

ELDER BALLARD BLOWS UP THE CHURCH

Transcript of Radio Free Mormon Podcast

Copyright 2017 by Radio Free Mormon

Testing, one two three. Testing, one two three. This is Radio Free Mormon on the air, broadcasting behind enemy lines.

Tonight's episode, *Elder Ballard Blows Up the Church*. This past Sunday evening, November 19, 2017, Elder Ballard and Elder Oaks held a face to face broadcast with the young single adults of the church.¹ Over two weeks prior to the face to face presentation, Elders Ballard and Oaks produced a promotional video which was released by the church.² In that promotional video, Elder Ballard admitted that there were a lot of questions they were receiving from the young single adults of the church; that they did not know the answers to some of them, and then very candidly said that those were the questions that they would avoid.

So my expectations of what would happen at this face to face presentation were severely reduced. I expected that Elder Ballard would be true to his word, they would winnow out the difficult questions, they would focus on the bland questions and give appropriately bland and thoroughly expected responses. And for the most part, that is what happened in the face to face from last Sunday, November 19, 2017.

But Elder Ballard shocked me and shocked the world of Mormonism, and those interested in Mormonism, by making an absolutely unforced error. At about 42 minutes into the face to face

¹[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube
%2c+young+single+adult+face+to+face+devotional&view=detail&mid=8BDC8FAEE979FCC05A528BDC8FAEE979FCC05A52&FO
RM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+%2c+young+single+adult+face+to+face+devotional&view=detail&mid=8BDC8FAEE979FCC05A528BDC8FAEE979FCC05A52&FORM=VIRE)

² It appears the promotional video has been scrubbed from YouTube. The full audio, however, was captured in Radio Free Mormon's pre-scrubbing podcast on the subject.

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2017/11/radio-free-mormon-019-table-scrap-train-wrecks-information-avoidance/>

presentation, and not even in response to one of the questions, Elder Ballard declared that the church does not hide anything from its members. He said that the church does not hide anything from anybody; that he and Elder Oaks are thoroughly familiar with the history of the church; they know the integrity of the church leaders, and he stated that the church throughout its history has never hidden anything from anybody. And he chose as his illustration for this point the First Vision accounts.

As I said, he is not responding to a question, but he is obviously prepared to speak on this issue, because he has brought with him a black binder in which are some papers which he opens up at this point in order to reference the 1970 article in the *Improvement Era* written by James B. Allen about the eight accounts of the first vision. (James B. Allen was taking the four accounts that come directly from Joseph Smith and adding four other accounts that claim to have been heard from Joseph Smith by other authors who then wrote them down.)

The point Elder Ballard was trying to make is that the church is not hiding the First Vision accounts. Rather, the church has been publishing the different first vision accounts since 1970, which is 47 years ago. Now, he did not mention any General Conference talks in which this subject has been addressed because, well, they aren't any. But he does have this article from 1970, and this is the quote from Elder Ballard that rocked the world and blew up the church.

Play the tape:

Elder Ballard: *And some are saying that the church has been hiding the fact that there is more than one version of the First Vision.*

Why would they say that, Elder Ballard? Could it be perhaps because the church **did** attempt to hide the different versions of the First Vision, especially the 1832 account?

Elder Ballard: *Which is just not true.*

This is the point in the talk where Elder Ballard begins digging himself deeper and deeper into the hole, and we will see the reason he is digging the hole is to ultimately plant explosives.

Elder Ballard: *The fact is we don't study; we don't go back and search what has been said on the subject.*

Here Elder Ballard engages in the age old tactic of blaming the victim. It is the members' fault for not knowing there was an article published forty-seven years ago about the First Vision accounts. He goes on.

Elder Ballard: *For example, Dr. James B. Allen of the BYU in 1970, he produced an article for the church magazines explaining all about the different versions of the First Vision.*

Well, actually, James B. Allen does **not** explain all about the different versions of the First Vision account in the article. What he does rather is give a brief overview of the subject with an eye toward minimizing the discrepancies between the different accounts and focusing on the similarities. The apologetic bent of the article is made clear at the outset when, in the introduction he describes the bombshell revelation of the 1832 account of the First Vision as a “gentle surprise to Mormon scholars.”³ Elder Oaks goes on to make a joke about this.

Elder Oaks: *How long ago was that article?*

Elder Ballard: *1970. That was back in 1970.*

Elder Oaks: *We've have been hiding that for quite some time. (Laughter from audience)*

Oh, good one, Elder Oaks. But of course, Elder Oaks' joke is meant to hide the fact, of which he is perfectly well aware, I presume, that for three decades, Joseph Fielding Smith **hid** the 1832 account of the

³ <http://www.mormonthink.com/files/eight-contemporary-accounts-1st-vision-improvement-era-1974.pdf>

first vision in his safe, and it was only released to the public in 1965 after its existence was leaked to the press.⁴

Elder Ballard: *But it's this, it's this, it's this idea that the church is hiding something which we would have to say as, as two apostles who have covered the world and know the history of the church and know the integrity of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve from the beginning of time...*

So here Elder Ballard is saying that he and Elder Oaks are two apostles; they are two senior apostles who are well familiar with the history of the church and with the leaders of the church, and he is about to make a blanket pronouncement based upon his special position and insider knowledge. And what is the pronouncement that he is about to make? Listen to it.

Elder Ballard: *There has been no attempt, on the part, in any way, of the church leaders, trying to hide anything from anybody.*

Elder Ballard boldly proclaims that no church leaders have ever tried to hide anything from anybody. And now he segues, as is customary at this point, into the Joseph Smith Papers Project.⁵

Now on the one hand, the church's efforts in publishing the Joseph Smith Papers does show a tendency toward more transparency, but it has nothing to do with whether the church has hidden things from its members in the past, as Elder Ballard denies; or whether it continues to currently hide things from its members, as Elder Ballard denies. It is what we in the business like to call a red herring.

Elder Ballard: *Now we've had the Joseph Smith Papers, we didn't have those, where they're in our hands now, and so we're learning more about the Prophet Joseph. It's wonderful we are! There's volumes of it.*

⁴[http://www.jamesjudithmconkie.com/uploads/3/8/0/8/38081735/dialogue_larson_another_look_at_joseph_smith's_first_vision_\(2\).pdf](http://www.jamesjudithmconkie.com/uploads/3/8/0/8/38081735/dialogue_larson_another_look_at_joseph_smith's_first_vision_(2).pdf)

⁵ <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/>

There's so much in those books now on my bookshelf, maybe you've read them all (to Elder Oaks), but I haven't gotten, I'm a slow reader.

Elder Oaks: *There's this much! (Stretching hands apart from each other to demonstrate.)*

The Joseph Smith Papers project is indeed sizeable; it is so large and so many volumes that Elder Ballard has not read them all; Elder Oaks apparently has not read them all. Nor should any member of the church reasonably be expected to have the time to read them all. Though they are out there, they are largely unaccessed and inaccessible due to time constraints, at least for the non-scholar average member of the church. Which gives the Joseph Smith Papers project the effect of, if not the appearance of being a document dump.

Now having used the 1970 *Improvement Era* article on the First Vision accounts and the Joseph Smith Papers Project as his examples, Elder Ballard concludes with the ultimate reason why it is you should trust him that the church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody. And that simple reason is . . . that you should trust him that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody. Here he goes.

Elder Ballard: *So, Just trust us, wherever you are in the world, and you share this message with anyone else who raises the question about the church not being transparent. We're as transparent as we know how to be in telling the truth. We have to do that. It's the Lord's way.*

That is the end of the quote from Elder Ballard. We need to trust him that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody, they are being as transparent as they know how to be, and they have to tell the truth because that is the Lord's way.

There are a number of things I could talk about in relation to the face to face presentation, but for purposes of this podcast I am going to focus exclusively on this statement by Elder Ballard. Elder Ballard has had a bit of a rocky road in public statements he has made leading up to this face to face presentation.

I have collected four of them and I want to quote them for you now. Because Elder Ballard, even in the space of a year, and in fact for the last couple of months leading up to this presentation, has had problems keeping his story straight. It is hard to figure out where he is coming from because he seems to change his position with some frequency on several fundamental issues.

For example, in a CES address on February 29, 2016, Elder Ballard said, “Gone are the days when a student asks an honest question and a teacher responds, ‘Don’t worry about it.’ Gone are the days when a student raised a sincere concern and the teacher bore his or her testimony as a response intended to **avoid** the issue.”⁶

Now, when Elder Ballard said this in the CES address in February of 2016, this comment was greeted with cheers from some quarters. Indeed it was time to start answering questions and not say “don’t worry about it” or bear their testimony in order to **avoid** answering the issue. In seeming contradiction to this position, however, in the promotional video to this very young single adult face to face presentation which was issued in early November of 2017, Elder Ballard says that to be honest, he does not have answers to some of the questions being asked by the young single adults and those are the questions he **avoids**.⁷ How do we square the statement by Elder Ballard in early November of 2017 with what he said back in February of 2016? Should difficult questions from LDS members be avoided or shouldn’t they? It seems that what he is doing is contradicting the advice he was giving the CES teachers back in February of 2016.

⁶ <https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/evening-with-a-general-authority/2016/02/the-opportunities-and-responsibilities-of-ces-teachers-in-the-21st-century?lang=eng>

⁷ Again due to the church apparently having pulled the promotional video from YouTube, this citation directs you to the full audio repeated in the Radio Free Mormon podcast on the subject.
<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2017/11/radio-free-mormon-019-table-scraps-train-wrecks-information-avoidance/>

But the contradictions continue in another statement by Elder Ballard; this one from the most recent general conference in October of 2017. There, Elder Ballard warned, “Be aware of organizations groups or individuals claiming **secret answers to doctrinal questions** that they say **today’s apostles and prophets do not have or understand.**”⁸ In seeming contradiction to this, in a devotional address given at BYU one week before the face to face presentation, a devotional address held on November 14, 2017, Elder Ballard says the following, “I am a general authority but that doesn’t make me an authority in general. I worry that members expect too much from their leaders and teachers, **expecting them to be experts in areas and topics well beyond their expertise. If you have a question that requires an expert, please take the time to find an expert to help you.**”⁹

Though one could argue that maybe Elder Ballard is talking about astronomy or psychology or anything other than the doctrines of the church, it is important to note he makes this statement in context of talking about the upcoming young single adults face to face presentation, which is only five days away as of the date he gives this BYU devotional address. And he goes on to talk about the questions they have received and mentions some of the questions that are being asked by the young single adults, and gives some answers to them.¹⁰ So when he says that he worries that members expect too much from their leaders and teachers, expecting them to be experts in topics well beyond their expertise, it sounds like he is talking about doctrinal questions about the church, and history questions about the church. At least I think that is the natural and straightforward interpretation of what it is he is saying.

⁸ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2017/10/the-trek-continues?lang=eng>

⁹ <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=elder+ballard+byu+devotional+2017&qpv=elder+ballard+byu+devotional+2017&view=detail&mid=933019CCBD04A8A74BC8933019CCBD04A8A74BC8&FORM=VRDGAR>

¹⁰ <https://news.byu.edu/news/byu-devotional-elder-ballards-questions-and-answers>

But how does that square with what he said in General Conference just last October? “**Be aware of organizations, groups and individuals claiming secret answers to doctrinal questions** that they say today’s apostles and prophets do not have or understand,” with the BYU devotional on November 14th only a month later, well maybe a month and a half later, where he says if you have a question that requires an expert, please take the time to find an expert to help you?

So as I say Elder Ballard comes into this face to face devotional with a somewhat shaky track record on the subject of difficult issues in the church. Are these difficult issues something that teachers in the church should address and not avoid as he said in February of 2016, or are they something that leaders in the church should ignore and avoid as he said in the promotional video? Are these difficult issues something that teachers and leaders should be expected to know the answer to? Or are these difficult issues something that teachers and leaders should not be expected to know, and instead an expert should be consulted? It is hard to know exactly where Elder Ballard stands on the issue except that he seems to stand in different and sometimes contradicting places depending on the time of day.

But in the face to face devotional, Elder Ballard outdoes even himself. He states that at no time in the history of the church have leaders of the church ever hidden anything from members of the church. He goes on to say that is not the Lord’s way. The problem with Elder Ballard’s statement is it just is not true.

I have assembled a list of twelve instances where church leaders have demonstrably hidden things from members of the church; which show that not only is Elder Ballard wrong when he says that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody, it also indicates strongly that Elder Ballard almost certainly knows that he is not telling the truth when he says that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody. Which means that even while he is saying the words that church leaders don’t hide things, he is in the very act of hiding things from the members of the church.

Example Number 1. The first example is the First Vision accounts. Since Elder Ballard was kind enough to bring up the First Vision accounts and cite to a 1970 *Improvement Era* article in order to show that the church has been upfront and open and always honest about telling the truth about its history, let's go back just a little bit in time to put this quote in context.

You may remember that about a year ago, Radio Free Mormon did an entire episode devoted to this issue.¹¹ We talked about and demonstrated how Joseph Fielding Smith, the Church Historian, found the 1832 account of the First Vision in a journal in the church archives. The 1832 account of the First Vision, as you recall, is significant because in it Joseph Smith mentions seeing only one person in the First Vision, not two as in subsequent recountings. It is the first recorded version that we have of the First Vision. It is also the only version that is recorded in Joseph Smith's own handwriting. Joseph Fielding Smith was a leader of the church. He was an apostle of the church and falls into this category where Elder Ballard has said *leaders of the church* have never hidden anything from anybody.

What was Joseph Fielding Smith's response when he happened upon the 1832 account of the First Vision in the 1930s? What he did was he took a pen knife, he cut the pages out of the book in which this was written by Joseph Smith, and he took those pages and he hid them in the vault in his office. Does that sound like church leaders hiding things from church members?

The 1832 account remained hidden in Joseph Fielding Smith's vault. He did not show this document (and there were other documents in the vault; it wasn't just this one thing that was sitting in his vault) he did not show it to anybody unless they came in with authority from somebody higher up the food chain than Joseph Fielding Smith in the church. And because Joseph Fielding Smith was an apostle, that food chain higher above him was extremely limited. I'm not going to go into all the details of the incident

¹¹ <http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/11/extra-radio-free-mormon-hiding-church-history/>

right now. You can go back and listen to the podcast. It's called, *Hiding Church History*, if you want the details. (You can also read Stan Larson's excellent 2014 Dialogue article on the subject.)¹²

Suffice it to say that Joseph Fielding Smith hid the 1832 account of the First Vision in his safe from the 1930s to the 1960s. It was in his safe for three decades. And the only reason Joseph Fielding Smith ever released it to the public is because the existence of the 1832 account of the First Vision was leaked to the press. In other words, it was found out publicly that he had possession of this document. So what did Joseph Fielding Smith do?

He surreptitiously took the 1832 account that he had cut out with a pen knife from the diary or the journal in the 1930s, and taped it back into the journal that he had cut it out of three decades previously. He then arranged to have a graduate student, Paul Cheeseman of BYU, directed toward its existence so that Paul Cheeseman could then write about it in his master's thesis. This was Joseph Fielding Smith's way of introducing this document into public discourse while maintaining plausible deniability that he had ever hid it in the first place.

It was not until the mid-1960s that Paul Cheeseman wrote his master's thesis, and the church never published Paul Cheeseman's master's thesis, or at least I should say the first person or first entity to publish Paul Cheeseman's master's thesis was the Tanners. (Gerald and Sandra Tanner were long standing publishers of critiques of the LDS Church, considered by the faithful to be anti-Mormon. And not only were they the first people to publish Paul Cheeseman's Master's Thesis, it appears they were also the first people to publish the 1832 First Vision Account itself.)¹³

¹²[http://www.jamesjudithmconkie.com/uploads/3/8/0/8/38081735/dialogue_larson_another_look_at_joseph_smith's_first_vision_\(2\).pdf](http://www.jamesjudithmconkie.com/uploads/3/8/0/8/38081735/dialogue_larson_another_look_at_joseph_smith's_first_vision_(2).pdf)

¹³ <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no100.htm#Suppressed>

Now you can imagine the firestorm of controversy and publicity this caused the church. And so not that long after, in 1970, James B. Allen writes an article for the *Improvement Era* in which he mentions the 1832 account of the First Vision. And if you actually look at the article you will see that he does so very glancingly, very apologetically. By which I mean putting on it the best spin possible, and while he does mention that Joseph Smith records seeing only one person in the 1832 account of the First Vision, the article immediately glosses it over and tries to show why it is no big deal.

And so what Elder Ballard is doing is pointing to a 1970 article that talks about the different accounts of the First Vision while entirely omitting the fact that a church leader had hidden the first account, the 1832 account, for decades in the church safe in the historian's office so it could not be seen by anybody.

Making it even stranger is the fact that this 1970 article in the *Improvement Era* that Elder Ballard refers to is not available on the church website. Let me repeat that: Elder Ballard refers to a 1970 article that is published by the church, and he says the church is not hiding anything, and yet this article itself is not available on the church website. Is that hiding something? I don't know. It is certainly a strange situation. (And it should be remembered that although I continue to repeat the article is found in a 1970 edition of *The Improvement Era*, Elder Ballard actually never mentions the name of the magazine, but simply says the article was written for "the church magazines.")

What is happening is not that the church has not hidden things. What the church did was it tried to control the information by hiding the 1832 account. And then, when it was leaked and it had to come out, they were forced to release it. And after they were forced to release it, they tried to control the narrative. So once having lost the battle to control the information by hiding it, then they tried to control the narrative as they did in this 1970 *Improvement Era* article. And Elder Ballard continues to try to control the

narrative by using the First Vision accounts as an example of the church not hiding stuff, when actually this is a classic example of the church hiding stuff!

The last thing I want to say about the First Vision accounts is, “Why is Elder Ballard referring his audience to a 1970 *Improvement Era* article (technically an article for “the church magazines”) that is not on the church website, while not mentioning to his audience that they can find the essay about the different First Vision accounts on the church website (still buried three-clicks deep)?¹⁴ One would get the idea that he really doesn’t want to talk about the essays that are on the church website. Instead he would rather talk about a 1970 article that is not available on the church website. Is Elder Ballard trying to hide something here, as well?

Example Number 2. The second example is that Joseph Smith lied about polygamy. We know a couple of things. Number one--We know Joseph Smith practiced polygamy. Number two--We know Joseph Smith lied about it.

In the church essay on the subject, the church itself admits that Joseph Smith lied about practicing polygamy.¹⁵ (This essay must be considered super sensitive, because instead of being buried three-clicks deep as are the other Gospel Topics essays, the website has been arranged to bury this particular essay not three clicks deep, but four! It is little wonder so many say they have difficulty locating the essays even when they are aware of their existence and trying to find them. Imagine how difficult it is to stumble across them if you do not know of their existence. One might start to think that is the idea.) Now, in the church essay it doesn’t say he lied about it, because the church isn’t going to say Joseph Smith “lied” about it. Instead, if you remember, the church admits that Joseph Smith issued “carefully worded denials” about practicing polygamy. Which is a nice way of saying he was lying about it.¹⁶

14 <https://www.lds.org/topics/first-vision-accounts?lang=eng>

15 <https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng>

But by the way, there are some listeners to this podcast who believe in their heart of hearts that Joseph Smith did not practice polygamy. And I want to be sensitive to their feelings as much as I can, and I do want to respect their opinions. But the fact is, it doesn't make any difference whether Joseph Smith practiced polygamy as far as this argument goes, because the church in its essay **admits** that the LDS Church **does** believe Joseph Smith practice polygamy.

So what we have is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints admitting in their essay (which is found by the way on the church website) that Joseph Smith practiced polygamy, and also admitting that Joseph Smith denied he was practicing polygamy while he was practicing polygamy. He was **hiding** it. So from the LDS Church's perspective, which Elder Ballard represents by the way, the church admits that Joseph Smith hid the practice of polygamy in which he was secretly engaged. And yet Elder Ballard says that the church leaders have never in the whole history of the church ever hidden anything from anybody. So what I am saying here is that this a second example of church leaders hiding things from the members in contradiction to what Elder Ballard declared in the face to face devotional

Example Number 3. The third example is post manifesto polygamy. Now it's a big phrase. I expect that most of my listeners know immediately what I am talking about. But let me break it down for you quickly. In 1890 President Wilford Woodruff declared that there would be no more plural marriage in the LDS Church. This is called The Manifesto. You can find The Manifesto printed in your triple combination in Official Declaration 1.¹⁷

This is what you find there written by President Wilford Woodruff. He is responding to reports in the press that the leaders of the church have taught and encouraged the continuance of the practice of polygamy. Wilford Woodruff then says, "In the most solemn manner, I declare that these charges are

16 Actually, the essay itself doesn't even say Joseph Smith's name in this particular admission, but simply refers to "church leaders and members" generically. It is clear they are having a difficult time putting this in print.

17 <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/1?lang=eng>

false. We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice.”

He goes on to say, “Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by congress forbidding plural marriage, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the church over which I preside to have them do likewise.” This was a lie.

Because after 1890; after The Manifesto was issued; church leaders at the highest levels did indeed solemnize plural marriages for different members of the church.¹⁸ And not only that, Wilford Woodruff himself, seven years after he issued The Manifesto saying that they were not practicing plural marriage anymore, married another wife in addition to the other wives he already had. Seven years after he issues The Manifesto, in 1897, Wilford Woodruff enters into another polygamous marriage.¹⁹ Was the church hiding anything there?

So at first they issued The Manifesto in 1890, and the Second Manifesto was issued in 1904, fourteen years later. They said this time we really mean it. That’s why there was a need for a second manifesto.

Not only was the church hiding its practice of plural marriage, its continuing practice of plural marriage, between The Manifesto in 1890 and the Second Manifesto in 1904, the church continued to hide this fact from its members afterward. So much so that D. Michael Quinn, who published a paper dealing with post manifesto polygamy, was excommunicated from the church in 1993 largely because he

18 http://www.mormonismi.net/kirjoitukset/quinn_moniavioisuus.shtml

19 http://www.mormonismi.net/kirjoitukset/quinn_moniavioisuus.shtml, section X. Although Quinn finds the circumstantial evidence for this 1897 plural marriage “compelling,” the church essay acknowledges the allegation but dismisses it on the basis the “historical record” makes it “unclear.” <https://www.lds.org/topics/the-manifesto-and-the-end-of-plural-marriage?lang=eng#36>. This is all but hidden at the very bottom of footnote 36 in the essay.

published the scholarship on the subject.²⁰ Does that sound like church leaders were trying to hide anything?

Example number 4 is the Adam-God teaching of Brigham Young. Brigham Young taught that Adam was God. This was covered in a prior podcast by Bill Reel.²¹ The short story is that Brigham Young taught that Adam was God. He taught this on numerous times, in numerous venues, for twenty-five years. But after he died, the church gradually came to the point where it realized it didn't like the teaching, and it was going to do away with the Adam-God teaching. But the way they decided to do away with the teaching was to deny that Brigham Young ever taught it. They would hide that fact.

So in 1976 President Spencer W. Kimball, as president of the church, gets up in General Conference and denies that Brigham Young (or any general authority) ever taught the Adam-God Doctrine.²²

And in the more recent church manual on the teachings of the presidents of the church, in the manual involving the teachings of Brigham Young, they quote Brigham Young from the very sermons in which he is teaching Adam-God, but they quote him so selectively, and carved out his quotation and removed it from the context of what he is saying so completely, that it can be used in the church manual to promote the current orthodox teaching on the subject, which is that Adam is **not** God.²³ Does that sound like the church is hiding anything?

And by the way, I do think the church should get some credit for publishing the essays on the church website. I do not think they go far enough. I still think they are spinning things. I still think they

20 <http://www.pbs.org/mormons/interviews/quinn.html>

21 <http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/09/premium-adam-god-historical-subterfuge/>

22 "We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine."

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/10/our-own-liahona?lang=eng>

23 <http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/09/premium-adam-god-historical-subterfuge/>

hide things. (Can you say “several months before her 15th birthday”?)²⁴ And I can document that. And maybe I will do that in a future podcast.

The point I am trying to make here is it appears the essays are done, and yet there is no essay on the Adam-God doctrine. I don't know why that is. But I can guess that the church doesn't want to admit that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine because it feels that doing so would be throwing red meat to the polygamous sects that broke away from the LDS Church, who do believe the Adam-God doctrine, and also believe and continue to practice polygamy.

Example Number 5 is Mark Hofmann. Now you may remember Mark Hoffman. Back in the early 1980s, he was in the business of selling fraudulent documents to the LDS Church. The document that is most remember is sometimes called the Salamander Letter.²⁵ But there was another controversial document he sold to the LDS Church. And that was a document that was purportedly in the handwriting of Joseph Smith, and it dealt with his early history in treasure digging.²⁶ At the time, in the early 1980s, the church was still very much invested in hiding the fact that Joseph Smith was a treasure digger before he became the prophet of the LDS Church.²⁷ This document was not faith promoting.

Mark Hoffman bypassed church archives and went directly to the office of Gordon B. Hinckley. (This easy direct access to Gordon B. Hinckley suggests the familiar relationship the two had developed.) Yes, it was Gordon B. Hinckley who was involved in this, and I know this may disappoint some people who have a high opinion of Gordon B. Hinckley. At the time Gordon B. Hinckley was not president. He was a counselor in the first presidency under Spencer W. Kimball. This was January of 1983.

24 <https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng>

25 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salamander_letter

26 <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/trackingch6b.htm>

27 <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/09/joseph-smiths-reputation/among-historians?lang=eng>

Mark Hofmann went to Gordon B. Hinckley in his office with this letter and offered to sell it to the church. The letter mentioned clever spirits that would guard treasure sites and recommended techniques for foiling them.²⁸ Altogether this letter was a very big embarrassment to the church. It is not known what was said by Mark Hofmann to Gordon B. Hinckley. What is known is that Gordon B. Hinckley took out a checkbook and wrote a check to Mark Hofmann for fifteen thousand dollars. Mark Hoffman took the check, and Gordon B. Hinckley took the letter.²⁹

Now what happened after this meeting in January of 1983 is significant. There were no press conferences about the letter. There were no articles in church magazines about the letter. In fact, Gordon B. Hinckley took the letter and squirreled it away, and hid it with the idea in mind that it would not come to the attention of the members of the church. Does this sound like church leaders hiding things from the members Elder Ballard?

What ended up happening is that this letter was hidden by the church for over two years and would have remained hidden indefinitely except for the fact that Mark Hofmann called up the *Los Angeles Times* and leaked the fact that his own forged letter had been bought by the church, and was in possession of the church. (Hofmann didn't say it was forged, of course.) And he told the *Los Angeles Times* what it contained. The *LA Times* called the church and asked for verification about whether they had bought this letter. The church denied having bought the letter. The *LA Times* said they were going to run with the story anyway, and the church headquarters went into DEFCON 1 trying to figure out how it was they could release the letter in advance of the *LA Times* ' story.³⁰

28 https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=Rwca6Czn&id=E397C40E929FDEFEC6D94B40AB97153608692317&thid=OIP.Rwca6CzneWeOE8--tjZiywDtEs&mediurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.utlm.org%2Fimages%2Ftracking%2Ftrackingp87_josiahstowell.jpg&exph=820&expw=650&q=hofmann+forgery%2c+joseph+smith+letter+to+josiah+stoal&selectedindex=1&qpv=hofmann+forgery%2c+joseph+smith+letter+to+josiah+stoal&ajaxhist=0

29 <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/056-23-29.pdf>

30 <http://www.mormonstories.org/brent-metcalf-mark-hofmann-salamander-letter-bombings/>

This is what the church does. And once again this is a pattern. It's the same kind of thing that happened with the 1832 account of the First Vision. They find something, or in this case they buy something, that is damaging to the church. They hide it away. They keep it hidden. They keep it secret. They keep it safe. And then if it gets leaked to the press and the public finds out that you have it, then what you do is try to figure out a way as quickly as possible to release it publicly so that you can then look like that you were being upfront about this the whole time.

Well I'm sorry. You do not get credit for being open and honest and transparent with your members when you hide things and the only reason that you release these damaging things is because you got caught hiding them. That doesn't fly. It does not suddenly mean that you are not hiding things. It means that you are hiding things and then you get caught.

And by the way these two examples, especially these two examples, where we know that the church hid documents that were damaging to church history, and released them only after their existence was leaked to the press, is why it is that members of the church, when they find out about these episodes, lose faith in their leaders. They lose trust in their leaders. What was it said, Elder Ballard? You said you can "trust us" that the church doesn't hide things.

Well when we know the facts, we know that we **can't** trust you, Elder Ballard. We can't trust any of the church leaders, because we know that you will hide things and you will lie about things you have hidden. You want to protect us. I know you think you are doing God's work. I know you think you are protecting our testimonies. I know that you think it is more important to protect our testimonies and get us into the celestial kingdom than it is to give us the full truth that might remove us from the church, affect our testimonies and keep us from being exalted.

I understand where you are coming from. But the fact is that you can't sit on the stage with Elder Oaks (and we'll get to Elder Oaks shortly; believe me he's not going to escape unscathed in this) and declare to the world that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody.

The other point I want to make about this is that when the members of the church find out that the church hidden things, and then lies about hiding them, it makes us wonder what things do you have that are damaging to the church that are hidden away that you **haven't** told us about, and that you have not released to the public because their existence has not been leaked yet. Now some may think that is an idle question. Because how can we know what's in the vault? Well how **can** we know what's in the vault?

All we know is that on these two specific occasions, with the 1832 account of the First Vision, and the treasure digging letter by Mark Hofmann, the church has an established track record of taking things damaging to the church, hiding them, and refusing to release them until their existence is leaked. And that leads us to wonder what do you have now that is damaging to the church that you haven't released because their existence hasn't been leaked. That was example number five. Now for example number six.

Example Number 6. Elder Boyd K Packers' talk, *The Mantle is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect*.³¹ It is incredible to me that Elder Ballard would sit up there and say that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody when Elder Packer's talk, *The Mantle is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect*, is a blue print; it is a smoking gun. I did an episode on this talk. It was the first episode that I did on Radio Free Mormon called *The Great Church History Cover-up*, which went into detail into this talk given by Boyd K. Packer August 22, 1981 to the Church Education System.³²

In summary, Boyd K. Packer admitted that he knows there is damaging information about the church in existence, and he told the CES instructors, in other words the seminary instructors, the teachers

31 https://www.uvu.edu/religiousstudies/docs/msc_packer_mantle.pdf

32 <http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/10/extra-behind-enemy-lines-great-mormon-history-coverup/>

of the young people, the BYU professors, that they were not to talk about the damaging information; that they were not to publish the damaging information; that they were only to publish the faith promoting, whitewashed, correlated, sanitized version of church history. He told them that they were supposed to **hide** the negative aspects of church history. And he went further than that and said that if anybody who was employed by the church disregarded his counsel and did publish negative aspects of church history, then they would be looking for a job, and they would certainly be spending eternity someplace hotter than the celestial kingdom.

Example No. 7. Now we get to Elder Oaks. Because on August 16, 1985, four years after Boyd K. Packer gave his talk (referred to above), Elder Oaks gave a talk to the same audience, to the CES, church educational system people, and what he did was he took the same position that Elder Packer had staked out four years previously.³³

And by the way, yes, this is Elder Oaks, Elder Dallin H. Oaks, it's the same Elder Oaks who as sitting up there with Elder Ballard on November 19, 2017, while Elder Ballard says the leaders of the church have never hidden anything from its members. This is what Elder Oaks said in 1985. "I have chosen to speak on how church history should be read, especially the so-called history."

Now what Elder Oaks means by "so-called history" is negative information about the church. In any other context that would be real history. But for him it is "so-called history." He goes on to say, "The fact that something is true is not always a justification for communicating it." Let me say that again; "The fact that something is true is not always a justification for communicating it." He is saying the exact same thing that Elder Packer said four years before in his famous phrase that "not all truths are useful." Elder Oaks believes the exact same thing. Just because something is true does not justify communicating it.

33 http://scottwoodward.org/Talks/html/Oaks,%20Dallin%20H/OaksDH_ReadingChurchHistory.html

So there are some truths that should be hidden. And then he goes on to make this astonishing admission--Elder Oaks from 1985—"Balance is telling both sides." Well I'm glad he knows what balance is. "Balance is telling both sides," but he goes on to say this is not the mission of official church literature. Can you believe that he said that? Yes, that's what he said. This is not the mission of official church literature. It is not the mission of official church literature to be balanced. It is not the mission of official church literature to tell both sides. He is totally on board with what Elder Ballard said four years earlier.

Now in context what Elder Oaks is saying is, it is the responsibility of the media to be balanced, it is the responsibility of the media to tell both sides. Because this is 1985 and what is blowing up? If you said Mark Hofmann, you're right, Those documents are blowing up, and I'm sorry for that use of an unfortunate pun. It was unintended. It was said with absolutely no malice aforethought. And the media is coming out and it is slamming church leaders for hiding church documents.

And this is something I have to add in here: Elder Oaks was one of the two top church leaders involved in this episode. He was involved in the press conferences. The other one was Gordon B. Hinckley. If you go back and research this you will find that this is the case.³⁴ Dallin Oaks knew everything that was going on with the documents being purchased. He knew they were attempted to be hidden, and he knew that they were hidden until their existence was leaked to the press.³⁵ That is why it is so phenomenal that Elder Oaks is actually on the same stage with Elder Ballard when Elder Ballard was saying that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody. Because Elder Oaks knows perfectly well that he has done exactly that!

³⁴ See, for example, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/10/recent-events-involving-church-history-and-forged-documents?lang=eng>

³⁵ Elder Dallin Oaks does his best to sidestep allegations of church suppression of the Hofmann documents in the 1987 article cited above. The facts relating to the treasure digging letter are simple. Gordon B. Hinckley purchased it in January of 1983. The church did not release it until the summer of 1985, two and a half years later, and only after publicly denying possessing the letter. <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/050-36-41.pdf>

Getting back to the Elder Oaks' quote which is talking about the media; he is really complaining about the media slamming the church. He says that the media needs to be balanced. This is what he says, "Balance is telling both sides. This is not the mission of official church literature or avowedly anti-Mormon literature. Neither has any responsibility to present both sides." So he is saying that anti-Mormons have no responsibility to present both sides. But critically, he is also saying the same thing about the church. The church has no responsibility to present both sides of the issue. The church's only responsibility is to tell one side of the issue; the faith promoting side; the faith promoting history; and to disregard, to not talk about, to **hide** all the negative aspects of church history. This is example seven.

Example Number 8 is in 1984. Boy, they're really cropping up here in the 1980's aren't they? This is the General Conference talk in 1984 by Elder Ronald Poelman. He was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he gave a talk in General Conference which has become quite well known. The reason it became quite well known is because he said something very different from what other General Authorities before and after have said.

The main message of the church has been that you have to rely on your leaders from cradle to grave. You go along with what the church leaders say no matter what it is. No matter what your views, no matter what your personal feelings may be, when the leaders speak, the debate is over.³⁶ What Ronald Poelman was saying was, well yes, that's true in one's initial stages in the church. But ideally the goal of the church is to have a person progress to the point where their center of authority is not in the leaders of the church. It is actually inside themselves.

He got away somehow with giving this talk in General Conference in October of 1984, but as soon as he gave this talk it was deemed to be improper, incorrect. It needed revision. So instead of publicly saying that Elder Poelman gave a talk that had some incorrect ideas in it and correcting the record, what

³⁶ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/08/the-debate-is-over?lang=eng>

the church did was something very different. What the church did was something surreptitious. What the church did was something that might be considered, oh, I don't know, hiding things.

What they did was bring Elder Poelman back into the tabernacle; General Conference was broadcast from the tabernacle back in 1984; everybody has gone home. His talk is completely rewritten by somebody else, presumably to change its meaning to make it match with what he was supposed to say. He was marched back into the tabernacle, the cameras were set up again, he was required to give the new and improved version of the talk and then that new and improved version, the changed version of the talk, was substituted in for his real talk in the video tapes that were produced and distributed by the church of General Conference.³⁷

In fact, if you go to the church website and look at the 1984 general conference, you look at Elder Poelman's address, what you will find there is, inserted in where he gave his original version, is the new talk.³⁸ And when you look at it and you know that that is what happened, it is quite obvious that is what is taking place. For example, if you go onto the church website and you look at all the speakers before him and all the speakers after him, you will see the lights come down slowly as they begin their talk, and you will see the members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sitting behind them, and you will see their figures as the lights go down and then it becomes black and you just see the speaker. There is one exception to that. It's Elder Poelman.

When Elder Poelman gets up there, it is totally black behind him, because there are no members of the choir there. There is no audience there. And in fact, it appears there was a cough track added to his second talk to make it sound like there was actually an audience there in the tabernacle when there was no

37 <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/elder-poelmans-most-famous-speech/>

38 https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1984/10/the-gospel-and-the-church?lang=eng&_r=1

audience there.³⁹ It is incredibly Orwellian, of course that this talk would happen in 1984. Thank you, George Orwell.

And you can find the first version and the second version of Elder Poelman's talk on the Internet with all the changes.⁴⁰ Let me read you just one that is illustrative. This is from the first version of Elder Poelman's talk: "The orthodoxy on which we insist must be founded on fundamental principles of eternal law." Now that remains the same in the new and improved version, but in the first version he goes on to say, "**including free agency and the divine uniqueness of the individual.**" You see how he focuses on free agency and the divine uniqueness of the individual. That is important to Elder Poelman. Once again, "The orthodoxy on which we insist must be founded on fundamental principles of eternal law including free agency" (this is the part that will be changed) "including free agency and the divine uniqueness of the individual."

In the new and improved version, this is what it was changed to; the first part is the same, "The orthodoxy on which we insist must be founded in fundamental principles, eternal law," and now the new part, "**and direction given by those authorized in the church.**" So instead of the first version of the talk where he focuses on free agency and the divine uniqueness of the individual as being fundamental to orthodoxy, it is changed in the new and improved version; instead of free agency and divine uniqueness being important, it is now "direction given by those authorized in the church."

As I say, this is merely an illustrative example to show the change between the first talk and the second talk. There are many other changes, additions and deletions that are made between the two. Once again, you can find these on the Internet. Getting back to Elder Ballard's quote that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody. Do you think that qualifies, Elder Ballard?

39 <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/045-44-57.pdf>

40 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qlr30dtCvo>

Example number 9—I think I mentioned it before but maybe I didn't. I'm getting a little exercised here; about the 1970 *Improvement Era* article that Elder Ballard references. He has it in a little black binder with him on the stage. One of the ironies is that this article is not available on the church website. Yes, I did mention it, now I remember, but it doesn't stop there.

Not only is this *Improvement Era* article not available on the church website, no General Conference talks before 1971 are available on the church website.⁴¹ Does that sound like they're hiding anything?

Also the Journal of Discourses is not available on the church website. Does that sound like they're hiding anything?

And not only that, the Lectures on Faith are not available on the church website. You will recall I did an episode on this as well.⁴² The Lectures on Faith were the “doctrine” in the Doctrine and Covenants. They were originally published in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, where they remained for many, many years until the early part of the 20th century when they were finally removed from a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. So even though the “doctrine” was taken out of the Doctrine and Covenants, the book still retained the name of Doctrine and Covenants. It was done without a church vote, and the reason why is because of Lecture Number Five.

There are seven lectures in the Lectures on Faith. Lecture Number Five taught a very different and conflicting idea about the nature of god to what the church believes today. It does not teach that God has a body of flesh and bones, as tangible as man's, the Son also, and the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit, as in the current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.⁴³

41 <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/conferences?lang=eng>

42 <http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2017/03/extra-radio-free-mormon-amazing-contradicting-joseph-smith/>

43 <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/130?lang=eng>

Instead it taught that there are only **two** people in the Godhead, God the Father and Jesus Christ; the Holy Ghost not being a separate personage, but simply being the “mind” that is shared by the Father and the Son. It further taught that the Father does not have a resurrected body of flesh and bones; Jesus does, but not the Father; the Father instead is a personage of spirit in the Lectures on Faith.⁴⁴

This is why it was removed from the Doctrine and Covenants in the early part of the 20th century. This is why I expect the Lectures on Faith are not available on the church website. Does this sound like church leaders are hiding things from the church members?

Example Number 10—Now we come to 1993 when Elder Oaks got caught lying in public. And what he got caught lying about was the excommunication of one of the members of the September Six, whose name was Paul Toscano.

The problem here is that six people were excommunicated in September of 1993; it was widely thought, and not without reason, that these excommunications happening all at the same time to prominent people publishing on controversial church topics must be orchestrated by the highest levels of the LDS Church. In other words, what are the odds that six different stake presidents are going to be excommunicating six people all at the same time?⁴⁵ The second problem is that the LDS Church at the time, as they do today, was trying to float the story that church leaders had nothing to do with these local disciplinary issues, but this was just different stake presidents being moved upon by the Holy Ghost at the same time to excommunicate these six controversial scholars.

During this time period, the story began to leak out that actually that was not the case; that in fact Elder Boyd K. Packer had been in contact with Paul Toscano’s stake president. His name was Kerry Heinz. So going back to Elder Oaks, in a story run by the *Arizona Republic*, who interviewed Elder Oaks,

⁴⁴ <http://www.lecturesonfaith.com/5/>

⁴⁵ Technically five excommunicated and one disfellowshipped.

Elder Oaks reaffirmed that the sanctions on these different scholars were not part of an orchestrated effort to silence critics. And when he was specifically asked whether Boyd K. Packer had had any contact with Paul Toscano's stake president, Elder Oaks said "I have no knowledge of whether he (Elder Packer) did meet with Heinz."⁴⁶

Now remember, this statement by Elder Oaks was shortly after General Conference in October of 1993. The problem is that Elder Oaks was caught off base lying when he said he had no knowledge of whether Elder Packer had met with Heinz, in other words, Paul Toscano's stake president. Because in fact he **did** know that Elder Packer had met with Paul Toscano's stake president. And the fact that he knew was told to Ezra Taft Benson's grandson, Steve Benson.

You see, Steve Benson met with Elder Oaks and Elder Neal Maxwell in September of 1993. And in that meeting, Elder Oaks specifically told Steve Benson that Elder Packer had had contact with Paul Toscano's stake president. So when Steve Benson heard Elder Oaks, or read about Elder Oaks, denying any knowledge of Boyd K. Packer meeting with Paul Toscano's stake president, Steve Benson faxed Elder Oaks a letter reminding him that in their September meeting, Elder Oaks had said, speaking about Boyd K. Packer, "You can't stage manage a grizzly bear." Elder Oaks added, "It was a mistake for Packer to meet with Heinz, and a mistake for Heinz to ask for the meeting."

So let me break this down; in a private meeting with Steve Benson in September of 1993, Elder Oaks said that he **does** know that Elder Packer had a meeting with the stake president; less than two months later he's being asked questions by a reporter, and he says he **doesn't** know whether Elder Packer had any meetings with the stake president. He goes to the old "I had no knowledge of that" routine when he certainly knew very well, as manifested by the fact that he told it to Steve Benson. But we don't have to just go by what Steve Benson said in order to understand this is what really happened. In other words,

46 <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/092-65-79.pdf>

we don't have to take Steve Benson's word over Elder Oaks. Because Elder Oaks then admitted the fact that he had "misspoken," uh, which is a nice word for "lie," after receiving Steve Benson's letter.

Elder Oaks refused to discuss most of the contents of Steve Benson's letter. However, concerning his "no knowledge" quote about the Packer/Heinz meeting, he said it was a statement "I could not defend. It was not a truthful statement." So Elder Oaks **admitted** that he told the press something that was not true when he said he had no knowledge about the meeting between Elder Packer and the stake president.⁴⁷

But Elder Oaks tried to shift responsibility away from himself to Steve Benson by blaming him for revealing the contents of a confidential communication. What Elder Oaks said about that to an AP reporter was, "Steve Benson is just going to have to carry the responsibility for whatever he relates about a confidential meeting."⁴⁸ There was nothing in there about Elder Oaks having to bear any responsibility for lying to the press.

So that story seemed to get a bit complicated, but I wanted to try and make sure I explained it well as I possibly could. In summary, Elder Oaks, yes, the same Elder Oaks who is on the stage with Elder Ballard at the face to face devotional; in 1993, knew that Elder Boyd K. Packer had been in direct communication with the stake president of Paul Toscano, one of the September Six. Yet, when asked about it by the press, he denied any knowledge of it. And then when called on it, he admitted that his statement could not be justified. Does that sound like church leaders hiding anything from the members, Elder Ballard?

And how strange it is that you are sitting up there right next to the man who did it. Okay, that was example number 10.

⁴⁷ Elder Oaks would attempt to excuse his misstatement on the basis he was talking too quickly.

⁴⁸ <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/092-65-79.pdf>

Example number 11 has to do with this entire face to face devotional. It is clear as crystal that this entire presentation has been organized. All the questions have been vetted in advance. We know that through the promotional video. We know that from the introductory comments in the presentation itself. These questions have been vetted.

Elder Oaks says in the face to face that they have received over 4,000 questions, and that they haven't read them all but they had help from unnamed sources collating and categorizing these different questions, and ultimately these are the questions that were picked to be answered.

They had several weeks to prepare, they have a lot of staff able to work on it to prepare the presentation, because the last thing they want is some kind of crazy question, or difficult question, or question that they don't know the answers to which they're going to try to avoid, coming at them from left field .

Elder Ballard (as well as Elder Oaks) even has a notebook on stage so he can use it to refer to when he is answering some of these questions, so obviously he knows what is coming. This is a loosely scripted performance.

And yet at several points during the face to face presentation, they try to present it as if this is all spontaneous and off the cuff. At the beginning, the young man who is hosting the presentation along with a young woman, invites the people who are watching, the young single adults who are watching, to text in questions during the presentation, as if just anybody can just text in a question and have it not vetted, not prepared for, not researched in advance, and have it asked off the cuff to these apostles. And the reason he does that is to make the entire presentation look like it's not scripted, which it obviously is.

In fact, he follows up on that suggestion that people can text in their questions by announcing in the middle of the presentation a new question which he says has just been texted in by a young single adult somewhere in the world, and then he reads the questions. That did not happen. There was no young single

adult who texted in a question in the middle of the presentation, and then it was responded to by the two apostles without it being first vetted and prepared for on their part. So my question here in example number eleven is, “Does this count as deception? Does this count as hiding things?”

And in the very presentation in which Elder Ballard claims that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody, are they in fact trying to hide the fact that this is a staged performance and all the questions have been vetted in advance?

This may seem a small thing in this context, but think about the national outcry that ensued when a similar thing turned out to be happening by a presidential candidate during a presidential debate; that she knew the questions in advance because they were being fed to her by Donna Brazile. She knew the questions in advance, she was able to prepare the answers in advance, while all the time giving the impression that she was fielding them off the cuff.⁴⁹

All I am saying is that most Mormons were very upset when they heard that news, and is it appreciably different to have the same thing happening when two leaders of the church are doing the same thing?

Example number 12 is astonishing. If you recall, Elder Ballard had already said in the promotional video which was issued a little over two weeks before the presentation itself that they don’t have answers to all the questions, and that those are the questions they will avoid. So we already know from his own mouth that there are some questions that they have received that they don’t know the answers to, which I think really means they don’t like the answers to, they don’t want to give the answers to, because then it goes into the negative aspects of church history that Elder Oaks in 1985 has already gone on record that the church has no responsibility to be talking about.

49 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/07/donna-brazile-is-totally-not-sorry-for-leaking-cnn-debate-questions-to-hillary-clinton/?utm_term=.0dc6cef8a970

We already know that there are certain subjects and certain conversations and certain questions that are off-limits; that are not going to be allowed to be asked, because Elder Ballard said they are going to avoid those questions. And yet it is that same Elder Ballard who at the face to face presentation itself says that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody.

Well, are you a church leader, Elder Ballard? And what are these questions that you are avoiding? And why don't you have answers to them? Are you and Elder Oaks not both prophets, seers and revelators? And do you think not telling us what difficult questions you are avoiding qualifies as hiding something from somebody? Because if so, you have already refuted and contradicted your own statement in the face to face presentation by your statement in the promotional video for the face to face presentation.

And finally, I've given you a dozen examples of church leaders hiding things from members of the church. I'll make it a baker's dozen and give you number thirteen, which is a quote from Elder Snow.

Example Number 13. Elder Snow is the LDS Church Historian. He gave a statement on November 8, 2013, and what he says is that the church in the past has not been transparent about its history, and its information; that they're working on it, they're trying to be better, they're trying to be more transparent.

But the logical conclusion of what he says is, if the church has not been transparent in the past, then church leaders have been, repeat it with me, hiding things from the members. Here's what Elder Snow says, "I think in the past there was a tendency to keep a lot of the records closed or at least not give access to the information." (Does that sound like someone hiding anything?)⁵⁰

It goes on, "But the world has changed in the last generation." So now he not only admits that in the past the church has hidden things, he is going to talk about the reason that the church can no longer get away with hiding things, and therefore why it is the church is not hiding as much stuff as they used to;

50 <https://mi.byu.edu/truth-in-church-history-excerpts-from-the-religious-educators-qa-with-elder-steven-snow/>

because of the Internet. This quote establishes what I have said more than once, that the church was dragged kicking and screaming to the transparency table because of the Internet.

Here's his quote again, "I think in the past there was a tendency to keep a lot of the records closed, or at least not give access to the information. But the world has changed in the last generation with the access to information on the Internet (thank you Elder Snow!) we can't continue that pattern." What pattern? The pattern of hiding things. "We can't continue that pattern. I think we need to continue to be more open." Notice the use of the word "more." We need to be more open. We haven't always been open. We're not continuing to be open. We're not saying we'll be open in the future. He's saying in the past we have not been open, but we need to continue to be *more* open.

This statement alone is a direct contradiction to what Elder Ballard said at the face to face devotional November 19, 2017. Let me read his quote again. This is what Elder Ballard said. Compare this with what Elder Snow said only four years ago, "It's this idea that the church is hiding something, which we would have to say, as two apostles that have covered the world and know the history of the church, and know the integrity of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve from the beginning of time. There has been no attempt on the part, in any way, of the church leaders trying to hide anything from anybody."

Conclusion

So in conclusion, Elder Ballard claims the leaders of the church have never hidden anything from anybody at any time during the course of the church, even from the beginning of time. And tonight I have presented not one, not two, not three, but thirteen different instances of where church leaders have hidden things from members of the church.

Elder Ballard is not telling the truth. When Elder Ballard says "you can trust me," the one thing we know is that we cannot trust him. And in fact, during this comment, Elder Ballard chides his audience

about not researching and studying enough; that if they would have researched and studied enough, they would find things that have already been written about the different accounts of the First Vision, like the 1970 article in the *Improvement Era*.

He chides his audience for not doing enough research to realize that the church published on this 47 years ago. And he chides them about it in spite of the fact this article cannot be found on the church website. But the flip side of this argument is even more damning.

Because if his audience had done half as much research on the two gentlemen addressing them at the face to face devotional, Elder Oaks and Elder Ballard, the audience would find out that these two apostles cannot be trusted to tell them the truth.

That is the critical problem that the LDS Church faces today. They can either choose to be open and transparent about their history and about their doctrine, or they can cover it up and lie about it. Unfortunately, Elder Ballard and Elder Oaks specifically have chosen the second alternative. So when Elder Ballard says that church leaders have never hidden anything from anybody, not only is he lying, he is lying to cover up the lies.

This is how bad it is getting in the LDS Church. This is why members of the church are more and more losing faith in their leaders. And they're losing faith in their leaders because more and more members of the church are finding out that their leaders cannot be trusted. And statements like this by Elder Ballard make it even more difficult to trust him and the other apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This is how Elder Ballard blew up the church at the face to face devotional, November 19, 2017. And this is Radio Free Mormon signing off the air!