

Monson's "Nasty" Coke Habit & the LDS Church's "Fizz"tory of Flip-Flopping

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Mormon Church President Thomas Sssssssssssnske Oil Salesman Monson's "Nasty" Coke Habit: Revealing Info from Inside His Family & from Those Who Work for Him (Plus, the Mormon Church's Long-Standing Anti-Coke "Revelation," Now Repealed)

In another thread, RfM poster "James Strang" poses the following question:

"During the time when Mitt Romney ran for president, the [Mormon]church announced that cola drinks were not forbidden.

"That confused a New Zealand Mormon bishop who went public in a newspaper article about how he taught members to refuse to drink colas, as it violated the Word of Wisdom. Countless Mormons avoided cola consumption, including me.

"I started drinking colas in 1996 after quitting the church and felt like a novelty in being liberated and free.

"So, do any Mormons still claim colas are a banned substance and anybody drinking them will not enter a Mormon temple?"

("Do Any Mormons Still Regard Colas as a Sin as Coffee?," by "James Strang," on "Recovery from Mormonism" discussion board, 30 November 2016)

The Mormon Church has--yet again--performed a complete 180: This time on its now-defunct denunciation of consuming caffeinated sodas.

Trouble is (and on a personal note that goes right to the top of the Mormon Church food chain), even before reversing course on gulping Coke, its own president Thomas S. Monson--prior to and after becoming chief LDS Church honcho--was secretly refusing to tow the Mormon Church line against drinking caffeinated beverages.

Here's the stimulating story:

--Confessions from a Daughter of Thomas S. Monson about Her Father's Pepsi Cola Addiction

As a preface, Monson's daughter, Ann, once personally told me that the leaders of the LDS Church loved members of my family who were "loyal to the Brethren." I found that interesting since it was Ann herself who also played show-and-tell on how her own father not loyal to the anti-cola teachings of the highest leaders of the Mormon church.

*RfM contributor (and friend) "TLC" reports:

"Steve [Benson] shared this story from me anonymously but I'm retelling it here; owning it and attaching my name to it and making it real for those who might have had their doubts when Steve told it.

"I started at BYU in the fall of 1972 and in the first couple of months one of the girls I dated was Ann Monson. Absolutely stunningly gorgeous and way out of my league. I asked her out and she said yes and I took her to the Homecoming Ball in the Fall of 1972. Showed up at her dorm to pick her up and I'm pretty sure it was both Thomas and Frances that were there to greet me. They'd both come down to help Ann get ready for the big shindig.

"I walked in and there was Ann looking like a stunning replica of Ann Margaret circa 1965. I will never forget what a vision she was standing there in her spaghetti-strap dress that was for all the world a most blatant violation of BYU dress code. But who was going to argue with her daddy about it, huh?

"Not me. I was into girls with an edge.

"I took Ann to the dance and watched as people's heads swiveled around ala Linda Blair all night long trying to see who this gorgeous b***h was in the immoral ball gown. It was kind of like being with Cinderella, only I don't think Ann was wearing a tiara that night. And I kind of don't think that squirrels and birds dressed her, either. Could be, though--strange stuff goes on at BYU.

"Ann was, and probably still is, a gorgeous woman. Why she invested any time with me I'll never understand but it's widely known that us gay boys in hiding can be quite appealing to the ladies. Suck it up straight boys and get over it. You may have my spoils if you wish.

"Homecoming was followed by General Conference or vice-versa. Ann showed me around Temple Square and the underground tunnels and then we sat in those big cushy chairs in the Tabernacle behind the big kahunas during a couple of sessions of conference and ate with the Mormon giants in a special dining room somewhere there on Piazza Tempio. I was having lots of fun and Ann was at least pretending to be into me and stuff. Can you imagine if I had just not chosen to be gay I might be mormon royalty right now??? Yeh, like that was ever gonna happen.

"On another visit to Salt Lake Ann took me to her home in one of the privileged hillside neighborhoods. On the way out the back door to show me the gardens we passed a long stack of Pepsi crates full of empty Pepsi bottles. Ann pointed at them as we were going out the door and with a laugh said, 'Dad's nasty little habit.'

"Now you gotta put this in context of the early '70s when most Mormons were still laboring under the weight of the urban legend that said the Coke and Pepsi were 'against the Word of Wisdom.' (If Mormons stopped drinking COke today the company would go out business). I thought about Ann's words: 'Dad's nasty little habit' and decided right then and there it was OK for me to masturbate more and be a little gayer than I'd ever been before. If Tom Monson could have his nasty little habits, then surely it was OK for me to have mine.

"I mean no disrespect towards Ann in telling this story. I'm justifiably angry at her daddy for declaring war on me and my community but Ann isn't her dad and, who knows, she might actually disagree with what he did as well. All I can tell you is that back then she was beautiful, she was extremely intelligent and aware and that dating her was a lot of fun. All these years I have secretly gloated about the fact that I'm probably one of the few guys ever, if not the only one, in BYU's history that's taken a girl to Homecoming who was wearing a revealing spaghetti-strap dress. Somehow there's just some really wonderful irony in that.

"Gay boys rule!!"

("I Dated Tom's Daughter Ann," posted by "TLC" [aka Tom Clark], on "Recovery from Mormonism" discussion board, 18 November 2008)

*Next, this reported acknowledgment from Monson's own nurse, on her boss's Coke addiction.

RfM poster "ironmann" (also a friend of mine from our days together in the LDS Church and for whom I can personally vouch) writes:

"My sister told me her friend, who is Monson's nurse, says he's addicted to Diet Coke, which makes more sense since it is the official drink of Utah. Also, what kills me is the double standard: When I went to the Church-owned Polynesian Culture [PCC] center in Hawaii in March of this year, at the dinner/luau they served regular caffeinated Pepsi, Mountain Dew, etc., and caffeinated tea and coffee. They want to make the non-member feel at home. What happened to sticking to your standards or being peculiar? The hypocrisy is hilarious."

("Re: W[ord] o[f] W[isdom]: Caffeinated Beverages--Now at the PCC," posted by "ironmann," on "Recoery from Mormonism" bulletin board, 26 July 2012)

--A Caffeinated Monson Personally Confirms He Has Diabetes

Several years ago at a Benson family function where Monson was invited, I had a chance to briefly chat with him. He was sitting down and didn't seem physically comfortable. I asked him how his health was doing and he soberly informed me that his foot was giving him a bad time and that he was a diabetic. More recently, I had another chance to meet and chat with Monson briefly. Suffice to say, he is a big guy--with a large, protruding, fatty belly. Not good, diabetic or not.

--The Coke-Adominal Fat-Diabetes Connection

Monson ought to read up on how his Coke habit is bad for those with his condition, espeically when they're overweight like him. As one diabetes-devoted website, "Diabetes Mine," reports:

". . . [R]esearch seems to confirm that there is a significant correlation between drinking diet sodas and weight gain. There's that word again, correlation, so it's difficult to say that diet soda causes weight gain, but the two do seem to show up in pairs far more often than you'd think."

The research cited (as cited by “Time” magazine) notes the following about the relationship between cola drinking, weight gain and diabetes:

“More bad news, diet soda drinkers: data presented recently at the American Diabetes Association’s (ADA) Scientific Sessions suggest that diet drinks may actually contribute to weight gain and that the artificial sweeteners in them could potentially contribute Type 2 diabetes.

“In one study, researchers from the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, looked at aggregate data from 474 older adults in the San Antonio Longitudinal Study of Aging, or SALSA. . . . The researchers wanted to track any association between diet soda drinking and body fat over time. What they found was that all participants saw their waistlines expand, but those who reported drinking diet soda had 70% greater increases in waistline growth than non-drinkers 9.5 years later. Among frequent drinkers--those who consumed two or more diet sodas a day--waistline growth was 500% greater than among non-drinkers. Researchers said their results were adjusted for other contributing factors like diabetes status, leisure-time physical activity level and age. . . .

“The data didn’t say why diet sodas might play a role in weight gain, but previous research suggests it has to do with the disconnect between the taste of artificial sugars and their lack of calories. The brain is wired to expect a big load of calories when foods taste sweet or fatty. But because diet foods fail to deliver, it throws the brain out of whack. Studies in animals suggest that artificial sweetener consumption may lead to even more eating and weight gain, perhaps in part because it triggers the body to start storing more calories as fat.

“Excess weight, especially around the belly, as measured in the SALSA participants, is a risk factor for a variety of ills, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes.”

But wait, there's more:

“ . . . [R]esearchers think [that animal lab studies tracking the relationship between drinking diet soda containing aspartame and the development of diabetes are] still meaningful [to humans]. 'These results suggest that heavy aspartame exposure might potentially directly contribute to increased blood glucose levels, and thus contribute to the associations observed between diet soda consumption and the risk of diabetes in humans,' said Dr. Gabriel Fernandes, a University of Texas professor of rheumatology and clinical immunology, in a statement., [as reported by the website, “Science Daily”]:

“Epidemiologists from the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio reported data showing that diet soft drink consumption is associated with increased waist circumference in humans, and a second study that found aspartame raised fasting glucose (blood sugar) in diabetes-prone mice.

“Data from this and other prospective studies suggest that the promotion of diet sodas and artificial sweeteners as healthy alternatives may be ill-advised,” said Helen P. Hazuda, Ph.D., professor and chief of the Division of Clinical Epidemiology in the School of Medicine. “They may be free of calories but not of consequences.” . . .

“To examine the relationship between diet soft drink consumption and long-term change in waist circumference, the Health Science Center team assessed data from . . . a large, population-based study of the disablement process in elderly Mexican-Americans and European Americans. . . . Measures of height, weight, waist circumference and diet soda intake were recorded at SALSA enrollment and at three follow-up exams that took place over the next decade. The average follow-up time was 9.5 years. The researchers compared long-term change in waist circumference for diet soda users versus non-users in all follow-up periods. The results were adjusted for waist circumference, diabetes status, leisure-time physical activity level, neighborhood of residence, age and smoking status at the beginning of each interval, as well as sex, ethnicity and years of education.

“Diet soft drink users, as a group, experienced 70 percent greater increases in waist circumference compared with non-users. Frequent users, who said they consumed two or more diet sodas a day, experienced waist circumference increases that were 500 percent greater than those of non-users.

“Abdominal fat is a major risk factor for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and other chronic conditions. ‘These results suggest that, amidst the national drive to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks, policies that would promote the consumption of diet soft drinks may have unintended deleterious effects,’ the authors wrote. . . .

“In [a] related project, Ganesh Halade, Ph.D., Gabriel Fernandes, Ph.D., the senior author and professor of rheumatology and clinical immunology, and Fowler studied the relationship between oral exposure to aspartame and fasting glucose and insulin levels in 40 diabetes-prone mice. Aspartame is an artificial sweetener widely used in diet sodas and other products.

“One group of the mice ate chow to which both aspartame and corn oil were added; the other group ate chow with the corn oil added but not the aspartame. After three months on this high-fat diet, the mice in the aspartame group showed elevated fasting glucose levels but equal or diminished insulin levels, consistent with early declines in pancreatic beta-cell function. The difference in insulin levels between the groups was not statistically significant. Beta cells make insulin, the hormone that lowers blood sugar after a meal. Imbalance ultimately leads to diabetes.’

“These results suggest that heavy aspartame exposure might potentially directly contribute to increased blood glucose levels, and thus contribute to the associations observed between diet soda consumption and the risk of diabetes in humans,’ Dr. Fernandes said. . . .’

“Maybe it’s time to switch to water.”

If Monson and others Coke addicts believe that they've dodged the bullet because they're already diabetic, they need to re-examine their rationale. According to the “Diabetes Mine” website: “If you think you’re off the hook with the whole 'diet-soda-might-be bad-for-you' debate just because you’ve already got diabetes, think again! Research now indicates that those who consume diet soda daily are at a higher risk of cardiovascular disease. According to data presented at the American Stroke Association’s International Stroke Conference in 2011, researchers studied 2,564 participants and found those who drank diet soda every day were at a 48% higher risk of having a stroke or other vascular incident than those who didn’t drink it at all. . . .

“Now, this doesn’t necessarily show causality, as Dr. Hannah Gardener, one of the researchers at the University of Miami, explained. Further studies, she says, are needed to show what exactly about diet soda is causing cardiovascular disease in these patients. But research would indicate that diet sodas are not necessarily the best daily beverage choice for us PWDs [People With Diabetes] , despite their null effect on blood sugars. Diet soda might not contain a PWD’s nemesis--sugar--but it does contain sodium, phosphate, and usually caffeine (unless you make sure to get caffeine-free). Phosphate in high doses can have a negative effect on the health of your bones. Sodium and caffeine can cause dehydration, making you more thirsty, making you drink more diet soda, causing more dehydration... you see where this is going?”

The “Diabetes Mine” website continues:

"A 2009 study in the journal 'Diabetes Care' offers some suggestions as to why this connection occurs: 1) diet sodas may increase our desire and then consumption of 'sugar-sweetened, energy-dense beverages/foods,' i.e. our bodies react by craving more food, or 2) drinking these beverages may 'disrupt consumers' ability to accurately estimate energy intake and remaining energy needs,' i.e. we lose the ability to estimate how much food we actually need. On the other hand, some experts think that many folks who drink a lot of diet soda are already overweight and are drinking diet soda to lose weight, and therefore are already at risk for hypertension, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes."

("What's So Bad About Diet Soda?," by AllisonB, "Diabetes Mine: A Gold Mine of Striaight Talk and Encouragement," 21 March 2012); "Waistlines in People, Glucose Levels in Mice Hint at Sweeteners' Effects: Related Studies Point to the Illusion of the Artificial," in "ScienceDaily," under "Science News," 18 June 2011; and "Studies: Why Diet Sodas Are No Benefit to Dieters," by Meredith Melnick, in "Time" magazine, under "Time Heathland: A Healthy Balance of the Mind, Body and Spirit," June 29, 2011)

Earth to Monson: Lay off the cola, big guy. Given your increasingly decrepit condition, combined with current scientific findings, you don't have to be a "prophet of God" to figure that out.

--Bottoms Up: The Mormon Church's Top-Down Backtracking on Caffeinated Cola Drinks

It seems the Mormon Church has never met a "revelation" it couldn't reverse. From an article from the "Salt Lake Tribune":

"Maybe now, reporters, bloggers, outsiders and even many Mormons will accept that the Utah-based LDS Church does not forbid cola drinking. On Wednesday, the LDS Church posted a statement on its website saying that 'the Church does not prohibit the use of caffeine' and that the faith's health-code reference to 'hot drinks' 'does not go beyond [tea and coffee].' A day later, the website wording was slightly softened, saying only that 'the Church revelation spelling out health practices . . . does not mention the use of caffeine.'" Same goes for the Church's two-volume handbook, which stake presidents, bishops and other LDS leaders use to guide their congregations. It says

plainly that 'the only official interpretation of 'hot drinks' (D&C 89:9) in the Word of Wisdom is the statement made by early Church leaders that the term 'hot drinks' means tea and coffee.'

"That doesn't mean Church leaders view caffeinated drinks as healthy. They just don't bar members from, say, pounding a Pepsi, downing a Dew or sipping a hot chocolate. Even LDS presidential nominee Mitt Romney has been seen drinking an occasional Diet Coke, and Mormon missionaries in France routinely imbibe caffeinated colas --without embarrassment or consequences.

"This week's clarification on caffeine 'is long overdue,' said Matthew Jorgensen, a Mormon and longtime Mountain Dew drinker. Jorgensen, who is doing a two-year research fellowship in Germany, grew up 'in a devout Mormon household, in a small, devout Mormon town,' where his neighbors and Church leaders viewed 'drinking a Coca-Cola as so close to drinking coffee that it made your worthiness . . . questionable.'

"That view was magnified when LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley offhandedly told '60 Minutes' that Mormons avoid caffeine. Several earlier LDS leaders, including apostle Bruce R. McConkie, considered imbibing Coke as a violation of the 'spirit' of the Word of Wisdom. It was dictated in 1833 by Mormon founder Joseph Smith and bars consumption of wine, strong drinks (alcohol), tobacco and 'hot drinks,' which have been defined by church authorities as tea and coffee.

"Even so, many outsiders and plenty of insiders get that wrong. Journalists--from 'The New York Times' columnist Maureen Dowd to 'The Associated Press'--have often stated that Mormons don't drink caffeine. Last week, 'NBC News' hour-long feature on Mormonism made the same mistake, prompting the church's initial statement on its website. That blog post was later tweaked, according to Church spokesman Scott Trotter, 'to clarify its intent, which was to provide context to the NBC piece.'

"Part of the confusion stems from LDS Church-owned Brigham Young University, which neither sells nor serves caffeinated drinks. But BYU spokeswoman Carri Jenkins explains that is 'not a university or Church decision, but made by dining services, based on what our customers want.' There has not 'been a demand for it,' Jenkins said Thursday. 'We are constantly evaluating what those needs and desires are.'

"Indeed, fully caffeinated colas are available in the Church's Joseph Smith Memorial Building restaurants and in the Lion House Pantry next to the faith's headquarters in downtown Salt Lake City.

"In the end, it's up to individual Latter-day Saints to decide what to drink. 'I can understand why the Church is cautious,' Jorgensen wrote in an email. 'Saying that caffeine is OK might sound like saying that caffeine is healthy, maybe even an endorsement of caffeine. Plus, I think members need opportunities to work through questions of right and wrong for themselves.' Caffeine, he said, 'is the perfect, low-risk testing ground for members to make decisions for themselves.'"

By the way, here is the Mormon Church's latest skinback on its anti-cola directive from On High--as it appears on its own waffling website:

" . . . [A]nother small correction: Despite what was reported, the Church revelation spelling out health practices (Doctrine and Covenants 89) does not mention the use of caffeine. The Church's health guidelines prohibit alcoholic drinks, smoking or chewing of tobacco, and 'hot drinks'-- taught by Church leaders to refer specifically to tea and coffee. * (* This posting has been updated since it was originally published)."

("OK, Mormons, Drink Up: Coke and Pepsi Are OK; Church Posts Statement Clarifying-- Again--That Caffeinated Sodas Are Not Off-Limits," by Peggy Fletcher Stack, under "Health," in "The Salt Lake Tribune," 30 August 2012, updated 31 August 2012, at: <http://m.sltrib.com/sltrib/mobile2/54797595-218/church-drinks-caffeine-l...> and "Mormonism in the News: Getting It Right | August 29," the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, under "Newsroom: Headquarters Edition, the Official Resource for News Media, Opinion Leaders and the Public, " 2 September 2012)

Which all begs the question: If the Mormon Church is so damn concerned about its members' health, then why has it now declared--in direct opposition to its own historical teachings--that it's acceptable to drink caffeinated Coke and other similarly drugged-up products? After all, the Mormon Church has traditionally opposed the drinking of caffeine-laden beverages--and has said so through its highest leaders. Again, let's examine the record.

--Condemnation from the Mormon Church Hierarchy of Drinking Caffeinated Beverages

Contrary to the historically-imprecise "Salt Lake Tribune" article quoted above, the

Mormon Church has a long-established record of opposing the consumption of caffeinated beverages, including sodas. Indeed, according to the historical position of top Mormon Church leaders, drinking caffeinated sodas is an act that does violence to the God-directed designs of the Word of Wisdom. It's the spirit of the thing. And aren't Mormons into following "the spirit"?

Ardent Mormon defender W. John Walsh--quoting leading Mormon Church authorities in his article "Drinking Soda (cola)"--notes that {despite trying to get the Church off on technicalities) drinking caffeinated drinks does, in fact, violate the intent, purpose and spirit of the Word of Wisdom:

"While it is not a technical violation of the Word of Wisdom, Latter-day Saints are encouraged by Church leaders to avoid caffeinated drinks. It is believed that caffeine in large quantities, such as found in caffeinated soft drinks, is not good for the body and therefore violates the spirit of the Word of Wisdom.

"While many Latter-day Saints drink decaffeinated cola drinks, some people have suggested that we should avoid the empty calories of those beverages in favor of something more nutritious. It is well established that many people are overweight and yet also do not receive enough nutrition in their diets. The popularity of cola beverages has been linked to both problems in recent studies (See 'CNN Report' on 2/15/01) Counsel from Church leaders on this subject is as follows:

****"President Spencer W. Kimball taught:**

"Generally when we speak of the Word of Wisdom, we are talking about tea, coffee, tobacco, and liquor, and all of the fringe things even though they might be detrimental are not included in the technical interpretation of the Word of Wisdom. I never drink any of the cola drinks and my personal hope would be that no one would. However, they are not included in the Word of Wisdom in its technical application. I quote from a letter from the secretary to the First Presidency, 'But the spirit of the Word of Wisdom would be violated by the drinking or eating of anything that contained a habit-forming drug.' With reference to the cola drinks, the Church has never officially taken any attitude on this at but I personally do not put them in the class as with the tea and coffee because the Lord specifically mentioned them [the hot drinks]. . . . I might say also that strychnine and sleeping pills and opium and heroin are not mentioned in the Word of Wisdom and yet I would discourage them with all my power.' ('The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball,' p. 202)

**“President Heber J. Grant taught:

“I am not going to give any command, but I will ask it as a personal, individual favor to me, to let coca-cola alone. There are plenty of other things you can get at the soda fountains without drinking that which is injurious. The Lord does not want you to use any drug that creates an appetite for itself.’ (‘Conference Report,’ April 1922, p.165)

**“Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught:

“ . . . [T]here are many other substances which have a harmful effect on the human body, though such particular things are not specifically prohibited by the Word of Wisdom. Certainly the partaking of cola drinks, though not included within the measuring standard here set out, is in violation of the spirit of the Word of Wisdom. Harmful drugs of any sort are in a like category.’ (‘Mormon Doctrine,’ p. 845)

**“Bishop Vaughn J. Featherstone taught:

“Speaking of those who rationalize the church’s stand on cola drinks, Bishop Featherstone said, ‘We can find loopholes in a lot of things if we want to bend the rules of the church.’ (‘The Church News,’ ‘Conference Issues’ 1970–1987, p. 9)

**“Elder Samuel O. Bennion taught:

“I heard President Grant say, recently, that he would consider it a favor to him, if men and women would abstain from the use of tea and coffee, tobacco, liquor, and coca-cola; that they would have power given them to establish themselves in the faith, and save themselves from debt, sickness, and disease. And he read from the revelations, that the destroying angel would pass them by; and he is a prophet of God.’ (‘Conference Report,’ April 1922, p. 140)

**“Elder John A. Widtsoe taught:

“Whenever a drink is advertised to “give you a lift,” the “lift” is likely to be caused by the drug which it contains. Such soft drinks are decidedly harmful and habit-forming,

even though sold by the millions. Such caffeine-containing drinks, offered by every soda fountain and most eating places, and consumed in large quantities, should be known and avoided.' ('The Word of Wisdom: A Modern Interpretation,' p. 97)

**"Elder Mark E. Peterson taught:

"And then there are some soft drinks which contain harmful or habit-forming ingredients. The leaders of the Church have not attempted to add to the list of prohibitions in the Word of Wisdom to include all such items, but they teach that in the spirit of the Word of Wisdom, if not in the letter, we should avoid anything which contains ingredients which are harmful and habit forming.' ('A Word of Wisdom,' p. 15)"

("Drinking Soda (cola)," by W. John Walsh)

**Finally, Mormon Church president Gordon B Hinckley taught that Mormons were not to drink caffeinated sodas.

–From a 1996 CBS "60 Minutes" interview by Mike Wallace with Hinckley:

Wallace: "Mormons adhere to a very strict health code. No alcohol, no tobacco, no coffee, no tea, not even caffeinated soft drinks . . . "

Hinckley: "Right."

–From a 1998 "Larry King Live" interview by Larry King with Hinckley:

Hinckley: "Oh, I don't know. You've read a part of the Word of Wisdom. The Word of Wisdom covers many things, , , "

King: "By saying no?"

Hinckley: "By saying, by proscribing those things."

King: "No to caffeine?"

Hinckley: "No to caffeine, coffee and tea."

("The '60 Minutes' Program on the LDS Church, broadcast on CBS TV, April 7, 1996," transcribed by: Robert J. Woolley; for a full transcript of the "Larry King Live" interview between King and Hinckley, 8 September 1998, see "06.06 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints {Sociology}; for a partial transcript of the same interview, this one dealing specifically with Hinckley's comments on caffeinated beverages, see "Sorry Apologis, but He [Hinckley] DID--Here is the EXACT TRANSCRIPTquotes from Larry King BTW, not Mike Wallace")

--Many Mormons Themselves Believe That Drinking Coke Is Against the Word of Wisdom

As to the Mormon Church's historic, leader-led opposition to caffeined-coke consumption, below is a good summary (although obviously edited by Mormon apologists, since "Wikipedia" allows for anonymous tampering of others' submissions). Of particular interest is the surviving tidbit that befuddled Mormon Church president Heber J. Grant reversed his anti-coke drinking stand after meeting with a representative from Coca Cola:

"A longstanding issue among members of the [Mormon] Church is whether it is permissible to ingest drinks containing caffeine that are not coffee or tea. In 1918, Frederick J. Pack, a Latter-day Saint professor at the University of Utah, published an article in an official church magazine in which he reasoned that because Coca-Cola contained caffeine, which is also present in tea and coffee, Latter-day Saints should abstain from Coca-Cola in the same way that they abstain from the Word of Wisdom 'hot drinks.' Since Pack's article, many Latter-day Saints have come to believe that the reason tea and coffee are proscribed is the presence of caffeine in the drinks. However, the Church has never stated that this is the reason for the prohibition.

"The Church has no official stance on the consumption of caffeinated beverages and the consumption of such does not constitute a violation of the Word of Wisdom. However, a number of church leaders have discouraged the use of such products. For example, in 1922, Church President Heber J. Grant counseled the Latter-day Saints: 'I am not going to give any command, but I will ask it as a personal, individual favor to me, to let coca-cola [sic] alone. There are plenty of other things you can get at the soda fountains without drinking that which is injurious. The Lord does not want you to use any drug that creates an appetite for itself'."

“Two years after making this statement, Grant met with a representative of the Coca-Cola Company to discuss the Church's position on Coca-Cola; at the conclusion of their second meeting, Grant stated that he was 'sure I have not the slightest desire to recommend that the people leave Coca-Cola alone if th[e] amount [of caffeine in Coca-Cola] is absolutely harmless, which they claim it is.' Grant never again spoke out against the use of cola drinks.

“Approximately 50 years later, the Church issued an official statement which stated: 'With reference to cola drinks, the Church has never officially taken a position on this matter, but the leaders of the Church have advised, and we do now specifically advise, against the use of any drink containing harmful habit-forming drugs under circumstances that would result in acquiring the habit. Any beverage that contains ingredients harmful to the body should be avoided.'

“Because of such statements, some adherents believe that caffeine is officially prohibited under the Word of Wisdom. On the campus of Brigham Young University, a Church-owned school in Provo, Utah, only caffeine-free beverages are sold. Official Church publications have occasionally published articles by medical practitioners that warn of the health risks of consuming caffeine.

“However, in November 2010, the 'Salt Lake Tribune' noted that in the 2010 Church 'Handbook,' which sets out the official position of the Church on health and social issues, no position on drinking Coca-Cola or caffeinated drinks is included. The 'Tribune' has concluded that the Church 'takes no official position on caffeine.' In 2012, the LDS Church, after an NBC broadcast talking about Mormonism and insinuating that caffeine was prohibited, put out a statement on their website refuting the notion. This was also reported in 'The Salt Lake Tribune.'”

(“Cola and Other Caffeinated Beverages,” under “Word of Wisdom,” citations provide in article)

The Mormon Church “takes no official position on caffeine”? Um, tell that to true-believing Mormons who have had it crammed down their throats that it does.

--The General Mormon Church Membership Has Long Been Manipulated by the

Mormon Church Leadership to Believe That Consuming Caffeinated Colas Essentially Violates the Word of Wisdom

It is clear that the Mormon lay membership has historically regarded the consumption of caffeinated colas as a violation of the Word of Wisdom. To be sure, faithful LDS pew-sitters have regularly quoted high Mormon Church leaders and official Mormon Church publications in support of abstinence from caffeinated sodas. Below are some prime examples of this common indoctrinated Mormon mindset:

"If you're new to the [Mormon] Church or been a lifetime member I'm sure you've heard the cola/caffeine debate over and over. Some say to keep the Word of Wisdom you shouldn't drink cola drinks, others say it doesn't matter. So what's the Church's stand on cola drinks? Here you'll find what the LDS Church has published about cola drinks, caffeine and the Word of Wisdom.

"In 1975, the 'New Era's Question/Answer section asked: "Is it against Church standards to drink cola beverages or any other beverage containing caffeine?" Bishop H. Burke Peterson, who was the First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric at the time answered:

"And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man.' (D&C 89:10)

"We should notice the word wholesome and always consider the things that we take into our body as to whether they are wholesome or not. The scripture continues, "All these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving." (D&C 89:11) Consider the word prudence. Would eating a whole apple pie or a cake or watermelon at one sitting be prudent? It is contrary to the principles embodied in the Word of Wisdom to take an excess of anything into our bodies.

"Two of the tests we can employ as we question the use of any food or beverage are: Is it wholesome? Is it prudent? As we know, some of us need more rest than others. These same principles imply that we should not tax our bodies beyond good judgment. Finally, remember that the Lord has counseled:

"For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward." (D&C 58:26)

"We know that cola drinks contain the drug caffeine. We know caffeine is not

wholesome nor prudent for the use of our bodies. It is only sound judgment to conclude that cola drinks and any others that contain caffeine or other harmful ingredients should not be used.'('Q&A: Questions and Answers,' in 'New Era,' pOctober 1975, p. 34) . . .

"Is the above quote still valid since it was published over 25 years ago? Here's what the 'Ensign' printed about caffeine and cola drinks in 1988:

"Apparently, the potency of caffeine is related to body weight. To a 150-pound adult, 'a cup of instant coffee or a can of cola beverage could give about 1 mg caffeine per kilogram of body weight. In a very young child, a cup of chocolate or a candy bar would give the same proportion of stimulant to body weight. When this child drinks a can of cola. . . . caffeine intake is comparable to an adult drinking four cups of instant coffee. . . . Restlessness, irritability, sleeplessness, and nervousness are some of the symptoms.'

"According to a statement in the "Priesthood Bulletin" of February 1972 (volume 8, number 1), [t]here has been no official interpretation of [the] Word of Wisdom except that which was given by the Brethren in the very early days of the Church when it was declared that 'hot drinks' meant tea and coffee.

"With reference to cola drinks, the Church has never officially taken a position on this matter, but the leaders of the Church have advised, and we do now specifically advise, against the use of any drink containing harmful habit-forming drugs under circumstances that would result in acquiring the habit. Any beverage that contains ingredients harmful to the body should be avoided.'" (Clifford J. Stratton, "Caffeine—The Subtle Addiction," in "Ensign," June 1988, p. 60)

"So, does this mean we shouldn't drink cola drinks? I think we need to be wise in our choice of foods and drinks. To obey the Word of Wisdom we can't use tobacco, drink coffee or tea, or use drugs, but we must individually decide for everything else. We know what the scriptures say, what the Church's counsel is, and we must choose. If we feel we wouldn't be obeying the Word of Wisdom by drinking cola drinks, then don't drink them, if we feel that we shouldn't eat a chocolate bar or other dessert every day then don't do it and you will be blessed. If we become addicted to a substance we are being controlled by the substance and are not obeying the Word of Wisdom.

"I believe drinking a cola drink now and then just as eating a chocolate bar every once in awhile is fine. Drinking a cola drink or eating a chocolate bar every day would not be

healthy and in my opinion if I did this I WOULD NOT BE OBEYING THE WORD OF WISDOM, but that would be my opinion and my choice, that would affect me and no one else.

“To learn how much caffeine there is in coffee, cola drinks, chocolate, medications and diet pills see Part Two: 'Common Sources of Caffeine.'

“Find out how caffeine can affect your health, sleep, pregnancy and fertility, anxiety, headaches and much more in Part Three: 'Caffeine and Your Health.'”

(“Cola Drinks and Caffeine Part 1: What is the LDS Church's stand on caffeine, cola drinks and chocolate?,” under “Basic Beliefs”)

Here is an additional example of the Mormon membership's generally-ingrained anti-cola mentality—encouraged by the Mormon Church's official position on health matters:

“ . . . [L]et's talk about . . . the use of the principle of wisdom with regard to our physical health. We have been encouraged by the General Authorities to take care of our bodies and do what we can to ensure our good health. Since the peoples of the world have moved into the drug culture, and since the recreational and hard drugs are so deleterious to the body, there has been strict council to completely avoid all contact with such debilitating, habit forming substances.

"There has also been counsel against using soft drinks containing caffeine. It is not true, as you suggest, that the Church has never formally come out against Coke. Certainly they have not attempted to equate it with the formal Word of Wisdom, but they have counseled Mormons to leave it and other habit-forming drinks alone. Here are a few examples of the counsel given to church members on the subject [quoted above].”

(“Ask Gramps—Moral Answers to Everyday Concerns, Curiosities and Uncertainties: Can Mormons Drink Caffeinated Sodas?,” at: <http://www.askgramps.org/can-mormons-drink-caffeinated-sodas/>)

And here, once more, another clear manifestation of a LDS Church-propagandized Mormon member who claims that abstinence from caffeinated colas is actually what Joseph Smith had in mind back in the 1800s:

“Although the text of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Word of Wisdom, as set forth in Section 89 of the Doctrine & Covenants, does not specifically include cola drinks, modern LDS prophets have implied that the consumption of cola drinks violates the Word of Wisdom in spirit, if not necessarily the letter of the law.

Consequently, to truthfully answer 'Yes' when the bishop asks you during a worthiness interview if you are obeying the Word of Wisdom, you must refrain not only from caffeinated hot beverages like coffee and tea, but should also from caffeinated soft drinks, because an occasional overzealous bishop may deny you a temple recommend simply for consuming cola drinks.

“But as is pointed out . . . in statements by several Church authorities, the Word of Wisdom is not officially interpreted by the Church to formally proscribe cola drinks. Nonetheless, the late President Spencer W. Kimball had this to say on the subject:

“Generally when we speak of the Word of Wisdom, we are talking about tea, coffee, tobacco and liquor, and all of the fringe things even though they might be detrimental are not included in the technical interpretation of the Word of Wisdom. I never drink any of the cola drinks and my personal hope would be that no one would. However, they are not included in the Word of Wisdom in its technical application. I quote from a letter from the secretary to the First Presidency, "But the spirit of the Word of Wisdom would be violated by the drinking or eating of anything that contained a habit-forming drug." With reference to the cola drinks, the Church has never officially taken any attitude on this at but I personally do not put them in the class as with the tea and coffee because the Lord specifically mentioned them [the hot drinks].... I might say also that strychnine and sleeping pills and opium and heroin are not mentioned in the Word of Wisdom and yet I would discourage them with all my power. ('The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball,' p. 202)

“And now, more scientific validation of the wisdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his legitimate successors emerges. On May 19th, 2009, the 'Telegraph' . . . published a story about a study by researchers at the University of Ioannina in Greece which reveals that chronic consumption of large quantities of cola drinks can cause a condition called hypokalaemia, in which levels of potassium in the blood fall, in some patients. Symptoms can range from mild muscle weakness and constipation to paralysis. The symptoms were found in people who drank between two and 10 liters of cola drinks per day. Writing in the 'International Journal of Clinical Practice,' researchers from the University of Ioannina . . . detail cases of the condition, including a pregnant woman who was drinking between three and seven liters of the soft drink a day. 'We are

consuming more soft drinks than ever before and a number of health issues have already been identified including tooth problems, bone demineralisation and the development of metabolic syndrome and diabetes. Evidence is increasing to suggest that excessive cola consumption can also lead to hypokalaemia.' said Dr Moses Elisaf, who led the review of research. The research team also suggests that both the sugar and caffeine in cola can help to trigger the condition. This implies that drinking diet cola may lessen the risk, although not eliminate it. The study does not address non-caffeinated soda, but the nature of effervescent soft drinks implies that at least some tooth problems, bone demineralisation, and diabetes can result.

"Here are the categories, in order of descending risk: Caffeinated soda (cola drinks)--Maximum risk. Caffeinated diet soda. Non-caffeinated soda. Non-caffeinated diet soda

"Consequently, I suggest that if you must drink soda and want to be both Word of Wisdom-oriented and minimize your risk of hypokalaemia, then your best bet is to drink only non-caffeinated diet soda. Most of it tastes like medicine, but based upon personal experience, Diet 7-Up is the most drinkable. . . .The condition is not irreversible. All patients made a full and speedy recovery after they stopped drinking cola and took supplements of potassium.

"Now you understand why, although cola drinks are not officially banned by the LDS Church, the Church leadership has counseled members not to partake of them."

("Why LDS Church Leaders Imply That Cola Drinks Violate the Spirit Of the Word of Wisdom: New Study Shows Cola Drinks Contribute To Hypokalaemia," on "Mormonsism Unveiled: Fact vs. Fancy," by "jack Mormon," 19 May 2009)

On the issue of caffeinated colas, sheep-think runs wide and deep in the Mormon Church Try as hard as it might to blame others (including the Elohim-less media and evil "anti-Mormons") for supposedly mispresenting its long-trumpeted opposition to caffeinated colas, the LDS Church really has no one to blame but itself.

--Conclusion on the Supposed Cola "Confusion"

The Mormon Church has been caught--as it has time and time again--abandoning its

“revealed” positions issued from God to its ranking leadership. That shouldn't be a hard fact to swallow, given that this is the Mormon way of doing the Lord's business.

Let's get real, folks. The “real thing” is that it doesn't matter what Mormon Church presidents and other high-ranking LDS “prophets, seers and revelators” have taught on any matter. Chances are they'll be unteaching it, denying they ever taught it or claiming that they are unaware of ever having taught it.

As a now-dead (and therefore effectively irrelevant) modern-day Mormon “prophet” declared:

"I don't know that we teach it."

(Gordon B. Hinckley, interview with "Time" magazine, 4 August 1997, "LDS Mormon Prophet Gordon Hinckley Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley, Mormon Prophet")

The Mormon Church does, however, teach the consumption of Jell-O since, just like its "eternal" doctrine, you can't nail it to the wall. Then again, can one really know if the Mormon Church teaches that Mormon Church president taught that he didn't know if the Mormon Church teaches it?

As LDS Inc.'s. now-revised 13th Article of Faith boldly declares:

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous and in doing good to all men--except when convenience requires that we not be. Indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of our PR department: We believe all things, we change all things, we have denied we have changed many things, and hope, as the need arises, to be able to change and/or deny everything.. If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report or praiseworthy, we will first conduct some internally-commissioned studies on what non-Mormon society thinks and seek to change the unpopular or backward Mormon things.”

Drink the Kool-Aid, indeed.

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**Re: Monson's "Nasty" Coke Habit & the LDS
Church's "Fizz"tory of Flip-Flopping**

Posted by: **azsteve** ()
Date: December 02, 2016 07:02AM

The issue of the whole coke and coffee prohibition in the church is pretty stupid. A high percentage of temple-goers are obese. It's an established medical fact that obesity is extremely unhealthy, and actually causes a large number of other diseases, and leads to an early death in nearly all cases. The word of wisdom doesn't even consider that most important issue. But if you drink caffeinated drinks, you're sinning because it's unhealthy. The purpose of this point isn't to disparage overweight people. It's to show that there's something significant missing from the church's 'inspired' health code.

**Re: Monson's "Nasty" Coke Habit & the LDS
Church's "Fizz"tory of Flip-Flopping**

Posted by: **midwestanon** ()
Date: December 02, 2016 07:45AM

Also, did the original WoW really reference tea and coffee when it mentioned hot drinks? I had thought that was some kind of 20th century Mormon retroactive inclusion thing. I mean, hot drinks is so vague... How can you prove what Joe really meant?

**Re: Monson's "Nasty" Coke Habit & the LDS
Church's "Fizz"tory of Flip-Flopping**

Posted by: **liesarenotuseful** ()
Date: December 02, 2016 11:24AM

the original WoW, still in D&C 89, did not reference tea and coffee. It also said, "Not by commandment or constraint."

**Re: Monson's "Nasty" Coke Habit & the LDS
Church's "Fizz"tory of Flip-Flopping**

Posted by: **liesarenotuseful** ()
Date: December 02, 2016 11:26AM

I was not allowed to drink drinks with caffeine my whole life, until I went on a mission. Our MP instructed us to not turn down coke, since the people were poor and likely spent their little bit of money on

us, and we didn't want to offend them

**Re: Monson's "Nasty" Coke Habit & the LDS
Church's "Fizz"tory of Flip-Flopping**

Posted by: **midwestanon** ()

Date: December 02, 2016 12:31PM

So when did the church arbitrarily read into d&c 89 that hot drinks meant tea and coffee? Around the time Heber J came to be prophet, and suddenly the WoW was required to be a member in good standing? I like how Mormons conveniently skirt around the truth of the fact that for the first 90 years of their movement, the word of wisdom was really optional, and it wasn't until about 90 or a hundred years ago that it became part of their core "Doctrine".