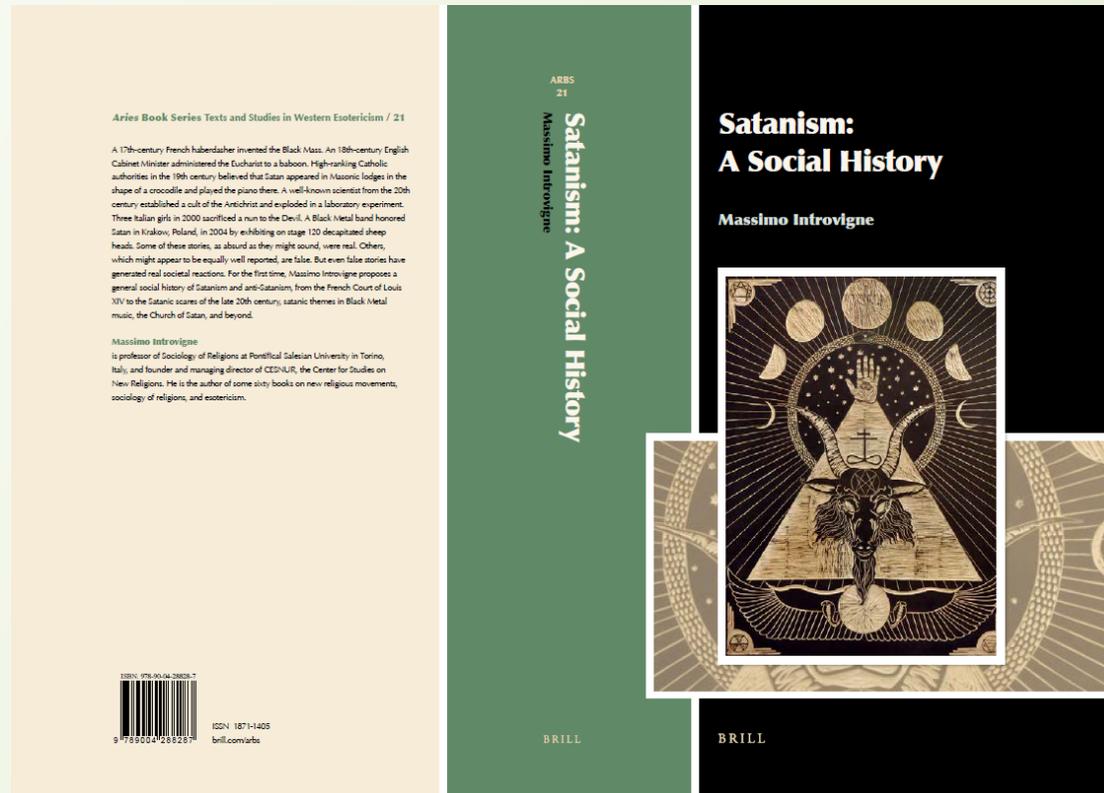


Accusations of Satanism against Mormonism and the Utah Satanic Abuse Scare

Massimo Introvigne (UPS, Torino, Italy)

CESNUR 2016 Conference – Daejin University, Korea

Satanism: A Social History

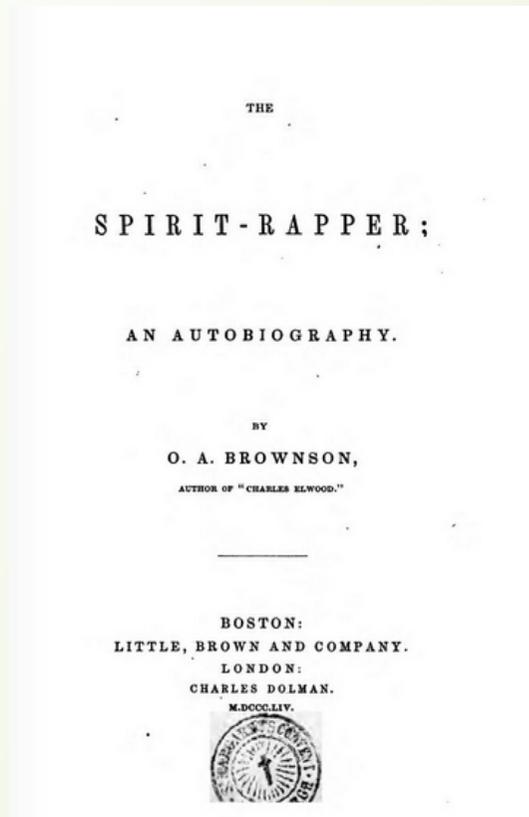


- My 700-page book *Satanism: A Social History* will be released by Brill in September 2016. As a *social* history, it deals with both Satanism and anti-Satanism. More than a hundred pages are devoted to the Mormons

Why the Mormons?

- But what exactly do the Mormons have to do with Satanism? Anti-Satanism often suspected the Mormons of Satanic practices:
 - as an early explanation of why Mormonism succeeded;
 - as part of a worldwide Masonic conspiracy;
 - within the context of the American Satanic ritual abuse scare;
 - in the discourse of a radical fringe of Evangelical anti-Mormonism

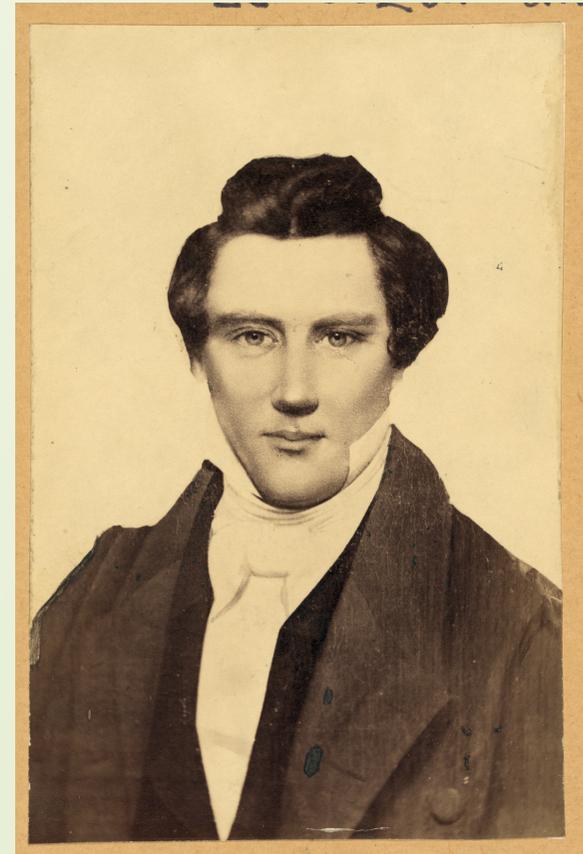
1. Satanism Explains Mormonism, 1854-1864



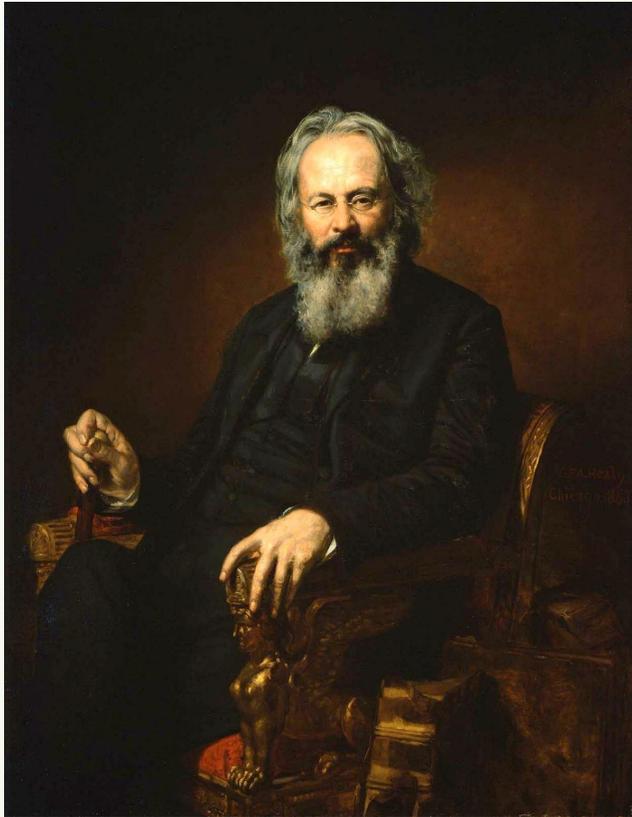
- The first wave of accusations of Satanism against the Mormons started with the publication in 1854 of *The Spirit-Rapper: An Autobiography* by Orestes Brownson (1803–1876), where the author described in a sensational form his itinerary from a social reformer interested in Spiritualism to his conversion to Catholicism in 1844

The Mystery of Joseph Smith

- Brownson believed that the Mormon founder Joseph Smith (1805-1844, right), whom he claimed he personally met, was “utterly incapable of conceiving, far less of executing the project of founding a new church”. “In his normal state, Smith could never have written the most striking passages of the *Book of Mormon*; and any man capable of doing it, could never have written anything so weak, silly, utterly unmeaning as the rest”



Mormonism, “the Synagogue of Satan”



- For Brownson (left), explanations mentioning human agents who allegedly “helped” Smith were “ridiculous”. Smith was clearly under the influence of a “superhuman power”, the Devil. “That there was a superhuman power employed in founding the Mormon church, cannot easily be doubted by any scientific and philosophic mind that has investigated the subject; and just as little can a sober man doubt that the power employed was not Divine, and that Mormonism is literally the Synagogue of Satan”

The Devil in America

- Brownson was not the only American author of the 19th century who connected Mormons and the Devil. In a work in verses of 1867, which criticized both Mormonism and Spiritualism, as well as abolitionism and feminism, an author writing under the pseudonym of “Lacon” exposed the “Devil of Mormonism” as the authentic creator of the religion founded by Joseph Smith

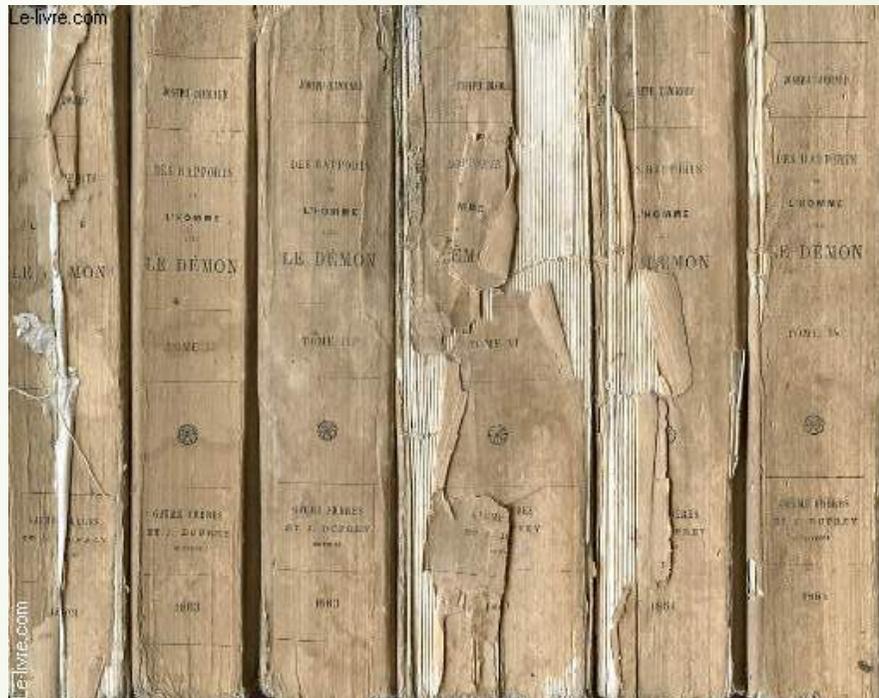
THE
DEVIL IN AMERICA:
A Dramatic Satire.

SPIRIT-RAPPING—MORMONISM;
WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTIONS AND SPEECHES;
ABOLITIONISM;
HARPER'S FERRY RAID AND BLACK REPUBLICANISM;
DEFEAT OF SATAN,
AND FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE GOSPEL.

BY **L A C O N.**

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1860.

Anti-Mormonism Goes to Paris



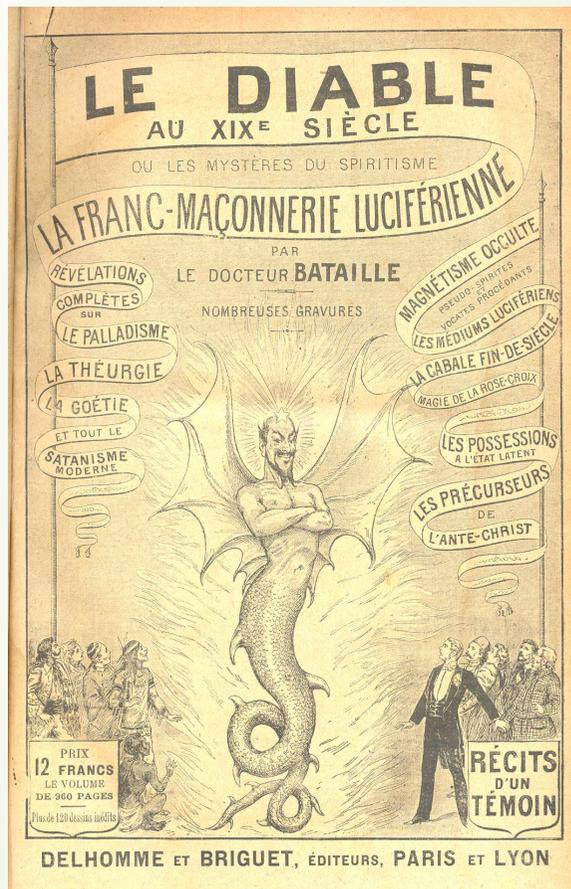
- In 1864, Catholic lawyer Joseph Bizouard (1797–1870) published in Paris a summa of anti-Satanism, *Des Rapports de l'homme avec le Démon*. It included six volumes, for a total of four-thousand pages. In the sixth volume, he devoted a long chapter to Mormon Satanism, largely derived from Brownson

A Forgotten Literature

- By the 1870s, the massive anti-Satanist literature produced in France by Bizouard and his colleagues Jules Eudes de Mirville (1802-1873) and Henri-Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux (1805-1876, right) had largely gone out of fashion. It will, however, be rediscovered and used within the context of the great French and European anti-Masonic scare of the late 1880s and 1890s



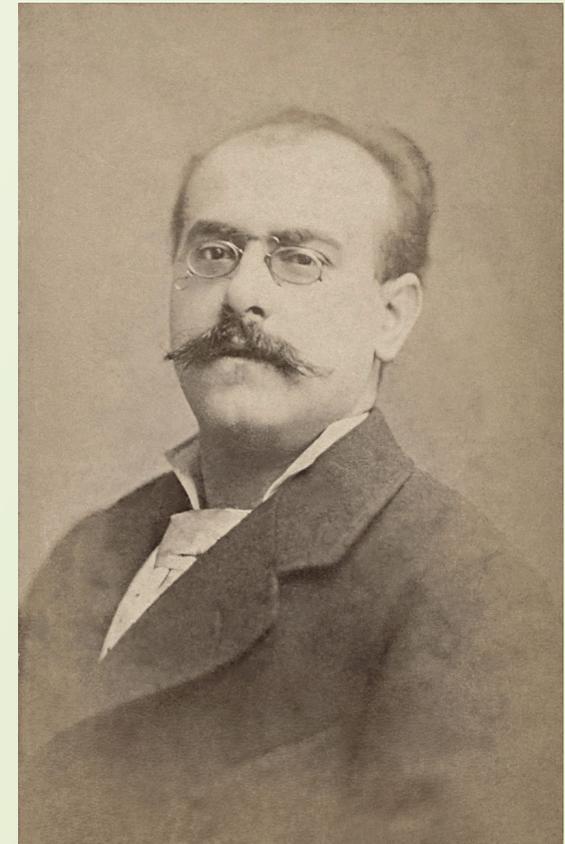
2. Mormonism as Part of Satanic Freemasonry, 1891-1897



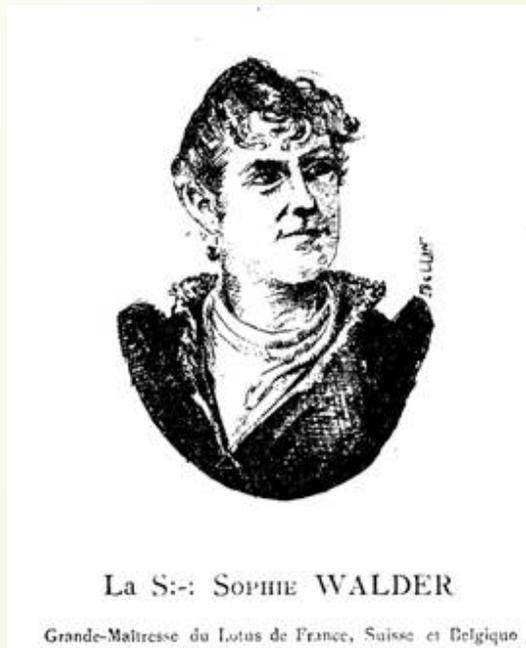
- In 1891, an extraordinary book started being published in installments in Paris. It was called *Le Diable au 19e siècle*, was signed by a certain “Dr. Bataille” and promised “definitive” revelations on Satanism and the Satanic nature of Freemasonry

Anti-Masonism and Léo Taxil

- Although a medical doctor, Charles Hacks, wrote portions of *Le Diable*, its main author was Léo Taxil (pseud. of Gabriel Jogand, 1854-1907, right), a Freemason and the author of vitriolic anti-Catholic pamphlets who in 1885 had announced with much fanfare his conversion to Catholicism. Taxil's career only becomes understandable by considering the ferocious opposition between the anticlerical French Freemasonry and the Catholic Church in late 19th-century France



Sophie Walder, Mormon Satanic Priestess



- Taxil and *Le Diable* claimed that Freemasonry was controlled by a Satanic secret society called Palladism. One of the high priestesses of Palladism was, Taxil claimed, Sophie Walder, a Mormon and the daughter of “the former Pastor Phileas Walder, impenitent Anabaptist, now Mormon, who resides in the United States, in Utah, where he is the shadow of John Taylor [1808–1887], who is the successor of Brigham Young [1801–1877] as head of the Mormons”

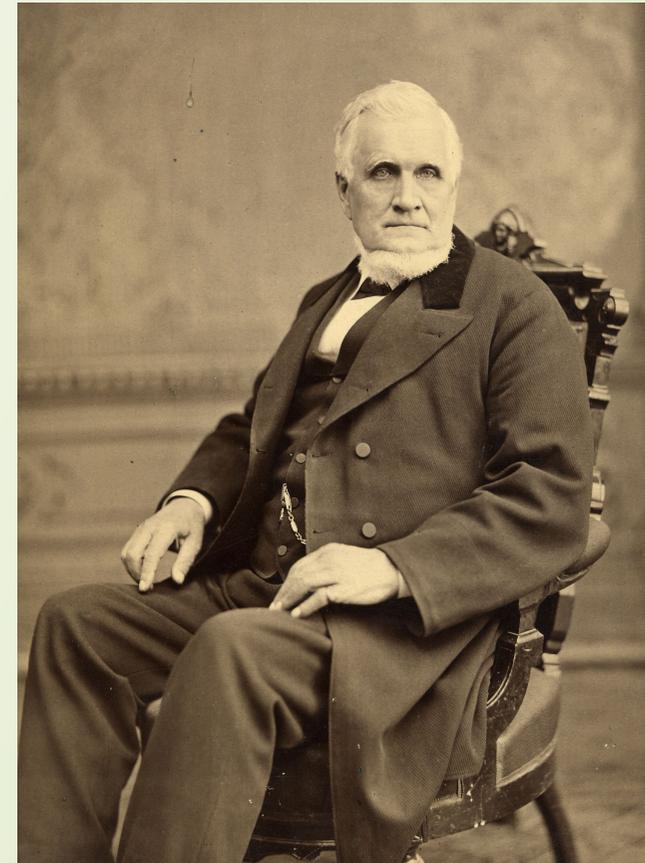
The Non-Existing Walder Family



- Taxil's claims notwithstanding, my own research revealed that no Walder family with a father called Phineas or Phileas and a daughter called Sophie (above, as depicted in *Le Diable*) existed in the U.S. in the 19th century, nor there was a Walder family in Salt Lake City at the time of Brigham Young or John Taylor

John Taylor, Satanist

- The main theme of *Le Diable* was the rivalry within the Satanic Palladism between two high priestesses, the Mormon Sophie Walder and the non-Mormon Diana Vaughan, and Diana's eventual conversion to Catholicism. A subplot concerned the Satanists' control of the Mormon Church through its third president, John Taylor (right). Taxil claimed that Taylor was a member of the Supreme Council of Palladism



The Fall of Taxil



- Eventually, within the Catholic world itself, many started suspecting that Taxil had created a huge hoax, and that Diana Vaughan (in a photograph produced by Taxil, left), who as an ex-Satanist and Catholic convert corresponded with cardinals and the Pope himself, was just a figment of the writer's imagination. Eventually, in a lecture given in Paris on April 25, 1897, Taxil confessed the fraud and nothing further was heard of Palladism or its Mormon High Priestess Sophie Walder

The Legend Lives On

- Notwithstanding the fall of Taxil, the idea that Mormons had something to do with Satanism lived on. Esoteric author René Guénon (1886-1951, right), in his 1923 anti-Spiritualist book *L'Erreur spirite* and in other texts, reiterated that Mormons were controlled by Satanists or by the Devil himself, although they were normally not aware of it and were, thus, “unconscious Satanists”



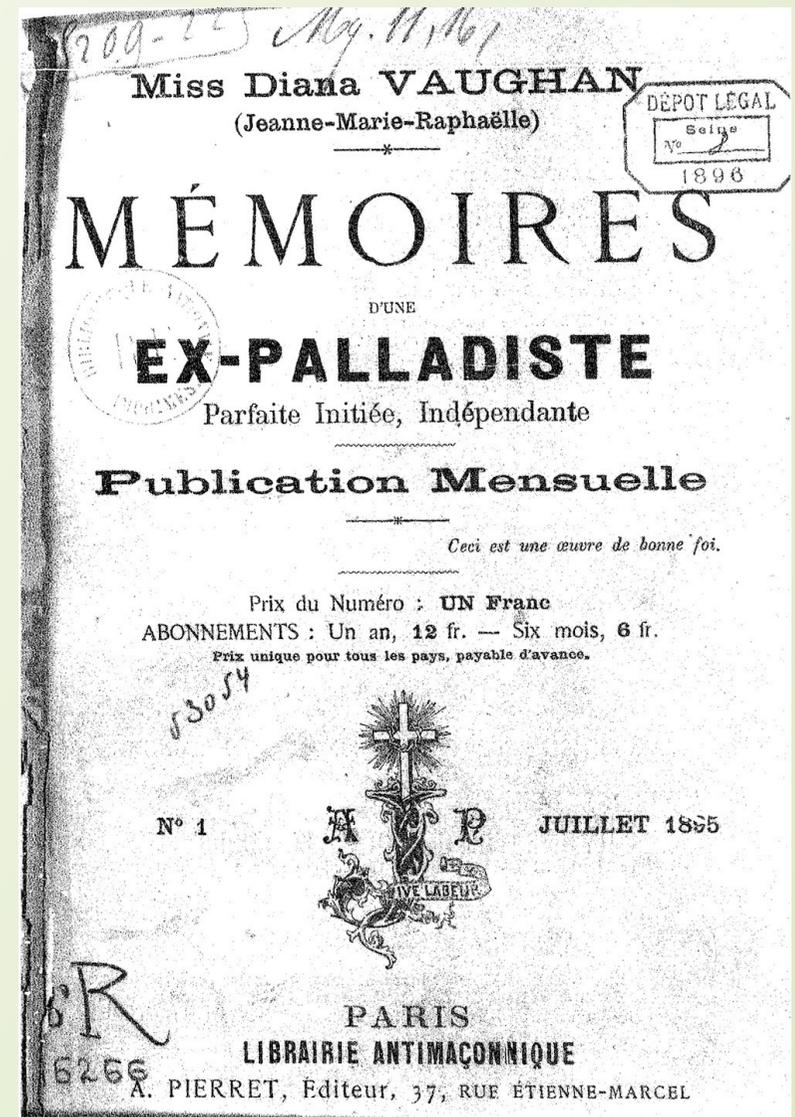
3. The Mormon Satanic Abuse Scare



- Starting with the publication of the book *Michelle Remembers* by Canadian psychologist, Lawrence Pazder (1936-2004), and his patient Michelle Smith in 1980, U.S. and other countries experienced for some 15 years an unprecedented Satanic ritual abuse scare, based on memories “recovered” by “survivors” and, later, children, who claimed to have been abused by powerful, secret Satanic cults

Taxil Redux

- Some “survivors” claimed they were abused by Mormon parents who were part of Satanist cults started by Brigham Young, who had already been connected to Satanism by the *Diabie*. The survivors movement quoted and even republished books by “Diana Vaughan” as authoritative statements on Satanism, unaware that they were part of the Taxil hoax

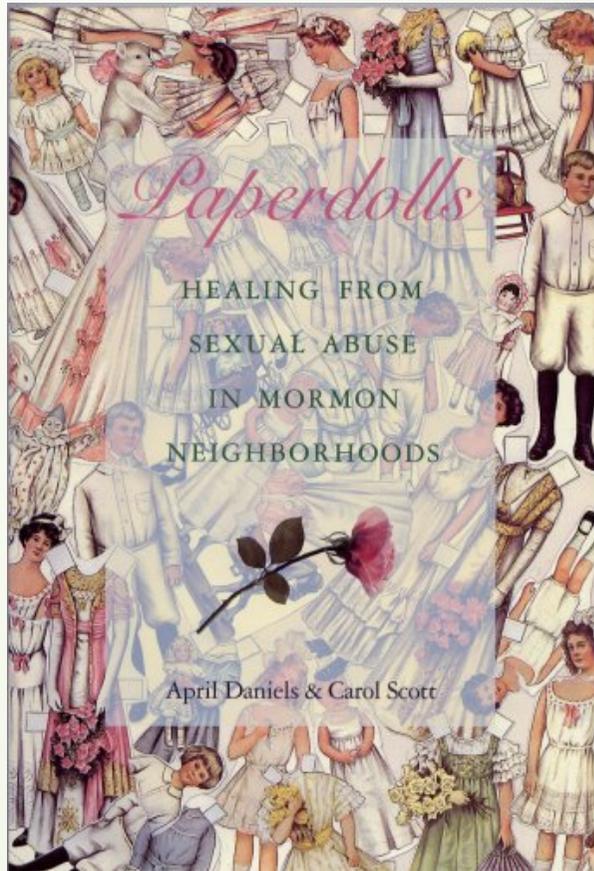


Satanic Abuse Scare in Utah

- In 1985, Dr. Barbara Snow, a therapist strongly persuaded of the reality of satanic abuse, arrived in the small Utah town of Lehi (right). Soon, she started accusing respected members of the local Mormon community of satanic ritual abuse, eventually obtaining the conviction of one Mormon elder, although many believed him innocent



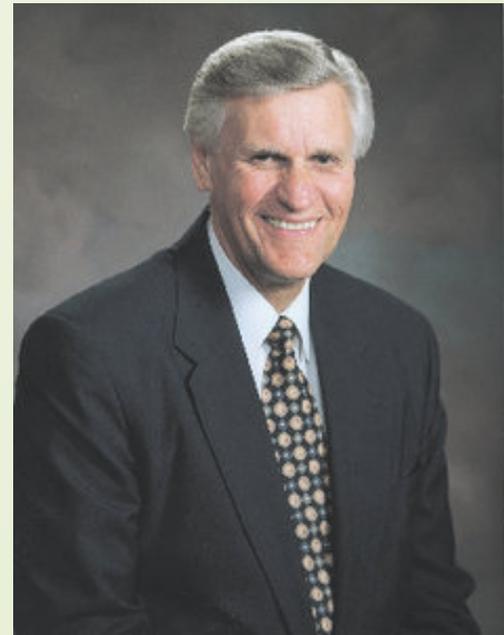
Paperdolls and the Black Temple Ceremony



- Snow and other therapists tried to expose other Mormon “satanic rings” in Utah and Idaho, but investigations proved inconclusive. The accusations were, however, popularized by the 1992 book *Paperdolls*, written by two Salt Lake Valley “survivors” using the pseudonyms April Daniels and Carol Scott. While in Catholic settings survivors told of Black Masses, Mormon survivors reported that they had been abused within the context of a “black” version of Mormon temple ceremonies

Bishop Pace's Memorandum

- What was unique in the Utah scare was that the alleged existence of a ring of Satanists within the Mormon Church was taken seriously by the Mormon Church itself. In 1991, a confidential memorandum to Church authorities authored by Bishop Glenn L. Pace, then Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, dated July 19, 1990, came into the possession of Evangelical Salt Lake City anti-Mormons Jerald (1938–2006) and Sandra Tanner, who published it



DO NOT REPRODUCE

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 19, 1990
To: Strengthening Church Members Committee
From: Bishop Glenn L. Pace
Subject: Ritualistic Child Abuse

Pursuant to the Committee's request, I am writing this memorandum to pass along what I have learned about ritualistic child abuse. Hopefully, it will be of some value to you as you continue to monitor the problem. You have already received the LDS Social Services report on satanism dated May 24, 1989, a report from Brent Ward, and a memorandum from myself dated October 20, 1989 in response to Brother Ward's report. Therefore, I will limit this writing to information not contained in those papers.

I have met with sixty victims. That number could be twice or three times as many if I did not discipline myself to only one meeting per week. I have not wanted my involvement with this issue to become a handicap in fulfilling my assigned responsibilities. On the other hand, I felt someone needed to pay the price to obtain an intellectual and spiritual conviction as to the seriousness of this problem within the Church.

Of the sixty victims with whom I have met, fifty-three are female and seven are male. Eight are children. The abuse occurred in the following places: Utah (37), Idaho (3), California (4), Mexico (2), and other places (14). Fifty-three victims are currently living in the State of Utah. All sixty individuals are members of the Church. Forty-five victims allege witnessing and/or participating in human sacrifice. The majority were abused by relatives, often their parents. All have developed psychological problems and most have been diagnosed as having multiple personality disorder or some other form of dissociative disorder.

Ritualistic child abuse is the most hideous of all child abuse. The basic objective is premeditated--to systematically and methodically torture and terrorize children until they are forced to dissociate. The torture is not a consequence of the loss of temper, but the execution of well-planned, well-thought out rituals often performed by close relatives. The only escape for the children is to dissociate. They will develop a new personality to enable them to endure various forms of abuse. When the episode is over, the core personality is again in control and the individual is not conscious of what happened. Dissociation also serves the purposes of the occult because the

Alarming Findings

- Pace, taking his clues from “survivors” and therapists, claimed in his memorandum that there were some 800 Satanists hidden within the Mormon Church in Utah, including “Young Women leaders, Young Men leaders, bishops, a patriarch, a stake president, temple workers, and members of the Tabernacle Choir”

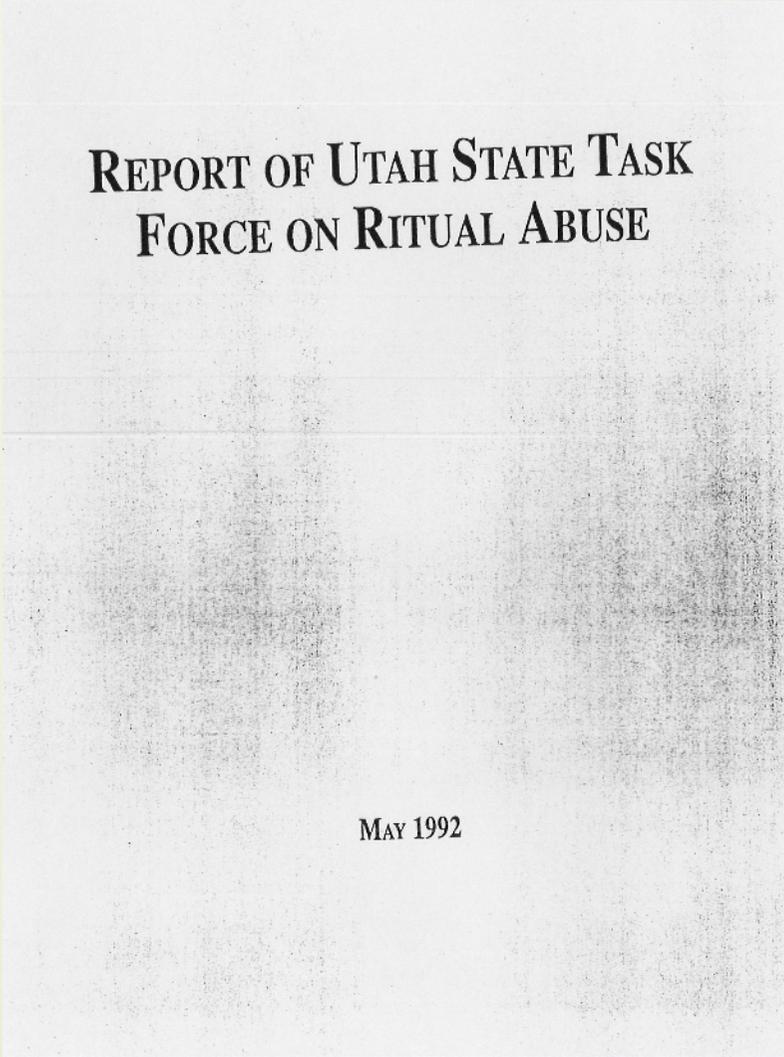
Official Statement

- After the disclosure of Pace's memorandum by the Tanners, the First Presidency of the Mormon Church (right) published a letter dated September 18, 1991, stating that "we occasionally receive reports from some areas about the activities of people who engage in ritualistic practices including forms of so-called Satan worship. We express our love and concern to innocent victims... We caution all members of the Church not to affiliate in any way with the occult or those mysterious powers it espouses"



The State Intervenes

- Shortly after Pace's memorandum was written, the Utah Governor's Commission for Women and Families formed a subcommittee and task force to address issues of ritual (including satanic) child abuse. The task force was stuffed by Mormon leaders and therapists who supported the "survivor". Not surprisingly, its 1992 report confirmed Pace's findings



REPORT OF UTAH STATE TASK
FORCE ON RITUAL ABUSE

MAY 1992

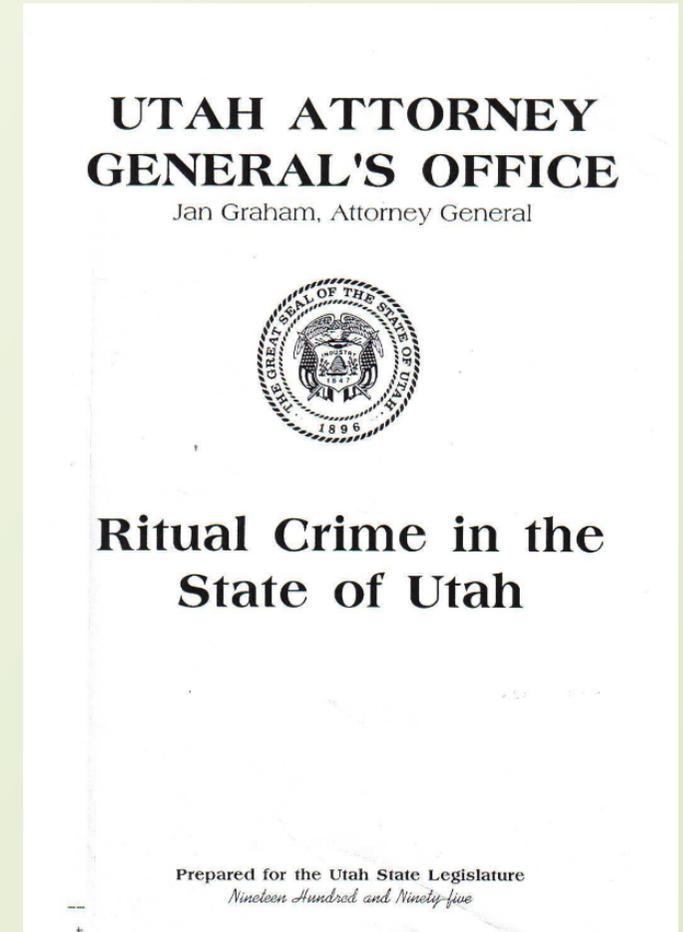
Dr Noemi P. Mattis



- The main force in the subcommittee was not a Mormon, but a Belgian-born secular Jewish therapist, Dr Noemi P. Mattis (above). She was a staunch believer in the “survivors” claim that a powerful Satanist ring “as secretive as the mafia” existed within the Mormon Church and often killed its victims. She claimed that “doctors and morticians” were involved in the Mormon Satanist cult, and this explained why bodies were never found

The 1995 Attorney General Report

- Consistent with a national attitude where skeptical voices were by now prevailing, in 1995 the Utah Attorney General published a new report, *Ritual Crime in the State of Utah*. Although reluctant to criticize the report of 1992, the new document concluded that the police had not been able to ascertain even one clear case of satanic ritual abuse. After the 1995 report, the moral panic concerning Satanism retreated to the margins of the scene in Utah, cultivated only by some anti-Mormons and by therapists who still lectured on satanic abuse to increasingly smaller audiences



“False Accusation Is Also a Sin”



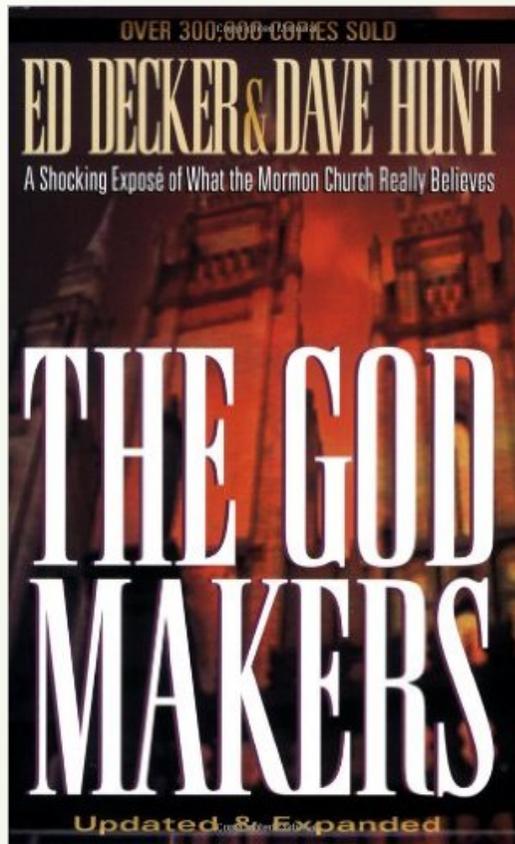
- In the Mormon Church, a march backwards began in the same year 1992, with a speech by Richard G. Scott (1928–2015, left), one of the Church’s Twelve Apostles, in the General Conference. Although Scott deplored the “tragic scars of abuse”, he also cautioned against “improper therapeutic approaches”, which may “unwittingly trigger thoughts that are more imagination or fantasy than reality... Memory, particular adult memory of childhood experience, is fallible. Remember, false accusation is also a sin”

4. Extreme Evangelical Anti-Mormonism

- On December 31, 1982, a film entitled *The God Makers*, produced by ex-Mormon turned anti-Mormon Ed Decker (right), premiered at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, before an audience of 4,000 Evangelical Protestants. While therapists and “survivors” claimed that Satanists were a deviant ring within an otherwise benign Mormon Church, Decker claimed that Satan-worship was the very secret of the Mormon temple



Joseph Smith, Prophet of Satan



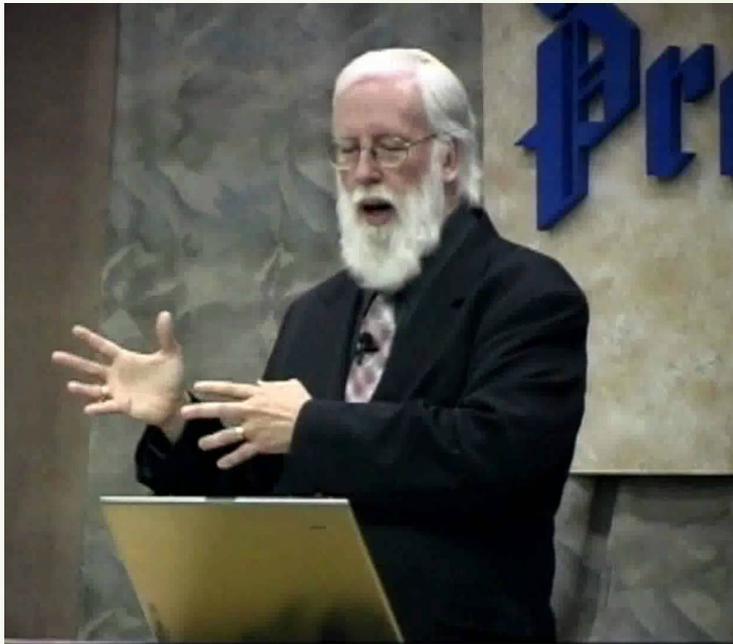
- Decker claimed that “while most critics of Mormonism regard Joseph Smith as a fraud who deliberately deceived his followers into joining a church of his own making, and whose doctrines and rituals were borrowed from Freemasonry and other pagan religions”, in fact “a careful investigation indicates that Joseph Smith was in touch with a superhuman source”, Satan

James R. Spencer

- Other Evangelical counter-cultists jumped on the bandwagon, including James R. Spencer (right), pastor of Shiloh Christian Center in Idaho Falls, Idaho, who offered detailed analyses of the Mormon temple ceremony, claiming it is devoted to worshipping Lucifer



Enter Bill Schnoebelen



- The campaign claiming that Mormonism was, in essence, Satanism gained momentum in 1984 when Bill Schnoebelen (left), an occultist who had been a member of Michal Bertiaux's "Luciferian" O.T.O. in Chicago and had converted to Mormonism in 1980, announced his new conversion, this time to Evangelical Protestantism

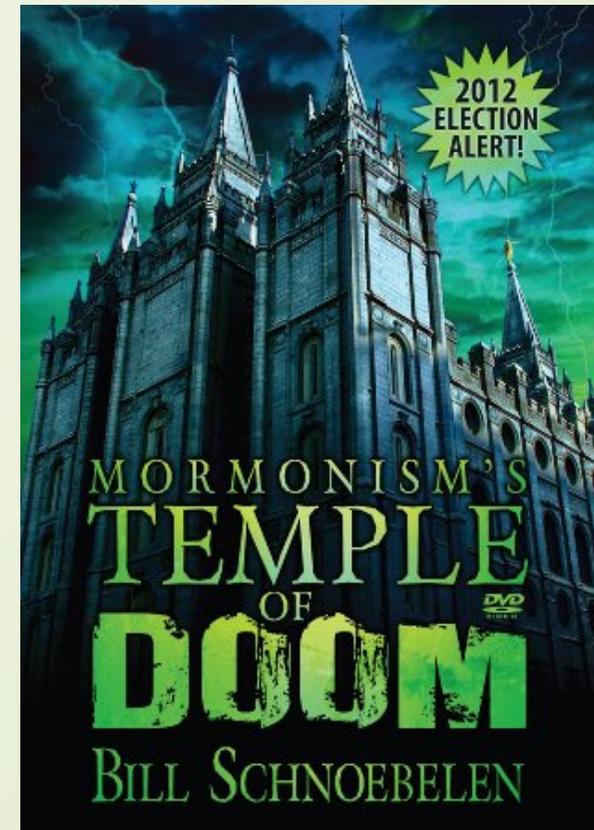
Luciferianism and Mormonism



- Schnoebelen claimed that, having been first a Luciferian and then a Mormon, he was uniquely qualified to insist that Luciferianism (or Satanism: he didn't really regard Luciferianism as different from Satanism) and Mormonism were one and the same

The Mormon Temple of Doom

- In *Joseph Smith and the Temple of Doom* (1986), that was later made into an anti-Romney DVD during the 2012 presidential campaign (right), Schnoebelen claimed that at its highest levels, the Mormon Church was a Satanist cult. He added that the leaders of his own Satanist group had suggested that Schnoebelen received the initiations of the Mormon temple as a crowning to his occult career



A Mormon Dr. Faust



- One of the twelve Apostles of the Mormon Church at that time was James E. Faust (1920–2007, left), who had been a well-known lawyer in Salt Lake City before becoming an Apostle. The last name of the Apostle, the same of the famous Doctor Faust who sold his soul to the Devil in the German legend, represented an irresistible temptation for Schnoebelen. He claimed that Apostle Faust received him and his wife Alexandria, confessed that the god worshipped in the Mormon temple was Lucifer and, recognizing in Schnoebelen a fellow Satanist, offered him a position as a Mormon general authority

Mormonism's Temple of Doom



Magick

Mormonism

Masonry

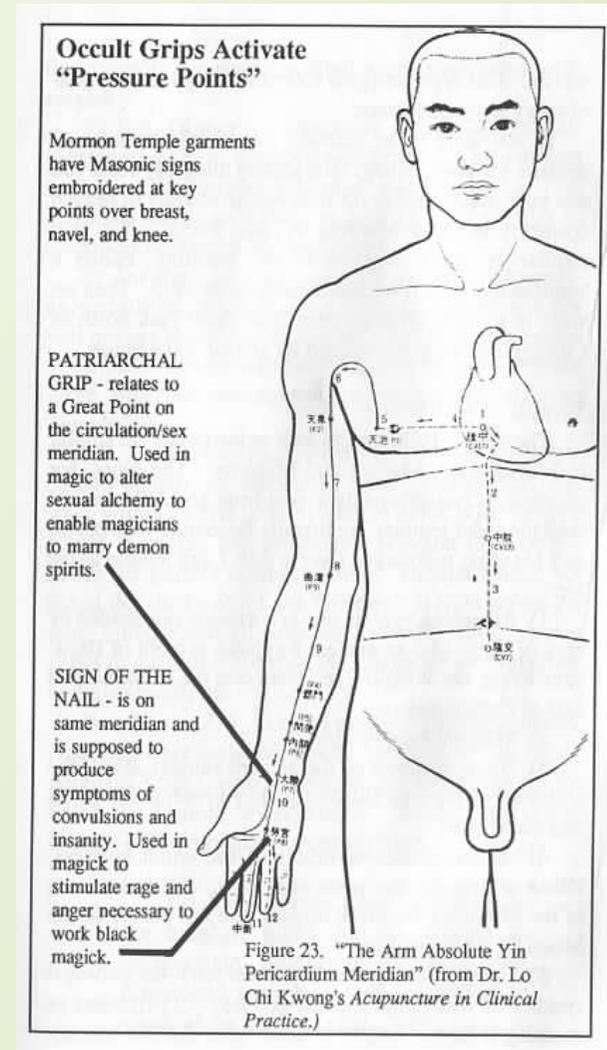
by William J. Schnoebelen
& James R. Spencer

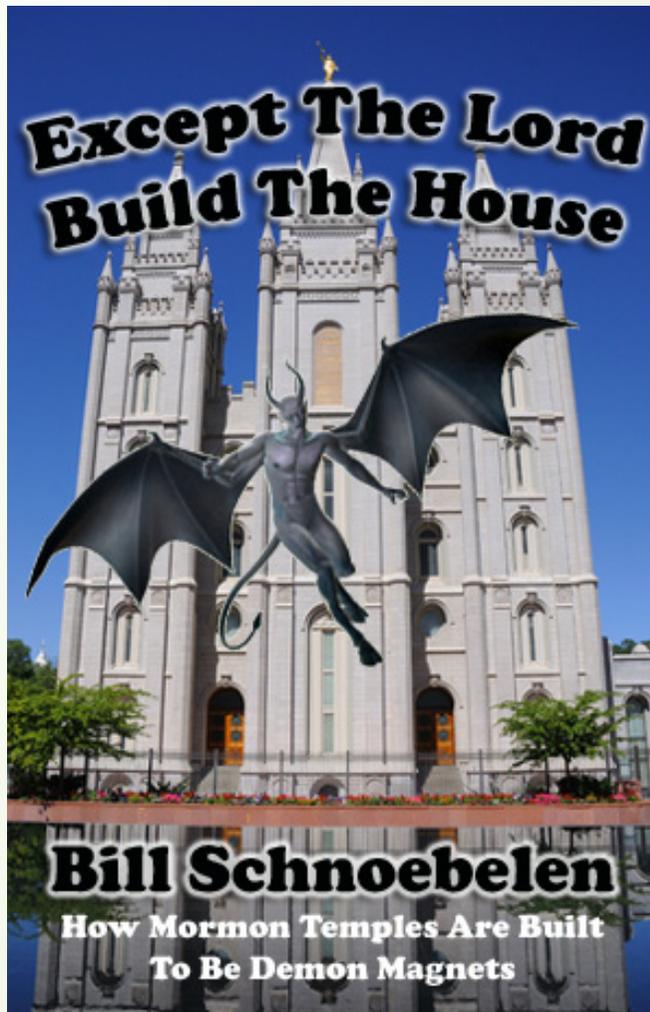
Temple of Doom, Again

- In 1987, Spencer and Schnoebelen published a book together, entitled (again) *Mormonism's Temple of Doom*. In the book, Spencer introduced Schnoebelen as a “former witch, Catholic priest, Mason and Mormon”. In fact, Schnoebelen had not been consecrated a priest in the Roman Catholic Church but, both as a priest and a bishop, by Chicago occultist Michael Bertiaux, who operates among his various activities a Gnostic Church

Satanism, Mormonism, and Sex

- In the new book, Schnoebelen maintained that the rituals of both Mormonism and Freemasonry are identical to those found in Satanism, Wicca, and secret high circles of Roman Catholicism, and that some of these rituals are devised to sexually excite both men and women. For example, Schnoebelen claimed that the marks on the Mormon temple garments “are held together by a subtle occult web of sexual energy, which is activated by pressure from the two highest grips in the LDS Temple endowment”





Satanist Architecture

- Schnoebelen also claimed that the architecture of the Mormon temples, in particular “the trapezoidal shape” of the spires on the Salt Lake City temple, “draw demons like flypaper”: “the Salt Lake Temple is, in fact, a perfectly designed habitation for devils”. Not to be outdone, Decker wrote that the Temple’s spires really “represent an upside down nail, pointing defiantly toward heaven – as if to impale the Lord Jesus anew when He comes in the clouds of glory!”

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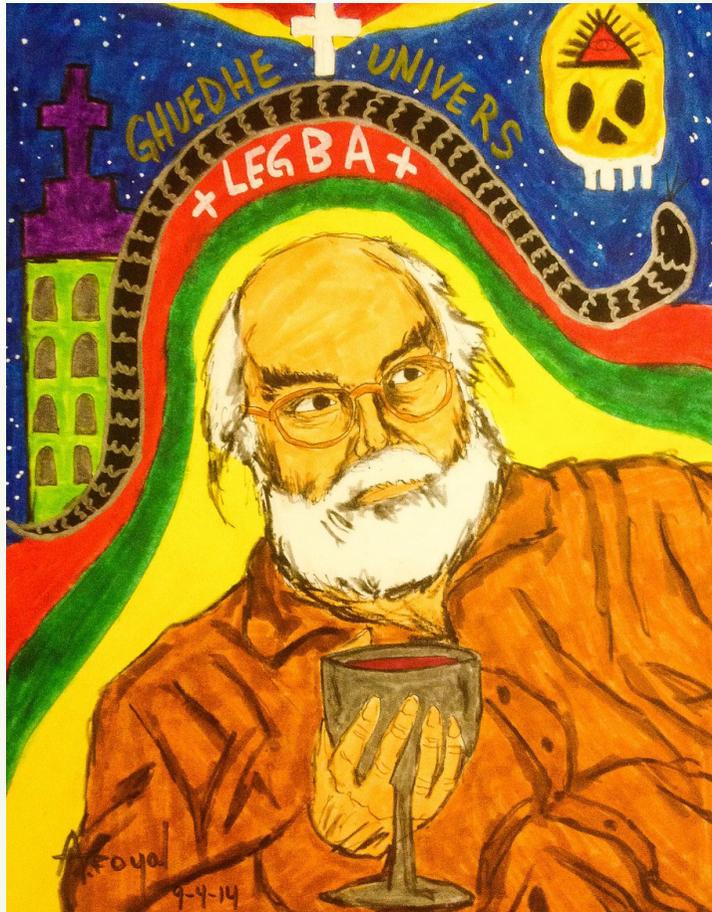
Reformed Vampire

- In his video *Interview with an Ex-Vampire*, Schoebelen claimed to have been, in addition to a Satanist and a Mormon, also a Freemason, a Wiccan, and even a vampire. The back cover of the book he wrote in 1993 with his wife, *Lucifer Dethroned* stated: "If Schoebelen, crazed by blood lust and headed for murder, could be changed by Jesus Christ, ANYONE can!"

Schnoebelen Criticized

- Too much was too much even for the Evangelical anti-Mormon community. Schnoebelen was criticized by senior Evangelical anti-Mormons, including Jerald and Sandra Tanner (right), and lost much of his credibility. He was, however, supported by Decker and Spencer and continues to lecture about Mormonism as Satanism to this date





Diana Vaughan, Again

- Finally, as it might have been expected, the story came full circle and Schnoebelen claimed that he knew better as it had been a member of the Order of Palladium, a secret society controlling Satanism, Freemasonry, and Mormonism. But the Palladism Schnoebelen had been initiated in had been founded in Chicago by an occultist and associate of Bertiaux (portrayed by Arturo Royal, left), D. DePaul, by channeling the spirit of Diana Vaughan...

Why Bother?



- One may question whether characters of this sort and their gross propaganda (left) are worthy of scholarly investigation. The question, however, is not whether these ideas deserve to be taken seriously, but whether they were taken seriously by social movements of some significance. Although the extreme Evangelical anti-Mormon movement is not as large as it claims to be, it is also not totally insignificant, and its literature enjoys a large circulation

“Uncivil Religion”

- According to sociologists David Brion Davis and Robert N. Bellah (1927–2013), anti-Mormonism followed, in the United States, a parallel scheme to criticism of Freemasonry and anti-Catholicism. Freemasons, Catholics, and Mormons were seen as foreigners to American “civil religion”, which always had an aspect of “uncivil religion”, needing to designate adversaries in order to affirm itself



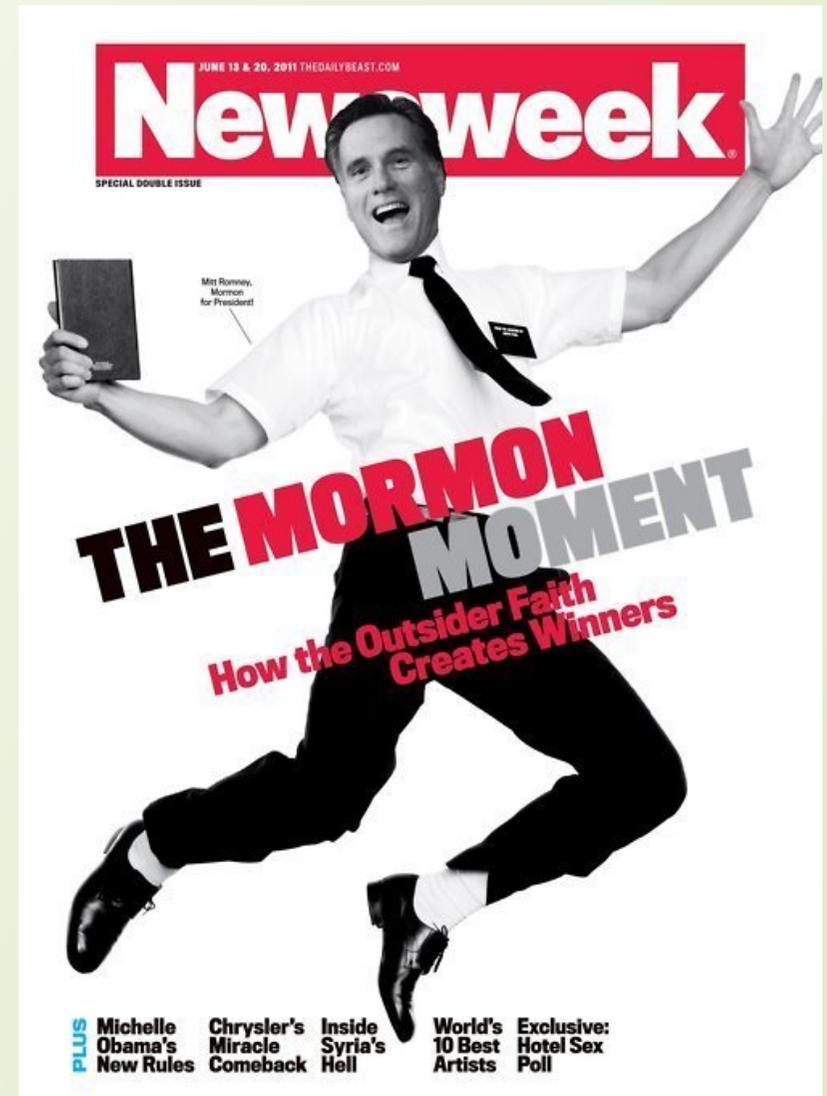
Secrets of the Temple



- The secret of the Mormon temple, which only the faithful can access, was a parallel, in the imagination of the opponents, to the secrets of the Masonic lodge and that of the Catholic confessional. And secret was regarded as something sulphurous and inherently un-American

A Mainline Religion?

- The fact that in 2012 a Mormon was the presidential candidate for one of the major parties should confirm that Mormonism is now largely accepted as part of the mainline, at least in the United States





However...

- On the other hand, the fact that the Satanic ritual abuse scare gained a particular currency in the Mormon Intermountain West, and the return of old anti-Mormon accusations of Satanism in Evangelical circles shows the strength of old legends and myths. As Mormonism becomes part of the American civil religion, areas of “uncivil religion” become marginalized but do not disappear

For more information: cesnur_to@virgilio.it



A photo-cartoon of the Devil attending the Mormon 2014 General Conference