

## Chapter 11

### William Law Launched the Second Conspiracy against Joseph

The authors first asserted in the preface of *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*, Volume 1, that a conspiracy existed at Nauvoo against Joseph to falsely charge him with practicing polygamy and introducing it as a doctrine into the Church, to wit:

**It can be proven that men nearest the Prophet entered into a conspiracy against Joseph and Hyrum and attached polygamy to Joseph's name in order to justify their own crimes of practicing it. The polygamous doctrines promoted by this conspiracy are still the basis of the Mormon Church's theology.**

Since the above statement was first published in the year 2000, numerous evidences of the same have been published by the authors in *Vision* magazine and in *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*, Volumes 1, 2, and 3. The leaders of that conspiracy were the seven apostles who had plural wives before Joseph's death: Brigham Young, Willard Richards, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, Heber C. Kimball, George A. Smith, and Orson Hyde.

A majority of the twelve apostles were polygamists by April 1844. Apostles Wilford Woodruff and Orson Pratt had not married plural wives by that date; however, they would soon do so. Those men were joined by Joseph Bates Noble, William Clayton, William Henry Harrison Sagers, and a number of others. They, their plural wives, and their families and close friends formed a secretive plural marriage society that brought many benefits to its members—including power, pleasure, protection, and wealth.

Once immersed in its alluring entanglements and heady

intrigues, they were dedicated to practicing polygamy. They brought it into the Church as a doctrine by secretly teaching that Joseph Smith was the originator and that he also had plural wives.

By teaching this falsehood as an initiation to higher discipleship, they were able to make more polygamous disciples. Brigham Young and the others used the same false stories about Joseph having plural wives that Dr. John C. Bennett and his clique had successfully employed three years earlier to make converts to their new system of marriage.

Simultaneously, most Church members were also aware that Joseph and Hyrum had been contending against plural marriage in the Church courts, in the priesthood quorum meetings, in their preaching, and in the pages of the *Times and Seasons*, *Nauvoo Wasp*, and *Nauvoo Neighbor*.

Since Young, Taylor, and other apostles were increasingly suspected of cohabiting secretly with plural wives while openly condemning polygamy, it was natural that some members would conclude that Joseph was also doing this. Such confusion served the conspirators' purposes very well.

### **A Second Group of Conspirators Threatened to Kill Joseph**

In addition to the polygamy conspirators noted above, on March 27, 1844, two men—M. G. Eaton and A. B. Williams—made affidavits in which they swore that certain prominent non-polygamist men in the Church and in the city had formed another conspiracy against Joseph, Hyrum, and the entire Smith family. Eaton and Williams revealed that the conspirators were accusing both Joseph and Hyrum with crimes of plural marriage and had threatened to kill Joseph and every member of the Smith family. Eaton and Williams testified that the plot included William Law, Joseph's former counselor in the First Presidency; William's brother Wilson Law; Attorney Chauncey L. Higbee and his brother, Attorney Francis M. Higbee; Dr. Robert Foster; Joseph H. Jackson; and others.

According to the affidavits, the conspirators were declaring that plural marriages were being practiced in the Church and Joseph and Hyrum were named as being among the participants.

In spite of the hard battle which Joseph and Hyrum had fought against polygamy, the members of both conspiracies were trying to involve them in, or associate them with, that practice. And evidently at least one group was threatening to kill the entire Smith family!

Still, there was not unity between the two conspiracy camps. While the apostles were practicing polygamy and attaching Joseph's name to it, William Law and his supporters wanted to expose its practice to bring down Joseph *and* the apostles in order to start their own church.

Eaton's and Williams's affidavits made it clear that William Law and his coconspirators were eagerly spreading the news that Brigham Young and other apostles had plural wives. The apostles feared the reaction of Church members. They also feared Joseph, knowing he was against their polygamy. Therefore, it was to their advantage to appear to align themselves with Joseph and to stand publicly against those who were involved in the second conspiracy, which could remove Joseph from power.

Law and those plotting with him were already making the public aware of the polygamous activities of the apostles. This would open the way for the apostles to be charged with the crime of bigamy by civil authorities in the courts of the land. The apostles would do everything possible to prevent this from happening and to protect themselves—even if that meant falsely pretending to be innocent of polygamy!

### **Apostle John Taylor Published the Affidavits Warning That the Second Conspiracy Threatened Joseph's Life**

The new affidavits sworn to by Eaton and Williams are an important link in the chain of events which led up to the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum. Within a month, the affidavits were entered as evidence by Joseph in the civil court as part of his defense to show that a death threat existed against him.

Apostle John Taylor, who was editor of two Nauvoo newspapers—the *Times and Seasons* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*—published the affidavits in both. The members of the Quorum of

Twelve were in control of both papers. At the time he published the affidavits, Taylor was the husband of three wives and would have been threatened by anyone who was antipolygamy. The second group of conspirators threatened antipolygamists (such as Joseph) and polygamists (such as Taylor) alike. Any sentiments Taylor may have had to protect Joseph very probably took second place to his desire to cover up his own sins and crimes of polygamy.

The affidavits show that polygamy was one of the subjects William Law and those with him in his conspiracy were determined to expose to the public. This included the seven polygamous apostles whom they saw as their competitors in ruling the Church and gaining converts to their own church.

The two affidavits were used in court by Joseph a month later, in May 1844, after he was arrested on a charge made by Francis M. Higbee, one of the members of the Law conspiracy. Joseph submitted Eaton's and Williams's affidavits as part of his evidence to show that the Higbees, the Laws, and others were plotting to wrongly frame him for polygamy and to take his life (see *Times and Seasons* 5 [May 15, 1844]: 541–542).

**Williams's Affidavit**

State of Illinois, }  
Hancock County } ss.

Personally appeared before me, Daniel H. Wells, acting Justice of the Peace, in and for said county, Abiathar B. Williams, who being duly sworn according to law deposeth and saith, that on or about the 15th day of March, A. D. 1844, Joseph H. Jackson came to my house and requested me to walk with him,—which I did. During the time we were walking, said Joseph H. Jackson said that he was then coming from Mr. Law's; that there was going to be a secret meeting in the city of Nauvoo, probably to-morrow evening; but as it was not decided he could not say positively as to the time, but he would inform me in season. The said Joseph H. Jackson said that Doctor [Robert] Foster, Chauncy [sic] Higbee and the Laws [William and Wilson] were red-hot for a conspiracy, and he should not be surprised if in two

weeks there should be not one of the Smith family left in Nauvoo. After we arrived at Mr. Loomis' the Masonic Hall, in the city of Nauvoo, he related some thing which he stated Doctor Foster had said relative to his family. This he did in the presence of Mr. Eaton and myself, and strongly solicited myself and Mr. Eaton to attend the secret meeting, and join them in their intentions. The said Joseph H. Jackson further said that Chauncy Higbee had said that he the said Chauncy Higbee had seen men tied hand and foot and run through the heart with a sword, and there [*sic*] heads taken off, and then buried;—and he durst not say a word. This the said Jackson said in Mr. Loomis' room, and further this deponent saith not.

A. B. WILLIAMS.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of March, A.D. 1844.

DANIEL H. WELLS, J. P. [L. S.]

### Eaton's Affidavit

State of Illinois, }  
Hancock County } ss.

Personally appeared before me, Daniel H. Wells, an acting Justice of the Peace in and for said county, M. G. Eaton, who being duly sworn according to law deposeseth and saith that on or about the 15th day of March, A. D. 1844, Joseph H. Jackson came to me several times and requested me to go on the hill with him. I finally consented and went with him to the Key Stone Store, in the city of Nauvoo. Doctor Foster and one of the Higbees, I think Chauncy Higbee, were in the store. The said Joseph H. Jackson, together with the said R. D. Foster, and said Higbee, went into the back room of the store. They appeared to enter into private council. Soon after they went into the said room the said Joseph H. Jackson invited me into the room where they were now sitting. I immediately complied. Soon after I went in the said Higbee commenced talking about

the spiritual wife system. He said he had no doubt but some of the Elders had ten or twelve apiece. He said they married them whether the females were willing or not; and they did it by recording the marriage in a large book; which book was sealed up after the record was made, and was not to be opened for a long time, probably not until many of the husbands of those who were thus married were dead. They would then open the book and break the seals in the presence of those females, and when they saw their names recorded in that book they would believe that the doctrine was true and they must submit. He said this book was kept at Mr. Hyrum Smith's. I asked the said Chauncy Higbee \* \* \* \*

[Here follows some expressions too indecorous for insertion.]

The aforesaid R. D. Foster, then asked me what I would think if during my absence from home a carriage should drive up to my house, a person alight, and the carriage then drive off again, this person should then go into my house and begin to tell my wife a great many things against me to prejudice her mind against me and use every possible means to do this, and finally would introduce and preach the spiritual wife doctrine to her and make an attempt to seduce her, and further this person should sit down to dine with my wife, bless the victuals &c, and while they were thus engaged, I should come home and find them thus associated; this person should rise up and say how do you do, and bless me in a very polite manner &c., and also, if upon these appearances, I should feel jealous that something was wrong and when the person was gone, I would ask my wife what had been the conversation between her and this person, but she wou'd [*sic*] refuse to tell me. [I] then draw a pistol and present it to her and threaten to shoot her if she did not tell me all, but she would still refuse. I then would give her a double barrellled pistol, and say to her defend yourself, for if you don't tell me, either you or I

would shoot. She would then faint away through fear and excitement, and when she came to again she would begin and tell you how this person had been trying to poison your wife's mind against you, and by preaching the spiritual wife system to her had endeavoured to seduce her. I replied I should think he was a rascal; but who has had such a trial as that? The said R. D. Foster, answered that he was the man who had had that trial, and who had been thus abused.

The said Dr. Foster, Higbee and Joseph H. Jackson then remarked that they were about to hold a secret meeting to oppose and try to put a stop to such things. The said Joseph H. Jackson also said that if any person undertook to arrest him he should begin to cut them.

The said R. D. [Foster] further said he was afraid of his life and dare not be out at nights.

The said Higbee said he had not a doubt but there had been men killed in Missouri who had had secrets that they were afraid to divulge.

He said he was afraid of his life.

The said Jackson further said that he should not be surprised if there should be a real muss and insurrection in the city in less than two months, and that if a disturbance should take place the Carthaginians and others would come and help them.

He mentioned some name of persons who would come from Carthage which names I do not remember. The same day when in Mr. Loomis's room. I heard the said Jackson say that the Laws were ready to enter into a secret conspiracy tooth and nail.

The said Higbee also said that while at the Key stone that if ever he was brought before the Mayor's Court again, and the Mayor [Joseph Smith] told him again to hold his tongue, that he should get up and tell him he had a right to speak and should do so, and then if any man attempted to put him out of the court he would shoot them through and

**further this deponent saith not.**

**M. G. EATON.**

**Sworn and subscribed before me this 27th day of  
March A. D. 1844.**

**DANIEL H. WELLS, J. P. [L. S.]**

*(Times and Seasons* 5 [May 15, 1844]: 541–542)

In the above affidavit by M. G. Eaton, it is stated that a portion of the contents of the affidavit were withheld from publication because of “some expressions too indecorous for insertion.” These words were deleted also when they were printed in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.

By deleting a portion of the affidavit from publication in the *Times and Seasons* and in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, an important link in the chain of events in the history of the introduction of plural marriage into the Church was lost. A reading of the affidavit reveals that, according to Eaton, Chauncey Higbee had been relating to Eaton allegations about the spiritual wife system—including how Church elders had married a plurality of wives, some of them being married women. At this point Eaton asked Higbee a question, and Eaton’s question was deleted in the published versions. Chauncey Higbee’s entire reply to Eaton was left out also. Why? Who was named in the deleted portion? Did the unprinted words refer to the polygamous apostles? Is Eaton’s original affidavit, including the deleted portion, still on file among the historic records in the Utah LDS Church at Salt Lake City? If the deleted portion were made public, it could provide important information on the history of polygamy practiced by Church leaders in the spring of 1844.

### **Hyrum Smith Preached a Bold Conference Sermon against Polygamy**

Joseph and Hyrum attended the Church conference that started April 6, 1844, with knowledge that members of two conspiracies were working against them. Joseph was determined to take action against those who were practicing polygamy as soon as he could arrange to do so, and Hyrum was prepared to assist him. This meant that when Joseph ordered plural marriage

charges to be brought against the seven guilty apostles before the Church's High Council, it would cause an instant division in the Church and tear families apart. It would also result in the guilty apostles having bigamy charges brought against them by civil officers, since bigamy was a crime in the state of Illinois.

The civil officers of both Hancock County and the state of Illinois would be eager to prosecute and seek convictions of the bigamists. The law-breaking apostles could be charged, tried, convicted, fined, and/or imprisoned. Although Joseph had only one wife, and was innocent, he would likewise be charged and would have to prove his innocence because there were those who were eager to falsely testify that he was also guilty of polygamy.

Joseph's most reliable supporter was his brother Hyrum, who was his counselor in the First Presidency, as well as Presiding Patriarch of the Church. It was to this 1844 Church conference audience that Hyrum preached a stirring sermon in which he strongly condemned polygamy. He knew that he was speaking directly against the powerful members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Nevertheless, according to the official report in the Church's publication, he boldly declared:

**A certain good sister came to my house and she was troubled because she heard so many big things; she thought it weakened her faith. I told her she had too much faith; she believed too much; I will tell you how you may know whether the thing is true or not. When any come to you with a lie, you feel troubled; God will trouble you and will not approbate you in such belief; you had better get some antidote to get rid of it. Humble yourself before God, and ask him for his spirit; and pray to him to judge it for you. It is better not to have so much faith, than to have so much as to believe all the lies. Before this conference closes I want to get all the elders together. I shall make a proclamation: I want to take the line and axe, and hew you, and make you as straight as possible; I will make you as straight as a stretched line. Every elder that goes from Nauvoo to preach the gospel, if he preach any thing else we will silence him through the public print; I want all the**

**elders to meet and to understand, and if they teach any thing but the pure truth we will call them home.** (*Times and Seasons* 5 [August 1, 1844]: 598)

### **Elder Levi Graybill's Report on Hyrum's Sermon**

One of the many priesthood members who was present at the April 1844 Church conference in Nauvoo was Elder Levi Graybill, who later joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Graybill testified that he heard Hyrum's sermon and that Hyrum made a statement that was not printed in the official report in the *Times and Seasons*. Graybill declared that Hyrum advised the sisters of the Church that if any man proposed a polygamous marriage to them to "put a dagger to his heart." Elder Graybill asserted:

**I was present at the April conference in Nauvoo in 1844. . . . I was well acquainted with Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and most all of the early leaders of the Church, and I do not believe that such a thing as polygamy was ever practiced by any of them during the lifetime of the martyrs. At the conference of April, 1844, Hyrum Smith said from the stand that some had been teaching spiritual wifery, which meant polygamy, and addressing the sisters he said: "If any man makes such a proposition to you, if you will put a dagger to his heart I will plead your cause in the day of judgment."** (*Journal of History* 4 [January 1911]: 108)

Elder Graybill, like many other Church members, never believed that Apostle Taylor and other apostles had entered into polygamy during Joseph's lifetime. He was convinced that Taylor and the other apostles were speaking the truth when they condemned the practice and denied that they had plural wives at Nauvoo before the martyrdom. Graybill never realized that Taylor's insistence of innocence was just a temporary ruse to protect his own group of polygamists from a competing group of conspirators. In addition, Taylor wanted to make it appear that he was loyal to Joseph during the high-profile threat to Joseph's life.

In reality, Joseph told the truth and fought the encroachment of polygamy from whatever quarter it approached. Conversely, Apostle Taylor and others of the Quorum of Twelve, who were deeply involved in the practice, were lying when they denied its existence among the leaders.

### **Taylor Referred to Spiritual Wifery as Being Filthy**

As stated earlier, Apostle John Taylor published Eaton's and Williams's affidavits in the *Times and Seasons* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*. He wrote a preface to the affidavits that appeared in both publications, but first in the *Neighbor*. In the preface, he condemned the claim by the conspirators that the doctrine of spiritual wifery was being practiced in the Church, even though at that time he was the husband of three wives.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, in the preface he called that doctrine "filthy." Here are Apostle John Taylor's editorial comments relative to Eaton's and Williams's affidavits:

**We received the following affidavits just as our paper was going to press; and stopped it on purpose to insert the precious morceau. We have only time and room to make a few remarks on this dishonorable plot, which is as execrable and fiendish, as the *subject is filthy*. We could hope, for the sake of humanity, that the statements [concerning the existence of a conspiracy] by the deponents [Eaton and Williams] are untrue; but we are obliged to believe them till we have other evidence.**

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1. Taylor continued for years to deny that polygamy was being practiced by himself and others. However, he went on to marry a total of sixteen wives. They were: (1) Leonora Cannon in 1833; (2) Elizabeth Kaighin, 1843; (3) Jane Ballantyne, 1844; (4) Mary Ann Oakley, 1846; (5) Mary Amanda Utley, 1846; (6) Ann Hughlings Pitchforth, 1846; (7) Ann Ballantyne, 1846; (8) Mary Ramsbottom, 1846; (9) Lydia Dibble Smith, 1846; (10) Sarah Thorton Coleman, 1846; (11) Mercy Thompson Smith, 1846; (12) Sophia Whittaker, 1847; (13) Harriet Whittaker, 1847; (14) Caroline Hooper Saunders Gillian, 1847; (15) Margaret Young, 1847; and (16) Josephine Elizabeth Rouche, 1886 (see Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons*, 354).

**We know not how to express our indignation at the statements contained in the affidavits. We thought that the saints had been slandered enough already by the Missourians, and a lot of apostates, with John C. Bennett at their head; and that the vocabulary of the lower regions, and the ingenuity of his satanic majesty had been exhausted to find out matter of accusation against the saints, and language filthy enough to convey their ideas. . . . All that we have to say is, from such men, from such measures, from such corrupt and debasing ideas and plots “good Lord deliver us.”** (*Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 17, 1844; italics added)

When the affidavits and Taylor’s preface are read in conjunction with one another, it is easy to conclude that Taylor was referring to plural marriage as being the “subject” in the affidavits that he called “filthy.” To suddenly come out against a practice in which he was already so undeniably involved is evidence that he must have been terrified of two things:

- the competing group of conspirators whose threats of violence were garnering the attention of lawmen throughout the state; and
- Joseph Smith, who planned to expose *all* of the polygamists.

Taylor had to be aware that his high station in life might soon end, and he might be sent to prison.

Joseph, who was ready to appear before a grand jury to clear his name of charges of the crime of polygamy, would stand on the side of the law. This meant that *both* conspiracy groups (polygamous and nonpolygamous) would be exposed by him. In the process, a majority of the Quorum of Twelve would be found guilty and fined or imprisoned or both. No doubt those apostles greatly feared the civil authorities. Likewise they feared Joseph, as well as Hyrum who would stand with him. Joseph had set his face against polygamy and could not be swayed by the apostles who had embraced that doctrine and who hoped to enlist him in their plan.

### **Sidney Rigdon Published That the Twelve Had Plural wives**

In October 1844, nearly four months after Joseph's death, Elder Sidney Rigdon, who had moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, published a paper in which he asserted that the apostles "and their adherents" were practicing spiritual wifery. Elder Rigdon, who had been a member of the First Presidency at the time of Joseph's death, had only a few weeks earlier been cut off from the Church by the efforts of Brigham Young. Elder Rigdon wrote:

**It is a fact, so well known, that the Twelve and their adherents have endeavored to carry on this spiritual wife business in secret . . . and have gone to the most shameful and desperate lengths, to keep it from the public. . . .**

**How often have these men and their accomplices stood up before the congregation, and called God and all the holy Angels to witness, that there was no such doctrine taught in the Church; and it has now come to light, by testimony which cannot be gainsaid, that at the time they thus dared heaven and insulted the world, they were living in the practice of these enormities; and there were multitudes of their followers in the congregation at the time who knew it. (Sidney Rigdon, *Messenger and Advocate* 1 [October 15, 1844]: 14)**

### **Taylor Answered Rigdon's Polygamy Charge**

Stung by Rigdon's assertion that Apostle Taylor had only been pretending to be against polygamy, Taylor answered Rigdon by publishing an article. It was entitled "THE APOSTLES AND APOSTATES," and Rigdon's charges were strongly denied. Taylor published:

**The saints of the last days have witnessed the outgoings and incomings of so many apostates that nothing but truth has any effect upon them. In the present instance, after the *sham* quotations of Sidney and his clique, from the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants, to skulk**

off, under the “dreadful splendor” of “spiritual wifery,” which is brought into the account as graciously as if the law of the land allowed a man a plurality of wives, is fiendish, and like the rest of Sidney’s revelation, just because he wanted “to go to Pittsburg and live.” Wo to the man or men who will thus wilfully lie to injure an innocent people! *The law of the land and the rules of the church do not allow one man to have more than one wife alive at once* [italics added], but if any man’s wife die, he has a right to marry another, and to be sealed to both for eternity; to the living and the dead! there is no law of God or man against it! This is all the spiritual wife system that ever was tolerated in the church, and they know it.

AN OLD MAN OF ISRAEL.

(*Times and Seasons* 5 [November 15, 1844]: 715)

So once again Apostle John Taylor is seen as the documented polygamist who was pretending otherwise. It is important to note from the above quote that, while practicing polygamy, Taylor knew very well what the law of the land and the law of the Church was—that a man can only have one living wife at a time.

Remember, Hyrum and Joseph had already been killed when this debate between Taylor and Rigdon was aired. Nevertheless, polygamy, with all of its problems, was continuing to escalate within the Church.

### **Six Years After Joseph’s Death Utah LDS Apostle Taylor Admits Joseph Had Nothing to Do with Polygamy**

In 1850 Apostle Taylor and two other elders went to Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, where they held meetings and participated in a three-night public debate with three noted ministers: the Reverend C. W. Cleeve, the Reverend James Robertson, and the Reverend Philip Cater. One of the topics of the debate was “Joseph Smith.” During the debate, Apostle Taylor was asked direct questions as to whether or not Joseph Smith had practiced polygamy. Taylor strongly denied over and over that Joseph had practiced polygamy. And then, to prove that there was no polygamy practiced by

Joseph or tolerated by Joseph in the Church, Apostle Taylor read the Church's law on marriage, which had been printed in the 1835 Kirtland edition, the 1844 Nauvoo edition, and the 1850 Liverpool edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. He read these words:

**Inasmuch as this Church of Jesus Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.** (John Taylor, *Three Nights' Public Discussion Between the Revds. C. W. Cleeve, James Robertson, and Philip Cater, and Elder John Taylor of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at Boulogne-sur-Mer, France*, 8)

### **Three Additional Factors Strengthened the Two Conspiracies**

The two conspiracies Joseph faced at Nauvoo were fed into, and made worse, by three additional factors:

- 1. Masonry Factor.** As shall be seen in chapter 19, Dr. John C. Bennett used a Masonic phrase in one of his published accusations against Joseph, which likely enraged nearly every Mason who read it (both in and out of the Church) and set them against Joseph.
- 2. Political Factor.** Politicians in Missouri and Illinois generally disliked the Church and feared the united voting block the Church could muster. Most of them were eager to scatter the Church and the members' voting power. In the 1800s politics were even more contentious than today. So dangerous was the environment that none other than Illinois State Legislator Abraham Lincoln prevailed upon the state to arm the Nauvoo Legion so the city could defend itself from nearby enclaves of bandits and hostile communities that were raiding it. Those who had political differences with the Church were very eager to encourage any bad rumor against Joseph Smith.

### **3. Missouri Slavery and Native American Factors.**

One of the prime reasons Church members had been driven out of Missouri (across the Mississippi River and into Illinois) was due to slavery. Missouri was a slave state, and Church members generally opposed the practice. Although Illinois had less slaves than Missouri, it still had plenty of proslavers who despised antislavers.

To the infuriation and shock of such proslavers, no sooner did Joseph Smith and the Church arrive at Independence in 1831, than they held an integrated worship service. “W. W. Phelps preached to a mixed audience of white pioneers, negroes, and Indians, and on the same day two were baptized” (RLDS *History of the Church* 1:204). The Missouri slave industry, the proslavers in Illinois, and those who despised the Native Americans hated the Church and could be counted on to assist any group that opposed Joseph Smith!

#### **Summary**

The documents quoted in this chapter verify that Apostle John Taylor published and spoke both truth and falsehood over a period of years, in America and abroad, which misled Church members and the general public. What remained consistent in his varying accounts was that they were always crafted to preserve his status and allow him to take full advantage of any situation. John Taylor’s main goal was to prosper and promote himself and other polygamous apostles, and he used both truth and falsehood to do so.

In his deception, he was often successful. True, he was not alone in misleading the Saints and the public. However, as editor of the Church’s official paper at Nauvoo and as an apostle, he had a responsibility to *always* publish and speak the truth. Church members, as well as the public, had a right to know the truth. The truth was that Joseph had only one wife, but the majority of the twelve apostles had plural wives.

Since it is now known that John Taylor and six other apostles were polygamists at the time Joseph died, it is understandable that Church members were not unified in what they believed

about Joseph and polygamy in the Church. At Joseph's death, some believed he had plural wives, while others believed he had only one wife. Some believed Joseph had plural wives but later repented. Others believed he had plural wives but never repented and hence was a fallen prophet. Others, such as Elder Levi Graybill, were of the opinion that neither Joseph nor any of the apostles practiced polygamy during Joseph's lifetime. They innocently, but wrongly, believed the practice started *after* Joseph's death. Some thought it started at Kirtland in the 1830s. Others believed it started at Nauvoo. Still others placed its beginning in the Utah LDS Church at Salt Lake City in August 1852 when Brigham Young introduced what became Section 132. Then there were those who could not believe that the apostles ever practiced polygamy while Joseph stood against it. They were unable to separate the actions of Joseph from those of the majority of the twelve apostles.

The numerous opinions—both in 1844 and today—about the source of the introduction of polygamy into the Church has occurred because the trusting Church members were misled by the falsehoods told them by the polygamous apostles. In contrast, Joseph (who faced two conspiracies that promulgated the belief that he was a polygamist) never changed his testimony that he had only one wife.