

‘Misleading’ Book of Mormon Lands Church President in Court for Financial Fraud

A British judge has thrown out a fraud case against the head of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, saying “the court is being manipulated to provide a high-profile forum to attack the religious beliefs of others.”

Tom Phillips, a former Mormon bishop and stake president, had charged that church President Thomas S. Monson has “made representations ... which were untrue or misleading”—including that “the Book of Mormon, the church’s signature scripture, was translated from ancient gold plates by church founder Joseph Smith; that the Book of Abraham, another text viewed as scripture, is a literal translation of Egyptian papyri by Smith ”—to “make a gain for himself or another.”

“To convict, a jury would need to be sure that the religious teachings of the Mormon Church are untrue or misleading,” said the ruling by Judge Howard Riddle, chief magistrate in Westminster Magistrates’ Court. “No judge in a secular court in England and Wales would allow that issue to be put to a jury.”

A statement released Thursday by church spokesman Cody Craynor expressed satisfaction with the ruling, saying, “This case was a misuse of the legal system and should never have been brought.”

Phillips is not discouraged by the decision, according to a statement issued by a spokesman for , where Phillips is managing editor.

“Although this ruling represents a setback for our cause, we remain steadfast in our commitment to bring the LDS

Corporation to justice," Phillips said.

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