

On Being An Apologist: Imperatives, Predicaments, Perils, and Blessings.

By Robert B. White

2009 FAIR Conference

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am grateful beyond expression to be here this evening. As my public ministry came to an end and I wondered what I would do with my time, when the bishop and the stake president and the temple president got done with me, there was a little left. And I was very fortunate to be introduced to FAIR, and to encounter faithful Latter-day Saints who, without formal assignment or call, but as I hope I will show, with a divine mandate, have put themselves forward to defend the truth of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I have considered it a miracle to watch and to have been in this room today and to have felt the presence of the Holy Spirit as sister and men of erudition, but with no pride, have spoken of things which can save souls. There is no place I would rather have been. Now, I do apologize to you that I am not wearing a tie. I have waited 40 years to be able to speak to a group of Latter-day Saints without wearing a tie.

And I must also say that this country of yours is hot, which isn't to say it isn't sometimes hot up in Edmonton, there was a day in early July when it hit 77. Well, you laugh but that heat wave went on for almost a week.

The United States and Canada have been good friends since 1812 when you burned down our capital in York and we repaid the compliment by burning down your White House, and we've called it quits now, and we're friends. What I'm going to tell you now is not apocryphal; it actually happened. As the survey was being done of our border between southern Alberta and northern Montana, the survey crew came to a ranch house which had a very tall flagpole and snapping in the wind at the top of the pole was a Union Jack, which back then was the Canadian flag, British flag now. And so, this was obviously a man who was very proud of his Canadian position. Well, when the survey crew went through, one of the surveyors came back and found the rancher and said, "I'm afraid, sir, I have some bad news for you. We have just surveyed the border and your house is on the American side. We're sorry." He said, "oh, my man, don't be sorry. I am truly grateful because I don't think I could have handled another Canadian winter."

Well, the time has come at the end of a full and long day when brevity will be more appreciated than profundity, the latter of which I am incapable at any event. And a very few thoughts of mine ought to suffice, only to serve as seeds for greater thoughts of your own as you search and sift, through all that you know and feel and that you've heard and learned. We have been educated and touched by people who know what they have to say and that what they say is right. And we can be certain, by what is apparent to the Brethren, that still on the earth, among all nations, sects, parties and denominations, thousands and thousands of people who are only kept from the truth because they do not know where to find it. And as we know, the problem is that there is also another bunch who are doing their utmost to see that they can't find it or recognize it when they do.

Now, I come from the former group. My mother and father and I were members of the First Presbyterian Church of Edmonton. It's a long way from -- well, Edmonton is a long way from everywhere -- that's a long way from here, and I was raised as a Scottish Presbyterian, and at First Presbyterian Church I encountered religion and God for the first time. Now, you may think you know Presbyterians, but if you don't know a Scottish Presbyterian, well, it's like the Mormon Church and the Community of Christ. If you want real Presbyterianism, you have got to be Scottish Presbyterian. If you're a Scottish Presbyterian, you can go for a walk on Sunday, but be sure you don't enjoy it. Well, I am thankful, and have expressed it to my Father in Heaven, for this man, Reverend J. Macbeth Miller, a sainted man who introduced me as a boy to God. He told me that He was real and that He loved me and that I ought to mind Him. As you could see, it's a wealthy church and we were very poor, we lived in a two-room apartment carved out of an old boarding school, we had no car. And yet, we had dinner at the manse far more than our share of times. The Reverend and Sister Miller would take us on picnics, he would take my father golfing, he took us to Banff, and although my father, and he would not mind me telling you, although my father was an alcoholic, he was trusted enough by Reverend Miller to be made an Elder of the Presbyterian Church. I loved that man and I am certain that one of the very first things my father, who is the reason I'm a Latter-day Saint, did, when he passed from this life to a life where the ravages of an early encounter with alcohol in the army would not overcome him, is that he will have looked up Macbeth Miller. I asked him a very deep theological question once. I was alarmed in Sunday school by the pictures of the angels and as we left I said, "Reverend Miller, just where are the wings going to grow out of the back and how are we going to get our clothes on over them." He was a deep theologian, was Reverend Miller, and he leaned over and smiled at me and he said, "Ah, laddie, that's a mystery of God." And I think most things were except for the love of God.

Well, so I am aware, as a Latter-day Saint who does apologetics, that there are very fine people who are not of our faith and would be if they could be, and should be if they knew. And so I am not at all ashamed about being a Latter-day Saint apologist. And here are we all Latter-day Saint apologists. And how in the world did we ever get ourselves into this? What were we thinking? As you know, it is a much misunderstood and often maligned undertaking, suspected even by some of the members of the Church. Some want to know why we are apologizing for being Mormons, and of course the other people think that we should be forever apologizing to them, because while it is their right to define us in any way that they can think of to do so, we on our part ought to apologize for, well, all of the secrets locked up in the First Presidency vault, and making people think we've got microfilm in Little Cottonwood when we know that's where all the bullion's kept, and our conspiracy to take over the world is certainly something we should apologize for. We are not the only people, fortunately, to whom unreasonable apologies are demanded. This dear brother says if the Security Council doesn't apologize, he's going to light off a nuclear bomb. We ought to get one of those. And there are some people who ought to be apologizing because all of us make mistakes. And we ought to apologize when we do, but you can be very sure that they never, ever will.

Now, some Latter-day Saints, of course, believe that as apologists, what we really are, are mission-field Bible bashers who have not quite grown up and who spend all of our time making life miserable for the poor, defenseless anti-Mormons, and it hurts when our co-religionists don't fully understand what it is that we're doing. And so, nevertheless, here we are, as Latter-day Saint apologists. And my beloved brothers and sisters, I believe that as Latter-day Saint apologists you are mandated by heaven in what you do and what you accomplish. And I'm going to suggest that in the revelations, there are three direct references, sometimes obscure and easily passed over, in which the Lord anticipated the work being done by FAIR and by FAIR only, because the institutional Church cannot do this and be deflected from the work, the magnificence of which has just been described to us.

First of those is a revelation that was given when Joseph went from Kirtland down to Hiram, about 60 kilometers. Now, I know that you've not completely severed your ties from the mother country, so that's 35 miles. You got rid of the rest of us but you still hung on to that. You don't use pounds, shillings and tuppence though, do you? And while in Hiram many of the revelations and much of the translation of the new translation of the Holy Bible was completed by Joseph Smith. John Johnson turned over to him a place to live at his home, the largest home in the area. This is how it looks now, and the room is where the work was largely done, it's how it looks now. And Sidney Rigdon and his family -- Phoebe and his six children -- lived in a little place across the street. But the Lord spoke to them in the midst of this important work and told them that what was necessary was that they leave it for a season and do some apologetic work. Ezra Booth, who joined the Church because of a miracle and then quit it because there weren't enough miracles has the distinction of being the first anti-Mormon to establish an anti-Mormon blog. Being short of Internet Service Providers, he made use of the pages of the Ohio Star and wrote a series of nine articles critical, particularly, of the character of Joseph Smith. He was soon joined by the famous Symonds Ryder -- I hope I've got it down right, I can never remember how to spell that brother's name. You know, there is a lot of evidence that God has a sense of humor. Symonds Ryder's tombstone has a spelling mistake on it. I think that was inspired. Plural marriage will be in the Sunday School manual before that will be, but...

And the Lord said this to the Prophet and to Sidney and, I suggest, to you, "Wherefore, confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch" -- now is the kicker -- "inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest. Wherefore, let them bring forth their strong reasons against the Lord. Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you -- there is no weapon that is formed against you that shall prosper." [Doctrine & Covenants 71:7-9]

Well, where is Thomas Ford? Where is Lilburn W. Boggs? Where is Thomas Sharp? How many more spikes do we need to pound through the heart of the Spaulding Manuscript. Where is Ethan Smith? Where is DNA? Where is the Kinderhook Plates? Where are all of the confabulations which have been arrayed in an effort to disprove this glorious work. And we've just heard from a brother who has given his life to becoming

as closely acquainted with the life of the Prophet of any man, who is more convinced than he has ever been of the divinity of the Prophet's work.

Now, as I said, the Church institutionally does not engage now in going forward and confounding our enemies and calling upon them to meet us in a formal sense, but we do it. As with other technology, the Brethren concluded early on that they would not be afraid of the Internet but that we would own the Internet. And site after site after site after site has been launched and polished by the Church to make available our version of our religion. Nevertheless, the recent campaign of Brother Romney for the Presidency of the United States shocked the Brethren and all of us at how misunderstood we are and by some how much we're disliked. And therefore, there is still a need to meet those who oppose us, in public and in private. We do that in FAIR on the Internet and in other ways. We don't go picking fights with them and we eschew debates with them. Instead we place before them to take whatever shots that they wish to. The faith of the Lord Jesus Christ is restored to the earth in these latter days, and let them, all of them, bring forth all their strong reasons. Their new book on the Spaulding Manuscript, God help us, George Smith's ... is it a biography, is that ... I don't know ... George Smith's thing about Joseph Smith, DNA, which was, of course, supposed to be the end of the Church, Hoffman and the salamander letter. I was a bishop of the ... of a single adult ward when the salamander letter made the headlines, and there were a couple of pages in Time Magazine, who have never devoted more than a column to anybody ... anything favorable to us, but two pages to the salamander letter. And some poor man and his wife said, "well, that's it for us, we're leaving the Church, the salamander letter has done it for us." And one of my counselors said, "well, what are we going to do?" I said, "well, Steve, it's very simple. If the salamander letter is genuine, the Church isn't true." And he said, "that's a very bold statement." And I said, "no, Steve, it isn't, because the Church is true. And, therefore, you may take it that the salamander letter is a fake." Well, the institute director heard about this and asked me how I could justify it, and I said, "well, you know, we deal with this sort of thing in the courts all the time." I said, "I'll tell you what the experts will say. They are not going to say that it's the right paper, and they're not going to say it's the right ink. They're going to say the paper is consistent with the time and the ink is consistent with the time, and I've noticed that the writer, Martin Harris, the only exemplar of his handwriting we have was found by the same fellow who found this and where he gets them is a dark secret."

Well, you see, when we know that this is the truth, how many things do we have to know about why the critics are wrong? We know it. We may not know why, we may not understand how, but I wonder, my beloved brothers and sisters, if, as apologists, we must not be careful and realize that Christ is the way, the truth, the life, and that no man will come to the Father but by Him. And that what we need to do, to protect everyone we need to protect, is to ensure that they receive for themselves a testimony of that truth. Now, we are the line in the sand. We do not attack others, we do not promulgate doctrine or declare it, we are not officially assigned or appointed by the institutional church, but we are Latter-day Saints, true to the truth that our parents have cherished, and true to the truth for which martyrs have perished, and that as those who are standing on the thin red line, we put up a barrier that says, "this far, no further." And so, in Elder Maxwell's

memorable statement, we protect those fragile souls whose faith may falter if we cannot demonstrate that what we say can be defended. Our defenses will convert no one, but they will protect those who otherwise can be converted. And that message in the Doctrine and Covenants includes these words, “and others who shall read,” and that’s us, you.

There’s a second mandate. Numerous revelations were, as you know, received just before, at the time of, and just after the dedication of the Kirtland temple and so auspicious an event was it and so profound the endowment received there that the implications of some of the precious paragraphs which were inserted in the longer revelations can be overlooked. Now, in numerous places, the Lord has taught that faith is the actuator of mankind and that faith in truth is the fundamental premise of all positive action, and we know that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the restored gospel. And so, it is obviously important to the Lord that we have faith and important to us that we have it. And so, if the Lord undertakes to explain what to do so that people will have faith, that is worth listening to. And the Lord said it, but the phrase in which He said it is almost invariably quoted not for the predicate. Here is what he said, “And as all have not faith,” what? “Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom, yea, seek ye out of the best books words of (I can’t read these things from where I am) by study and also by faith. [Doctrine & Covenants 109:7]

Why are people, then, to diligently learn wisdom, to study out of the best books, and to seek learning? It’s because all have not faith. Now, we have heard today and you will tomorrow, sister and brethren who have sought and obtained great learning, tremendous erudition, and they use it in their careers to earn a living and to advance in their fields. But when they come to this conference, this one, not the “Sunshine” whatever it is, where, you know, again, in Elder Maxwell’s penetrating prose about small equivocations leading to large deviations, is one of the reasons why FAIR must be kept as pure as it is and free of small deviations ... equivocations ... that lead to large deviations. And these brethren and sisters have brought their knowledge here not to show off, but because all have not faith. And so those who don’t have faith can, by being here and by going to FAIR, and to searching elsewhere, get that faith too, because “to some it is given ... to know” and “to others it is given to believe on their words, that they [too] might have eternal life if they continue faithful.” [Doctrine & Covenants 46:13-14] Now, Brother Gee, Barney, the rest of you, all of you, God bless you, God bless you, that you aren’t going to symposiums to show off, but are coming to present in answer to what I tell you is the Lord’s hand upon you, long ago, long forgotten, the veil of it having been drawn across your minds, but the Lord’s hand, I know has been put on your heads, that the perils of Sariah can be made real today to those who don’t have faith, so that we do not have to be troubled about DNA or plural marriage or anything else. And I hope that you feel as I certainly now do, the Holy Spirit bear witness to you that you have been divinely mandated in what you’re doing and God bless you that you have not been lead into the paths of equivocation.

Well, there is another mandate, the third. And all of us know what it is (and we’ll find out what it is when I get the clicker to work). Joseph in August of 1831 got to

Independence, Jackson County, Missouri and determined by revelation that that was indeed to be Zion. And the culmination and highlight of a very busy week was the placement of the cornerstone for the temple that before the Lord returns will be built on that place. And he had to leave and get back to Kirtland and the people who were staying were pressing him with questions about everything. And so, as he always did, he went to the Lord, and the Lord through him said so kindly, “now look, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in [you,] wherein [you] are agents [un]to [your]selves.” [Doctrine & Covenants 58:27-28] And my beloved brothers and sisters inasmuch as you do good you will not lose your reward. Now, you will notice that that is not optional; that is a commandment. It is a commandment by the Lord that without a calling or a position or a formal assignment that we will of ourselves find and be about good works, and there are many from which to choose, and you have chosen as your good work the defense of the faith of the Latter-day Saints, and in doing so you are fulfilling in that third respect, the divine mandate, and we should not have to have any apologies for that.

But I am become very concerned for you. As I made the transition from what I’ve done for so long to trying to do what I can to pitch in a little here, I saw very quickly that the adversary knows he has to destroy you or lose the war and that you stand between him and many of his objectives. That will not go to your heads because you wouldn’t be here if it would. But I saw too that apologetics is extremely dangerous work; it’s perilous work. Now, we could not do the kind of apologetics which C.S. Lewis did. He came at things from a different point of view. We quote him often and even occasionally in context. And this is one of those times when the context speaks:

“I have found,” this dear soul said, “that nothing is more dangerous to one’s own faith than the work of an apologist.” Think of it: nothing is more dangerous to our faith, yours and mine, than the work of an apologist. Why? “Because no doctrine of that Faith seems to me so spectral, so unreal as one that I have just successfully defended.” You see, we make a point, we defend a point, but for a moment, you see, its truthfulness has seemed to rest on me, and if it’s no stronger than I am, how strong can it possibly be? And then he said, “that is why we apologists take our lives in our hands and can be saved only by falling back continually from the web of our own arguments ... from Christian apologetics [in]to Christ himself. That is also why we need one another’s continual help -- *oremus pro invicem* (let us pray for one another).”

And so we need to understand that the things that we learn about and know so much of as apologists, that we are very careful that they do not become substitutes for our religion and our faith, that we are not Latter-day Saint apologists, we’re Latter-day Saints and we do the work of apology, but we must not let it change. Now, I ask only questions because I have no commission, implied or real, to provide any answers and I defer to those who have thought these things through before me and better, but there is a matter that I wonder if we should worry about. “For behold, God hath said a man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing”. [Moroni 7:6] Does that mean that paying tithing can

be unrighteous? Yes, it does. When I was a stake president, I noticed a man who became a full tithe payer invariably four months before his next daughter was to be married in the temple. Does it mean that you can pray to God and it's not righteous? Yes, it does. We get the fruit and the tree backwards. We say, "well, you can ... the tree gives good fruit," but what the Lord says is, "oh, taste the fruit, test the prayer, test the gift, and then you'll know something about the tree" because a man being evil can't do that which is good, and as good as it looks, once you've tasted it you'll know about the tree. And so, let a man and a woman examine herself and himself and be aware -- I hope we always are aware -- that we are not doing what we're doing because we love contention, which is the tool of the adversary, not because we need a forum in which to display one's supposed erudition, and there are many such forums, I am sorry to say, and many such people, notwithstanding Elder Dallin H. Oaks' twice-repeated warning in General Conference of the dangers of attending a certain event which will be held about a week from now, and at the risk of giving offense, I will happily stand to the side and a step behind Elder Dallin H. Oaks, because if they want to be offended with me, they'll be offended with him too. Equivocations and deviations, he said. Be so careful.

An outlet for pent up Church-related frustrations because among ourselves we can wink and laugh about, well you know, President Packer's talk on little factories, hahahaha, without having been a bishop who has given that talk to dozens of boys and saved their souls. And that we are not searching for appreciation where none has been discerned before, never been a ward clerk, never been a young men's president, an elders quorum president, or a primary president and so we look for a club where we can be appreciated. And of course we don't want ... we want to be sure that we have not come here in search for answers to our own doubts because we must be courageous enough, as Brother Barney said, to enunciate our own doubts and answer them, resolve them and not pent them up.

And so, with those things in mind, here is what I worry about, without condemning; I have no authority or inspiration or revelation, but I wonder about it. All things that advance safety are to be applauded even though some of them can have unexpected consequences. (Where did I go? That's where I went and that's where I'm going.) The other month, I was uncharacteristically surfing the Net. I had succumbed to the blandishments of my law firm that had given me a new Blackberry and I started to learn, it's true, if you click on enough links, you can go anywhere. And I came across a discussion of gospel doctrine class on a blog. Well, I teach gospel doctrine class; I was interested and I found that in fact they were talking about the manual from which I teach and they were talking about a lesson which I had just given. And in the blog, I saw, this couldn't really happen, this is sort of a metaphor, that they said there was a mistake in the manual. Now, I can see a mistake getting by me but the curriculum committee, I don't know. So, I read further. And I read that a dear brother, and if you're here, brother, I'll see you after and make sure I, you know, I love you. I mean nothing other than that, except a voice of caution. I'm not an old man yet, although those years are now visible, they're not over the horizon, and I know that old men are behind the times but there is a lot of time behind old men. And so, this dear young brother, who knows a lot and who picked out the mistake, flipped out his phone and what he did is, he then immediately

contacted someplace in cyberspace and confirmed indeed there was a mistake, and he had a friend on the other side of the classroom, so he texted him to point out the mistake that the teacher had made, and they had another friend at the back of the class, and they both got him involved, and then Charlie over in the next ward, who was probably taking the same thing should be clued in, and so pretty sure everybody was aware that there was a mistake in the teacher's manual. And I worried that all they took home was a mistake in the teacher's manual. What was the mistake? Oh, it was the Marsh strippings story. There's more to it than is in the manual, if that's a mistake. It actually makes Brother Marsh look better than he deserves to, but.... When, you see, when we know so much, we can think that those who know less are making mistakes. And so, we have to ... we may think we've got to do something and protect the Latter-day Saints from their ignorance. It's true that you go a long ways into the Doctrine and Covenants before you find any interest on the Lord's part with any subject other than faith in the Lord, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, but there are all of these things that they can hear about which are true but may sound strange, and so we need to protect them and we have to wonder about how to do it. And we have to, I suggest, wonder carefully.

Some safety devices have untoward consequences. The intention is good, but the results are not necessarily so good. And I am certainly not suggesting that we tell people they ought not to read everything they can find that the Church Historian's office is making available so that never again are the enemies of this faith going to say that we hide our history. The only place from now on that our true doctrines and history will be hidden and unfound by the Latter-day Saints is in the Ensign. Well, metaphors can be dangerous because the subject of the metaphor may be very good, but when transferred to another context might give a misleading message. We do talk about, and I'm just wondering about, this idea of inoculation, because all of our people aren't the same. You know, the flu season is coming, and the best minds in the world are not going to figure out what viruses to vaccinate us against. So, how are we -- and I only ask the question -- how are we going to know what viruses we should inoculate, who, against? An inoculation that may be wonderful for the first chap but may not be so good for three back in the line. And we learned long ago to teach bishops that when interviewing youth on matters of chastity to be careful not to teach them perverted behavior, because we had some young people in the Church who first learned about masturbation after it was described to them by their bishops, who then asked them if they did it. And so, you know, we can start asking people, "hey, did you Joseph Smith married somebody that Emma didn't even know about it?" And you know, maybe they didn't know that, and that's interesting, and they kind of wonder the way out, and that sounds like a good one. So, the next thing they can do is lose their testimony. If we don't know what vaccination to give against this flu, should we not wonder about what to vaccinate the Latter-day Saints, inoculate the Latter-day Saints, with.

You know, if you've looked at the last answer to an "ask the apologist" and tried to follow the thread, you can see that there is occasionally a lack of unanimity. Ultimately, of course, we're fortunate because the matter can always be resolved by finding out what Lou thinks? And so the problem's solved. But as the Church is making the tremendous efforts, which our brother has just told us of, so that anything anybody wants to know is

there to know, we need to appreciate the fact that our people cannot ... I wonder ... cannot begin to think that every expectation for information that they have can be fulfilled. To think that we not only deserve to know the answers to all questions, but that we do know them. I guess you have known those airport lineups, somewhere in there, there is a Seventy late for a stake conference. You'll know him: he'll be in a suit, jacket, with a tie done up, smiling at the nice gate agent as he explains that while he is very grateful for the \$10.00 breakfast coupon and the free night at the Jolly Roger 18 miles down the road, he really would like to keep his present booking because there's a stake president pacing the halls in another airport, quickly realizing he's got two priesthood leadership meetings to fill by himself and a good chunk of the Saturday evening session, and the 6 o'clock dinner's off, so, he's going to be eating baked lasagna for six weeks. Because we can tell them, good news, your plane's about to arrive. But you just never know what that might mean.

And so I wonder, do the Latter-day Saints need inoculating or transfusions. The Brethren this year have said that "Gospel Principles" will, for the next two years, be our manual in priesthood and relief society. I'm aware that there are people who bemoan going back to this simple, boring thing. So, you read the table of contents, and as you do, you will understand that what it is designed to do is not inoculate but transfuse into the lives of the Latter-day Saints the fundamental faith in the fundamental gospel restored through the Prophet. And as we draw our line in the sand, let the Church give transfusions.

And I just ask, without deciding or answering, that we wonder about inoculations. Mention was made a little while ago in answer to a question, we've all seen this picture and some missionaries have born their souls' witness that that's true. Whereas we know that that's what happened. Well, that information -- by the way, everybody in my gospel doctrine class is aware of it; my approach has been with such things is just to assume everybody knows it. One sister said, "how come I have never heard of that before?" And I said, "I don't know, it's in the '82 Ensign." I've had some fun going through the indexes and picking out all the strange and weird stuff that's in the Ensign. So, that comes forward and we've got one brother and that gives that brother a doubt, and it comes to another brother and to him it raises a question. But what makes the difference, whether it's going to be a doubt or whether it's going to be a question? The answer is this: if the salamander letter is true, the Church is false, but the Church isn't false, and if I know it, and if our people know it, and if we declare it, no matter how many strange and wonderful things that the people may hear of, as thinking Latter-day Saints they will want to resolve the question, but it will not deprive them of their testimony of the truth.

Now, I quit fast, now, because I know some of you may be worried that I have fallen (I shouldn't have taken a drink there) you're sure I've fallen, but that I've fallen into the trap of the warm fuzzies. You know that on the message boards, people are warned that we try to get people to join the Church by having warm fuzzy feelings. All we'd need to do is slip them a Tom Collins and that would do the job. When they say that we are trying to get people to join the Church because of some fuzzy feeling in their heart, nothing could be further from the truth, because to be converted, one must first hear the word from one whom the Lord has sent and then he must act upon it. And acting upon it

involves many things, but they all have one thing in common: they lead to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; they do not lead to an explanation of how the Book of Mormon was translated and whether it was dictated or given by impression, or why Section 5 has two verses, the wording changed, or why the rod of nature became the rod of Aaron, and all the rest of it. It leads them to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and experience shows that when people have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing doubting, they can get out of a boat in the middle of a storm and they can walk on water. Well now we know that he did doubt and then sank and the Lord said, "why for didst thou doubt?" But remember, too, that the Lord reached out his hand and He caught him. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that can make man walk on water can dispense with DNA and Ethan Smith and everything else. Especially when FAIR is standing as that thin red line demonstrating that there are lots of us who know about all of these things, and that we're faithful Latter-day Saints, and that to the degree that there are answers, here they are. And that is how FAIR is saving souls.

The other thing that the things that they do leads to is repentance, and repentance leads to increased faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and eventually impels one to be baptized by immersion for the remission of sins, and then comes the Gift of the Holy Ghost, which most often settles gently but does sometimes come accompanied with such a feeling of joy that it does feel as though our hearts are burning within us. And sometimes it comes by the whisper of a voice that is so still and so small. Well, that's the process that appears to be in the Lords' plan. And that as we let and encourage and have confidence in the Church, making available everything that we've heard of, making opportunities for research and examination available to all.

And because, remember, of the three divine mandates that you have, and I testify ... it is a matter of testimony to me that this organization has come together as a result of the hand of the Lord. It is spoken of in unreserved praise by the Brethren, unreserved praise by the Brethren. And of course, you're the organization. Well, we're told by some that because they don't have warm fuzzy feelings that we don't. Well, we do. That is so supernal that if one has not experienced it, locked in the prison house of words one could not explain it. Once someone has experienced it, they are never in any doubt about what it was. Well, those are things, as I said, just to think about, and when thinking about them, to remember this very great testimony of a very great man: "The gift of the Holy Ghost comes after one repents and becomes worthy.... The Holy Ghost bears witness of the truth and impresses upon the soul the reality of God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ so deeply that no earthly power or authority can separate him from that knowledge." [President James E. Faust, "The Gift of the Holy Ghost -- A Sure Compass," First Presidency Message, Ensign, April 1996] I know of no inoculation -- maybe there's one, but no inoculation that I know of -- that could bind me to the Lord so closely that except for my surrender to the evil one, I'll never be separated from it.

And so, I just ask now as I end, for us to think about faith in Christ, about repentance from sin, of making and keeping covenants, and through the Holy Ghost learning line upon line, to express gratitude for the learned men and women of FAIR who without

panoply or praise have learned and taught because all of us have not faith, and that we maintain a firm commitment to praying for each other.

Now, I sit next to you as a brother in the pew in sacrament meeting. I sit there as you do, but when the end of my public ministry came, the Lord did not erase from my mind that which had changed from a testimony to a witness. And just as a brother in the pew sitting next to you, my beloved friends, I know that the Lord Jesus Christ lives and is our Savior and our Redeemer, and that Joseph was his prophet, and Thomas S. Monson is. I know, I know that, and I thank God for it and bear witness of it in the name of the God of Israel, amen.