

Forward by Dr. James Wilkins

A Story of a Struggle in Life to Find Peace

This 21st century is filled with struggling people. In fact, most of earth's six billion people face some adversity or problem. Some struggle just to have enough food to eat; others, with addiction; some are dealing with a broken heart, dream or life. STRUGGLE TO PEACE deals with the struggle of a young woman with her religion. Some people will read this booklet with amazement or in almost unbelief. They will shake their heads and say: "I didn't know they believed that."

Many of the thousands of hard-working, honest, good moral people of this religion will be shocked! The leaders of this well-known religion will scream out: "This book is a life; our doctrines have been distorted and the young woman is lying."

The first printing of **STRUGGLE TO PEACE** simply presented Cindy Benson's simple testimony. All of the 62 references along with the final 20+ pages were added in answer to her critics' charges that the book was filled with falsehoods.

We ask the readers to please use their own reasoning powers and prayerfully consider the story that this young woman is telling of her struggle to find peace with God.

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A Struggle to Peace: A Heart Rendering Story Where Truth Prevails by *Richard & Cindy Benson*

A Struggle to Peace: I Felt Very Special

Out of all the millions of people in the world, I held it a privilege to be one of those born into a Mormon home. I cherished my Mormon heritage as one of the most precious aspects of my life. I thought I was very special to God, because he had placed me into a family who belonged to “the only true church”¹ and I knew this put me ahead of many people in my advancement towards my becoming a goddess along with my husband becoming a god over our own world.

2

I started attending the LDS church as an infant and received my name and blessing by the hand of my father when I was three months old. The only religious training I had were the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As a Mormon, I was taught that there were many gods, but **we served the god of this world, whose name is Elohim.**

3

Elohim lived near the planet Kobob.

4

We were taught he was once a mortal man, who through obedience to Mormon laws and ordinances was exalted to the status of godhood

,5

just like his father before him, to eternity past.

6

Lucifer Wanted to be the Saviour

□□□□ **Elohim (the god of Mormonism) is a polygamist**⁷ The number of wives he has is unknown. These wives bore to him billions of spiritual babies. These spiritual children lived him and his wives in a pre-existent realm.

We were taught that the pre-existence was a place where every human being born on earth lived as one of these spirit children.⁸ Elohim saw that his children needed to advance farther,

so he decided it was time for them to take a physical body upon the earth to undergo the experiences of mortality.

Thus Elohim called together a council of the gods to decide the destiny of all those who would be sent to earth. **Two of Elohim's sons were there: Jehovah** (the first born and the Mormon Jesus) **and**

Lucifer

As Mormons we

believed Jesus and Lucifer were spirit brothers,

as well as spirit brothers to all mankind.

9

Mormonism teaches that Lucifer **presented his plan to be the savior** of the world. Getting the glory for himself, he would redeem all mankind without allowing one soul to be lost.

10

Jesus said he would give men their free agency of choice as on all other worlds before.

The council of the gods rejected Lucifer's plan and accepted Jesus' plan.

Angered, Lucifer led a rebellion in heaven where he convinced one third of Elohim's spirit children to rebel with him. He became Satan and was cast out. One third of the spirit children who rebelled with him became the demons and were sent to earth where they were denied physical bodies forever.

11

Mormon theology states that during this war in heaven, all of those spirit children of Elohim who were unfaithful and not valiant **came to earth cursed with black skin.**¹² Those who were more noble were born into Mormon homes

13

. Therefore, I felt it was

my reward from God

to be born in these last days, into a white Mormon home.

I Wanted to be a Missionary

As a child, I would sit in my primary class and sing the songs, "I Am A Child of God" and "I Hope They Call Me on a Mission," hoping that someday I could fulfill a mission for the Mormon church. I wanted to be a missionary.

At the age of eight, as with almost every Mormon boy or girl, I was baptized by immersion for the remission of sins¹⁴ by my father, who having the “proper authority” held the Melchizedek priesthood. According to Mormonism, only Mormon men have been bestowed with the authority to baptize and marry. Their priesthood consists of two parts; the Aaronic and the Melchizedek.¹⁵

I was then confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Even as a child, I was eager to learn about the Mormon church, which I was told was the only true church upon the face of the earth. □ **Joseph Smith**, who was the founder and first “prophet” of the LDS church, **at the age of fourteen**, claimed to have wanted to know what denomination he should join. (Having heard of Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist faiths). He went into the woods to pray. There **he said he had a vision** in which two personages he claimed was God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him and told him he must join none of the **Christian Churches** for they **were all wrong**, their creeds were an abomination in God’s sight and their professors were all corrupt.¹⁶

After he received his vision, he said an angel named Moroni visited him and told him where to find some gold plates. There were the plates from which he was supposed to have translated the Book of Mormon.¹⁷ He was also the one who was to perform the work of restoring the church to the earth. ¹⁸ So on April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith started his church known as The Church of Christ, later known as The Church of the Latter Day Saints, now known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.¹⁹

The early Mormon church leaders introduced several unique **doctrines never before found in Orthodox Christianity**. Their teachings included 1- **polygamy** -the practice of having more than one wife at the same time, also stating that the god and Jesus Christ of Mormonism are polygamists,⁷

2-

blood atonement

- the literal shedding of the blood of the sinner instead of relying on the shed Blood of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

20

& 3-

their beliefs about God

- that there are millions of gods and that men may become gods.² One of my favorite statements was, “

As man is, God once was, as God is, man may become.

”

21

After the Nauvoo Expositor had exposed the teaching of the plurality of wives, Joseph Smith ordered the destruction of the printing press²² and for this he was sentenced to the Carthage jail. While he was in jail a mob broke in and killed him. I was taught that he was a martyr, that he sealed his testimony with his blood, and that he said he was “led like a lamb to the slaughter.”

23 As a Mormon, I compared his death to that of Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. He was considered one of the saviors of mankind.

24

History proved that Joseph Smith did not go like a lamb to the slaughter. He shot three men; killing two and injuring the third in a gun battle before he was shot.²⁵

I Idolized Joseph Smith

I was never taught that he killed anyone. I was only taught the things that made him look wonderful. My teachers always seemed to leave out the facts, making him out to be more than just a mere human being. I placed him on a pedestal. He became the standard for what I wanted my husband to be, and his perfection was what I wished to achieve in my life. I idolized him as the man God had chosen to bring the gospel and the church back to the earth. Joseph Smith was more important to me than Jesus Christ. When I attended the LDS church, **our main focus was on Joseph Smith**

and what he had done for us. I was taught that if it had not been for Joseph Smith, there would have been no salvation.

26

I was taught more about him and the Mormon “prophets” than any of the prophets in the Bible.

Even during our monthly fast and testimony meetings, almost everyone's testimony would speak of their belief that the LDS church was true and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet. **But seldom, if ever, were any praise or thanks given to the Lord for the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on the cross for our sins.**

I was taught that the Bible was the Word of God as far as it was translated correctly.²⁷ I didn't want to read the Bible, because I did not know which part I could trust. The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price were the only books I needed, because Joseph Smith had written them, and I thought they were trustworthy.

Converted to Mormonism on March 12, 1832

I was a sixth generation Mormon. My great, great, great grandfather, Milo Andrus, converted to Mormonism on March 12, 1832, just two years after the Mormon church began. He was acquainted with Joseph Smith and knew Brigham Young well. (Brigham Young later became the second "prophet" of the LDS church.) My grandpa Milo was present when the official announcement of the doctrine and practice of plural marriage was made. Although he did not want to live as a polygamist, Brigham Young told him it was required of him. He eventually took plural wives at the expense of his first wife and marriage, as his first wife would not live polygamy. He had a total of eleven wives and fifty-seven children.²⁸

My family all belonged to this "only true church." My father and mother were very devout Mormons. My dad was a member of the High Council. He and my mother saw to it that I attended church regularly, although I never had to be forced to go.

I Thought the World of My Parents

Like most children, I thought the world of my parents. My dad was a truck driver, so I didn't get to see him very often. When he was home, he was either sleeping or reading. He had a set of the Journal of Discourses which contain the early Mormon teachings. This is what he read from most of the time. While reading these early LDS church writings, my dad's views started to change. He realized that the Mormon church of today is not what it was like in the beginning.

Some of the doctrines had been changed and even their stand on who god is had changed.²⁹

As a truck driver, my dad had several routes to southern Utah. This is where he met up with a group of Fundamentalist Mormons or Mormons who believe and practice the early teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young and still live polygamy. He studied with them as often as he could. They expounded the early teachings and explained to him that they believed Wilford Woodruff the fourth “prophet” of the LDS church went astray by signing the Manifesto putting a stop to polygamy.³⁰ They had broke away from the mainstream Mormon church and formed their own church with their own “prophet” yet they all still claim to be the “only true church.”

“The New and Everlasting Covenant”

After spending time with this group, and after a lot of personal study, my dad thought it was only right that he become a polygamist. Brigham Young, the second “prophet” taught that only those who become gods are those who enter into polygamy.³¹ Joseph Smith called polygamy the “New and Everlasting Covenant,” and said that all those who are not living it would be dammed.

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One Day We Were A Happy Family

While I was a child of eleven years of age, my fifty-three year old father brought home a fifteen-year old girl and told us that he must take her as his second wife in order to fulfill the law of eternal progression towards his own godhood. One day we were a happy family, and the next we were not; devastation struck our household. I thought she was my baby-sitter. Imagine my surprise when I learned she was going to be my “mother.” I could not understand why my dad thought he needed another wife.

I had never heard my parents argue — until that night. My mother cried as my father tried to get her to accept this girl into our home. I laid in bed that night in horror, not knowing what the future would hold. I think my dad was surprised that my mother did not welcome this girl into our home with open arms. He had already settled it in his mind that he must live polygamy

while it was a shock to the rest of us.

He had never told us of his secret meetings with this polygamous sect or of his findings as he studied the early Mormon doctrines.

Fear, hurt, and anger hung over our house. My parents continued to fight, unable to settle their differences. And so, although I think my dad must have loved us, he left us, in order to follow the early LDS teachings.

After he moved out, he went to live in Colorado City, Arizona, which is a polygamist community. My dad “married” his second wife and a short time later “married” her sister, having a total of three wives.

□□□□ **My mother was left alone to raise her children.** I was the youngest of her seven. I am now the seventh of sixteen children due to my dad’s polygamous relationships. There were three of my mom’s children still at home when he left.

My mother was very depressed after her husband left her. She had been hurt terribly. She had lived her life for her husband, who had **promised her everything—even eternity together.** 33 She was so devastated over what had happened that it was hard for her to function. She stayed on the couch, unable to go on. I got myself to and from school with always the same result when I came home, she would be on the couch. My sisters and I had to take on several responsibilities that were sometimes hard to handle. But through this ordeal, it was my mom who was hurt the most. Although she did not agree with my dad taking plural wives, she did not divorce him.

She thought she still needed him, because Mormons are taught that it is the **men who call their wives out of the grave** and receives her into the celestial kingdom.

34

I was still very unsure as to why my dad thought he needed to “marry” other women. He

said it was because he was being a true Mormon. I thought I was a true Mormon, but I had never been taught in my ward that I needed to live polygamy. (A ward is a name given to a local Mormon congregation.)

It was at this time that I knew I needed to find out for myself what had actually been taught on this subject so that I could understand what had taken my dad away from me. I started to study on my own in the Book of Mormon. This was the book that Joseph Smith said was the “most correct book on the earth”³⁵ surely I would find my answers here. I continued to read until I found what I was looking for. The Book of Mormon states that polygamy was abominable (Mosiah 11:2 & Jacob 2:24) and that god commanded man to have only one wife and no concubines. (Jacob 2:27)

I was so excited! I had found something that would prove to my dad that what he was doing was wrong and he could come home. So I wrote him a letter with the verses I had found that condemned polygamy hoping that shortly I would see him come back home.

As time went by, and he had not responded, I became discouraged. Then one day he wrote back.

He thanked me for writing to him and showing him these passages, but he said that he must live the true gospel by living polygamy. He pointed out that in the Doctrine and Covenants-another book written by Joseph Smith-polygamy is called the “new and everlasting covenant”³² and he said it must be fulfilled. He told me it did not matter what was written in the Book of Mormon, other revelation revealed that polygamy was now commanded and good in the sight of the god of Mormonism. He said I had better live it also or I would be damned.

³²
I wondered, “Where would I be damned to?” I had never heard about hell and was never taught about a place of condemnation. It was taught that even the meanest sinner would find some place in the heavenly realm.

³⁶
I knew then that I had lost my father to a set of man made doctrines and ungodly practices that even contracted his own scriptures.

A Life of Secrecy

After my dad took plural wives, our lives took on a form of secrecy. I did not dare tell anyone where he had gone or what he had done. Polygamy was still illegal, although there are thousands living it daily. I was afraid he would get arrested and be sent to jail. I began to be very selective in the things that I would say. I became a very good liar, deceiving all those who asked me anything about him. Everything was a lie or a story. I never once felt any guilt for my action as I thought I was protecting him.

There were some people that knew what he had done and eventually most found out. We became outcast. People, even some of our friends, became cold towards us. We were shunned by most of the members of the ward we belonged to. This was something I had a hard time understanding. After all, my dad was only following Mormon doctrine, yet most of our friends and family were embarrassed by it. Many Mormon people today are embarrassed by the doctrine of polygamy, many even deny it was taught. But the fact is, it was taught, believed and lived. Mormon doctrine states that polygamy will again be lived throughout eternity. For Mormon women who make it to the highest degree of heaven, they have only to look forward to sharing their husband with many other women for eternity.³⁷

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- 6 The Seer by Orson Pratt, p. 132
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- 37 The Seer by Orson Pratt p.37-39 & Brigham Young and His Wives by John J. Stewart, p. 41