

Mormonism Live

Interview with Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

November 24, 2021

Radio Free Mormon (RFM): Good evening, Mr. Reel. Wow, wow, that's impressive. Thank you, everybody.

Bill Reel: That crowd feels like it gets bigger and bigger, doesn't it?

RFM: I know that the applause gets longer and longer every week. I don't understand why that would be.

Bill: Yeah, there are 145 people watching at the moment. There's already 14 comments up there. And before we jump into the show, you've got the topic tonight. We've been advertising it everywhere. So I hope people are excited. We're interested in having this conversation today. And I'll let you introduce our guest in just a moment. But...

RFM: I took out a full page ad in the New York Times.

Bill: Yeah, but I did want to introduce our helping hand here, our third teammate. And so, I'm gonna change the little thing here so that's not kind of irritating. Maven, are you there?

Maven: Yes. Can you hear me?

Bill: I can hear you. Maven is live on Mormonism Live. This is our... This is the third person, the third teammate here of the team Mormonism Live. Maven is in charge of the behind the scenes stuff going forward. And we are so excited to have her, and I just want to introduce her to all of our viewers. This is Maven. And folks, this will be who is helping us behind the scenes, and give us a few weeks to really get into the groove of it. But she's already saving us a lot of time, energy, and resources and making things easier for me. So big kudos to Maven, and...

Maven: Thanks, though.

RFM: Hey, Maven, in the interest of transparency, Maven is not her real name. And that is not her real picture.

Bill: No, that's...

Maven: Thank you, RFM.

Bill: She's not actually a cartoon.

RFM: Because for some reason, she wants to maintain a certain degree of anonymity, even while she's helping us out behind enemy lines.

Bill: I love it.

Maven: Yes, I'm still not out to my family. So, at this point, I'm going to try the RFM route. We'll see if I get doxxed later by anybody.

RFM: It's a good thing you don't have a distinctive voice.

Maven: Well, according to you, I do, so we'll see how it goes. But I'm excited to be here for sure. I did want to just give a quick shout out for my screen name to a commenter on last week's program. And so, it was Equinox Project. And they asked to give the behind the scenes tech-maven a nom-de-keyboard, maybe some significant Mormon woman from its history. So, I actually really liked Maven. So I picked up on that. But I have been using "Brody" as a last name, which is an obvious call-out to Fawn Brody. So...

Bill: Oooh, I like it.

Maven: So that is where Maven came from. Thank you very much. I really liked how that sounded. And I'm really excited to be part of the show. I am not a tech-maven, but I am someone that's interested in this, and I'm dedicated to figuring out and solving the problems. So I certainly hope I'm an add and not a subtraction from the show.

Bill: You are a huge net positive. And so, we'll let you go back behind the scenes. But thank you so much for all that you are doing and going to continue to do here for the show and all the help you're going to be.

RFM, I'm turning it over to you, my friend. Tonight's show is yours.

RFM: Thank you. I am so excited about tonight's show, because we have a very special guest on tonight's show—a guest that I have been working on for years now to try and get him on tonight's show. He finally caved. I think I used the missionary commitment pattern successfully to get him on the show. It's Denver Snuffer. Do you want to bring him on?

Hello!!

Denver Snuffer: Now, who is this?

RFM: It's Denver Snuffer, I think! I'm Radio Free Mormon, and that's Bill Reel.

Denver: I've got the name RFM written right on my screen.

RFM: Yes, thank you very much. I appreciate that—because we certainly know each other a little bit more familiarly when we're talking on the phone, et cetera. You know, we're... I'm very excited to have you here. I think a lot of people are gonna know who you are. If I could just give a brief introduction, and hopefully I won't get it too wrong.

You're an individual who has written a great deal about Mormonism. And you and many similarly-minded people... You found a lot of similarly-minded people who have read your books who, in large measure, I think, agree with your points of view and who have created a rather large number of people who have left the LDS Church in favor of your teachings. I'm trying to avoid calling you a leader because I know that that is something that you eschew vehemently.

Denver: Yeah, I don't like that.

RFM: Right.

Denver: But I think one of the problems with religion is when you do have leaders and you have hierarchies, I think you stumble at that point.

RFM: Yes. And very brief: My understanding is that what you seek to do is to restore the church to its charismatic beginnings under Joseph Smith, which you feel got lost after Joseph Smith died and Brigham Young took over the reins, and it hasn't been recaptured since by the official LDS Church. Is that a good thumbnail sketch?

Denver: Yeah, that's pretty good. Back in the missionary discussions and in a big plaque on the wall in the Visitor's Center at Temple Square, there was that quote from Roger Williams about how the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit that was evident in that first primitive church that Christ established had been lost, and that the reason that it was lost is because the Christians had no more of the spirit than the heathens had, and that the only way to get that back would be for God to send new apostles because it wasn't gonna happen otherwise. That Roger Williams quote got used to paper over the charismatic issue for Mormonism because of the claim that we have, you know, an ongoing set of bonafide apostles, and we have an ongoing set of prophets, seers, and revelators. But as you examine the track record, the prophecy and the seership and the revelation phenomenon really was the whole reason why Joseph drew people to him. And then after his departure, the net results were quite different.

And so, now looking at it today and examining where the LDS Church is, that sort of presence of the Spirit seems to be wanting. And I'm not trying to lead anything, but I am trying to teach about what it was that Mormonism stood for. Religion ought to be inviting; it ought to be exciting. Assuming that religion (as Joseph defined Mormonism) includes all truths, wherever you find it—it includes and encompasses all truth—assuming that is the case, then the religion ought to be the most exciting, enticing, inviting, interesting thing there is. There isn't anything bigger than something attempting to gather all truth. And yet, Mormonism (as it has developed under the umbrella of the LDS Church) has turned into something that rather doesn't want any new "news" intruding in, and the confining nature of how Mormonism in the LDS version is developed has resulted in a lot of people feeling like there's got to be something more to this religion—because if it is accurately depicted in its correct form in the institution of the LDS Church, then it's just as hollow and just as spiritless as any Protestant denomination.

RFM: Yes, and perhaps more so. My experience in church during the last couple of decades of my activity was that going to church was as boring as watching paint dry. No, actually, it was worse than that. It was as boring as watching dry paint dry. So I think you're right. I mean, it advertises itself as the "only true and living church." I don't think it's really living anymore. It may not be completely dead, but it's definitely on life support.

Denver: Yeah, yeah...

RFM: So I wanted to tell everybody a little story about you and me on the phone the other day because I think it's significant for what you've just said. But this is when I called you up, maybe a month ago. We finally got you scheduled to come on the show. And I call you up,

and I say, “Hey, Denver,” and you say, “Hi, Radio Free Mormon.” And I say, “How’s my favorite prophet?”

Denver: [laughter]

RFM: And you did that: You laughed (you laughed MORE ‘cause it was, you know, new to you then; you’re hearing it for the second time now). But I thought (and I think I said, you know), “That is very, very appealing.” Because a person who does not take themselves too seriously is something that I personally gravitate toward. I think it was one of the things that a lot of people found attractive about Joseph Smith, that—in some areas, of course, he took himself seriously—but as he presented himself to the public, usually, he was very down to Earth. When I joined the church in the late 70s, we used to hear the story all the time about how he loved to pull sticks...

Denver: Yeah.

RFM: ...with people, though I haven’t heard that in decades now. I don’t know if that went by the wayside as we moved on toward more serious-minded or presenting prophets than Joseph Smith. But I can understand why it is that you are very appealing in that way.

Denver: Well, it’s a sincerely-held conviction. I don’t think you get anywhere in the idea of “achieving oneness as people” if you start out from a proposition that there’s a structure and a hierarchy and someone’s bigger and better than someone else. I think if you go back to the New Testament and you look at what Christ did, He didn’t assert that He had authority. And when they asked Him by what authority He was doing things, He deferred on the question by posing a corollary question about the authority of John and, you know, “Tell me what the authority was,” and they could not say after they reasoned, and so their response was, “We can’t tell you where John got his authority from.” And Christ said, “Well, then neither will I tell you what my authority is.” And the matter ended.

If the Lord... If the Lord elected not to say, “I have authority,” and it comes from whatever source, what value is it to make a bunch of claims about authority? If the Lord didn’t do it, why do we do it? I mean, I think that what the world needs right now is someone to help teach about the religion in a way that invites, entices, interests people, and inspires them to do better, because we really do need people doing better. There’s so much going on that’s depressing, and discouraging about our conversation, our society, our news, our media. Shouldn’t religion be like an oasis in the middle of all that and to make us think more deeply, more clearly, more reflectively and to enjoy life more? And you don’t get there by saying, “I’m bigger than you. My opinion matters more than does yours.”

RFM: Can I break in just to tell you a story, which you may find amusing. It was going on ten years ago, I’d never heard of you before (it probably wasn’t ten, but almost ten years ago, and I’m at church. This, by the way, is a very, very small ward in a small town in western Washington. And I have to go out to the car to get something (maybe it’s an excuse just to get away for a few minutes, you know, take a smoke break outside), but the deal was that there was nobody in the parking lot, but of course, there’s a bunch of cars, and I look over a couple cars down, and the bishop’s wife is seated in the passenger seat of the car. And I go over to her, I say, “Hi, how are you doing?” And she’s got this book that she is just bent over

and riveted to. “What are you reading?” and she says, “This is a book by Denver Snuffer.” (And I don’t know which book it was.) But here we have the bishop’s wife in the parking lot during church, reading your book. And in some ways, I wonder if that’s emblematic of a lot of your followers. What do you think?

Denver: Probably so. I’ve told people that, in my view, you can remain an active Latter-day Saint, you can be a Catholic, you can be a Baptist, you can be any religion that you want to be if you find that fellowshipping helps you there. But there are some things that you ought to know, and I’m happy to teach them, and the teachings are largely based upon Scripture and not, you know, some new innovative thing—but primarily trying to point out that there’s a great deal that we already have that is poorly understood, and so let me see if I can teach you and persuade you. And if so, then welcome it if you find it to be true. And I think there are a lot of people who have found, as you pointed out, Mormonism to be stale, flat, and...

RFM: Unprofitable?

Denver: Unprofitable.

RFM: ...to complete the Shakespearean phrase.

Denver: Yeah. And it has become so. You mentioned you came on board in the 70s. I remember in the 70s, the most interesting hour of the week was the priesthood session, with all the arguments that went on about doctrine and history and speculation about eternities. And the second most interesting hour of the week was Gospel Doctrine, where it was a free-for-all, and everyone was talking. The high priests and the elders (the priesthood group), they were a little more combative; the Gospel Doctrine—because the women were in there, it toned down a bit. But those two hours were just gripping. They were fun. It was interesting to go to church. And if you brought an investigator, they came away saying, “Wow, my church isn’t anything like that.” And I miss those days. Leadership has strained the life out of it.

RFM: Well, I do, too. And I’ve likened those days (my first days in the church in the late 70s), that there was a new and glorious sun that had burst upon my view as I learned about Mormonism, as I joined the church, as I began as a new member attending the different church meetings. But in retrospect, it wasn’t a sun that was rising. It was a sun that was setting and on the verge of going down below the horizon.

Denver: Yeah, I... Remember—and this may shock people that didn’t live through that era—but there was a moment in time when we actually had Leonard Arrington as the Church Historian, D. Michael Quinn as an assistant in the LDS Church Historian’s Office, and Paul Toscano as an active member of the church (and a vocal member of the church). And that was a condition in which the church actually existed at a moment in time. And, you know, that’s passed.

RFM: I’d like to talk with you about your excommunication, not to reopen old wounds. But that was September 2013, correct?

Denver: Yes.

RFM: That was more when I became aware of you through other means, as well. My son, Jonathan (who is in the United States Air Force) was very much involved with your teachings. He liked a lot of what you had to say. He married into a family that was even more involved with your teachings (and is still married into that family). But he gave me a book—and this was actually at the end of 2013—he gave me one of your books. Let me come back to that. Let's talk about September 2013 and your excommunication. Can you tell our audience in thumbnail form why it was that you were excommunicated? And who was behind it, if you know?

Denver: Yeah, I had a stake president that had defended me for some period of time. He had actually called me to be a member of the High Council. I was on the High Council, and he was getting, apparently, some feedback from downtown. But he defended me, and he vouched for me. And ultimately, there was enough pressure that he released me from the High Council. But he released four people at the same time. So it didn't draw any attention.

RFM: Denver, what is it you're doing that's causing this attention?

Denver: Oh, I had written the book, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, and that had been greeted with some consternation downtown.

RFM: What is the thesis of your book, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*?

Denver: It's taking a look at some of the events in church history and saying that perhaps there is a different narrative that would more accurately reflect the events rather than forcing the events to fit into a narrative that says, "All as well in Zion." Perhaps it would fit better into a narrative that says, "We're out of sync with the Lord." One of the major themes of *Passing the Heavenly Gift* is that in that January 1841 revelation to Joseph Smith (which is Doctrine and Covenants section 124), the Lord tells the saints in Nauvoo that He's got some objectives in mind that He's going to assign to them and that He'll give them sufficient time in order for them to accomplish the objectives. But if they don't, then at the end of the allotted time, there's going to be a fork in the road. If they achieve it, they will not be moved out of their place. He will defend them, and they will establish the cornerstone of Zion in Nauvoo. But if they fail in the task, then they WILL be taken and removed, and instead of blessings, there'll be cursings, and they will be dispossessed of their Nauvoo position, and they'll go through a whole sequence of disasters. It's in Doctrine and Covenants section 124.

RFM: Was that...?

Denver: I...

RFM: Oh, I'm sorry, I started to say was that the five-year prophecy on (or deadline on) building the Nauvoo Temple?

Denver: Well, the Nauvoo Temple did not... Section 124 does not set a date. It just says, "I'll give you sufficient time," without establishing what the timeline was. What I suggested in *Passing the Heavenly Gift* is that there's an objective set of criteria that we can use to try and

figure out if they passed muster and accomplished what was required OR if they failed and if they were driven out. And the answer is, obviously... I mean, they didn't finish the temple, they got driven out of Nauvoo, they suffered a series of cursings rather than blessings. The book details what happens to them after they were expelled, including, you know, the distresses that they suffered in Utah. Famines were not the end of it. They lost all their cattle up in Cache county because of the winter that came in. I mean, the stories about Lorenzo Snow going out and digging up the Sego lily bulbs, and he was so hungry that instead of taking the bulb back to his family, he ate it on the spot because he was starving. The stories about eating shoe leather. I mean, these were objectively verifiable sequence of events that happened after the section 124 promise that you're gonna either have blessings, on the one hand, or you're gonna have cursings, on the other hand. And I suggest, "Well, why don't we at least allow for the possibility that they failed?" And that as a consequence of that they WERE rejected with their kindred dead, as 124 says.

RFM: So, if I understand you correctly, HISTORY demonstrates the fact that they did not build the temple within the sufficient time period allotted by the Lord because they obviously received scatterings and cursings, rather than blessings and staying in Nauvoo.

Denver: Right. And the book goes through/walks through all of that, and it walks through history and hiccups and problems. And the book—ultimately, at the end—suggests that, yeah, it's kind of a mess, and it's not all that it claims that it is. However, there's still some value to it. And there's nothing wrong with you—individually—YOU going back and saying, "Okay, the church as an institution may not have pleased the Lord with what THEY have done. But there's no reason why I can't go back and repeat the process, going all the way back, you know, as Joseph Smith did and approaching God as a penitent inheritor of a flawed, messed-up institution." I can still individually approach God and say, "Hey, I know it's a mess. But I would really like to get right with you—myself, individually."

And so, the book ends on the rather upbeat note of suggesting, "Hey, you can still reclaim it; it's not dead." The other day when we were talking, I mentioned to you that the book cover has a candle, and the candle is smoldering—there's a spark still on the wick and there's smoke coming up (that are actually Hebrew letters that come up in the pattern of the smoke), but the spark is there. And we all know that if you've got a spark left in a candle, you can get it to reignite just by blowing on it. If you blow on the candle, you can stimulate it back to a living flame. And that symbolism on the cover was suggesting, you know, that the breath is a symbol of the Spirit; you can get the Spirit and breathe life, breathe the fire back into the promise of the Restoration—individually, if not institutionally. And institutionally, I think that that ship sailed.

RFM: Right, and I remember I said, "the Ruach Elohim."

Denver: Yeah.

RFM: The breath of God. And then I said, "I have just exhausted my knowledge of Hebrew with that phrase."

Okay, so that's the book. I want to come back to this in a second. But can we just pursue this line for a minute? Because I remember reading the book and recall that you had likened the

current state of the LDS Church to the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness under a lesser law. They weren't cast off from God, but they'd been given a lesser law to try and help them along. And so, my question for you now is: Do you still maintain that view of the LDS Church as having a lesser law that they can rekindle by blowing upon the flame?

Denver: I think individuals can. I don't think the institution can. I think the institution has trapped itself in its own mousetrap and that there literally is no way out. I could take you and Bill and Paul Toscano and (if he were still around) Hugh Nibley, and I could put you guys in a First Presidency/Quorum of the Twelve, and I don't think the institution is capable of responding. First of all, you would be junior-most members so that you would be quite elderly before you ever get into the big seat that really matters—the one chair that matters. And by that time, you would have been habituated to a program. There is, in fact, a program.

Bill: We'd have to go to the crappy places in South America.

Denver: Yeah. And you have to sit and wait for other people ahead of you in line to tell you what to do.

RFM: By the way, apologies to all of our listeners in South America, BILL!

Bill: I didn't say which ones. All I know is that when you're the "junior-six," you get told what to do and where to go. And the other guys get the easy tasks.

Denver: Yeah. And you enter, and you leave the room according to seniority.

RFM: Yes, but it's not a legalistic religion.

Denver: No. Well, I'm not sure it is still a religion.

RFM: So, let me take you back to 2013, if I can...

Denver: Yeah.

RFM: ...because you mentioned this book; you've gone over the thesis statement. Apparently, the people downtown—and by that, I take it you mean downtown Salt Lake City in the church office building? Is that correct?

Denver: Right.

RFM: That they were having heartburn over this. Can you tell us what happened (and this is just a thumbnail version, because we actually have a whole bunch of other stuff to get to), and how it was that you found out who was behind the hit?

Denver: Well, the Stake President that defended me was replaced by a new Stake President. And...

RFM: Had your first Stake President served his entire ten years?

Denver: It was nine years. So, I don't know how long you would normally sit, but I think nine years is close enough that you might not...

RFM: Yeah.

Denver: ...you might not think it was an early release.

RFM: Okay.

Denver: So, after nine years, he was replaced. The fellow who came down to replace the Stake President with a new one was Russell Nelson. I think he, at the time, he was either President of the Quorum of the Twelve... Actually, it may have been... It may have been Boyd Packer. But Russell Nelson was right up there in seniority. He came down, he released the old Stake President, he called the new Stake President, and on the date that he called the new Stake President, he handed my membership records to the new Stake President and said that the committee had decided that this member needed to be dealt with. And so, that was the introduction...

RFM: Denver, this is very important information (I think) to me and to the audience because it was right around this time—maybe a little bit later—that the church sent out a spokesperson named Ally Isom (I-S-O-M, if memory serves) when other excommunications were going on (that you may be aware of) to assure the public-at-large that these were local decisions and that the leadership of the church was in no way involved in any kind of disciplinary proceedings on the members.

Denver: Yeah...that didn't happen with me...

RFM: So, I'm going for your basis of knowledge on this one. Can you tell us how it is that you know that Russell Nelson was behind this and that he told your Stake President that the committee had made the decision to... What was it you said?

Denver: That this member needed to be dealt with, that there needed to be discipline done for this specific member. And the membership records—my membership records—were handed to the newly-installed Stake President. The reason I know that is because there was...

It actually took numerous interviews and about a year-and-a-half before the new Stake President decided to pull the plug and actually hold a court and kick me out. During that year-and-a-half, we had a lot of interviews, meetings, discussions, email exchanges, and at one point, he thought everything was going to be copacetic. It was just going to work out. And he told me that the reason this was happening was because of the day he got called, and Russell Nelson handing him the membership records, and all of this other stuff ensuing.

RFM: So, it was your Stake President who told you...

Denver: Yes.

RFM: ...that Russell Nelson was the one who told your Stake President, gave him your membership records, and said the committee has decided that you need to be dealt with.

Denver: Right. And in the series of meetings, he was persuaded that I was not the threat that the committee thought that I was.

Look, I was very low-key and very quiet in my ward/in my stake. I wrote things, but you had to BUY them, you had to go FIND them. I didn't advertise it. There were a lot of people who were neighbors and members of my ward who never knew I'd written a single book! And so, the idea that I'm out proselytizing to try and get people to, "Hey, wake up! This church is a mess!" That's a false notion. I did my home teaching. I paid my tithing. I had a temple recommend, which is another interesting thing—I was never asked for my temple recommend back throughout the whole ordeal, right up until, well, even after I was excommunicated. They never did ask for my temple recommend back. But I was not a threat.

At one point, the Stake President wanted the entire Stake Presidency to hear me out. So, we got together one Sunday evening. We were talking... Actually, it's in my journal; it may not have been a Sunday, but it was an evening, and it was early enough. I was answering questions. And I said, "Look, look, guys—we're not getting anywhere. You don't even have the right questions to ask. Let me just walk you through what it is that I think you need to understand in order to grasp where I'm coming from." And we were in the High Council office; there's a whiteboard there. I got, you know, a magic marker. And I walked them through on the board for about an hour/hour-and-a-half explaining things to them.

And when it was done, I mean, one of the members of the Stake Presidency had tears he was so moved. The other one was saying, "We have to keep you in this church." And my understanding is that after that interview, they sent a letter downtown—all three of them—suggesting that it would be a mistake to give me the boot. And I thought (and I think they thought) that everything would be copacetic at that point.

However, within a month, the Stake President called me back, and he said that he had been given more training—and he actually had a copy of the *Church Handbook of Instructions* with highlights on it—he'd been given more training and that "these sections required" that he had to do something. And I asked him if I could, you know, look at the pages. And he said, "I can show them to you, but you can't have them." So, I looked at them, and I said, "It doesn't fit. I'm not doing that. That is not what happened here."

One of the accusations was that I was "disparaging a president of the church." In *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, I quote from Heber J. Grant's diary. Heber J. Grant's diary included entries where his mother told him that he cared too much about money and not enough about things of the Spirit. And then in his diary, he goes on to talk about how he's never had an inspired dreaming; he's never had any kind of spiritual experience. This is the president of the church in his own diary, either quoting his mother or making his own reflection. So the point I made was, "I'm not disparaging Heber J. Grant. I'm quoting him, and he's quoting his mother. If you got a problem with the language, then you ought to go discipline Heber J. Grant's deceased mother, or you ought to go do something with Heber J. Grant, but I'm not doing anything more than quoting them." And...

RFM: I take it all of your arguments were in vain.

Denver: Yeah, yeah. Ultimately, a church court was convened. I cleared it with the Stake President that I could bring my family with me to the church court. The reason I wanted my

family there was because all of this had to do with the book, and it did not have anything to do with moral lapses (because excommunication almost invariably has a stigma associated with it—that it's because you are doing some immoral act). So, I wanted my family to be there so that they understood EXACTLY what the basis was.

When we got there that evening, instead of allowing my family in, we learned that they were not going to be welcomed into the High Council room. One of the excuses they gave was that “there aren't enough chairs,” and my kids who were present said they'd be happy to sit on the floor. And they said, “No, that won't work.” And I reiterated, at one point... We went back and forth for about 45 minutes in the hallway of the Stake offices trying to allow me and my family in so that I could deal with the court issues. And they wouldn't. And at one point, I said, “Look, the reason I want them there is because I want them to fully understand exactly what the accusations are and that they do not involve anything of moral turpitude and that all of this is about a book.” And the Stake President... I had my family—one of my daughters was on the love seat in the hallway, sitting right next to where the Stake President was standing. He said, “I want to assure you that this has nothing to do with any immorality. This has to do with a book.” And my daughter (I won't name her), bless her heart, my daughter, who was sitting right next to him, looked up to him, and she said (really indignantly), “A book! A book!!” And you could almost see the Stake President shrink from what he had just said and what this teenage daughter's reaction was.

Ultimately, they wouldn't allow me in the room. They went...

RFM: They allowed you in the room, though, right?

Denver: They would have allowed only me in the room.

RFM: Okay.

Denver: And because my wife and I had struck an arrangement before we got there, we'd agreed that if they can't all come in, then I wouldn't go in. And so, they tried me in absentia, and it took a little while, but they finally reached unanimity. And that date, it was September the 10th of 2013. It's...

RFM: A significant day for you, wasn't it?

Denver: Exactly... Exactly 40 years (to the day) from the day I was baptized on September 10th in 1973. So there was a symmetry to it all and...

RFM: By the way, Denver, I'll give you a little observation that may not have occurred to your Stake President: I have never seen an LDS Stake Center that has had a shortage of chairs.

Denver: Yeah... yeah. Well, they only have a shortage when they need to have a shortage.

RFM: Yeah, I'm getting that impression.

Denver: And I guess they had one.

Bill: Just a quick... Just a quick note. Yeah, no, you're good. Just a quick note. Having been excommunicated myself, I can also acknowledge, as a second witness, that the Stake... My Stake President also informed me that people higher than him said that he had to have the disciplinary court; it wasn't up to him. So, when these guys say that that's all local level decisions...not true.

Denver: Yeah, it's not.

RFM: Why do you think they do that, Denver?

Denver: Um, I think they're... If you look at how the church (the institution of the church) has developed itself and painted itself into a corner, the one thing that they just cannot allow to happen is for people to question keys, continuity of authority, existence of status to rule and govern and preside. And if you diminish the way in which the institution has poorly preserved the original endowment that was given at the time of Joseph Smith, what they have left with today is: We have authority. We are prophets, seers, and revelators in the same sense that...in the same sense that the pope is the Vicar of Christ. The pope's infallibility does not reckon from the fact that he speaks the WORDS OF God. It reckons from the status that he holds as the regent of God, therefore empowered to bind God in a legal sense. And I listened to a Rasband... It was a Rasband recording, somewhere on the internet...

RFM: Oh, Elder Rasband!

Denver: Yeah, Elder Rasband.

RFM: I thought this was some kind of reggae musical group.

Yeah, no, it's Elder Rasband in a recent recording. And essentially he attributed the status of Russell Nelson to being "prophet, seer, and revelator" to office and position. These are honorific titles. They are honorific titles in the same way that the pope is an honorific. They don't mean that he's a prophet indeed. They mean that he holds an office titled "prophet"; he holds an office titled "seer." It's not that there is the presence of charismatic prophecy. It's not that there is the presence of seership, in the sense of "seeing beyond the veil." It is an honorific.

And they use that as a word of art. And all I'm suggesting is wouldn't it be nice if, despite all the institutional claims, if you could set the institution aside just for a moment as "it's a nice place to go and worship and fellowship, and have your kids raised, and participate in meetings, and have your children learn some public-speaking things, and read some Scriptures, and sing some songs"? It's a nice place to do all that. But your religion, your connection to God, the spark of the divine that exists within you, connecting to the originator of that spark of the divine? Hey, that's up to you. Why don't you go do that? And there's no impediment to you doing that. You're just as authorized as was Joseph Smith, and you're probably more authorized than was Brigham Young. So, go do it. Go do it yourself. Worship where you want to. If Joel Osteen turns your gears, hey, go join a mega-church. Listen to Joel. I mean, his gospel of success... I don't like his delivery, but you know, at times he stumbles on an acorn, but...

RFM: [laughter]

Denver: Yeah.

RFM: Denver, you said twice that the church has painted itself into a corner. Can you explain what that corner is you feel the church has painted itself into?

Denver: Everything is circulating around the fullness of the keys that are possessed in one individual, exclusively, in its fullness. Bruce R. McConkie had some little phrase that he used: “All authority that God has vouched safe to man is possessed in the fullness by the head of the church.” And so, now that that’s the deal, what happens when, as was the case (I’m not making this up; it was the case), what happens when people learn the true order of prayer in the temple, and they organize their prayer groups, and they gather together in the homes, and they dress in the robes, and they engage in the true order of prayer, and they get revelation? What happens when that happens? And they have a revelation, and the revelation from God to them trumps something that a leader is trying to get people to do—what happens? I mean, the conflict almost instantly suggests that the way you resolve the conflict is, “Obey God.” I mean, obey God because He spoke to you. You don’t obey someone through whom God is filtered if you can go to the source and God can speak to you directly. So, you obey God—now you’ve got a conflict.

Well, how does the institution deal with that? A letter goes out from Spencer W. Kimball; I put it up on my website, at one point...

RFM: Can you tell our listeners the name of your website so they can find it?

Denver: Oh, it’s just denversnuffer.com, just d-e-n-v-e-r-s-n-u-f-f-e-r.com. And you can go there.

RFM: I apologize for interrupting.

Denver: Yeah, you’d have to search to find it. It’s a PDF, but it’s the letter. It was sent out from... over the signature “Spencer W. Kimball as President of the Church” to all of the stakes and all of the bishops, and it announced, “We are discontinuing prayer circles outside of the temple.”

RFM: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Okay. Now, I know that you were a member of the church for five years before I was, but you’re blowing my mind, man. Because I would have thought that NEVER would prayer circles outside the temple be countenanced by the leaders. I’m wrong about that?

Denver: They had prayer circles in wards! They had prayer circles in Stakes!

I don’t know how much of this you’re aware of, but there’s actually an Elder’s Quorum room in the Salt Lake Temple, just like there’s a First Presidency room, and there’s a Quorum of the Twelve room—there’s an Elder’s Quorum room. And the Elder’s Quorums would sign up, and they would rotate the... In the valley, they would rotate their opportunity to go into the Elder’s Quorum room in the temple. And one of the regularly conducted things in the room was to hold prayer circles. So, they would bring their wives and the, you know, the

teachers and what have you, and they'd rotate in for their Elder's Quorum presidency meeting and include a prayer circle.

They used to hold them in stake centers; they used to hold them in ward buildings. In fact, one of the things that was talked about is, "Who's in your prayer circle?" "She's in our prayer circle." "He's a member of our prayer circle," because they would get together, and they would pray, and the way in which you deal with this—when the conflict arises, and it's hard to govern—is you terminate prayer circles.

So, a letter went out... I forget the year; I think it was '74.

RFM: I'll bet it was before 1978.

Denver: Yeah, yeah, yeah, it was before '78. And it terminated prayer circles. And I remember Bruce R. McConkie came to a stake conference meeting when I was down in Texas (your neck of the woods, RFM). He was down in Texas; we had a stake conference. It was in Odessa. (To give you an idea of how big a stake in Texas was, the stake boundaries were actually larger, geographically, than the state of Utah.) So if you're going to stake conference (we were over in Abilene), we had to drive hours to get over to Odessa for the stake conference. And on a Saturday evening, there's a priesthood meeting held at the stake center. Well, in Texas at that time, with those boundaries and that travel, the get-together for the priesthood meeting that evening was the main chapel of the stake center with the missionaries (the full-time missionaries) and me and one or two others. It was like, you know, 14 or 15 people in a hall that could seat a thousand.

And so, Bruce R. McConkie came down from the podium. He had a whiteboard brought in. My memory is he actually took his coat off, which tells you, you know, he's going to be approachable. And he opened it up for questions. And there were lots of questions, and the prayer circle issue was something that someone asked about. And one of the comments that he made was that the church determined that it was difficult to govern with the prayer circles going on. And so, the termination of the prayer circle practice was done so as to make it easier to govern the church.

Well, it's an illustration of how you drain the Spirit out of the institution. Because the institution literally is built to protect a singular office. There is one and only one Mormon legally, because the Corporation of the President (which is a corporation sole) owns every chapel, every stake center, every temple, every welfare farm, every ancillary business, every mall... Everything that's out there is the property of one and only one person. And that's the "whoever happens to be the individual" that occupies the Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Well, when that's the structure, you... I mean, you've now invented the perfect mousetrap, and you've caught everyone in it.

Bill: Just a quick note, Denver. I shared a link in all of the places where our stream goes out. It is a website, ldspioneerarchitecture.blogspot.com. They have an article on prayer circle rooms in LDS chapels, and they share pictures of multiple ward buildings that had that. So, just another...essentially to back up what you're saying and to express that a lot of the LDS wards early on (and some of them still today) have prayer circle rooms.

RFM: And this is one of the fascinating things about Mormonism to me is that as much as I've studied over many, many years, there's still new things I'm learning, like this tonight.

Denver: Oh, hey, let me tell you something. Yeah, I have that experience all the time. You know, I thought... I read it; in fact, Oliver Cowdery said it. Oliver Cowdery (after he'd been excommunicated in that 1838 timeframe) had lamented that he had always hoped that Joseph Smith would make some effort to reproach him and to bring him back and to invite him back. And Joseph wound up killed before that had ever been done. And so, in reading Oliver's end of things, I had always assumed that Joseph never made any outreach to Oliver, when (to my surprise, and I just learned this in the *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 12*) in June of 1843, Joseph Smith directed that a letter be sent to Oliver Cowdery asking Oliver if he'd spent enough time eating the corn husks and if he didn't want to be welcomed back home (it being, you know, a reference to the prodigal...

RFM: The prodigal son.

Denver: ...son). Yeah, and so Joseph did make the effort for the outreach. Now, he directed that the letter be sent and out over his name. But the *Documents* doesn't include a letter. So I don't know if the letter ever got written or sent. I'm still waiting to see. Maybe it'll show up in *Documents, Volume 13* when they release that, which I'm waiting for. But Oliver, I think, would have been really gratified and touched had he known that in June of 1843, Joseph had actually wanted to reach out to him, you know—and I just learned that. The study of the Mormon landscape is ongoing, and you're always going to find something new.

RFM: I will tell you that even in 2021, which we are in now, there's no guarantee that if you write a letter and put it in the mail with sufficient postage affixed, that it's actually going to get where you're sending it.

Denver: Yeah, I just had a... This is a pleading with the court. I just had an exhibit show up in my mail for a motion that got filed—and I didn't get the motion; I just got AN exhibit (it was like exhibit G or something). So, everything that had gone before that in exhibits, as well as the motion itself... Even the court system is at times unreliable.

RFM: Denver, this is fascinating. We are already almost, well, an hour into this. There's one thing I want to talk with you about, and we're gonna let a lot of it go to the cutting room floor. This has been fascinating talking to you. And I suppose if anybody wants to ask a question about your visions of Jesus or seeing Jesus (however you frame that), I'll let them call in and ask that, but I wanted to go right now—for the final part of this part—with the June (I think was June) 2015 "Boise Rescue."

Denver: Oh, yeah.

RFM: Where now President Oaks (a heartbeat away from the presidency) President Oaks took off to Boise, Idaho, which I understand he perceived of as being a hotbed of Snufferite-ism. And he went there with Richard Turley (Assistant Church Historian) in tow to give a three-stake fireside in which he vehemently denounced false prophets. I'm sure you're aware of that happening. We actually have a clip here from the news at the time talking about it with a few audio clips from Elder Oaks and Richard Turley (who I cannot

help but continue to think sounds just like Barney Fife—Richard Turley does; when you hear it, you'll see if you agree with me). But I want to get your comments on this after we play it. It's just about a minute or two long. Do we have that?

And I cannot hear the audio.

(It might be one of the better ways to listen to Elder Oaks.) But we really need to hear the audio for this clip to work. It does have subtitles, at least.

Bill: Yeah, no biggie. I think it's just a little glitch when you add the screen that the audio has to be added to so no biggie, she'll have it back up here in a second.

RFM: Ok. And this ran on the news a few days after it happened. And there's even a clip of you because they talked to you for comment at the end. Okay, let's give this another go.

Bill: Oh, still not.

RFM: Still not. So, we'll continue to work on that.

Bill: And Maven, maybe if you can send me the link on Facebook, I can try to put it up on my screen and see if that makes any difference.

RFM: By the way, everybody, I hope you'll be patient with us. We are trying to take care of a few kinks in the technology. One of the main reasons that we were doing this was so that hopefully listeners can actually hear me when they call in (that was one of the big things that we've been dealing with for about a year now). And hopefully we've got that ironed out. But as I'm finding out with technology, when you iron out one wrinkle, it can raise a few more in other places. And sometimes there's no telling why—unless you're really smart.

Bill: And I actually might have it here. Let me see if I can get it.

RFM: Alright, and that is Elder Oaks, and I'm not sure if that's really video of him from Boise. It looks kind of like the stake center, but maybe they have a really nice... Excuse me, from the General Conference Center. Maybe they have a really nice stake center there in Boise with a nice wood and the plants and everything in the background.

Bill: Sorry, I apologize.

RFM: Yeah. Because my understanding is is that this is not something that was supposed to be ready for primetime. It was a multi-stake fireside. People were actually not supposed to record because they give that warning at the beginning, right? "Don't record, don't record us." And somebody, some disobedient soul, actually went ahead and recorded it, and I think they're playing the recording over some stock footage of Elder Oaks. And let's see if we've got it now.

Bill: All right, I think this should be it. Let me know if you guys have sound.

————BEGIN VIDEO CLIP————

Dallin Oaks: When you follow false prophets, when you start toward apostasy, you are on the wrong side.

Newscaster: LDS Apostle Dallin H. Oaks with a plea to members of three stakes in Boise.

Dallin Oaks: Stand fast with the leadership of the church.

Newscaster: Oaks, alongside Church Historian Richard Turley, picked Boise as the place to spend time responding to critics.

Richard Turley: One claim that we sometimes hear is that the church is no longer the church that was restored to the earth by the Prophet Joseph...

Newscaster: ...a claim made by this man, Denver Snuffer, an attorney from Sandy.

Denver Snuffer: It was not the same church in 2013 as the one I was baptized in in 1973.

Newscaster: Snuffer was excommunicated two years ago for spreading his ideas, including the thought that Mormons should be able to be rebaptized. He lectured about that in Boise.

Denver Snuffer: I know there are a lot of people that have been rebaptized. I know that there are people that are blogging in the Boise area and talking about meetings that are taking place.

Newscaster: But the church denies this meeting came in response to any of that, telling 2News Elder Oaks was not scheduled for an assignment that weekend so decided to use his free time to visit an area with a concentration of members, knowing that some members have questions from time to time that trouble them. Snuffer doesn't know what role, if any, he played.

Denver Snuffer: I don't know that I have a following. I know that there is a group of people that is discontent.

————END VIDEO CLIP————

RFM: And there's the end of the video clip. Oh, and the very interesting...

[crosstalk]

All right. So, I wanted to say about that, however, that I thought, number one, you were very gracious in how you responded to... Let me back up. It was obvious to anybody with two brain cells to rub together that you're the reason that Elder Oaks took Elder Turley out to Boise, Idaho—because everything he said was designed to contradict all of your main talking points, even though he never mentioned your name. And it was so obvious that the reporter asks the church if you were the cause (which it obviously was), and Elder Oaks then has the church spokesperson (Elder Oaks doesn't respond to it because, you know, he's very busy), and he has a church spokesperson deny it and say, "Oh, he just had some free time in his schedule, so he decided to go out there, you know; it was just one of those things." I thought that was an obvious, let's say, well, something that was less than the truth

on his part in saying that. But I thought you were gracious in not holding his feet to the fire about that. What were your thoughts about the Boise Rescue, as it's come to be known?

Denver: Well, the concern that I have is that anytime I try to assert my own relevance and importance, we're missing the point. The point is not me. The point is: If Mormonism has value, and I can talk about the value that it has, and there are a whole host of people that resonate with that value and say, "Yeah, that's something that I've thought or I've believed or I've understood, or I now understand, and I believe that to be more correct than what I'm hearing elsewhere..." It's the content that has some value, not me. But to say, "Hey, hey, look at me," it seems to me that that is contrary to achieving anything to benefit other people.

People are best benefited when the religion lives in them, when the fire gets ignited in their own hearts, when they can look around in this world and they can see the fingerprints of God everywhere and the wonder of this creation and to feel like they have a spark of the divine in themselves as well. To say, "There's a lot that God has done with ME," distracts more than it contributes. If instead you can say, "There's a spark of the divine that's within YOU that is actually connected to God," and if you can find the peace within you to allow that still small voice to actually be heard, you will find an amazing thing about the value of not only yourself but every individual that's walking on the planet, and that we are all interconnected with one another through that divine spark. The problem is, we tend...

The whole idea of a prophet status, a seer status, a big guru, a divine cumbah that has somehow the authority to rule and reign from the rivers to the ends of the earth and none dare make afraid, it... That is nonsense. That is contra accomplishing what the Savior did. I mean, the Savior was more or equally concerned with the leper, with the blind, with the maimed, with the halt, with the poor, and He called from the ranks of the blue-class laborer the intimate circle that He had. He was not interested in the recognition from the hierarchy. And the hierarchy certainly had very little use for him. They felt threatened by Him. That's the problem. The truth and religion itself—when it properly connects a person with God—makes them so resilient that they don't fear a hierarchy anymore.

RFM: Can I ask you a question? First off, with my observation, and this will probably be the last thing—I'm sorry—before we take callers. There's so much we could talk about, and I know that you've written a great deal. How many books have you written, by the way?

Denver: I think I've got 22 in print. There's a new one that we're trying to get into print here shortly. I don't think we're gonna get it out in time for Christmas, but it's primarily addressed to Christians...

RFM: Twenty-two books. You're like the Stephen King of Mormonism.

Denver: That...yeah. Hey, this one [holding up *A Man Without Doubt*].

RFM: Yes?

Denver: This one was written to give Joseph Smith the opportunity to actually defend himself. And it takes the three longest compositions by Joseph Smith—but gives an introduction that sets them within a historical setting so that you can understand what was

going on, why he wrote what he wrote. But it's the three longest compositions, and this is for a Christian audience. I'm trying to get people that distrust Mormons and Mormonism to take a look at it.

And then this is the latest book, *Religion of the Fathers*. It's actually based on a talk that I gave at a conference down in Aravada Springs. And it's dealing with the whole Book of Abraham controversy.

Those were the two most recent ones, but a new one is coming out. It's primarily for a Christian audience. And I'm going out to Kentucky to at a conference there in the spring and hopefully have an opportunity to see some more Christian folks. It's really hard because the impression that people have been given by the Mormon missionaries is that the LDS Church defines what Mormonism is. And if that's the definition, Christians really ought to walk away. But if the definition can be expanded to include something more and embrace any truth that they already have, then maybe taking a second look would be a good thing. Yeah. Twenty-two books in print right now.

RFM: I apologize. I wasn't laughing at you. I... Every now and then I make the mistake of reading the comments that ~~Bill's putting~~ or that Maven's putting up. And I saw a comment after my Stephen King reference, saying, "Which apostle is the clown in the sewer?" And that started making me giggle. I apologize. We're not going to try and answer that question tonight.

But I did want to continue with my observation that Stephen King scares a lot of people, but what you write, I think, scares the leadership in Salt Lake City more than anything else—because here's what I see. First off, I see that all of the members of the church, to some degree, I think have a little bit (maybe a lot a bit) of cognitive dissonance. And it's built into the system because we are baptized into the church that Joseph Smith founded; we learned about Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, all the visions, all the charismatic gifts, but then we get baptized into this nearly-dead husk of a church that I think has been resting on the laurels of Joseph Smith for about 180 years now. And they see there's no "there" there. And we have leaders of the church now finding that many of their best and brightest—seriously—are leaving the church to follow the path that you're charting. And, dang, if you're not doing all the things that Joseph Smith did that the leaders of the church are not doing. And by that, I mean, claiming to see Jesus (Joseph Smith did that). They're still trying to hang on to that sort of fiction in the top echelons of the LDS Church, but I think that people are starting to get wise to that, that they haven't really seen it. The old joke is that when the Quorum of the 15 get together in a room, each of them sits around wondering if they're the only one who hasn't seen Jesus. So... But they certainly haven't produced new Scripture; you have, and I'm thinking there of the Testimony of John (and probably other things as well). So you have visionary experiences, you're producing new Scripture, you have charismatic gifts, there's the whole second comforter and the visitation of Jesus that you have re-instituted into the world because the LDS Church has lost it, thus the title, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*. I think that you are a real burr in their bonnet. (It's a bee in their bonnet and a burr under the blanket.) But I think you're both of those things to the LDS Church leaders. What do you think?

Denver: I think that if you were to reduce it down to one concept, the idea of democratizing revelation so that everyone can stand on equal footing is fearsome to people who entertain a lot of insecurities about that very topic. If you have the self-confidence to say, "I have connected with our Lord, and therefore, welcome, brother, if you have likewise connected." That's one approach. The other approach is, "I haven't. I don't expect I ever will. In fact, it is not within my ambit of experience or expectation, and therefore, what you say about connecting up with God, that's threatening to me. We have office. We have order. We have position. We have rank. We have keys," whatever the hell those things are.

RFM: Keys mean, "You can't do bupkis without our permission."

Denver: Yeah, keys are one of the most often-used and poorly-defined ideas that the institutional church rails upon.

RFM: Did I define it pretty well, though, in an LDS context?

Denver: Yeah, "I'm the boss." That's...

RFM: Yeah, "You can't do anything without my permission," whether it's baptizing people, you rogue you, baptizing people without authority of the duly-constituted Bishop—or anything else that you do. And this is another thing that gets them very upset with you, such that they go and have a special Boise Rescue, not only because they're concerned about you, but they're concerned about the influence that you're having among members of the church. I think that goes without saying, but I just said it anyway.

Denver: At one point I... In one talk I gave, I said they claim that they hold all the keys and that there's one guy who's the key holder, above all, and every one of you are nothing more than keyholes.

Bill: Yeah, yeah.

RFM: Ooh. Yeah. He's the... President Nelson is the Key Master.

Denver: Yes. And you're a keyhole.

RFM: I'm the gatekeeper.

Bill: So, let me jump in here. Let me jump in here for just a second. So first, let us set up the... I want at least get the phone call stuff set up so that Maven can start screening some calls. And then I want to ask a question, while she's doing that, maybe two.

So first off, I'll put the banner up. This is now our brand new "Victory for Satan" segment of the show where you get to not only put in the word "Mormon" (which we'll get to), but you also get to put in the Mark of the Beast, 666. So, our telephone number, our new telephone number for our live call-in section here is 1-662-MORMON or 662-667-6667. And when you call in, Maven will screen your calls. We want to make sure that those calls are on topic and have to do with Denver Snuffer and the things that he's saying tonight, and she'll double check that.

So, here's my question while she's doing that; two things, really. Jonathan Streeter asked a great question because, Denver, I'm a skeptic at heart. And, you know, I don't want to debate my end-position on whether what some of these things you've said, in terms of your experiences, are real or not. But here's what I do think. I think you're much softer and kinder and more... You're easier to work with and to sit with and to have a conversation and try to talk about hard things.

So, two things. One is that when Joseph Smith died, there were multiple voices that came forward trying to lead the church.

Denver: Right.

Bill: And one of my fears is that, you know, when your day on this earth comes to an end, that there's going to be voices within your followers who do the same thing who say, "Hey, I'm now the guy who should be leading." And I'm curious what your contingency plans are to make sure that whatever it is "your vision of what should happen" actually does happen rather than three or four James Strang's coming forward.

Denver: Yeah. I'm trying to elevate people and to bring them along and teach them enough so they can stand on their own feet. Hopefully, by the time I finish, there will be people who are of deep enough understanding and vast enough experience that there won't be a controversy. One of the things that I've tried to get across is that having an organization is going to doom anything because organizations can be taken over. But if you fragment it, if you leave it at the bottom level without an organization, then you have to corrupt every single person. You can't get to a hierarchy or an individual or an inner clique, you can't get to that and corrupt the whole. If everyone stands on an equal footing, then you have to corrupt every single one of them.

One of the things that I've taught or suggested is that people get together in fellowships and they gather their own tithing among their group. And then after they gather their tithing, they use that money to help anyone with a need among them. I'm trying to take all of the money/all of the profit out of the practice of the religion, and there IS money in religion in the form of tithes and offerings. But if that money gets used to benefit people in need, and it never gets aggregated into some fortune with a hierarchy and control of it, if you have to sacrifice for the religion because you can't earn a living by being a minister, then a lot of the people who want to practice a religion in order to benefit themselves look at this and say, "Well, it's a dry well—there's nothing there for me to benefit or profit from because I can't get paid for what I do."

I've spent a small fortune on doing what I do in order to advance the religion. But I haven't profited. I don't make money. And tithing groups that gather money use that money among themselves to pay for food and shelter and transportation, medical care, and education, and take care among themselves of needs that they have. I'm hoping that, by the end, there is a group of people who are sufficiently united in how they view the practice of religion ought to be conducted that we don't need a leader, we don't need a, "Hey, hey, listen to me." But if someone's got a good sermon to deliver, a good message, a good concept, let them speak up, and let everyone listen and determine for themselves if it be true or not.

RFM: And I understand, also, Denver, that your definition of tithing is different from the LDS definition in current usage—that your definition of tithing is a tenth of an individual's SURPLUS.

Denver: Only their surplus. Yeah, you have to take care of your own family. All of the costs associated with your own family, whatever's left over after that, one-tenth of that is the tithe. You don't deprive your own family. In fact, if you can't meet your needs, not only should you not PAY tithing, but you ought to be the recipient of help from other people who ARE paying tithing. It ought to be a light thing. It ought to be easy to be born.

Bill: Perfect. And we've got a caller in the queue; we'll go to her in just a moment.

My last question is: When you have somebody who's following along and they want to be included in your group, but they're saying things or doing things that aren't meshing, what is the way in which your system—and again, I don't mean, you have a system; I know you don't have a system—but the way in which your group of followers kind of do... Because on some level, you do have to regulate a little bit, right? You do have to... If somebody's imposing themselves in unhealthy ways or maybe they have mental instability or maybe there's some other reason that they're putting themselves at the forefront, and it's not helpful. What's the way in which your organization (for a lack of a better word) handles that?

Denver: Issues like that are dealt with by the women. Men don't do that. The women are entrusted with that kind of disciplinary stuff EXCLUSIVELY. They may ask a man to come testify, but the women are the decision-makers on that. We've empowered women to do that sort of thing, including investigating and even suspending people. That's up to the women.

RFM: Hmm, where did that come from Denver? Was that a result of revelation?

Denver: Yeah, actually, I... We hadn't gotten to the tenth talk, but one of the things that I had advocated for and prayed about was just giving women priesthood. And the response that I got was not that. But instead of women having priesthood, women have authority OVER the priesthood to govern, to discipline, to curtail—and so, the balance was struck. Instead of men holding the exclusive authority to do everything, men can perform ordinance work, but women have the ability to deal with the discipline, including terminating the ability of a guy to exercise priesthood because he's out of line. In many respects, one of the most common problems that men have when they become abusive is something FIRST learned or experienced or witnessed by the women. And so, the women—who have long been powerless—really have been entrusted with that end of things, and it's kind of a balance.

Bill: Perfect. So, we're gonna go to our first caller. We're gonna hope, we're gonna cross our fingers, RFM, that the caller gets to hear you, as well. And so, she has called into the show before, but it is Nicola. Nicola, I'm adding you to the show now. Nicola, how are you?

Caller 1, Nicola: I'm fine. I just wanted to ask... And I was very... This is a very good episode. I really like it. And I very... I'm quite interested, but I wanted to know what his take on the sacrament was? Does he just do it the same way? Because like, if you're going to do it

from home, how the heck, I mean, basically, I've just been... I've been taking the sacrament, and I've just been praying that Heavenly Father does it because, obviously, I haven't got priesthood.

Bill: Yeah.

Nicola: I'm not going to church anymore because I can't... I'm... I suppose I'm concerned it's just not right, but I feel very strongly about the sacrament. So, I want to know how you feel about, like, how you do things because obviously...?

Denver: Okay. I've actually tried to help out with this, particularly during the period of time in which meetings were suspended and people were not gathering together for fear of some, you know, exposure to something that's going to kill them. So, I actually recorded the sacrament prayers, and they are on my website: denversuffer.com. And I've said if you want to use my recorded version of the sacrament prayer at home when you're in isolation... And it was intended primarily for women to use. There are a lot of single mothers, there are a lot of widows, and they don't have any access to someone that can bless the sacrament for them. I recorded the sacrament prayers, and you can play them off of my website and do the sacrament at home.

And the prayer, by the way, is the one that you find in the Book of Mormon, not the one that you find in the Doctrine and Covenants. They changed the prayer in the Doctrine and Covenants. I've remained faithful to the version that appears in the Book of Mormon. (I believe that the section 20 language was written by Oliver Cowdery.) But the Book of Mormon version—slight wording difference—Book of Mormon version is the one that I would use..

RFM: The Book of Mormon says...

[crosstalk]

I'm sorry. In the Book of Mormon it says, "wine." So do you use wine instead of water?

Denver: Yeah, I believe wine ought to be used in the sacrament.

Bill: And I'll just say, I've been to a remnant meeting, and we were there for the sacrament (being done here in southern Utah and St. George—it was at one of the conference rooms in one of the hotels). And the sacrament, as administered by your group, Denver, matched up much more closely with my study of LDS Scripture than the LDS sacrament.

Denver: Yeah, yeah.

Bill: Unfortunately.

Denver: Again, it just... Yeah, the longer it goes on, the more distant they become from where it was, notwithstanding what Turley said in the recording you played earlier.

Bill: Yeah.

RFM: And what was that he said?

Denver: Well, he said that there are claims that it isn't the same church as the one that Joseph did. Hell, it's not even the same church I joined in 1973, or you joined in '78!

Bill: It's not even the same church it was 10 years ago.

RFM: Can I tell you one of my favorite quotes for me?

Denver: Yeah.

RFM: One of my favorite quotes for me is the dilemma that the church leaders find themselves on, which is, number one, if Joseph Smith was not a prophet, then they're not prophets. That much is obvious enough, right?

Denver: Yes.

RFM: The other prong is if Joseph Smith WAS a prophet, then they sure as hell aren't prophets.

Denver: That ship's sailed.

RFM: Yeah.

Bill: Nicola, does that answer your question?

Denver: Emma Smith said...

Nicola: Yes, and thank you so much. That was very, very interesting. That's very good.

Bill: Thank you.

Nicola: Will the show notes cut to these things?

Bill: Say that again.

Nicola: So, is this... Is his website attached to this... Have you got the website attached that you get the sacrament prayer?

Bill: Denver, where's the website she can see that?

Denver: It's the denversnuffer.com website. And there's a link right on the front page that you can go to the sacrament prayer. Are you going to link it in this, in the notes of this?

Bill: Yeah, I'll put it in the show notes.

Denver: Okay. By the way...

Nicola: Thank you so much.

Bill: Thank you, Nicola. Good, have a great night. Bye-bye.

Nicola: Thank you. Bye-bye.

Denver: Just to finish the thought that RFM provoked. Emma Smith said, “Without Joseph, there is no church.” And I think Emma was right on that score.

Bill: Yeah, yeah. Cool.

Next caller is going to be Christian, and Christian wants to ask you a question about gender within how you understand the theology works. So, Christian, you’re on the air, Mormonism Live with Radio Free Mormon and Bill Reel and Denver Snuffer. What’s on your mind tonight, my friend?

Caller 2, Christian: Hey, good evening, everybody.

Bill: Good evening.

Christian: So, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” has been a pretty big battleground, in terms of in the church and without the church. I was curious as to hear Denver’s thoughts on how much... You know, if that’s good doctrine, if it’s mixed doctrine. Essentially, I’ve heard him speak on the divine roles of men and women. And I was curious to hear more about that. And then, of course, more like, what are some social and cultural stigmas that we’ve made up in terms of men and women. What should we be seeking, in terms of divine, you know, prototypes of the man and woman?

Denver: I gave a talk that’s actually—I think it’s 47 pages in the form that it’s on my website—called “Our Divine Parents,” where I get into the whole issue of the Creation, the creation of the man, the creation of the woman, the relationship between the two of them, what it was that was required in order to make Christ the Redeemer for a posterity and, therefore, the essential fatherhood of Christ to the man Adam but, on the other hand, the essential connection of the woman to the Divine Mother. And that there’s so much about the story of the Creation and the origination of the two and how those two go together.

And then I took off on the statement that Joseph made about Jesus Christ being the prototype of the saved man and that if you’re going to be saved, you have to be precisely what Christ is and nothing different or else not be saved. And I used that analogy to then talk about the role of the woman and the prototype of the saved woman and tied that into the role of Mary as the mother of Christ and Her stewardship over the whole thing—from the time of the Annunciation, the birth, the divine origin of Christ in mortality, Her role shepherding Him right through to the end. She was there at the Last Supper; She was there in the Garden; She was there at the cross. She shepherded Him through the entire thing and discharged the Divine Mother role and is the prototype of the saved woman. And I suggest in that talk that the Catholics got Mary right a bit more than did the Mormons get Mary right.

And that there is a process by which the male fulfills, ultimately, the role of achieving, duplicating what the prototype of the saved man (or Christ) is and attaining to the resurrection. You’re going to be resurrected, but when you get resurrected, you’re dependent upon Christ for that. You have to “attain to the resurrection,” as Joseph explained it in the King Follette Discourse. “Our Divine Parents” goes into that and tries to explain how that relates.

And then the prototype of the saved woman is explained in “Our Divine Parents” in a way that I think makes a lot more sense than what we’ve done with Mary in Mormonism. I mean, Bruce R. McConkie made her breeding stock for both the Divine Father and Joseph, and that, yeah, it’s all... It’s all a mess.

That talk—I’d refer you to that. And I’ve only briefly skimmed the surface of that; it’s a big subject. Read the talk—it’s 47 pages—or listen to the talk. It’s recorded; it’s on the website somewhere.

RFM: Can I throw a follow-up in here, Bill?

Bill: Yeah, sure.

RFM: I apologize. Denver, is there a place for gay/homosexual/lesbian people to be accepted in full fellowship in your faith?

Denver: I don’t see any reason why they would not be accepted. They need to understand that there is a divine role behind sexual identity, and we get to imitate that divine role in being a father and a mother in this life. And...

Look, people bring with them a whole lot of baggage. I would imagine that almost every person who’s ever been excommunicated from the LDS Church has suffered some kind of trauma. There are all kinds of reasons why we have the quirks we have, we have the hang-ups we have, we have the errors, deficiencies, mistakes that we have. The fact that someone has something that is quirky about them...

And the objective is to love one another, and then go from there. You’ll never get anywhere if you can’t sort through the idea that there is a divine spark in anyone, no matter who they are and no matter what’s wrong with them. There are a lot of angry people who, if you were in their shoes, you would be angry. I mean, I don’t understand a lot of things about what people get hung up on. There are some bizarre, aberrant things that are fetishes that are out there. I don’t claim to understand them. But I don’t care if you’ve got them. Just don’t practice them on me, please. And we’ll get along just fine.

RFM: Okay, Denver... And I apologize. This is not at all a gotcha. I just want to put a fine point on this question. If I am a gay man—openly gay man in an openly gay (even) marriage—and I’m a member of your faith, are there any things that I, as a gay man, cannot do in your faith or any ordinances that I cannot perform?

Denver: Not that I’m aware of at present. I wouldn’t think so. We don’t have a temple, and we don’t have marriage sealings. And so, that’s an issue that we don’t even address at this point. I think, at some point, we may have a temple.

Your question reminds me of... There was a homosexual couple... I grew up in small town in Idaho, and there was a homosexual couple in the hometown. They lived together. They owned a business together; they had a restaurant. I actually worked for these guys when I was in high school doing labor in the kitchen and washing dishes. And euphemistically...

They were accepted in the community; no one, you know, talked down about them. But everyone knew that they were homosexual. And they were euphemistically referred to by the good Christian folks in my hometown as “bachelors.” They were a couple of bachelors. And so, for some time when I was a kid, I didn’t know if “bachelor” was codeword for homosexuality or an unmarried male, but bachelor had that connotation in our little neighborhood in my hometown. And by the way, we trick-or-treated at the house. They were accepted as people in the neighborhood. And I mean, they were known to be a couple of steers without a cow. But, you know, hey, if that floats their boat, what the hell?

Bill: Yeah, I just, I would simply hope that the God that we’re all kind of dealing with has a space for all of humanity and all of its expressions that isn’t causing harm to other human beings.

Denver: I think it is worse to collect tithing to pay a professional minister than it is to have a homosexual relationship in which you are a faithful companion to someone else. No matter what the relationship is, I think it begins with fidelity and trust and honesty. I don’t know how you become a suitable, trustworthy person if you’re untrustworthy in the most intimate relationship that you have.

Now, the most intimate relationship you have was originally ordained to produce progeny, and progeny was intended to teach you something. I think both of you are fathers...?

RFM: Yeah. Mostly they teach me regret.

Bill: [laughter]

Denver: Well, and humility. And, yeah.

RFM: I’m still working on that one.

Denver: Yeah. I mean, the life’s lessons that come from being a parent by far exceed any other experience that I’ve had. My children are exceptionally precious to me. They just... They make my life more whole. Some of my fondest moments in life have come inside the family—and not just with my wife, but with my wife and children. And so, that ennobling experience of the family is something that I would suggest needs to be included within life’s experience, if at all possible.

Bill: Yeah, and just a note. So, people are noticing, I mean, two women in 2021 can certainly have a kid; two men can certainly have a kid. I know lots of gay parents, and they seem to be doing a hell of a lot better job raising their children than I sure did do in mine. And my... Again, I just want to throw it out because I want to represent some of the voices in the...as the viewers. My hope would be that you (as you move forward, in whatever this is or turns into) that you do a better job than the LDS Church at finding a fair, healthy, equal place for people whose humanity has been marginalized over and over again when they are doing no... They’re doing as much harm or less harm in the world than I’m doing. And I hope that your God—and I’ll say, “My God,” because I would have to spend two hours debating what that sounds like or what that means to the listeners—but that your God or my God, that we

find a place for folks to feel loved and to feel equal. Because I think that group of human beings have been marginalized and traumatized enough.

Denver: Yeah. And I do think that there are problems with all of us. But if what your focus is upon is plumbing the depths of connecting with God... I don't know how many people are interested in what I'm talking about if they have no interest in trying to comprehend the value of the marriage relationship and the explanation that I've given in "Our Divine Parents." If they do, then I have no problem with them. And I do think that there's enough trauma to go around without us inflicting more upon one another.

And I like what you said, Bill. I have no doubts that God loves everyone who's down here. And I have no doubt that he would like the atonement to accomplish the maximum possible and to avoid having it affect a tiny group of people that are religiously narrow-minded as the outcome of all His suffering. The objective is to have everyone that enters this world be added upon. And I can think of hundreds of ways in which you can add upon someone no matter what their sexual issues are.

Bill: Yeah, and I would go one step further, and again, I don't want to press. We can go to our last caller here in just a moment, and we can kind of wrap up the show. But my two cents... And again, I haven't spoken to the Savior, and I don't have any of those experiences. But I would suggest, too, maybe we all have to kind of sit down and come up with better language. I've heard, as you're talking the last few minutes, a lot of the words you're using, saying "problem" or other kinds of rhetoric, often... And I think it's reasonable to see some of those words as meaning "less than" or "problematic," and I just... I think...

Denver: Or judgmental.

Bill: ...I think we all ought to sit down and come up with better language. Not only are these folks looking for a place to be just human, they're also looking for the rest of us to change our language so that the space sounds fair and equal, too.

Denver: Yeah, yeah.

Bill: So, anyway, final caller—if you're okay with that, RFM?

RFM: Yes. And thank you for taking those questions that were sort of interruptions on my part, Denver. I apologize.

Denver: Oh, yeah, that's fine. That's fine.

Bill: Yeah, so Dark Swarm is our last caller. He wants to talk to you a little bit about your Scriptures. And so, Dark Swarm, you're on the air—Mormonism Live with Denver Snuffer, Radio Free Mormon, and Bill Reel. You're gonna close this out, my friend. What's on your mind?

Caller 3, Dark Swarm: Hello there. I would like to hear more about Denver's new edition of the Scriptures. I've heard that they're attempting to distance from the LDS Church so that more people can view them. What's your thoughts about that?

Denver: Yeah, all of the Scriptures are available free online. Surprisingly, there was a website URL (scriptures.info)—all of them are up and there. We did get a leather-bound set prepared, and those are available, and there's still a handful of these that can be purchased through the scriptures.info website (I think there's a link to get there). But you can read them free online.

Dark Swarm: Hmm.

Denver: What the Scriptures are is an effort to go back and try to reclaim, as best as it is possible now to do so, the original Scriptures as they were first translated by Joseph Smith, in the case of the Book of Mormon, and as the revelations rolled out to Joseph Smith when they were first recorded. The Doctrine and Covenants that the LDS Church offers have been substantially modified, edited, revised, and don't reflect what Joseph originally did. Doctrine and Covenants section 27, for example, was only about five verses long originally. Oliver Cowdery (in the Book of Commandments) out in Independence felt at liberty—because he'd been told that he could do some things—he felt at liberty to expand that. It grew; it became a monster—revelation 27; it includes the first recitation of a visitation by Peter, James...

RFM: Peter, James, and John.

Denver: ...and John. Yeah, that wasn't in the original revelation that got stuck in by Oliver. The press got destroyed in Independence, but pages got gathered up and smuggled out in the skirts of some women; those pages got bound. And then THAT was the prototype that got used for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, where Joseph added the teach...the Lectures on Faith. We've gone back to get the—as near as possible as we can—the original revelation to Joseph, the Lectures on Faith in the form that Joseph published and vouched for them, and we've included that in the Doctrine and Covenants, which has been renamed "Teachings and Commandments"—T&C instead of D&C.

Dark Swarm: Oh!

RFM: And part of that, Denver, by the way, is you got rid of section 132, correct?

Denver: Yeah, we got rid of 132, and we got rid of 110—there are some problems with them. And there's an explanation, actually, in the Scriptures for what got dropped out and why. Provenance is a problem with a number of things. We could probably spend an hour on that! The Book of Mormon...

RFM: By the way, going... I'm sorry, just before you get to the Book of Mormon (because I'm fascinated by all of this), but you've also added a few sections to the Teachings and Commandments (which is your version of the Doctrine and Covenants)...

Denver: Correct.

RFM: ...including two sections that detail your visions or, well... Jesus appeared to you/visitations of Jesus. So, if anybody wants to read those, they can go to them. What sections are those, Denver?

Denver: They're in the T&C, the Teachings and Commandments sections 160 and 161. You can read them there. And those are excerpts from a journal that I keep. Anything that happens gets recorded contemporaneous with the event. If I later talk about it, I only talk about it as a quote from the contemporaneously-recorded event. I don't elaborate on it; I don't embellish it. It's just what's there and only what's there, and it doesn't grow with time. So 160 and 161 are where you could read those two.

The Book of Mormon has a really interesting provenance for what we've got. Joseph Smith translated it, and scribes wrote it down. They didn't take that to the printer. They took a copy that Oliver Cowdery rewrote; it was the printer's manuscript. The printer's manuscript got copied by Oliver Cowdery, taken to E.B. Grandin, and then E.B. Grandin did all of the punctuation (it was John Gilbert, his employee, that set it up and did the typesetting and punctuated) because what the printer's manuscript looks like is one long sentence. So Grandin and John Gilbert punctuated the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith began to revise the Book of Mormon before he was killed, and the revisions that he made in the Book of Mormon appear to be corrections. When Oliver Cowdery copied it, he made, on average, a mistake every page and a half. When the printer printed it, the printer made some mistakes. Joseph was apparently going back to the original narration that he gave and correcting the Book of Mormon to make it conform to the first version.

We know that (or we can conclude that) because the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon got deposited into the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, and then, years later, it got taken out—it had rotted; only about 28% of the original manuscript still exists. But with that 28%, we are able to compare ~~the~~ what was originally translated with the printer's manuscript (that we have in full) to pick out the errors. and then we have the ability to see what Joseph was doing when he was making revisions along the way so it looks like that original printer's manuscript. So the Book of Mormon that we published is an attempt to get back, as near as possible, to the original translation.

Now, here's where the story really gets interesting. Joseph Smith's revisions were not picked up when the Book of Mormon... Joseph authorized them to print it in London. When the Book of Mormon got printed in London, it was an earlier edition that hadn't been corrected by Joseph, but it got printed in the mission field in London by the Quorum of the Twelve over there. When the LDS Church began to print the Book of Mormon itself, they did not use the version that Joseph had corrected. They used the version that was over in London.

RFM: Was that the 1837 version?

Denver: Yeah, yeah.

Bill: In Kirtland, yeah.

Denver: Yeah, so the Book of Mormon version contains errors that were made by the printer, errors that were made by Oliver in copying it, and errors that were made by a new printer over in London. And that's the version that's been handed down in the Book of

Mormon version from the LDS Church is that. We've tried to fix all of that. And in the Foreword to each of the volumes of Scripture, there's an explanation given that tells all of the effort that went in to try and fix it and to make it more correct.

RFM: Did you rely at all on Royal Skousen Herculean efforts in this regard to try and correct...?

Denver: Yeah, that was used in the examination as well. And his latest version where he did a side-by-side comparison and he tracked it down through, that was really helpful.

Bill: Perfect. Anything else, RFM?

RFM: No, that's it. Except that, you know, we could go on for a long time. We've already gone longer than we usually go. But I have really, really enjoyed the conversation, Denver Snuffer. I appreciate your coming on the show and giving us of your time, and hopefully we can, maybe, get you to come on some...

Denver: Hah!

RFM: ...time in the future to talk about everything that you're doing now and all the great things that you're doing—because it's been a few years, and a lot of people I've talked to in my experience has been that you sort of seem to have fallen off the radar. And some people were wondering if you're even around anymore, if you're even doing anything anymore. Somebody thought maybe you had died. Obviously, that's not the case.

Denver: Well, this is a few months old; this is about a year old [holding up books]. And there's another one coming out here shortly. Yeah, I continue to work. And the purpose is to push the Restoration further along, to get more of it on the ground and back into the hands of people.

RFM: All right, well, you're certainly very busy. And no, you haven't fallen off the radar. So, thank you so much for coming on the show. And it says RFM. Yes. And this is...

Denver: That's so I don't... Yeah...

RFM: That's me. #lazylearner.

Denver: There you are.

RFM: I think that's all of us here tonight.

Denver: Well, my note was up so I didn't call you by your name.

RFM: I appreciate that. You had made a comment about in the private chat, saying you had the note up there to remind you to call me RFM. And I said, "And I have a note up on my computer to remind me to call you 'Your Holiness.'"

Denver: Your Holiness, yeah.

RFM: Yes. And you take a joke. You're so great. I appreciate it so much.

Denver: Yeah.

Bill: Denver, thank you for your time.

Denver: Yeah. Good to talk to you. Take care.

Bill: Yeah, appreciation to Maven for running things behind the scenes. By the way, it does look like the phone system now works, RFM, where you and I can both communicate with the caller. So, that worked out great, as well. And listeners, just want to say thank you. I appreciate so much everybody tuning in today, and it was grateful for Denver to give us his time. And folks, if you like Mormonism Live, please go to mormonismlive.org and donate. And don't forget...

Closing: Give Brother Joseph a break!