- It might qualify as “gaslighting” to second guess why something should matter to someone. Especially when the concerns are legitimate. Which they are.
- Do you retell this story in an unethical way? Does her appearance of being shaken by your retort necessarily mean that her problems were resolved in the long term by your retort? I would love to talk to this sister missionary now to see if you, in fact, resolved her concerns. Do you know how we can get ahold of her?
- As a professional apologist, do you not understand why questions about Joseph Smith and Mormon church history matter to people who are doubting?
- What are the implications of sharing this story more broadly?

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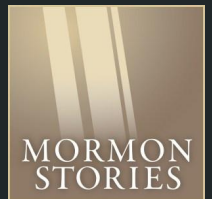
# What Mormons are Taught about Joseph Smith

- That he was honest.
- That he had special powers to translate ancient records.
- That he was falsely accused of breaking the law.
- That he had one wife: Emma.
- That he did more for mankind than any human other than Jesus.



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[#WhyMormonTruthMatters](https://twitter.com/WhyMormonTruthMatters)







# WHAT MORMONS ARE NOT TAUGHT ABOUT JOSEPH SMITH

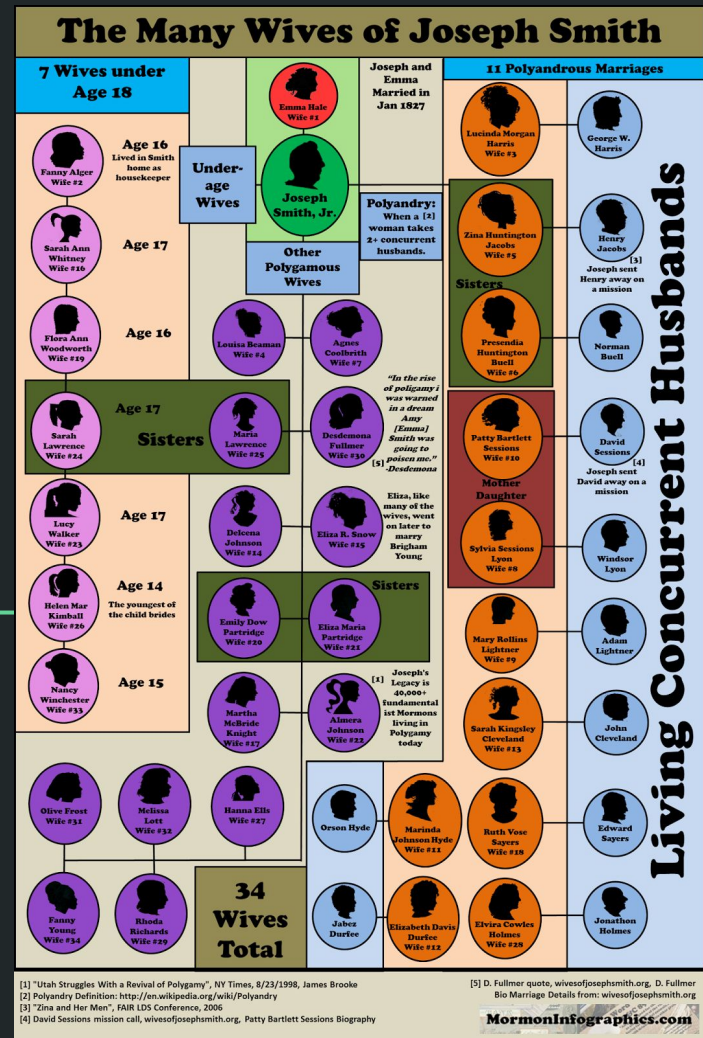
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Joseph Smith secretly married so many women that we don't know the exact number.



Evidence indicates that Joseph Smith participated in both types of sealings. The exact number of women to whom he was sealed in his lifetime is unknown because the evidence is fragmentary.<sup>24</sup> Some of the women who were sealed to Joseph Smith later testified that their marriages were for time

Joseph Smith married at LEAST 34 women, including domestic help, sister pairs, mother/daughter pairs, at least one 14 year old, and several already married women.





Joseph Smith  
married at least  
one 14 year old.



The youngest was Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of Joseph's close friends Heber C. and Vilate Murray Kimball, who was sealed to Joseph several months before her 15th birthday.

Joseph Smith  
lied to Emma  
about most of  
his 30+ wives

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Serve ▾

Living Life ▾

Plural Marria



## Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo

<sup>39</sup> But Emma likely did not know

about all of Joseph's sealings.<sup>40</sup>

- Marrying 34+ women, domestic help, one 14 year old, sister pairs, mother/daughter pairs, and already married women.
- Lying to his wife and “followers” .

Legitimate questions/concerns?

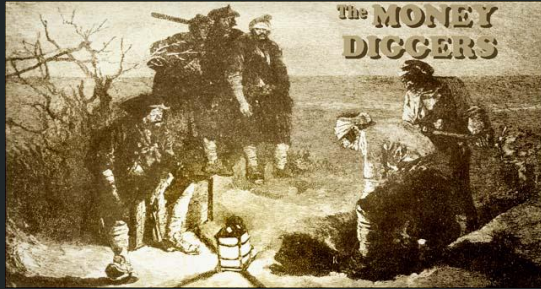
Reasonably call a “prophet’s” credibility into question?



Sincere Question: Would you have trusted your daughters to be alone with Joseph Smith?



Deceptive and coercive polygamy and polyandry are only the tip of the iceberg.



@exmah  
741



TikTok  
@exmah741

# The truth about Joseph Smith

- That he was honest.
- That he had special powers to translate ancient records.
- That he was falsely accused of breaking the law.
- That he had one wife: Emma Smith.
- That he was 2nd to Jesus only in righteousness in the history of humankind.

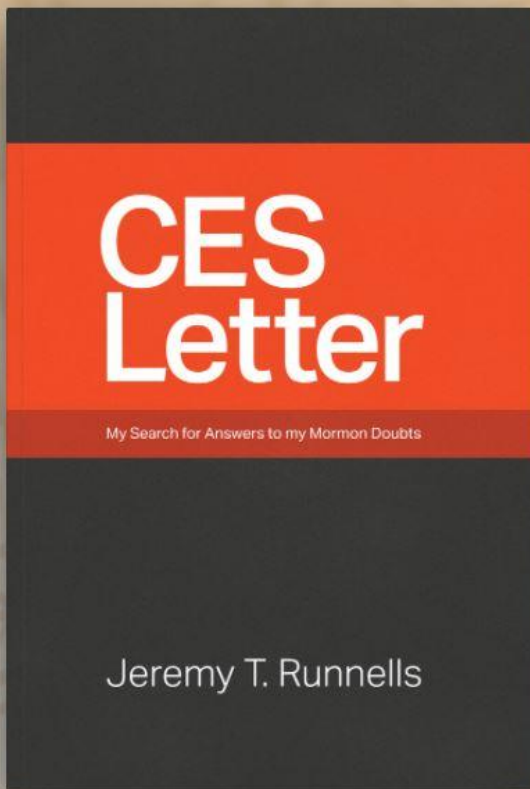


- Joseph Smith had a long history of fraud.
- Joseph Smith's "translations" (Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham) have been disproven by science.
- Joseph Smith frequently broke the law.
- Joseph Smith was killed as the result of his misbehaviors.

Why Mormon Truth Matters:  
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#WhyMormonTruthMatters





## CES Letter

### My Search for Answers to my Mormon Doubts

BY JEREMY RUNNELLS

*CES Letter* is one Latter-day Saint's honest quest to get official answers from the LDS Church on its troubling origins, history, and practices. Jeremy Runnells was offered an opportunity to discuss his own doubts with a director of the Church Educational System (CES) and was assured that his doubts could be resolved. After reading Jeremy's letter, the director promised him a response.

No response ever came.

**PAPERBACK BOOK**

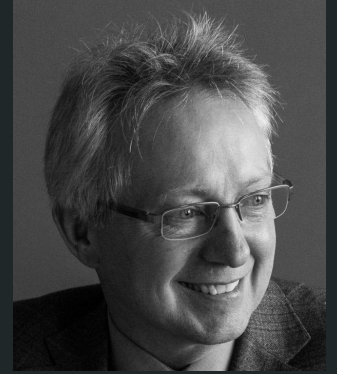
Now available for shipping!

**Get the book**

<http://CESLetter.org>

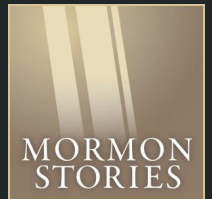


# Why does the truth about Joseph Smith and Mormon church history matter?



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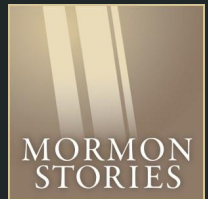


Mormon children are indoctrinated based on inaccurate and incomplete teachings about Joseph Smith.



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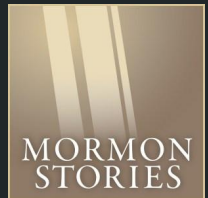


Mormon converts join the church based on inaccurate and incomplete teachings about Joseph Smith.



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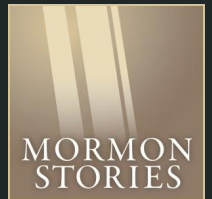
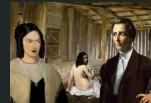


Mormon missions are socially mandatory, and perpetuate inaccurate understandings about Joseph Smith.



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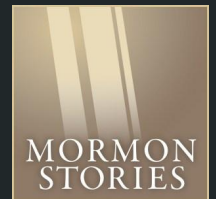
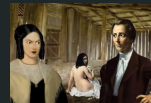


Young Mormon women often forgo education and careers based on inaccurate and incomplete church teachings about Joseph Smith.



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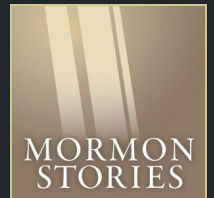
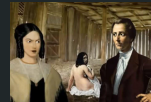


Mormon marriages  
are based on inaccurate  
and incomplete  
teachings about Joseph  
Smith.



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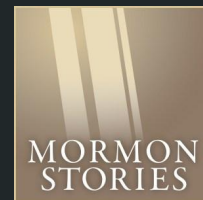
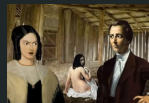


Mormon temple covenants are made for ETERNITY, and are entered into based on inaccurate and incomplete teachings about Joseph Smith.



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@michella  
\_lazyjd



 TIKTOK  
@michella\_lazyjd



There have been way too many Mormon mixed-faith divorces caused by one spouse learning the truth about Joseph Smith, and the other spouse not believing the truth, and thus rejecting their questioning spouse.



Idschurch • Follow

Idschurch "I am in a mixed-faith marriage. This is such a simple sentence to say. And though I can say it with confidence now, that hasn't always been the case—mainly because our marriage didn't start out this way. It's been a rather long and painful journey. If you could see that first... would s... convers... wonder... did we c... dismiss... well-me... member... betrayal... once us... day of b... "The thi... alone in



54,941

1 DAY AGO

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Open Stories Foundation

### mixed-FAITH Marriage WORKSHOP

- Cultivating emotional intimacy.
- Re-building your life on common values
- Raising healthier children in a mixed-faith home
- How to talk about religious differences in a healthy way
- Turning this "crisis" into an asset
- Dealing with extended family

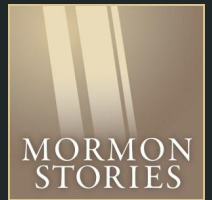
\$295 per couple  
scholarships available - email  
openstoriesfoundation@gmail.com  
if financial assistance is needed.

AUGUST  
11-12, 2017  
slc / utah county

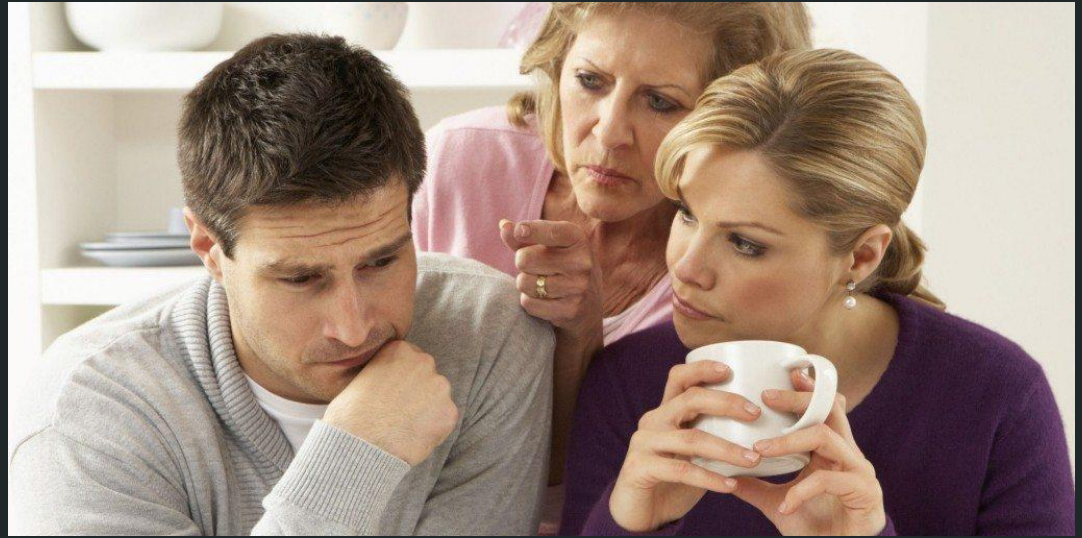
Julie de Azevedo  
Hanks, Ph.D. & John  
Dehlin, Ph.D.  
mormonstories.org/mixedfaith

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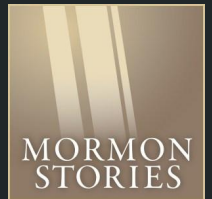
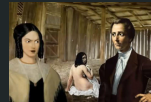


Way too much  
Mormon family  
division based on  
inaccurate and  
incomplete teachings  
about Joseph Smith.



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Your somewhat invalidating response here may only further encourage such familial rejection, as other believing family members may echo your words:

“Why does it matter?”



Mormon Native Americans are taught that their dark skin is the sign of a curse from God based on teachings from Joseph Smith.

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## The Making of a Lamanite: Popular Native American Cultural Efforts from the LDS Church

By [Miael Spotted Elk](#), News Writer  
February 23, 2019



In the second and final part of this series, we are looking back at the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that has involved or depicted Indigenous communities in Church-sponsored cultural campaigns.

“Because of their unbelief, the Lamanites are cursed, receive a skin of blackness, and become a scourge unto the Nephites.”

CHANGED IN 2010 TO:

“Because of their unbelief, the Lamanites are cut off from the presence of the Lord, are cursed, and become a scourge unto the Nephites.”

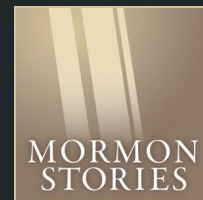
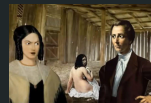
CHAPTER SUMMARY, 2 NEPHI 5  
THE BOOK OF MORMON

MISSSEDINSUNDAY.COM

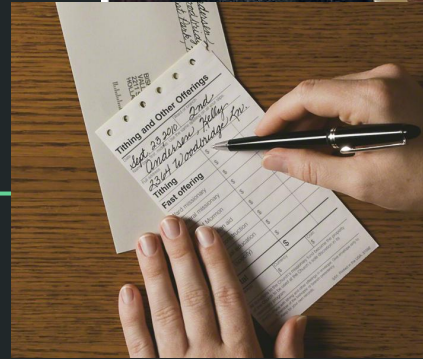
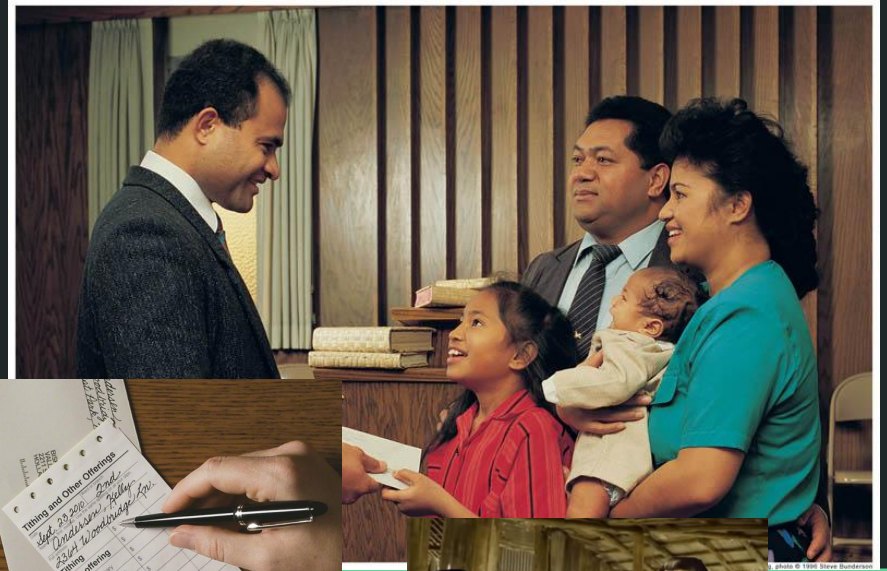


The Living Legends group in 1977, known as the Lamanite Generation. Courtesy of BYU's Living Legends.

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the thoughts on Indigenous depictions from a U student

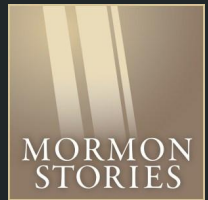
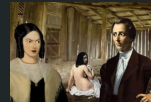


Mormon tithing is mandatory: 10% of income for LIFE. And is contributed with inaccurate and/or incomplete information about Joseph Smith.

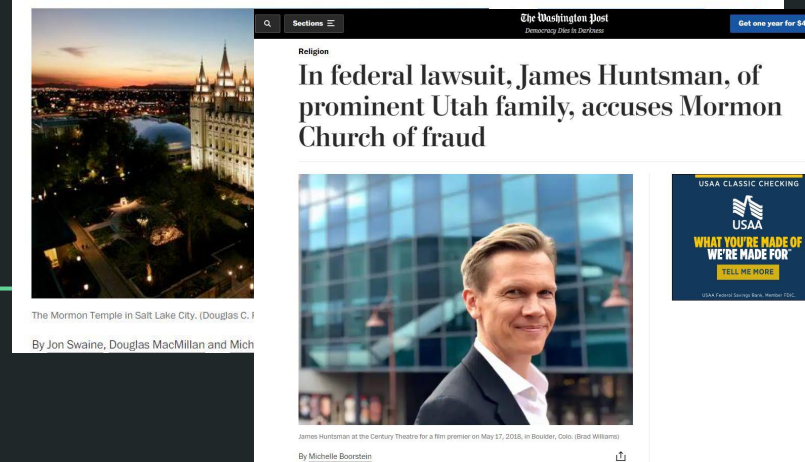


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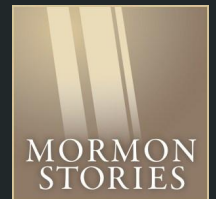
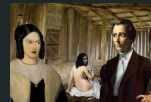


Mormon church has amassed over \$120 Billion in investments alone, under false pretenses, and is misusing the funds.



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# Mormon LGBTQ bigotry is rooted in the teachings of Joseph Smith.



LATEST PODCAST EPISODE  
CLICK THE DESCRIPTION TO READ MORE

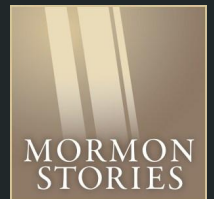
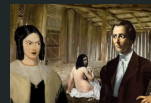
**144: Randy and Jeremy | Excommunicated For Falling in Love**

00:00 1:37:21

[BROWSE EPISODES](#) [ON APPLE](#) [ON GOOGLE PLAY](#)

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Randy Wellbaum  
& Jeremy Adriano

Excommunicated  
from Mormon  
Church for  
Getting Married

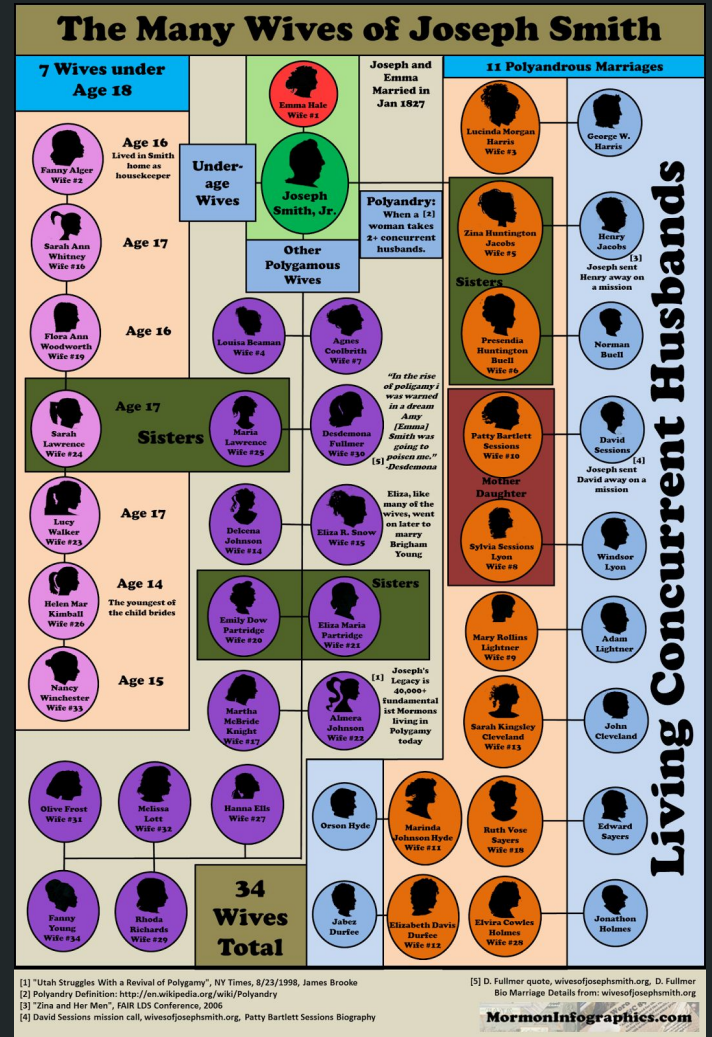
June, 2021







Joseph Smith can have 34+ wives including a 14 year old, sister pairs, and over 10 women married to other men - in violation of D&C 132 - and yet the Mormon church is asking these two faithful, legally married men to divorce each other?



[1] "Utah Struggles With a Revival of Polygamy", NY Times, 8/23/1998, James Brooke

[2] Polyandry Definition: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyandry>

[3] "Zina and Her Men", FAIR LDS Conference, 2006

[4] David Sessions mission call, wivesofjosephsmith.org, Patry Bartlett Sessions Biography

[5] D. Fullmer quote, wivesofjosephsmith.org, D. Fullmer Bio Marriage Details from: wivesofjosephsmith.org

# Epidemic of Mormon LGBTQ suicides rooted in the church built by Joseph Smith.

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Idaho Statesman

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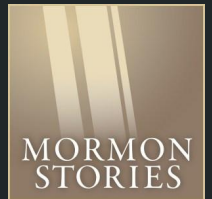
RELIGION

## 'Endure until you die': LDS Church's LGBTQ policies put gay youth at risk, advocates say

BY RILEY BUNCH SPECIAL TO THE IDAHO STATESMAN  
SEPTEMBER 08, 2019 01:00 AM, UPDATED SEPTEMBER 09, 2019 09:47 AM

12-year-old's mic is cut off while coming out to her Mormon church

3:54 I hope someday to go on dates, go to school dances, to hold hands, and to go off to college.

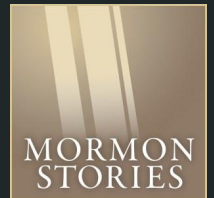
A screenshot of a video player. The video shows a young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a white shirt and a red tie, standing at a wooden podium and speaking into a microphone. The video is viewed from behind a person's shoulder, whose dark blue shirt is visible in the foreground. The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar, and a subtitle at the bottom.

# Absence of Informed Consent within Mormonism



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## For active, believing Mormons...

- Were you taught growing up that Joseph Smith married over 34 women, including a 14 year old and other men's wives, and lied about it to Emma and the church?
- Did you deserve to know this before committing your life to the church?
- Does it concern you that you weren't taught this?



## For Mormon Returned Missionaries...

- Did you teach your investigators that Joseph Smith married over 34 women, including a 14 year old and other men's wives, and that he lied about it to Emma and the church?
- Did they deserve to know this before getting baptized?



## For believing Mormon parents...

- Have you taught your children that Joseph Smith married over 34 women, including a 14 year old and other men's wives, and lied about it to Emma and the church?
- Shouldn't they know this before making an eternal commitment?



The overwhelming majority of Mormon church members and converts were **NEVER TOLD** about Joseph Smith's sexual behavior. This remains true to this day.

---



@cknotso  
smallville



TikTok  
@cknotso



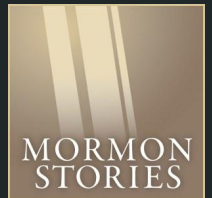
In 2021, building a life based on the Mormon “Plan of Happiness” is a like building a house on a “sandy” foundation.



The foolish man built his house upon the sand,  
The foolish man built his house upon the sand,

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# It's almost a guarantee in 2021 that over half of your family will leave the Mormon church.



Idschurch marriage, to say. An confident the case didn't sta long and) that first t would set conversat wonderin did we ge dismissivi well-meat members betrayal &...  
once used to be a day of rest became a day of battle to simply show up.  
"The thing is, my husband and I are not alone in the battle to show up. Not even

54,941 likes  
1 DAY AGO

Log in to like or comment.



# The Age of Mormon Apostasy



World Business Markets Breakingviews Video More

SPECIAL REPORTS JANUARY 31, 2012 / 5:15 AM / UPDATED 9 YEARS AGO

## Special Report: Mormonism besieged by the modern age

By Peter Henderson, Kristina Cooke

11 MIN READ



“Maybe since Kirtland, we’ve never had a period of - I’ll call it **apostasy**, like we’re having now,” he told the group in Logan.

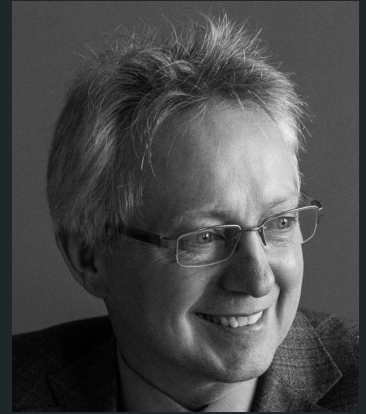
By Peter Henderson, Kristina Cooke

11 MIN READ



Will you please consider a more ethical approach when counseling troubled teens, young adults, and adults over matters of faith?

Will you consider apologizing for your statement?



# Listeners and Viewers: Please Help

- I am looking into the possibility of authoring a book.
- Please consider getting a TikTok account if you don't have one.
- Please create and share two TikTok videos:
  - **“What do I wish the Mormon church had told me?”** tagging it: **#mormoninformedconsent**
  - **“How did the Mormon church harm you?”** tagging it: **#mormonharm**
- Your responses may be compiled into a book/web project.
- Looking for Mormon Stories Podcast guests from TikTok support.

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