

## Wheat & Tares

The philosophies of men mingled with the philosophies of women.

**APOSTASY, DENVER SNUFFER, MORMON DISCUSSION, RELIGION, REVELATION,  
SCRIPTURES**

## Denver Snuffer's Teachings to be Canonized as Scripture



**Date: March 22, 2017 Author: Mary Ann © 0 Comments**

A new movement based on the belief that the existing LDS hierarchy “lost it’s way” has achieved a major milestone: establishing a new canon of scripture. Placed alongside Joseph Smith’s teachings are those of Denver Snuffer, a man many believe is a latter-day prophet.

The creation of the new scriptures, designated the *Restoration Edition*, was announced last Saturday at the Doctrine of Christ Conference in St. George, Utah. From the official announcement:[2]

*One of the first ways a dispensation becomes corrupted is by compromising the scriptures used by believers in that dispensation. Therefore when a new dispensation begins, one of the first orders of business for believers is to adopt a new set of scriptures which restore, insofar as it is possible, a correct version of the material they regard as scripture.*

*Just like the saints of the New Testament adopted a new body of teachings, the Book of Mormon people preserved and added to sacred writings. And while Joseph Smith lived, there were both corrections to old scripture and new scripture was added. Likewise for us, there is a need to remove errors, correct texts, and add to the body of scripture to guide us. This assembly – that is, this worldwide body of believers – must also decide what we accept as scripture. It is our right and sacred responsibility to address this need.*

The *Restoration Edition* is still a work in progress, and believers are encouraged to review the materials and submit suggestions via a designated email address. The goal is to eventually have a final product presented for approval at a future conference.

The new scriptures are based on the current mainstream Mormon canon with heavy modification. All verse numbering is eliminated (excepting Proverbs), and chapter divisions have been reworked (excepting the Book of Mormon where chapter divisions were determined by Joseph Smith). Punctuation is minimal “in order to free up the text for greater possible interpretation.”

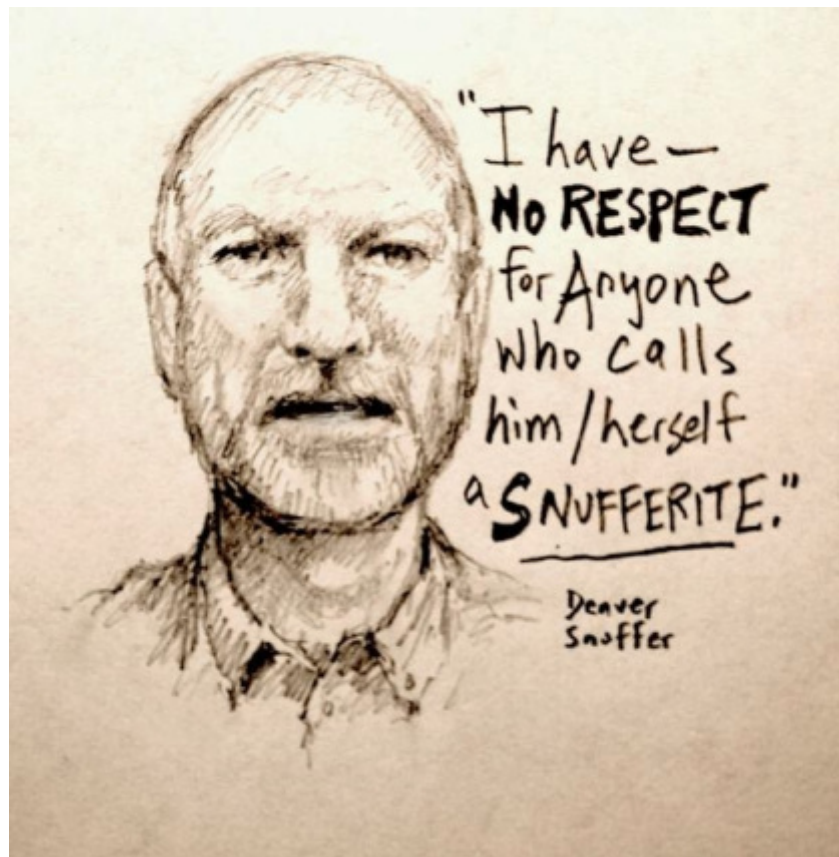
Their Old Testament and New Testament is based on the Joseph Smith Translation. In the Old Testament the *Song of Solomon* is eliminated (Joseph declared it uninspired), and the book of *Proverbs* now includes sayings from both Joseph Smith and Denver Snuffer. The Book of Mormon is based on the 1840 edition, benefiting from Joseph Smith's corrections to the 1830 and 1837 editions.

The *Restoration Edition* of the Doctrine and Covenants is radically altered. Some changes:

- All sections not authored by Joseph Smith are eliminated. Sections authored by Joseph Smith were compared to manuscripts from the Joseph Smith Papers Project. Sections which have questionable documentation (like the Kirtland Temple visitation by Elijah and others in D&C 110) or based on fragments of Joseph's teachings (D&C 129) were removed. (Believers also find the hand-shake instructions in D&C 129 ineffective in discerning lying spirits.)
- *Lectures on Faith* are back in!
- Official Declarations removed: "Official Declarations 1 & 2 are declarations made by a different church."
- D&C 132 is still in, but it's Denver Snuffer's edited version. (Snuffer doesn't believe Joseph Smith practiced polygamy.)
- In the Appendix is a section titled "A Prophet's Prerogative" by Jeff Savage. Using the example of Nephi and Joseph Smith's creative approach to Isaiah 29, Savage argues that "a prophet can apply a generalized prophecy for a large body of God's people over multiple dispensations to a more specific meaning only intended for [a smaller group,] even when that means adding and rearranging details not found in the original prophecy." However, because Isaiah's original prophecy is still useful in its broader meaning, the original KJV version is retained in addition to Nephi and Joseph Smith's narrower Book of Mormon-centric interpretations.

Like the Doctrine and Covenants, the new *Pearls of Great Price* (note the switch from singular to plural) has many changes. Here's a sampling:

- The section "Governing Principles" lays down principles and practices of the new movement. I'll go deeper into this below.
- The full *Wentworth Letter* replaces the previous *Articles of Faith* to provide better context.
- A new section called "Testimony of John" contains "a newly revealed account of John the Beloved's Testimony of Jesus the Messiah" (Denver Snuffer's inspired and expanded translation of John's gospel in the New Testament).
- Denver Snuffer's revelations are tacked on to the end. There are 9 so far, though it is expected additional revelations will be added in the future.



## The Movement

Numbers are difficult, but there are at least a few hundred followers throughout the world.[3] Local groups of believers are called “fellowships,” and fellowships are found in at least 6 countries (Australia, Germany, Qatar, Spain, Sweden, and the United States). Fellowships are organic, created and maintained locally. As explained in the “Governing Principles,” there is no hierarchy in the movement.

Denver Snuffer has long claimed he has no intention of starting his own church, yet it is clear this new movement is based in large part on his teachings in books[4] and lectures. Snuffer once described his role to Jana Reiss:

*The “movement” (if it can be called that) is not owned by me. The participants are independently motivated, and I exert no control over anyone.*

*No one sustains me, or accepts me as their leader. I don’t ask or expect them to, and I don’t believe that I am above criticism or that what I say can’t be challenged. Everyone is free to believe according to the dictates of their own conscience. Our common ground only has to be a belief in Christ, in baptism, in receiving the Holy Ghost, and the need for repentance. Everything else is open for discussion.*

The new Pearls of Great Price give helpful perspective on the ideology of believers. In “An End of Authority” we find Snuffer’s 2014 declaration that the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles forfeited their claim to the priesthood because they “voted to sustain those who abused their authority in casting me out of the Church.” In “His Return,” Snuffer confirms his belief that “without the ordinances of salvation through the authorized ministers of the gospel it was not possible for men to shed their sins.” The movement adheres to a male-

only priesthood for the time being, as explained in “Seven Women,” but only women are permitted the vote to sustain men in those offices (and a minimum of seven female votes are necessary to sustain the man).

“Governing Principles” covers the general organization and operation of believers in the movement. Men who held priesthood offices in the mainstream LDS church prior to April 2014 (when the hierarchy lost the approval of God) still hold that authority and may bestow priesthood authority on others. While men administer the ordinances of baptism and sacrament, both men and women perform healing blessings. Tithing is collected and disbursed at the local level according to the principle of “common consent.” Tithes and offerings are to assist the poor. For more information on the inner workings of the movement, see Jana Reiss’ interview with Denver Snuffer from a couple months ago.

It’s been awhile since we’ve had a notable schism in the Mormon church. While I wouldn’t say the new scripture announcement *legitimizes* this movement, I feel it certainly lends new weight. What are your thoughts?

[1] This is the second conference members of the movement have organized, the first being at Boise last September. I mentioned the conference in my last post because of Dr. Robert Norman’s participation.

[2] This announcement was republished on at least two blogs of movement followers: Adrian Larsen (To the Remnant) and John and Jennifer Willis (A Little Peace in Paradise).

[3] Figuring just 5 believers in a fellowship multiplied by 50+ fellowships identified on the locator map gets you well over 200 members.

[4] Here at Wheat and Tares, Mormon Heretic reviewed Denver Snuffer’s book *Passing the Heavenly Gift* and gave his thoughts on Snuffer’s subsequent excommunication in 2013.



## Published by Mary Ann

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