

Letter to the Editor by Francis Nelson Henderson, nelson@henderson.whsites.net

Comment on Dallin H. Oaks speech given at BYU-Idaho, 13 October 2009.

Claiming freedom of Religion and of speech, Mormon Apostle Oaks is hypocritically seeking immunity from criticism for what church leaders do and say while denying those same basic American values of liberty inside the church. Oaks is the church spokes person for the PBS Documentary “The Mormons” in which he affirms long standing church policy that church members are not free to speak publicly their opinions. He says, “It is wrong to criticize ⁱ leaders of the church, even if the criticism is true.” Church members are denied freedom of speech on threat of expulsion from the church. The cases of David P Wright ⁱⁱ and Janice M Allred ⁱⁱⁱ are examples of members expelled for expressing or promoting views differing from those of church leaders.

State and National laws have the potential to act forcefully upon the lives of citizens through the police power of the State. Hence, the American governmental system purposely separates religion from state in order to protect both religion from state intervention, and to protect the citizens from churches who seek to use the force of law to compel obedience or to deny liberty, like Mormonism is doing through defeat of the gay marriage law in California. The church and Apostle Oaks are not entitled to the immunity he seeks ^{iv} from public criticism and opposition that weaken influence. Church member-citizens, exercising their rights of citizenship, may rightfully, publicly oppose the church and its officers.

ⁱ Web Link to Video clip from PBS Documentary “The Mormons”, Dallin Oaks, <http://www.henderson.whsites.net/Free-Speech.html>

ⁱⁱ Web Link to on-line Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance Volume 3, David P Wright, “Personal History”, <http://www.mormon-alliance.org/casereports/volume3/part5/V3P5.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Web Link to on-line Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance Volume 2, Janice M Allred, “White Bird Flying”, <http://www.mormon-alliance.org/casereports/volume2/part4/v2p4.htm>

^{iv} "Religious Freedom", Transcript of Dallin H. Oaks speech given at BYU-Idaho, 13 October 2009, <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/religious-freedom>