

FAMILIES HELD HOSTAGE

ARZA EVANS

(AUTHOR OF *THE KEYSTONE OF MORMONISM*)

Karl Marx, the infamous prophet of world communism, demanded communal ownership of everything including wives and children. This, of course, would abolish not only private property but also the traditional family. Everything and everyone would belong to the community.

Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, and other communist leaders, soon learned that abolishing the family was a big mistake. It even threatened their communist party security. These leaders found that strengthening the family unit also strengthened their control and power over people. Anyone who spoke against the party or party leaders were not only placing their own lives and fortunes in jeopardy, but also those of their family. Very few men or women were willing to do this. Also, when any communist leader traveled abroad to another country as an ambassador or even as part of a ballet company, they were never allowed to take family members along with them. If a traveler should defect and ask for asylum, their family back home in the Soviet Union, China, or Cuba would pay a very high price including possible execution. Again, very few men or women were willing to subject their families to this much trouble.

Early Mormon leaders were also quick to see the **power** of family ties. They did everything they could to strengthen Mormon families including inventing the **non-Christian doctrine** of eternal marriage and eternal families. Jesus did **not** teach eternal marriage and families nor did any of the Biblical prophets. (see Matt. 22:23-30 and Luke 20:27-35) Strangely, this doctrine is not found in *The Book of Mormon* either! However, LDS Church services often include sermons, songs, poetry, and dramas depicting the doctrine that “families can be together forever.”

At first, the concept and slogan “families can be together forever” may sound like a harmless, romantic notion; but in reality it is perhaps the most controlling and stifling doctrine taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It effectively creates fear of ostracism, closes minds, and regulates personal behavior. Questions about this and other Church doctrine can cause serious family problems including divorce.

A strong and brave man who is willing to face an enemy’s bullets often melts and becomes compliant when faced with his mother’s tears when she says, “Son we all love you so much, please stay active in the Church, pay your tithing, and go to the temple often so that we can all be together in the celestial kingdom of God. It would break my heart if you were not there with the rest of our family.” This awesome power, a mother’s pleading and tears, is at the disposal of the LDS Church!

Sometimes Mormon missionaries become disillusioned with missionary work, with Mormonism, or both. Most of these missionaries however, stay on their missions because they do not want to embarrass their parents and other family members. It would be too humiliating to leave their missions and go home. They believe that they would not be welcomed at home. Fear of their family's reaction forces these missionaries to continue with their missions whether they want to or not.

A man or a woman who comes to the conclusion that Mormonism is based upon deception and who then decides to leave the LDS Church must also be willing to give up his or her family. It may turn out that the doubter is able to persuade some family members to change their minds about Mormonism, but the odds are against this happening. Instead, a person usually learns that family members have been so thoroughly indoctrinated that their highest loyalty is to the Church, not to a husband, wife, son, daughter, or even to the truth. And a Church member who associates or sympathizes with an "apostate" risks failing his or her temple worthiness interview. (This is one of the questions.)

LDS Hypocrisy:

Even though some very expensive media advertisements depict Mormonism as family oriented, it actually breaks up many families and causes a great amount of pain and suffering. As a missionary, I helped break up a number of families when one person (usually the wife) became converted and then divorced the unbelieving spouse. I am very sorry for this and wish that I could go back and undo all of the damage that I have done. Missionaries are still breaking up the families of non-members while at the same time claiming to be "family oriented."

The LDS Church not only breaks up non-Mormon families, it also breaks up many LDS families. Utah has one of the highest divorce rates in America. Some of the causes of these divorces include: (1) Overwhelming financial pressures that can result from having large families, payment of tithing, sending sons and daughters on missions, and contributing time and money to other Church programs. All of this can cost many thousands of dollars. A husband or wife is often forced to take extra employment outside of the home just to pay all of the bills and send a son or daughter on a mission. (2) Arguments about tithing, about Church doctrine, about going to meetings, and about temple attendance can cause alienation and serious marriage problems. (3) Feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and even depression can result from perceived failure to live up to the many demands, rules, and requirements of the Church.

Although claiming to be family oriented, Church policy does not allow parents to witness the marriage of a son or daughter in a Mormon temple unless those parents are full tithe payers in good standing with the Church. This ticket to the temple can cost thousands of dollars. And

since I refused to say that I believed in Joseph Smith and pay this extortion (about \$5,000), I was not allowed to see my own son get married. Also, young Mormon siblings (usually under 18) are not allowed to see an older sister or brother get married in an LDS Temple even if the younger person **is** a full tithe payer. This is not family orientation nor is it Christian. It is another cruel anti-family policy of the LDS Church.

The following true stories are not exact word-for-word quotations:

A Heartbroken Mother

I am a 55 year old woman who grew up in a prominent LDS family. I tried my best to be a good wife and mother and to accept all of my Church callings. I took my children to Church and taught them to believe in Mormonism. After many years of abuse, I ended my “eternal marriage” and divorced my husband. This was not an easy thing for a woman who has been taught since childhood that marriage is eternal and that she needs a husband who holds the Melchizedek priesthood in order to enter into the highest degree in the celestial kingdom of God.

After my divorce, I started to do some serious research into Church doctrine and history in order to strengthen my faith and testimony. The more I studied, the more I came to believe that Mormonism is based upon deception. This heartbreaking discovery has been even more painful than my divorce. My parents, my brothers and sisters, and also my children have turned against me. They are all still active Church members. My married children will not even let me be alone with my grandchildren. They are afraid that I may try to turn them against the Church. Adding to my pain is the guilt of knowing that I am the one who taught my children to believe in Mormonism and to act this way.

An Angry Father

I am a Catholic who married a Mormon woman. I have always tried to be understanding and supportive of my wife’s religion. I even agreed to allow our children to go to her Church and be brought up as Mormons. My oldest son and I have always been very close. When he decided to go on a two year mission, I agreed to support him even though I would need to work a lot of extra hours. When he came home from his mission, he married a Mormon girl in an LDS Temple. Her family and my wife were able to see the wedding but I was not “worthy” to attend. I had to wait outside the Temple even though I had paid for his mission and part of his wedding. This made me very angry with the Church. Since the wedding, my son and his wife don’t want much to do with me because I won’t convert to Mormonism. The Mormon Church has destroyed my family!

A Temple Wedding

I still agonize over how deeply my wedding day must have hurt my parents. I am their only daughter. I refused to drive to the temple with

them for fear of smelling like my dad's cigarette smoke. I have grieved many times since then about my decision to get married in a Mormon Temple with my parents standing outside shivering in the December cold. My grandparents and my brothers stayed home, as did my aunt, my uncle, my cousins, and almost all of my friends.

We walked into the sealing room. Who was there for me? Not any of my family or people who really knew me, cared about me, or loved me throughout my life. The room was full of people that I didn't know. The temple sealer gave a short talk and then recited some memorized words about us becoming kings and queens in heaven. There were no flowers, no music, no ring ceremony, nothing like the wedding I grew up looking forward to. I had no way of knowing all of this until it was too late.

We were pushed out of the room to make way for the next couple. The cycle time for weddings is only about thirty minutes. We walked out of the temple to where my parents were waiting. My mother was crying. My dad said I looked pretty. I felt horrible. I will never forget that sick feeling in my stomach as long as I live.

My wedding broke my heart and that of my family. I eventually left the Church and my husband but not before my children were taught that temple marriage is the only marriage truly acceptable to God. Today, I face the prospect of one or both of my children being married in an LDS Temple surrounded by strangers while I stand outside and wait.

Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Ostracism of friends and family members is not loving and not Christian. It has broken many hearts including mine.

The Mafia

What organization can claim a stronger family orientation than the Cosa Nostra? Right and wrong, legal and illegal, and moral or immoral mean very little when compared with family loyalty. Powerful family pressures suffocate individual conscience. Then why should a controlling family orientation be considered something for Mormons to brag about?

Better Relationships With Some Other Family Members

Almost everyone has a husband, wife, son, daughter, or some other family member who no longer believes in Mormonism. When a person decides to leave the LDS Church, they are often surprised by how close and even intimate their relationships with inactive, non-believing, and non-member relatives can become. Just brewing some coffee often helps!

Note: There is no copyright on this paper. (Feel free to make copies.)

THE KEYSTONE OF MORMONISM is a powerful book. Contact me at: arza@charter.net. Book orders: Amazon.com, keystonebooks.com, Bookstores. Good Websites: keystonebooks.com, postmormon.org, exmormon.org, latterdaylampoon.com, lds-mormon.com.