



THE 1995 MORMON-JEWISH AGREEMENT: A FAILED EFFORT

by Helen Radkey
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On May 3, 1995, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and a consortium of major Jewish organizations signed a landmark agreement over the issue of posthumous baptisms of Jewish Holocaust victims by the LDS Church. By signing the written document with Jewish groups, the LDS Church created the impression that the proxy baptisms of Jews, especially Jewish Holocaust victims, would more or less cease, or be drastically reduced in volume.

In one of the main clauses of the 1995 agreement, the LDS Church promised to issue a directive to all officials and members of the Church to discontinue any future baptisms of deceased Jews, including all lists of Jewish Holocaust victims, unless they were direct ancestors of living members of the LDS Church, or the Church had the written approval of all living members of the deceased's immediate family.

While Jewish spokespeople fully expected the LDS Church to keep its end of the bargain, the agreement between Mormons and Jews seems to have been largely a public relations maneuver from the Mormon end. LDS officials did not want to be seen as insensitive to the memory of Jewish Holocaust victims—and too many Jewish Holocaust names had shown up in the LDS Church's database of posthumous ordinances, the International Genealogical Index (IGI), for the issue to be ignored. The American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors issued a formal complaint, an agreement was created and Jewish representatives had a hand in its formation.

Has the LDS Church made a diligent and reasonable effort to honor its 1995 pact with Jewish groups? In my opinion, the answer is a resounding "no." Not only has the flow of names of those who were "knowingly Jewish" gone unchecked through LDS temples, LDS officials have never openly acknowledged that the agreement has not worked. The number of Jews known to have been subjected to LDS posthumous ordinances against

the terms of the 1995 agreement is large-scale. Jewish representatives handling the proxy baptism issue should be sounding the shofar to awaken complacent Jews—and to loudly call the LDS Church to repentance—for the rest of the world to hear.

Since the origination of the Mormon-Jewish agreement, the names of tens of thousands, and likely hundreds of thousands of identifiable Jews, have appeared in the IGI. These names include thousands of Jews whose names were taken from synagogue lists from around the world, rabbinical lines, and a vast array of Jewish notables. Included among these are prime ministers of Israel: David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Menachem Begin, and multitudes of Jews in the arts, the sciences, and in the entertainment field, including the Three Stooges and the Marx Brothers.

The long list of Jewish deceased, known to have been subjected to post-1995 LDS posthumous ordinances, includes British Jews who were transported in convict ships to penal colonies in Australia, and also prominent Jews who died in the Titanic disaster. Even the name of famed Jewish Holocaust survivor and Nazi hunter, Simon Wiesenthal, who died in Vienna, Austria, in September 2005, ended up in the IGI around December 2006, much to the annoyance of officials at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

The names of untold thousands of Jewish Holocaust victims have shown up in the IGI since 1995. So many thousands of Jews who died in the Holocaust could not all be lineage-linked to living Mormons. Some of these Holocaust victims, murdered as young children or teenagers, have no direct descendants. Entire family groups perished in the Holocaust and left no descendants. Their bloodlines were wiped off the face of the earth. Mormon faithful submit many of these names anyway, falsely claiming descendancy.

Post-1995 entries for some well-known Jewish Holocaust victims have appeared in the IGI. Anne Frank is recognized worldwide as a teenage icon of the Holocaust. Her diary has been published in many languages, and millions of people today are familiar with her story. Anne and her sister, Margot, were both posthumously baptized on December 18, 1999 in the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple. Anne Frank had been baptized by Mormons at least eight times before 1995. Around October 2005, Anne Frank showed up, once again, in the online IGI, this time as Anneke Frank.

The written assurance that severely limits posthumous baptisms of Jews was inevitably doomed to failure. It is a fundamental Mormon objective that the entire human race, both living and dead, should be subjected to LDS temple ordinances. The dead must be offered salvation—the fullness of the gospel—according to Mormon theology. LDS Church members are taught that they have a religious obligation to trace their family history and subject their (non-LDS) direct ancestors and the descendants of their direct ancestors to proxy temple ordinances. Some Mormon do-gooders, however, go far beyond this requirement and submit the names of the dead of the world, including any Jewish deceased, into the LDS temple system.

LDS Church directives to its officials and members to cease the baptisms of deceased Jews have not deterred overzealous Mormons who have misused the identities of

countless deceased Jews from Jewish families that do not belong to them. These church members have inundated the LDS temple system with names of those who are known to be Jewish—against the stipulations of the ill-fated 1995 agreement. Mormon submitters may also claim family links to deceased Jews—and these ties may not be direct ones.

The agreement signed in 1995 is specific in stating that the LDS Church would limit the baptism of Jews to “direct ancestors” of living members of the LDS Church. Usually, “direct ancestors” are parents, grandparents, great grandparents, etc.

In 2005, the Church decided to “broaden” its definition of the meaning of “direct ancestors.” According to the LDS Church, a church member can baptize a person from whom he or she is directly descended, like a great-great-great grandparent, and, also, all of the known descendants of that great-great-great grandparent, even though they are not “direct ancestors” of the church member, as the term “direct ancestor” is universally and legally interpreted. Why wasn’t this irregular interpretation of “direct ancestors” written into the 1995 agreement and explained to Jewish groups when the agreement was signed?

There is no evidence that the LDS Church ever obtains written permission from living members of the deceased’s immediate living family (as the 1995 agreement specifies must be done) in the cases where the deceased are identified or known as Jews who are not the direct ancestors of living Mormons.

Using Anne Frank as an example, the LDS Church did not obtain consent from the Frank family for the duplicated temple ordinances that this famous Holocaust victim has been subjected to. In December 2002, I received a phone call from the genealogist for the family of Anne Frank, who resides in Virginia, USA. My caller indicated that permission had not been given by the Frank family for the LDS Church to baptize Anne. He wanted to know who had authorized her posthumous temple work.

If a deceased person was born within the last 95 years, Mormons are supposed to obtain permission to perform temple ordinances for that individual from the person’s closest living relative. This is a specific guideline of the LDS Church. Again, using Anne Frank as an example, Anne was born in 1929 and the 95-year rule was ignored in her case, as in the case of most of the Jewish children of the Holocaust who have been subjected to LDS posthumous rites. Based on my analysis of temple ordinances performed on Jewish Holocaust victims, the 95-year rule is usually never upheld.

As an ongoing condition of the 1995 agreement, the LDS Church agreed that it would remove from the IGI the names of all deceased Jews, who can be identified as Jews, if they are found to be improperly included in the IGI database. While the names removal provision is a legitimate part of the agreement, this stopgap measure gives Mormons the opportunity to conceal post-1995 excesses for Jewish deceased and doesn’t solve the real problem. The huge volume of post-1995 temple work that has been performed for known Jews is the essence of the breach of contract. Removal of these names proves nothing. It is only a token acknowledgment that these names should not have been in the IGI.

Removal of names usually passes the buck onto outside parties and tries to make non-Mormons responsible for bringing inappropriate IGI submissions to the attention of Mormon authorities. More confusion has been added in that, despite requests for the removal of some Jewish names, LDS officials can claim some questionable IGI entries are relatives of a Mormon. When pressed for proof, usually none is forthcoming, and Mormon officialdom hides behind protecting the privacy of its patrons.

Records of those who have been subjected to LDS posthumous rituals are retained by the LDS Church. While the Church has removed many names of Jews from the IGI, it maintains private lists of those names and their ordinance details. The removal of names is, essentially, a manipulation of data out of one file into another.

The removal of obvious Jewish Holocaust names from the IGI has been inconsistent. The LDS Church has not removed all post-1995 IGI entries for Jewish Holocaust victims, including Dutch listings that cite death camps, such as Auschwitz or Sobibor. Periodically, and usually after complaints, some of these listings disappear. When entries vanish—new records for Jewish Holocaust victims usually appear in the IGI—as though names go in and out of that database through an unstoppable revolving door.

Some IGI entries should have been removed years ago. Examples are more than 700 “overlooked” entries for Jewish Holocaust victims from Rome, Italy, who died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in October 1943. Most of the IGI listings for the Jews of Rome show May 1999 baptisms. A link to these names was given to the LDS Church in 2001.

In May 2001, a list of more than 200 names of Jewish people, mainly notable Jews, like Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and Viktor Frankl, was faxed to the LDS Church by Aaron Breitbart, senior researcher at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. I had supplied Breitbart with the list in person, together with corresponding research from the IGI and relevant biographies for most of these Jews. In *The Salt Lake Tribune* article “LDS Try to End Unauthorized Work for Jews” by Bob Mims on May 2, 2001, it reported that “The LDS Church...will strip the names of more than 200 Jewish people from Mormon genealogical records....”

One of the names on the list was Elena Calo, a young Italian Jewish girl who perished in the Holocaust on October 23, 1943. She was part of a large group of more than 1,000 Jews from Rome who died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in the Nazi attempt to destroy Rome’s Jewish community. Elena Calo was baptized on May 6, 1999 in the Logan Utah Temple. From my list of more than 700 names, nearly 200 of these Roman Jews were posthumously baptized on May 6, 1999 in the Logan Utah Temple.

In checking the names on my list they received from the Simon Wiesenthal Center, LDS officials must have seen the IGI entry for Elena Calo—the only one of its kind listed in that database. A Family History Library official later told me that four or five names on my list were not removed from the IGI because they were “relatives” of Mormons. Years later, I learned I had not been told the truth. There is no possible way that Elena Calo

would have direct family ties to any living Mormon. Along with other members of her family, she perished in the gas chambers at Auschwitz and left no descendants.

The hundreds of IGI entries for the Roman Jews were submitted from a Holocaust list. Such a large number of known Jewish Holocaust victims, with many different last names, could not all be the ancestors of a living Mormon. These deceased should not have been subjected to post-1995 LDS temple ordinances. They were known Italian Jews who died horrifying deaths in the gas chambers of Auschwitz because they were Jewish.

While there may be questionable value in the removal of names from the IGI, this condition is a valid provision of the 1995 agreement between Mormons and Jews. The LDS Church did agree to remove names, especially those inappropriately submitted that were brought to its attention. Along with hundreds of other similar entries from the same Holocaust list, Elena Calo's name was never removed from the online IGI. Her name is still in that database at the time of the writing of this report on May 15, 2008. On September 25, 2007, the date of my most recent check, all 700 plus entries for Rome's Jewish Holocaust victims were still in the online IGI. Most likely, they still are.

As a condition of the 1995 agreement, the LDS Church agreed to remove from the next issue of the IGI the names of posthumously baptized Jewish Holocaust victims from four major Holocaust lists. These lists are referred to in the agreement as the German *Gedenkbuch*, "the Dutch Book," "the French Book," and "lists at the Holocaust Museum in Israel," adding approximately 380,000 names of Jewish Holocaust victims to the IGI.

The 1995 agreement also states that the LDS Church would provide Jewish groups with a list of all Jewish Holocaust victims whose names were removed from the IGI, and would confirm in writing when removal of such names had been completed. The Church did present Jewish organizations with a compact disc documenting the deleted names. This report identifies that CD as "Holocaust Names Removal CD" (HNRCD).

An analysis of the HNRCD by New Jersey-based Jewish genealogy expert Gary Mokotoff, however, showed it contains only 247,479 names, of which 31,688 are duplicates. (A duplicate is defined as identical given name, surname, and birth date.) According to Mokotoff, the HNRCD contains a birth file and a marriage file. The birth file contains 225,083 records of which 19,251 (8.5%) are duplicates. The marriage file contains 22,396 entries of which 12,437 (55%) are duplicates.

The actual content of the HNRCD that was given to Jewish groups is as follows:

The birth file minus duplicates	= 205,832
The marriage file minus duplicates	= 9,959
Individual names removed from the IGI	= 215,791

While an exact tally of names of Jewish Holocaust victims that were supposed to have been removed from the IGI is not known, 215,791 is a far lesser cry than the estimated 380,000 names of baptized Jewish Holocaust victims from the four major Holocaust lists.

It is not known why there were so few records on the HNRCD, or so many duplicates. A French list was supposed to have been removed. There is no evidence from the HNRCD that such a list existed.

The thousands of entries for Dutch Jewish Holocaust victims from the HNRCD birth file were removed from the IGI, as a condition of the 1995 agreement. The removal of these IGI entries for Dutch Jews created a new dilemma. Even as thousands of Dutch entries vanished from the IGI—new entries for Dutch Holocaust victims have appeared in that database since the HNRCD was produced by the LDS Church. A significant number of the newer IGI entries match Dutch listings from the birth file on the HNRCD.

The volume of post-agreement ordinance data for Jewish Holocaust victims from the Netherlands represents agreement breaches by the thousands. Year after year, in contempt of the agreement between Mormons and Jews, some Mormons are deliberately pushing the names of Jewish Holocaust victims from the Netherlands through LDS temples. Dutch Jews who perished in the death camps, Auschwitz and Sobibor, have been primary targets in this massive and determined effort to flout the 1995 agreement.

It doesn't seem to matter how many of these Dutch entries disappear from the online IGI. More listings for Dutch Holocaust Jews appear to take their place, including names that disappear, and then reappear as duplications. It is anybody's guess how many thousands of Dutch Jewish Holocaust victims have been subjected to post-1995 LDS posthumous ordinances. The tally must be extremely high.

My most recent spot-check investigation on February 19, 2008, uncovered 105 new entries in the online IGI for Dutch Jewish Holocaust victims. 104 of these listings cite Auschwitz as the place of death. One entry cites Sobibor. The 105 entries are for 81 individuals with many different last names. (There are multiple entries for some names because marriage sealings are listed separately in the IGI.) At the time I discovered these IGI records, 40 of the entries had been cleared for posthumous ordinances and showed no temple activity. The majority of the 105 entries match the birth list on the HNRCD.

From the 105 entries, 65 Dutch Jews, all victims of the Holocaust, were individually baptized on January 26, 2008 in the Ogden Utah Temple. The names and vital data on the IGI listings for 63 of the 65 baptisms match birth entries on the HNRCD. In other words, on January 26, 2008, in the Ogden Utah Temple, at least 63 Dutch Jews who died in the Holocaust, and whose previous baptismal records had been purged from the IGI by the LDS Church, were again baptized by the LDS Church.

What makes these circumstances even more remarkable—even as cartloads of names of Jews, especially Jewish Holocaust victims, have been processed post-1995 through LDS temples—the LDS Church has gone through a series of processes to ensure that all online ordinance details are completely off-limits to non-Mormons. Before the agreement, the IGI was an open book and its ordinance information was publicly available. IGI ordinance data was accessible on microfiche and can still be freely viewed (to January

2000) on the old DOS version of the IGI, which is on compact disc at many LDS family history centers around the world.

Since May 1999, the IGI has been accessible online at <http://www.familysearch.org/> . Now only a person with a special user log-in (an accredited Mormon) can access ordinance data in the online IGI to determine which LDS rituals have been done for a dead person. This precaution appears to be a security “shield” that protects the privacy of the LDS Church. The Church made an agreement with Jews and then attempted to eliminate all non-LDS monitoring of ongoing ordinance activity.

In August 2004, I was assigned by Jewish groups to collect copies of approximately 5,000 post-1995 IGI records for identifiable Jews documenting breach of contract. The 5,376 ordinance copies I obtained included 3,416 entries for Jewish Holocaust victims from many European countries. 1,784 of these records were for Dutch Holocaust victims. This research was handed to LDS officials by Jews, during meetings between these LDS leaders and Jewish representatives in Salt Lake City, on April 10 and April 11, 2005. Newspaper headlines and television news reports later proclaimed that the proxy baptism issue between these two groups was resolved and the 1995 agreement was reaffirmed.

The LDS Church had recommitted itself to stop posthumously baptizing Jews, but LDS officials made promises that would not be kept. The names of Jewish Holocaust victims, in particular, continued to freely flow through LDS temples and into the online IGI, as temple ordinance details for these names would remain hidden from public scrutiny. When Mormons received my 5,376 copies, they tracked the log-in I was using and I was immediately locked out of the password-protected online ordinance database.

Although I have managed to gather many thousands of questionable post-1995 Jewish entries from the online IGI since 1999, I have had limited access to online temple ordinance details because of privacy restrictions. There have been long periods of time when I have had no opportunity to obtain online ordinance information. Whenever I have been able to access online ordinances—and search only drops in the bucket in this database of so many millions of names—I always seem to easily find fresh evidence that the Jewish Holocaust content of the IGI has increased. If, in a matter of minutes, I can usually find obvious breaches involving Jewish Holocaust victims, especially IGI entries showing death camps, continuing into 2008, the problem definitely demands attention.

The majority of deceased persons who are subjected to temple ordinances are affected by the LDS Church’s extraction program which provides the bulk of the names submitted to LDS temples. The Church has acquired an immense collection of billions of records that contain the names of individuals who have lived on the earth. From the current online edition of *Family Record Extraction Administrative Handbook*, page 1: “Through family record extraction, workers create automated indexes to various historic documents that contain the names of individuals who have lived on the earth. The indexes are then made accessible worldwide through the Church’s family history Internet resources and computer programs. Names from extracted indexes are also sent to the temples when needed to supplement the names that members provide for ordinance work.”

The LDS Church claims it stopped extracting Jewish lists after the signing of the 1995 agreement, but when the agreement was signed, there were innumerable extracted entries and prior submissions still in the temple system for obvious Jews. The Church claims these extracted lists started prior to May 1995 and that the total process can take years. It seems the Church did not recall extracted records after signing the agreement.

Extracted synagogue lists continued to be processed through LDS temples post-1995. Clear-cut examples are two batches of 19th century records for the Mosiac Congregation of Copenhagen, Denmark. Proxy baptisms for approximately half of these two batches were performed in 1993. In 2001 and 2002, 1,178 baptisms were done for the same synagogue batches. Mosiac Congregation Jews were still being subjected to posthumous ordinances in November 2004.

As of May 15, 2008, the LDS Church had 125 operating temples worldwide and 14 more temples announced or under construction. Over the years, millions of Jews have been subjected to posthumous ordinances through church extractions. Multitudes of post-1995 entries for Jews have shown up in the North American section of the IGI. Admittedly, when the source is public records, it is not always possible to tell who is a Jew. The LDS Church is not under any obligation to sift through all extractions from public records to try to determine who are certain Jews. However, I have found cases whose sources were New York City marriages where the officials performing the marriages were identified as rabbis. Clearly these people are Jews. Research in the Australian section of the IGI shows post-1995 entries that appear to have been extracted from Australian vital records that identify the proxy recipients as Sydney/Hebrew. Clearly these people are Jews.

The LDS Church is developing a new system to be found at <http://new.familysearch.org> . When fully released, the new program may provide some screening processes to curb the excesses of Mormons who improperly submit names of Jews to LDS temples. In the meantime, the Church claims it cannot control its overzealous members. Even so, since May 1995, the temple system which the Church owns and controls, along with its vast army of willing Mormon participants, has subjected countless “knowingly Jewish” deceased to posthumous ordinances against the terms of the agreement which it signed. It is a poor excuse to say a promise was not kept because the LDS Church has not had control over the content of its temple submissions. Church members give names to the Church. The Church then processes these names. The Church must be held accountable.

In order to get around its apparent misuse of millions of names of deceased, including vast numbers of Jews, the LDS Church has come up with the justification that its temple rituals for the dead cause no injury to anyone. Mormons usually insist that all afterworld recipients are free to accept or reject these ordinances—so there is no harm done. In certain instances, an offer can be as offensive as the act itself. Many Jews consider the offer to be baptized a Mormon as offensive as the act.

LDS rituals for the dead are implicit attempts to deny the religious beliefs of (non-LDS) lives already lived. Dead people should be remembered for who and what they were.

Jewish Holocaust victims were killed by Nazis because they were Jews. These millions of murdered innocents should always be memorialized as Jews—each and every one of them—and never treated as though Judaism is a halfway house to the divine. For the sake of collective Jewish memory and historical accuracy their Jewish religious identities must remain intact and not be altered in any way by Mormons. The LDS Church should keep its promise to Jewish groups, stop posthumously baptizing Jews—especially Jewish Holocaust victims—and not excuse agreement breaches by saying that deceased Jews can decide for themselves whether or not they want to be Mormons.

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