

The consequences of disagreeing with one's enemy

## THE SINGER/SWAPP SIEGE: REVELATION OR RETALIATION?

By Ogden Kraut

WHAT WOULD BE your reaction if a friend told you he had received a revelation instructing him to bomb a church building? Would you say, "Hey, that sounds like a great revelation"? Or would you tell him he must have conversed with Beelzebub? Such was the dilemma I faced last January when Addam Swapp told me his reasons for dynamiting the LDS meeting house at Marion, Utah.

I decided to follow the advice given by Brigham Young, who said:

When you see spiritual manifestations that you do not understand, be quick to see, quick to hear, . . . quick to understand, but slow to judge.<sup>1</sup>

Several days before the church bombing, I made plans to take Sunday dinner to Vickie Singer and her family. But that Saturday night the televised news of the Marion Stake Center dynamiting implicated the Singers and Swapps. At first I threw up my hands in despair and decided to have nothing to do with the situation. By morning I resolved to do what I could to avoid a repeat of the John Singer tragedy.

AFTER more than ten years of being on the defensive against Church and local and state governments, this was the family's first *serious* act of aggression. It rose like a phoenix out of the ashes of John Singer.

Why did such a peaceful, pioneer-type family change into one that caused such an explosive outcome? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand John Singer, the patriarch of the family—the cause for which he fought, the problems he faced, and the way he thought. He took a strong stand on the issue of educating his children at home, as did Brigham Young:

---

OGDEN KRAUT, an independent Mormon fundamentalist, is a friend of the Singer and Swapp families and acted as a mediator in the 1988 Marion, Utah, standoff. He is the author of numerous theological books, including *Jesus Was Married*, *The Three Nephites*, and *Men and Monuments of Freedom*. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 1988 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City.

We are the guardians of our children; their training and education are committed to our care, and if we do not ourselves pursue a course which will save them from the influence of evil, when we are weighed in the balance, we will be found wanting.<sup>2</sup>

And also Joseph F. Smith:

But some Latter-day Saints are so liberal and unsuspecting that they would just as soon send their children to Mr. Pierce down here as to anybody else. I would not do it. However good a man Mr. Pierce may be, he should not teach one of my children as long as I have wisdom and intelligence to teach him myself, or could find a man of my own faith to do it for me. This is true doctrine, and no man can take any exceptions to it.<sup>3</sup>

In the same tradition, some years ago, Ezra Taft Benson emphasized that the federal government should have no control in the field of education:

There is absolutely nothing in the Constitution which authorized the federal government to enter into the field of education. . . . Federal taxes for education means federal CONTROL over education. No matter how piously the national planners tell us that they will not dictate policies to local school systems, it is inevitable that they will in the long run. In fact, they already are doing it.<sup>4</sup>

John and Vickie Singer valued these rights and freedoms. They had studied the scriptures, the Constitution, and the teachings of the Founding Fathers of the LDS church and the American nation. They were also familiar with U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan's 1963 statement:

Attendance at the public school has never been compulsory; parents remain morally and constitutionally free to choose the academic environment in which they wish their children to be educated. . . .

Therefore, in 1973 they felt justified, in fact duty bound, to take their children out of public schools to protect them from the vices and corruptions so prevalent there, and provide them with a better education at home—just as many other concerned American families were doing.

But this course of action, and the method by which they executed it, resulted in a long string of legal battles over whose right it really is to educate those children. Following is just a brief outline of the main events between March 1973 and January 1979, when John was killed:

–29 March 1973: John Singer removed his children from public schools.

–1974: The Singers agreed to educational testing, monitoring, and evaluation of their student-age children by school authorities.

–September 1975: John Singer refused further testing of his children.

–15 June 1976: A series of court hearings began in Summit County to determine whether the family or the state had the responsibility for educating the Singer children.

–August 1977:

At a trial the Singers were found guilty of child neglect. A bench warrant was issued for John and Vickie's arrest.

–November 1977: Judge Kenneth L. Bachman sentenced John and Vickie to 60 days in jail and a \$299 fine.

–16 December 1977: John supplied witnesses for his hearing but would not attend.

–3 January 1978: At a new hearing witnesses were supplied, but Singer family did not attend because of threats that the

children would be taken. John and Vickie Singer were found guilty of child abuse.

–4 March 1978: Judge John Farr Larson found John Singer in contempt of court and issued a warrant for arrest. Judge Larson said in court that he was "not impressed with those who say God's law is above the law of the land."

–July 1978: John Singer says he is afraid to leave his property. He felt that he was protected on his own land.

–17 July 1978: John Singer married his second wife, Shirley Black (six months before his death).

–November 1978: John's brother, Harald, met with Governor Scott Matheson and informed him that John would never fire the first shot.

–Early January 1979: Continual snowmobile activity surrounding the Singer farm.

–18 January 1979: John left his property to collect the mail at the end of the lane, was confronted by police officers, and was shot and killed. Vickie was imprisoned and her seven children were sent to a foster home.

During the early stages of John Singer's troubles over the school issue, I gave him many pages of legal cases and court decisions to help with his home school program. Even though his education problems were eventually resolved, his situation seemed to get worse. On one particular television interview, he said:

Why is it so hard that an individual cannot just plainly obtain his freedoms and his rights to do in his own family as he pleases? Why is it so hard to accomplish? Why must it always be that a man should sacrifice or compromise on his beliefs and liberties in order to be able to get along?

A few weeks before John's death, his yard was filled with cameramen, the news media, and visitors. I came up and humorously said to him, "John, for a man who wants peace and privacy, you're a failure." That brought out his boisterous laughter, one of his marked distinctions.

But his situation went from bad to worse. About ten days before he was shot, I spent the weekend at his farm. During the

visit I noticed several snowmobiles buzzing around the perimeter of his property, even during the night. When I asked him about them, he replied that they were "working with the law." He said he was afraid they were about to use force against him. "No, John," I answered, "they aren't that dumb!" But a few days later John was dead.

Certainly Vickie Singer deserved her day in court—either to settle a claim or to have a jury settle her mind as to the proper course of justice in what had happened. I took Vickie and a few other family members to Wyoming to meet with attorney Gerry Spence. Vickie explained to him it would be a battle over constitutional rights and correct principles, not one for money or vengeance. He agreed to take the case. Spence and his staff spent months preparing a wrongful death suit, but Judge Winder refused to hear the case for "lack of evidence." Later, when one



of the staff attorneys heard that the Supreme Court had denied Vickie's motion for a trial, he actually wept and said, "Never in my life have I been so ashamed of my profession!"

**D**URING the ensuing nine years, the family continued the fight for their constitutional rights and freedoms. But it was even more difficult without John's strong leadership. There were serious problems with the neighbors who tried to get them off their land, but the courts awarded Vickie legal title to the house and land. There has been continual battle over water rights which culminated in the undermining of their spring, so they had no water for a garden, lawn, or trees, and barely a trickle for culinary purposes. Financial struggles, persecution, and other stressful problems have plagued the family since John's tragic death.

Addam Swapp and his cousin Roger Bates, from Fairview, Utah, entered the picture in September of 1980 when they married Heidi and Suzanne, the two oldest Singer daughters. Later, Addam married the Singers' third daughter, Charlotte, as his second wife. Addam had been extremely interested in the John Singer story, but now, as part of the family, he took up the banner with fervor. In the summer of 1988 Addam wrote in a letter:

Knowing of the great injustices done against John, Vickie, and myself at the hands of this wicked people, I knew I had to make a stand against it. For to remain silent, knowing the truth, and not standing against wickedness, you become that which you submit to, through your silence.

Addam's concept is correct, but circumstances may determine its justifiability. The Prophet Joseph Smith made a similar statement:

That which is wrong under one circumstance may be, and often is right under another. God said, "Thou shalt not kill"; at another time He said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy." This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of Addam's decision to "make a stand," he wrote forceful letters to various community, political, and Church leaders. Most of these were interpreted by the recipients as personal insults or threats. For example, in a letter dated 14 September 1987 and addressed to the LDS General Authorities and numerous state educational and political leaders, Addam wrote:

John Singer warned you people in the name of Jesus Christ to stop your actions against him. You cared not for these warnings and now you will reap the whirlwind of destruction.

The Lord has told me that I should declare these things unto you for a wise purpose in Him. I have also been told by my God that you men are past forgiveness and will be destroyed.

These letters brought no favorable results for the family, so Addam felt that stronger measures were necessary to bring Vickie's hardships and persecutions to light. It was not enough to

just put in writing a reminder to these Christian leaders of their obligation to the widows and orphans.

What was the final motivation behind the dynamiting of the church? What drove Addam to spray paint on others' property, interfere with a neighbor's claim to water, defy a law officer, and resist an arrest warrant? What gave Addam the confidence that he could win a battle against both the State of Utah and the Federal Government? According to Addam, it was because of revelations he had received. The main revelation upon which Addam based his actions was received 26 December 1987. He showed me this written revelation on my first visit to the Marion farm during the siege. It included the following excerpts:

REVELATION TO ADDAM SWAPP  
26 DECEMBER 1987

Thus saith the Lord unto my servant, Addam, inasmuch as you have asked me to know my will concerning you and what I require at your hands—this generation is a most wicked generation. It is the most wicked ever to inhabit the face of the earth. . . .

I, the Lord, the Great I Am, who was and is and ever will be, will take this earth in my right hand and by the power of my spirit I will cleanse it of all wickedness.

But I will remember the covenants I have made with my people and this is my people—those who will serve me at the cost of all, even to the giving of their lives for my sake, . . . I will bring them into the valleys of these mountains beginning with this valley which was consecrated and set apart for the purpose of gathering. . . . And I will make thee a Fenced Brazen Wall, and great power will I give thee, and I will make the nations of the earth to fear thee greatly. . . .

Therefore, I give unto you a commandment, that you go out to battle against this church and government. . . . They will be utterly destroyed and none will remain on the face of this land, and I the Lord God will support you and multiply your Priesthood greatly that you will fight valiantly for me, for your arm will be my arm, and I will let the sword fall in your behalf. Behold I will bring your enemy under your feet and you will trample underfoot many people, and I will preserve you by the power of my Spirit.

I say unto you, Addam, stand and fight manfully with great courage in my Spirit. Fear not for your life or your families' lives for they are in my hands. Pray always and keep your eyes single to my glory, and I will reveal my mind to you concerning all things. Behold I am with you till the end, Even so, Amen.

After this divine reassurance, Addam felt justified in taking more aggressive action, including the 16 January bombing of the Marion LDS church.

Because of the obvious and intentional evidence Addam left behind at the church, within hours the Singer farm was surrounded by law officers, including agents from the FBI, ATF,

UHP—and the LDS! Many forms of psychological warfare were used against the 15 members of the Singer/Swapp families:

- 1. Their water, electricity, and telephones were cut off.
- 2. High frequency sirens and bright lights were directed at the house during the nights to prevent them from sleeping.
- 3. Airplanes, helicopters, snowmobiles, and at least 50 armed officers surrounded their house continuously.

A SWAT team was called to the farm. The best minds in the country were consulted on how to resolve the standoff. At the beginning of the siege, Roger Bates, Vickie's son-in-law, was allowed into the compound where he talked to the family on two different occasions, but his efforts failed to end the stand-off. After nine days of unsuccessful attempts, the law officers decided to try another mediator.

Calvin Clegg, special agent and spokesman for the FBI, called and asked me to help because he said I had the respect of both the Singer family and the law enforcement agencies. Apparently my name had been suggested by several sources. I accepted the assignment, but told him that since these bombing actions were so unusual for the Singers, I probably had a 10 percent chance of getting over the fence; however, I would give it a try.

MONDAY,  
25 JANUARY 1988

**S**HORTLY before 4:00 p.m. Calvin Clegg and I drove up to the damaged Marion Stake Center which served as the command and observation post. I carried some milk and baby cereal up to the Singer farm, walking over the spot where John had been shot nine years previously. It was a reflective yet apprehensive walk. I was filled with strong hopes that no more blood would be shed on this ground.

When I reached the fence, Addam stood about 50 yards away holding his rifle. He said nothing so I called out, "You sure know how to mess up a good taco dinner," referring to the Sunday dinner we had planned. I crawled over the fence and

approached him, but before we could begin a conversation, there was a flurry of snowmobile activity on the nearby hillside. Addam raised his rifle, looked around carefully, then stared at me full of suspicion, thinking I was a decoy or a diversion. I, too, wondered if I had been set up for something. The situation was very tense and scary for a few moments. I later found out that the confusion was just the "changing of the guards." What bad timing!

When everything quieted, we started walking toward the house and I said to Addam, "What the hell is going on up here? The news media reported that you are married to Vickie!" He

replied, "It's not true." I mentioned that the next day's newspaper had confirmed the report. He emphasized, "It's still not true." I told him how difficult it was to get a true picture of what was going on, and I wanted to get the whole story.

Addam said he had received a revelation that John Singer was going to be resurrected and that the setting in order of the Church, state, and nation would begin at the Singer farm. He said that a confrontation with the law was inevitable, and that there would be some bloodshed—all of which would bring to pass the fulfillment of Addam's revelation.

He admitted bombing the LDS church and said that on the particular night of the bombing the security lights at the church went out, which the families took as a sign or manifesta-

tion of approval.

My conversation with Addam and Vickie had to end before I was ready to go, because I had been instructed by the law officials to leave the house before dark. By 5:30 it was getting dark. If I didn't come out by then, they would suspect that I had been taken as a hostage or maybe even shot. Before leaving, I took their picture, saying it would be a part of history. I told them it would be nice to see them again during the stand-off, but suspected that it would not be allowed.

Addam took me over to the siren that had been making such hideous noises and pointed out the bullet holes he had shot



in them. During the night he and Jonathan had taken them down and brought them back to the house because they were so intolerable.

I walked back down the lane that afternoon and was debriefed by the law officials. I strongly suggested they stop the sirens because they were not doing what they had wanted them to do. The family was not weakening, and they were not hardened criminals. The sirens were turned off.

Since my time had been cut short by darkness, there was not much to report, so I asked not to have any press interviews.

TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY 1988

**M**ONDAY night the FBI called again and asked me to deliver a letter from Utah Governor Bangerter to the Singers and Swapps. This time I walked up the lane with the governor's letter, baby diapers, and a telephone. Apparently the phone system had shorted out and the new equipment was needed so Addam could call out if he decided to.

When I handed Addam the letter, I said, "Most letters cost a quarter to mail, but this one cost \$1500 because it arrived special delivery by helicopter from the governor." He was impressed but said he no longer had confidence in politicians or the courts and didn't want to answer it. I reasoned with him, "Addam, this is not just an ordinary letter from the governor. This is a means to explain to him and the whole state your reasons for what has happened here. What are you going to do—act like Jonah and not deliver your message?" I continued, "The whole nation is like an audience; the curtain is about to go up, the lights are on, and the music is playing. Now it's your turn, Addam, to come out on the stage. Are you going to refuse? You have here one golden opportunity—and a lot of bad options. If you don't handle this right, you'll lose everything you have, including your cause."

I told him I knew a little bit about writing and would be glad to help him with his answer. He replied that he would pray about it. I responded, "Well, then get a revelation to answer that letter, and don't write it like a nut. You've already written letters they think sound that way." I then added that I didn't come up there just as a friend for a visit, nor did I come up just to mediate for the law; I felt that God wanted me there to help. He agreed and so did Vickie.

Addam was arrayed with a rifle in his arms, a knife and pistols at his sides, and two belts of ammunition crisscrossing his breast. He looked like a Mexican bandito. I said, "Addam, your mission in life is not to create a war." He turned to me and said he really didn't want any bloodshed. To me, this admission was a major factor towards improving the negotiations.

I explained the reasons for the phone equipment I had brought and asked him to hook it up, which he agreed to do. I also told him that I had been informed that a wealthy man back east had offered to pay up to \$4 million to be used in their defense, if they would come out without any bloodshed.

I mentioned that in the past few days I had met many law

officers at the command post and that they were not just "local yokels," but men of integrity, knowledge, and experience. Like the old-time movies, many of them wore white hats. They didn't want any harm to come to anyone. Most of them were really good men.

One incident of particular interest occurred on my first day in Marion. While one of the officers was watching the television monitor of the siege activities, he saw some of the Singer family members riding snowmobiles. He said to me, "I've never been on a snowmobile; here I am cramped up in this trailer and they get to ride around outside." I told him, "Well, I know Addam well enough that if I recommended you to him, he would let you come up and have a ride." He was surprised. "Do you mean that? Would you ask him when you go up there?" When I next saw Addam, I told him about it. He smiled and nodded his head in agreement. I later told the officer of Addam's reaction, and he responded with, "Then Addam can't be such a bad guy after all."

As I was leaving the main house that day, I asked Addam about the meaning of the nine feathers on the spear he had planted near the stake center at the time of the bombing. He answered that each feather represented one year since the death of John Singer.

A three-hour debriefing session followed.

WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 1988

**T**HIS morning the FBI called me at work to say that Addam had put through a call and told them he was working on his letter to the governor. They wanted me to go up again that afternoon and get it, so they sent a helicopter to pick me up.

By 2:00 p.m. I was once more at the church command center. I talked to Addam on the phone and told him I was on my way up. He told me not to come until 5:00 because he would not be finished with his letter until then. Addam indicated that he did not want me to help with the letter, which made me think that he was writing it with the same tone as his previous letters.

I arrived at the main house about 5:00 p.m. Both Vickie and Addam had written responses to Governor Bangerter's letter, which they handed me in *sealed* envelopes. I visited with them only a short time, asking Addam to call me Saturday morning between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. By then I would try to have some answers or ideas that would help resolve the situation. He agreed to do it.

As we walked out of the house, I turned to Addam and said, "According to your revelations, it appears to me that you will have either a big miracle up here or you will have a catastrophe!" He responded quickly, "That's right."

When I delivered the two letters to the officials, they sat in a circle and read them page by page. I'll never forget their expressions. I have seen happier faces at a funeral. They could see that Addam and Vickie were unchanged in their stand and had no intention of giving themselves up. I read the letter also, and

told the officials that this was my greatest disappointment in trying to bring the matter to a peaceful settlement.

**T**HE next day, Thursday, 28 January, I watched the televised account of two armored personnel carriers crash through the fence and then heard gunfire. Shortly thereafter the announcement was made that an officer had been killed and Addam was wounded. A voice from a loud-speaker commanded the rest of the Singer and Swapp family members to come out of the house with their hands up. The war was over. There had been no miracle. The Singer/Swapp Siege ended with their surrender.

For them, however, the real calamity was just beginning. Jails and long family separations were new and tragic experiences.

On 3 February I met with Brent Ward, the federal government's prosecuting attorney. The following day I spoke for over an hour to the Grand Jury. On 14 April, I appeared as a witness in the first Singer/Swapp trial, which, like the siege, lasted for 13 long days.

During one of my siege visits to the farm, Vickie told me, "Everything we have done, we were commanded by the Lord to do," and also, "The setting in order will begin here!"

Addam later justified his actions in a nine-page letter written from jail on 22 June 1988. After spending most of the letter reviewing the history and background of the Singer case, he concluded:

For these and other reasons, the Lord did command me to blow up the Mormon church building. I did not do what I did out of hatred or malice towards these people. Me and my family pray for them continually. We have only wanted to be left alone.

**T**HERE are many guidelines we can use to help in evaluating this unique episode in history. We usually think that good revelations come to good individuals and bad revelations come to bad ones. But history has shown that sometimes bad men receive good revelations and good men sometimes receive bad ones. It is imperative that each revelation be carefully scrutinized

to determine its source and message.

Brigham Young declared, "If true principles are revealed from heaven to men, . . . always look out for the counterfeit."<sup>6</sup> The Apostle Paul also declared that it is "no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). Parley P. Pratt specifically warned that "the most formidable power that will be arrayed against Christ and His Saints in the last days will consist in the revelations of Satan."<sup>7</sup> The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that there are three sources of revelation—not just two—"The spirit of God, the spirit of man, and the spirit of the devil."<sup>8</sup> Joseph also warned that "nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the

influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God."<sup>9</sup>

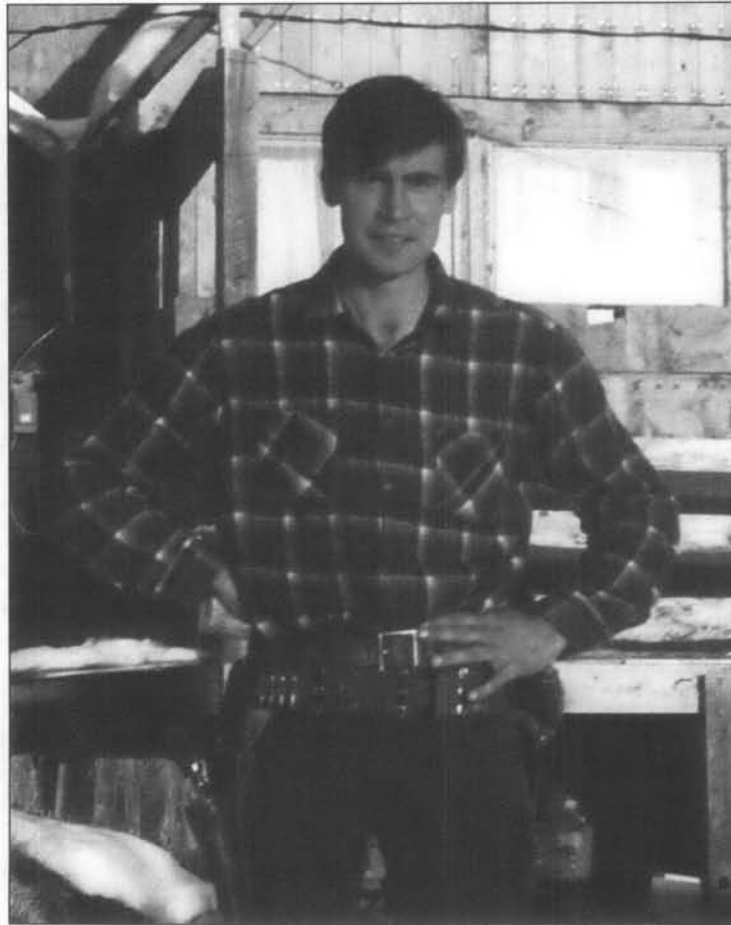
Revelations have been claimed as the basis for long painful pilgrimages, great sacrifices, wars, and killings. The LeBarons and Laffertys took a course of killing and imprisonment because of revelations they claimed were from God. Over one hundred different "prophets" with their revelations have left the LDS church since its organization.

We live in an age of deception—political, economic, moral, and certainly religious. Everything has become about as genuine as professional wrestling! Jesus warned us that almost the very elect would be deceived (Mark 13:22). In other words, everyone *except* the very elect would be deceived. There have been many controversial and conflicting revelations in LDS church history, as well as questionable revelations to people outside the Church. It

is strange that so many men neglect or disobey a true revelation from God, yet they will suffer and endure misery, prison, and death defending an incorrect one.

Do we as individuals have a responsibility to avoid personal deception? About 100 years ago at the First Church in Newbury, Massachusetts, preacher Leonard Withington answered this question:

There is great guilt undoubtedly in deceiving the people. But it is not so generally understood that there is some guilt in being deceived. . . . For to have any corrupt interest which makes us willing to believe a lie, is almost equal to the depravity that tells it; indeed, the one character stands very near the other. . . .



If we are deceived, it is because there is something in us that lends itself to deception. . . . If the heart were calm and pure, it would not be so often deceived.<sup>10</sup>

The Savior warned us that the path to eternal life is strait and narrow (Matthew 7:14), but he didn't explain that it was also strewn with banana peels and broken glass. It is a very difficult and precarious pathway.

In trying to determine, then, whether Addam's revelation was of God, the devil, or himself, let's consider what good has resulted from it? What are the fruits? True, "the harvest is not over," and in discerning Addam's revelation we should be careful not to judge the individuals concerned. But still there are some very important questions for us to consider: Was the siege at Marion supposed to turn out as it did? What glory or honor has been attributed to God throughout this episode? What blessings have come to the Singers and Swapps, or to anyone else? In an effort to present information fairly, let's look at both the negative and (admittedly, few) positive aspects. First, the negative:

1. The siege resulted in the death of officer House and the wounding of Addam Swapp.

2. Addam, Jonathan, Vickie, and Timothy have been incarcerated for months now, including several weeks in San Diego at a federal prison undergoing psychiatric evaluation. On 2 September, Judge Bruce Jenkins sentenced these four defendants according to the guilty verdicts of the jury for their federal crimes. They are also facing additional criminal charges by the State of Utah.

3. The family is experiencing long separations with resulting homesickness, loneliness, and other problems.

4. In jail, the four defendants live daily with filthy language, terrible immorality, poor food, and unsanitary conditions.

5. There were tremendous expenses resulting from the restoration of the stake center, the law personnel and equipment involved in the siege, and the lengthy court battles that ensued. Now, on the positive side:

1. National attention was focused on the possible misuse of political and religious authority. The media asked again why John Singer was shot in the back; it discussed legal actions against the Singers and Swapps by local LDS and educational leaders; and it asked about the role of the general Church leaders in the episode.

2. Because Vickie Singer's fifteen-year-old son Benjamin refused to testify before the grand jury, the courts had to determine whether children should be required to testify against their parents. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Tenth Circuit Court's decision that Benjamin *did* have to testify. (However, Benjamin never did testify against any of his blood relatives.)

3. Based on the Singer case, in July 1988 five Utah district judges declared in an unusual *en banc* opinion declared that the mandatory sentencing guidelines were unconstitutional. The judges said:

To the extent that the guidelines treat the poor, deeply religious grandmother from Marion, Utah, who has

young children at home to support, the same as the successful, hardened mafioso from the Bronx, we believe the guidelines err.<sup>11</sup> Then on 18 January 1989 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of mandatory guidelines, standardizing numerous mixed and conflicting lower court rulings.

Thomas Jefferson, with his keen insight into the duties and limitations of those in the government, wrote in 1823 to John Adams:

And what country can preserve its liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time, that the people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. . . . The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.<sup>12</sup>

At least Addam, in his own way, was not afraid to stand up for his beliefs and convictions. The method of fighting this battle used by the Singers and Swapps seems wrong and crude to Americans, but should the families just sit back and do nothing if they feel an injustice has been done?

One may wonder now, after some time has elapsed, how both Addam and Vickie feel about what has happened. In his 22 June 1988 letter, Addam wrote:

My heart holds no hatred or revenge against this people. God can testify to this. I only want to be able to stand upon righteous principles, without compromising before my God, so that I know when I leave this mortal existence, that I fought valiantly for truth, freedom, liberty and the eternal rights of man. For I know that the oppressors of men can never take over a country in which the people of that land will refuse to submit to wicked rule, but the moment a people will sit back and say nothing, is the moment they have lost everything.

A few weeks later, on August 9 Vickie wrote in a letter:

All in all, I can truthfully say that I know that the truth has been stood upon, and that these painful experiences we have gone through are not in vain, and no matter how bad things may look to others, they will one day, soon, be able to understand.

On 2 September 1988 Federal Court Judge Bruce Jenkins sentenced the four defendants for a variety of guilty verdicts relating to the meetinghouse bombing and the siege at Marion. Addam and Jonathan Swapp received 15 and 10 year sentences, respectively; Vickie and Timothy Singer, 5 and 10 year sentences.

In December 1988, three of the defendants were in district court in Coalville, Utah, answering charges relating to the death of Officer Fred House. Addam and Timothy were found guilty of negligent homicide. On 26 January 1989 Judge Michael Murphy sentenced them to 1-15 years in the state prison (to be served consecutive with their federal sentences). Jonathan received 12 months.

## CONCLUSION

**T**HIS harrowing siege was a sorrowful experience for all sides. Years ago I saw the Singer family's bitter tears as they stood beside the grave of their husband and father. Once again I have seen their tears and sorrow during their separation and incarceration. Now, there is also the anguish of the Swapp family members. Through television, many in Utah shared the grief of the family of Officer House. I saw the sorrowful countenances of many law officers as their attempts to bring this whole affair to a peaceful conclusion proved futile. As the prince in *Romeo and Juliet* lamented while he pronounced judgment, "All are punished."

The tragedy of the Singer/Swapp shooting is now part of Utah's history. It should not be forgotten. If we do not learn something from this drama at Marion we miss an important lesson in life—our responsibility to properly use the gifts of God!

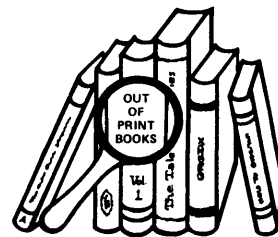
Did Addam Swapp carry the banner for John Singer or did he destroy it? Did he have the right to proclaim his own sovereignty and declare war on a state and the nation? What prompted him to bomb the LDS church—revelation or retaliation?

The struggle for freedom—and for law and order—has never been easy. Like two sides of a coin, if we enjoy liberty on the one hand, we must accept its responsibilities on the other. The scriptures counsel us to render "unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). If we exceed either of these bounds, a catastrophe can result. No one has summarized this better than Joseph Smith:

The gifts of God are all useful in their place, but when they are applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare and a curse instead of a blessing.<sup>13</sup> ☞

## NOTES

1. Fred Collier, ed., *Teachings of Brigham Young*. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1987) 3:238.
2. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:225.
3. Joseph F. Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 14:288.
4. Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*. (Salt Lake City: Parliament Publishers, 1969), pp. 230-31.
5. Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972), p. 261.
6. John A. Widstoe, comp., *Discourses of Brigham Young*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951), p. 240.
7. Parley P. Pratt, "The Coming Crisis," *The Millennial Star* 15:273-74.
8. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 189.
9. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 205.
10. The quote was collected by the author from the January 1944 issue of *Destiny* magazine.
11. Memorandum Opinion, 18 July 1988, p. 23.
12. Thomas Jefferson, *Wisdom of Thomas Jefferson*. (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1943), p. 115.
13. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 248.



## BENCHMARK BOOKS

SPECIALIZES IN  
OUT-OF-PRINT, USED  
AND RARE BOOKS ON  
MORMONISM AND UTAH.

WE BUY AND SELL  
AND CONDUCT BOOK  
SEARCHES FOR  
OUT-OF-PRINT BOOKS.



## BENCHMARK BOOKS

331 Rio Grande St., Suite 300

P.O. Box 9027

Salt Lake City, Utah 84109-0027

(801) 532-3100

Curt Bench, Proprietor