

On January 7, 1947, Bishop Koyle was summoned to a Church trial. He appeared before his stake president and the high council of his stake in a formal Church court proceeding.

According to the few accounts which are available, the proceedings in some respects, composed a scene of questionable justice. In a secular court the accused normally has the advantage of a non-partisan judge and jury. As occasioned here, however, this was not the case. Practically everyone present was well versed in the history of the mine in addition to being intimately acquainted with its aged prophet. Partisan feelings for and against the old man were such that emotions might well have replaced facts as a basis for judgment. (Historical Study of the Koyle Relief Mine, Christianson, p. 54)

The court proceedings had all been pre-arranged. An unmerciful decree had been written for this special occasion. The Bishop was ordered to sign this typed statement or else lose his membership in the Church. The Bishop repeatedly bore testimony of the reality of the numerous spiritual experiences that he had and the complete fulfillment of the promises that had been made to him by the Lord. He desperately sought to stay the decision of the court by requesting a hearing with the President of the Church--just as he had done in 1913. However, they said that such a procedure was not according to the rules of the court; therefore, his request was denied. Like criminal lawyers who badger a client into a breakdown, Bishop Koyle was continually threatened with excommunication if he did not sign the paper. This was the same old procedure of the Catholics who, during the Dark Ages, forced signatures from the "heretics" who chose to disagree with the Pope. There seemed to be no way out for him--it was sign a lie or be classed as an excommunicated apostate. At this moment he was in a complete state of quandary. Under the pressure of such unwarranted bombardment, the poor man broke down and wept. The ultimatum was a most consequential form of mandate--both choices were bitter to his soul.

From nearly 7 o'clock that evening until midnight he was pressured to "sign" that document. Finally he spoke up and said, "You are forcing me to sign a lie." Raymond Taylor, one of the high councilmen, told him that if he would sign it, then they could get the interview with the President of the Church.

He John Koyle was getting old now, in his 84th year; for a long, long time his health had been failing badly, and even now he had been on a sick bed for several days. The years had taken their toil of his strength and vigor, filled as they had been with so much trouble and persecution, and now most of the fight was gone out of him. He knew that his days on earth were about over, and for the few that might be left to him, he did so want to cling to his membership in the Church--the Church for which he had been a missionary and a bishop--a membership which so many LDS believed was essential to salvation. (The Dream Mine Story, Pierce, p. 93)

The Bishop was told, and knew, that if he did not sign that document, he would be excommunicated, and then others who were associated with him would be excommunicated also. What he didn't know was that they would excommunicate him and others like him anyway.

One of his close associates begged him saying, "For heaven's sake, Bishop, don't let them take

away your membership." He was expressing fear for both himself and for other stockholders. None of them thought that they would be brought to this final test--the truth or their membership in the Church! They didn't think the leaders of the Church would go that far in this issue. Koyle looked at the paper and then made one more request. If he signed it, would they agree not to make it public until after he had a chance to present his case to the head of the Church. The request was acceptable and agreed upon.

Then John H. Koyle, sick and weakened, with the fight gone out of him, and his two closest friends urging him on, did that which his Nephite mentors, long ago in 1914, had warned him not ever to do. He signed this bold-faced lie and cleverly conceived repudiation to save his friends and himself from the Church axe, which was hanging over them ready to drop if he did not sign. Herein was the full significance of the Nephite warning to him that he should never write anything, nor sign any written statement about the mine. To that warning he had always tried to be strictly obedient--not even so much as writing a personal letter to anybody, and what is more unfortunate, not putting his wonderful experiences in his own writing. . . . (The Dream Mine Story, Pierce, p. 94)

After the document had been signed and they went to the home of Quayle Dixon, the Bishop was weeping and sobbing like a child. He bore the consequence of a concession just as the Prophet Joseph did when he gave the Book of Mormon manuscript to Martin Harris. (See D & C. Section 10.) It was merely an expression of human weakness, but it was a spiritual catastrophe. As Moses, who in a moment of weakness took honor from the Lord, lost his chance to visit the Promised Land, so by the stroke of a pen the Bishop took honor away from the Lord for the mine. He would not live to see the promised ore.

The statement was an explosive shock wave to the Dream Miners. However, everyone soon knew that he had signed it merely as a means to retain his membership in the Church.

The men responsible for Koyle's trial did not keep their promises. First, they published that document without his consent and against their own word that they would not do such a thing. Second, they excommunicated him after they promised him that they would not if he signed that statement. Third, they never made the promised arrangements for Koyle to have an interview with the Church President. And fourth, they continued to harass, threaten and excommunicate stockholders of the mine.

Quayle Dixon and Wallace Strong signed the declaration as witnesses. All three names appeared on the front page of the Deseret News in full size reproduction of the declaration with their signatures as they were signed on that document. (See following article.)

It was an agreement with hell and he suffered the pains of hell. He suffered more and grieved more because of his signature on that document than for any other sin of his life.

Because the General Authorities had consummated their cleverly conceived placard, the Bishop realized that he had been exploited and betrayed. The full impact of what he had done by signing that directive was now clear to him. Under coercion and threats, he had put his trust in

the arm of flesh--the General Authorities--and now he suffered the curse. Remorse and regret are the consequences of sin, and now came the Godly sorrow that only repentant sinners know. His grief nearly brought, him to death.

In that state of agony to the soul, his departed wife came to him in a dream to impress him with the necessary will to continue with his life and mission. She concurred that the signing of that document was wrong, that it was a satanicly inspired testament, but that they on the other side realized and understood the pressures that had been brought upon the Bishop. Centuries of history have been filled with these evil and coercive pressures and the influences that work upon men to use them. The whole picture became clear to his mind and he knew now why the messengers had warned him not to sign anything. The Bishop repented as best as he knew how. He always referred to that incident as the "worst thing I ever did in my life."

RELIEF MINE I, by Ogden Kraut