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## Largely Shadow, Short of Reality

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# LARGELY SHADOW, SHORT OF REALITY

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Allen Wyatt

Review of Ronald V. Huggins, *Lighthouse: Jerald and Sandra Tanner, Despised and Beloved Critics of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2022). 392 pages. \$39.95 (hardback), \$24.95 (paperback).

**Abstract:** *Jerald and Sandra Tanner have had a long ministerial career trying to convince people that the truth claims of the Church are wrong. Even though their ministry has closed its doors, Sandra Tanner still gives interviews recounting their adventures in fighting the good fight. This image is burnished by a biography of the Tanners and their ministry written by Ronald V. Huggins. In this review I examine the way in which Huggins approaches his subjects in his book.*

I must start this review by making it explicitly clear that I am not reviewing the Tanners, but I am reviewing a book about the Tanners and their ministry. It is not my intent here to give a full review of the Tanners's lives; such would be virtually impossible. Instead, my focus is much more limited to providing a review of Huggins's recounting of the Tanners's lives. I do so by examining Huggins's approach and the recounting of several key events within his book.

My knowledge of and interest in the Tanners goes back decades (just under 45 years). My knowledge of and interest in Huggins's book summarizing the Tanners's lives and ministry does not go nearly so far. I first learned about *Lighthouse*<sup>1</sup> in early June 2023 when I attended a business conference. A non-member friend of mine, whom I only see at such conferences, mentioned that his wife had been reading a book

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1. Ronald V. Huggins, *Lighthouse: Jerald & Sandra Tanner, Despised and Beloved Critics of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2022).

and something caught her eye. It was a reference to me, and she (and her husband) were intrigued by the mention.

This caught me by surprise, and I asked my friend what the name of the book was. He sent me a link to the book, and I ordered it. It was when I saw the link that I understood why my name should be mentioned in the book. (It has to do with a lawsuit; more on that shortly.)

When I received *Lighthouse*, I immediately started reading it. Like many historical fiction novels, I found it to be a real page-turner; I couldn't put it down.<sup>2</sup> The main characters were larger than life, effusing nothing but pure intent and exemplifying dogged determination. They not only occupied the moral high ground, but they blazed new trails in that ground. They were, collectively, David — chosen personally by God to deliver Israel from the wicked, evil Goliath.

This was good stuff! It was hagiography<sup>3</sup> at its best, playing fast and loose with the historical facts to present the God-conjoined<sup>4</sup> Davids in the best possible light. Huggins has done an admirable job of feeding the myth of the Tanners. He virtually admits as much in his introduction:

In my view a credible biography of the Tanners would . . . involve . . . a determined process of removing ourselves from the story to the point that what ultimately emerges is a depiction of what the world looks like from the perspective of [the Tanners] and how that vision moved them to think and act as they did. (p. x)

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2. My ability to read through the book directly could be due to my familiarity with most of the history and incidents described in the book. Other reviewers didn't find the book as much of a page-turner because of their unfamiliarity with the history and events. (See, for example, Julie J. Nichols, "Huggins, 'Lighthouse: Jerald & Sandra Tanner, Despised and Beloved Critics of Mormonism,'" *Dawning of a Brighter Day* (blog), <https://www.associationmormonletters.org/reviews/older-reviews/huggins-lighthouse-jerald-sandra-tanner-despised-and-beloved-critics-of-mormonism-reviewed-by-julie-j-nichols/>.) Unfortunately, an unfamiliarity with those things risks the reader accepting Huggins's recounting as "the way things really were."

3. A dictionary definition of *hagiography* is an "idealizing or idolizing biography." See *Merriam-Wester*, s.v. "hagiography," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hagiography>. Another definition is "a biography that treats the person with excessive or undue admiration." See *Dictionary.com*, s.v. "hagiography," <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/hagiography>.

4. "Jerald was convinced that God had sent Sandra into his life, reasoning that 'since she told me that she wanted to be a Christian, I felt that it would be pleasing to the Lord for us to be married.'" (p. 51).

The Tanners always viewed themselves as warriors for truth as they understood it, and Huggins dutifully burnishes that self-image.<sup>5</sup> Jerald Tanner was “firm and confrontational when he felt a point of truth and accuracy was at stake” (p. xi), just as a good truth warrior should be. In a complementary manner, Sandra Tanner is “unpretentious, thoughtful, articulate, and reasoned” (p. xiv), all great skills in conveying the truth uncovered by the Davidic warriors.

Huggins is not shy or subtle in his open expressions of admiration for the Tanners. His choice in adjectives describing their motives and actions is unfailingly positive. He never deals with the real-world effects that the Tanners had on hundreds, if not thousands of families. That choice by Huggins is understandable; it wouldn't fit with the image that he wants to create for these good warriors.

He seems oblivious to how his larger-than-life characterizations of them are, at times, unbelievable. For instance, Huggins quoted biblical scholar F. F. Bruce's comment about his father that Bruce “never had to unlearn anything I learned from him.” Huggins's assessment? “The same can be said of Jerald” (p. xiv). The glowing accolade, the early-on application of Bruce's comment to Jerald Tanner seems unearned when Huggins later explains how the Tanners were duped by Dee Jay Nelson and had to backtrack their support of him (pp. 147–64). It is such self-unawareness that evidences Huggins's uncritical approach to his subject matter. It is also evidence, at least to this reader, that Huggins's work is hagiography and not balanced history.

Huggins, as is to be expected in a purported biography, spends the early chapters in his book detailing the familial background of both Jerald and Sandra, pointing out how they came from families who had long been within the Church. In documenting Sandra's genealogy, he of course points out how she counts Brigham Young among her ancestors (pp. 22–28). He also understandably documents the Tanners's spiritual journey that led them away from the denomination in which they were raised. This journey is, consistent with Huggins's evangelical

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5. In some ways, *Lighthouse* can be considered a book-length version of a three-part article written by Huggins shortly after the death of Jerald Tanner. See Ronald V. Huggins, “Jerald Tanner's Quest for Truth,” *Salt Lake City Messenger* 108 (May 2007), 1–18, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/108saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>; Huggins, “Jerald Tanner's Quest for Truth — Part 2,” *Salt Lake City Messenger* 109 (October 2007), 1–17, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/109saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>; and Huggins, “Jerald Tanner's Quest for Truth — Part 3,” *Salt Lake City Messenger* 111 (November 2008), 1–14, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/111saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>.

worldview, interesting and profitable, as it led them to Christ: “From a Christian perspective, [Jerald’s] experience was common and has been described by theologians such as Augustine of Hippo, John Wesley, and Charles Finney as an important stage leading to authentic conversion to Christ” (pp. 47–48).

Others had previously commented on the spiritual journey traversed by the Tanners and the spark it created for their eventual life’s work. For instance, Lawrence Foster comments that:

Four months after their marriage, Sandra converted to evangelical Protestantism. The couple began putting out fliers, then pamphlets, books, and historical documents, explaining their position and trying to work through their own understanding of Mormonism and where it had gone wrong.<sup>6</sup>

Foster is factually correct, and I have no doubt that Huggins would see nothing wrong with such a statement. After all, it is written from the perspective of someone (such as the Tanners and, no doubt, Huggins) who believes that something *had* gone wrong with Mormonism. What if, however, the “something” that had gone wrong was with the Tanners, not with Mormonism? Huggins never considers such a possibility in his biography, though Foster is astute in pointing out that “a key factor” in Jerald’s animus toward the Church was his “reaction to his initial naive and unrealistic understanding of Mormonism.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, the trajectory of the Tanners’s lives was something that had gone wrong in Jerald (*his* reaction), not in the Church. This leads to the Tanners having an “overall tone [that] is far more bitter than that of the average ex-Mormon.”<sup>8</sup> Huggins never considers such a possibility; the bitterness that is so apparent to others is expunged from his telling. It is the Tanners who are on the side of right, and there is something wrong with Mormonism.

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6. Lawrence Foster, “Career Apostates: Reflections on the Works of Jerald and Sandra Tanner,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 39, <https://www.dialoguejournal.com/articles/career-apostates-reflections-on-the-works-of-jerald-and-sandra-tanner/>.

7. *Ibid.*, 41.

8. *Ibid.*, 42.

### Huggins's Depiction of the Tanners and Mark Hofmann

Huggins spends a good number of pages (pp. 244–60) relating the Tanners's interactions with Mark Hofmann.<sup>9</sup> Huggins is quick to point out that when Hofmann provided a copy of an early document to them, “Sandra simply stuck it in a file because it lacked any credible provenance” (p. 244).

Huggins is slow to admit that, in the beginning, the Tanners were just as taken in by Hofmann as everyone else was. For example, Huggins recounts the “discovery” of Hofmann's Anthon Transcript (pp. 245–47) and mentions how various experts accepted the forgery, including some scholars and experts associated with the Church. Not once, though, does Huggins mention that the Tanners also accepted the forgery as real, devoting the lion's share of a full newsletter to the find and extolling it as further proof of problems within the Church.<sup>10</sup> In fact, in short order they expanded the information first published in their newsletter, the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, into a pamphlet entitled “Book of Mormon ‘Caractors’ Found!” and added it to their catalog of items for sale.<sup>11</sup>

Huggins similarly downplays the Tanners acceptance of a subsequent Hofmann forgery known as the “Joseph Smith III Blessing.” Hofmann “discovered” this document in early 1981, and the Tanners quickly published a pamphlet entitled “Joseph Smith's Successor: An Important New Document Comes to Light.”<sup>12</sup> Under the heading “Amazing Discovery,” they state that “a recent discovery by Mark Hofmann

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9. It is beyond the scope of this review to address the impact that Hofmann had on everything related to Mormonism; that is best left to other books, and there are numerous choices available. For instance, see Linda Sillitoe and Allen Roberts, *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988); and Richard E. Turley Jr., *Victims: The LDS Church and the Mark Hofmann Case* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

10. See “Joseph Smith's ‘Caractors’ Found! Important Discovery Puts President Kimball on the Spot,” *Salt Lake City Messenger* 43 (July 1980), 1–11, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/43saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>.

11. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, “Book of Mormon ‘Caractors’ Found!” (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1980). The pamphlet was advertised for sale in the *Salt Lake City Messenger* 45 (February 1981), 8. This is the only time the Tanners advertised the pamphlet in their newsletter.

12. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, “Joseph Smith's Successor: An Important New Document Comes to Light” (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1981). The Tanners offered the pamphlet for sale, along with an abbreviated, article-length version of their pamphlet, in the *Salt Lake City Messenger* 46 (October 1981), 9–11, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/46saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>. It is the only edition of the newsletter in which the pamphlet was advertised.

proves that Joseph Smith actually did designate his son [Joseph Smith III] as successor.”<sup>13</sup> In 31 pages of meandering prose, the Tanners built their “proof” upon Hofmann’s forgery, stating in various ways that “Joseph Smith III was the true successor and that Brigham Young wrongfully appropriated this right to himself”<sup>14</sup> and that “the Utah Mormon Church will have a difficult time explaining it away.”<sup>15</sup>

The Tanners further quote Wilford Woodruff as saying “Joseph Smith never ordained his son Joseph, never blessed him nor set him apart to lead this Church and Kingdom on the face of the earth. When he or any other man says he did, they state that which is false before high heaven.”<sup>16</sup> Their judgment on Woodruff’s statement? “It is obvious that the discovery of a blessing completely destroys President Woodruff’s argument.”<sup>17</sup> In their view, “the recently discovered blessing provides devastating evidence against the Utah Mormon Church.”<sup>18</sup>

The Tanners, of course, were wrong, but you wouldn’t know it from the way Huggins approaches the matter. The Joseph Smith III blessing was a fabrication of Mark Hofmann; it was not real. That didn’t stop the Tanners from swallowing it and regurgitating it as evidence against the Church.

The Tanners also capitalized on Hofmann’s next “discovery,” a supposed 1829 letter by Lucy Mack Smith,<sup>19</sup> but Huggins largely ignores this. It is only with the advent of the White Salamander Letter, and Huggins’s depiction of that advent, that we see Huggins start to admit that the Tanners were beginning to question the amazing discoveries by Hofmann:

Up to that point [in time] Jerald, along with everyone else, had been looking at early Mormon parallels as supportive evidence for the authenticity of the forgeries. Hofmann, like any other truly accomplished forger, had been playing to the expectations of the experts ... paving the way for his forgeries

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13. Tanner, “Joseph Smith’s Successor,” 1–2.

14. *Ibid.*, 7.

15. *Ibid.*, 17.

16. *Ibid.*, 13. The Tanners’s citation for this is “Statement by President Wilford Woodruff, as cited in *Priesthood and Presidency*, by Charles W. Penrose, page 22.”

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 27.

19. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, “Lucy Smith’s 1829 Letter” (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1982). The Tanners offered the pamphlet for sale in the *Salt Lake City Messenger* 49 (October 1981), 12, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/49saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>.



to be welcomed with open arms. As Orson Welles once said, experts are “God’s own gift to the faker.” Jerald himself had, until now, been perhaps too ready to listen to the judgment of experts, of whom the most prominent was Dean Jessee. But now that Jerald realized he might be dealing with a faker, he knew he would need to be looking at the evidence in a different way; he would need to be thinking of material found in early Mormon texts not only as possible contemporary parallels to the documents Hofmann was finding, but as possible sources drawn upon as a basis for forging them. (pp. 251–52)

This characterization is very convenient for Huggins’s narrative. Notice, though, that Huggins deflects from Jerald any responsibility for earlier acceptance and use of Hofmann’s forgeries and places the blame squarely on “the experts,” and especially on Dean Jessee. In other words, Jerald, up to this point, had been the victim not only of Hofmann, but also of others who had, just like Jerald, accepted what Hofmann offered. Unlike the others to whom Huggins deflects, though, throughout the entire Hofmann saga (at least as selectively recounted by Huggins), there were only two parties who made any income from what Hofmann produced — Hofmann (of course) and the Tanners.

Unfortunately, Huggins isn’t alone in his historical myopia:

The Tanners were among the first public critics of the forger and later murderer Mark Hofmann ... By early 1984, Jerald Tanner had concluded there was significant doubt as to the Salamander Letter’s authenticity ... By late 1984, he questioned the authenticity of most, if not all, of Hofmann’s discoveries, largely for their undocumented provenance. He was ultimately vindicated when Hofmann’s forgeries were exposed.<sup>20</sup>

Jerald’s 1984 decision regarding Hofmann may have been “ultimately vindicated,” but his early acceptance of Hofmann (from 1980 through 1984) was not. After cashing in on Hofmann’s forgeries for years, the Tanners silently removed the forgery-based pamphlets from their catalog,<sup>21</sup> and they never placed the pamphlets in any list of

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20. Wikipedia, s.v. “Jerald and Sandra Tanner,” last modified September 16, 2023, 04:58, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerald\\_and\\_Sandra\\_Tanner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerald_and_Sandra_Tanner).

21. This conclusion was reached by reading all issues of the *Salt Lake City Messenger* published between 1981 and 1984 when Jerald publicly had his change of heart regarding Hofmann’s many finds.

their publications that I could locate.<sup>22</sup> Huggins mentions a couple of the Tanners's pamphlets based on the Hofmann forgeries, but charitably exonerates Jerald from any responsibility for having “cashed in” on those forgeries — it was, after all, the fault of “the experts.”<sup>23</sup>

### Shadow or Reality?

As one might expect, Huggins spent a full chapter on *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* (pp. 101–20). This was the Tanners's *magnum opus*, a chameleon of a book that went from 239 pages in 1963 (under the less sensational title *Mormonism: A Study of History and Doctrine*; see p. 102) to a whopping 772 pages in its final fifth edition in 1987.<sup>24</sup> His assessment of the book is interesting:

The book had all the hallmarks of what would become recognizable in Tanner publications: a homemade appearance; an overuse of underlining, all-capital letters, and tediously long quotations; *and* an overtly evangelical Christian perspective. It ... brought forward mountains of new evidence with an eye

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22. What the Tanners still offer online can be found at <http://www.utlm.org/booklist/digitalbooks.htm>.

23. The Tanners have, in many venues, indicated that the issue isn't necessarily that Jerald beat the “Church's experts” to the punch, but that the Church, led by a prophet, should never have been fooled by Hofmann at all. See, for instance, the discussion in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, interview by Stan Larson and George D. Smith, *Everett L. Cooley Oral History Project*, April 2, 1997, 73–75, <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=788232>. Such discussions, while facile, are dismissive and show a lack of subtly and nuance when it comes to understanding the purpose of prophets. They demand a level of infallibility from prophets that those prophets have never claimed nor has the Lord ever required.

24. As I consider the history of *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?*, I can't help but consider it the *CES Letter* of its day. The *CES Letter*, written by Jeremy Runnels, purports to share the truth that the evil Church has long suppressed, the same as the Tanners's work. Both seek to bring people ‘out of Mormonism,’ though the Tanners envision that transition will bring the individual to Christ and Runnels doesn't express any desire for where it brings the individual. Like *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?*, the *CES Letter* impressively grows with each new edition. The *CES Letter* serves as the money machine that keeps Runnels' ministry afloat, the same as the ever-burgeoning *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* did for the Tanners's ministry half a century before. With so many similarities, one can plausibly envision a future day when a doppelganger of Ron Huggins will, similarly, write a glowing biography of Runnels. It is another odd choice by Huggins that he mentions John Dehlin's work as emblematic of the future of what the Tanners undertook (pp. 326–27), but doesn't mention Runnels at all.

for accuracy ... Believers may insist some of the claims are sensationalized, or they may disagree with Jerald and Sandra's conclusions about what the evidence means for the church, but they cannot say that *Shadow or Reality?* made up any sources or facts. (pp. 104–105)

This is hardly a ringing endorsement. While facts are important for any writer — particularly writers approaching historical inquiry — it is the use to which those facts are put that is paramount. It is not the transcription of quotes that is important, but how the quotes are used by the one doing the transcribing.

Of course, Huggins never questions the use to which the quotes are put, presumably because Huggins's evangelical sensibilities generally agree with the choices of the Tanners in this regard. Note that in the above quote Huggins counts the “overtly evangelical Christian perspective” as a plus for *Shadow or Reality?* His approbation is equally evident as he recounts how the book was condensed, repackaged, and published by Moody Press under the title *The Changing World of Mormonism*.

I did find it odd that Huggins chose, in his chapter about *Shadow or Reality?*, to spend a good number of pages on something entirely unrelated to the book. Huggins's chapter occupies 20 pages, but the last 7 of those pages (pp. 114–20) never once mention the book; they detail the dissolution of the marriage of Sandra's parents and the eventual Christian conversion of Sandra's father, Ivan. The material on Sandra's parents is definitely appropriate for a biography, but its inclusion in a chapter ostensibly about *Shadow or Reality?* is odd and never explained by Huggins.

Another thing that Huggins never deals with in the chapter is the eventual reactions to *Shadow or Reality?* by various academics. There have been multiple reviews of the book written, but only one is addressed: *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism: A Response to Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* (pp. 195–205). The 1977 response takes on many of the claims of the Tanners, but the response is never dealt with by Huggins; he only details the Tanners focus on the anonymity of the response's author, whom they christen “Dr. Clandestine”:

The Tanners spent nearly half of their *Answering Dr. Clandestine* unmasking the author. The thing that made *Distorted View of Mormonism* interesting, after all, was not what it said, but its anonymity and the absurd carnivalesque series of events that accompanied its birth. (p. 201)

Huggins, once again, presents the Tanners as good warriors, trying to uncover the truth of who the author is, all the while ignoring what the author has to say — he focuses on the messenger, not on the message.

### The Story of a Lawsuit, According to Huggins

Here is where, for me, the story gets a bit personal, as my name is mentioned in Huggins's book. (Recall that my name being mentioned is why I first became aware of *Lighthouse*.) It all has to do with a lawsuit filed against me by Sandra Tanner.

I first became aware of the lawsuit on Monday, April 25, 2005. I was sitting in my home office, in Mesa, Arizona, when that afternoon a reporter for *The Salt Lake Tribune* contacted me by phone.<sup>25</sup> I was asked for comment on a lawsuit the Tanners had filed against me and my company. I had no idea what the reporter was talking about, as the Tanners had not seen fit to file a cease-and-desist demand, nor to utilize any form of communication to let me know that a lawsuit was coming.<sup>26</sup> I had thought it odd that, one week previous to the filing (on April 18, 2005), Sandra Tanner had purchased something from the FAIR online bookstore.<sup>27</sup> In hindsight, Sandra made the purchase because she was gathering what she viewed as evidence for her soon-to-be-filed suit. The suit was, entirely, a bolt out of the blue, and it ended up occupying several years of my life.

Let me start, though, by looking at how Huggins decided to describe this particular lawsuit. Here is the pertinent prose that he uses:

After being on the receiving end of lawsuits, the Tanners found themselves back in court in 2005, this time as the plaintiff. The Mormon-themed Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research (FAIR), aided by Allen Wyatt, had registered thirteen internet domain names that led to sites that mimicked the appearance of the Utah Lighthouse Ministry

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25. Pamela Manson, "Ministry files suit over Web sites," *The Salt Lake Tribune* (April 26, 2005), <https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?itype=NGPSID&id=2684651>.

26. It was evident, however, that the Tanners reached out to reporters in the Salt Lake area to let them know that they had filed the lawsuit. Were that not the case, the reporter wouldn't have known to contact me by phone.

27. She had purchased a CD of a talk given by Mike Ash entitled "The Impact of Mormon Critics on LDS Scholarship." With shipping, it cost her \$11.90. The CD was not sold on my website about the Tanners, but through FAIR's online bookstore. Sandra had to visit my website, click to go to the FAIR website, click to go to the FAIR online bookstore, and then consummate the purchase.

site, but with links that directed people to FAIR articles instead of the Tanners' work. The choice of the domain names made it appear that they were intentionally trying to create confusion on the web to draw traffic away from the Tanners' website. For example, the Tanners' website was [www.utlm.org](http://www.utlm.org), but if someone typed in [utahlighthouseministry.com](http://utahlighthouseministry.com), or even [sandratanner.com](http://sandratanner.com) and [jeraldanner.org](http://jeraldanner.org), they were directed to FAIR's websites. They even exploited the frequent misspelling of Jerald's name with a G instead of a J. Sandra filed suit to prevent "the exploitation of the ministry trademark and our personal names, and to ensure that those seeking our information are not misled."

The case dragged on for years, and was ultimately lost on the grounds that the websites had ostensibly been intended as "parodies." ... Happily, although the Tanners didn't prevail in the suit, they were able to retrieve all but one of the domain names. (pp. 311–12)

Huggins is correct that the case did drag on for years. In virtually everything else he reports, however, he is materially incorrect. (It does fit the heroic narrative that Huggins exemplifies throughout the book, however.) Let me bring up a few points about the literary choices that Huggins makes in his prose.

First, Huggins says that FAIR, "aided by Allen Wyatt, had registered thirteen internet domain names." This is incorrect, as I registered only ten domains, and I registered those personally, without any knowledge by other FAIR officers. I did not "aid" FAIR in this, even though at the time I registered the domains and created the website (late 2003) I was an officer of FAIR.<sup>28</sup> I did not make the registrations or website in my capacity as an officer of FAIR. In fact, I only let FAIR know about one of the domains ([sandratanner.com](http://sandratanner.com)) and the website I created later, in April 2004.<sup>29</sup>

Second, Huggins says that the domains I registered "led to sites that mimicked the appearance of the Utah Lighthouse Ministry site." He is correct in the respect that I did create a single site (not multiple *sites* — plural) and that site did mimic the Tanners's site. I, however, would have used the word "mocked" rather than "mimicked"; that would seem

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28. My "officer" position with FAIR was a volunteer position. There was no pay or remuneration for that title or position.

29. Email to FAIR apologetics list, April 20, 2004. Email in possession of author.

a better description to me, as it encapsulated my design intent at the time.

Third, Huggins says that the domains I registered contained “links that directed people to FAIR articles instead of the Tanners’ work.” Huggins gives a false impression here. Yes, my website contained links to some articles at FAIR’s website, but those links were in the distinct minority. The site I created included a grand total of 16 links. Eleven of those led to FARMS articles at BYU, four led to articles at FAIR, and one led to the Church’s website.<sup>30</sup>

Fourth, Huggins says that “if someone typed in *utahlighthouseministry.com*, or even *sandratanner.com* and *jeraldanner.org*, they were directed to FAIR’s websites.” This is false, as the “someone” would be directed to my website (again, not plural) and then they would need to click one of four links at my website to get to FAIR’s website. It is possible that Huggins is assuming that my website was FAIR’s website. If that is the case, his assumption (though it may be innocent) should not become the historical record because it is incorrect.

Fifth, Huggins says “They even exploited the frequent misspelling of Jerald’s name with a G instead of a J.” The problem here is the use of “they,” when the correct usage is “Wyatt.” I did it, solely; there was no “they.” And, yes, I did exploit that common misspelling because I knew how people used the internet.

Sixth, Huggins indicates that the Tanners’s case was “ultimately lost on the grounds that the websites had ostensibly been intended as ‘parodies.’” The truth was, the Tanners lost twice, once on their initial suit and then again on a more limited appeal. Their losses were incurred on much broader grounds than mere “parody.” Plus, I never claimed that I created the website as parody; that was an assessment by the courts as to what my site was, based on the mocking way in which I designed the website.

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30. It has always been interesting to me that Sandra Tanner chose to file suit against me and FAIR, but did not include the Church or BYU in her suit. This, despite the fact that 75% of the links from my website went to websites operated by the Church or BYU. I suppose this is evidence that Sandra wasn’t concerned about the links, *per se*, but that she based the inclusion of just FAIR on the assumption that I was, in creating the website, acting as an agent of FAIR. This was disproved during discovery and argument in the initial court proceedings. Even though the fact was documented and established that I was acting individually, the Tanners still decided to keep FAIR as a defendant when they appealed the initial ruling.

Seventh, Huggins says that happily, the Tanners “were able to retrieve all but one of the domain names.” This shows a profound lack of understanding of how the internet works. If I leave my wallet on the dresser, I can later retrieve it. I can do so because I once had it in my possession and now, happily, I have possession of it again. The Tanners never owned the domain names that I registered, so they could not retrieve them. The Tanners eventually got possession of the domain names because even before the initial suit was decided I, under advice of counsel, utilized an escrow company to transfer them to the Tanners and even provided information to them on how to claim them from the escrow company. This transferal was not required by the court, and had I not chosen to instigate the transferal, I would still own the domains to this time.

For a good recitation of facts, it is helpful to look at a portion of the decision by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals:

Jerald and Sandra Tanner founded UTLM in 1982 to critique the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). In support of its mission, UTLM sells books at both a brick-and-mortar bookstore in Utah and through an online bookstore at the official UTLM website, [www.utlm.org](http://www.utlm.org).

The Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR) is a volunteer organization that responds to criticisms of the LDS Church. FAIR’s website also has an online bookstore, and both FAIR and UTLM provide online publications on the subject of the LDS Church. The publications in the two bookstores overlap by thirty titles. Defendant-Appellee Allen Wyatt is the vice president and webmaster for FAIR. In November 2003, Wyatt created a website parodying the UTLM website — the Wyatt website is similar in appearance but has different, though suggestively parallel, content.

The district court’s Memorandum Decision and Order describes the design and content of the Wyatt and UTLM websites (Mem. Decision & Order at 3-4), and Appellant’s appendix includes screen shots of the websites. The design elements are similar, including the image of a lighthouse with black and white barbershop stripes. However, the words “Destroy, Mislead, and Deceive” are written across the stripes on the Wyatt website. Prominent text on the Wyatt website consists of a slight modification of the language located in the



same position on the UTLM website. For example, the UTLM website states: “Welcome to the Official Website of the Utah Lighthouse Ministry, founded by Jerald and Sandra Tanner.” In comparison, the Wyatt website states: “Welcome to an official website *about* the Utah Lighthouse Ministry, *which was* founded by Jerald and Sandra Tanner.” (emphasis added.) The Wyatt website does not have any kind of disclaimer that it is not associated with UTLM.

The Wyatt website contains no advertising and offers no goods or services for sale. The Wyatt website includes sixteen external hyperlinks. Eleven of these hyperlinks point to the website of an organization at Brigham Young University. Three hyperlinks point to articles on the FAIR website that are critical of the Tanners, and another takes viewers directly to the FAIR homepage. The other external hyperlink is to the website of the LDS Church.

Wyatt, through his company Discovery Computing, Inc., registered ten domain names, each of which directed visitors to the Wyatt website. The domain names are combinations of “Utah Lighthouse Ministry,” “Sandra Tanner,” “Gerald Tanner,” “Jerald Tanner,” and “.com” and “.org.” Wyatt first publicized the Wyatt website to FAIR members in April 2004. Defendants assert that prior to April 2004 only Wyatt had any knowledge of or input into the website.

Wyatt ceased operation of the website and began to transfer the domain names to UTLM in April 2005.<sup>31</sup>

In reviewing Huggins’s presentation of the case in his book, it is obvious that he either didn’t look up the actual court decisions or he purposefully misrepresented the case.

In retrospect, with the lawsuit 15 years in the rearview mirror, I know that there are many people who consider Sandra Tanner to be a good Christian. They find her kind, affable, and giving. I have no doubt that she is all of these things to some people. She is not that to me, however. Relatively early in their publishing career, the Tanners asserted that “the leaders of the Mormon Church have always found it very hard

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31. See *Utah Lighthouse Ministry v. Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research & Discovery Computing*, D.C. No. 2:05-CV-00380-DAK, <https://www.ca10.uscourts.gov/sites/ca10/files/opinions/01011032310.pdf>.



to accept criticism.”<sup>32</sup> Huggins never acknowledges that the Tanners had the same difficulty when anyone criticized them. I know, from personal experience, that the same can be said about Sandra and her actions relative to the lawsuit.<sup>33</sup>

This review, however, is not about Sandra; it is about Huggins’s depiction of Sandra’s actions. He doesn’t bother to get the facts of the lawsuit correct, nor did he bother to reach out to me to discuss what he planned on writing about the lawsuit.

This last point — of not attempting to reach out to me — seems particularly germane, as Huggins states that in order to write the Tanners’s biography there would need to be special care taken:

I also knew that it would not suffice for me to simply familiarize myself with [the Tanners] material. I would also need to delve into the evidence and arguments of those the Tanners were in controversy with, who, taken together, represented dozens of people over many years. (pp. vii–viii)

With such a special need recognized and expressed, it should be noted that when it comes to this particular lawsuit, Huggins spectacularly failed. Not only did he not reach out to me, he did not reach out to any of the other defendants in the lawsuit, nor to the defense attorneys. Had he done so, his coverage of the lawsuit would have been more complete and, possibly, more nuanced. The fact that he didn’t reach out cannot help but cast a shadow over research Huggins purports to have done in preparing other sections of the book.

Please understand — I am not trying to convince anyone that the Tanners were “bad” and I was “good” relative to this particular lawsuit. People can form their own opinions of my actions, Sandra’s actions, and both of our reactions. Personally, I trust that Sandra Tanner was following what she viewed as the best course of action at the time, as painful as that may have been for those put on the defensive. The fact that the courts ultimately disagreed with her is almost beside the point.

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32. “Suppression of the News,” *The Salt Lake City Messenger* 6 (January 1966), 1, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/6saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>.

33. At the urging of counsel, I made a phone call to Sandra Tanner during the initial lawsuit and talked to her on the phone. I expressed regret that we were both in the midst of the lawsuit and let her know that the domains she wanted were being held in escrow for her. If memory serves, I told her I would send her information on how to secure ownership of the domains from the escrow account. The conversation was not pleasant, as Sandra chastised me for my “unchristian” behavior that, in her view, made her actions necessary.

My purpose here in recounting this is that Huggins, as a biographer, made choices as to how he would depict an incident about which I have first-hand knowledge. That he chose to do so in what I view as a slanted, shallow, incomplete way is *very* germane to a review of his book as a whole. It is Huggins's actions that are at point here, not anyone else's.

Finally, it should be noted that Huggins spent nine pages (pp. 299–307) discussing a previous lawsuit brought by the Church against the Tanners in which the Tanners were ultimately victorious. In page after page, he recounts the “intimidating way” (p. 300) the Church behaved, their “ongoing hostility toward” the Tanners, their “inaccurate” work (p. 303), their “slandorous” (p. 304) charges, how they “incorrectly insinuated” (p. 304) things about the Tanners, their use of “dangerous logic” (p. 307), and how they sought to curtail freedom (p. 307).

Conversely, the Tanners are described by Huggins as “careful” (p. 300) and “wise” (p. 303) in their actions in that suit. He indicates that the Tanners felt “that the church hoped to match their vast financial reserves against their comparatively modest means . . . to drive them into bankruptcy” (p. 302). In other words, once again the Tanners were victims and were fighting the good fight against the evil Church. Huggins has only negative adjectives available for the Church and positive adjectives for the Tanners.

By comparison, when describing the Tanners's suit against myself and FAIR, Huggins spent less than two paragraphs. He doesn't bother to even provide a footnote to the suit filed by the Tanners, which is available on their website.<sup>34</sup> He doesn't bother to note that every allegation the Tanners made in their suit was rejected by two courts.<sup>35</sup> He doesn't bother to mention that the Tanners's attorney, when questioned as to what it would take to settle the case, indicated that they felt a “fair settlement”

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34. See *Utah Lighthouse Ministry, Inc. v. Discovery Computing, Inc.*, <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/trademark/utlmcomplaint.pdf>. It is worth noting that when it comes to the earlier Church-instigated case against the Tanners, Huggins cites the actual court documents multiple times (see pp. 301n4-5, 303n8-10, 304n12, 304n14, 305n15-16, 305n18, 306n19, and 307n23.) He fails to cite any court documents in recounting the Tanners's suits against myself and FAIR.

35. See the Tenth District Court of Appeals decision cited earlier. For a news story about the early dismissal of the Tanners's initial lawsuit, see Pamela Manson, “Judge tosses cybersquatting suit against pro-Mormon group,” *The Salt Lake Tribune* (March 26, 2007), <https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?itype=NGPSID&id=5524587>. A very similar story appeared in the paper the next day: Pamela Manson, “Federal judge dismisses anti-Mormon group suit,” *The Salt Lake Tribune* (March 27, 2007), <https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?itype=NGPSID&id=5528551>.

would involve at least \$10 million. There is irony — unreported and perhaps unrecognized by Huggins — that the Tanners felt the Church was trying to bankrupt them through legal means when, years later, they tried to do the same thing with their suit, except this time they played the role of the aggressors. This brings to mind another observation of Lawrence Foster:

The Tanners have repeatedly assumed a holier-than-thou stance, refusing to be fair in applying the same debate standards of absolute rectitude which they demand of Mormonism to their own actions, writings, and beliefs.<sup>36</sup>

Huggins may think such behavior as exhibited by the Tanners is praiseworthy in crafting his biography of them, but my first-hand experiences with the Tanners and their attorneys provides a different perspective. Huggins glosses over and sanitizes information about the Tanners in order to establish their legacy and burnish their image within certain quarters.

### **Consequences, Intended or Not**

Any action in life comes with consequences. This truism should not come as a surprise to anyone. Some of those consequences are intended and some are not. If the intended consequences are those that come to pass, then we are generally happy, but if the unintended consequences are negative, we generally are not happy.

Enough of the life lessons, though. As simple and obvious as they may be, I mention them because the actions the Tanners took in their lives have had consequences. Some of those consequences are obvious — they have an outwardly happy family, they had a happy marriage, they found joy in giving service at their chosen church and at the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake.<sup>37</sup> There were, no doubt, many other things — results of their actions — that brought Jerald and Sandra happiness and joy. I would not deny them any of those positive results.

Huggins, though, provides an interesting quote from Sandra: “If Mormonism isn’t true, setting aside the eternal question, just what it inflicted on my ancestors is enough to demand an accounting” (p. 323). Obviously, Sandra sees no problem in being the one to do the

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36. Foster, “Career Apostates,” 45–46.

37. Huggins talks extensively about the Tanners’s work with the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake. See, particularly, Chapter 13, “Jerald’s Other Ministry: The Rescue Mission of Salt Lake” (pp. 207–18).

demanding.<sup>38</sup> Does a sense of fairness, then, dictate that an accounting be demanded of Sandra and Jerald for the toll that their life's work "inflicted" upon others? Should their acts be judged by the consequences they brought about, intended or not?

What about the consequences to those studying Mormon History, in general? At the time the Tanners were starting out in their careers, things were generally looking up when it came to studying Church documents. Terryl Givens and Philip Barlow describe those years in this manner:

The surge of scholarly interest in the Mormon past ushered in a vibrant era of intellectual inquiry and productive work that received official praise and support. In fact, staunch conservative Joseph Fielding Smith, who in the 1960s was Church Historian as well as a senior apostle, was a prime mover in efforts to professionalize the office ... By 1969, the changes in approach to the Mormon past taken by LDS scholars were marked enough that professor of history Moses Rischin, not himself a Latter-day Saint, concluded that developments constituted a "new Mormon history." The era of Camelot, as Arrington's associate Davis Bitton later called the next years, would mark unprecedented access to church archives, and surging scholarly production of high quality and volume ... But it was a painfully short-lived Camelot. Within a decade, Arrington had been released and he and his colleagues reassigned to disparate programs and locations. Access to church archives was no longer as open, and signals from the church leadership suggested concern over the new trends.<sup>39</sup>

Many scholars agree with Bitton that those years were a "Camelot" when it came to them gaining access to primary documents. Leonard

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38. Sandra's demand for an accounting seems rather facile, as in many venues her vita has always included the obligatory statement that one of her ancestors is Brigham Young. It seems, at least to me, an inescapable paradox that Sandra wants to hold one of her grandfathers accountable for what was done to, well, that same grandfather, among many other ancestors. Sandra's expressed desire to be judge, jury, and executioner also seems to fly in the face of the moral agency possessed by her ancestors — at least some of them chose to join the Church and presumably the majority of them chose to remain in the Church. Her demand for accounting ignores that truth.

39. Terryl L. Givens and Philip L. Barlow, *The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2–3.

Arrington, who was Church Historian during those Camelot years, is quoted several times by Huggins in a manner that casts aspersions on the Church for bringing Camelot to an end and closing the archives (pp. 203–205).

What was the truth, however? After Arrington was reassigned, he gives a different picture than Huggins does, lamenting that the Church archives, “fully opened for several years, are now being closed up, or restricted, once more.” His contemporaneous conclusion as to why this was happening was that, primarily, “the Tanners, Marquardt, et al., and Fred Collier, et al., ‘borrowed’ things from the archives, and duplicated them, and used some of the material against the Church.”<sup>40</sup>

So, even though Huggins (and, no doubt, the Tanners) fault the Church, Arrington — who was in the thick of things of which the Tanners were a part — understood that the Tanners were largely responsible for access being more restricted. This brings to mind an assessment penned by Lawrence Foster:

The Tanners are critical of what they term the Mormon “suppression” of documents and evidence [because] they believe that the full record of Mormonism, if it could be made available, would utterly refute the Church’s truth claims and lead to the destruction of the faith. At every point, the Tanners see fraud, conspiracy, and cover-ups. They always assume the worst possible motives in assessing the actions of Mormon leaders, even when those leaders faced extremely complex problems with no simple solutions.<sup>41</sup>

The Tanners, in the Quixotic desire for greater openness, published things to which they had no right (in Arrington’s air-quoted words, things they “borrowed”), with the result that true academic study actually suffered. Huggins never covers such consequences — but why should he? It certainly doesn’t fit the narrative of what he is trying to build for the Tanners’s legacy.

What, though, of the consequences of the Tanners’s actions when it comes to families? Should their acts be judged against the turmoil, strife, and emotional carnage that their efforts seeded far and wide?

Sandra, no doubt, would say that they should not be held responsible; they were simply spreading the truth as they saw it. It is a self-justification

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40. Arrington, *Confessions of a Mormon Historian*, 3:221. The diary entry was for September 4, 1981.

41. Lawrence Foster, “Career Apostates,” 45.

they spent a lifetime faulting in members of the Church and denying those, such as myself, who pushed back against their efforts. In other words, by at least one measure the Tanners were hypocrites, willing to see the mote in others' eyes, albeit unclearly because of the beam in their own (see Matthew 7:1–5). Huggins's readers would never be the wiser as to this reality.

Huggins provides, in a second-hand manner, an anecdote that pulls back the curtain just a bit. In discussing the relationship between the Tanners and Wallace Turner, a journalist for the *New York Times*, Huggins shares this:

Turner also shared how, as he interviewed one member of the church and Jerald's name was mentioned, the man's "face darkened." "Yes, I know of him," the man told Turner. "My wife is in his clutches — intellectually speaking, of course." (pp. 111–12)

Huggins allows the anecdote to stand on its own, without commentary. The bottom line, though, is that material published by the Tanners sowed strife, struggle, and discontent in this person's family.

This is not a lone incident; examples could be legion. Leonard Arrington recorded in his diary that at a book signing event in Orem, Utah, he and Davis Bitton had been verbally accosted by a fellow "who was quite loud and very bitter and caustic." This unnamed fellow had read publications "by the Tanners and was bitter that the Church had lied to members about our history. He didn't believe anything was true any longer. He kept this up for some time."<sup>42</sup> The fellow eventually left, but notice that Arrington's record of the confrontation indicated the Tanners's publications led the man to not "believe anything was true any longer." One can only wonder how such effect could affect familial harmony for the fellow.

In a later diary entry, Arrington tells of an encounter with an unnamed student in a class he was teaching at BYU. The student was "the wife of [name redacted], who was excommunicated a couple of years ago for apostasy because he had read and fully accepted the Tanners' material." This student was "apparently divorced from him, has custody of the children except the oldest boy, who remains" with the husband.

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42. Leonard J. Arrington, *Confessions of a Mormon Historian: The Diaries of Leonard J. Arrington 1971–1997*, ed. Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2018), 2:759. The diary entry is for April 2, 1979, and covers events of the previous three or four days.

“She indicated that her former husband has been ‘filling the kids full of the Tanner stuff’” and was apparently taking Arrington’s class “to get ammunition and to understand fully this matters herself.” Arrington was apparently impressed with this student as he concluded by saying that “I would think anybody who divorced her or let her divorce him would have to be crazy.”<sup>43</sup>

The Tanners would, no doubt, focus on the woman needing to “get ammunition,” as if she were in the wrong. It is just as easy, though, to see that such an approach would not be necessary had not the Tanners’s material been responsible for the dissolution of the marriage and breakup of the family.

I could add my own personal witness to these anecdotes, as I joined the Church in 1968 as a pre-teen in my parents’ family. Shortly after our family joined, my father discovered the writings of the Tanners. From that point onward he would fight against the Church, using arguments that had their genesis in the Tanners’s material. My father is now into his 90s, and he still argues against the Church using the same material. His actions — rooted in what the Tanners published — have caused no end of strife and contention within our family for over half a century.<sup>44</sup>

The Tanners (and Huggins) repeatedly say that their ministry’s purpose was to bring people to Christ.<sup>45</sup> In reality, its purpose was to take people out of the Church. “Bringing people to Christ” is a platitude of self-delusion.<sup>46</sup> Sandra periodically expresses as much: “God had given us a burden to share with them that they [members of the Church] had been misled and betrayed . . . The church isn’t worthy of their devotion.”<sup>47</sup>

43. *Ibid.*, 2:776, name redaction in original.

44. This personal experience with the Tanners’s publications is one of the reasons — perhaps the primary reason — that I created the website countering the Tanners and that resulted in their suing me and FAIR. (Huggins’s superficial, incomplete, and misleading coverage of the lawsuit was recounted earlier in this review.)

45. Huggins reports that in an early interaction between Jerald and LeGrand Richards, Jerald said that “I want to show the Mormon people the love of Christ” (p. 65).

46. Even a cursory examination of the index to Huggins’s book bears this out: there are references to “LDS Church” on many more pages than to “Jesus Christ” (p. 357). According to the index, references to “Jesus Christ” appear on 11 pages and references to “LDS Church” appear on 75 pages. There are only two pages of overlap between the references.

47. “Tanners are a wellspring of documents,” *Deseret News* (May 16, 1998), <https://www.deseret.com/1998/5/16/19380391/tanners-are-wellspring-of-documents>. The same Associated Press story, with minor editing, appeared later at



Exposing what you see as incorrect behavior in others — whether that assessment is correct or not — doesn't bring others to Christ. It may pull people away from what they believe, but it doesn't provide them a reason for belief in something different. The Tanners always focused on the tearing down of what the Church did, not on the evangelizing of others to what they viewed as a better life.

### Conclusion

Huggins has written a highly readable hagiography of Jerald and Sandra Tanner. He claims that “hagiography” was not his goal (p. ix), but as one who lived through and was directly affected by the Tanners, I cannot but conclude that is what he created.

From the beginning of his book, Huggins was clear that he wanted to create his biography from the viewpoint of the Tanners. He wanted to create “a depiction of what the world looks like from the perspective of the subjects themselves.” He tempers that approach, a bit, by then saying that this might not be an “adequate guide for imaginative biographical reconstruction” (p. x). I would agree that his “reconstruction” of the past is “imaginative,” but it is not exactly historical. It is deceptively limiting to indicate what the pond looks like to a single fish swimming within it, but any story of that fish must include not only comments of who the other fish are, but what the effect is of that single fish on the ecosystem of the pond. Huggins sticks to the single fish; he doesn't consider the wider pond.

Huggins indicates that he did his work under Sandra's close review and with her stamp of approval,<sup>48</sup> a fact that seems to argue against objectivity on Huggins's part. I have no doubt people who support the Tanners's ministry will consider it a remarkable book. I am not one

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“Ex-Mormons evangelize against faith,” *Kitsap Sun* (July 11, 1998), [https://products.kitsapsun.com/archive/1998/07-11/0043\\_ex-mormons\\_evangelize\\_against\\_fai.html](https://products.kitsapsun.com/archive/1998/07-11/0043_ex-mormons_evangelize_against_fai.html).

48. In the Introduction to his book, Huggins notes twice that he is grateful for Sandra's review of his manuscript. “I am grateful to Sandra Tanner for the many times she reviewed things I had written ...” (p. x); and “I am indebted to ... Sandra Tanner, who read and reread the various drafts of the present work ...” (p. xvi). Further, the very first words of the Introduction are “When I was approached about writing a biography of Jerald and Sandra Tanner ...” (p. vii). One can easily assume, without contrary information, that it was Sandra or her ministry that approached Huggins about writing the book. As to the book having Sandra's stamp of approval, all one needs to do is to listen to the many podcasts she did after publication of the book, all of which were supportive.



of those people, but I, too, consider it a remarkable book. I consider it remarkable that the lives of two people who spent their careers tearing down the faith of others could be praised as if they were somehow ‘fighting the good fight’ and bringing others to Jesus. I cannot help but consider the spiritual and emotional devastation that the Tanners left in their wake — not in the lives of all, to be sure, but in the lives of many.

Finally, I consider it remarkable that Huggins’s book could be awarded the Best Biography Award for 2023 by the Mormon History Association.<sup>49</sup> Leonard Arrington — who founded and was the first president of the Mormon History Association<sup>50</sup> — had numerous problems with the Tanners and, as already mentioned, considered their work as one of the key factors that led to the closing of the Church archives and the dismantling of the Church History Department in the 1970s. It seems simply incredulous (and darkly ironic) that the organization Arrington founded would recognize and reward Huggins for a biography about the people that opposed Arrington’s work and the faith that Arrington held dear.

The bottom line, to me, is that Huggins’s work is credible, but it is incomplete. There is much to the Tanners that he chose not to share. For me, his book is largely shadow, short of reality.

**Allen Wyatt** *has been working in the computer and publishing industries for over three decades. He has written more than 60 books explaining many facets of working with computers, as well as numerous magazine articles. He has been publishing free weekly newsletters about Microsoft*

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49. See “2023 Awards,” Mormon History Association, <https://mormonhistoryassociation.org/awards/2023-awards/>. I recognize it is possible that *Lighthouse* was the only submission to the Mormon History Association for the “best biography” designation for the year. In e-mail conversations with MHA personnel during September 2023, I asked if this were the case, but they indicated it was not their policy to make the number of submissions public. To my mind, however, if the only submission for a category is laudatory toward individuals whose mission and entire purpose for being was antithetical to the founders of the organization, that doesn’t mean that you must award the sought-after recognition. Would the Tanners have awarded “best biography” status to a laudatory biography of Joseph Smith? No, the thought makes reason stare!

50. For information about the founding of the Mormon History Association, see “About Us,” Mormon History Association, <https://mormonhistoryassociation.org/about-us/>. For information about past presidents of the organization, see Wikipedia, s.v. “Mormon History Association,” last modified September 12, 2023, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon\\_History\\_Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_History_Association).

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