

*David Whitmer was excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1838 for turning against Church members and joining in persecuting them. Though he never returned to the Church in his lifetime, he never denied the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, and even publicly defended it. The following article was first published in the Richmond, Missouri, Conservator, March 25, 1881:*

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## RICHMOND CONSERVATOR

Richmond, Missouri, March 25, 1881

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### A PROCLAMATION

Unto all Nations, Kindreds, Tongues and People, unto whom these presents shall come.

It having been represented by one John Murphy, of Polo, Caldwell county, Missouri, that I, in a conversation with him last summer, denied my testimony as one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon.

To the end, therefore, that he may understand me now, if he did not then; and that the world may know the truth, I wish now, standing as it were, in the very sunset of life, and in the fear of God, once for all to make this public statement:

That I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof, which has so long since been published with that book, as one of the Three Witnesses. Those who know me best well know that I have always adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the truth of all my statements as then made and published.

He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear; it was no delusion; what is written is written, and he that readeth, let him understand. And that no one may be misled or deceived by this statement, I wish here to state that I do not endorse polygamy or spiritual wifeism. It is a great evil, shocking to the moral sense, and the more so because practiced in the name of religion. It is of men and not of God, and is especially forbidden in the Book of Mormon itself. I do not endorse the change of the name of the Church, for, as the wife takes the name of the husband so should the Church of the Lamb of God take the name of its head, even Christ. It is the Church of Christ. As to the high priesthood, Jesus Christ himself was the last great high priest, this, too, after the order of Melchisedek, as I understand the Holy Scriptures.

Finally, I do not endorse any of the teachings of the so-called Mormons or Latter-day Saints, which are in conflict with the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible and Book of Mormon, for the same gospel is plainly taught in both of these books as I understand the word of God. And if any man doubt, should he not carefully and honestly read and understand the same before presuming to sit in judgment and condemning the light, which shineth in darkness, and showeth the way of eternal life as pointed out by the unerring hand of God?

In the spirit of Christ, who hath said: "Follow thou me, for I am the life, the light and the way," I submit this state-

ment to the world; God in whom I trust being my judge as to the sincerity of my motives and the faith and hope that is in me of eternal life.

My sincere desire is that the world may be benefited by this plain and simple statement of the truth.

And all the honor to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen!

DAVID WHITMER, Sen.

Richmond, Mo., March 19, 1881.

We the undersigned citizens of Richmond, Ray county, Missouri, where David Whitmer has resided since the year A. D. 1838, certify that we have been long and intimately acquainted with him and know him to be a man of the highest integrity, and of undoubted truth and veracity.

Given at Richmond, Missouri, this March 19, A. D. 1881:

Gen. Alexander W. Doniphan

Hon. George W. Dunn,

Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit

Thomas D. Woodson,

President of Ray Co. Savings Bank

J. T. Child, editor of "Conservator"

H. C. Garner, Cashier of Ray Co. Savings Bank

W. A. Holman, County Treasurer

J. S. Hughes, Banker, Richmond

James Hughes, Banker, Richmond

D. P. Whitmer, Attorney-at-Law

Hon. Jas. W. Black, Attorney-at-Law

L. C. Cantwell, Postmaster, Richmond

George I. Wasson, Mayor

Jas. A. Davis, County Collector

C. J. Hughes, Probate Judge and Presiding

Justice of Ray County Court

Geo. W. Trigg, County Clerk

W. W. Mosby, M. D.

Thos. McGinnis, ex-Sheriff Ray County

J. P. Quesenberry, Merchant

W. R. Holman, Furniture Merchant

Lewis Slaughter, Recorder of Deeds

Geo. W. Buchanan, M. D.

A. K. Reyburn