

MORMONISM

I. Introduction

- A. The cult of Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith on April 6, 1830 in Fayette, NY. It was known as *The Church of Christ*. Later, the church became officially known as *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* in 1834.
- B. According to the LDS Church, Joseph Smith was visited by God the Father and God the Son after praying about which church he should join. He was told that he should join none of them because they were all an abomination to God. It was after this event in 1820 that young Joseph was led by the angel Moroni to discover the *Book of Mormon* and later establish the Mormon Church.
- C. The Mormon Church now has a membership of over ten million and is growing at an unprecedented pace, doubling in size every ten years.
 1. Church membership world-wide: U. S., over 4,800,000; Mexico, 760,000; South America, 2,100,000; Europe, 380,000; Asia, 610,000; and several hundred thousand elsewhere in other countries.
 2. The Church projects membership to be 23 million by year 2020, and 52 million by 2040.
 3. The Mormon Church has a missionary force of over 40,000 members made up of young men, and more recently, older retired couples who serve in 200 missions around the world.
 4. Mormon Temples: There are fifty temples around the world with more than a dozen additional ones being planned.
 5. Temples are utilized for endowment ceremonies, sealing of men and women together for eternal marriage, and baptism for the dead. Ninety-eight percent of the activity in the Mormon Temple is related to baptism for the dead. (Note: this is the reason why discovery of one's ancestry is so important to Mormons.)
 6. Priesthood: The Mormon Church confers two different priesthoods on its male membership.
 - a. Aaronic Priesthood: This priesthood is for young men twelve years of age. The young priest is allowed to baptize and assist in sacramental service.
 - b. Melchizedek Priesthood: This priesthood gives the mature Mormon male the authority to govern the church and impart the "gift of the Holy Ghost" by the laying on of hands.
 7. Church structure.
 - a. Branch: a local congregation of fewer than 200 Mormons led by a branch president.
 - b. Ward: a congregation with a membership of as many as 800 members and led by a bishop.
 - c. Stake: a Stake is the combining of five to twelve Wards in a given area that is defined by geography.
 - d. Area: an Area comprises all of the above mentioned congregations within a given district.

8. Church government.

- a. First Presidency: is made up of the Prophet who holds the highest rank in the Church and two other men as counselors. All three men are considered to be living oracles of God.
- b. Council of the Twelve Apostles: these men administer the affairs of the Church throughout the world. The senior Apostle is the President of the Church and is believed to actively exercise all the keys of the Kingdom of God on earth.
- c. First and Second Quorums of the Seventy: these men preside over the international Church and are assigned to a specific geographical area.
- d. Presiding Bishopric: consists of three men who oversee the Bishops worldwide. They conduct the temporal affairs of the Church.

II. The Foundation of Mormonism

A. The Vision of Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith is believed to have had a vision after a spiritual revival in the early 1820's where he sought the counsel of the Lord to direct him. There is much confusion regarding this vision because there are several differing accounts of it. These varying accounts offer conflicting dates of Joseph's vision, his age (whether he was 14 or maybe 16 years of age) , and conflicting accounts of who the spiritual personages were who spoke to Joseph (God the Father and His Son Jesus, or an Angel).

B. Mormon Doctrine

1. Doctrine is received through two different sources: the living prophet and the Standard Works. The Standard Works are *The Bible*, *The Book of Mormon*, *The Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*.
2. The living prophet is the first line of authority for the Mormon. The present prophet can overturn any prior teaching of a past prophet, including Joseph Smith.
3. *The Book of Mormon* is considered to be "another Testament of Jesus Christ." Surprisingly, *The Book of Mormon* is the most doctrinally orthodox. It also contains many quotations from the King James Version often without any attribution. It teaches that the Godhead is one God, whereas other Mormon writings teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct deities. (See *Mormon Doctrine* , by McConkie, Pp. 119-121)
4. *The Doctrine and Covenants* was written after the *Book of Mormon*. According to their beliefs it contains latter-day revelation, and therefore has greater truth than does the earlier publication. Most of their bizarre beliefs that diverge from traditional Christianity come from *The Doctrine and Covenants*.
5. The Holy Bible is used by the LDS, but it is believed to have serious problems of interpretation along with the omission of "precious truths" (see the 8th Article of Faith) Therefore, the *more correct* Scriptures should be used (see Standard Works #1).

C. Why Mormons reject the Bible

1. Mormons insist that they do not reject the Bible since they so often refer to it as Scripture.

However, they consider it to be only partially complete.

2. The *Church News*, a Mormon newspaper, carried this statement concerning the Bible: "It is the Word of God. It is not perfect. The prophet Joseph made many corrections in it."
3. First Nephi 13:26 from the *Book of Mormon*, states the following about the Christian Church: "A great and abominable church which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the lamb many parts which are plain and most precious."
4. This Mormon view of the Christian Church gives us insight into how they have come to disregard the Bible. The Mormon apostle, Orson Pratt, in his book, *The Seer*, says this about the Christian community: *Both Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the 'whore of Babylon' whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornications and wickedness.*"
5. Orson Pratt also stated that, "No one can tell whether even one verse of either the Old or New Testament conveys the ideas of the original author."
6. Joseph Smith makes an attempt to give credibility to the *Book of Mormon* in his fourth volume of the *History of the Church* when he says: "I told the brethren that the *Book of Mormon* was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."

III. Some observations:

- A. The Mormon Church is not within the realm of Christian orthodoxy. Indeed it is a cult based on the teachings of a mystic who participated in a variety of occult behavior (See our briefing outline #10 on the Characteristics of Cults). Its message of salvation is based on a doctrine of works-salvation. It teaches that Satan is the brother of Jesus and that God the Father is an exalted man. An unofficial *shema* of the Mormon church is: "As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be.
- B. The secret temple rituals of Mormonism have been borrowed largely from the secret rites of the masonic lodge. (See: *What's Going On In There?* by Chuck Sackett).
- C. The Mormon Church makes every attempt to discredit the Bible as God's infallible Word and to establish Joseph Smith as God's spokesman presenting another gospel. Joseph Smith fails every Biblical test of a true Prophet.
- D. The Word of God stands alone as God's Truth, the *Standard Works* of the Mormon Church, excluding the Bible, have no credibility whatsoever. We find in Scripture that God's word will stand forever (Isaiah 40:8), that it will never pass away even though heaven and earth will someday pass away (Matthew 24:35).
- E. The *Book of Mormon* does not correspond to what we know God has already revealed in His Word. The inconsistencies, the changes in the *Book of Mormon*, and the heavy plagiarism of the King James translation bring serious doubt as to the trustworthiness of the text.

Some examples of plagiarism:

1. 1 Nephi 20:21 Isaiah 48:49
2. 2 Nephi 7:8 Isaiah 50:51
3. 2 Nephi 12:24 Isaiah 2:14
4. Mosiah 14 Isaiah 53

5. 3 Nephi 12:14 Matthew 5:7
6. 3 Nephi 22 Isaiah 54
7. 3 Nephi 24:25 Malachi 3:4

- F. The *Book of Mormon*, in contradiction to the Bible, teaches that God has a body of flesh and bone, and is an exalted man. They believe the god they worship is Adam. Brigham Young says: "He is your Father and our God and the only God with whom we have to do." Orson Pratt says:

...our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previously heavenly world by His Father; and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father and so on, from generation to generation, from one heavenly world to another still more ancient, until our minds are wearied and lost in the multiplicity of generations and successive worlds, and as a last resort, we wonder in our minds, how far back the genealogy extends, and how the first world was formed, and the first Father was begotten."

Mormons are polytheists pure and simple!

- G. They also believe that there is no eternal hell and that there are three levels of heaven. When a man becomes a god he is given his own planet to populate. Hence Mormons believe there are humans on other planets in the universe. Maybe it's not just a coincidence that most UFO sightings are in the Mormon populated states of Utah and Nevada!
- H. In spite of the convoluted teaching of the Mormon church we find them in the same camp with evangelicals on many moral and social issues. The outward appearances may be good but the Mormons perpetuate a false and even pagan worldview contrary to the orthodox teaching of the Old and New Testaments.

For Further Study:

Books

Brodie, Fawn M. *No Man Knows My History-The Life of Joseph Smith*.
 Cowdrey, Wayne, Davis, Howard A., and Scales, Donald. *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?*
 Decker, Ed. *Decker's Complete Handbook on Mormonism*.
 Decker, Ed, Hunt, Dave. *The God Makers*.
 Greer, Thelma. *Mormonism, Mama, & Me*.
 Martin, Walter. *The Maze of Mormonism*.
 McConkie, Bruce R. *Mormon Doctrine*.
 Reed, Farkas. *Mormons Answered Verse by Verse*.
 Scott, Latayne C. *The Mormon Mirage*.
 Tanner, Jerald and Sandra. *The Changing World of Mormonism*.

Web Sites

<http://www.mrm.org>

<http://www.serve.com/larryi/lds.htm>

<http://www.watchman.org/mormonm.htm>