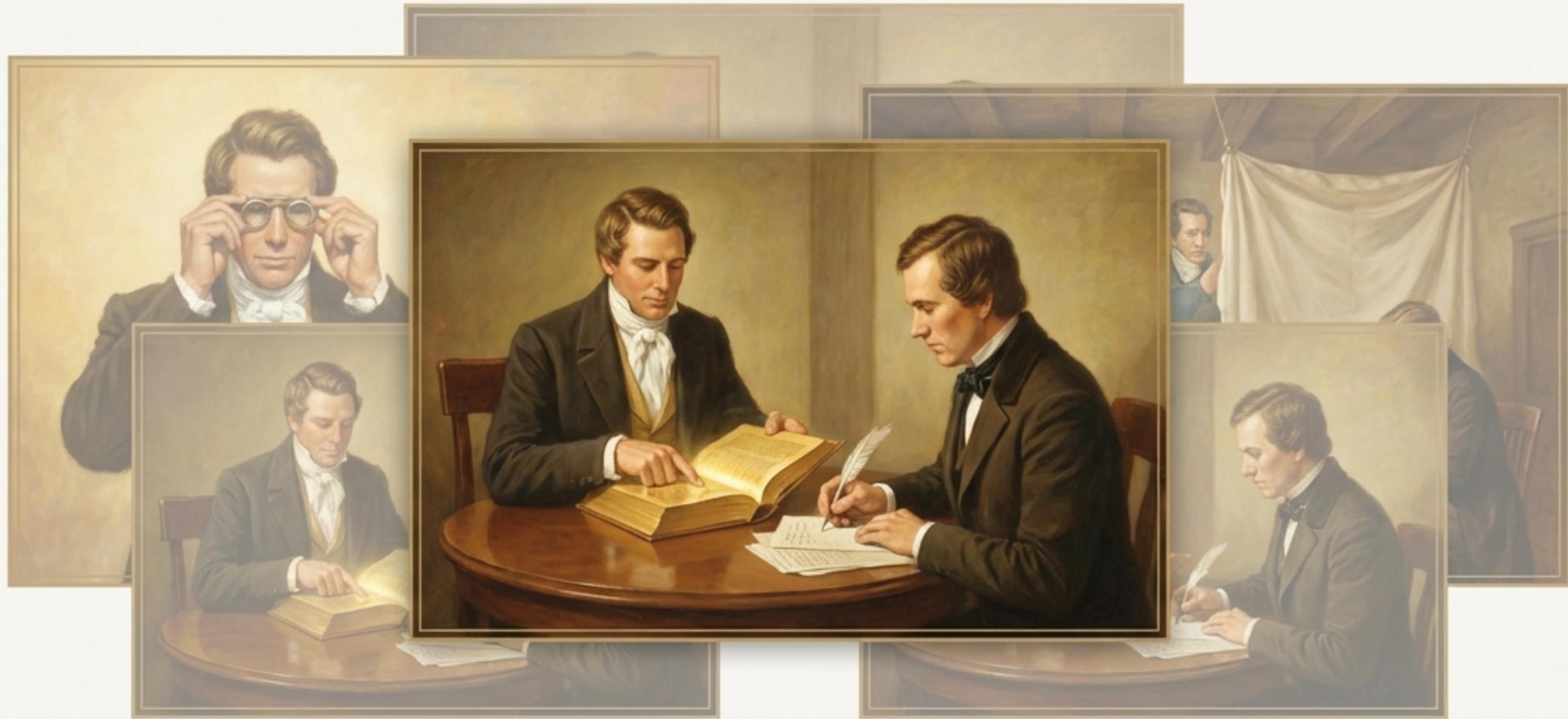


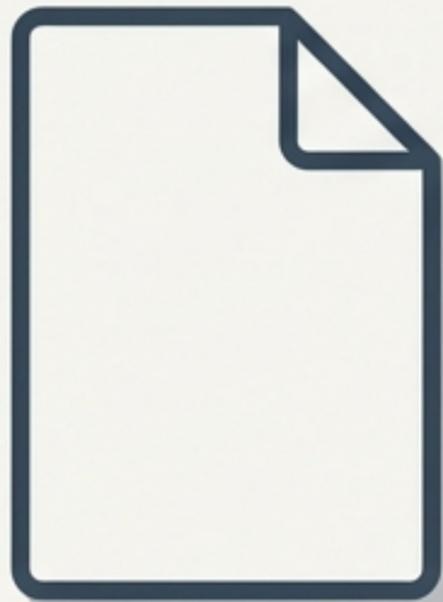
For Over 150 Years, This Was the Undisputed Story.



For decades, this was the only version of the translation process members of the church saw. These images appeared in official curriculum, on the walls of chapels, and in all church literature. They depict an academic, scholarly translation.

“The church is very specifically very carefully showing you this image even though it’s not correct... it’s been an act of intentional overt deception for at least a half to a full Century.”

In 2013, a Sincere Letter of Questions Ignited a Crisis of Faith

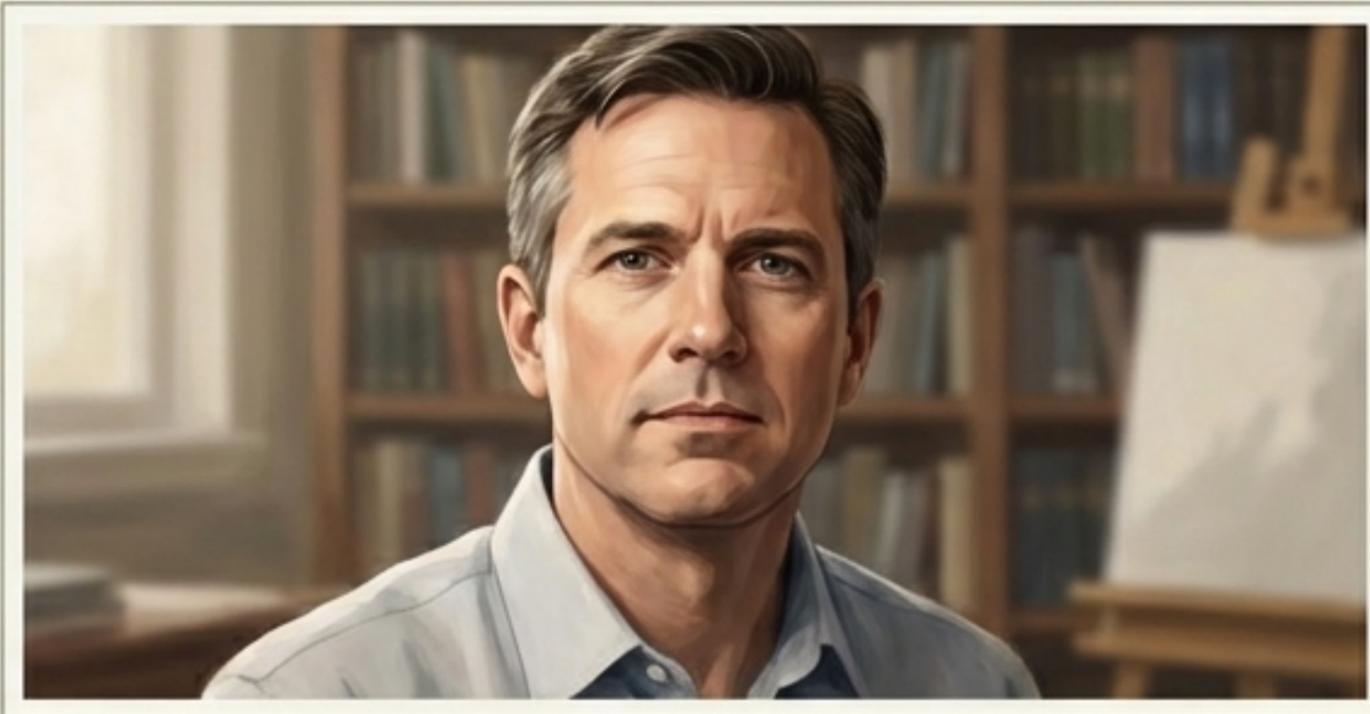


CES Letter
April 2013



Jeremy Runnells, a lifelong church member, compiled decades of historical problems and unanswered questions into a document for a Church Educational System (CES) Director. It became known as the “CES Letter.” Instead of receiving answers, he was excommunicated. The letter highlighted discrepancies the church had actively sought to deny or avoid.

Then, the Church's Own University Began to Illustrate the "Apostate" Material.



Anthony Sweat

BYU Professor

Department Chair, Church History and Doctrine

Anthony Sweat began painting “previously unrepresented important aspects of church history.” His work, starting in 2014—just one year after the CES Letter was published—started to visually published—started to visually depict the controversial history the church had long suppressed.

The CES Letter Claimed the Gold Plates Weren't Used. A BYU Professor Painted It.

THE QUESTION (CES LETTER)

“Joseph Smith used a rock in a hat for translating ... while the gold plates were covered, placed in another room, or even buried in the woods. The gold plates were not used for the Book of Mormon we have today.”

– Jeremy Runnells, CES Letter

THE VALIDATION (ANTHONY SWEAT)



Art by Anthony Sweat, BYU Professor of Religion. His paintings were first published in the 2014 book *From Darkness Unto Light*.

The CES Letter Pointed to Folk Magic. The Church's Art Now Admits It.

THE QUESTION (CES LETTER)

“If Oliver Cowdery’s gift was really the use of a divining rod... this tells us that the origins of the church are much more rooted in folk magic and superstition than we’ve been led to believe.”

– Jeremy Runnells, CES Letter

THE VALIDATION (ANTHONY SWEAT)



Sweat’s art acknowledges the original 1829 revelation, which stated Oliver had the “gift of working with the sprout,” later changed in scripture to the “gift of Aaron.”

The CES Letter Described Coercion. A BYU Painting Depicts the Threat.

THE QUESTION (CES LETTER)

“[Joseph made] threats that he... was going to be slain by an Angel with a drawn sword if the girls didn’t marry him. I have a problem with this. This is Warren Jeffs territory.”

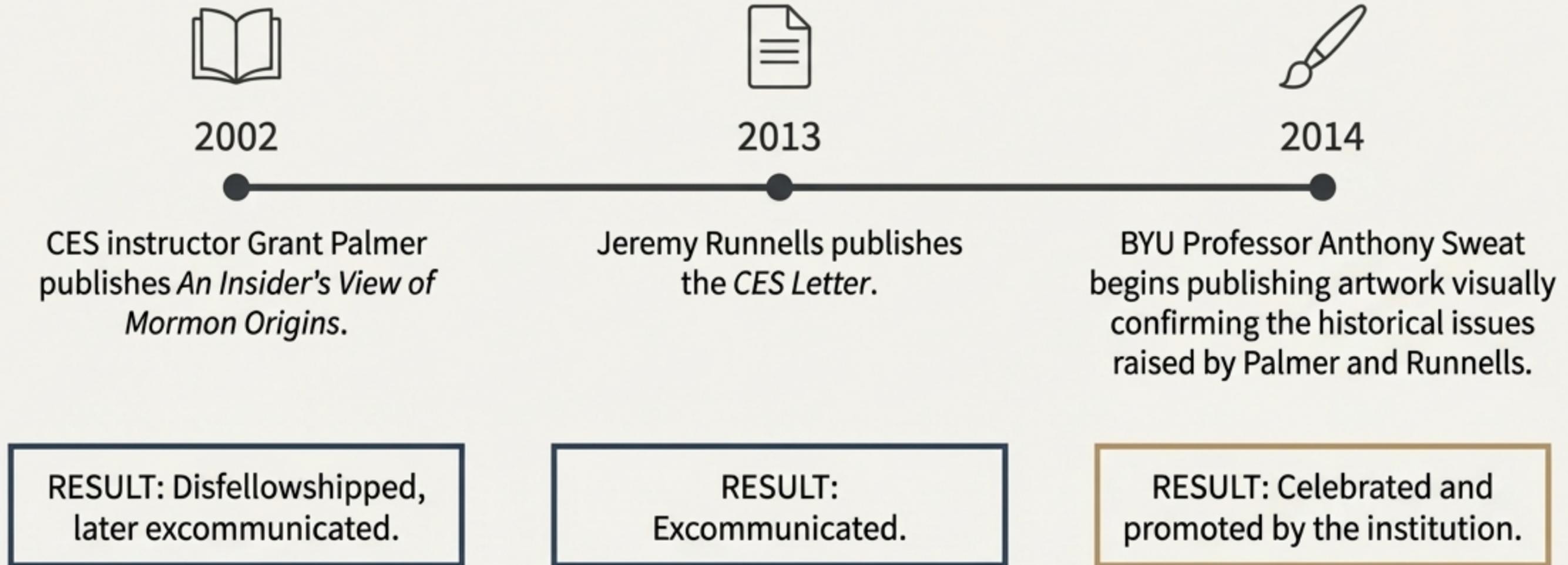
– Jeremy Runnells, *CES Letter*

THE VALIDATION (ANTHONY SWEAT)



Joseph Smith told at least 20 people this story to convince women and their families to agree to plural marriage, including the family of 14-year-old Helen Mar Kimball.

The Institutional Pattern: Punish the Critic, Then Quietly Adopt Their Findings



The new “transparency” is not institutional innovation. It is a direct response to courageous historians and critics who were excommunicated for telling the truth first.

The Church is “As Transparent as We Know How to Be.”



THE OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION



“There has been no attempt... of the church leaders trying to hide anything from anybody. We’re as transparent as we know how to be.”

– M. Russell Ballard, Apostle



THE REALITY OF THE STRATEGY



“[Depicting the seer stone] probably won’t communicate what the church wants to communicate... some things just don’t work visually.”

– Anthony Sweat, BYU Professor

The new art acknowledges historical facts only after decades of denial. But the careful curation shows the primary goal is not historical accuracy, but institutional narrative control. The very institution that punished the questioner is now validating the questions—but only on its own terms.