

STATEMENT OF DAN FISCHER

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE—AUGUST 1, 2008

I woke up this morning to read a statement in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, saying that I have been trying to hide my life. Anyone who knows me knows that nothing could be further from the truth. It is evident that my work with the Lost Boys and my Congressional testimony last week has made the FLDS sect pretty angry, enough so that they would attack me.

The disjointed, spurious allegations against me seem to fall into the following areas:

1. That I did not support my children.
2. That my first two wives and I separated because I was abusive.
3. That I engaged in abusive discipline of my children.
4. That I abandoned my children, throwing them out of my house.

At the outset, it is important to keep in mind that the FLDS are trying to use me as a distraction to deflect attention from themselves. FLDS are taught from an early age that lying to protect the “Prophet” and the “Church” is perfectly acceptable and even desirable. However, their skillful distortions, lies and half-truths simply will not work.

As some of you know, I was married to three women by the FLDS leader in my younger years. The second one married to me, Leenie, has been my wife for some time now. We had our 35th wedding anniversary just two weeks ago.

NON-SUPPORT ALLEGATIONS

I have 16 children and anyone who knows me knows that I support my family. The allegations of non-support concern two of my children by my third wife Marcia, whom I have not supported, but not for the lack of trying. I was cut off from all communication with them. I was never asked for support, and indeed, when I did try to help them my help was spurned.

SEPARATION AND DIVORCE FROM MY FIRST AND THIRD WIVES

The separation and ultimate divorce from my first and third wives had to do with personal issues, mostly related to the dynamics of living a FLDS polygamous life, and not with spurious claims of abuse. For example, my third wife was upset with me because for many years I had no interest in having a conjugal relationship with her. Discussion of personal dynamics and things of this nature simply have no place in the public conversation and I simply do not intend to address them.

WITH REGARD TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF MY WIVES

I have already indicated that a FLDS plural household is generally one that breeds many conflicts and indeed, "continual fighting." And, yes, sometimes that meant physical confrontations on all sides. But to portray a picture that tries to paint me as a "wife-beater" is wrong. It is character assassination, and it is untrue.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSIVE DISCIPLINE OF MY CHILDREN

To try and turn normative corporal discipline, common 20-30 years ago into child abuse is something that is just ludicrous. Sure I spanked my kids. This was not unusual inside and outside of FLDS in the 1970s. Furthermore, to imply that I tried to suffocate my children to keep them quiet is beyond goofy. It is a lie, a damnable lie. Interestingly, I am alleged to have done this in public, in church. If this were true (and it is not) then where were the other parents to stop this alleged abuse and protect the children?

ALLEGATIONS THAT I EVICTED MY OWN CHILDREN

The children who I allegedly threw out of my house left because they would not conform to the FLDS religious requirements. They were 18 or older. Their leaving the house was simply a reality of the FLDS life and teachings. I might add that one of those children who left is my daughter Jaleena, who is now a dentist and, I am proud to say, my “boss” in a dental practice.

BOTTOM LINE

I can't say that I've been a perfect parent. I've often said “What I wouldn't give if I could start over with my older children with what I know now.” That said, it is interesting that the charges of FLDS “affidavits” trying to malign me really amount to charging me with living an FLDS lifestyle and conducting myself in accordance with the teaching of the leadership and the typical day-to-day life of FLDS adherents. On this count, I certainly was guilty as charged. Today, I am forever grateful that my eyes were opened to a life outside of the FLDS--one that has freedom, one that is conducive to a constructive husband-wife and family relationships, and one that does not compel an “us against them mentality” that is used to justify lying.

I've often said that I feel like a human who has lived three distinctly different lives--my formative life in FLDS, my life as a polygamous husband in FLDS and the life of freedom after leaving FLDS. We all know the challenges that can occur in single marriage relationships, where adults seek to discover each other through a quality courtship experience. Imagine the framework for discord when a society takes three women, even women who have their own incompatibilities with each other, and requires, without their having a choice, that they all be married to the one man under one roof and raise a family in such environment. That is not a logical way to set the stage for peace and tranquility in the family. This is what happened to me. And that is not to say that my two former wives didn't have positive qualities and values. It simply is a goofy way to have to live, and one that breeds friction.

I can say that my experiences, even difficult ones, living in the FLDS society have given me insights and the capability of understanding and helping those young boys who have been expelled by FLDS or who left of their own accord. I can also say that my experiences have enabled me to share what I believe are important insights to the wrongs and atrocities committed by the leaders of the FLDS society. From this, I believe some good has come from a very difficult time in my life. And my efforts to help children and even others will continue unabated.