

Volume 1, No. 3

July 1995

## BROTHER AND SISTER CANDIDE

It's not too late to volunteer dramatic, literary, singing, and staging talents or just good ideas to Marti L. Jones, chair of the Mormon Alliance's roadshow. It is scheduled in conjunction with the August 1995 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City.

The roadshow, titled "Brother and Sister Candide: The Best of All Possible Churches," is in semi-final production as this newsletter reaches you, and has recruited (can this be possible?) the services of beings from Planet 10.

## CASE REPORTS 1995

The first volume of the Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance, 1995, containing about a hundred accounts of ecclesiastical and spiritual abuse, is scheduled for publication about November 15. It contains a section of letters, and sections of reports clustered around the themes of authoritarian leadership, mission experiences, the experiences of gay and lesbian Mormons, the experiences of those who have voluntarily withdrawn from the Church, a major section on child sexual abuse within the Church, and a section of "documentary histories" that includes the full documents generated by the disciplinary actions against Janice Allred, Eugene Kovalenko, Dan and Charlene Ecklund, and David P. Wright and Dianne T. Wright.

"We realize that this is not light reading for anybody," comment the editors, Janice Allred and Lavina Fielding Anderson. "But we've tried to provide positive examples where we can, historical interpretation and context to aid in understanding, reviews of books on related subjects, related essays of a helpful nature, and especially our faith that repentance and forgiveness are not only possible but neces-

sary parts of mortality."

Members of the Mormon Alliance receive this volume as a benefit of membership. Additional copies can be ordered from Signature Books, 564 W. 400 North, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 461-1617, for \$23.00. This price includes shipping and handling.

## PLAY THAT "PLAY-BY-PLAY" GAME

Serious conference watchers are already looking ahead to October general conference to see if the trend identified by alert watcher Ardean Watts for ties with geometric patterns (forty out of forty-five) will continue under the Hinckley presidency.

Lynne Kanavel Whitesides and Devery Anderson are among the panelists who will share observations on Mormonism's most important public ritual. In addition to commentary on trends (Will authoritarianism continue as a heavy player? Will what seemed to be a muting of commentary on social issues in April 1995 repeat itself?), this fast-paced potpourri of responses, reactions, faith-promoting moments, and good-natured banter will intersperse slices of panelist commentary with responses from the audience.

The meeting will be held Monday, October 3, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the auditorium on the third floor of the Salt Lake Public Library, 209 East 500 South.

"Serious watchers," according to the moderator, Lavina Fielding Anderson, are "people who actually listen to, watch, think about, and otherwise pay attention to General Conference. People who are sitting in the stake center in pantyhose or white shirts (as gender appropriate) with serious expressions on their faces during broadcasts but who have little receivers in their ears for the action on NBA have spectator-only status."



## LETTERS

*Common Consent welcomes short contributions to this column. We reserve the right to edit for length.*

### Gathering Up Tares

The excommunications over the last year, culminating in the recent excommunication of Janice Allred, have brought to my mind the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). This parable, located in a chapter of parables dealing with the "Kingdom of Heaven" (the early Church), details how the leaders of the Church were to handle those who differed from them in beliefs, customs, and culture. For Matthew's community of mixed Jews and Gentiles (Greeks), these instructions were particularly important since diverse theological beliefs existed. For this reason, Jesus cautioned the early Church leaders through this parable against judging others, admonishing them instead to let matters rest in the hands of Christ, the Judge.

Two dangers existed then, as now, in "gathering up" what were perceived as offending members. First, Church leaders might excommunicate a member that they perceived to be embracing and teaching false doctrine but who in fact was espousing the truth. Thus, the danger existed that the leaders, in their ignorance, would expel a believing Saint based on false perceptions and prejudices (Luke 6:37-39). The second danger lay in destroying the faith of those members closely rooted to the offending member, resulting in the destruction not only of the offending member but also those sympathetic to their cause. This would result in contention and offense, feelings diametrically opposed to the spirit of Christ's gospel. Membership in Christ's Church was based, therefore, not on acceptance of a theological dogma established by the governing apostles but rather on a belief in Jesus (Mark 16:15-18). Jesus rebuked

the disciples for judging others: "Forbid him not: . . . For he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark 9:39-40).

The leaders of today's Church, at all its levels, would do well to learn the lessons of the ancient Church and accept the teachings of Christ's parables: "Let them both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat to the barn" (Matt. 13:30; emphasis mine). Rather than excommunicating faithful and believing members, perhaps we should be working on tolerance and love towards our brothers and sisters in the faith of Christ.

*Brian H. Stuy  
Woodland Hills, Utah*

### Loving Courage Still Alive

I was surprised to learn of the recent resignation of four of the original trustees, three of whom--Paul and Margaret Toscano and Erin Silva--are now dear friends. (It is my misfortune, I'm sure, not to have had an equal opportunity to get to know Fred Voros.)

Never will I forget the surprise phone calls from Erin, Paul, and Margaret in the summer of 1992 following my stake president's excommunication of me in Ventura, California. I did not know any of them at the time, but their generous offer to defend me in my formal appeal not only lifted my spirit from a lonely place but gave me renewed hope that loving courage was still alive among our people. Although the official appeal failed to affect the decision, their commitment and compassion for me and others have endeared them to me forever.

Thank you and bless you, my friends, Erin, Margaret, and Paul. Your caring, Christian efforts, though troubling to many, have, I am sure, deeply pleased our Lord. May those who remain in the Alliance continue to follow your example and keep your standard.

*Eugene Kovalenko  
Los Alamos*



### Eternal Death

It has been referred to as the ultimate act of all violence, and for those of us who understand its implications, it offends deeply our sense of decency. It is committed in a spirit of vengeance and retribution with a long and tragic history which has left in its wake a trail of broken lives and the darkest side of authoritarian religion.

It is Mormon excommunication, and to the many protesting Latter-day Saints, it is spiritual murder, having been methodically designed to separate the individual from God, spouse, and loving children for eternity. It is eternal death.

In the case of Janice Allred of Provo, mother of nine children, it was executed on May 9 by an LDS Church court for no other reason than her expressed desire to openly explore theological issues within her church. Allred is a committed Latter-day Saints, scholar, moderate feminist, and homemaker. She breached no formal LDS doctrine, led no protest group, and carried no malice toward anyone. I have known her for years as a loving, gentle, compassionate human being, the mainstay of the kind of home and family that most of us could envy.

This heinous practice must stop. There is nothing within the character of Jesus Christ to recommend it. It is an evil force, for it generates seeds of repression, fear, hypocrisy and terror among faithful church members of conscience. In the last two years, the Mormon Church has become a national spectacle of

spiritual abuse because of its increasingly vindictive excommunications. We who care deeply must publicly address this issue.

*James E. Chapman  
Salt Lake City*

(Reprinted from the Salt Lake Tribune, 29 May 1995.)

### BELIEVE THIS LABEL!

Please check your mailing label. If it does not have a number or a letter in the right-hand corner on the same line as your name, **this is the last issue you will receive and you will not get the Case Reports, 1995**. To make your subscription current, please remit \$30.00 to the Mormon Alliance, 6337 Highland Drive, Box 215, Salt Lake City, UT 84121.

### PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

This issue of the newsletter may seem to be reaching you with unnecessary speed (whoa! you didn't know the summer was going that fast!), but it is actually on time. The first two for 1995 were catching up after delays. The fall newsletter is scheduled for mailing on 5 October, just after the semi-annual General Conference Critique.

### POST-PUBLICATION EDITING

Whoops! The May 1995 issue of By Common Consent is Volume 1, No. 2, not No. 1. Also, on page 4, the date of Jan Shipp's interview for Religion on the Line should have been 14 August 1994, not 1995.

### Thoughts for Our Time

*Compiled by Arthur C. Wiscombe*

Unlike [people] in bondage under the less popular forms of slavery, those enslaved by religion do not know that they are not free. This can be religion's most subtle evil, for because of it [people] are often robbed of their dignity without knowing what they have lost. --Sterling M. McMurrin, Religion, Reason, and Truth, p. 110.

Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they. --Jean Jacques Rousseau, Social Contract (1762), chap.



homosexual couples. According to Don Hallstrom, the Regional Representative, "The Hawaii church has the full support of Mormon leaders in Salt Lake City." Associated Press, "LDS Church Files Appeal in Same-Sex Case," Salt Lake Tribune, 17 April 1995, D-2; Douglas D. Palmer, "3 LDS Officials Seek to Join Hawaii Suit," Deseret News, 14 April 1995, A10.

15 April 1995. Elder James E. Faust, when calling a man to be stake president, asked his wife if she could support him in his calling. She wrote: "I nodded in [the] affirmative. Sensing my deeper feelings, Elder Faust tenderly reiterated: 'Can you support this good man in the home with fresh white shirts, warm meals, contented children and order? This will be of great importance to his success.' My mundane duties suddenly had the appearance of Christlike service." Connie W. Watts, "Lighter Heart," Church News, April 22, 1995, 15.

19 April 1995. Bombs in the Oklahoma City federal building killed 167, including dozens of young children at a day-care center. Bo Gritz, in a television interview, commented: "The destruction in Oklahoma City of a nine-story building was a Rembrandt. It was a masterpiece of science and art put together." Bill Hall, "Bombing of Babies in Oklahoma Was a Masterpiece--of Senselessness," Salt Lake Tribune, 29 May 1995, C-4.

7 May 1995. Speaking in a CES fireside broadcast from Seattle, President Boyd K. Packer warned young adults against "two spiritually dangerous ideas: individual freedom without responsibility and unrestrained diversity. 'You can know by the Spirit those teachers you can safely trust.'" Pye Hirsche, "Elder Packer Urges Faith, Understanding," Universe, 9 May 1995, p. 3.

9 May 1995. Bishop Robert Hammond excommunicated Janice Allred for "apostasy." (See July issue of By Common Consent.)

10 May 1995. A letter from the Presiding Bishopric (Merrill J. Bateman, H. David Burton, and Richard C. Edgley) to U.S./Canada General Authorities and local priesthood leaders announced the establishment of a "telephone Help Line" for "priesthood leaders" who "become aware of any abuse involving church members." (1-800-453-3860, extension 1911) The caller can confidentially "consult with social services, legal, and other specialists who can assist in answering questions and in formulating steps that should be taken." These experts will also provide "information about local reporting requirements." In January, Ralph

Neeley was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Jefferson County, Texas, court for repeatedly molesting an eight-year-old girl at the chapel. Her parents sued him, the church, and Neeley's bishop "who apparently knew about the allegation but failed to report it. The Church 'settled for an undisclosed amount.'" Photocopy of letter in my possession; Mark Carter, "Mormon Church Opens Advice Line on Abuse," Salt Lake Tribune, 10 June 1995, D-1, D-3; Mike Carter, Associated Press, "LDS Hotline to Help Leaders Deal with Abuse," Deseret News, 9 June 1995, B-3.

11 May 1995. In a Tribune article about Janice Allred's excommunication, Peggy Fletcher Stack reported that "several Mormons" she contacted for comment "were outraged . . . but they said they were afraid to comment publicly." Peggy Fletcher Stack, "LDS Church Excommunicates Feminist Author," Salt Lake Tribune, 11 May 1995, B-1; Associated Press, "LDS Excommunicate Feminist; Appeal Planned," Deseret News, 11-12 May 1995, B-10.

18 May 1995. The quarterly B. H. Roberts Society meeting dealt with homosexuality and Mormonism. Moderator Gary Watts contrasted the current scientific and therapeutic consensus about the origins of homosexuality with the Church's insistence that it is a learned and chosen behavior. Speakers were Duane Jeffries, a biology professor at BYU, who reviewed the literal on animal same-sex behavior and concluded that it is a universal phenomenon for a minority of every species. Keith Frogley, a Salt Lake businessman, resented the myths about homosexuality that had made it difficult for him to respond appropriately when his son told him he was gay. "I was armed only with the misconceptions of my own experience." Steve and Allison (surname withheld), a couple from Logan, talked together about Steve's homosexuality and how it had impacted their marriage. Holograph notes in my possession; Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Homosexuality comes Out Despite Mormon Doctrine," Salt Lake Tribune, 20 May 1995, D-1, D-4.

19 May 1995. Lynne Kanavel Whitesides, in a letter to the Tribune, protested the excommunication of Janice Allred and with bitter wit suggested: "When women come to the waters of baptism from now on, we could add one step: See if they float." Lynn[e] Kanavel Whitesides, "Time and Heartache," Salt Lake Tribune, 19 May 1995, A-32.

20-21 May 1995. Speaking at a regional con-



ference in Santa Rosa/Vacaville, California, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "Think of the marvelous blessing of the priesthood. . . . I am thankful for the system of governance of this great cause. What a miracle it is, this system which the Lord set up." "Prophet Reviews 'Mormon Footsteps' in California," Church News, 27 May 1995, 5.

21 May 1995. The Santa Barbara (California) News-Press devoted 169 column inches to the case of Michael Shean, a Mormon who engaged in homosexual activity as a Scout, served a mission, married in the temple, became the father of four, established a law practice in Santa Maria, and gave extensive Church service and community service. He was also a homosexual pedophile. He was a counselor in the bishopric in 1980 when he was excommunicated for sexually molesting two full-time missionaries. After about two years of therapy, Paul Bramwell, an LDS Social Services clinical psychologist, certified to Shean's bishop and to President Spencer W. Kimball, that Shean's therapy was a success. Shean was rebaptized in November 1981 and his priesthood and temple blessings were restored in June 1983. Before the year's end, he had sexually molested a teenager in the ward. For the next eleven years, he coached high school baseball and little league teams, taught seminary and Sunday School, and represented juvenile clients who could not afford private attorneys. One of these clients filed a claim of sexual misconduct against him in August 1994. Sheriff's deputies confiscated a hand-held vibrator, creams, lotions, child pornography, notes, appointment books, and the 1980s letters by Shean, his supportive wife, his therapist, and his ecclesiastical leaders. In October 1994, a grand jury indicted him on twenty-six counts of lewd and lascivious acts with minors; in a plea bargain, prosecutors dropped twenty-two of the counts, and Shean pled "no contest" in April 1995 to four counts of sexual misconduct. He was scheduled for sentencing on May 30 but the case was continued to July 6. At least four of Shean's alleged victims have filed multimillion dollar lawsuits against him. Bramwell and Shean's wife have been named in four and the Mormon Church in two for failing to warn law-enforcement officials about Shean's acts. According to Steve Hamilton, lawyer for Shean's alleged victims, "his therapy was medically unproven and did nothing to stop a public threat. 'The church failed to report prior incidents of child molestation in order to protect its image and reputation in the

community. . . They essentially committed a cover-up. In doing this, they exposed the entire community to potential future sexual misconduct.'" As of May 21, no action had been taken on Shean's membership. Bramwell, whose California license expired on April 30, 1995, has been transferred to American Fork, Utah; one of his letters to Shean's bishop states: "I would have no hesitation allowing him (Shean) to work with my own sons." A member of an adjoining stake who knows Bramwell considers him to be "a fruit loop as a therapist" and reports another case in which he counseled a gay youngster in his early teens to make himself unattractive to those in his high school who were picking on him for his effeminate behavior by eating large quantities of candy to develop pimples. The youth initially followed this advice but, found it unsuccessful. He has since left the Church. Scott Wilson and Rhonda Parks, "Confessions and Desires," Santa Barbara (California) News-Press, pp. A-1, A-11, A-12; personal communications.

31 May 1995. Jennifer Bottomly, a former paralegal at American Investment Bank in Salt Lake City, sued her boss, Thomas L. Monson, eldest son of President Thomas S. Monson, in 1993 when, according to her lawsuit, he "stalked her, tried to kiss her, searched her belongings, listened to her conversations, . . . repeatedly propositioned her, . . . wrote love notes, and left 'lewd' materials on her desk, including an explicit drawing of two people having sex." Monson was fired 7 September 1993 for, according to his deposition, "using poor judgement in his relationship with the woman," Bottomly was fired six days later, despite assurances that her job was not at risk, and Monson filed a suit for defamation of character. The EEOC has asked to join Bottomly's suit against AIB and related companies. Mike Carter, Associated Press, "EEOC Seeks to Intervene in Sex-Harassment Suit," Salt Lake Tribune, 10 June 1995, B-3.

17 June 1995. Rex Lee resigned after seven years as president of BYU, a month after he spent two weeks in the hospital for a fever of unknown origin. Jennifer Skordas, "Tears, Accolades Flow as Lee Quits BYU Post," Salt Lake Tribune, 17 June 1995, B-1, B-8. No public announcement was made of a change in BYU's Board of Trustees about June 7 or 8. Released were Elders Boyd K. Packer and Neal A. Maxwell, both long-time members, and Elaine Jack. Unconfirmed reports identified L. Tom Perry as trustees' new chair.

MORMON ALLIANCE  
6337 HIGHLAND DRIVE  
MAILBOX 215  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84121

Every worldview and attitude within oneself is both liberating and limiting. Without some clear moral basis, it is hard to see how one could learn from experience. On the other hand, a clearly defined moral point of view can limit one's views of what others are doing and what is possible in human experience. There is a price to pay for having no defined moral basis, but there is also a price to pay for having one. That's the way life is.

Then there are those who identify with some clear moral basis, often through identifying with some religious tradition, but who never spiritually grapple with that tradition. They become moral automata who make little effort to understand the significance of a moral principle or rule, and so they go through morally and socially accepted motions, but they cannot be said to be moral in any interesting sense of the word. --Elton A. Hall, interviewed by Kael Moffat, "Morality in Education," Student Review, 29 March 1995, 3.

Great meanwhile is the moment when tidings of freedom reach us; when the long enthralled soul, from amid its chains and squalid stagnancy, arises, were it still only in blindness and bewilderment, and swears by Him that made it, that it will be free! Free! Understand that well, it is the deep commandment, dimmer or clearer, of our whole being, to be free. Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all [human] struggles, toilings and sufferings, on this earth. --Thomas Carlyle, The French Revolution

By Common Consent is the quarterly newsletter of the Mormon Alliance. Comments, articles, and items for inclusion are welcome submitted thirty days before the mailing deadlines, which are the first weeks of July, October, January, and April. Please submit them at The Mormon Alliance, 6337 South Highland Drive, Mail Box 215, Salt Lake City, UT 84121, thirty days in advance of publication.

The purpose of the Mormon Alliance is to identify and document ecclesiastical/spiritual abuse, to build more sensitive leadership, to empower LDS members to participate with more authenticity in Mormonism, and to foster a healthier religious community.

Membership in the Mormon Alliance is \$30 per calendar year. Benefits are the newsletter, the annual Case Reports volume, and mailings about quarterly meetings held in Salt Lake City. Subscriptions received at any point in the year will bring you to all four newsletters and that year's volume of the Case Reports. Individual copies of the Case Reports (scheduled for publication in the fall of 1995) will be available for \$20.00 from Signature Books, 564 W. 400 North, Salt Lake City, UT 84116.

#### TRUSTEES OF THE MORMON ALLIANCE

Janice Merrill Allred  
Lavina Fielding Anderson  
James E. Chapman  
Allen Roberts  
Marti Lynne Jones  
Paul Swenson  
Marion Smith

To report cases of ecclesiastical and spiritual abuse, contact:

Lavina Fielding Anderson  
1519 Roberta Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84115  
(801) 467-1617