

Sheep Stealing: How the Cults Infiltrate Christian Churches

By Kurt Van Gorden

Jesus set forth the imperatives for pastoral care by telling Peter, “Tend My lambs,” “Feed My sheep,” and “Tend My sheep” (John 21:15-17). In 33 years as a missionary, I have encountered cult representatives who view the Christian Church as their special place to proselytize for new converts. Among these I have found the Unification Church, The Way International, and a smattering of others, but few groups can match the Mormons in entering Christian churches for proselytizing purposes. When I became a minister, a wise pastor once told me, “Notice that the cults are never the first on any mission field. They wait for Christian missionaries to spend their resources and then they follow us and steal our sheep.” That observation has proven true over and over.

At one time, the Unification Church, founded by Sun Myung Moon, encouraged their members to join Christian Churches incognito to gain new converts. Sitting in the back of the church and making friends was the first step. Once this recruiting method was initiated, they worked themselves into voluntary positions and occasionally they became Sunday school teachers. This I witnessed and wrote about in the late 1970s through the mid-1980s, to help pastors prevent a potential problem. Although these members (called Moonies or Unificationists) actively pursued Christians for Moon’s new gospel, they were not actually missionaries. They were rank and file members doing their duty for their leadership.

Another group I encountered was The Way International, which tried this approach among young Church people in Orange County, California. Their missionaries, the WOW (Word Over the World) ambassadors, began showing up at Christian concerts to invite concertgoers to their Twig Bible studies. The church asked me to help them identify this group and stop them from preying upon their youth. Part of a shepherd’s work is to “guard what has been committed to your trust” (1 Timothy 6:20), which in this case was to guard the unaware youth from false doctrine and spiritual predators.

The Mormons have a history of aggressively infiltrating Christian churches to convert Christians. When I was on a Christian mission in Copenhagen, Denmark, I found that the Danish Mormon church began in 1850 through this same method. Mormon missionaries began attending a Baptist Church without identifying themselves or their purpose. Yet one member of the mission group was a Mormon Apostle from Salt Lake City, Utah, Erastus Snow, who completely hid his Mormon rank and affiliation from the Baptist pastor.

Snow had been commissioned at a Mormon Church conference six months earlier to begin a Scandinavian mission. The unsuspecting Baptist congregation became their target. The Mormons sat in the back of the Baptist Church and quietly befriended the members. Once they gained their confidence, they gradually introduced Mormonism into their discussions. Within three months of arriving, they swept all but a handful of members into Mormonism, thus organizing the first Danish Mormon church.

This is sheep stealing through dividing and conquering.

In response to this, a Danish Lutheran bishop, Reverend Peter Kierkegaard (the brother of the famed philosopher Søren Kierkegaard), published the first Scandinavian pamphlet to warn other Christian Churches about the errors of Mormonism (*About and Against Mormonism*, 1855).

Proselytizing happens to large and small churches. Seldom do we get an insider’s glimpse of this like what I have seen in letters from active Mormons. A Mormon from Pomona, California, wrote to me boasting about baptizing several Baptists and Calvary Chapel members into the Mormon Church. He wrote this because he knew that I taught at Calvary Chapel, Evangelical, and Baptist Churches. Quite sadly, I found out that what he wrote was true. He covertly entered Calvary Chapels and Baptist Churches to befriend members and convert them.

One time I saw this same man sitting toward the back of a large Calvary Chapel where I was preaching. I took that opportunity to publicly warn the congregation that he was roaming among them in search of his next convert. Mormonism was my subject that day, so I quoted his letter from the pulpit as one who targets Calvary Chapels. The Bible urges us to “note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them” (Romans 16:17). This we must do.

Jesus had little regard for sheep stealers. He called them wolves in sheep’s clothing and hirelings, who pretend to be real Christians when they are nothing of the sort (Matthew 7:15; John 12:10; Acts 20:29). We should view them through Christ’s eyes and see their true nature. A wolf can be nothing other than a wolf by nature and sheep are sheep. A wolf does not become a lamb by wearing sheep’s clothing. His motive and purpose does not change with a change of clothing.

In another example, a Mormon missionary admitted by letter that he was recruiting for the Mormon church at a Christian single’s group. When the pastor confronted him, he outright lied to the pastor until the pastor showed him his own letter. Caught in embarrassment, he then apologized, only to turn around and repeat the same thing at a later time in the same church! This is aggressive sheep stealing.

Dr. Steve Johnson,¹ a pastor in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, wrote about this on a blog:

A number of years back our Singles Sunday School class had a visit from a Mormon (Ken ~~Hxxxxx~~) who did not identify himself as such. He attended a class taught by one of our singles (Stan).

After the class Ken wrote a letter to the class teacher [Stan] seeking to recruit him to Mormonism. The class teacher passed the letter on to me. Later, I arranged a meeting with this Mormon. I asked him if he had been proselytizing members of our church. He said, ‘Absolutely not.’ At that time I took his letter out of my pocket and said, ‘Would you like me to read you your recent letter to Stan?’ He turned beet red and apologized.

I told him that he was welcome to propagate his views off our property and outside our meetings, but if he thought we’d allow him to come to our meetings to recruit people to Mormonism, he was sadly mistaken. He apologized. Three years

¹ Dr. Stephen M. Johnson posted this blog on 02/12/06. He supported his claim by linking a copy of the Mormon’s letter to a URL. [Note: The writer’s last name has been removed.]

later the same guy attended a Bible Study sponsored by our class and tried to do a similar thing.

The Mormon's letter to Stan, the single's teacher at Dr. Johnson's church, is quoted and reproduced below. It serves as an example for how this operation works inside a Christian congregation. It states:

Dear Stan,

I enjoyed your lesson last Sunday. You are an excellent teacher. That is a great gift. I am a missionary for my Church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (L.D.S. or Mormons) and so I wanted to share of the things which I have learned to be true. There are many other things that I could send, but hopefully I will be able to give them to you later. The book "Marvelous Work and a Wonder" is an excellent book to explain about the Church. The second book also good because prayer is important to knowing the thing which you read are true.

The men who wrote these essays on prayer are all apostles and prophets which have been chosen for this dispensation by the Lord. But you don't need to take my word for it the Lord will tell you himself. As it says in the Book of Mormon, Moroni 10:3 . . . [see text below] . . .

So I would challenge you to pray for answers to these questions.

1. Has God restored his authority through the Holy Priesthood and established a Prophet for us in this day? A prophet as surely as was Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah.

2. Is the Book of Mormon the word of God as important to us in this day as the Bible, both Old and New Testaments?

I know that these things are true as I have received personal revelation to know this. I would like to make myself available to you for further explanation and instruction. We have a set of discussions which take no less than 5 hours to present. I feel that you might be uncomfortable about this because of your experience with the group in Houston.

I am at your service in Jesus Christ's name,

Sincerely,

Ken Hxxxxxx

Running parallel with these infiltration programs, we now see a new arena where Mormons are being openly invited by Christian Churches under the guise of dialog.² I

have attended these meetings (largely sponsored by the Mormon-owned Brigham Young University), where Dr. Robert Millet, of BYU, and Rev. Greg Johnson, of Utah, role-play a rehearsed conversation designed to get Christians to lay down their defenses. What is the result? I have personally talked with Christians who have become baptized members of the Mormon Church through these meetings.

Christian Churches, without knowing it, become hosts to the sheep stealing by inviting Mormon speakers, like Dr. Millet, to freely speak without refutation by Rev. Johnson. Furthermore, the unique power of Christ's gospel is left undefended by Johnson. He quickly silences Christians if they point out differences or defend historic Christianity.³ This charade becomes sheep stealing with a welcome sign.

False teachers send their workers forth to steal sheep from Christian churches and they often hide their motive and purpose from Church leadership. This article serves to warn pastors about wolves in sheep's clothing who seek to convert the weak and unaware Christians from their congregations. Pastors are charged with the duty of feeding and tending the sheep, which includes their protection and sound apologetics.

Utah Gospel Mission

P.O. Box 780 Victorville, CA 92393

www.UtahGospelMission.org

Kurt Van Gorden is a contributing writer to several books on cults, world religions, and the occult with Drs. Walter R. Martin, Ronald Enroth, Norman Geisler, Josh McDowell, Ravi Zacharias, and Alan Gomes, in addition to writing *Mormonism* (Zondervan, 1995). He directs two missions to the cults, Jude 3 Missions and the Utah Gospel Mission, which was founded in 1898. www.UtahGospelMission.org misioneditor@hotmail.com
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Dear Stan,
I enjoyed your lesson last Sunday. You are an excellent teacher. That is a great gift. I am a missionary for my Church - the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (L.D.S. or Mormons) and so I wanted to share of the things which I have learned to be true. There are many other things which I could send, but hopefully I will be able to give them to you later. The book "Marvelous Work and a Wonder" is an excellent book to explain about the Church. The second book is also good because prayer is important to knowing the thing which you read are true. The men who wrote these essays on prayer are all apostles & prophets which have been chosen for this dispensation by the Lord. But you don't need to take my word for it the Lord will tell you himself. As it says in the book of Mormon Moroni 10:3 Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. 4. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the

Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. 5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye shall know the truth of all things.
So I would challenge you to pray for answers to these questions.
1. Has God restored his authority through the Holy Priesthood and established a Prophet for us in this day? A prophet as surely as was Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah.
2. Is the Book of Mormon the word of God as important to us in this day as the Bible both old and New Testaments.
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I am at your service in Jesus Christ's name,
Sincerely,
Ken Hxxxxxx

² The Mormon Church has also targeted Christian ministers as converts through a "fellowshipping" program (c.f., *Ensign*, June 1976, 52). The story of fourteen ministers who converted to Mormonism is found in Gibson's *From Clergy to Convert* (Bookcraft, 1983).

³ I dealt with this at length in my chapter, "Mormonism," in Geisler and Meisler, *Reasons for Faith: Making a Case for the Christian Faith* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007).