

Testimony of Dr Dan Fischer before Senate Judiciary Committee on July 24, 2008

Chairman and Members of the Committee, my name is Dan Fischer.

- I was born a third generation Polygamous Mormon. I grew up in the FLDS society. My wife was born fifth generation polygamous Mormon going back to when mainstream LDS were practicing polygamy. My father had three wives. I am or was the oldest of 36 children. At one time I had three wives.
- My grandfather spent 3 years in the Utah State Penitentiary for Polygamy. He had seven wives, and was the “prophet” of the precursor to current FLDS society in the late forties and early fifties (or at least was “prophet” until the last two leaders re-wrote the history in the late eighties).
- I was born and raised in this society complete with my path in life being determined by the leadership. I was raised according to FLDS doctrine. I lived the changes in the doctrines during the 50s to the mid-90s and have observed the changes since.
- My three wives were all married to me “by appointment”, as instructed by the FLDS leadership. Today, I’m monogamous and married to the second wife the leadership assigned me in 1973. We have been married 35 years this month. I had the very rare opportunity to obtain a college education in the sixties and seventies, graduating as a dentist in 1974. This was virtually unheard of then, as it is now.
- While I left the FLDS twelve years ago. I’ve witnessed for 50 years the pivotal changes that brought FLDS to what it is today.
- I am a cofounder with Micha Barach of The Diversity Foundation. Over the last four years, the foundation has been significantly engaged in helping about 230 expelled FLDS young people, most of them male. Most expenditures are for necessary psychological counseling, financial assistance, employment, housing and importantly, education. Some support has been allocated to fund legal civil action for a few of the boys. Generally, such legal actions are not undertaken to enrich the individual plaintiffs. For example, a pending case was filed for the purpose of generating a fund to help mothers with their children who need assistance upon leaving the FLDS.

When I travel across America and to international destinations, should the subject of FLDS and polygamy arise, the first expression is disbelief. How could this be occurring in America in the 21st century? The truth is much stranger and problematic than just the “novelty” of polygamy. Indeed, were several women and only one man decide to set up housekeeping in this day and

age, one would think that it should hardly be worth comment, when lifestyles previously considered unusual, exotic or even deviant, are finding their place in a more open and tolerant America. However, the polygamy I'm here to talk about is for more than just unusual housekeeping arrangements. Reality: The problems caused by the FLDS leadership are unacceptable whether they were polygamous or monogamous. Too often wrongful actions occur under the smoke screen of polygamy or "religious freedom". Unfortunately, FLDS polygamy has degenerated to a cult that is far from benign. Today, it is a society with absolute rule over the lives and thought of individuals and families; a society at odds with the laws that govern outsiders including "apostates" like myself and – "gentiles" such as all of you. That being said, many of these people are good caring human beings, at least amongst themselves.

While you'll probably gather important information related to tax fraud and welfare fraud, there are probably some who pay their taxes fairly and for sure there are some who are eligible for welfare and should be the recipients of its benefits. Furthermore, there are some destitute families who truly need welfare assistance and who are probably entitled to it. The fraud subject will probably tie to men who can provide economically for all their families but choose not to do so with the convenience of non-recorded "spiritual wives" and children versus "legal wives" and their children. And yes, the under-reporting of income as per tax fraud may connect to this subject as well.

There isn't time here today for me to share all the history that has occurred over the last two centuries which have spawned into the realities of the FLDS today. I have included what I believe to be a simple "milestone" timeline with approximate dates in my written report to help you better understand how the FLDS of today have evolved step-wise over more than a century. Understanding the history can be so important for so many reasons including decision making ones. What was once something that might have been termed a benign alternative lifestyle and/or religion has become a society which operates as a law unto itself as much as it possibly can.

It would be a mistake to assume that FLDS people are not intelligent and/or less than actively engaged in life. In fact, many FLDS are very intelligent and hard working. Many are very proficient with modern technology even sophisticated surveillance and the like. For example, in 2005, the former special investigator for the Utah Attorney General's office of Utah, Ron Barton shared with me that approximately \$600,000 had been granted to the FLDS Colorado City police by the Federal Government under provisions of the new Homeland Security program to attain sophisticated surveillance equipment. There is good reason to believe they have learned to use it for multiple purposes.

Family members are continually taught to separate themselves in every way from apostates/traitors and even taught by their prophet Warren Jeffs to do "...severely", meaning in strong absolute ways. FLDS members are beyond family level loyal; they are "exaltation level loyal. They are taught that they are God's chosen few. The children are born "covenant children, held back until the last days to usher in the millennial reign complete with God's destruction of all of North America, save the worthy of FLDS. The FLDS feel that they are a suppressed and persecuted people. They have banded together in a virtual "underground" way characteristic with what occurs when leadership of any society takes total control of both spiritual and temporal life. They along with their children have been raised as "calves in the stall" for many decades, being taught principally just what the master wants them to know. Their prophet is as their God. Whatever he says takes precedent over any previous scripture of any previous century. It can also take precedent over the laws of the United States.

Certainly, we in the United States all have and respect religious freedom, but the all encompassing control over mind, person, family, economics and more, exercised under the guise of religion, has moved FLDS to disturbing cult level proportions. Without question, FLDS members will sacrifice self, family and children if directed to by their leader. Their "salvation" as taught by their prophet is dependent on them obeying totally what their prophet requests no matter what! Even the freedom to travel by self determination or even to purchase automobiles or other items of lower value has been taken over by the leadership. For decades, home ownership and/or occupancy has been controlled by the leaders. Over the last 10 years, businesses have been controlled by leadership. The hiring or firing of employees especially as it relates to non-believers especially apostates, is almost always determined by the FLDS leadership. Who one is married to and when (including underage marriage) is totally under the control of FLDS leadership. If a young woman refuses to marry a man the prophet tells her to, she comes under extreme pressure. And, if she chooses someone on her own, she will be branded with, in essence, the "scarlet letter". If a young man shows interest in a girl, he is "kicked out of town". Regardless the reason a boy is expelled, the directive falls under the control of the leadership.

There are several other examples of disturbing proportions, some of which are included in a press conference speech I gave on the steps of the Utah State Capitol four years ago with about 70 FLDS "lost boys" and our Utah Attorney General, Mark Shurtleff. A copy of the speech, along with several affidavits from boys relative to the abuses they endured from FLDS police officers in the Twin City community or from others including the FLDS leadership, are included in my written testimony for the record. The very high level of control over most every aspect of an individual's life, from the cradle to the grave, including not only spiritual but temporal needs complete with the position of limiting formal education significantly keeps these people in a

condition of doubt, distrust and in several respects, virtually at the level of the people who lived during the middle ages complete with virtual forced confessions from “religious”/temporal leadership. There are many striking similarities that cause one to see FLDS leadership as “The Taliban of America”.

To FLDS, the laws of the United States tend to be seen as irrelevant or merely obstacles to get around. The former prophet, Rulon Jeffs, was a Certified Public Accountant. Rulon, along with his sons Warren and LeRoy, prepared my income tax returns in my younger years. It was standard procedure for “spiritual wives” to list themselves as the “head of household” on their income tax returns for the benefit of the tax credit. I’ve heard this practice continues today with the FLDS and even some other polygamous societies. In more recent years, the FLDS have moved to extreme tactics to “bleed the beast”, namely the US government and American businesses in general. Some men and businesses will even take out bankruptcy so to funnel more monies to the benefit of the leadership. I believe others following me will reveal more on this type of activity. For sure, all governments and particularly the Federal government are looked at with extreme suspicion. The FLDS believe these governments must topple in the near future. The level of extremism in the FLDS that has brought this type of thinking about did not occur even as recent as 15 years ago. Milestone events of particularly the last five decades have set the stage for what is occurring currently in FLDS.

Warren Jeffs has been known to recommend the book: *The Third Reich*. Warren has had objectionable school books destroyed. Not unlike the environment in Nazi Germany, Jeffs encourages young people to tell on the wrongs of their parents, siblings and friends. Substantial attempts are made to limit young people’s exposure to much of the education America has deemed so important for centuries. Public education ended for the FLDS upon the demand of Jeffs in 1998. Immediately, over 1200 children lost a quality education! The parents of over 1200 students were told to take their children out of the public school system even though more than half of the administrators and teachers were FLDS. This crippled the school system as FLDS teachers, administrators, school board and the like continued on the public payroll, while refusing to interact more than necessary with the very few remaining "apostate" or "gentile" students.

Probably one of the greatest atrocities Warren Jeffs has brought upon the FLDS has been the decimation of families. Since around 1998, about two hundred and fifty married men of all ages and some with multiple wives, children and grandchildren (even great grandchildren) have been expelled. They are instructed to “repent from afar”. The men are virtually erased from the history and existence to their families. Wives are remarried taking their children with them.

For the children, their “old father” is no longer their father. This can happen literally overnight with no warning.

Warren Jeffs requires of these unfortunate men a written confession before or after their departure of any wrongs they may have committed regardless of how many years previous such may have occurred. The instruction is “God has revealed to me the wrongs you have done; hence your list needs to match with mine”. It is believed that this has even caused many men to confess of wrongs they haven’t done simply to try and retain a relationship with their families or society. These men are now scattered all across America. Most still support the prophet economically. Their wives with their respective children are usually married to other men often within days. These very young and older women with their children or often moved to the home of the new man’s family but still in the same town. Others may be spread to multiple states or Canada. Wives will not object. They have been taught even by their own husband for years that obedience to the prophet must supersede even their love or devotion to him. Many of these wives and married children are instructed to change their last names to that of the new father. This destroys a family, a heritage, a lineage, and the basic glue that holds a society together. This plus being cut off from family and community often contributes to much of the post traumatic syndrome issues of our Utah “Lost Boys”

In 1999, my family was destroyed by Jeffs. I’m going to read to you how this occurred from a statement of my brother Shem who was present: Read statement.

I managed to talk once to my father about this atrocity, puzzled as I was regarding how he could “consent” to such treatment and the annihilation of our family. I realized once again the level of “brainwashing” he was subjected to. For about 15 years prior to the year 2000, “prophecies” from the pulpit by Rulon and Warren claimed the end of the world would occur at the year 2000. This is another one of the extreme examples of tactics that hold the people in fear, even down to the little children. My father believed the end of the world prophecy to his core. I told him such wouldn’t happen. He tried to persuade me it would. I pleaded with him to talk with me by the year two thousand and one should he realize the end didn’t come. He wouldn’t commit. When it moved to the year 2002, he still couldn’t commit. When it moved to the year 2003, he finally said, we’ll ok, maybe. It struck me how complete his conditioning was.

In his business, my father could put 100,000 miles on a car in one to two years. Historically, he’d been known to fall asleep at the wheel. Because of this and with him then in his mid-seventies and prior to the destruction of our family, an older child would usually drive him. After his family was taken from him, he was even scoured when going to the house to ask if one of his older children could drive him. For my father, his saga ended in February of 2002.

He died while driving himself in the middle of the day to Saint George Utah some 35 miles from Shortcreek; my father's car plunged into the only ravine for some distance in either direction. There were no skid marks. Did he go to sleep? Possibly. Did he simply decide to "plow it in"? Possibly. Regardless which is the case, do I hold Warren and his sick extremism responsible? I do.

The most tragic atrocity caused by the current FLDS leadership relates to children. I've often said: "Keep your eye on the ball and the ball is the children". We know what can occur in the mind of a young child when they are involved in even a typical divorce in which there is a presiding judge who has the duty of determining what is in the best interest for the child. Who looks out for the children when FLDS families are destroyed on the order of Jeffs?

Even in the best of cases, children of multiple ages often take the guilt onto themselves. They have nightmares and often require the best counseling available. Even I, at age 50 when my family was destroyed, would wake up with nightmares for over a year. I literally felt as if I'd just become an orphan at age 50 (and, even though cut off from family for some time, when all at once you come to realize they don't exist as "your family" complete with the memories, heritage, name and the like, it is traumatic). Imagine what must go through the mind of a child who doesn't have a chance to understand what I can, namely that their parent's leader is the one causing this and that he is a fanatic. Imagine the horror and terror that must occur in their tender minds when they wake up one day to the realization that their father is no longer their father; that they will not be hugging him, talking to him or even interacting with him ever again. And, then imagine what must be going through their young minds as they discover their mother is married within days to another man who is then kissing and making babies with her. Imagine the scaring that will continue in that young mind for a lifetime. Imagine future generations being married brother to sister and in some cases not even knowing they are brother and sister and hence, because of the obscene atrocity of a sick leadership, human gene pools become scrambled with all the tragic and even hideous fallout thereof.

The instant and spontaneous mandate of divorce and re-marriage is just one example effecting lives of families and individuals when due process of law can be circumvented. No court intervention is sought or even a court notified even if original marriages were performed in the legal sense. A goofy leader operating under a smoke screen of "religious freedom" can become a total dictator in both the spiritual and temporal sense even or especially in America. Our founding and later "fathers" of our nation could readily see the need to protect against the destruction even annihilation of a human's life. I don't think they ever imagined the need for laws to protect against the destruction, even annihilation of families by third parties with routes outside of existing law. Civil routes enable family members to challenge these third parties via

“alienation of affection”. In cases like I’m describing here via FLDS leadership and society, no child or former spouse will ever bring themselves to even think of challenging this via a civil legal case.

We believe this atrocity has harmed in excess of one thousand American children. For some this has occurred multiple times with them drug “family” to “family” and potentially spread over multiple states. I believe this ongoing atrocity has and will continue to increase the likelihood of additional child abuse of multiple dimensions. One of our esteemed Senators, Hubert Humphrey, said something to the effect: You can measure the quality of a society by the level of importance they put on protecting their most vulnerable citizens. No Americans are more vulnerable and more precious than our children. This subject is very important to our Diversity Foundation.

The Diversity Foundation was founded about ten years ago. It was founded for the purpose of furthering a better understanding with America’s youth of the value of diverse races, religions and backgrounds. For the last four years it has been substantially engaged in helping young men who have been expelled or left the FLDS society. This weaning of the flock of males continues even though the boys may try to return home, and even when a court order attempts to send them home. This is the case in spite of many prominent FLDS claiming there are no “lost boys”, but only rebellious boys as found in other societies. Included in my submission are short audio clips of Jeffs teaching young people how and for whom the prophet decides to “kick out of town”. Diversity’s greatest expenditures with the castaway young men are for education and psychological counseling. Imagine the challenge that exists for a thirteen year old who must make it on his own. Imagine the challenge that occurs for a 20 year old who can neither read or write and/or doesn’t even know multiplication tables -- someone who was kept out of school to work in heavy construction at a very young age, their earnings going to family or FLDS leadership. Sadly, some of these young boys have even died in accidents on construction sites.

In a cloistered polygamous society, simple math and biology tells us some boys must either become bachelors for life or leave. There are pretty close to fifty boy babies born for every fifty girl babies born. More recently, a few young girls have come out. Counter to Jeff’s view of boys as expendable, FLDS characteristically fight hard to keep their girls. Many years of expelling free spirits plus downgrading and preventing education ultimately rapes a society. Hitler and Stalin killed their self thinkers and intellectuals. Jeffs prevents or expels them.

I value our religious freedoms. However, claims of freedom of religion should not be allowed to blind us to the many illegal and unconscionable activities of FLDS leadership. I invite Congress to take appropriate measures to protect all innocent parties but especially children. As was once said, "Doing the right thing is not always easy but it's always the 'right thing'".

Thank you