



UNDERSTANDING MORMONISM

A search for truth

The dominant narrative is not true; it can't be sustained. The Church has to absorb all this new information or it will be on very shaky grounds (and that's what it is trying to do) and it will be a strain for a lot of people.

Richard Bushman, Faithful Mormon Historian and author of *Rough Stone Rolling*

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FORWARD

When I realized that foundational claims made by the LDS church were false, I chose to leave the faith as a matter of integrity. This book is the result of my attempt to understand the doctrine and evolution of the movement from a non-believing perspective. I have attempted to cite accurate sources and to provide as factual and balanced an overview as possible. If you discover any errors, please feel free to provide feedback to admin@mormonscholar.org so that I can improve my understanding and this document. Please appreciate that Mormonism continues to change and this document is (and will likely always be) a work in progress.

INTRODUCTION

Mormons often feel misunderstood by those who do not share their faith. They may worry that non-believers do not understand their doctrine.¹

This work hopes to introduce significant beliefs of Mormonism with some historical context to aid in better understanding the Mormon church of yesterday and today. Mormonism is complex, and any single topic covered here is generally so complex that it could be the subject of a book. This book simply introduces topics and gives references for further study. The purpose of this work is not to challenge one's beliefs or "prove" that Mormonism is made up. There are other resources which serve this purpose for those interested².

This work does not intend to be exhaustive. It does attempt to make the wealth of material which is available more accessible, in a logical narrative, so that the reader can understand:

- How the official narrative and the related doctrine of Mormonism has changed over the years
- Early church teachings and doctrines, including sources for these teachings & how they have evolved
- Polygamy: its origin, ties to temple ceremonies, and Mormon views of sexuality
- Mormon culture, doctrines, and how they intertwine.
- Mormon psychology and the role of *testimonies*

In many cases the church allows for parallel narratives, with simplified (and factually defunct) versions of the history being used for the core church teaching materials while at the same time having more factual versions available in obscure publications for those members who are more interested in history. Through the 2nd half of the 20th century, the historically accurate versions have been marginalized in the correlated Sunday environment. This will be explored, as well as impetus and change in rhetoric since 2010.

The Church's history can broadly be broken up into the following periods:

- 1) 1800-1844:- Joseph Smith: Foundations of Mormonism and the start of Polygamy.
- 2) 1844-1890: Growth and formalization of the movement and Polygamy.
- 3) 1890-1930: Transitioning away from polygamy and becoming "respectable" and "modern"
- 4) 1930-1960: Becoming an all-American religion and worldwide expansion
- 5) 1960s – 2000: Corporate Mormonism: Priesthood Consolidation³ and the mass marketing of Mormonism on a global scale.

¹ "Much misunderstanding about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints revolves around its doctrine" <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/approaching-mormon-doctrine>

² See <http://www.letterformywife.com/> or <https://cesletter.org/>

³ <https://www.lds.org/manual/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times-student-manual/chapter-forty-three-an-era-of-correlation-and-consolidation?lang=eng>

6) 2000 – Present: Facing the age of Google.

While all of these periods are considered, emphasis is placed on the early period and the modern movement. The influence of the early leaders (especially Joseph Smith and Brigham Young) is crucial to understanding the movement, and they will receive special attention.



Figure 1 - Possible Photograph of Joseph Smith⁴



Figure 2 - Portrait by Sutcliffe Maudsley, 1842⁵

Sociologists generally classify all new religions as emerging religions. They often are the result of the rejection of mainstream religion and may rely on new revelations from God. Many claim to be restorative in nature. Most have a charismatic leader, and when this leader is male, many have sexual practices which also lie outside of the norms of society. Many of them prophesy or teach of an imminent 2nd coming of Christ. The first 60 years of Mormonism tends to fit this mold.

Early Mormons expected and received the fantastic. There were new scriptures, ancient artifacts, tools for receiving direct revelations from God and performing miracles, angelic visitations, and visitations by God, Jesus, and ancient prophets. The end of the world and Christ's second coming would happen *in their lifetime*. Zion would be built and a temple raised in *the New Jerusalem* – built right here in the USA. Devils were cast out in order to heal individuals from their sicknesses. In this section we consider some of the artifacts and general mysticism of the early church.

⁴ See <http://www.brunson20.com/2013/05/the-joseph-smith-photograph.html> This image is also used in some official church apologist materials. See https://youtu.be/dJ7oJA5E_vM?t=10m40s

⁵ See <https://history.lds.org/exhibit/sutcliffe-and-elizabeth-foxcroft-maudsley?lang=eng>

SEER STONES IN THE EARLY MORMON CHURCH

(image)⁶

...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

(Matthew 16:18)

THE SEER STONES OF JOSEPH

Joseph Smith was born in 1805. His father was a “visionary” man and participated in a local practice of hunting after buried treasures. Special rocks or *seer stones* (also known as peep stones) were placed in top hats and the “seer” would look at the stone in order to see where missing objects or treasures could be found. These treasures were said to have been left by Spanish treasure ships, the native people, or pirates and generally believed to contain large quantities of brass, silver, or gold.



Figure 3 - The Seer Stone Joseph Smith used to dictate the Book of Mormon

Ideas regarding seer stones were likely taken from *The Magus*, written by Francis Barrett first published in 1801⁷. Between about 1815 and 1840, the use of seer stones was popular in New York, Pennsylvania, and some surrounding areas. By the 1850s, usage had become less common and after 1880 they had virtually disappeared from the public conscience.

There are three early stones that were probably all obtained by Smith between about 1819 and 1822. One of the stones is said to have been obtained by borrowing a seer stone from a neighbor, Sally Chase, also skilled in the art and using it to see where he should find his own stone⁸. One of the early stones (the green stone) was probably purchased. A third stone was found when a well was being dug on Willard Chase’s property⁹ between 1819 and 1822. This was likely the “chocolate colored stone”. Chase described it as a “singular” and “curious” stone and was intent to keep it, but agreed to loan it to Joseph Smith. This stone was likely iron banded jasper¹⁰. After two years, Joseph Smith returned the stone, but shortly thereafter it was borrowed again, this time by Hyrum Smith, Joseph’s brother. The stone was never returned.¹¹

The first/primary use for the stone was to find lost objects including buried treasure, and Joseph used the brown stone for this purpose. This stone was used by placing it at the bottom of a white top hat and using ones hands to block light from coming in around the sides of the rim. When used in this manner, Joseph claimed that he could see things on the stone. Between about 1822 and 1827, Joseph working in the company of several different groups dug on about 18 different properties in search of gold, silver, a chest of watches, and other treasures¹².

⁶ https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/magazines/ensign/2015/10/seer-stone-joseph-smith-ensign-liahona-october-2015_1512979_inl.jpg

⁷ <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/panmankey/2013/07/josephsmith/>

⁸ Mark Ashurst-McGee, “A Pathway to Prophethood: Joseph Smith Junior as Rodsman, Village Seer, and Judeo-Christian Prophet” (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 2000), 204.

⁹ It can be argued that they were not digging a well at all, but rather digging for buried treasure.

¹⁰ http://reallyoldrocks.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/genesis_Stone2_605.jpg or <https://redd.it/3ftwqv>

¹¹ See his affidavit published in *Mormonism Unveiled* or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willard_Chase

¹² Dan Vogel, “The Locations of Joseph Smith’s early Treasure Quests”, *Dialogue, a journal of Mormon thought* Vol 12, No 3 pp 197-233 (esp pg 229-230). See http://undergroundnotes.com/graphics7/Dialogue_V27N03_211.pdf

There were no fewer than 6 self-proclaimed seers living within a 2 mile radius of his house. Joseph however was considered particularly skilled at the art, and received a relatively high wage for his skill. He was employed by Josiah Stowell and others. Although no treasure was found, Josiah was a believer in Joseph Smith and his abilities and testified on his behalf when J.S. was brought to trial for these activities (by Josiah's sons who felt that their father was being defrauded). The use of stones and other magical objects to find missing items was against state laws in New York. According to the court records in 1826 (when he was brought to trial for his usage of the seer stones to try to find buried treasure) he often "knew all too well" where lost objects were located.

In addition to the brown stone, early witnesses point to magical "spectacles" that were used early in the translation process. These spectacles were placed into the hat and used in the same manner as the brown seer stone. This method was given up early in the translation process and was not used after the 116 pages were lost by Harris. With the exception of this early period, Joseph used the brown stone to dictate the Book of Mormon. He claimed that when placed in the hat with his head against the rim, one character from the plates would appear on a piece of parchment and below would appear the translation in English which he would then read off to the transcriber. One character could represent a single word (such as a proper noun) or a phrase up to about two sentences in length. The concept that a single character had a longer meaning (or 5 levels of meaning) was popular in the early 19th century¹³ and would later correspond to his Book of Abraham translation. When Joseph claimed to know where to go to find the plates, it was probably because he claimed to see the spot in his seer stone. After he claimed to have found the gold plates on Cumorah, some of his fellow treasure seekers searched the hill for fresh holes, but found none. There were earlier contracts in place regarding how any treasures found were to be split, and some of the people who had entered into a contract with Joseph may have felt defrauded. Joseph claimed that all of the hills in the area were built by hand by the ancient inhabitants and that many of them had caves with treasures¹⁴.

In addition to use in translating, the brown stone was used to receive revelations for the early church and sometimes commanded Joseph to do certain things, such as to move to Peter Whitmer's house for the translation, or to be baptized (with Oliver). Sections 1-19 of the D&C were received via the brown stone, placed in a hat.

Joseph was arrested for the use of his stone in conjunction with money digging and brought to trial first in 1826 and later in June of 1830. However, after completing the Book of Mormon translation, Joseph stopped using the brown stone to receive revelations around Aug 1829 and gave the stone to Oliver in the early spring of 1830¹⁵. In late 1830, missionaries including Oliver were telling perspective converts that Joseph used the spectacles to look at the plates, and then placed his head in a hat to receive the words of the Book of Mormon by revelation¹⁶. By late 1831, there were large numbers of converts from Ohio who did not believe in seer stones in the same way that the

¹³ See <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/intro/introduction-to-revelations-and-translations-volume-4> for a more detailed explanation.

¹⁴ The hills in the area were formed by glaciers, and have a peculiar form. Many locals believed that they were formed by Native Americans.

¹⁵ An Address to All Believers in Christ, Whitmer, pg 32. "After the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished, early in the spring of 1830, before April 6th, Joseph gave the stone to Oliver Cowdery and told me as well as the rest that he was through with it, and he did not use the stone any more."

¹⁶ Shaker Richard McNemar: The Earliest Book of Mormon Reviewer, by Christian Goodwillie, Journal of Mormon History, Vol 37, No. 2 (Spring 2011). pp 138-145. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23291640?read-now=1&seq=6#page_scan_tab_contents

earlier New York followers did and their usage was “deemphasized” in the written record¹⁷. The use of seer stones is not mentioned in the more than 2000 page History of the Church first published in the 1850s.

So strong was the belief among the New York members in Joseph Smith's ability to use these stones to receive revelation, that when he stopped using them in about 1830, David Whitmer concluded that all of the revelations received without them were of the devil.¹⁸ The brown stone remained with Cowdrey until it was given to Brigham's brother and later Brigham Young. It was sold to one of his wives as part of their inheritance and then donated to the LDS church in the late 19th century¹⁹. Brigham Young acquired the stone no later than 1853.²⁰

Even though Joseph stopped using the chocolate colored stone in the early 1830s, he had other stones which he continued to obtain and use throughout his life, with at least two of them being found in Nauvoo.²¹ Joseph may have used a seer stone (likely the white one) in the translation or creation of the book of Abraham²². His brother Hyrum encouraged Joseph to use the seer stone when reciting the revelation on plural marriage, but Joseph refused saying that he knew the revelation well enough to give it without the use of the stone.²³

Brigham Young quoted Joseph saying that he had five stones and that there was a seer stone for every person on earth.²⁴

The stones²⁵ important to Joseph Smith include:

- 1) The chocolate colored stone²⁶

¹⁷ Oct 1831 General Conference: Joseph stated, “It was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon.”

¹⁸ Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ... (Richmond, Mo.: David Whitmer, 1887), 54.

¹⁹ Oliver was a believer in the stones and their magical power. At the same time, he penned the most convincing story of the Urim and Thummim (aka the magical spectacles or stones on a breastplate), which were not used.

²⁰ “The question is asked many times, ‘Has brother Brigham got the Urim and Thummim?’ Yes, he has got everything; everything that is necessary for him to receive the will and mind of God to this people.” Heber C. Kimball, in General Conference, 1853.

²¹ □ “According to Brigham Young, ‘Joseph found two small ones on the beach in Nauvoo—a little larger than a black walnut without the shock on.’” - Quinn, D. Michael (1998), Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (2nd ed.), Salt Lake City: Signature Books, pp. 171–173, ISBN 1-56085-089-2

²² Quinn, D. Michael (1998), Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (2nd ed.), Salt Lake City: Signature Books, ISBN 1-56085-089-2, pp 242, 244. See also an interview with Dan Vogel: <https://youtu.be/iH7IwuKt-M?t=1092>

²³ See Mormon Enigma, Newell, pg 152.

²⁴ “Oliver sent me Joseph's first seer stone; Oliver always kept it until he sent it to me - the second seer stone Dr. Williams had - the third one was a very large - and Joseph found two small ones on the beach in Nauvoo - a little larger than a black walnut without the shock on - Joseph said there is a stone for every person on the earth - I don't know that I have ever had a desire to have one.” The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young, Ed. Richard S. Van Wagoner, Smith-Pettit Foundation, Salt Lake City (2009), <http://bit.ly/BY-discourses>

²⁵ See <http://www.fullerconsideration.com/sources.php?cat=GP-SS> for primary sources and quotes regarding the seer stones.

²⁶ This stone was used to attempt to find treasure and to find and dictate the book of Mormon. It appears to have seen extensive use between 1824-1830. It was then given to Oliver Cowdrey, who kept it until he gave it Phineas Young near the time of his death. It was given to Brigham Young, and later sold to one of his wives as part of this estate. It was placed on the Manti temple altar during the dedication and called the “Urim and Thummim” at that time. By the late 19th century, it was in the possession of the LDS church and reportedly kept in the First Presidency's vault.



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- 2) The white or cream colored stone (translucent).²⁸
- 3) The “very large” stone.²⁹
- 4) The peyote stone.³⁰



- 5) The second small stone³¹

²⁷ Image Copyright Intellectual Reserve (LDS). See: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2015/10/joseph-the-seer?lang=eng>

²⁸ This stone may have been found by Joseph around 1822(?) and was shown and described during his 1826 trial. As such, it may have been the stone used to seek for buried treasure for Stowell. See the 1877 Purple affidavit. <http://www.olivercowdery.com/smithhome/1877Purp.htm>

²⁹ Brigham Young describes the 3rd stone as being very large. This may be the same one that was described by Grant Palmer, who claims to have seen this stone along with the previous two in the possession of the LDS church in the late 1960s. Palmer described it as made of hardened mud or clay based on the appearance, being roughly the size of a softball with some sort of a handle to carry it around. <https://redd.it/2usqe8>. This description is somewhat suspect because there are not additional confirming sources. More likely, the 3rd stone may have been the green stone (BELCHER-SMITH-DIBBLE-PIERCE STONE) listed as #6. Regardless, it is believed to be in possession of the LDS church.

³⁰ See D. Michael Quinn. 1998a p. 246-247. Joseph Smith found this stone, possibly in its rough unshaped form, along the Mississippi River's shore between 1839 and 1844. After Joseph's death, the stone was kept by Emma Smith and inherited by her second husband, Lewis Bidamon. It eventually made its way to the Wilford Wood Museum in Woods Cross, Utah. It is the size of a U.S. quarter dollar and “is the most intricate of those attributed to Smith. It has a hole through the center surrounded by eight smaller indentations, with tooled ridges around the edge” This is probably one of the two stones that Brigham Young referred to that was found during the Nauvoo period. See also <http://www.mormonthink.com/files/restoration-sacred-mushroom.pdf> pg 24.

³¹ This stone was found during the Nauvoo period is not described in the literature apart from the reference from Brigham Young. It is described as being the size of a black walnut without its shell.

6) BELCHER-SMITH-DIBBLE-PIERCE STONE The Green stone shown below:³²



The LDS church has released pictures of the brown stone, which is one of the 3 or more “seer stones” in their possession. Stone #4 can be viewed in a museum. There may be additional stones.

OTHER SEER STONES IN THE EARLY MORMON CHURCH:

Early New York members were aware of the seer stones and believed in their powers. Several early members had their own stones³³. This certainly was the case with Hiram Page, who had a stone and received revelations which he thought came from God.³⁴ Other early members having seer stones included the Whitmers.³⁵ While the Page stone was ground up by the members after a heated debate and revelation through Joseph Smith that Page’s revelations were of the devil, the Whitmer stone has survived and been passed on through the family.

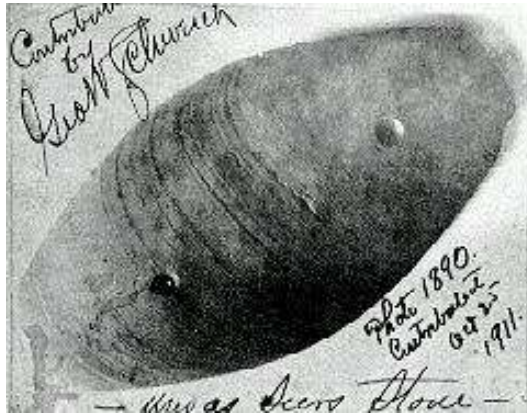
According to various sources, at least one of the following stones was owned and used by David Whitmer. The one on the right may have belonged to Jacob Whitmer (one of the 8 witnesses)ⁱⁱ.

³² See <http://www.rickgrunder.com/HistoricalArchive/belchersmithdibble.htm>. This stone may have been sold in the early to mid 1820s to Joseph Smith. After his death, it was given to Dibble and later given to family members. When an older owner passed away in the early 1990s, it was sold at auction to allow for family members to share the inheritance. The buyer was Jay Mitton, a wealthy lawyer in Utah. It was said to have been examined by the BYU Geology department prior to being donated to the LDS church.

³³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seer_stone_\(Latter_Day_Saints\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seer_stone_(Latter_Day_Saints))

³⁴ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiram_Page and D&C section 28.

³⁵ <http://www.rickgrunder.com/HistoricalArchive/whitmerstone.htm>



THE URIM AND THUMMIM

The concept of glasses as a translation mechanism was first introduced in 1825 by Samuel Lawrence.³⁶

While the method of translation was clearly understood by many members of the church including Emma, Oliver, Martin Harris, and others, Joseph stopped talking about his use of the seer stone for creation of the Book of Mormon around 1830 or 1831.³⁷ This may be because he was put on trial for the use of this stone. Using stones to find treasure was against the law in New York. At the 1830 trial, Oliver Cowdery testified of the use of the spectacles as the translation means rather than the chocolate colored seer stone.³⁸ In December 1830, Joseph Smith received a revelation that the New York church should relocate to Kirtland to be with Sidney Rigdon's group which had merged with the early church³⁹. The Ohio converts – mostly anti-Baptists or Campbellites from Rigdon's congregation, outnumbered those in the NY church and did not believe in seer stones in the way that those in NY and PA did. In July 1832 and again in Jan 1833, Phelps claimed that the Urim and Thummim were the instrument used Joseph Smith to translate the Book of Mormon⁴⁰. In 1834, what would become the official version of translation including the Urim and Thummim was published by Oliver Cowdery.ⁱⁱⁱ Joseph Smith confirmed this version of events on at least 3 occasions, including this statement: "through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record through the gift and power of God"⁴¹ While this would remain the version taught for more than 150 years, there would be a few references to the seer stones by the early church leaders, several by B.H. Roberts between 1904 and 1930, followed by a few more in the 1970s – 1990s. Several articles in the Deseret News between 1880 and 1890 which included first-hand and second-hand accounts by Whitmer and

³⁶ <https://youtu.be/ksnbSh51itg?t=2m30s> See also the Willard Chase affidavit in Mormonism Unveiled.

<http://www.mormoninformation.com/wchase.htm>

³⁷ "It was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon." Minutes, Church conference, Orange, OH, Oct. 25–26, 1831, in Minute Book 2, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, available at josephsmithpapers.org; Welch, "Miraculous Translation," 121–9.

³⁸ http://www.lightplanet.com/response/1826Trial/Benton_1831.html

³⁹

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Rigdon#Latter_Day_Saint_leader_in_Ohio.2C_Missouri.2C_and_Illinois_.281830.E2.80.9344.29

⁴⁰ <https://youtu.be/ksnbSh51itg?t=490>

⁴¹ HC 4:537 See <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/volume-4-chapter-31>. While this account is in the official History of the Church and it appears to be written in first person by Joseph Smith, it is well documented that this history was rewritten to appear in first person.

Harris also give an accurate description of the brown stone and its importance in the creation of the Book of Mormon.

Brigham Young stated that there were many who had the natural gift of being able to use seer stone, but that Joseph was special because he was called as a prophet.

Brigham Young in saying that He **did not profess to be a prophet seer & Revelator as Joseph Smith was**, was speaking of men being born Natural Prophets & seers. **Many have the gift of seeing through seer stones without the Priesthood at all.** He had not this gift naturally yet He was an Apostle & the President of the Church & kingdom of God on the Earth and all the Keys of the Holy Priesthood & of Revelation was sealed upon him & the spirit & power of Revelation was upon him daily.⁴²

It became a practice to call these seer stones “the Urim and Thummim” in the early church around 1833.⁴³ This practice continued into the late 1800s, and the white or chocolate colored seer stone was referred to as the Urim and Thummim by members when it was placed on the Manti Temple alter during its dedication.^{iv}

David Whitmer recalled in 1881:

The tablets or plates were translated by Smith, who used a small oval or kidney-shaped stone, *called Urim and Thummim*... Mr. Whitmer emphatically asserts, as did Harris and Cowdery, that while Smith was dictating the translation he had no manuscript notes or other means of knowledge, save the Seer stone and the characters as shown on the plates...⁴⁴

After Joseph Smith was killed, Brigham Young worked to collect the seer stones but did not use them to receive revelations. The existence of seer stones was mentioned in church literature between about 1880 and 1936, often with amended quotes which routinely suppressed information regarding that it was placed in a hat for translation. Between 1921 and 1936, seer stones were also mentioned in Sunday school lessons. After 1950, there were very few references to the seer stones in church literature until 2013 when the church first acknowledged their usage in the production of the book of Mormon.^v The 2013 article correctly identifies the brown stone and its use, though it does not preclude the use of the “glasses” or “clear” Urim and Thummim in the production of the Book of Mormon^{vi}

⁴² Wilford Woodruff Journal, 5:549-550.

⁴³ "The prophet also had a seer stone which was separate and distinct from the Urim and Thummim, and which (speaking loosely) has been called by some a Urim and Thummim". McConkie, Bruce R. (1966), *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 818.

⁴⁴ Notes of a correspondent with Mr. Whitmer on October 14th 1881 as published in the Chicago Times and republished in *The Myth of the "Manuscript Found" or the absurdities of the "Spaulding Story", Eleventh Book of the Faith-Promoting Series*, by Elder George Reynolds, Pub. Juvenile Instructor Office, SLC, 1883. Pg 83. NOTE: Even though this information is correctly given by Whitmer, the book itself calls the information errant on pg 85, "The next error is that the seer stone which Joseph used in the translation 'was called Urim and Thummim.' The instrument thus denominated was composed of two crystal stones 'set in the two rims of a bow.' The seer stone was separate and distinct from the Urim and Thummim. The latter was delivered to the angel as well as the plates after the translation was completed; the former remained with the Church and is now in the possession of the President."

In Dec of 2017 the LDS church published its first images showing a hat as part of the translation process⁴⁵. Neither



Figure 4- Translation as depicted in the Missionary Training Manual (Preach My Gospel - 2017)

image shows the complete truth (which hat with his face buried in the hat). Nevertheless this depiction is more accurate than all previous portrayals.^{vii} Some un-official church-directed sources have provided accurate images of the translation process⁴⁶.

USES OF SEER STONES IN MORMON THEOLOGY

The following uses of seer stones are historical or have been taught by Mormon apostles:

- 1) To find buried treasures⁴⁷
- 2) To translate or dictate documents, especially those of “ancient origin”. This includes documents which are buried or hidden in distant places⁴⁸.
- 3) To get revelation from God⁴⁹

SEER STONES IN THE TEMPLE AND IN HEAVEN

Early on May 1st, 1842 Joseph stated the following:

The keys are certain signs and words... which cannot be revealed... til the Temple is completed – The rich can only get them in the Temple... There are signs in heaven, earth, and hell, the Elders must know them all to be endowed with power... The devil knows many signs but does not

know the sign of the Son of Man, or Jesus. ***No one can truly say he knows God until he handles something, and this can only be in the Holy of Holies*** (bold and italics added).⁵⁰

In Doctrine and Covenants 130:10-11 (Apr 2, 1843) we read:

Then the **white stone** mentioned in Revelation 2:17, *will become a Urim and Thummim to each individual who receives one, whereby things pertaining to a higher order of kingdoms will be made known*;

⁴⁵ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2017/12/joseph-smith-strength-out-of-weakness?lang=eng> See also: <https://wheatandtares.org/2017/12/02/tip-of-the-hat-to-church-magazines-more-accurate-book-of-mormon-translation-images-in-ensign/>

⁴⁶ <https://youtu.be/4LdR7BoI6F0?t=121>

⁴⁷ This was the original use by Joseph from about 1822 to 1827, though no treasure was found.

⁴⁸ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/7?lang=eng>

⁴⁹ This includes several sections of the D&C (1-19), as well as proposed use by David of the Old Testament as reported by Orson Pratt in GC, in his talk Celestial Marriage (1869). These revelations are also said to include use in the temple in order to see books which contain genealogies which will allow for temple work to be done for dead people where records are otherwise missing.

⁵⁰ Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (1980), Provo Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center), 119. As quoted in Dialogue V34N102_87 pg 89-90. https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V34N0102_87.pdf

And **a white stone is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom**, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word.

The 'new name' is part of the temple ceremony, and has been since the Nauvoo period. It is known that Joseph treasured his white seer stone. Based on these references, it appears that he may have been intended to use it or similar stones as part of the temple ceremony. Shortly after Lyman Wight was endowment into the Quorum of the Anointed on May 14, 1844, Joseph Smith confirmed Wight's mission to take a group of settlers to Texas. As part of this ordination, Wight received a white (seer?) stone⁵¹. As Smith was killed prior to the Nauvoo temple being completed, his exact intentions regarding distribution of white seer stones may have been lost to history.

Later apostles taught that the Urim and Thummim would be used in temples in order to divine the names of past ancestors to allow temple work to be done for them⁵².

Among these hidden things that are to be revealed are the **books of genealogy**, tracing individuals and nations among all people, **back to ancient times**.

It may be inquired—"How can all this be done?" We answer, **by the Urim and Thummim, which the Lord God has ordained to be used in the midst of his holy house, in his Temple**.

The Manti temple was dedicated in May 1888, and the "Urim and Thummim" (seer stone) was placed on the altar during the dedication⁵³. The holy of holies was located in the Manti temple until the completion of the Salt Lake temple in 1893 and may have housed one or more of the seer stones during that period.

OTHER ARTIFACTS WITH MAGICAL POWER

THE JUPITER TALISMAN

⁵¹ Quinn, Origins of Power, pp 198-199.

⁵² See Journal of Discourses vol 16, pp 260-261 (Orson Pratt, 1873) <http://jod.mrm.org/16/251#260>

⁵³ The brown seer stone was most probably used, though the church had in their possession the white and brown seer stones at that time.



Picture of the Jupiter Talisman that Joseph Smith wore⁵⁴

Joseph Smith believed in and carried a silver Jupiter Talisman.

In astrology, Jupiter is always associated with high positions, getting one's own way, and all forms of status. And I quote: "Typically a person born under Jupiter will have the dignity of a natural ruler... He will probably have an impressive manner.... In physical appearance... strong, personable, and often handsome... cheerful winning personality"

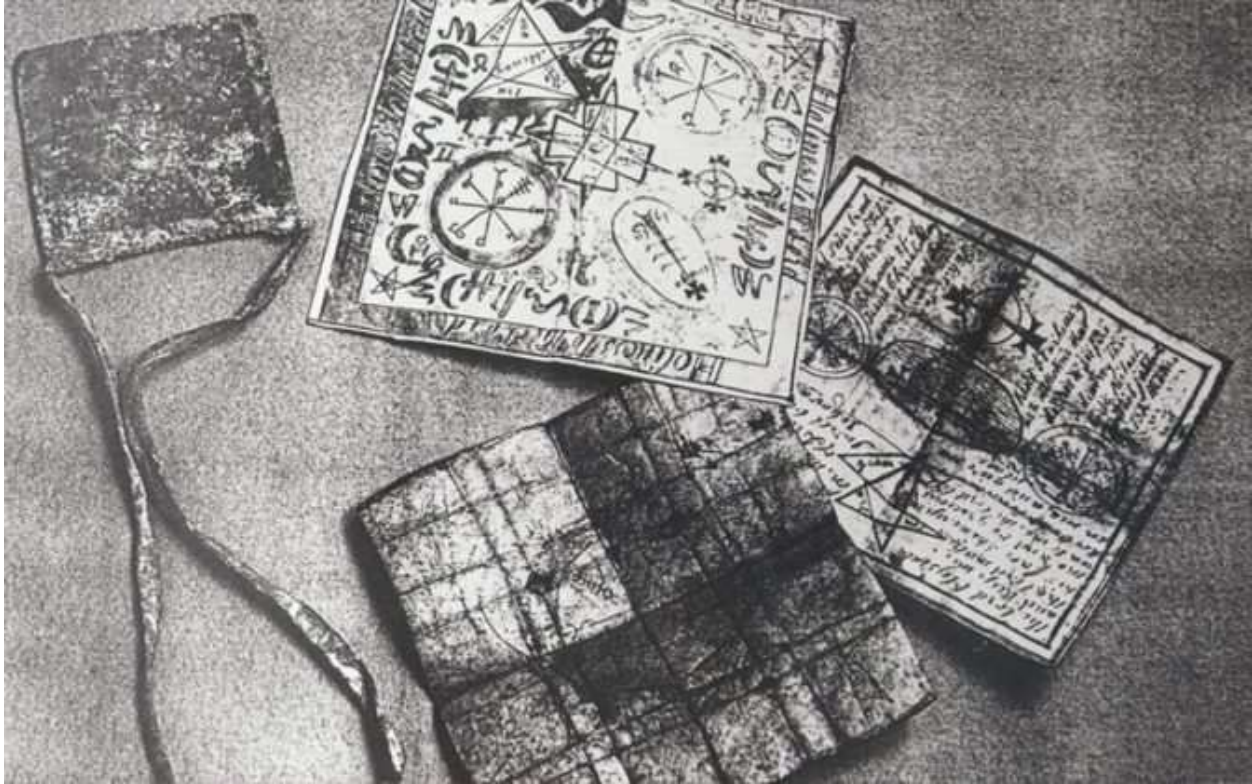
...When properly invoked... these intelligences - by the power of the ancient magic – guaranteed to the possessor of this talisman the gain of riches, and favor, and power, and love and peace.... Any one who worked skillfully with this Jupiter Table would obtain the *power of stimulating anyone to offer his love* to the possessor of the talisman, whether from a friend, brother, relative, or *even any female*.⁵⁵

It is unknown exactly when Joseph obtained this talisman, though it may have been associated with his money digging in the 1820s. He reportedly carried it until his death.

SMITH FAMILY MAGIC PARCHMENTS

⁵⁴ <http://www.lostmormonism.com/jupiter-talisman/>

⁵⁵ Mormon Miscellaneous, published by David C. Martin, vol. 1, no. 1, October 1975 pp 14-15 as quoted in The Changing World of Mormonism, Tanner, pg 90.



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Joseph Smith owned 3 magic parchments which he may have acquired from his father. The purpose of these papers was to call upon spirits for help or visitations. It was a mix of Christianity and occult magic. The three parchments are known as the:

1. Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah Parchment
2. St. Peter Bind Them Parchment
3. Holiness to the Lord Parchment

These were passed down through Hyrum Smith's family after the death of Joseph.⁵⁷ Mormons believe that St. Peter had the rights to *bind* people together in eternal family units and that this could create a condition whereby men could be righteously connected to multiple women in polygamous relationships. "*Holiness to the Lord*" is a phrase written on the outside of all Mormon temples.

SMITH FAMILY KNIFE

A knife, belonging to Hyrum Smith has symbols on the handle associated with Mars and the occult. While it is difficult to draw conclusions due to the lack of accounts from the time of ownership/use, this artifact is consistent with others (seer stones, Jupiter Talisman) and may give further credence to the Smith family's activities in treasure hunting and other occult practices.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ <http://www.lostmormonism.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/smith-family-magic-parchements-670x421.jpg>

⁵⁷ <http://www.lostmormonism.com/smith-family-magic-parchements/>

⁵⁸ https://www.reddit.com/r/exmormon/comments/x52un/smith_family_dagger_listed_in_the_inventory_of/ See also references in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, by D. Michael Quinn pp 341, 134.

DIVINING RODS

There is evidence that both Oliver Cowdrey and Heber C. Kimball, early prominent members of the church, had divining rods (wooden sticks) which they used to receive answers to prayers and revelation. Heber C. Kimball was given his rod by Joseph Smith.⁵⁹ The divining rod of Cowdrey was later used by Brigham Young to choose the location where the Salt Lake Temple should be built.⁶⁰

CANES OF THE MARTYRDOM

The coffins that Joseph was placed in prior to burial (2-3 coffins) were later cut up and used to make canes. The exact number of canes made is unknown, though it likely numbered at least 6 and some speculate many more. The canes had a lock of hair from Joseph Smith placed on their handles. At least one person (Heber C. Kimball) used the cane to heal others.^{61,62}



Figure 5 - Canes of martyrdom in the LDS church history museum. The hair of Joseph can be seen on the handle of the top cane.

THE RED HANDKERCHIEF

⁵⁹ This is detailed by Richard Anderson, Mormon Historian and author of the first missionary discussions used throughout the 1950s and 60s. See http://www.boap.org/LDS/History/HTMLHistory/v1c4history.html#N_13

⁶⁰ Additional information about these and other rods can be found here:

<https://exploringmormonism.com/walking-canes-casket-sticks-dousing-rods-and-more-a-tour-of-some-of-the-most-bizarre-items-of-mormon-folklore-history-and-magic/> See also: Anthon H. Lund Journal for July 5, 1901: "in the revelation to Oliver Cowdrey in May 1829, Bro. [B. H.] Roberts said that the gift which the Lord says he has in his hand meant a stick which was like Aaron's Rod. It is said Bro. Phineas Young [brother-in-law of Oliver Cowdrey and brother of Brigham Young] got it from him [Cowdrey] and gave it to President Young who had it with him when he arrived in this [Salt Lake] valley and that it was with that stick that he pointed out where the Temple should be built."

⁶¹ <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/canes-martyrdom> See also <http://iod.mrm.org/4/292#294>

⁶² https://ldsmag.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Church_History_Museum_0024.jpg

Joseph gave a red silk handkerchief to Wilford Woodruff which he said could be used to heal 2 children. Woodruff used it for this purpose and kept it in his possession until his death. It is currently in the 1st presidency vault.⁶³ Other handkerchiefs and similar items were also used for healing.⁶⁴

EARLY ARTIFACTS MISSING

Mormon leaders teach that all ancient artifacts of early Mormonism have disappeared. This is the case with the Golden Plates, the special translators (Urim and Thummim) and Sword of Laban. In some accounts, they were delivered into an angel's hands⁶⁵. In other accounts, they were placed into a cave or vault inside of or near to the hill Cumorah^{viii}.

The LDS church teaches that God protected the Urim and Thummim⁶⁶ for more than 3000 years and allowed a number of prophets on multiple continents to use the stone before taking it away in 1829. These "translating instruments" were removed from the possession of Smith prior to the translations of the Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham. Joseph Smith would later claim to translate Egyptian Papyri (the book of Abraham) using his white seer stone and start translating the Kinderhook Plates⁶⁷. The Urim and Thummim was said to have been created by God for this purpose. Some historians believe that the Urim and Thummim as a translation instrument/concept was first "seen" by Samuel Lawrence in 1825, and that Smith adopted this concept.^{ix}

Some of the accounts of the witnesses indicate that the plates which were associated with the Book of Mormon were seen with *spiritual eyes* or *second sight* and never with *natural eyes*. Given the size of the box and weight when hefted, there may have been a set of plates constructed of common tin⁶⁸. A box containing something that weighed roughly 50 pounds was lifted by several witnesses, but never seen⁶⁹. Several witnesses noted that Joseph Smith did not have the plates in the same room that he was translating. The purpose of this object (if it existed) seems to be to give additional weight to his historicity claims regarding the book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith demonstrated on many occasions the ability to produce material or revelation without source materials. Examples include:

- 1) Over 130 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. Some were produced with the assistance of a seer stone, but most without.
- 2) Section 7 in the D&C is especially interesting, as it contains the record as written by John of the New Testament and revealed to Joseph Smith via the "Urim and Thummim". In this case, source material is said to exist in some hidden location, presumably 1000s of miles away from where the translation is occurring.

⁶³ See: http://scottwoodward.org/miracles_healings_joseph-wilford-redhandkerchief.html and <https://exploringmormonism.com/our-own-peek-into-the-first-presidency-vault/>

⁶⁴ <http://jod.mrm.org/4/292#294>

⁶⁵ The angle Moroni. See: <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/17401> on page 141.

⁶⁶ According to LDS teachings, God protected this particular pair, but there are multiple Urim and Thummims (possibly pairs, possibly as many as 3 sets). See <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/urim-and-thummim>

⁶⁷ The Kinderhook plates were later shown to be a forgery. Nevertheless, Joseph's ability to translate them was used as evidence for his prophetic calling as late as 1962 in official church publications (Improvement ERA Sept 1962). <https://archive.org/stream/improvementera6509unse#page/n21/mode/2up/search/plates> pg 23.

⁶⁸ Given the dimensions described by witnesses, the weight matches much more closely that of a light metal such as tin rather than gold, which would have been about 3 times as heavy.

⁶⁹ This box was later tested at BYU in the early 90s for traces of gold using highly sensitive bombarding techniques. No traces were found. The professor involved was Steven Jones.

- 3) The Inspired Version/Translation of the King James Version of the Bible (which includes the source material for the “Book of Moses”).

In addition, we have the following translations which claimed to use source material:

- 4) The Kinderhook Plates (known forgery⁷⁰)
- 5) The Book of Abraham was said to be translated from Egyptian records⁷¹.

Apart from the claims of Mormon leaders, there is little reason to believe that the book of Mormon was produced in a way substantially different from the other works or revelations of Joseph Smith. The material difference (if there is one) may be the use of the white hat and brown seer stone to create the book of Mormon, and other stones (or lack of stones) were used when dictating other works.

All of the ancient purported artifacts associated with early Mormonism are missing including:

1. The Liahona (a magical pointing compass buried with the gold plates)
2. Breast plate and glasses (also buried with the gold plates)
3. Sword of Laban
4. Brass plates
5. Golden plates
6. Stone box which had been holding the Golden Plates

Joseph stated that an angel came down and took items 2 and 5 after Martin Harris lost the 116 pages. In many early references, items 1-5 are said to be contained within a cave inside of Hill Cumorah. Competing gold-diggers investigated the Hill Cumorah shortly after Joseph claimed to have found the plates, but found no fresh digging on the site. The claimed stone box (6) has not been found.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES - POSSIBLE DRUG CONNECTIONS

Early members were attracted to the Mormon Church in part because it could promise and deliver on spiritual experiences. Spiritual experiences including the visitation of angels, Christ, and speaking in tongues were very common in the early church, but reduced significantly after Kirtland and almost entirely disappeared after the death of Joseph Smith.

These spiritual experiences were not random occurrences. They typically occurred at meetings, often after 1-2 days of fasting and after the members of the congregation consumed large quantities of sacramental wine. Mormon meetings were generally open only to believers.

It has been suggested that these may have been induced or encouraged by various toxins including one or more of the following:

- 1) Peyote Cactus (native to Texas and Mexico)

⁷⁰ These were admitted to be a forgery in 1879, and this was confirmed by testing in 1980. Some church publications use the Kinderhook plates as evidence that Joseph Smith could translate ancient documents as late as 1979. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinderhook_plates

⁷¹ These records have been compared with the material produced and there is no correlation. Current church teachings have redefined translate to mean to receive via inspiration from God. In other words, the source characters were not used to provide the “translated” material. See <https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng>

- 2) Amanita Muscaria (Fly Amanita) (found in large parts of north America including new York and new Jersey)
- 3) Datura (Angel's Trumpet) (Native to the American southwest, but largely cultivated in Europe and elsewhere).

Only the second one appears to have been native to the New York area, though some have argued that all three would have been available to Smith. While there is significant evidence that greater spiritual experiences accompanied Joseph Smith, especially during the years of 1831-1837, *there is no known physical evidence to confirm the use of mind altering substances.*⁷²

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS

Beginning in Dec 1834, Joseph Smith Sr. (Joseph Smith's father) was called by his son to be the patriarch of the church⁷³. In this position, he gave members blessings which would tell about their futures and "place within Israel" for a fee. The blessings were generally given to people without a father who could give such a blessing. Fathers who had received blessings would then bless their families in return. The original fee seems to have varied, but was roughly \$1-\$4 in the 1830s, which is roughly equal to between \$20 and \$100 in 2017 currency. Some blessings were given for free. The weekly salary for the patriarch was prescribed to be about \$10/week.⁷⁴ Every member who was given a blessing was told that they were either a direct descendant in one of the tribes of Israel or that they were adopted into a tribe.⁷⁵ In practice, the tribes of Ephraim or Benjamin are claimed for more than 90% of all members of the Mormon faith. Charging a fee or receiving payment from the church for giving blessings was ended in 1914, though they were still allowed to accept "gifts of gratitude" until these became discouraged around 1943.⁷⁶

In addition to getting information on their "tribe", a recipient also received a blessing. These blessings may give the person guidance regarding how they should live their life as well as promises regarding future marriage, children, and being alive during the 2nd coming of Christ.⁷⁷ While common in the 19th century, the practice of telling people that they will live to see Christ come again is now specifically discouraged.⁷⁸ Early members would often receive multiple blessings throughout their lives, with some receiving 5 or more.

Some early blessings had more fabulous or interesting promises than are common today. Oliver Huntington was promised that he would "have power with God even to translate thyself to Heaven and preach to the inhabitants of the moon or planets." One early member was promised by Joseph Smith, Sr., in 1837 that "thou shalt stand on

⁷² <http://www.mormonthink.com/files/restoration-sacred-mushroom.pdf>

⁷³ Official LDS sources place the date in 1833, but Quinn places it firmly in 1834 in *Origins of Power*, pg 47.

⁷⁴ Figures taken from various quotes referenced in https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N03_11.pdf pg 26-27.

⁷⁵ The only exception to this is those of African heritage, who were told that they were "orphans".

⁷⁶ Dialogue V26N03_11, pg 28. https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N03_11.pdf

⁷⁷ In 1837, Wilford Woodruff (later the 4th president of the church) was told by Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr., "I bless thee as Melchisedeck [sic] blessed Abram when he returned from the Slaughter of the ten kings... thou shalt stand in the flesh & witness the winding up scene of this generation. Thou shalt remain on the earth to behold thy Savior come in clouds of heaven." Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898, Typescript, 9 vols., Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 1:142-143 as quoted in Dialogue, V26 No. 3_11 pg 9-10. https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N03_11.pdf

⁷⁸ In the modern handbook for patriarchs, they are specifically counseled to "avoid sensational or extravagant promises...(he) should not make references to calamities or the timing of the second coming."

a great plane, the one nearest to the Celestial world of Colob and preach to its inhabitants".⁷⁹ Recipients were generally addressed as "thee" or "thou" in early blessings, though this practice is now specifically prohibited.

Early blessings also promised many women that they would have the power to heal the sick. Patty Sessions was told that she "would partake of the Blessings of the Priesthood in common with thy companion shall have Faith to heal the sick by the laying on of hands when there is no Elders present."⁸⁰

The position of presiding patriarch for the church was eliminated in 1979 under Spencer Kimball⁸¹. Until that time, it had been passed from father to son to direct descendants of Joseph Smith Sr., with a few exceptions where it went to other male family members or other people who were unrelated for short periods of time. One patriarch, Joseph Fielding Smith⁸², was found to be gay and forced to resign from the position after 4 years in 1946.

Irene M. Bates (a believing Mormon) has done considerable research on the subject and written extensively on patriarchs.⁸³

SPEAKING IN TONGUES AND ADAMIC

Speaking in tongues was common in the early church and continued into the late 1800s. Several members including Brigham Young and Eliza Snow (2nd president of the Relief Society and plural wife to Young and Joseph Smith) were said to have spoken in the pure Adamic language. Speaking in tongues in the late 1800s was done primarily by women, but it was discouraged and the practice later died off.

Words in Adamic as revealed by Joseph Smith and other early church leaders include:

Word	Meaning
Awmen	The name of God
The Son Awmen	The Son of God
Awmen Angls-men	Angels
Shinehah	The sun
peh leel (or) Pay Lay Ale	Oh God, hear the words of our mouth
Kolob	The heavenly body closest to God's throne
Adam-on-di- Ahman	The place where Adam offered sacrifices when he and Eve were banished from Eden.
Deseret	Honey Bee

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DOCTRINE

OVERVIEW

⁷⁹ Blessing to Benjamin Clopson by Joseph Smith, Sr., 1837, RLDS archives. See

https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N03_11.pdf pg. 11.

⁸⁰ Blessing given to Patty Sessions by Uncle John Smith, 18 Mar. 1848 as quoted in Dialogue V26N03_11 pg 15.

https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N03_11.pdf

⁸¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_Presiding_Patriarchs_\(LDS_Church\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_Presiding_Patriarchs_(LDS_Church))

⁸² Note: This is not the Joseph Fielding Smith who was later the prophet of the LDS church (this was his uncle). He had his priesthood restored in 1957 (later serving on the high council) and he died in 1964 at age 65.

⁸³ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/50554463_Bates_Irene_M

⁸⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adamic_language

WHAT IS DOCTRINE

Early church leaders believe that the words they delivered from the pulpit constituted the revealed word of the Lord and the doctrine of the church. The view that the living prophet and apostles delivered words which constituted doctrine was believed from the days of the early church through at least about the 1970s.

Brigham Young stated:

*"The Lord is in our midst. He teaches the people continually. **I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture. Let me have the privilege of correcting a sermon, and it is as good Scripture as they deserve.** The people have the oracles of God continually. In the days of Joseph, revelation was given and written, and the people were driven from city to city and place to place, until we were led into these mountains. **Let this go to the people with "Thus saith the Lord," and if they do not obey it, you will see the chastening hand of the Lord upon them...**"*⁸⁵

George Q. Cannon of the first presidency stated in 1861:

*The Journal of Discourses*⁸⁶ deservedly ranks as one of the standard works of the Church, and every rightminded Saint will certainly welcome with joy every Number as it comes forth from the press as an additional reflector of 'the light that shines from Zion's hill.'⁸⁷

In 1956, J. Reuben Clark clarified that only apostles (Quorum of 12) could make or interpret doctrine of the church on an official level:

They possess a special gift; they are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, which gives them a special spiritual endowment in connection with their teaching of the people. **They have the right, the power, and authority to declare the mind and will of God to his people, subject to the overall power and authority of the President of the Church.** Others of the General Authorities are not given this special spiritual endowment and authority covering their teaching; they have a resulting limitation, and the resulting limitation upon their power and authority in teaching applies to every other officer and member of the Church, for none of them is spiritually endowed as a prophet, seer, and revelator. Furthermore . . . the President of the Church has a further and special spiritual endowment in this respect, for he is the prophet, seer, and revelator of the whole church.⁸⁸

In 1956 and 1959, two books were published by Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie entitled, "Doctrines of Salvation" and "Mormon Doctrine".

By the 1960s, Apostle LeGrand Richards took a slightly more restrictive approach to doctrine of the past when he responded to an inquiry in a letter:

⁸⁵ Journal of Discourses, 13:95.

⁸⁶ The Journal of discourses was an annual publication of the writings and teachings of the presidency of the church and some apostles which was regularly published between 1855 and 1886. It is roughly the equivalent of the modern General Conference Ensign issues.

⁸⁷ "Preface", Journal of Discourses 8:3.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Roy W. Doxey, *The Latter-day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963), 1:ix–x. See https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/roy-w-doxey_accept-divine-counsel/

Your next question: Can the Journal of Discourses be used as doctrine if the man speaking says, 'Thus saith the Lord'?

I cannot answer that question because *I don't know what part of the Journal of Discourses you have in mind. I would have to know just what you were referring to.*⁸⁹

President Howard W. Hunter taught:

Our modern-day prophets have encouraged us to make the reading of the conference editions of our Church magazines an important and regular part of our personal study. Thus, general **conference becomes, in a sense, a supplement to or an extension of the Doctrine and Covenants**. In addition to the conference issues of the Church magazines, the First Presidency writes monthly articles that contain inspired counsel for our welfare.⁹⁰

In May 2007, the church narrowed this definition significantly when it posted the following on its official website⁹¹:

- **Not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine.** *A single statement made by a single leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion, but is not meant to be officially binding for the whole Church. With divine inspiration, the First Presidency (the prophet and his two counselors) and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (the second-highest governing body of the Church) counsel together to establish doctrine that is consistently proclaimed in official Church publications. This doctrine resides in the four "standard works" of scripture (...), official declarations and proclamations, and the Articles of Faith. Isolated statements are often taken out of context, leaving their original meaning distorted.*
- **Some doctrines are more important than others** and might be considered **core doctrines**. For example, the precise location of the Garden of Eden⁹² is far less important than doctrine about *Jesus Christ* and His atoning sacrifice. The mistake that public commentators often make is taking an obscure teaching that is peripheral to the Church's purpose and placing it at the very center. This is especially common among reporters or researchers who rely on how other Christians interpret Latter-day Saint doctrine.

In Apr 2012, Christofferson reiterated the above and added clarification indicating the doctrine could come either by inspiration to the president of the church or via decisions taken by councils:

The President of the Church may announce or interpret doctrines based on **revelation** to him (...D&C 138). Doctrinal exposition may also come through the **combined council** of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (... Official Declaration 2). Council deliberations will often include a weighing of canonized scriptures, the teachings of Church leaders, and past practice. But in the end, just as in the New Testament Church, the objective is not simply consensus among council members but revelation from God. It is a process involving both reason and faith for obtaining the mind and will of the Lord.⁹³

The above statement, was repeated by a general authority in 2013 (in a slightly modified form):

⁸⁹ Letter to Morris L. Reynolds, May 16, 1966 as quoted in Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pg 437.

⁹⁰ The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1997), 212; emphasis added, quoted in *Teachings of the Living Prophets Student Manual*, 73; bold in original.

⁹¹ <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/approaching-mormon-doctrine>

⁹² This place is Adam-ondi-ahmen, in Missouri USA, and it is doctrine (being officially included in the Doctrine and Covenants)...

⁹³ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2012/04/the-doctrine-of-christ?lang=eng>

The prophet and President of the Church can **receive revelation individually that becomes doctrine** when it is sustained by the united voice of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles⁹⁴

Many church leaders define doctrine as being something which is unchangeable:

Our understanding of God's plan and His doctrine gives us an eternal perspective that does not allow us to condone such behaviors or to find justification in the laws that permit them. And, ***unlike other organizations that can change their policies and even their doctrines, our policies are determined by the truths God has identified as unchangeable.***"⁹⁵

FUNDAMENTALIST MORMON DOCTRINE

In 1919, Gospel Doctrine was published. It contained the teachings of Joseph F. Smith, the then recently deceased prior president of the church. This approach was a fundamentalist, literalist interpretation of the scriptures and may have been a response to new biblical scholars and evolutionary biologists who then viewed Genesis as an allegorical rather than a literal description of history. Joseph F. was the son of Hyrum and considered himself a defender of the faith.

This fundamental approach was taken up by his son, Joseph Fielding Smith who published the 3-volume Doctrines of Salvation between 1954 and 1956. These were edited by his son-in-law Bruce R. McConkie. McConkie took up the banner of fundamentalism within the church and published the reference book Mormon Doctrine two years later. Later champions of similar fundamentalist views include Packer, Ballard, and others.

MORMON DOCTRINE (THE BOOK)

Perhaps not as a result of correlation, but essentially simultaneous to this undertaking, Bruce R. McConkie (a member of the Quorum of the 12) decided to write down Mormon Doctrine in a book with that title. It was first published in 1958. He attempted to consolidate the beliefs of the LDS church into a simple form and to describe the various teachings. He was discouraged from doing this by his uncle, then president of the church, David O. McKay. After some major revisions based on input from other church leaders including Spencer Kimball, the second edition was published in 1966 and became a standard reference source for many Mormons of the era. It went out of print in 2010. The title page contains a then rare disclaimer that it is not an official publication or position of the Mormon Church. Such disclaimers have become more common in recent years and instructions regarding the required disclaimers are now included in the general handbook for members making their own pro-LDS web pages. Similar disclaimers are included by representatives of FairMormon in all of their communications.

Among other things, the first version of Mormon Doctrine claims that the Catholic Church is the "great and abominable church" described in the Book of Mormon and Bible⁹⁶. It also claims that Negroes were "those who were less valiant in the pre-existence"^x and describes peep stones (such as the one Joseph used to dictate the Book of Mormon) as being the devil's imitation of the Urim and Thummim.

RESTORATION – "THIS IS NOT MY DOCTRINE"

Joseph taught that the doctrines which he introduced were not new, but a restoration of things done in the New and Old Testament times. The doctrine of polygamy or plural marriage was taught as being a restoration. He

⁹⁴ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2013/09/how-is-doctrine-established?lang=eng>

⁹⁵ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/no-other-gods?lang=eng>

⁹⁶ "It is also to the Book of Mormon to which we turn for the plainest description of the Catholic Church as the great and abominable church." Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 130 (1958). This claim regarding Catholicism is consistent with comments made by David O. McKay and earlier church authorities, but was removed in later editions. This was also strongly implied by J. Reuben Clark in his April 1949 Address: Beware of False Prophets (May 1949 Ensign, pg 268) <https://archive.org/details/improvementera5205unse/page/n13>

taught that all teachings and ordinances of both the New Testament and Old Testament should be restored. This included animal sacrifice.^{xi} This is in contrast with many mainstream Christian religions who feel that the New Testament and Christ take precedence and replace Old Testament teachings and practices.

...all the ordinances and duties that ever have been required by the Priesthood, under the directions and commandments of the Almighty in any of the dispensations, shall all be had in the last dispensation, therefore all things had under the authority of the Priesthood at any former period, shall be had again...⁹⁷

Early Mormons including Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other prophets until at least Joseph Fielding Smith (1876-1972) taught an interpretation of the Old Testament including Genesis events such as the creation of Adam and Eve, a literal 7 day creation (as opposed to evolution), and the tower of Babel including the confusion of languages as a literal events. Per this theory, inhabitants of the Americas (Jaredites) from about 2200 BC to 600 BC would have spoken the “pure Adamic language”.

Brigham Young routinely taught that things which he said from the pulpit were not his own, but rather doctrines that he had heard from Joseph Smith.

ESTABLISHING AND CHANGING DOCTRINE

Officially, doctrine never changes⁹⁸.

Doctrines are eternal and do not change; however, the Lord, through His prophet, may change practices and programs, according to the needs of the people.⁹⁹

...we stand in holy places, for **His doctrine is sacred and will not change** in the social and political winds of our day.¹⁰⁰

In reality, doctrine does change and is redefined on an ongoing basis. Significant shifts in doctrine are often done with official declarations. For less prominent doctrines, a more subtle method is used. Establishment and modification of doctrine includes the following steps:

- 1. Introduction and establishment of a doctrine**

A doctrine is often introduced in the form of a talk or speech given to the body of the church

- 2. Embellishment and Justification**

New doctrines may require justification to persuade the body of the church. This was especially true early on before family and community bonds made it difficult to leave the movement. Justifications may be rooted in Biblical references, logical arguments, and/or theological arguments including claimed revelations. Doctrines can be embellished and tweaked by church leadership as needed.

- 3. Alternate doctrine or modification**

Modifying a doctrine is usually done by the upper leadership including the first presidency and the quorum of the 12. Major correction or changes are done via Official Declarations. However, whenever

⁹⁷ Joseph Smith (Oct. 5, 1840), in Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 171-73

⁹⁸ See <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2013/09/how-is-doctrine-established?lang=eng>

⁹⁹ <https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-of-the-living-prophets-student-manual/chapter-2-the-living-prophet-the-president-of-the-church?lang=eng> see also: <https://www.lds.org/manual/teaching-in-the-saviors-way/part-3-teach-the-doctrine/teach-the-doctrine?lang=eng> and <http://emp.byui.edu/SATTERFIELD/Rel431/Doctrine%20Quotes.pdf> for a good general overview of the modern approach to LDS doctrine.

¹⁰⁰ Apostle Robert Hales: <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/04/stand-strong-in-holy-places?lang=eng>

possible, doctrine is changed in a more subtle manner as this is less disruptive to the membership as outlined in steps 4-6.

4. Dual-narrative phase (doctrines 1 & 2 maintained together)¹⁰¹

In this phase, conflicting doctrines may be maintained in parallel. In order to avoid conflict, one of the doctrines might be classified as a “higher order doctrine” or “mystery of Godliness”. This “higher doctrine” may only be taught to committed members and/or only taught in the temple. As this “higher doctrine” becomes less prominent, it may be removed from temple teachings, though members will still be allowed to maintain it as part of their personal belief system.

5. Doctrinal Ambiguity and weasel words

In some cases, the church may choose to create ambiguity when a doctrine is considered strange by the larger public. When this is implemented, the *details of the doctrine* may be considered *less important than ‘God’s love for his children’ or the way in which God interacts with ‘his people’*. For example, “we may not know all of the details about how the creation took place” or “*while few Latter-day Saints would identify with caricatures of having their own planet*, most would agree that the awe inspired by creation hints at our creative potential in the eternities”.¹⁰² Often the teachings of church leaders are described as the beliefs of random church members¹⁰³.

6. “We have always maintained” (doctrine 2).

In this phase, the preferred version of the doctrine becomes the dominant narrative. Previous doctrines are sometimes denied, and when questions are asked, the answer generally states that those who taught these former histories/doctrines “did not have the full light and knowledge that we have today”.¹⁰⁴

Generally, doctrines which have been changed or eliminated are redefined to being policies¹⁰⁵, because policies can change (as opposed to doctrines which never *officially* change).

REDEFINING TERMS

Rather than acknowledge that the church has presented inaccurate or false information in the past or that doctrines have changed, the Mormon Church has undertaken to redefine terms in a way that makes the previous statements and doctrines more acceptable.

PROPHET, SEER, AND REVELATOR

Joseph was known to the early church as a prophet, a seer, and a revelator. The 3 terms were not generally interchangeable in the early years. In the *translation* of the Old Testament undertaken by Joseph Smith in June of 1830, the text begins:

¹⁰¹ A good example of a dual narrative that is active today is with polygamy. This is still an official doctrine and per early quotes necessary for salvation, but it is currently completely forbidden, with those who practice this doctrine being excommunicated from the church.

¹⁰² <https://www.lds.org/topics/becoming-like-god?lang=eng>

¹⁰³ See for example <https://www.lds.org/study/history/topics/lamanite-identity?lang=eng>. “...some early Latter-day Saints speculated about which specific groups [of Native Americans] were the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples...”. The article fails to mention that church leaders including all of the prophets between 1830 and 1980 made this claim.

¹⁰⁴ Regarding Blacks and the Priesthood, the church wrote: *Soon after the revelation, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, an apostle, spoke of new “light and knowledge” that had erased previously “limited understanding.”* See: <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>

¹⁰⁵ One example is with respect to blacks and the priesthood: “Church leaders believed that a revelation from God was needed to alter the policy...” <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>

A Revelation given to **Joseph the Revelator** June 1830

At the end of the first chapter – an addition to the bible added by Joseph and prior to the text of Genesis chapter 1, the text reads:

A Revelation given to the Elders of the Church of Christ On the first Book of Moses ~~given to Joseph the Seer~~¹⁰⁶

The term seer was defined as being someone who could look into the Urim and Thummim and receive revelation. In 1878, Orson Pratt questioned:

What man, I would ask further, among all the religions of the earth, for the last seventeen centuries, that has possessed the Urim and Thummim, the gift that would constitute him a seer and a revelator?¹⁰⁷

The term “seer” began to be used as a generic title with the other terms “prophet, seer, and revelator” no later than 1852 when Brigham Young began to assume these titles. Brigham however never claimed to act as a seer or to see things in stones or otherwise. The combined title is often associated with Joseph Smith when used.

The decade of the 2010s has the fewest mentions of “seer” of any decade in general conference since the 1860s and roughly 25% of the proceeding decade. This may be associated with the release of information regarding seer stones and a desire to avoid this topic in general conference.

TRANSLATE

In the 1960s (and probably through the 1990s), the LDS church maintained that Joseph was a scholar of languages and was proficient in Greek, Hebrew, and Egyptian. This quote is typical:

It is interesting to note that the Prophet, who had little opportunity for formal schooling, was our greatest advocate of education. Sensing that his people should know languages, especially those basic languages of the Holy Bible, he employed a Hebrew scholar, Dr. Seixas from Oberlin College, to come over to Cleveland, Ohio, to teach Hebrew to the leaders of the Church. He thought they could master it in seven weeks of night school. This proved a little bit short, and they employed him for another seven weeks — fourteen weeks—equal to one quarter of schooling. **Only two of the students mastered Hebrew sufficiently to give any discourses on it, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Orson Pratt.** All others felt a little inadequate in that language.

In the course of a brief few years **the Prophet Joseph was able to read Egyptian—the ancient hieroglyphics—German, Hebrew, and Greek.** I suppose he would not have been proficient in speaking any of them, but he understood them and conversed on Biblical writings in those various languages. On one occasion he mentioned a great number of languages and said, “If I live long enough I will master them all.”¹⁰⁸

In 2005, Bushman stated:

Maybe we do need to have another word... I think we certainly need to make clear to our children as we teach them or whoever that when we refer to a translation, is carrying the message from one culture into

¹⁰⁶ Old testament revision 1 can be found on the Joseph Smith Papers website:

¹⁰⁷ Orson Pratt, 1878, General Conference

¹⁰⁸ https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/william-e-berrett_life-character-prophet-joseph-smith/

the language of another. *Not necessarily using the dictionary word. So we do have to generalize or change the meaning of the word translation from its ordinary usage.*¹⁰⁹

Perhaps following this suggestion, by the 2010s, the church claimed that Joseph Smith had no special knowledge of these languages and that all of his “translating” is not “translating” in the traditional sense, but rather receiving inspired words via the Holy Ghost.

We do know some things about the translation process. The word translation typically assumes an expert knowledge of multiple languages. *Joseph Smith claimed no expertise in any language...*

In these inspired translations, Joseph Smith did not claim to know the ancient languages of the records he was translating...

Joseph’s translations took a variety of forms. Some of his translations, like that of the Book of Mormon, utilized ancient documents in his possession. *Other times, his translations were not based on any known physical records...*

...illustrations with no clear connection to Abraham anciently could, *by revelation*, shed light on the life and teachings of this prophetic figure.¹¹⁰

The implication is that even if Joseph did not have records and did not translate them in the literal sense, the fact that he produced material which the church believes to be inspired means that he engaged in translation.

A recent account from BYU – the church owned university - shows how the production of the Book of Mormon has gone from “translation” to “dictating the translation”:

apr 14, 1829:

Joseph Smith commenced the second week of **dictating the translation** of the Book of Mormon to Oliver Cowdery¹¹¹

In 2015, the church published additional lesson material stating that the Inspired Translation of the Bible was also made without consulting the original Hebrew or Greek, but rather based on the King James Version and “promptings of the holy ghost”.¹¹²

A 2018 video by the church history department uses both the words dictation and translation when describing the creation of the text of the book of Abraham¹¹³. In the Joseph Smith Papers project, revelations and translations are included in a combined volume which eliminates the need for historians to distinguish between documents

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.mormonstories.org/podcast/richard-bushman-and-rough-stone-rolling-part-1-experiences-as-a-mormon-historian/> Part 3, 51 minutes into the recording.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng>

¹¹¹ <http://jschronology.byustudies.byu.edu/> accessed Jan. 2017.

¹¹² *Joseph’s translation was not carried out in the traditional sense. He didn’t consult Greek and Hebrew texts or use lexicons to create a new English version. Rather, he used the King James Version of the Bible as his starting point and made additions and changes as he was directed by the Holy Ghost.* <https://history.lds.org/article/revelations-in-context-doctrine-and-covenants-joseph-smith-translation-bible?lang=eng>

¹¹³ From the context, it appears that “dictation” is the way that the book of Abraham was produced or given, and “translation” is the word used to describe the project as a whole. See.

which have traditionally been classified as separately. Additional material from 2018 calls the Book of Mormon a “*revelatory translation*”¹¹⁴.

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE AND SEALINGS

Celestial marriage was a concept introduced around 1842 where sealings became a marriage for the after-life. This doctrine was a modification of proposals made by Swedenborg. The term Celestial Marriage when used in the church was synonymous to Plural Marriage until at least 1890.

A brief history of events:

- In the early church, marriage was a civil matter in the policy statement included as section 101 in the 1835 edition of the D&C. At the Kirtland temple, marriages were open to the public (including non-members) and parties afterwards included dancing and alcohol.
- Celestial marriage or sealings were viewed as a religious ceremony associated with the temple rather than a legal ceremony, as plural marriages were illegal within the United States, Mexico, and Canada during the entire time that they were sanctioned by the LDS church.
- The term “celestial marriage” as used in D&C 132 and in the early church up to 1890 refers only to plural marriage. This was a requirement to get into the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. The following was stated by Joseph F. Smith to congress under oath:

We formerly taught to our people that **polygamy or Celestial Marriage** as commanded by God through Joseph Smith was right; that it was a **necessity to man’s highest exaltation in the life to come**. That doctrine was publicly promulgated by our president, the late Brigham Young, forty years ago, and was steadily taught and impressed upon the Latter-Day Saints up to September, 1890.¹¹⁵

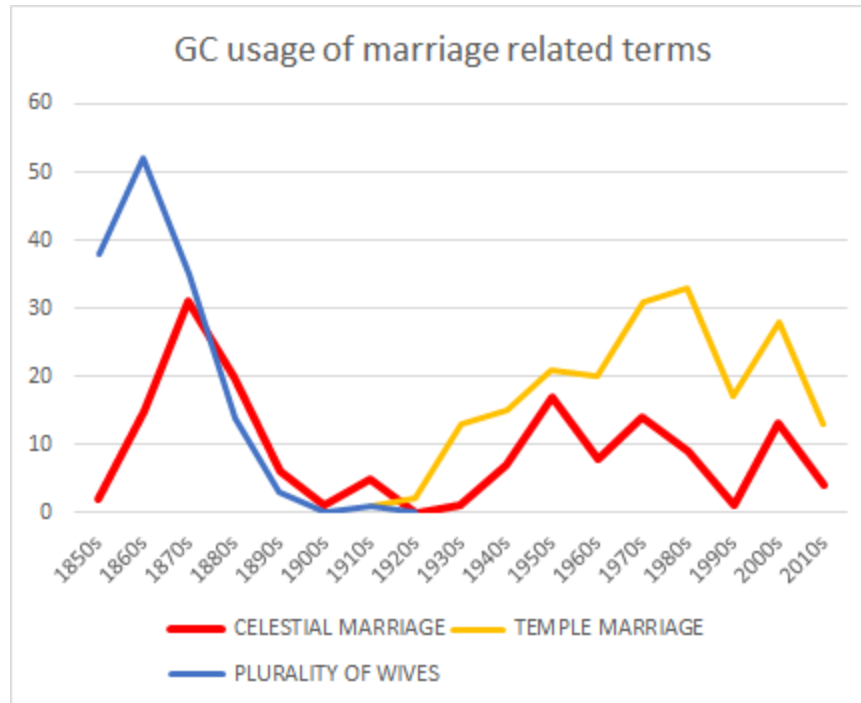
Another church leader made it clear that celestial marriage and plural marriage were the same in his 1887 conference address:

Men who have entered into **celestial marriage** -- that is, *those who have taken plural wives* -- are barred from taking the oath.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Referring to the Kinderhook plates: “Joseph evidently did not attempt a *revelatory translation* as he had done with the Book of Mormon plates” see: <https://www.lds.org/study/history/topics/kinderhook-plates?lang=eng>

¹¹⁵ Joseph F. Smith - Reed Smoot Case, vol. 1 p. 18.

¹¹⁶ Angus M. Cannon, 1887, in a general conference address. He was referring to taking an oath against plural marriage as required by a federal law at the time.



Marriage terms as used in general conference. Note that celestial marriage has two peaks: One associated with the traditional definition (plural marriage) and then a new one after the 1940s associated with the new definition – Temple Marriage.

- By 1930¹¹⁷ or so when it became clear that plural marriage would not come back to the mainstream church, celestial marriage referred to any marriage performed in the temple, and by this time plural marriages were not practiced in the mainstream church. Celestial marriage was hereafter defined as a typical, dual partner (opposite sex) relationship that had been performed in the temple.
- Sealings in the early church were mostly associated with polygamous marriages. Joseph was sealed to more than 30 women, but never sealed to his biological children during his lifetime (even though it is argued by church apologists that these powers had been around for 8 years prior to his death).
- During the early days in Utah (1850-1880s), sealings took various forms. Men were sealed in the temple generally when they were to be married to more than one woman. Men were also sealed to men of higher priesthood. This was a non-sexual union believed to give the men with the lesser priesthood an advantage in the afterlife. In one case, a former servant to Joseph Smith (Jane Manning) who was black asked to be sealed to her family. After being rejected based on the 'curse of Ham' or 'curse of Cain' doctrine, she was finally allowed to be sealed to Joseph Smith as an eternal servant¹¹⁸. This is the only known case of this type of sealing.¹¹⁹

BOOK OF MORMON AND THE LAMANITES

¹¹⁷ This change occurred between 1890 and 1930, but is hard to date exactly as there was likely a transition.

¹¹⁸ Even though she was sealed to Joseph Smith as a slave, her part in the ceremony was done by proxy because she could not go into the temple (because of her race).

¹¹⁹ <http://churchofthefridge.com/sealed-as-a-slave-the-disrespect-of-jane-manning/> In 1978, Mormons believe that Jane was finally sealed to her biological family in a proxy ceremony for the dead.

Among other things, one of the main claims of the Book of Mormon is that it can identify how the Americas were originally populated. This was a topic of great interest in the late 18th and early 19th century prior to the land-bridge theories and DNA testing. In these earlier centuries, many people believed that Adam lived in 4000 BC and that the populating of the Americas would have come after the flood which occurred about 2304 BC.¹²⁰

The claim that Native Americans were descendants of Lehi was taught by Joseph Smith when he commanded people in the name of the Lord to preach to the Lamanites. Early church leaders in some cases recommended that male members take plural wives from among the Native Americans to help to fulfill the prophecy that they would become a “white and delightsome” people.

Spencer W. Kimball stated in 1971:

(Lehi, the family patriarch, was) the **ancestor of all of the Indian** and Mestizo tribes in North and South and Central America and in the islands of the sea.¹²¹

Regarding Native Americans, the title page in the Book of Mormon from 1981-2007 read:

After thousands of years, all were destroyed except the Lamanites, and they are the ***principal ancestors*** of the American Indians.

After 2007, it read:

After thousands of years, all were destroyed except the Lamanites, and they are ***among the ancestors*** of the American Indians.

In 1993 (and 2016¹²²), Elder Nelson narrowed the scope of the claims of the Book of Mormon when he stated:

There are some things that the Book of Mormon is not. **It is not a text of history**, although *some history* is found within its pages. It is not a definitive work on ancient American agriculture or politics. It is not a record of all former inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere, but only of *particular groups* of people.¹²³

In spite of narrowing the scope of the Native American ancestry and historical claims, the book of Mormon is still *defined* as being more accurate than the Bible and is used to test the correctness of Biblical translations:

The most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical translation is not by comparing different texts, but by comparison with the Book of Mormon and modern-day revelations.¹²⁴

Members are warned that if they do not read it at least 15-30 minutes a day, they may lose their testimony. In 1986, a renewed focus on the Book of Mormon was instituted by the then leader of the church, Ezra T. Benson.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ <http://creation.com/the-date-of-noahs-flood>

¹²¹ http://archive.satrib.com/story.php?ref=/lds/ci_7403990

¹²² <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865657216/The-Book-of-Mormon-is-a-miraculous-miracle-says-President-Russell-M-Nelson-at-2016-Seminar-for.html?pg=all>

¹²³ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1993/07/a-treasured-testament?lang=eng>

¹²⁴ <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/selected-church-policies/21.1?lang=eng&r=1#211> section 21.1.7

¹²⁵ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1986/10/the-book-of-mormon-keystone-of-our-religion?lang=eng&r=1>

INFALLIBILITY OF PROPHETS

Prophets within Mormonism act as God's mouthpiece. They can speak as prophets, and as such they are regarded as infallible. However, they are also human and sometimes speak as "men". When they speak as 'men', they are allowed to be in error. In practice, this usually means that whenever they have said something which is clearly in error, it is said that they must have spoken that as a man and not as a prophet.

The converse is also true. When church leaders say something that might be prophetic, it can be ignored until it appears that it might have been fulfilled, whereupon this prophecy is canonized.¹²⁶

This doctrine or method of dealing with prophetic errors was established very early on. In 1832, Joseph had a revelation that Oliver should go to Canada to sell the copyright to the Book of Mormon. However, they were unsuccessful on this trip. Peter Whittmer later wrote:

Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: **"Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of men: and some revelations are of the devil."** So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copyright was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man.¹²⁷

In 1842, Dr. William Richards stated:

Sometimes Mr. Smith speaks as mere man. If he gave a wrong opinion respecting the book, he spoke as a mere man.¹²⁸

Brigham Young taught that everything that he said from the pulpit was doctrine. He further stated that essentially everything he taught was not his own teaching, but rather something that he learned from Joseph Smith. He freely admitted that Joseph was a seer – someone with the power to use stones to see things – and that he was not.

We are not accountable on points of doctrine if the President makes a statement. It is not our prerogative to dispute it. He is only accountable in points of doctrine. I have heard President Young avow the truth of Adam being our Father and God but have never heard him argue the question at all.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Section 87, said to predict the civil war is a good case in point. It was added in 1876, 16 years after the civil war started. The outbreak of war which is predicted could and likely did refer to ongoing rebellions in the year in which it was given (1832). Of these rebellions, Joseph Smith wrote in History of the Church (vol. 1, pg.301): "The people of South Carolina, in convention assembled (in November), passed ordinances, declaring their state a free and independent nation...President Jackson issued his proclamation against this rebellion, called out a force sufficient to quell it, and implored the blessings of God to assist the nation to extricate itself from the horrors of the approaching and solemn crisis." When these rebellions did not lead to the predicted war, this section was left out of the 1835 and 1844 editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. However, when the civil war did occur around 1860s, many saw this early writing as prophetic and began to preach that Joseph Smith had predicted the civil war. Some parts of the prophecy or prediction, such as that "war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place" never occurred. See <http://www.mrm.org/civil-war>

¹²⁷ Whittmer, An address to Believers in Christ.

¹²⁸ <http://www.mormonthink.com/greekweb.htm>

¹²⁹ Elder Abraham B. Smoot, "Minutes of the School of the Prophets," pp. 37-42, June 8, 1868.

The doctrine of infallibility was introduced around 1883, but reinforced in 1890 to help members support the idea of ending Polygamy¹³⁰.

"I say to Israel, **the Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this church to lead you astray.** It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty."¹³¹

In 1981, Ezra Taft Benson made a strong case for infallibility of leadership in his talk, "Fourteen fundamentals in following the prophet".¹³²

- First: The prophet is the only man who **speaks for the Lord in everything.**
- Second: The living prophet is **more vital to us than the Standard Works.**
- Third: The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet.
- Fourth: The prophet **will never lead the Church astray.**
- Fifth: The prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or diplomas to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time.
- Sixth: **The prophet does not have to say "Thus saith the Lord" to give us scripture.**
- Seventh: The prophet tells us what we need to know, not always what we want to know.
- Eighth: The Prophet is not limited by men's reasoning.
- Ninth: **The prophet can receive revelation on any matter—temporal or spiritual.**
- Tenth: **The prophet may well advise on civic matters.**
- Eleventh: The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich.
- Twelfth: The prophet will not necessarily be popular with the world or the worldly.
- Thirteenth: The prophet and his counselors make up the First Presidency—The highest quorum in the Church.
- Fourteenth: The prophet and the presidency—the living prophet and the First Presidency—follow them and be blessed—reject them and suffer.

Spencer W. Kimball rebuked Benson for his talk after it was given. However, this talk, was repeated and affirmed (in an abbreviated message outlining the same points) at the 2010 general conference.¹³³

¹³⁰ This was especially important because Mormon leaders in the decade prior had stated that if the church ended polygamy, it would be in a state of apostasy.

¹³¹ The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 212–13. This is essentially a repeat of a quote from Joseph F. Smith in General conference from 1883, "If any man in that position should become unfaithful, God would remove him out of his place. I testify in the name of Israel's God that He will not suffer the head of the Church, him whom He has chosen to stand at the head, to transgress His laws and apostatize; the moment he should take a course that would in time lead to it, God would take him away. Why? Because to suffer a wicked man to occupy that position, would be to allow, as it were, the fountain to become corrupted, which is something He will never permit."

¹³² <https://www.lds.org/liahona/1981/06/fourteen-fundamentals-in-following-the-prophet?lang=eng>

¹³³ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/obedience-to-the-prophets?lang=eng>

Other church leaders have stated that false doctrines are taught in the church. Eugene England wrote a letter to Bruce R. McConkie (a Mormon apostle) in 1981 regarding both this doctrine and the eternal progression of God. In his reply he condemned this doctrine as false, McConkie went on to state:

I do not know all of the providences of the Lord, but I do know that ***he permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality. We will be judged by what we believe*** among other things. ***If we believe false doctrine, we will be condemned.***¹³⁴

Apostle McConkie went on to explain:

It is my province to teach to the Church what the doctrine is. *It is your province to echo what I say or to remain silent.*¹³⁵

In 2013, it appears that church leaders are now allowed to be fallible again – at least in some cases.

And, to be perfectly frank, there have been times when members or leaders in the Church have simply made mistakes. There may have been things said or done that were not in harmony with our values, principles, or doctrine.¹³⁶

The church teaches that modern revelation takes precedence over revelation in the past.

Speaking under the direction of the Holy Ghost, the **living prophet's words take precedence over other statements on the same issue**. His inspired counsel is in harmony with the eternal truths in the standard works and is focused upon the needs and conditions of his day.¹³⁷

Note:

- That the living prophet's words take precedence over other statements on the issue (which could include the words of Christ) is preceded by the phrase "*speaking under the direction of the Holy Ghost*". Thus, anything said that turns out to be false or awkward can later be defined as something which was not *under the direction of the Holy Ghost*.
- The words are defined to be "in harmony with the eternal truths in the standard works", even though the phrase "take precedence" implies that they are something new or different.¹³⁸

POLICY

The difference between policy and doctrine is sometimes negligible. Whenever doctrines are changed however, the old doctrine becomes a "policy" by default. Policies are allowed to change, whereas Doctrines are "eternal".

¹³⁴ <http://www.mrm.org/bruce-mcconkies-rebuke-of-eugene-england>

¹³⁵ <http://www.eugeneengland.org/a-professor-and-apostle-correspond-eugene-england-and-bruce-r-mcconkie-on-the-nature-of-god>

¹³⁶ Uchtdorf, 2013. <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/come-join-with-us?lang=eng>

¹³⁷ <https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-of-the-living-prophets-student-manual/chapter-2-the-living-prophet-the-president-of-the-church?lang=eng>

¹³⁸ See also <http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/2014/10/how-to-become-apostate-in-one-afternoon.html> for an excellent coverage of this topic.

Doctrines are eternal and do not change; however, the Lord, through His prophet, may change *practices and programs*, according to the needs of the people.¹³⁹

Failed prophecies, such as the prediction that man would never go into space or that the moon was peopled by beings that dressed like Quakers are also redefined to be non-doctrinal and the personal opinions of the prophets who stated them:

Some people also stumble over statements made by Church leaders that have turned out to be incorrect, *not about doctrine but in their personal opinions*.¹⁴⁰

In some cases, policies are said to be received by revelation¹⁴¹. This may serve to further blur the line between doctrine and policy.

RELABELING TERMS

Around 2017, Endowment rooms were relabeled to be called “instruction rooms”¹⁴².

In April of 2018, the LDS church retired or rebranded their “Home and Visiting Teaching” programs and now calls the modified program “Ministering”¹⁴³.

DOCTRINES DEALING WITH SEX AND GENDER

JOSEPH SMITH - INTRODUCTION OF POLYGAMY

Modern readers may have a tendency to think of early America as a place of moral uprightness and Victorian virtues. In fact, *bundling* – a practice where a man might spend the night and share the bed of his courtship interest was common in the mid 18th century and continued in parts of New England into the early 19th century¹⁴⁴. Around the 1750s, as many as 1/3 of all brides were pregnant at the time of marriage.

We know very little regarding the early sexuality of Joseph Smith. Here is what can be stated with some certainty:

- 1) Joseph met Emma in 1825 while on a treasure hunting mission where he was using his stone to look for buried treasure. Her father was one of the supporters of the dig. Joseph married Emma Hale on Jan 18, 1827¹⁴⁵. They eloped to South Bainbridge, New York. This marriage was in opposition to her father’s wishes.
- 2) Her (Isaac Hale) father did not believe in Joseph’s supernatural gifts at the time of their marriage, in part due to his failure to find any buried treasure during a month-long search. In spite of this, he promised to

¹³⁹ <https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-of-the-living-prophets-student-manual/chapter-2-the-living-prophet-the-president-of-the-church?lang=eng>

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2015/03/when-doubts-and-questions-arise?lang=eng#>

¹⁴¹ This was the case for the Nov 2015 policy, which Nelson claimed was received by revelation.

¹⁴² https://youtu.be/XCLZ-F_LV90?t=224

¹⁴³ <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/04/02/no-more-mormon-home-and-visiting-teaching-outreach-will-be-a-holier-ministering/>

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Bundling.aspx>

¹⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Smith

forgive Joseph (presumably for lying and tricking his employer) if he would stop using the stone and work as a farmer. Joseph evidently promised to do this around 1827 but gave up around 1828 and continued working on the book of Mormon^{xii}, using the brown seer stone.¹⁴⁶

- 3) In 1831, a revelation was given that stated that men should marry Lamanites so that their seed could become “white and delightsome”. In 1834, this was interpreted by Joseph Smith to mean that married men would be marrying these Native Americans in polygamous relationships.¹⁴⁷
- 4) The first documented extramarital relation of Joseph was with Fanny Alger, probably sometime between 1833-1836. She was living with the family at this time working as a hired servant. According to at least one contemporary account, Emma had adopted her as a daughter. While it is unlikely that there was a legal adoption, records confirm that they were emotionally close. When Emma discovered the sexual relationship, she drove Fanny out of the house¹⁴⁸.
- 5) The “sealing power” was claimed to be restored in 1836 at the Kirtland Temple. This claim was made years after the event and not made by Joseph during his lifetime. After this event took place, Mormons claim the plural marriages were legitimate in the eyes of God, even though they were illegal in all of the political entities where they were undertaken during the 19th century (USA, Canada, Mexico). Early on, these relationships were prosecuted using the anti-bigamy laws. From about the 1870s onward, the US government also established anti-polygamy laws.
- 6) In 1835, the following declaration on marriage was added to the Mormon scriptural cannon (Doctrine and Covenants):

In as much as ***this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy***: we declare that *we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband*, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.¹⁴⁹

This section was added when Joseph was out of town. It is possible that this prohibition was added due to rumors about his sexuality (or potentially that of other members) at this relatively early date.

- 7) Joseph became a free mason on Mar 15th, 1842.
- 8) Joseph became the master free mason in Nauvoo on Mar 16th, 1842.
- 9) The modified mason ceremony was first used for sealings on May 4, 1842¹⁵⁰. These were sometimes performed in the woods outside of Nauvoo.

¹⁴⁶ Emma is considered reliable in this case and points to the brown stone, but some other sources point to him using his white or cream colored seer stone.

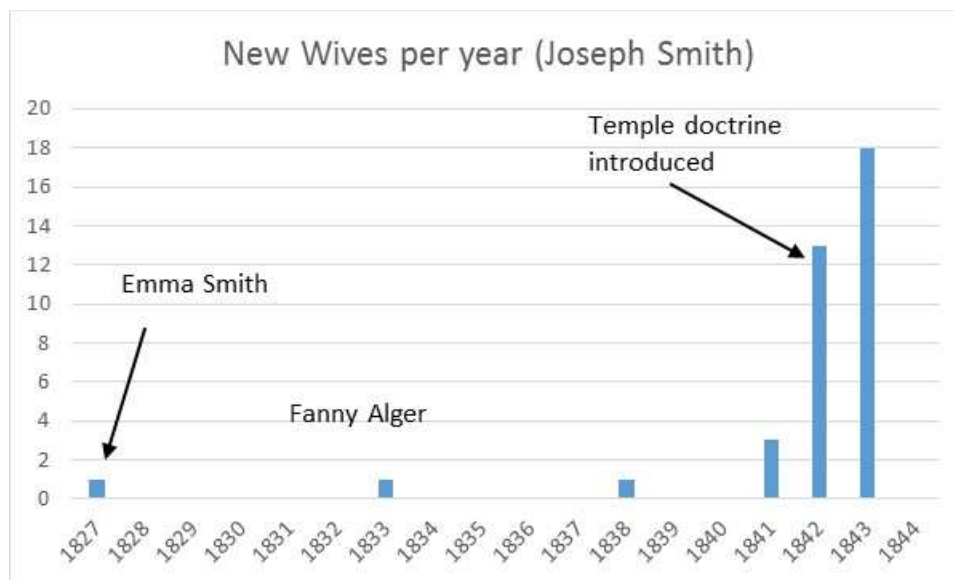
¹⁴⁷ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origin_of_Latter_Day_Saint_polygamy

¹⁴⁸ Quinn points out in *Origins of Power* that Oliver Cowdrey and other early church leaders also likely had adulterous affairs and that this did not automatically disqualify them from leadership in the eyes of their people.

¹⁴⁹ Doctrine and Covenants (1835 ed.), section 101, p. 251. Removed in 1876. This section also goes into some detail to describe marriage as a *legal relationship*. The timing of this statement is curious, and may indicate that the Fanny Alger affair or something similar happened prior to this publication.

¹⁵⁰ <http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Nauvoo>

- 10) John C. Bennett¹⁵¹, the assistant president of the church from 1841 to 1842, was excommunicated for “spiritual wivery” on May 11, 1842¹⁵². This practice appears to have started around 1841, which corresponds to the timeframe when Joseph began taking large numbers of suitors. The practice was publically condemned, even though in many ways it resembled what would later be known as polygamy. Some speculate that polygamy as a doctrine formed at this time and that previous sexual relationships that Joseph had could best be described as affairs or adultery. According to some contemporary accounts, Bennett performed abortions on women who may have been made pregnant by Joseph Smith^{xiii}.
- 11) Between 1838 and 1844, Joseph had relations or “sealings” to more than 30 women, of which at least 14 were married. It appears that at least one of these was non-sexual in nature. He would at least sometimes tell the women that an angel with a flaming sword had appeared to him and threatened that they would kill him if he did not take them as a plural wife¹⁵³. He also promised salvation to both themselves and their extended family in exchange for their obedience in becoming a plural wife.



- 12) Marriages accelerated between 1842 and 1844 when Joseph was sealed to at least 20 women. This corresponded to the adoption of Masonry within the male membership of Mormonism. The total estimate of wives or affairs varies, but credible sources indicate 30 or more, with most putting the number close to 35.
- 13) Joseph was upset by the distribution of the “Nauvoo expositor”. It was published with the help of William Law, a former member of the first presidency who had become upset and left the church after Joseph

¹⁵¹ Bennett was given a high leadership position in the Mormon movement in part as a reward for securing the Nauvoo Charter which gave early Mormons and Joseph Smith a high degree of independence from other state and local governments. Both Mormons and non-Mormons agree that he was basically a con-man. He was a doctor and some claim that he performed abortions on women to help to hide polygamy of Joseph and others. He is also credited with creating a new chicken breed, the Plymouth Rock. See:

http://www.geauga4h.org/poultry/chicken_breeds.htm .

¹⁵² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_C._Bennett

¹⁵³ At least 9 individuals made this claim. See <https://youtu.be/AciIEmqLUic?t=1245>

Smith tried to seduce his wife¹⁵⁴. One of the main claims of the paper was that Joseph Smith had multiple wives. The other was that Joseph was becoming a dictator and that he had been anointed as a King by the Council of the Fifty. Joseph denied these claims¹⁵⁵. The newspaper is considered by some historians to be mild in terms of the accusations made vs. those which could have been made by the authors. In any case, Joseph, with the help of the city council, ordered that the press be destroyed and it was. This upset local non-Mormons and led to his incarceration and later death. One of the two charges during this final incarceration was for adultery¹⁵⁶.

Most of the documentation which exists regarding Joseph's polygamy was collected at the direction of LDS leaders between about 1865 and 1890 for the purpose of justifying polygamy within Mormonism and to refute claims of authority coming from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (RLDS) which was reconstituted in 1860.¹⁵⁷

POLYGAMY (POLYGYNY AND POLYANDRY) – AN OVERVIEW

Polygamy was practiced by the mainstream LDS church in various degrees between about 1842 and 1920. It is still a belief, and will be "practiced in the eternities". The practice varied so widely that using the single term to describe the various practices is limiting. It might be more useful to think of polygamy in terms of periods which loosely merge together.

- 1) **The adultery period - 1832-1838:** During this period, Joseph was caught having sex with Fanny Alger, and was alleged to have had sex with others. The framework and theology for polygamy had not been constructed in any detail, and relationships might best be described as they were by Oliver Cowdrey – as a "dirty, nasty affair"¹⁵⁸.
- 2) **The polygyny and polyandry period – 1838-1842:** During this period, Joseph started to formalize the practice and structural framework. Perhaps in order to make it more shameful for the women than himself if he were to be caught, during this period 9 of the 11 known 'wives' were married to other men when Joseph had relationships with them.
- 3) **The secretive years, part 1 – 1842-1843:** The taking of wives accelerated during this period, and 20 of the 21 wives Joseph took during this period were not married. In 1842, modified mason ceremonies including the endowment were constructed to formalize the secret nature of the relationships into a theological context. In 1843, Joseph dictated what would later be known as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants which outline the formal principles of how polygamy would be practiced going forward. According to these principles, the man was required to marry virgins. In 1844 Joseph was killed, primarily as a response to the destruction of a press which he ordered. The press published only one paper, an expose detailing allegations of polygamy and some actions of the council of the 50.
- 4) **The secretive years, part 2 - 1844-1852:** Brigham continues to practice polygamy in a similar way to Joseph. He teaches that the person who has the higher priesthood has the right to women (over their

¹⁵⁴ Joseph requested the wives of the bulk of the 12 apostles of the church at that time, though he did not marry all of them.

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Smith said, "some say that I have 7 wives. How can this be given that I can find only one?". In fact, he had been involved in relationships with at least 30 women by this time.

¹⁵⁶ As there was no legal framework for polygamy at the time, all sexual relations with women other than his legal wife (Emma) would have been considered by the courts to be adulterous.

¹⁵⁷ See for example <https://archive.org/details/bloodatonementor00smit>

¹⁵⁸ See <https://archive.org/stream/josephsmithproph00wylwrich#page/58/mode/2up> pgs 58-60 for additional information.

husbands), and uses this logic to take at least one woman from her faithful and loving husband. The Nauvoo temple is completed and sealings are performed for Brigham, Joseph (by other living people on his behalf), and many others.

- 5) **The open years – 1852-1884:** Polygamy is formally acknowledged in Utah, though it is still denied in many cases by the missionaries preaching and converting new recruits in Europe. The practice peaks during the Mormon Reformation around 1857-1858 which is also the period when the average of women getting married is at its minimum. Preaching on the topic in General Conference reaches a peak in the 1870s and 1880s where it is often claimed that it is required and a restoration of truth from the Old Testament.
- 6) **The “do-or-die” years – 1884-1890:** Polygamy is made a requirement for all church leaders (Bishops, Stake Presidents, etc). Some leaders teach that a minimum of 3 wives is required for exaltation. Many are imprisoned or hide from federal authorities. John Taylor dies in hiding after writing what many consider to be a revelation that polygamy will never end¹⁵⁹.
- 7) **The “we don’t practice it, wink wink” years – 1890-1904:** Polygamy is officially abolished by Wilford Woodruff in the USA and Utah gains statehood. Polygamy and the taking of new wives continues for some, especially high church leaders who in many cases not only continue to live with all of their wives, but also take new ones.
- 8) **The “no, we really don’t practice it” years – 1904-1930:** After the Smoot hearings, the 2nd manifesto is issued. Two Apostles who keep marrying and approving polygamist wives are removed from the quorum. Many people who have multiple wives continue to live with them and have sexual relations and children. This is allowed by the wording of the temple ceremony until about 1930.
- 9) **Those that are not with us are against us – 1930-2000:** Yes, we used to practice polygamy, but if you try it we are going to excommunicate you¹⁶⁰. Don’t do it, it’s a felony¹⁶¹. That said, we really admire our polygamist ancestors and all of the struggles that they went through to live the fullness of the Gospel.
- 10) **Polygamy “that was so long ago” – 2000 – present:** Yes, some people practiced it a long time ago, but that was just a crazy exception to *God’s normal law*, which is monogamy. In 2013, the introduction to Official Declaration 1 was rewritten to reflect this new attitude¹⁶².

The practice of polygamy was first acknowledged publically in a statement given by Orson Pratt on August 29, 1852¹⁶³. It had been a more or less open secret after about 1844, with rumors starting around 1842. There was a section in the doctrine and covenants specifically prohibiting polygamy from 1835 until 1876. Due to this early date, it is clear that accusations regarding the practice started very early in the church, which hints that the extramarital relationships may have occurred around this time¹⁶⁴. The policy is as follows:

¹⁵⁹ This revelation is disputed by many and it is difficult to prove whether or not it is authentic. It was first made public around 1904. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1886_Revelation for additional information.

¹⁶⁰ The “Third Manifesto” was issued by Heber J. Grant in 1933 and marks this change in practice. This is similar in timing to changes in the law of chastity in the temple.

¹⁶¹ Bigamy was made a felony in 1935 in Utah. It is one of the few states where it is a felony.

¹⁶² See <https://bycommonconsent.com/2013/02/28/groundbreaking-scriptural-heading-changes-dc-132-and-official-declaration-1/> for an overview.

¹⁶³ http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Plural_Marriage. It is somewhat ironic that he gave this address, given that he had been excommunicated only 10 years early when he stood by his wife who said that Joseph Smith had tried to take her as a spiritual wife when he was serving a mission in England. She refused, and was accused by Joseph Smith of having an adulterous affair with William Bennett. See: <http://www.mormonthink.com/glossary/orson-pratt.htm>

¹⁶⁴ Both Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had extramarital relations around this time.

In as much as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of *fornication, and polygamy*: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.¹⁶⁵

This section was replaced by Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which explains and justifies polygamy in 1876.

Throughout her lifetime, Emma Smith denied that Joseph ever practiced polygamy and placed the blame/responsibility for the practice squarely with Brigham Young¹⁶⁶. In fact, she was probably aware of the practice at some level, at least with respect to a few of Joseph's wives¹⁶⁷. She taught vigorously against the practice in the Relief Society. For this reason, Joseph Smith suspended all meetings of the society in March of 1844. He died in June of that year. Thereafter Brigham Young disbanded the organization. The Relief Society was added as an LDS institution again in 1867, though there were smaller ward-level organizations in some places in the intermediate years.

The first 3 presidents of the relief society: Emma Smith (1842-1844), Eliza R. Snow (1866-1877), and Zina D. H. Young (1888-1901) had all been plural wives of Joseph Smith. The latter two were also plural wives to Brigham Young. Early presidents of the Relief society had the calling for life, and in many ways it was the female equivalent calling to that of the prophet.

Polygamy probably took a hard toll on many families. It certainly took a hard toll on Emma and many of the early women whose husbands engaged in the practice. In the 1870s and 1880s, Utah's divorce rate was among the highest in the nation.¹⁶⁸ Early presidents of the church had many wives, but also many divorces. Divorces decreased after the declaration to end polygamy, and reached their lowest levels in the 1950s and 60s before the rate started to increase again.

JUSTIFICATION OF POLYGAMY

The primary justification outlined for polygamy is found in Doctrine and Covenants section 132, which remains canonized LDS scripture (1876-present).

Some other justifications of polygamy given between 1831-1890 by prominent church leaders include:

- 1) It was approved by God for Abraham, David, Solomon, and others and was required as the restoration of all things.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Doctrine and Covenants (1835 ed.), section 101 vs 4, p. 251. Removed in 1876.

¹⁶⁶ Emma denied this to her son, who was the leader of the Restored Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, one of the many splinter groups. He traveled to Utah to investigate claims regarding polygamy. In order to prove that they were the "True Church", many older women belonging to the LDS movement in the 1880s gave statements regarding how they had been married to Joseph Smith. This is where much of the evidence for his polygamy comes from.

¹⁶⁷ Emma evidently agreed to the practice and allowed Joseph to marry the Partridge sisters at one point. Joseph purportedly required this for her to be able to participate in Temple ceremonies that he said were required for her salvation. What she did not know at the time was that the marriage ceremony that was performed for her benefit took place several months after he had married the two in private and started having sexual relations with them. She also reportedly drove our Fanny Alger years earlier when she caught her and Joseph sharing intimacies.

¹⁶⁸ Michael Quinn, as quoted here: http://mormoncurtain.com/topic_temples_section.html

¹⁶⁹ See D&C section 132 and <https://youtu.be/AciEMqLUic?t=1295>

- 2) It was practiced by both God the Father and Jesus Christ^{xiv}, both in time (mortality) and in eternity.¹⁷⁰
- 3) It was required in order to (literally) make the Native Americans into a “white and delightsome” people through intermarriage with Caucasian men.¹⁷¹
- 4) Monogamy was claimed to have been instituted by the founders of the Roman Empire (“the mistress of the world”) and a “system established by a set of robbers”.¹⁷²
- 5) The “Monogamic system” was claimed to be the “fruitful source of prostitution and whoredom throughout all the Christian monogamic cities of the Old and New World...”¹⁷³.
- 6) Polygamy would solve the issues of prostitution¹⁷⁴.
- 7) Polygamy “is far superior to monogamy for the raising of healthy, robust children!”¹⁷⁵
- 8) Polygamy was required for salvation. Failure to practice it (when one could) would cause damnation.¹⁷⁶

Brigham Young taught: “The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.”¹⁷⁷

THE TRANSITION FROM POLYGAMY AS A CORE DOCTRINE

Mormons vigorously fought the federal anti-polygamy including the Edmunds-Tucker act of 1887. By no later than the early 1850s, Mormons believed that polygamy was a requirement from God that could not be changed. Statements made by the leaders of the church between 1849 and 1890 include the following:

1 Feb, 1849 - First counselor Heber C. Kimball tells Sunday meeting that plural marriage "would end he said when the Church had gone to the Devil or the Priesthood taken from this people - then God would give it to another people." ¹⁷⁸

“The principle of plurality of wives never will be done away...”¹⁷⁹

“You might as well deny ‘Mormonism,’ and turn away from it, as to oppose the plurality of wives.”¹⁸⁰

I bear my testimony that it is a necessity, and that the Church of Christ in its fullness never existed without it. *Where you have the eternity of marriage you are bound to have plural marriage*; bound to; and it is one of the marks of the Church of Jesus Christ in its sealing ordinances.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁰ The Seer, pg 172, Apostle Orson Pratt.

¹⁷¹ See The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed, Cincinnati, 1852, pp. 58-59 as quoted in The Changing World of Mormonism, Tanner, pg 212.

¹⁷² Brigham Young, as quoted in Deseret News, Aug 6 1862 (further quoted in Tanner, Changing World of Mormonism, p.248).

¹⁷³ Journal of Discourses vol. 11 p. 128 as quoted in Tanner p.248.

¹⁷⁴ <https://youtu.be/AciIEmqLUic?t=1215>

¹⁷⁵ Journal of Discourses, vol 13, p. 317 as quoted in Tanner p. 249.

¹⁷⁶ Journal of Discourses, vol 20, pp 28-31. Joseph F. Smith stated in part “I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that *every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall be damned.*”

¹⁷⁷ Brigham Young (Journal of Discourses 11:269)

¹⁷⁸ The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power, Quinn 1997. See: <http://www.exmormon.org/mormon/mormon036.htm>

¹⁷⁹ Apostle Heber C. Kimball, Deseret News, November 7, 1855

¹⁸⁰ Apostle Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses, v. 5, p. 203

¹⁸¹ Apostle George Teasdale (quorum of the 12 from 1882-1907), Journal of Discourses, v. 25, pp. 19-22

According to the history of Salt Lake, the Latter-day Saints Millennial Star printed the following:

Shortly before the revelation known as the manifesto (which put a stop to the practice of polygamy) was given, Lorenzo Snow, who later became President of the Mormon Church, was declaring that no such revelation would ever come. When Lorenzo Snow was on trial for practicing polygamy, Mr. Bierbower (the prosecuting attorney) predicted that if he was convicted, 'a new revelation would soon follow, changing the divine law of celestial marriage.' To this Mr. Snow replied: "Whatever fame Mr. Bierbower may have secured as a lawyer, he certainly will fail as a prophet. The severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law, obedience to which brought imprisonment or martyrdom.

'Though I go to prison, God will not change his law of celestial marriage. But the man, the people, the nation, that oppose and fight against this doctrine and the Church of God, will be overthrown."¹⁸²

Between at least 1855 and 1890, polygamy was considered to be a higher law. Section 132 of the doctrine and covenants¹⁸³ teaches that in heaven there are 3 glories or degrees and that "in order to attain the highest, man must enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage." If he does not, "he cannot have an increase". The "new and everlasting covenant" or "celestial marriage" referred specifically to polygamy for all of the 19th and into the beginning of the 20th century. This doctrine—that man could become as god and have eternal increase by becoming the parents to spirits in an afterlife—may be uniquely Mormon. Plural marriage was considered superior to having a single spouse. As "persecution" for living this *higher law* intensified, Mormon leaders became more entrenched. Beginning in 1882, those who were not living the Patriarchal Law of Marriage could not be stake presidents or hold higher offices in the church¹⁸⁴. On April 6, 1884¹⁸⁵, Abraham H. Cannon commented in his journal:

At a Priesthood meeting... the strongest language in regard to Plural Marriage was used that I ever heard, and among other things it was stated that all men in position who would not observe and fulfill that law should be removed from their places.¹⁸⁶

About a month later, Heber J. Grant who would later become the 7th president of the church from 1918—1945, married his 2nd and 3rd wives on May 26-27th 1884. The mandate to do so was originally given as a requirement for him to be put into the quorum of the 12 and given to him via a revelation to John Taylor in 1882¹⁸⁷.

¹⁸² History of Salt Lake City, page 105. <https://books.google.com/books?id=fNkBAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA105&lpg=RA1-PA105&dq=God+will+not+change+his+law+of+celestial+marriage&source=bl&ots=PoDtQHfy2D&sig=kHcx47LmV0NokOd8LUyduVZV6N0&hl=sv&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjZp9W-ssnQAhUmlIQKHZstAZoQ6AEIJDAB#v=onepage&q=God%20will%20not%20change%20his%20law%20of%20celestial%20marriage&f=false>

¹⁸³ Section 132, outlining the justification for plural marriage was added to the Mormon canon in 1876, approximately 40 years after Smith started the practice and 34 years after it was first recorded. The practice was officially stopped 14 years later.

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.yorgalily.org/~yorgasor/church/MiscRevelations/RevJohn%20Taylor-1882.html> See the 1882 revelation to John Taylor and the entry from Wilford Woodruff's diary from Oct 13, 1882.

¹⁸⁵ Note that Heber J. Grant took his 2nd and 3rd wives a day on May 26-27th 1884. This may have had to do with the reiteration of this new requirement.

¹⁸⁶ Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pg. 269.

¹⁸⁷ D. Michael Quinn at 1:18:30 on this interview: <https://nakedmormonismpodcast.com/episode-153-d-michael-quinn-pt-1/> Oct 1882 revelation.

Because all of the leaders were required to be polygamists, the interment of all polygamists by the federal government hit the church particularly hard. Properties were seized and financial ruin of the movement was a very real possibility.

Colonies in Mexico and Canada were set up in 1885 and 1887 respectively in an attempt to avoid the effects of the Edmunds Tucker act. The Mexican colonies¹⁸⁸ were largely successful in this regard and new polygamist marriages continued to be performed under the approval of church authorities up to about 1904. However, Canadian authorities did not agree to allow citizens there to practice polygamy and it appears that members generally kept the pledge that their leader made to not engage in polygamy. Settlers there generally took one of their wives and left the remaining wife(s) behind in Utah.

After legal appeals had been exhausted, in 1890, Wilford Woodruff¹⁸⁹, the 4th leader of the Mormon faith, declared that Mormons had abandoned the practice in a statement given at general conference. The statement became known as Official Declaration 1 and was published in the Doctrine and Covenants:

To Whom It May Concern:

Press dispatches having been sent for political purposes, ...(that) allege that plural marriages are still being solemnized and that forty or more such marriages have been contracted *in Utah* since last June or during the past year, also that in public discourses the leaders of the Church have taught, encouraged and urged the continuance of the practice of polygamy—

I, therefore, as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby, in the most solemn manner, declare that these charges are false. We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice, and I deny that either forty or any other number of plural marriages have during that period been solemnized in our Temples or in any other place *in the Territory*¹⁹⁰.

... Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise.

There is nothing in my teachings to the Church or in those of my associates, during the time specified, which can be reasonably construed to inculcate or encourage polygamy; and when any Elder of the Church has used language which appeared to convey any such teaching, he has been promptly reproved. And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.

Wilford Woodruff

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

¹⁸⁸ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_colonies_in_Mexico for additional information.

¹⁸⁹ Woodruff was a polygamist but with only one wife living at the time.

¹⁹⁰ This statement does not preclude additional marriages being performed in Mexico, which continued during this period.

Given the prior statements by Prophet John Taylor and others to the effect that ending polygamy would constitute apostasy, Woodruff may have felt a need to reassure his followers that he was being directed by God. He stated the following:

The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty.¹⁹¹

Based on the change in practice and the assurances given, Utah became a state in 1896.

Despite the clear statement given, Mormons had not stopped practicing polygamy entirely. At least 4 of the apostles took new plural wives during this period¹⁹². Many of the others who took plural wives during this time were leaders in the church. Over the next several years, a number of plural marriages were approved within the US, as well as in Canada and Mexico, where settlements had been established in an effort to circumvent US law. While practicing plural marriages in these areas was illegal, the governments of these countries were not enforcing their laws on Mormons at that time. At least one marriage was also performed on the high seas outside of California, purportedly by Joseph F. Smith.

In addition to these new marriages which were approved by church authorities, there were a number of marriages which were not approved. Members may have found it difficult to differentiate between those marriages which were approved and those which were not. One of the daughters of a plural marriage from this period (that had been approved by general authorities) was Camilla Eyring Kimball, the wife of Spencer W. Kimball, 12th president of the LDS church.

¹⁹¹ Sixty-first Semiannual General Conference of the Church, Monday, October 6, 1890, Salt Lake City, Utah. Reported in Deseret Evening News, October 11, 1890, p. 2

¹⁹² <https://bycommonconsent.com/2004/05/10/the-lingering-legacy-of-post-manifesto-polygamy/>

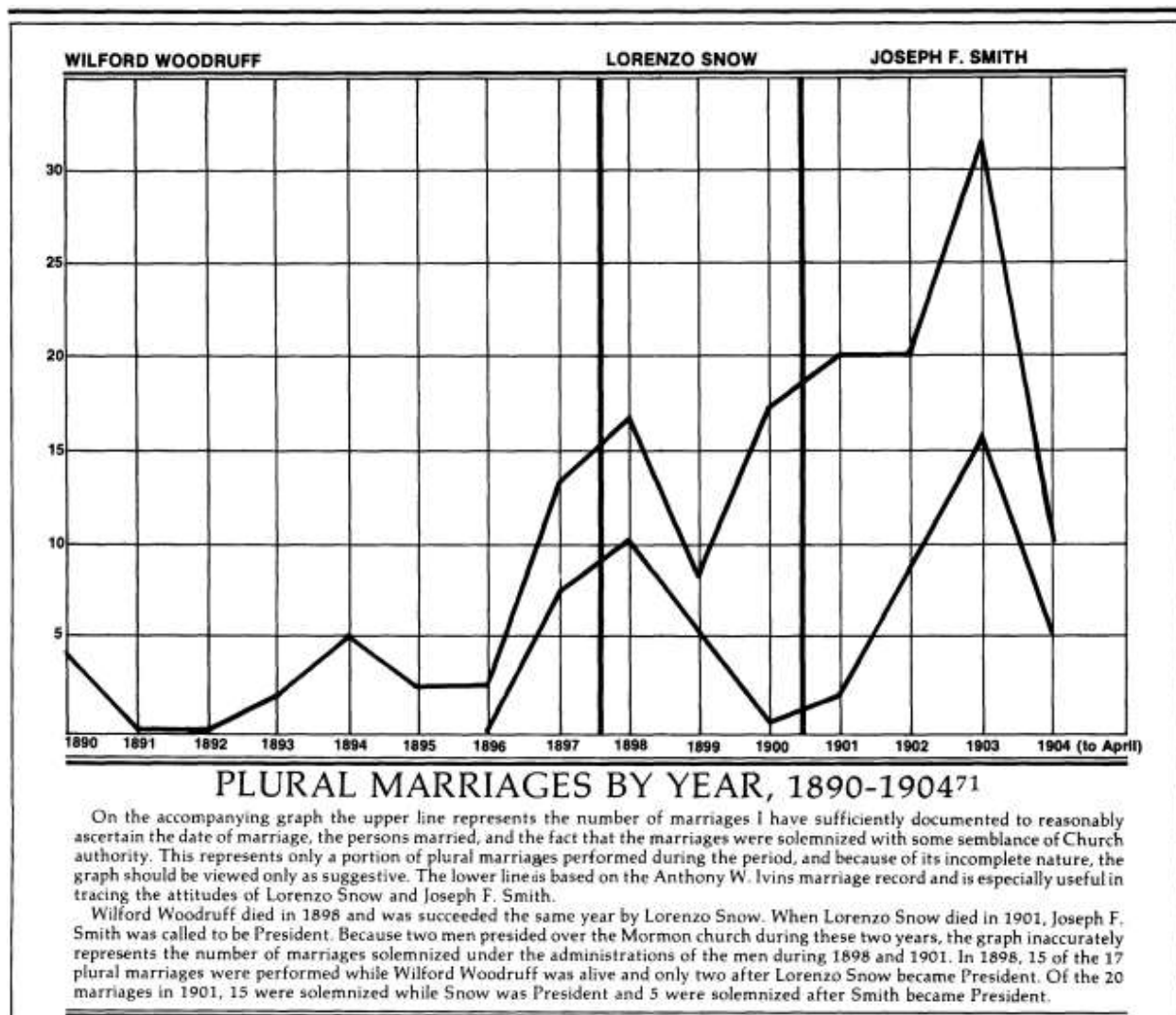


Chart detailing number of plural marriages by year between Manifesto 1 and Manifesto 2. ¹⁹³

In 1903, Utah elected as Senator Reed Smoot. His father (Abraham Smoot) had 6 wives. This caused an uproar in congress and congress refused to seat Mr Smoot, instead opening an inquiry into the ongoing practice of Plural Marriage within Mormonism. As part of this inquiry, Joseph F. Smith, son of Hyrum Smith and president of the Mormon Church was called to testify before congress¹⁹⁴. In his testimony he acknowledged that plural marriages had continued and that he was living in polygamous relationships.

This inquiry lead to the second manifesto (also in 1904), which states the following:

Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into, contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff of September 24, 1890, commonly called the manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff, and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriages violative of the law of the land, I, Joseph F. Smith,

¹⁹³ Image copyright Sunstone Magazine: <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/037-8-27-35.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ Other prominent church leaders testified as well. The hearings lasted 3 years, 100 witnesses were called, and the final proceedings consist of 3500 pages. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reed_Smoot_hearings

President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

And I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage, he will be deemed in transgression against the Church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof and excommunicated therefrom.

Joseph F. Smith,

President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹⁹⁵

Even after this manifesto, two of the quorum of the 12 (John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley) were opposed to it and thought that plural marriages should be continued. They, along with Heber J. Grant, had managed to escape from the US to avoid being subpoenaed and testifying at the 1904 hearings. Taylor and Cowley resigned from the quorum of the 12 in 1906¹⁹⁶. In 1911, Taylor was excommunicated for his continued opposition to ending polygamy. He died in 1916.

Within the LDS church, new plural marriages with multiple living wives ceased after 1909¹⁹⁷. However, there may have been some leniency towards cohabitation for those who were married prior to the official bans were in force. As part of the temple ceremony, the law of chastity still allowed for sexual relations for men to their wives *given them by the holy priesthood* until about 1930.

In 1913, some of those who wanted to continue to practice polygamy founded the community of Short Creek on the Utah Arizona border. The group was called the Council of Friends. After the death of the leader (Joseph W. Musser), the group split into two organizations with the Fundamental Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints remaining and the other group (Apostolic United Brethren) relocated to Bluffdale Utah. In the early years, the groups were left largely alone, although the mainstream LDS church was supportive of the 1953 raid on Short Creek which drew national attention and widespread condemnation.¹⁹⁸

In 1998, Gordon Hinkley commented in an interview:

...I condemn it (polygamy), yes, as a practice because **I think that it is not doctrinal**, it is not legal, and this church takes the position that we will abide by the law. (Recites 10th article of faith).¹⁹⁹

In 2012, a survey indicated that 86% of Mormons consider Polygamy morally wrong²⁰⁰.

In 2013, the section heading to Official Declaration 1 was changed to read as follows:

¹⁹⁵ Conference Report, April 1904, p. 75.

¹⁹⁶ When they resigned, they assumed that they would later be reinstated when “the heat blew over”. However, they were never reinstated into the quorum.

¹⁹⁷ The numbers fell sharply after 1890, and decreased further after 1904. They appear to have ceased entirely (at least those that were approved by church leadership) after 1909.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reed_Smoot_hearings retrieved 2017.02.24.

¹⁹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hildale,_Utah

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAsNMWwRXvs&feature=youtu.be&t=14m37s>

²⁰⁰ <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/01/12/mormons-in-america-executive-summary/>

The Bible and the Book of Mormon teach that **monogamy is God's standard for marriage** unless He declares otherwise...

Based on this statement, the teachings of the 1800s which state that *polygamy is always on the earth when God's true church is on the earth* appears to have been officially changed. However, the author is not aware of any official statements renouncing polygamy in heaven or denying previous statements about the polygamist practices of God or Jesus.

In 2015, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve stated:

Our doctrine—not just belief, but **doctrine**—that sexual relations are only appropriate and lawful in the Lord's eyes between man and woman **legally and lawfully married is unchanged and will never change**.²⁰¹

POLYGAMIST PROPHETS

The following chart provides a basic overview of the polygamist prophets of the LDS movement.

Prophet	Age of youngest wife	Avg age of wife	Avg diff in ages	Count of wives
Joseph Smith Jr	14	29	8	45
Brigham Young	16	34	13	55
John Taylor	16	30	8	16
Wilford Woodruff	15	25	20	9
Lorenzo Snow	14	20	17	10
Joseph F Smith	17	20	17	5 or 6
Heber J Grant	19	25	1	3

²⁰²

For a more detailed overview, see the endnotes.^{xv}

POLYGAMISTS IN HEAVEN

Later church presidents Joseph Fielding Smith (1876-1972), Harold B. Lee (1899-1973), Howard Hunter (1907-1995) and Russel M Nelson (1924 - ?) remarried after the first wife's deaths and were sealed to a second wife in temple

²⁰¹ Christofferson was referring to same sex relationships, and seems to have overlooked the fact that non-legal marriage relationships were encouraged in the LDS faith for at least some members between 1842 and 1904. See: <https://www.lds.org/church/news/churchs-doctrine-on-chastity-will-never-change-says-elder-christofferson?lang=eng>

²⁰² <https://redd.it/4nfwby> All information sourced from Wikipedia and believed to be correct, but some errors may be present in the data, particularly with respect to John Taylor, where sources disagree.

ceremonies. Ezra Taft Benson (1899-1994) was sealed to his recently deceased cousin in 1950 with his living wife acting as proxy. This brings to 12 the number of church presidents who have practiced some form of polygamy. As of 2018, there are no more than 30 years in 150+ year history of the Mormon movement where none of the leadership has practiced any form of polygamy. If we ignore polygamy in the afterlife, then LDS leadership practiced it for about half of the church's history.

SEXUALITY

In the early Mormon church, polyandry (a woman having 2 or more husbands) was only practiced by about 10-20 women, most of whom had relationships with Joseph Smith in addition to their legal husbands. The last known authorized case occurred in 1861, with the first having happened in the late 1830s. This last case was rather different than the earlier cases, as the woman had sex with other men in order to father children (her husband was impotent).

Polygyny (one husband, multiple wives) was practiced extensively between about 1841 and 1890, with limited practice thereafter until 1904²⁰³ and some cohabitations with the plural wives (married prior to 1904) until as late as the 1950s.

The punishment for adultery in the early church (1850-1880s) included castration or death by slitting the throat in some cases. These were prescribed by the highest leadership in the church and in line with the Blood atonement doctrine taught by Joseph Smith and especially Brigham Young.

Masturbation was addressed in the 1870s and 1880s as being practiced by both sexes and was (and is) taught to be an evil practice by Mormon leaders. Early references talk about masturbation leading to insanity (which was a common belief in psychology until the early 20th century).

Around 1900, some church leaders commented that premarital sex occurred in about 80% of all relationships and that 58% of marriages in one rural ward were "forced", which may indicate that premarital relationships were common within the church at that time.

In 1972, the church president issued this statement on the use of birth control:

[W]e declare it is a grievous sin before God to adopt restrictive measures in disobedience to God's divine command from the beginning of time to 'multiply and replenish the earth.' Surely those who project such measures to prevent life or to destroy life before or after birth will reap the whirlwind of God's retribution, for God will not be mocked.²⁰⁴

This was reiterated by then President Spencer W. Kimball in 1979:

It is an act of extreme selfishness for a married couple to refuse to have children when they are able to do so.²⁰⁵

The last high-profile statement regarding avoiding birth control seems to have been made by a member of the 70, J. Ballard Washburn, in the April 1995 General Conference. The current policy (as of Jan 2017) is stated as follows:

²⁰³ Quinn argues that there were approved new plural marriages as late as 1912.

²⁰⁴ Prophet Harold B. Lee, Conference Report, October 1972, p. 63

²⁰⁵ Prophet Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, April 1979, p. 6

Decisions about birth control and the *consequences of those decisions* rest solely with each married couple. Elective abortion as a method of birth control, however, is contrary to the commandments of God.²⁰⁶

Regarding oral sex, the first presidency had this council:

9 June, 1978 - First Presidency letter instructs that interviews of married persons "should scrupulously avoid indelicate inquiries," but also states that: "Married persons should understand that if in their marital relations they are guilty of unnatural, impure or unholy practices, they should not enter the temple unless and until they repent and discontinue any such practices."

5 Jan, 1982 - First Presidency repeats its 1978 instructions for "interviewing married persons," but adds: **"The First Presidency has interpreted oral sex as constituting an unnatural, impure or unholy practice."**²⁰⁷

15 Oct 1982 - First Presidency instruction to all stake and mission leaders that many letters from church members "indicate clearly that some local leaders have been delving into private, sensitive matters beyond the scope of what is appropriate.... Also, you should never inquire into personal, intimate matters involving marital relations between a man and his wife." Letter continues that even if a church member volunteers such intimate information, "you should not peruse the matter but should merely **suggest that if the member has enough anxiety about the propriety of the conduct to ask about it, the best course would be to discontinue it.**" In response to widespread complaints from married couples being asked if they have oral sex, this returns First Presidency stance to what it was prior to presidency of Spencer W. Kimball, now incapacitated.

Since the early 80s, it has been unclear within Mormonism as to whether or not oral sex is taboo. There do not appear to be any subsequent official statements on the topic.

Moral purity has been defined since the 1970s and sex prior to marriage as well as 'petting' or touching the sexual organs through clothing, etc., is strictly forbidden.

As of about 1995, members who have extramarital sex with the opposite gender are required to go through a repentance process of at least 1 year prior to being a missionary or getting married in the Temple. Those who engage in same gender sex are generally permanently banned from missionary service.²⁰⁸ Prior to about 1990, the repentance periods for missionaries were often much shorter.

ABORTION

²⁰⁶ <https://www.lds.org/topics/birth-control?lang=eng&old=true>

²⁰⁷ Information from this section taken from Quinn: Extensions of Mormon Power as quoted by: http://www.i4m.com/think/sexuality/mormon_sex.htm

²⁰⁸ Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops (Salt Lake City, Utah: LDS Church, 2010) §§ 4.5.2: "A candidate who has participated in homosexual activity during or after the last three teenage years will not normally be considered for missionary service, especially if the person has participated in such activities with several partners or with one partner over an extended period of time. In rare cases the stake president may submit a recommendation that the First Presidency consider an exception if there is strong evidence of genuine repentance and reformation and if the candidate has been free of transgression for a sufficient period of time. This period of repentance should be at least one year and may be as long as three years if the acts occurred several times or over an extended time or if the person was the aggressor."

Mormons have been opposed to abortion because they believe that it is taking the life of an individual. In addition, there is an inferred belief that the availability of abortion leads to sexual promiscuity.

The Church opposes abortion and counsels its members not to submit to or perform an abortion except in the rare cases where, in the opinion of competent medical counsel, the life or good health of the mother is seriously endangered or where the pregnancy was caused by rape and produces serious emotional trauma in the mother. Even then it should be done only after *counseling with the local presiding priesthood authority* and *after receiving divine confirmation through prayer*.

Abortion must be considered one of the most revolting and sinful practices in this day, when we are witnessing the frightening *evidence of permissiveness leading to sexual immorality*.²⁰⁹

Later statements in the 80s and 90s broadened the reasons for receiving abortions to include fetuses that had severe defects.²¹⁰

However, unborn bodies are treated differently with respect to saving ordinances than live persons, and differentiations are again made based on the age when one dies.

"No baptism or endowment is performed for a child who died before age eight... Only a sealing to parents is performed for such children."

"No temple ordinances are performed for stillborn children (those who are considered dead at the time of birth)." "...children who were not stillborn but who died shortly after birth... may be sealed to their parents."²¹¹

Abortion is also treated differently than murder when considering baptismal candidates.

With respect to related offenses, the Church distinguishes abortion from murder but holds it an extremely grave action, not to be done except in extremely limited circumstances that *might* include incest or rape, perils to the life or health of the mother, or severe birth defects. *As far as has currently been revealed*, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion.²¹²

VIRGIN BIRTH

One of the key doctrines taught in the Endowment Ceremony up through at least 1930 was that Christ was begotten the old fashion way – with God the father coming upon Mary in a very literal sense and that Christ was then the literal offspring of the father.

However, by 1966 this doctrine was considered apostate. Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

Virgin Birth (Virgin Birth) ... Our Lord is the only mortal person ever born to a virgin, because he is the only person who ever had an immortal Father. Mary, his mother, "was carried away in the Spirit" (1 Ne. 11:13-21), was "overshadowed" by the Holy Ghost, and the conception which took place "by the power of the Holy Ghost" resulted in the bringing forth of the literal and personal Son of God the Father... Christ is

²⁰⁹ Harold B. Lee, N. Eldon Tanner, & Marion G. Romney, "Policies and Procedures: Statement on Abortion," New Era, 1973-APR, Page 29 at: <http://library.lds.org/>

²¹⁰ See http://www.religioustolerance.org/lds_abor.htm for additional information.

²¹¹ <https://www.lds.org/manual/introduction-to-family-history-student-manual/chapter-7?lang=eng>

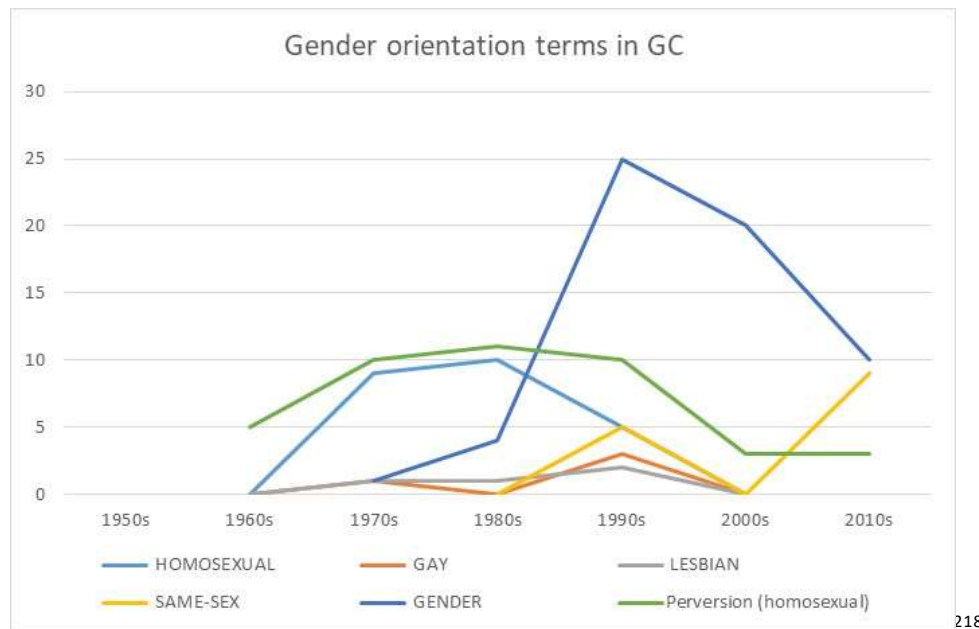
²¹² <http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Murder>

not the Son of the Holy Ghost, but of the Father ... *Modernistic teachings denying the virgin birth are utterly and completely apostate and false.*²¹³

FAMILY VALUES AND HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality was not a topic of significant discussion in early church history, and an openly lesbian women ran the primary organization in the 1930s²¹⁴. However, in the 1950s the church was starting to form a policy around this issue, and in 1959 Spencer Kimball quoted David O. McKay as stating "that in his view homosexuality was *worse than heterosexual immorality*; that it is a filthy and unnatural habit."

In the 60s and 70s preaching against homosexuality intensified and studies at BYU were performed using shock therapy and other methods to try to train a negative physical response in participants towards sexually arousing behaviors in their gender. Electrodes delivering high voltage were first placed on their arms and later their genitals. Participants were traumatized and at least two committed suicide²¹⁵. Conversion therapy was effectively outsourced to the quasi-independent group "Evergreen" between 1989 and 2011²¹⁶, thereafter the LDS church distanced itself from the group. In 2019 a church spokesman indicated that "the church has consistently denounced conversion therapy and has not changed its position."²¹⁷



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By the 1970s, church leaders taught that Homosexuality was a learned behavior and that it could be unlearned. Homosexuals were defined as being unhappy.^{xvi}

²¹³ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pg 576.

²¹⁴ Louie Felt and May Anderson jointly presided over the Primary organization. See <http://www.connellodonovan.com/abom.html>

²¹⁵ <http://www.mormonthink.com/glossary/electroshock-therapy-at-byu.htm>

²¹⁶ See Greg Prince, *Gay Rights and the Mormon Church*, pp 94-98.

²¹⁷ <https://www.deseret.com/utah/2019/10/23/20929351/lds-mormon-church-conversion-therapy-opposition-jesus-christ-latter-day-saints>

²¹⁸ Based on data from <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>

Legislating morality is a belief that goes back to the early desires to create a theocracy, as championed by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young²¹⁹. The need to legislate morality to maintain a righteous society was summarized by Oscar McConkie, an attorney responsible for the legal work of the LDS church.

We ought to legislate morality. My experience is that we legislate very little else, but it's a question of whose morality do we legislate – the Lord's or somebody else's?

If we could only convince ourselves that we are the agents of the Lord, we would surely make God's purposes our own. That is what we ought to be doing in the political process.²²⁰

In the late 80s and early 90s, this turned toward political activities to influence public policy with respect to the treatment of gays in the larger society. Those on the right viewed this as protecting the family and religious morality within society. Those on the left viewed this as encouraging discriminatory policies, particularly with respect to marriage rights. Many of these campaigns and donations were covert, but in 2008 the Mormon church played a central role in getting proposition 8 passed in California. This effort was viewed as hateful by some both within and outside of the church.

A documentary of the involvement of the church in this campaign was made in 2010.²²¹ The political victory demonstrated the effectiveness of the church in fund raising and organizing a lobbying campaign. This victory regarding Prop 8 was short lived however, as it was soon overturned by the courts.

For additional information about the evolution of church policies with respect to homosexuals, see:

<http://www.connellodonovan.com/abom.html>

In November 2015, the handbook was updated with a number of policies impacting homosexuals and their families as follows^{xvii}:

- 1) Homosexual marriage is considered grounds for apostasy.
- 2) Children living with a parent in a homosexual marriage or similar relationship can no longer be baptized or participate in baby naming ceremonies.

There was a negative reaction to the news among some Mormons, though it appears that the number of resignations that have occurred are insignificant relative to the total membership numbers of the church.²²² Some speculate that the policy was meant either to stem acceptance of homosexuals by the youth in the church or to create an appearance of higher morality within the membership of the church (by being willing to “shun evil acts”).²²³

See also:

²¹⁹ This effort was formally abandoned by declaration in 1896 prior to Utah achieving statehood.

²²⁰ Wenda Ogada, “Be Agents of Lord in Politics,” Daily Universe, 12 October 1978, p13 as quoted in The Mormon Corporate Empire, p 142.

²²¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8:_The_Mormon_Proposition

²²² <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/14/us/mormons-set-to-quit-church-over-policy-on-gay-couples-and-their-children.html> According to church sources, the percentage of people who have left during the time of these controversial events is less than 0.1% per year.

²²³ <https://medium.com/@jellistx/why-are-the-children-of-gay-parents-newly-unwelcome-in-the-mormon-church-67161add297a#.h87h5pki7>

<http://www.withoutend.org/elder-packer-danger-homosexuality-20-years/>

In Apr. 2019, there was an announced reversal of the November Policy. However, the official handbooks indicate that the policy was modified rather than rescinded and at least portions original policy seems to remain intact.²²⁴

DOCTRINES ASSOCIATED WITH BRIGHAM YOUNG

Brigham Young taught a number of doctrines which are no longer accepted within main-stream Mormonism. These include:

- 1) The Adam-God doctrine
- 2) Blood Atonement
- 3) The Curse of Cain
- 4) Joseph Smith as key figure, second only to Jesus Christ

ADAM AS GOD

Brigham Young taught that Adam was our God and that he brought one of his several wives to this earth in order to populate it. This teaching was introduced in about 1852²²⁵ and was removed from the church's teachings gradually following his death.

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and Sinner! When our Father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken—He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians and non-professing must hear it, and will know it sooner or later.²²⁶

Brigham Young claimed at least three times that this was not *his* doctrine, but something that he had learned from Joseph Smith.²²⁷

Elements of this doctrine appear to still be present in the temple ceremony during the lecture at the veil as late as the 1930s, though there was little or no public mention of the doctrine after about 1900.

In 1912, it appears that the First Presidency is trying to distance themselves from these teachings when they stated:

Speculations as to the career of Adam before he came to the earth are of no real value. We learn by revelation that he was Michael, the Archangel, and that he stands at the head of his posterity on earth (Doctrine and Covenants, Sect. 107:53-56). Dogmatic assertions do not take the place of revelation, and we should be satisfied with that which is accepted as doctrine, and not discuss matters that, after all disputes, are merely matters of theory.²²⁸

²²⁴ See:

https://www.reddit.com/r/exmormon/comments/cxhpd6/comparison_nov_2015_policy_apr_2019_press_release/

²²⁵ Young (1852, p. 50) (statement given in the general conference of the LDS Church on April 9, 1852).

²²⁶ "The Adam-God Doctrine," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 no. 1 (Spring 82), 14–58.

²²⁷ Ibid pg 28.

²²⁸ *The First Presidency, 1912*

Eugene England wrote a letter to apostle Bruce R. McConkie in 1981 regarding both this doctrine and the eternal progression of God. In his response, McConkie condemned the Adam God Doctrine as a false doctrine.

BLOOD ATONEMENT

Brigham Young taught that certain sins were so grievous that the perpetrator could not receive forgiveness through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. In such cases, it was necessary for the perpetrator of the crime to spill their own blood to atone for the sin. This requires a certain mode of death (such as slitting of the throat) where their blood literally falls on the ground, as was the case with Old Testament sacrifices. This was the case in sexual sins, the “sin of interracial marriage”, murder, apostasy, theft, fornication, and adultery. Sex between a man and his plural wives even when the church had officially stopped practicing plural marriage in the years between 1890 and at least 1930 were defined as non-adulterous.

The belief in this doctrine likely influenced the death penalty in Utah. There was a law from 1851 to 1888 in Utah allowing persons convicted of murder to be executed by decapitation.²²⁹

As of 2015, firing squad is an authorized method only if the drugs required for lethal injection are unobtainable or if the inmate was sentenced before 2004 and chose firing squad as the method of execution.²³⁰

There is some evidence that the Blood Atonement doctrine resulted in the murders of individuals on the order of Brigham Young. Bill Hickman admitted to committing several of these murders.²³¹

CURSE OF CAIN

Brigham Young taught that those who were of African descent and who had even one drop of African blood were cursed with the “Curse of Cain” which meant that they could not receive the priesthood or participate in temple ceremonies. There was once exception: They could be sealed as a slave or servant to a white couple to be a servant in the afterlife. There is only one known case of such a sealing. Interracial marriage was, according to Young, punishable by death.²³²

As the doctrine was taught, one drop of Negro blood was enough to disqualify a person from receiving the priesthood:

Now what is our policy in regard to inter-marriage? As to the Negro, of course, there is only one possible answer. We must not inter-marry with the Negro. Why? If I were to marry a Negro woman and have children by her, my children would all be cursed as to the priesthood. Do I want my children cursed as to the priesthood? **If there is one drop of Negro blood in my children, as I have read to you, they receive the curse.** There isn't any argument, therefore, as to inter-marriage with the Negro, is there? There are 50 million Negroes in the United States. If they were to achieve complete absorption with the white race,

²²⁹ Gardner, Martin R (Spring 1979), "Mormonism and Capital Punishment: A Doctrinal Perspective, Past and Present", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, pg 13

²³⁰ For an overview of the evolution of the death penalty and how it was applied in Utah, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_punishment_in_Utah#History_and_current_practices

²³¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Bill_Hickman

²³² “I would like the President of the United States and all the world to hear this. Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so.” (Brigham Young in General Conference, 1863. See also <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/blackintermarriage.htm>)

think what that would do. With 50 million Negroes inter-married with us, where would the priesthood be? Who could hold it, in all America? Think what that would do to the work of the Church!²³³

Until about the 1950s, at least some church leaders believed that Negroes would be slaves in the eternal realm.

If that Negro is faithful all his days, he can and will enter the celestial kingdom. He will go there as a servant.²³⁴

Although there is no genetic evidence to support the claim, Church leaders have taught that most members are literal descendants of Abraham through Joseph.²³⁵ Missionary efforts should center on bringing these descendants of Abraham into the church.²³⁶ The “prophet of the restoration” was himself, “a pure Ephraimite”²³⁷

Joseph in Egypt was married to Asenath, an Egyptian of relatively high birth status. They had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, the latter of which is said to be the forefather of Joseph Smith. Of the Egyptians, the book of Abraham (canonized LDS scripture²³⁸) records:

21 Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.

22 From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land.

23 The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden;

24 When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land.

The race that “preserved the curse in the land” was the Egyptians. It follows that Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh who were ½ Egyptian would have inherited the Curse of Cain. Thus, according to the Curse of Cain doctrine taught by church leaders between about 1850 and 1975, all church members who are from the tribe of Ephraim or Manasseh (roughly 90%) should have been barred from the priesthood, at least until the doctrinal and policy change of 1978.

Prior to the change in 1978, there was an effort to change the policy in 1969, but this change was blocked by Harold B. Lee²³⁹ who would later become the 11th president of the church. Because Hugh B. Brown had been a

²³³ Race Problems—As They Affect The Church, Address by Mark E. Petersen at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 27, 1954

²³⁴ Mark E. Petersen (LDS Apostle), Race Problems As They Affect The Church, Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 27, 1954.

²³⁵ “The great majority of those who become members of the Church are literal descendants of Abraham through Ephraim, son of Joseph.” (Improvement Era, Oct. 1923, p. 1149.)

²³⁶ Journal of Discourses 2:268–69

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ The book of Abraham claims to be a translation of some Egyptian funeral scrolls. It was “translated” by Joseph Smith between 1835 and 1842. It was canonized in 1880.

²³⁹ D. Michael Quinn, The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1994) p.

14. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_B._Brown

champion of this policy/doctrine shift, he was punished by the incoming president of the church, Joseph Fielding Smith, by being removed from the first presidency²⁴⁰.

Unlike Official Declaration 1, Official Declaration #2 claims not only to be a policy change, but also that it is a revelation from God and that it was predicted. It reads in part:

...(God) **by revelation** has confirmed that *the long-promised day has come* when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, **all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color**. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

An interview with LeGrand Richards (apostle of the LDS church) in 1978 suggests that the revelation process may have been more of a discussion and voting process.²⁴¹ Reviewing the racial doctrine was suggested in a study commissioned by LDS church in mid 70s.²⁴² The change in doctrine is discussed in detail by Spencer Kimball's son.²⁴³

DEIFICATION OF JOSEPH SMITH

Brigham Young revered Joseph Smith. Perhaps as a method of cementing his power base after assuming leadership of the church, he completed that Nauvoo temple which Joseph had championed.²⁴⁴

The deification of (or extreme reverence for) Joseph Smith appears to have started soon after his death.

General Joseph Smith...lived so far beyond the ordinary walk of man, that even the tongue of the vilest slanderer could not touch his reputation. **He lived godly and he died godly...**

When Gen. Smith went to Carthage...he said to a friend, *I am going like a lamb to the slaughter...I shall die innocent*. Now ye great men who boast of great wisdom, what think ye of the prophet's last prediction? How glorious! How mild! **How god like!**...²⁴⁵ (*bold added*)

Some accuse Mormons of worshiping Joseph Smith. This accusation often stems from quotes similar to the following quote of Brigham Young:

²⁴⁰ This was the first time that a person has been removed from the 1st presidency in the 20th century. He may have also been dismissed because he opposed Joseph Fielding Smith being made prophet. Some of the teachings of Joseph Fielding Smith are considered fringe by modern Mormons including a literal interpretation of the Bible (6000 year history of the world), his proclamation that if evolution is true the church is false, etc.

²⁴¹ http://www.lds-mormon.com/legrand_richards.shtml

²⁴² Crescent, McCormick & Paget (CMP) was commissioned in 1975 to do a study on the role and organization of the presiding Bishopric, Church policy positions, administrative procedures, and other internal matters. The report suggested a "careful review" of certain potentially embarrassing "doctrinal policies" such as withholding the priesthood from Negroes. The report strongly urged that the leaders reassess the race issue and its "relevancy" for the future. Two additional consultants voiced similar concerns. See The Mormon Corporate Empire pp 70-71.

²⁴³ For perhaps the best discussion, see the summary written by Spencer Kimball's son:

<https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/spencer-w-kimball-and-revelation-priesthood>

²⁴⁴ Completing the temple also allowed for formalization of polygamous marriages of Smith, Young, and others.

²⁴⁵ Times and Seasons #5 Vol 13 under "The Murder".

Joseph Smith holds the keys of this last dispensation, and is now engaged behind the veil in the great work of the last days... **no man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith...** every man and woman must have **the certificate of Joseph Smith junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are...** I cannot go there without his consent. He holds the keys of that kingdom for the last dispensation—the keys to rule in the spirit world; and he rules there triumphantly, for **he gained full power and a glorious victory over the power of Satan while he was yet in the flesh**, and was a martyr to his religion and to the name of Christ, which gives him a most perfect victory in the spirit-world. **He reigns there as supreme a being in his sphere, capacity, and calling, as God does in heaven.** Many will exclaim—“Oh, that is very disagreeable! It is preposterous! We cannot bear the thought!” But it is true.²⁴⁶

RACE AS A DOCTRINE

Mormonism is interested in the divine. Part of divinity has to do with an understanding of oneself as a piece of the divine, and this is often associated with race. This is manifest both in terms of being a chosen people, and also in terms of having cursed race(s).

LAMANITES

In the book of Mormon, there were two main races of people. Both were of the house of Israel, but the Nephites were the chosen people and the Lamanites were the cursed ones²⁴⁷. Even though they were cursed, they were in some cases made “white” again by being righteous. This ability of God to lighten or darken one's skin depending on their level of righteousness was discussed in General conference as late as the 1960s.²⁴⁸

Christians in the 1700s and early 1800s were searching for an explanation for how people had come to the Americas after the Great Flood (of Noah), and the Book of Mormon provided this explanation. Prior to the writing of the Book of Mormon, there were competing theories of the colonization: one putting the settling of the Americas around the time of the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel and the other much later around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the 10 tribes²⁴⁹. The Book of Mormon included both of these theories by allowing for multiple migrations²⁵⁰. The people were in both cases brought by God because they were righteous, and were at least partially destroyed when they became wicked.

²⁴⁶ Journal of Discourses, vol. 7 pg 289.

²⁴⁷ The actual back and forth between righteousness and wickedness is more complex, but most of the time the Nephites were the ‘good guys’ and the Lamanites the ‘wicked people’.

²⁴⁸ “I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people today ... they are fast becoming a white and delightful people. ... For years they have been growing delightful, and they are now becoming white and delightful, as they were promised. ... The children in the home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation.” (Spencer W. Kimball, Oct 1960 General Conference)

²⁴⁹ Christianity was the dominant narrative, and all Christian based theories placed them coming to the Americas after the great flood.

²⁵⁰ According to Smith, these two were the only migrations: “We are informed by these records that America in ancient times has been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites, and came directly from the Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ.” HC4:537. See: <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/volume-4-chapter-31>

Native Americans and most Pacific Island nations were defined by church prophets to be of Lamanite heritage²⁵¹. Joseph Smith and subsequent prophets commanded members to preach to these “Lamanites.”

THE CURSE OF CAIN

The most extreme example of racial discrimination was placed upon those who come from Africa. Based on writings of Joseph Smith in the book of Abraham²⁵², a doctrine known as the “Curse of Cain” was developed. One person with some African descent was given the priesthood, possibly by Joseph Smith and achieved relatively prominent position in the early church. When given his patriarchal blessing, he was declared an “orphan” rather than belonging to one of the tribes of Israel²⁵³. Two other people of African descent were given the priesthood, though in at least one case the person was pretending to be a “Lamanite”. Shortly after Brigham Young was firmly in control in the early 1850s, Brigham Young started teaching that no one with any African descent could have the priesthood or enter the temple to obtain those ordinances believed to be necessary for salvation or exaltation. The only temple ordinance open to such members was to be able to be sealed as a slave to a white church member to be their servant in the afterlife²⁵⁴.

There was some confusion regarding this doctrine in the early church, with some prominent leaders arguing that this was the Curse of Ham²⁵⁵ and other arguing the Curse of Cain. The Curse of Cain became the dominantly believed doctrine by the 1870s and the Curse of Ham is not prominently mentioned thereafter.

Because the Curse of Cain extended to Africans, it perhaps made logical sense that the devil should be represented in the temple ceremony as a black person. It was proposed that a black person be used to represent the devil in an early film production, but this was changed when some Polynesians protested. It was stated that Satan had black skin until the early to mid 70s.^{xviii} The clothing for the devil including his apron remains black.

It is interesting that while Mormons believed that Africans were cursed by God and could not have the priesthood due to their lack of valiance in the premortal life, there was no similar discrimination on an official level towards other races or nationalities²⁵⁶. Native Americans were considered based on teachings in the book of Mormon to be essentially pure-blooded house of Israel and as such were a priority for early preaching efforts and again in the 1960s and 1970s²⁵⁷. Missionary efforts to Europe began in earnest as early as the 1840s, expanding in the 1860s -

²⁵¹ This specific teaching which concluded that essentially all of the people of North & South America and the Pacific island was taught through about the 1970s. See <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/07/of-royal-blood?lang=eng>. After 2000, the teachings become much more vague and nuanced, possibly in response to DNA evidence regarding the migration and origins of these cultures/nations. As of 2016 the scope has narrowed considerably: “*It is not a record of all former inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere*, but only of particular groups of people.” <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/865657216/The-Book-of-Mormon-is-a-miraculous-miracle-says-President-Russell-M-Nelson-at-2016-Seminar-for.html?pg=all>

²⁵² As of 2017, the book of Abraham is still canonized scripture, in spite of strong evidence that the claimed source material (Egyptian burial scrolls) have no relation to the contents of the book. Some of the branches of Mormonism such as the Community of Christ do not have the Book of Abraham in their canon.

²⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah_Abel

²⁵⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Elizabeth_Manning_James

²⁵⁵ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curse_of_Ham for a history of the Curse of Ham in Christianity and Judaism. The Book of Abraham places the peoples of Africa as direct descendants of Ham.

²⁵⁶ While there is no official discrimination against other races, there has never been a non-white member of the Quorum of the 12 or First Presidency.

²⁵⁷ Spencer Kimball, an Apostle and later president of the church championed many of these efforts.

1880s. Early efforts concentrated on the US, England, and Scandinavia. Missionaries were sent to Japan in 1905²⁵⁸ and other countries were opened shortly thereafter. By the 1960s, missionaries were sent to most countries that allowed them to preach with the exception of African nations. The Mormon Church in the US remains one of the “whitest” churches.²⁵⁹

If those from Africa were the cursed ones, those of the house of Israel were the blessed ones. People who had joined the church were considered literally to be descendants of the house of Israel. In their patriarchal blessings, 90% or more of the church members are told that they descend from Joseph who was sold into Egypt. The church also teaches that the majority of people around the world are descendants of the house of Israel.

No one had truer blood of course than the prophet of the restoration – Joseph Smith – who was a ‘pure descendant’ of Joseph in Egypt. By the 2010s, DNA mapping of Joseph Smiths DNA using those of his descendants was available²⁶⁰.

Later church presidents extended this doctrine to explain that those who were born to non-white parents or who were born with disabilities had not been righteous in the pre-existence.

The privilege of obtaining a mortal body on this earth is seemingly so priceless that those in the spirit world, even though unfaithful or not valiant, were undoubtedly permitted to take mortal bodies although ***under penalty of racial or physical or nationalistic limitations...***²⁶¹

A change in doctrine regarding blacks was made in 1978²⁶², initiated by Spencer Kimball, then president of the church. It may have been influenced by one or more of the following factors:

- 1) An article in 1973 written by Lester Bush was read by Kimball and outlined in great detail how and why racism with respects to blacks in Mormonism was policy and not doctrine.²⁶³
- 2) A temple was being built in Brazil. Due to generations of intermarriage, it was impossible from a practical perspective to determine if people had “one drop of negro blood” and were thus disqualified from attending the temple.
- 3) About 3 reports by various consultants to the church during the 1970s stated that the ban was impeding missionary work and church growth, particularly in Africa. These reports suggested considering changing this policy.

²⁵⁸ Heber J. Grant, who lead this effort was going in part escape a subpoena (about polygamy) in conjunction with the ongoing Smoot Hearings.

²⁵⁹ The US Mormon Church has about 1% African American members. See <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/racial-and-ethnic-composition/>

²⁶⁰ This doctrine, that Joseph was a literal descendant of Joseph in Egypt, has not been discussed prominently since DNA testing became common. Alternative explanations of this doctrine may be developed by apologists.

²⁶¹ Harold B. Lee, Decisions for Successful Living, Pages 164-165. See also <https://archive.org/stream/StewartUdallConscienceOfAJackMormon/StuartUdall-OpenLetterOnRaceAndConsequencesOfConscience#page/n15/mode/1up> pp 13-16

²⁶² See the article by his son, Edward Kimball for a good overview: <https://www.scribd.com/document/85431038/Edward-L-Kimball-Spencer-W-Kimball-and-the-Revelation-on-Priesthood>

²⁶³ See <https://www.dialoguejournal.com/2012/mormonisms-negro-doctrine-an-historical-overview/> or the original article in the original format https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V08N01_13.pdf and https://youtu.be/_8DrWq0deRc?t=28m28s

- 4) Stanford had quit playing BYU based on this policy around 1969, and there was considerable negative PR on the topic since about 1963.

The official meeting in the quorum of the 12 was made when two of the 12 were away, including the most racist members of the body who would most likely have opposed the change²⁶⁴.

After the change in policy in 1978, Bruce R. McConkie, an apostle who had said things over the years in defense of the racist policies of the church (with respect to the priesthood) stated:

There are statements in our literature by the early Brethren which we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, "You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?" And all I can say to that is that ***it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything that I have said,*** or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. ***We spoke with a limited understanding*** and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.²⁶⁵

The change in doctrine/policy was widely applauded by most members in the church.

While it was possible for people of various races to get married after the policy change of 1978, interracial marriage was still discouraged. In a press conference following the declaration, the church spokesman, Don LeFaire stated:

...interracial marriages generally have been discouraged in the past and until the prophets (Spencer W. Kimball) further elaborates on the subject, that remains our position.

(The Church) discourages (interracial marriage) by counseling its members to consider the potential negative impact of different backgrounds and cultures on marriages and on the posterity of the union...

...marriage is a very difficult thing under any circumstances and the difficulty increases in interracial marriages.

...the Church does not prohibit, nor can it prohibit interracial marriages²⁶⁶ but it does discourage them.²⁶⁷

In spite of the official recommendations against interracial marriage, Thomas Monson of the quorum of the 12 officially presided at the marriage of Joseph Freeman and his wife Toa. He was the first man of African descent to be married in a Mormon temple on June 23, 1978 (to his Tongan wife).

In 2014, the LDS church published a Gospel Topics entry on Race and the Priesthood, which concludes that the reason that Blacks were not given the priesthood was due to racism within society and within the leadership of the

²⁶⁴ This includes Mark E. Petersen (on assignment) and Delbert Stapley (hospitalized). See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1978_Revelation_on_Priesthood

²⁶⁵ https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie_alike-unto-god-2/

²⁶⁶ In Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young, interracial marriage was prohibited with the prescribed penalty of death for anyone who broke this rule. Advice to avoid interracial marriage is still in current church manuals. See: <https://www.lds.org/manual/aaronic-priesthood-manual-3/lesson-31-choosing-an-eternal-companion?lang=eng>

²⁶⁷ As quoted in Black and Mormon, Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith, pg

church.²⁶⁸ There are anecdotal indications that Blacks in high leadership positions may still not be receiving their second anointing even though this is relatively common among their white counterparts²⁶⁹.

GODS OTHER PEOPLE

Mormons are fascinated by Jews and have taught since their earliest days that Mormons are literally of the house of Israel and that Jews would be converted to Mormonism prior to Christ's 2nd coming. In their earliest newspapers, articles about Jews around the world including their locations and populations were published to help plan missionary work.²⁷⁰ Jerusalem was dedicated for the return of Israel in 1841 by Mormon apostle Orson Hyde.²⁷¹ In the early church, this was prioritized because Mormons believed that the second coming of Christ was imminent and that it would occur in their lifetimes or that of their children²⁷². Modern Mormons are often pro-Israel and have a special respect and reverence for Judaism and the Jewish people which they do not share for other religions such as Buddhism or Baptists.

THE TEMPLE

Modern Mormons (post 1990) are typically taught the following:

- 1) Temples have always existed when God had his church on the earth. There are special ceremonies and covenants that a member must make in order to be able to make it into the celestial kingdom. In addition, one must learn special tokens (handshakes) and keywords (a "new name" and a few more words) in order to get into heaven.
- 2) The Kirtland temple (built by the movement in 1836), had some, but not all of the ordinances of the ancient temples. A full restoration of these ordinances occurred in the Nauvoo period and at the Nauvoo temple.
- 3) The temple ordinances remain largely the same as during the time of Solomon and there have been few changes to the ordinances since they were introduced by Joseph Smith to present. Known and acknowledged changes include some modifications to the sacred clothing or garments worn by those who have had their endowments. The ceremony has also been changed from a live performance with actors to a recorded message requiring less movement and a smaller staff at the temples. The ceremony has also been simplified and shortened.

A more accurate and complete history might be as follows:

- 1) The Kirtland temple was in many ways a fancy meeting house – a house for public worship and large meetings. It was built to be used as a school house – the school of the prophets. Even after its dedication, 2/3 of the space was classroom and it was used throughout the week for instruction purposes.

²⁶⁸ <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>

²⁶⁹ <https://redd.it/8sumhk>

²⁷⁰ Times and seasons – vol 5 #13 under communications:

<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8375> There is a 3 page article about the number of Jews around the world. It seems that there was a teaching at this time that many or all of these Jews would be converted to Mormonism. There is a detailed account of each country and how many Jews were estimated to live there. See also vol 5 #9 which also has an article about the Jews.

²⁷¹ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1991/10/orson-hydes-1841-mission-to-the-holy-land?lang=eng>. NOTE: Joseph Smith "borrowed" Orson Hyde's wife during his absence.

²⁷² Many early members were concerned about the coming in the early 1840s, probably due in part to the influence of the Millarites. They later believed that the 2nd coming would occur in 1890 based on quotes of Joseph Smith.

The high school was housed on the 3rd floor of the building²⁷³. It was used to marry members, but was open to both members and non-members, who on some occasions were witnesses for the weddings. These weddings were “till death do you part”. Festivities at weddings included dancing. Religious activities in the Kirtland temple included:

...washing, anointing, blessings, partaking of the sacrament, “sealing” (a group ceremony involving the Hosanna Shout), washing of the feet, etc. – but these did not constitute an endowment as we would currently define the term.²⁷⁴

...A month and a half later at the temple dedication, Joseph gave instructions on the ordinance of washing of feet; two days later the presidency “proceeded to cleanse our faces and our feet, and then proceeded to wash one another’s feet.” Following this, all attendees “partook of the bread and wine.” Finally, these recipients also received the ordinance of washing of feet. After administering these rites to about 300 male church members, Joseph Smith declared that he “had now completed the organization of the church, and **we had passed through all the necessary ceremonies.**”²⁷⁵

The temple rituals introduced in Nauvoo are much more similar to those commonly practiced by believing Mormons today. These rituals were influenced by the following:

- 1) The religious instruction parts are based on the creation story as told in the Old Testament, as well as the books of Moses and Abraham. Given that JS retranslated the Bible making significant changes to Genesis²⁷⁶ and was also responsible for the creation of the book of Abraham, it appears that he had a keen interest in the creation story.
- 2) The oaths, covenants, handshakes and other signs and tokens were largely adopted from contemporary Freemasonry.
- 3) Parts of the symbolism and belief structure with respect to the kingdoms of heaven may have been taken from Swedenborg²⁷⁷.

The Nauvoo temple was also open to the public, but only members were allowed in when ordinances such as baptism for the dead were being performed. A receipt for tithing paid was required to gain entrance.

The components taken from freemasonry probably originated with builders of the religious buildings in Europe. These rituals originated no early than about the 17th century.²⁷⁸

ORIGIONS OF THE CEREMONIES

Joseph Smith Senior (the father of Joseph Smith) was a freemason, becoming a master mason on May 7, 1818. Hiram also joined masonry in about 1825. However, in the late 1820s masonry was unpopular due to the death of

²⁷³ <https://youtu.be/rLfMRzvEUUk?t=1m40s>

²⁷⁴ https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V34N0102_87.pdf pg 77 (pg 3 of the PDF).

²⁷⁵ Ibid. pg 78.

²⁷⁶ This rewritten section is known in the LDS faith as the Book of Moses.

²⁷⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Swedenborg His work “Heaven and Hell” provided the basis for LDS afterlife theology known as “the Plan of Salvation”.

²⁷⁸ ²⁷⁸ https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V34N0102_87.pdf pg 83-84.

a former freemason who revealed some of their secrets²⁷⁹. It was rumored that he had been killed by fellow masons for breaching their oaths of silence.

Possibly because of this negative public sentiment, there are many anti-mason warnings within the Book of Mormon itself. Gadianton Robbers and their secret combinations (including secret signs and tokens) which lead to the destruction of the righteous people in the book of Mormon are a thinly veiled reference to masons and masonry.

Joseph's attitudes towards Masonry changed by the early 1840s, probably under the influence of John C. Bennett. Joseph and Sidney [Rigdon] were inducted into formal Masonry on the same day being made "Masons on Sight" by the Illinois Grandmaster.²⁸⁰

On March 15th 1842, Joseph received the first degree within Freemasonry and officiated as grand chaplain at the installation of the Nauvoo Lodge of Free Masons.²⁸¹ The following day, Joseph was raised to the third degree of master mason (the sublime degree) "on sight" by Grand Master Jonas of the Grand Lodge of Illinois. Joseph entered masonry just prior to introducing the temple sealings and the rapid expansion of polygamy²⁸².

Their induction and quick advance within Masonry was unusual but allowed, and may have been motivated by the significant political influence that Joseph had as leader of the relatively large religious movement (numbering perhaps 16,000 members in 1840).

Within 5 months, the activities of the Nauvoo branch of the Masons was suspended due to its unorthodox procedures and recruitment activities. Large numbers of new members were being inducted and promoted without the standard ballots and procedures being followed.

By the mid 1840s, there were about 2000 Mormons within a total of 5 lodges, the largest of which was in Nauvoo run by Hyrum Smith.²⁸³ Joseph insisted that Masonry be open to all members of the priesthood. There were perhaps 50-70,000 masons in the entire USA at this time.²⁸⁴

The first five Presidents of the LDS Church, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow, were all Masons in the Nauvoo Lodge²⁸⁵. In addition, the overwhelming majority of the hierarchy in Nauvoo was previously or became freemasons shortly after the Prophet was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ Mormonism was born in the throes of the holocaust provoked by the anti-masonic Morgan Affair of 1826 <http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/history/lds/mormonism.html> see also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Freemasonry#Morgan_affair_and_decline_in_American_Freemasonry_281826.F2.80.93c.1850.29

²⁸⁰ Reed Durham – see Wikipedia under Mormonism and Freemasonry.

²⁸¹ History of the church vol 4, ch. 32, p 552.

²⁸² Less than two months after entering Masonry, Joseph performed the first endowment ceremony on May 4th.

²⁸³ The Nauvoo lodge had 1550 members. See <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/selections-2006-religious-education-student-symposium/masonic-martyrdom-freemason>

²⁸⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Freemasonry#American_Freemasons_during_the_Civil_War

²⁸⁵ All 5 were also polygamists.

²⁸⁶ <http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/history/lds/mormonism.html>

Participation in masonry was either highly encouraged or required of the early male members of the church. The teachings and symbols of masonry would have a significant impact on how members saw their prophet, their temples, and the vows and covenants made in their temples.

When Joseph was shot, the following was recorded in the local Mormon-owned paper:

"...and were then shot to death, while, with uplifted hands they gave such signs of distress as would have commanded the interposition and benevolence of Savages or Pagans. They were both Masons in good standing. Ye brethren of "the mystic tie" what think ye! Where is our good Master Joseph and Hyrum? Is there a pagan, heathen, or savagenation on the globe that would not be moved on this great occasion, as the trees of the forest are moved by a mighty wind? Joseph's last exclamation was "**O Lord my God!**"²⁸⁷

When a mason is in trouble, they can call other masons to their aid by issuing a distress call. The Mason distress call (with hands uplifted) is:

O Lord, my God, is there no help for the Widow's Son?²⁸⁸

The First Presidency explained the secrecy of Temple ceremonies by referencing the Mason oaths used:

Because of their Masonic characters the ceremonies of the temple are sacred and not for the public.²⁸⁹

Familiar mason symbols were included in many of the architectural details of the Nauvoo and Salt Lake temples and the temple garments. These include the sun, moon, stars, beehive, compass, square, etc.

Lodges in Utah were first established in the 1870s. In order to get a charter, the Utah masons had to agree that Mormons would not be welcome as members. Masons felt that the temple ceremony was plagiarized from masonry. The numbers of masons who were Mormons plummeted between the 1850s and 1890s. This ban was lifted in 1985.²⁹⁰

Elements from Masonry which closely resemble parts of the endowment ceremony include the following:

- 1) Masonic symbols on the garments.
- 2) The signs or handshakes used in the ceremony.
- 3) The 5 points of fellowship used when going through the veil²⁹¹.
- 4) The penalties associated with the signs and tokens, including disembowelment and other death oaths prior to 1990.²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Times and Seasons, Volume 5, No 13. "Oh Lord my God" is the first part of the Mason cry for help and would have "required" other Masons in the mob to help the prophet.

²⁸⁸ <http://www.ephesians5-11.org/handshakes.htm>

²⁸⁹ October 15, 1911; Messages of First Presidency, 4: 250

²⁹⁰ http://www.uen.org/utah_history_encyclopedia/m/MASONRY_FREE.html

²⁹¹ In addition to the 5 points of fellowship, the participants were given the "key word on the five points of fellowship" Heber C. Kimball, *On the Potter's Wheel*, pp 203-204 as quoted in *The Mysteries of Godliness* pg 78. This part of the ceremony was removed in 1990. See <https://redd.it/158iss>

²⁹² These oaths and signs were actually removed from Masonry by most lodges by the 1980s.

The temple recommend interview for 1933 requires that members who will enter the temple, “should not join nor be a member of any secret oath bound organization...”. This would seem to prohibit masonry among LDS members during this time period.²⁹³

NECESSITY FOR SALVATION

Mormons believe that one is required to go through several ordinances in order receive salvation and exaltation²⁹⁴. Exaltation is another way of saying becoming like a God (i.e. being a god), which is considered both a gift and an automatic part of fulfilling what one is required to do within Mormonism. These ordinances require include:

- 1) Baptism
- 2) Confirmation/Laying on of hands for the gift of the holy ghost
- 3) Priesthood ordination for men (Melchizedek)
- 4) Receiving washings and anointings
- 5) Receiving the endowment
- 6) Temple sealing.²⁹⁵

The last 3 of these are performed exclusively in the temple²⁹⁶. All 6 are required in order to become a God in the next life, though children who die before they turn 8 and those who are single can go to lower levels of the celestial kingdom. In addition to these 6, there is another ordinances which is not required for salvation but which more or less guarantees it. It is called the 2nd anointing or ‘having your calling and election made sure’ and it is also performed in the temple²⁹⁷.

In addition to the promise of exaltation for those who receive all 6 of the above, Mormons are promised that they will have their children sealed to them and that this will allow for their children to be saved even if their children make sinful choices in this life²⁹⁸. This teaching has sometimes been modified or disavowed²⁹⁹.

TEMPLES AND ENDOWMENT HOUSES

The Kirtland Temple was built as a church, school, and meeting place. It was dedicated as a temple during a 7 hour service on Mar 27, 1836. After the failure of the Kirtland Bank in 1837, a group led by Warren Parrish and Martin Harris took control of the property. This facility was used for a washing ceremony, but did not have any ceremony

²⁹³ This restriction was removed prior to 1970.

²⁹⁴ This belief was introduced about 1843, and was not held prior to that time. The book of Mormon specifically teaches that faith, repentance, and baptism should be the only basis for doctrine. See 3 Nephi 11:38-40.

²⁹⁵ <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/priesthood-ordinances-and-blessings?lang=eng> section 21.1

²⁹⁶ In earlier church history, especially between 1842-44 and 1847-1889, many of these ordinances were performed outside of temples because temples were not available.

²⁹⁷ All people called to the 1st quorum of the 70 or higher leadership positions receive this ordinance. Very little is said publically of people in lower offices receiving this, although at least some stake presidents have received this ordinance.

²⁹⁸ See <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1992/04/our-moral-environment?lang=eng> under the section “The measure of a successful parent”.

²⁹⁹ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2014/03/faithful-parents-and-wayward-children-sustaining-hope-while-overcoming-misunderstanding?lang=eng> The article ends: “Thus, faithful parents can *invite* the power of heaven to influence their children. Nevertheless, *those children remain agents unto themselves*, and the choice to repent or not ultimately is theirs.”

resembling the modern LDS Endowment. Three temples of nearly identical design were announced for Missouri, but never built³⁰⁰.

The Nauvoo Temple was constructed between 1841 and 1846. It was used for about 3 months during the winter of 1845 and spring of 1846 during which time many of the members received their endowments prior to heading west.

The St. George temple was completed in 1877 and was the 3rd Temple of the LDS movement. It originally contained many of the features of the previous temples including two large assembly halls³⁰¹.

Even when temples were not built, the LDS church continued to perform ceremonies typically restricted to temples today. Temporary facilities used include:

1. The red brick store in Nauvoo (also used for mason meetings): 1842-1844.³⁰²
2. The Council House in SLC Utah: 1850-1855³⁰³.
3. The Endowment House in SLC Utah: 1855-1889.
4. The Endowment House in Spring City Utah from about 1876-1878.³⁰⁴

There is some indication that when dedicated structures were not available, ad-hoc arrangements were made. This includes a few sealings performed on trains, boats, or those done in Mexico between about 1888 and 1904.

GETTING IN THE SACRED DOORS

The Kirtland temple was open for both members and non-members. In Nauvoo, church members were required to show a receipt from tithing payments in order to enter the temple³⁰⁵ when performing baptisms for the dead. While the temple was generally open to the public, and had a large meeting room on the main story, it was not open for non-members when baptisms for the dead or endowments were being performed.

The first recorded requirements for getting into the temple are from 1856 and state that applicants:

...must be those who pray, who pay their tithing from year to year; who live the lives of saints from day to day; setting good examples before their neighbors. Men and women, boys and girls over *16 years of age* who are living the lives of saints, **believe in the plurality** [plural marriage], and do not speak evil of the authorities of the Church, and possess true integrity *towards their friends*.³⁰⁶

In 1886 the first presidency (John Taylor, George Q Cannon, Joseph F. Smith) stated that those attending the temple:

³⁰⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_Temple

³⁰¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._George_Utah_Temple

³⁰² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Brick_Store

³⁰³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_House_\(Salt_Lake_City\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_House_(Salt_Lake_City))

³⁰⁴ <http://sanpete.com/businesses/show/2135-spring-city-endowment-house-office-school>

³⁰⁵ <https://youtu.be/rLfMRzvEUUk?t=130>

³⁰⁶ Parowan Historical Record, 13, 16 March 1856, quoted in Buerger, *Mysteries of Godliness*, 99-100. Rachel Andora Woolsey Lee, *Diary*, 30 March 1856, BYU Archives and Manuscripts, quotes the same letter, dated 2 March, in almost identical words.

... should live in harmony and peace at home, they should settle all their differences before attempting to enter this holy place. . . . pray with their families morning and evening, and not neglect secret prayer;... honestly pay their debts . . . tithes and offerings,... observe the Word of Wisdom . . . [It is] inconsistent to carry the smell of whiskey and tobacco *into the sacred precincts* of the Lord's House. . . . [They should] observe to do and keep all God's holy laws and commandments.³⁰⁷

The sealing power was considered to only be held by one person on the earth at a time (the prophet). This was considered to be a key doctrine when polygamy was openly practiced. As such, until 1891, all temple recommends were signed by the prophet³⁰⁸.

Adherence to the word of wisdom became a formal requirement for entering the temple in 1921. Prior to this it was expected in many cases on a local level, but not mandated from the central leadership.

According to the 1933 Handbook:

(Members desiring recommends) should observe the law of tithing. The applicant should also observe all other principles of the Gospel, should keep the Word of Wisdom, not use profanity, should not join nor be a member of any secret oath bound organization³⁰⁹ and should sustain without reservation the general and local authorities of the church.

Both 1928 and 1934 editions (but not previous) list “liquor drinking” and “bootlegging” among the transgressions which are ordinarily such as to justify consideration by the bishop’s court. The 1934 edition added “drunkenness”.³¹⁰

Temple recommend questions became standardized in conjunction with the usage of the handbooks and continues to be updated.^{xix}

For additional information, see:

<http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=mormonhistory> pg 200 (135).

CEREMONY VERSIONS

There are at least 6 known revisions of the temple ceremony. Only limited accounts of the Nauvoo endowment are known to exist. The ceremony changed at least slightly between 1842 and 1845³¹¹, and was passed on orally for the first 30 years of its existence. Between Nov 1876 and Mar 1877, Wilford Woodruff, Brigham Young Jr. and some other wrote down the temple ceremony for the first time.³¹² Some details of the endowment were released in the Smoot hearings in 1904 and in the Salt Lake Tribune in 1906³¹³. The 1931 endowment ceremony is recorded

³⁰⁷ Clark, Messages of the First Presidency, 3:63 as quoted in

<http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=mormonhistory> pg 141(206)

³⁰⁸ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2016/04/see-yourself-in-the-temple?lang=eng> Polygamist marriages were approved for some higher church leaders until about 1906.

³⁰⁹ This is significant because in the early church, it appears that male members were required to be masons before they could go through the temple. In this statement, it appears that they are forbidden to be masons.

³¹⁰ https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_80.pdf pg 5

³¹¹ <http://www.templestudy.com/2008/01/26/wilford-woodruff-eyewitness-of-the-first-endowments/>

³¹² <http://www.wilfordwoodruff.info/p/timeline-of-wilfords-life.html> It was written down in part to harmonize the versions in light of the fact that for the first time there were multiple functioning temples in the church.

³¹³ <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045396/1906-02-12/ed-1/seq-2/>

in some detail³¹⁴. The pre-1990³¹⁵ and post 1990³¹⁶ are also available. Some additional changes were made in 2005. Major changes to the role of Eve and removing some sexist elements within the ceremony were made in 2019³¹⁷.

WASHINGS ANNOINTINGS, AND GARMENTS

Washings and annointings are the one part of the temple ceremony that was available in some form at the Kirtland temple. In Kirtland, ceremonial washing of the feet was an integral part of the ceremony. In Nauvoo, the washing ceremony consisted of washing the entire body in a tub of water. This was done by a temple worker of the same sex³¹⁸. The endowment ceremony was first introduced only to men, but later was introduced to women.³¹⁹ Anointing consisted in pouring a horn full of oil over the recipient's head.³²⁰

The importance of cleanliness as part of the ceremony was further underscored later, when it was required to be rebaptized within a week of going to the temple for one's endowments until about 1910.³²¹ Rebaptism was a common occurrence for various reasons between about 1856 and the early 1900s.³²²

Around 1930, the washing ceremony was modified. The participants were no longer fully naked but rather covered by a sheet that had a hole for their heads and was open at the sides. Washing consisted of rubbing water on certain parts of the inductee's body including their navel, knees, and forehead.

The ceremony was modified again in 2005, and the partial nakedness and touching of body parts below the neck were eliminated. Recipients now place their garments on their body prior to the washings and annointings.³²³ The ceremony has been transformed from a full body washing to a largely symbolic ceremony and the more sensitive or private parts of the body are no longer touched.³²⁴

³¹⁴ See: <http://packham.n4m.org/endow31.htm> Print and PDF versions are also available from Utah Lighthouse Ministries.

³¹⁵

http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:THZzNs1dzYJ:www.i4m.com/think/temples/temple_ceremony.htm+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us

³¹⁶ <http://mit.irr.org/mormon-temple-endowment-ceremony>

³¹⁷ <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/01/02/lds-church-releases/>

³¹⁸ There were two separate rooms used for washing. See the image in *The Mysteries of Godliness* pg 76. See also this image from the salt lake temple, 1911:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washing_and_anointing#/media/File:Washing_and_anointing_tub_in_the_Salt_Lake_Temple,_June_1911.png

³¹⁹ See *The Mormon Delusion*, pg 145. The endowment ceremony was introduced to women, with Emma being the first one to participate in 1843. This may have been done to get her to agree to allow Joseph to take 2 additional polygamous brides. He was already married to 18 at this time, most of which were unknown to Emma.

<https://books.google.se/books?id=7Dk993FxE5AC&q=145#v=snippet&q=145&f=false>

³²⁰ *Mysteries of Godliness*, p. 81

³²¹ 'The Practice of Rebaptism at Nauvoo,' D. Michael Quinn, *BYU Studies* (1978) 18:2. See also: <http://lds-church-history.blogspot.com/2012/04/rebaptism.html>

³²² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebaptism_\(Mormonism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebaptism_(Mormonism)) To underscore this point, during the reformation of 1856-57, those who refused to be rebaptized were kicked out of the church.

³²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washing_and_anointing

³²⁴ This transformation may be compared to the baptism ceremony which went from immersion during John the Baptist's time to placing a little water on an infant's head in many religions. Mormonism condemns this latter form of baptism.

GARMENTS

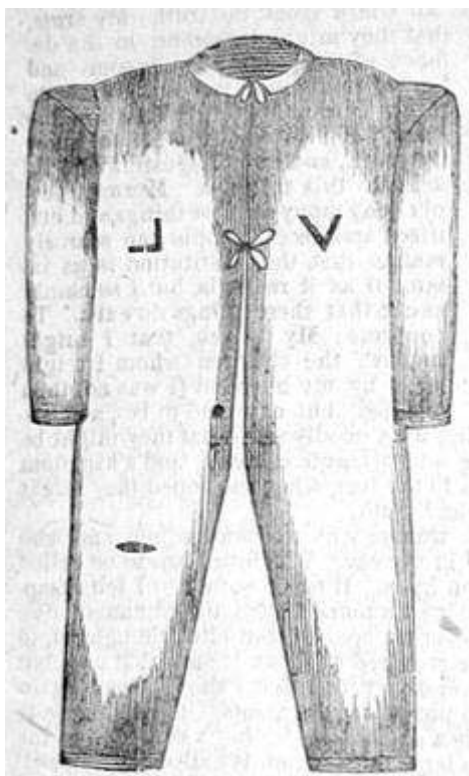
When one goes through the temple, they receive garments which they are told to always wear as it will provide “protection”. These were introduced as part of the Nauvoo temple ceremony. These garments consisted of “long johns” and were placed on the recipient after the washings and anointings. They were then cut in various places as the endowment ceremony progressed and at the end of the ceremony would contain the 4 marks associated with the garments. The skin above the knee was cut - something which Emma found objectionable - and this part of the ceremony was changed shortly after her induction in 1843.

The first garments were made of unbleached muslin and bound with turkey red and were without collars. Later on the prophet decided he would rather have them bound with white. Sister Emma Smith, the Prophet's wife, proposed that they have a collar on as she thought they would look more finished, but at first the prophet did not have the collars on them. After Emma Smith had made the little collars which were not visible from the outside of the dress, Sister Eliza R. Snow made a collar of fine white material which was worn on the outside of the dress. The garment was to reach to the ankle and the sleeves to the wrist.³²⁵

In the early church, members were not required to wear garments all of the time. They were considered a sign that one had entered into the special covenants, and because these were associated with the plural spouse doctrine, wearing these garments was a sign that one was likely involved with polygamy. Joseph sent out letters requesting the apostles take off their garments and destroy them prior to returning to Nauvoo. Joseph and Hyrum Smith did not wear their garments to Carthage when they were killed³²⁶. The garments belonging to Hyrum have been kept in the vault of the 1st presidency for more than 100 years.

³²⁵ Diary of James T.S. Allred; Letter to Col. Williams; [Microfilm d.1021/f.92, end of roll #2 (July 10, 1844)] LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City. See: <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/garments.htm>

³²⁶ John Taylor had also taken off his garments.



Temple garments circa 1879

The garment was originally a single piece³²⁷. Color of the garments was specified to be white in 1893. In 1906, LDS Church president Joseph F. Smith characterized as a "grievous sin" any attempt, in the name of changing fashion trends, to modify the 1840s garment pattern, which he characterized as "sacred, unchanged, and unaltered from the very pattern in which God gave them."³²⁸

Changes to the garments were made about May 17, 1923 – The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve agree to alter temple garment to be "...buttons instead of strings; no collar; sleeves above the elbow and few inches below the knee and a change in the crotch so as to cover the same." Mormons of the time regard this as a dramatic change from endowment garment introduced by Joseph Smith.³²⁹ Changes to the garments may have been a part of a larger effort to change the image of the church including its associations with polygamy.

Women's and men's garments used the same pattern until 1965³³⁰. Women's garments continued to be a one piece design until the 1970s, when all garments became two pieces as a standard (one piece garments were still offered). Members could make their own garments using approved patterns until at least 1977, though this is no longer an option. A variety of fabrics are available and men can choose between a standard and crew neck

³²⁷ In 1842, it may have been two pieces, but the single piece pattern was quickly established and was standard by the mid 1840s.

³²⁸ Smith, Joseph F. (August 1906), "Editor's Table", *Improvement Era*, 9 (10): 812–815.

³²⁹ http://www.i4m.com/think/history/mormon_history.htm

³³⁰ <http://www.i4m.com/think/temples/mormon-garments.htm>

design.³³¹ Changes and updates to the fit, materials, and marking (going from sewn to silkscreened, moving markings from the outside to the inside) have continued on a regular basis, the latest of which came in 2018.³³²

In addition to the four lines or cuts in the garments, the ties and collar also had symbolic meaning early on. From Wikipedia we read:

According to a description by LDS Church president John Taylor in 1883, the "Square" represents "the justice and fairness of our Heavenly Father, that we will receive all the good that is coming to us or all that we earn, on a square deal", and the "Compasses" represents "the North Star". In addition to the Square and Compasses, Taylor described the other symbols as follows: the collar represented the idea that the Lord's "yoke is easy and [his] burden is light", or the "Crown of the Priesthood"; the double-knotted strings represented "the Trinity" and "the marriage covenant"; the navel mark represents "strength in the navel and marrow in the bones"; and the knee mark represents "that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ".

In 1926, LDS Church apostle David O. McKay offered an updated description that was later incorporated into the church's endowment ceremony. According to McKay's explanation, the "mark of the Compass" represents "an undeviating course leading to eternal life; a constant reminder that desires, appetites, and passions are to be kept within the bounds the Lord has set; and that all truth may be circumscribed into one great whole"; the "mark of the Square" represents "exactness and honor" in keeping the commandments and covenants of God; the navel mark represents "the need of constant nourishment to body and spirit"; and the "knee mark" represents "that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Christ". Unlike Taylor, McKay did not describe the symbolism of the collar or the tie-strings because those elements of the garment had been eliminated in 1922.³³³

A NEW NAME

In the temple, people are given a new name which they are told to remember and which will allow them to get into the Celestial kingdom (the highest degree in heaven). The names given and process by which they are given has changed significantly throughout the years.

The new names were first instituted in Nauvoo sometime between 1842 and 1844. Between 1844 and 1878, all patrons going through the temple would receive the same new names: *Abraham* for men³³⁴, and *Sarah* for women. Brigham Young died in Aug, 1877. A change was made sometime between 1878 and 1880, and thereafter every person going through the temple received a name chosen by the temple worker. Temple workers were instructed:

"With regard to new Names, give easy names to be understood: Scripture names or names not in the Scripture, there are many good names of those who have lived upon the earth which are easy to understand[;] don't give any fanciful names, [and] be Sure they get the New Name and that they understand it."³³⁵ (*Minutes, Meeting of Workers in St. George Temple, August 31, 1880, typed excerpt, Buerger Papers*).

³³¹ Additional options and colors are available for those in the military or who require special uniforms.

³³² <https://janariess.religionnews.com/2018/03/14/hallelujah-mormon-womens-garments-just-got-a-lot-better/>

³³³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_garment

³³⁴ There are many sources for this, including: <https://archive.org/details/lettersofapostat00infree/page/58>

³³⁵ Minutes, Meeting of Workers in St. George Temple, August 31, 1880, typed excerpt, Buerger Papers

Having each member with a different new name became logistically difficult³³⁶, especially as members began to be encouraged to attend the temple more often than once. In 1965, new names were standardized such that everyone who came on a certain day would receive the same new name.³³⁷

List #1: Jan 1965 - June 1974: The same names were used for both those taking their own endowments and those going through for the dead. One list for women, and one list for men.

List #2: Aug 1974 – June 1983: the process became more complicated. There was a name associated with each day of each month. Thus, the names were still recycled, but only on an annual basis.

List #3: June 1983 – Jan 1993: The list is simplified again to a single name for men and women depending only on the day of the month.

List #4: Jan 1993 – Nov 2013: This list lasted 20 years and is similar to list 3 in methodology.

List #5: Dec 2013 – Present: A new list, following the same pattern as the last 2 lists.

THE ROLE OF PREACHERS AND LUCIFER

The original endowment ceremony in Nauvoo may have been 1.5-4 hours in length. However, Brigham Young added to the ceremony (Peter, James, and John, the lecture at the veil including Adam God Doctrine, etc). In 1906, the ceremony was still roughly 8 hours in length. This probably included washing, anointing, marking the garment, and the endowment ceremony. The modern ceremony is roughly 1.5 hours.

In addition to Lucifer who plays a prominent role in the modern ceremony, there were multiple preachers in the early ceremony representing various “corrupted” Christian faiths.³³⁸ These preachers appear to come in and try to sell in their various religions (with explanations thrown in regarding why these religions are false). The devil then comes in offering a non-Christian “life of pleasure” alternative before he is asked to leave by the actors playing Peter, James, and John. It appears that these multiple preachers disappeared and were replaced by a single preacher, probably by 1927. In 1990 the role of the preacher was eliminated entirely and his part was combined with that of Lucifer. At least one Hymn was sung as part of the early endowment ceremony.

SIGNS AND PENALTIES

In the early versions of the temple ceremony, the signs and tokens were accompanied by oaths of secrecy. The oaths also described the manner of death of the participant should they devolve any of the signs or tokens in the ceremony. The oaths were taken almost verbatim from Masonry and were as follows:

We and each of us, covenant and promise that we will not reveal any secrets of this... Should we do so, we agree that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots.³³⁹

³³⁶ Members were told that they needed to remember this name to be able to get into heaven. If they forgot it, someone in the temple would look it up. As this was a pencil/paper operation, logistics became difficult as membership grew.

³³⁷ http://www.fullerconsideration.com/temple_name_oracle.php

³³⁸ See <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045396/1906-02-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. According to the text of this 1906 account, “Men representing (or trying to) the different religious sects then came in and presented their views and said they wanted to try and save these fallen children. In doing this they could not refrain from exaggerating and coarsely satirizing the different sects they represented.”

³³⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penalty_\(Mormonism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penalty_(Mormonism)) had a full list of the penalties.

Around 1927, this was changed to the following version:

We and each of us, covenant and promise that we will not reveal any secrets of this... Rather than do so, I would suffer my life to be taken" (while pantomiming those gruesome deaths).

In 1990, it was changed to the following version:

I solemnly covenant before God, angels, and these witnesses, ... that I will never reveal the (first or second) Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood (or name of token), with its accompanying name and sign.

In addition, the signs of slitting one's throat was removed from the ceremony in 1990. Having the thumb extended (which previously represented the blade of a knife used to pantomime various ways of killing oneself), is still a part of the signs used in the temple. The full changes in the ceremony (which comprise about 5% of the text but make important substantive changes) can be found online.³⁴⁰ Many free-masonry lodges removed blood-oaths from their ceremonies in the early 1980s.³⁴¹

POLYGAMY

The endowment may have been introduced to allow for a structure for the institutionalization of polygamy. The construction of the temple in Nauvoo and the introduction of the endowment ceremony correspond with the widespread practice of polygamy by Joseph Smith and key followers including the quorum of the 12.

Brigham Young would later teach that polygamy was required to get into the highest levels of the celestial kingdom. Those who were not polygamist would have their wives taken from them:

"The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. . . Now, where a man in this Church says, '**I don't want but one wife**,' I will live my religion with one,' he will perhaps be saved in the celestial kingdom; but when he gets there he will not find himself in possession of any wife at all... but it will be taken and given to those who have improved the talents they received, and **he will find himself without any wife**, and he will remain single for ever and ever."³⁴²

Joseph Smith also used the parable of the law of talents with respect to polygamy and the need to have multiple wives³⁴³.

Changes in the temple vows of chastity also provide some insight into how the temple related to polygamy during and after the time it was practiced. The concept of wife seems to have evolved from something which was only valid when given in the temple, to something which must be legal. In 1904, at the Reed Smoot hearings Mr. Wallis stated under oath:

³⁴⁰ http://www.i4m.com/think/temples/temple_ceremony.htm

³⁴¹ <http://www.crystalinks.com/freemasons.html>

³⁴² Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11, p. 268 - p. 269, Brigham Young, August 19, 1866. He continued to teach this later on other occasions including Aug 31, 1873 as recorded by Wilford Woodruff:

https://archive.org/stream/WoodruffWilfordJournalSelections/Woodruff_Wilford_Journal_Selections_djvu.txt

Other second hand accounts of this doctrine indicate that it was being taught in 1859:

<https://archive.org/details/lettersofapostat00infree/page/36>

³⁴³ See the testimony of Benjamin F. Johnson https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_F._Johnson

Another is called the “vow of chastity,” by which we all vowed that we would have no connection with any of the other sex *unless they were given to us by the priesthood...*³⁴⁴

A 1906 account states:

The men then took the oath of chastity and the women the same; *they don't consider polygamy at all unchaste*, but said that it was an Heaven ordained law, and that *a man to be exalted in the world to come must have more than one wife*. The women then took the oath of obedience to their husbands, having to look up to them as their gods. *It is not possible for a woman to go to Christ, except through her husband.*³⁴⁵

In 1931 this same part of the ceremony read,

You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will not have sexual intercourse with any of the opposite sex except your *lawful wife or wives* who are *given you by the holy priesthood*.

The version used between about 1960-2018³⁴⁶ of this part of the ceremony reads:

We are instructed to give unto you the law of Chastity; which is, that each of you shall have no sexual relations except with your husband or wife to whom you are *legally and lawfully wedded*.³⁴⁷

In 2019, this part of the ceremony was changed again, possibly to clarify doctrine that homosexual marriages (now legal in the US) were not marriages in the eyes of God:

We are instructed to give unto you the law of Chastity; which is, that the women of God's kingdom and the men of God's kingdom shall have no sexual relations except with those to whom they are *legally and lawfully wedded according to His law*.³⁴⁸

THE OATH OF VENGEANCE

In early temple ceremonies in 1844, participants, “...formed a circle, offered up the signs, and then offered up prayers...that the Lord would frustrate the plans of our enemies.”

After the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the Law of Vengeance was added to the temple ceremony. It remained in the ceremony until about 1930. It was given after the Law of Chastity and is as follows:

³⁴⁴ Reed Smoot Case, vol. 2 pp. 77-79 as quoted in Tanner, Changing World of Mormonism pg 534.

³⁴⁵ See the 1906 account published by the Salt Lake Tribune:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045396/1906-02-12/ed-1/seq-2/>

³⁴⁶ The author does not know when this change was made, but believes that it was probably made between 1930 and 1960. A series of changes to the temple ceremony and garments were made between 1922 and 1927. The ceremony is believed to have been relatively static between 1960 and 1990, though significant changes were made in presentation when it went from a live ceremony to a film presentation in the 1950s.

³⁴⁷ The full modern endowment text can be found at <http://mit.irr.org/mormon-temple-endowment-ceremony>

³⁴⁸ <https://youtu.be/7VOb0XNjdXE?t=3152>

You and each of you do solemnly promise and vow that you will pray, and never cease to pray, and never cease to importune high heaven to avenge the blood of the prophets on this nation, and that you will teach this to your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generation.³⁴⁹

In the 1906 version:

After receiving the grip for the Aaronic priesthood, applicants were made to swear **"To obey the laws of the Mormon Church and all they enjoin, in preference to those of the United States"**.

After the negative publicity associated with the Smoot hearings, the emphasis of the Oath of Vengeance may have changed. David H. Cannon described the "law of retribution" in 1912 as a prayer rather than an oath:

"We importune our Father, not that we may, but that He, our Father, will avenge the blood of martyrs shed for the testimony of Jesus."³⁵⁰

It appears that between about 1845-1920, the Mormon church had a very adversarial relationship with the US government. After polygamy was abandoned and this relationship improved, the oath of vengeance was removed from the endowment ceremony.

THE ADAMIC LANGUAGE

Up until 1990, all temple versions used a phrase which was said to have been in the *pure, Adamic language*:

"Pale, Hale, Hale" or "Pay Lay Ale". These words are said to mean: "O Lord, hear the words of my mouth."

These words "*Pale, Hale, Hale*" were used as the sign for the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood. After 1990 these words were replaced with the *translation*, "*O Lord, hear the words of my mouth*".

PRAYER CIRCLES

As part of the endowment ceremony, a prayer circle is established. Members consist of those going through the temple for the first time and other volunteers. Participants are taught "the true order of prayer" and repeat a prayer offered by the officiator in the ceremony on a line by line basis. They also go through the signs and token (special handshakes) that they have learned as part of the ceremony.

Until the late 1970s, special prayer circles were also convened in some cases within specially designated rooms in stake buildings³⁵¹. Family alters were used through at least the beginning part of the 20th century in some home settings.

EARLIEST CEREMONIES

³⁴⁹ This may have been deleted in the late 1920s: Feb 15, 1927 - Apostle George F. Richards notifies temples that it is decision of First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve to immediately omit from prayer circles "all references to avenging the blood of the Prophets. Omit from the ordinance and lecture all reference to retribution." Letter also instructs to "omit the kissing" at the end of the proxy sealings.

http://www.i4m.com/think/history/mormon_history.htm

³⁵⁰ St. George Temple Minute Book, 22 Feb 1912, LDS archives, as quoted in Burger, The Mysteries of Godliness pp 135-136.

³⁵¹ <https://imgur.com/a/hN4ER> and <https://bycommonconsent.com/2006/07/14/the-family-altar/amp/>

The Nauvoo ceremony contained many elements not present in the current ceremony. Forbidden fruit, in the form of raisins³⁵², was eaten by the participants. Accurate records of these early ceremonies are available in the journals of early saints, but these records will not be disclosed by the LDS church³⁵³. There is one account available by a member that defected around 1846.³⁵⁴

INTERESTING HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1906 TEMPLE CEREMONY:

The 1906 ceremony was published by the Salt Lake Tribune.³⁵⁵ This included drawings of the early temple garment and apron worn by Satan in the presentation.

This ceremony appears to also have been about 8 hours in length. The exact text is not given in this published overview, though certain parts are nevertheless interesting. Parts of it may have been sensationalized and as such details should probably be taken with a grain of salt. This being said, many of the details are consistent or in line with the Nauvoo and 1931 accounts, and as such are likely credible. Records from Nauvoo indicate a much shorter ceremony (about 1.5-2 hours), but with the washing ceremonies taking longer than the modern equivalents (up to 2 hours). There are indications that the endowment grew in detail and complexity during the Nauvoo period. The first presentation in the Nauvoo temple had only Elohim, Jehovah, Michael, and the serpent as actors. In Dec. of 1845, Adam, Peter, James, and John were added.³⁵⁶ Eve was also added around this time.

³⁵² https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V34N0102_87.pdf pg 96.

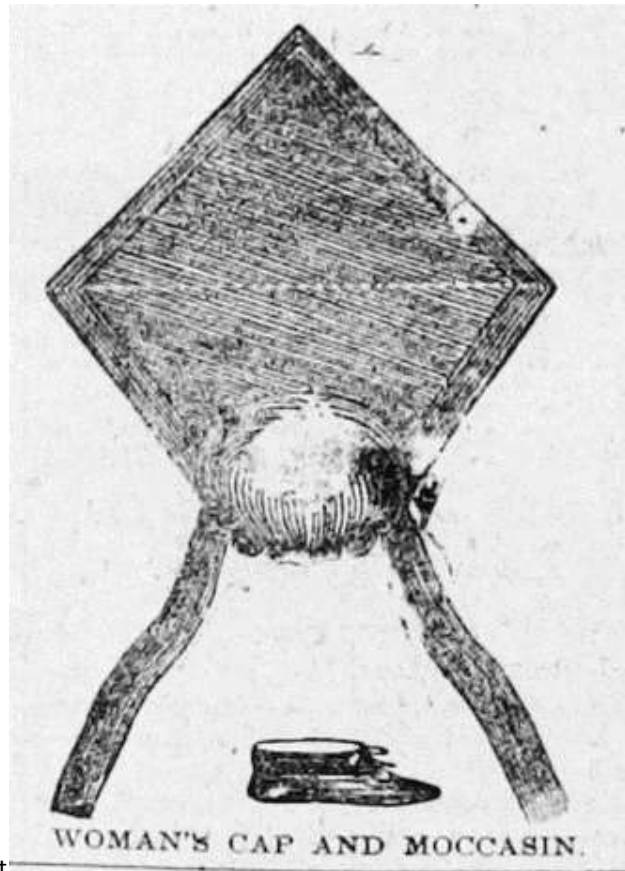
³⁵³ <https://youtu.be/fAnZmq-zUmU?t=350>

³⁵⁴ https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V34N0102_87.pdf

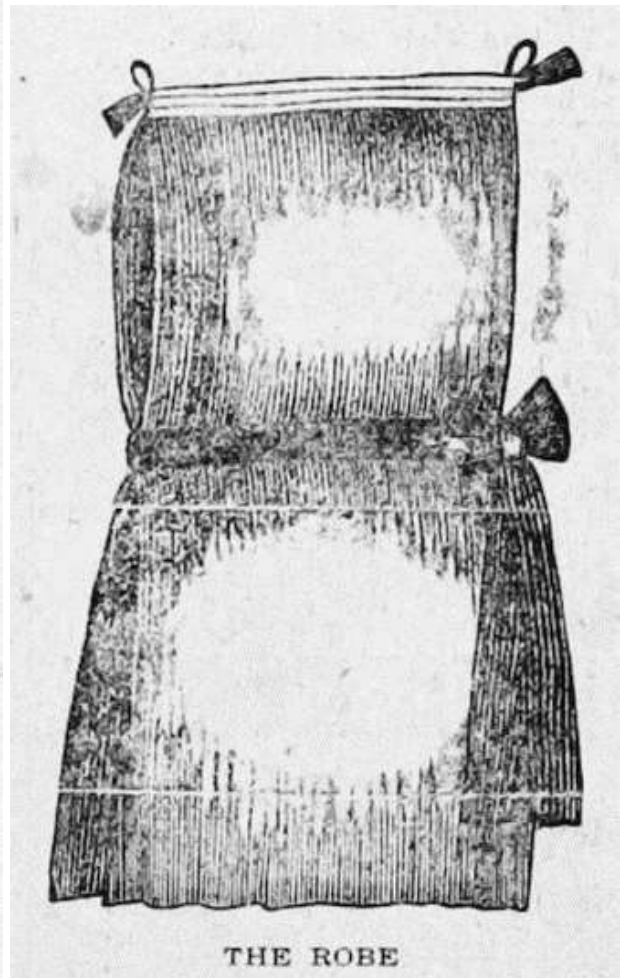
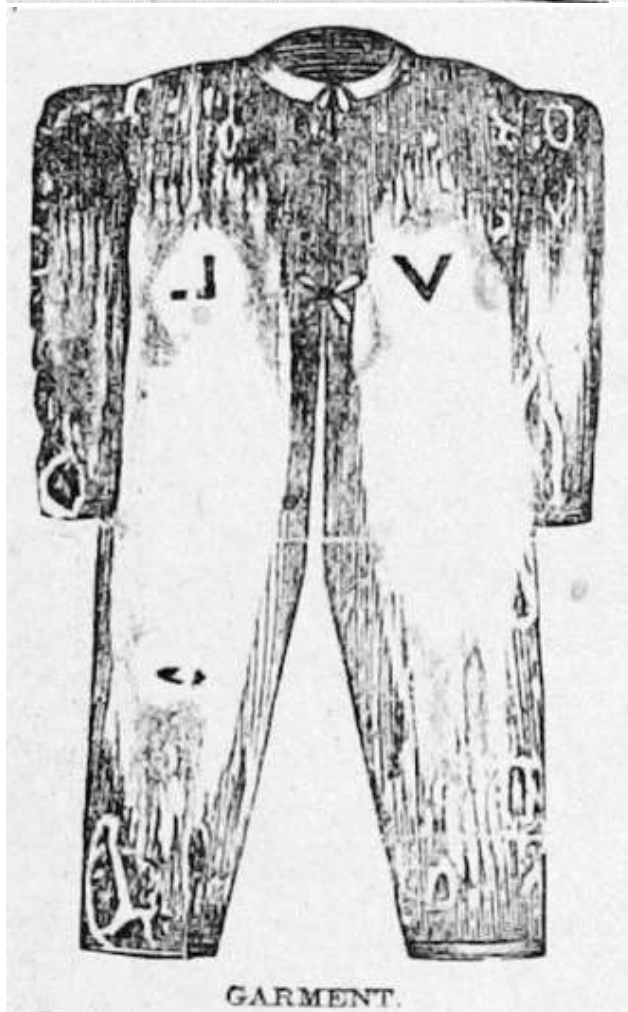
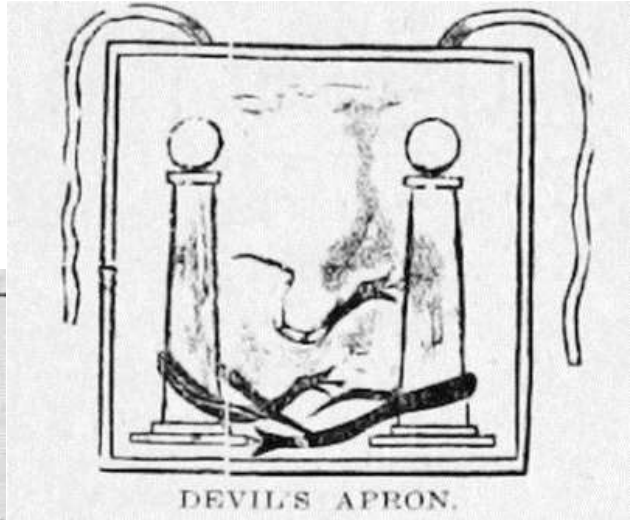
³⁵⁵ <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045396/1906-02-12/ed-1/seq-2/>

³⁵⁶ Buerger, Mysteries of Godliness pg 80.

Images published along with the article may be some of the earliest of temple clothing, though Hiram Smiths



garments are said to be in the 1st presidency's vault.



INTERESTING HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1931 TEMPLE CEREMONY:

The 1931 ceremony is also available online.³⁵⁷

A few elements found in this ceremony which are not found in the current ceremony:

- Lucifer and the Preacher are still separate actors, and dialogue during this section of the ceremony is longer than in the contemporary ceremony. The preacher is offered 4000 a year³⁵⁸ from Lucifer to preach and convert Adam and those in the ceremony. The (evil) preacher then tries to get the attendees and Adam/Eve to believe in certain doctrines of mainstream Christianity such as:
 - ...that great Spirit, without body, parts or passions, who sits on the top of a topless throne, 'beyond the bounds of time and space', whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere; who fills immensity with His presence and yet is so small He can dwell in your heart.
 - ...hell--that great and bottomless pit which is full of fire and Brimstone, into which the wicked are cast and where they are ever burning and yet never burn.
- The ceremony includes the Law of Vengeance, given directly after the Law of Chastity.
- The endowment lecture was given by the officiator and there was some latitude given in what was included. However, in addition to pointing out the details of the temple vale, the lecturer was instructed as follows:
 - In speaking of the creation, he is sure to say that Adam was not made out of the dust of the earth but *begotten the same as other men*; that the creation of Adam was done by a figure just to show you how man was made; and that *when he came here he brought **one of his wives** with him*.
- Women were required to go with or after men when going through the veil in the temple to come to the holy of holies. The process is described as follows:
 - All now being in readiness, a man's name is called, who goes up on the platform with his woman or women following him. There, as has been said, they seat themselves till their turn comes. *A man will sometimes take three or four, or even more, women with him, whom he has never seen before, but who must have a man to take them through and be lord to them.*
- As the man is being admitted into the "Glory room" (currently known as the Celestial Room), the following was noted in the ceremony:
 - ...As he says this he extends his hand and welcomes the candidate into the Glory Room. He is now the *lord over his women*...

FOR THE LIVING OR THE DEAD?

When temple practices were first introduced, they were intended to be for living members. According to Joseph Smith, the temple was for rich members and poor members could receive the spiritual manifestations and ordinances they needed on mountain tops.^{xx} Ordinances for the dead were not performed until after the temple was completed in Utah around 1877, and typically were done for direct relatives of members going back perhaps 2-3 generations. The first sealings between generations, and the sealing of parents to children (esp. for the dead) was done in 1894³⁵⁹. In this same year, the Utah Genealogical Society was established by the Mormon Church. By

³⁵⁷ <http://packham.n4m.org/endow31.htm> or

³⁵⁸ The average annual salary in 1932 was about 1368 USD, so the sum of 4000 is significant. <http://www.paper-dragon.com/1939/priceguide.html>

³⁵⁹ See <https://bycommonconsent.com/2012/03/29/mormon-temple-sealings/> or <https://www.lds.org/manual/presidents-of-the-church-teacher-manual-religion-345/wilford-woodruff-fourth-president-of-the-church?lang=eng>

the 1930s, members could submit names of their ancestors to the temple and unemployed members working there would perform the ordinances for the members for a small fee³⁶⁰.

Starting in the 1950s and 1960s, members were encouraged to attend the temple regularly even after going through the ceremony for themselves. In order to facilitate this, the church redoubled their efforts of collecting the genealogical records of people from around the world. Names were processed and prepared for the temple so that members could arrive and perform the ceremonies without bringing a name of their own. During this period, the Utah Genealogy Society (an entity owned by the LDS church) traveled to Scandinavia and photographed local state church books (Lutheran) in Sweden and elsewhere. By the 1980s, this collection of microfiche was stored in vaults outside of the church headquarters in Utah which were designed to withstand a nuclear blast.

The process of collecting and baptizing names of random individuals came under scrutiny in the press around 1990 when it was discovered that many people who had died during the Holocaust had been baptized into the Mormon faith inside their temples. Leadership at the time (Braugh) claimed that this had been done in error and that Mormons had a strict policy to only baptize names of individuals whose direct descendants were members of the Mormon faith. In 1995, the Mormon Church vowed to stop this practice.³⁶¹

Recently, an online group started collecting names of individuals who did not want to be baptized into the Mormon faith upon their death. There has been no indication from the LDS church that they will honor these wishes.³⁶²

EXALTATION

Brigham Young and other church leaders were very clear that those exalted (i.e. those who had lived righteously **and** who were polygamous with temple sealings) would become Gods and rulers of their own worlds. This teaching was taken from the temple ceremony, and as such probably originated with Joseph Smith. After about 1900, this was thought to apply to all sealed in the temple, not just those who were polygamist³⁶³.

All those who are counted worthy to be exalted and to become Gods, even the sons of God, will go forth and have earths and worlds like those who framed this and millions on millions of others.³⁶⁴

This was taught by other church leaders until at least Spencer W. Kimball in the 1970s. In addressing one gathering he stated:

Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose 225,000 of you may become gods. There seems to be plenty of space out there in the universe. And the Lord has proved that he knows how to do it. I think he could make, or probably have us help make, worlds for all of us, for every one of us 225,000.³⁶⁵

However, perhaps in part due to this being a theme in the Broadway musical "Book of Mormon", as of 2016 this doctrine is no longer in force:

12. *Do Latter-day Saints believe that they will "get their own planet"?*

³⁶⁰ Fees paid women were lower than those paid to men.

³⁶¹ <http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/lldsagree.html> and <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/04/29/us/mormons-to-end-holocaust-victim-baptism.html>

³⁶² <http://www.donotbaptize.com/>

³⁶³ In spite of these teachings, many members of the Q12 were sealed to dead women to ensure that they would be polygamists in the next life and thus worthy of the celestial kingdom. This continued into at least the 1920s.

³⁶⁴ Journal of Discourses 17:143

³⁶⁵ 'The Privilege of Holding the Priesthood', October 1975 General Conference Ensign, Oct 1975

No. This idea is *not taught in Latter-day Saint scripture*, nor is it a doctrine of the Church. This misunderstanding stems from speculative comments unreflective of scriptural doctrine. Mormons believe that we are all sons and daughters of God and that all of us have the potential to grow during and after this life to become like our Heavenly Father (see Romans 8:16-17). *The Church does not and has never purported to fully understand the specifics of Christ's statement that "in my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2).*³⁶⁶

TEMPLE STRUCTURES

In the early church for practical reasons, there was never more than one temple erected until late in the Utah era³⁶⁷.

In the late 1960s, the church considered a plan for a floating temple on a modified ocean liner, as well as making an airplane into a temple³⁶⁸. Discussions at high levels within the church suggested adding temple-like structures to stake centers for facilitating ordinances.

In the mid-1990s, Hinkley introduced the concept of smaller temples to the church and the number of active temples increased dramatically. The church has focused on the increasing number of temples in the 2010s as a sign that the church is progressing rather than conversion rates, which have been decreasing.

Year	Active Temples
1980:	19
1990:	44
2000:	102
2010:	134

OTHER DOCTRINES

THE WORD OF WISDOM – THE MORMON HEALTH CODE

The Kirtland Temperance society started in 1831 prior to Joseph Smith arriving in Kirtland. In 1833 (one month prior to the creation of the Word of Wisdom), this same society bought and destroyed the distillery in Kirtland.³⁶⁹ In the 1830s, alcohol drinking in the US had reached its peak with 7.1 gallons of alcohol being consumed per person, per year of which 60% was hard liquor.³⁷⁰ This may have been one factor in the number of temperance societies which were active in the 1830s. The American temperance society had been founded in 1826 and by 1838 there were over 8000 local groups with 1.25 million members.³⁷¹

The basic tenants taught in the Word of Wisdom were known at the time.³⁷² These included:

- Avoiding significant amounts of meat, especially in the summer time

³⁶⁶ <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/frequently-asked-questions> retrieved Dec 23, 2016.

³⁶⁷ 1884 – Logan became the 2nd temple in operation after the St. George temple. Note: There had been an endowment house and other facilities in operation earlier, and there may have been two or more endowment houses in operation at the same time.

³⁶⁸ See <https://youtu.be/512L0cE1Vmg?t=13m20s>

³⁶⁹ <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705382519/Whats-missing-in-the-Word-of-Wisdom.html?pg=all>

³⁷⁰ <http://www.li.suu.edu/library/circulation/Ostrowsky/soc4700moAlcoholConsumptionFall09.pdf>

³⁷¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temperance_movement

³⁷² As published in MEANS OF PRESERVING HEALTH, AND PREVENTING DISEASES, Dr. Shadrach Ricketson, Printed by Collins, Perkins, and Co, New York, 1806. See <http://www.mormonthink.com/wow.htm>

- Not drinking wine or hard liquor (distilled liquor)
- Not drinking hot drinks (coffee, tea, hot soups, and hot chocolate, etc)
- Not using tobacco except for medicinal uses on sick animals

The following were allowed or encouraged in the Word Of Wisdom:

- Mild barley drinks (beer)
- Fruits and vegetables in season
- The use of medicinal herbs
- Use of wine in conjunction with sacraments (the Eucharist and wedding ceremonies).

The Word of Wisdom was meant to encourage temperance³⁷³ and not prohibition. Enforcement of the word of wisdom has varied significantly. When it was first introduced, it was given as a commandment. This was quickly changed to a recommendation for the saints. However, many members disregarded it entirely. This included Joseph Smith who drank wine on many occasions including the night before he was killed. Emma Smith would also offer visitors (and Joseph) tea. Several events where Joseph Smith and early church leaders disobeyed the Word of Wisdom by smoking or drinking have been removed from recent editions of the History of the Church³⁷⁴.

When crossing the plains, coffee and liquor were kept in the larders.³⁷⁵ Once in Utah, Mormons were taught that the word of wisdom included a prohibition on all hot drinks including hot chocolate and hot soups.

We are told, and very plainly too, that hot drinks — tea, coffee, **chocolate, cocoa** and all drinks of this kind are not good for man. We are also told that alcoholic drinks are not good, and that tobacco when either smoked or chewed is an evil. We are told that **swine's flesh is not good**, and that we should dispense with it; and we are told that **flesh of any kind is not suitable to man in the summer time, and ought to be eaten sparingly in the winter**. The question arises in the minds of a great many people, "What then are we to eat if we drop swine's flesh and eat very little beef or mutton, and cannot drink tea or coffee, why, dear me, we shall starve to death." In conversation with one of the brethren the other day, he remarked "the diet of the poor is principally bread and meat, and if they dispense with meat, they will be reduced to very hard fare." I reasoned with him on the subject, and before we had got through, I believe I convinced him that other articles of food could be raised more cheaply and in greater variety than the flesh of animals.³⁷⁶

...we must feed our children properly.... We must not permit them to drink liquor or hot drinks, or **hot soups** or to use tobacco or other articles that are injurious.³⁷⁷

The Word of Wisdom was taught in Utah - especially after 1867 - and largely followed. The emphasis appears to have been primarily based on economic interest: a need to keep hard currency in Utah.³⁷⁸ Abstinence from pork

³⁷³ i.e. small quantities of alcohol were okay, but getting becoming inebriated was not.

³⁷⁴ Changing World of Mormonism, Tanner, pg 471.

³⁷⁵ Trail larders were well supplied, consisting of staples like flour, bacon, sugar, **tea, coffee**, beans, dried fruits, canned goods, salt, dried meats, vinegar, cheese, pickles, oat meal, molasses, bran meal, eggs, butter, wine, **whiskey, and other alcoholic beverages**. <http://www.mormontrails.org/Trails/Summary/trailful.htm>

³⁷⁶ <http://jod.mrm.org/12/221>

³⁷⁷ JD. V.12:221&223. Apostle George Q. Cannon 7 Apr 1868.

³⁷⁸ See Arrington, Leonard J. (1959) "An Economic Interpretation of "The Word of Wisdom"," *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 5: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=byusq>

was strongly encouraged between about 1868 and the early 1900s³⁷⁹. In 1870, Brigham Young suggested that tobacco was for cattle and lobelia for human consumption.

For a time, the prohibition of meat appears to be more important to church leaders than refraining from mild drinks (beer)³⁸⁰. This was especially the case for Lorenzo Snow, who stated in 1895:

Unless famine or extreme cold is upon us we should refrain from the use of meat.

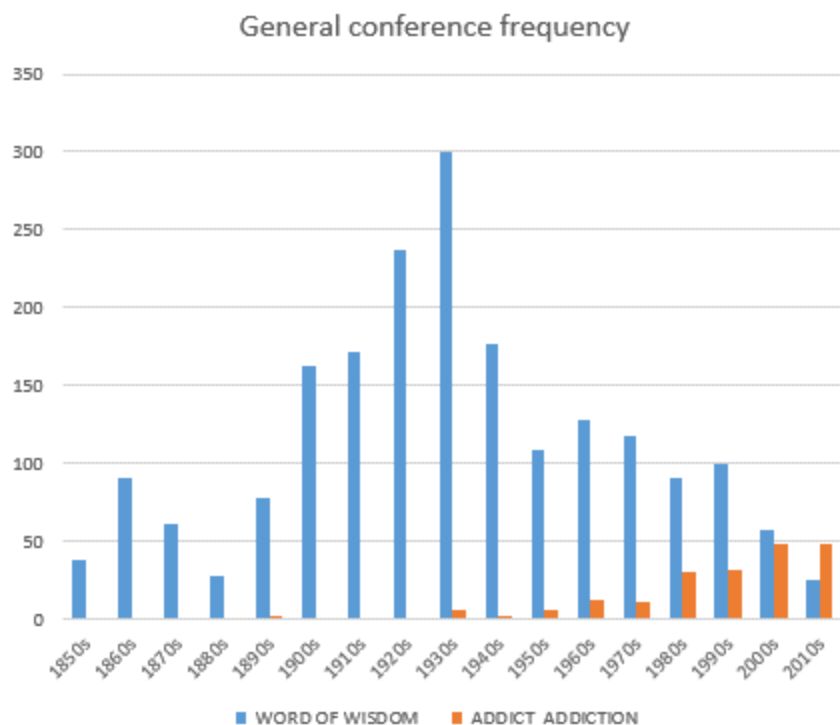
Temperance movements started gaining widespread support around 1910 and by 1920 the prohibition amendment was passed. The word of wisdom was made a requirement for admission to the temple around 1919³⁸¹. Clarity was added in the bishop's handbook between 1928 and 1933 further defining the Word of Wisdom as a requirement for temple attendance. In 1928, drunkenness and bootlegging were added to the list of crimes which would require a bishop's court.³⁸² The decade which saw the greatest emphasis on the word of Wisdom in general conference was the 1930s. In recent decades the subject of addiction in general have achieved greater emphasis.

³⁷⁹ Brigham Young, George C. Cannon, and George A. Smith made of series of comments in General Conference, mostly in 1868, indicating that "swine's flesh" was not to be eaten. One example: "If the people were willing to receive the true knowledge from heaven in regard to their diet they would cease eating swine's flesh. I know this as well as Moses knew it, and without putting it in a code of commandments." Journal of Discourses 12:54-55. George A. Smith also stated in 1868: "For some reason God, by special law, prohibited its use to the children of Israel; and it certainly seems desirable that *we should also discontinue its use*, as within the past few years in some countries where a great amount of pork has been consumed the people have been afflicted with a kind of pestilence-- a disease which is considered incurable. It is therefore wise and prudent for us to adopt plans to procure supplies from other sources."

³⁸⁰ https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_80.pdf "In 1901, John Henry Smith and Brigham Young Jr., both of the 12 thought that the church should not interdict on beer, or at least good Danish beer."

³⁸¹ Possibly 1921. Some sources vary, though flagrant violators may have been denied as early as 1902. Wine was eliminated from the sacrament by the Quorum of the 12 in 1906. See https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Word_of_Wisdom/History_and_implementation

³⁸² https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_80.pdf Dialogue, pg 82. Thomas G. Alexander, professor of History, BYU.



MANS LAWS VS. GODS LAWS

Joseph Smith and other early church leaders believed and taught that it was more important to obey Gods Laws than the laws of the land. Later leaders continued these teachings through at least about 1890.

When the government conflicts with heaven, we will be ranged under the banner of heaven and against the Government.... I defy the United States. I will obey God.³⁸³

Prophet John Taylor, January 6, 1880

Any man who says that he really and firmly believes a certain law of God binding on him, and who will not obey it in preference to a conflicting law of man or a decision of a court, has either an unsound mind or a cowardly soul, or is a most contemptible hypocrite.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Prophet John Taylor, Salt Lake Tribune, January 6, 1880, quoted in Samuel W. Taylor, Rocky Mountain Empire, 1978, p. 29 see: <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/unitedstates.htm>

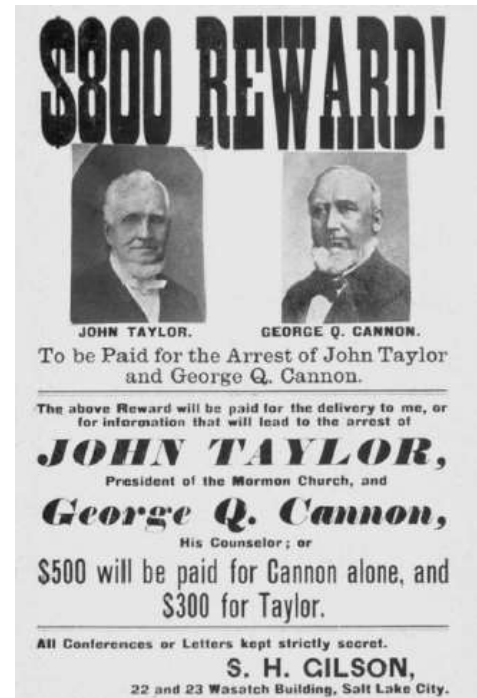
³⁸⁴ Quoting the prophet, Deseret News, July 6th, 1886. See <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/polygamy.htm>

Smith was arrested on several occasions, though rarely convicted. In many cases, he fled custody and was never tried. Early charges related to his use of a seer stone (or peep stone) which was illegal in New York (because it was a known tool of con-artists). Later charges were related to the illegal Bank set-up in Kirtland. Various conspiracy charges continued in the Missouri and Nauvoo periods (1838-1844) and late in life, he was arrested on fornication and adultery charges (for his various affairs which the church would later term the law of plural marriage).³⁸⁵

Brigham Young was arrested in the fall of 1871 on charges of "lascivious cohabitation" and released on a bail of \$5000.³⁸⁶ John Taylor was in hiding the last two years of his life to avoid arrest on charges related to his polygamy. Wilford Woodruff was also in hiding in the late 1880s to avoid arrest on polygamy charges.³⁸⁷ Lorenzo Snow was arrested and jailed for unlawful cohabitation between 1885–1886.³⁸⁸

Joseph F. Smith continued to live with his polygamist wives until his death. He was arrested for unlawful cohabitation in 1906.³⁸⁹ Heber J. Grant had 3 wives, and was arrested for unlawful cohabitation in 1899 after one of his plural wives had a child. He paid a fee of \$100 after pleading guilty.

Since 1945, there have not been prominent cases where LDS prophets have been charged with breaking US law. Gordon Hinckley may have committed perjury in the investigation of the Hoffman affair in the mid-1980s, though he was never put on trial for this offence. Modern church leaders have been requested to testify in several court cases, though church lawyers have thus far been successful in keeping them from testifying.



FASTING AND WELFARE

Modern Mormons fast by abstaining from food and water for a 24 hour period (or 2 meals) once a month on a prescribed day (usually the first Sunday of the month). The fast is officially broken by when participants partake of the sacrament in their Sunday meeting.³⁹⁰

Beginning in Kirtland in the 1830s, fast meetings were held on Thursday afternoons. In 1896, these meetings were moved to Sunday, due to the difficulty of working all day on an empty stomach.³⁹¹ Originally, members gave food to their bishops, equivalent to that which they would have otherwise eaten for distribution to the poor. This was changed to monetary donations in the late 1800s. During much of the 20th century, Deacons and Teachers

³⁸⁵ See

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Smith_and_the_criminal_justice_system#In_New_York_.281817.E2.80.9330.29

³⁸⁶ <http://hickmanmuseum.homestead.com/gasmith.html>

³⁸⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilford_Woodruff

³⁸⁸ Snow and other polygamists were pardoned in 1894 by U.S. President Grover Cleveland. See:

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=70911>

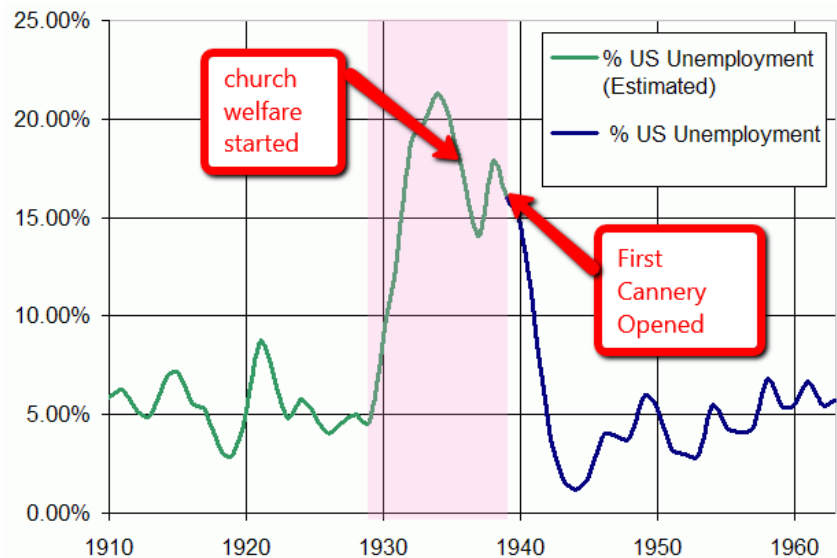
³⁸⁹ <https://xbishopscorner.wordpress.com/2014/12/27/plural-marriage-and-the-arrest-of-joseph-f-smith/>

³⁹⁰ http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Fast_and_Testimony_Meeting

³⁹¹ Ibid; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fast_offering

collected fast offerings while visiting members' homes. While still practiced in some areas (especially those with concentrated LDS populations)³⁹², most donations are now made electronically or via check and passed to the local leadership on Sundays.

Fast offerings as a concept was first introduced in Mormonism around 1837 by Joseph Smith in the Kirtland area.³⁹³ In 1845, the principle was reinstated by the Quorum of the 12. However, it appears that fasting with the associated offerings was often reactive rather than proactive. Fasting and the offerings were reinstituted in 1855 - 1856 in response to famine.³⁹⁴ The church welfare program which handles distribution of welfare needs was established and expanded significantly during the great depression. It was established in 1936 with the first cannery becoming operational in 1939.³⁹⁵



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Generous fast offerings are encouraged, where members are to give more money than that saved by the fast if they are able.³⁹⁷ However, in general fast offerings are not considered to be as important a commandment as tithing and questions regarding fast offerings are not included on the temple recommend interview. In 2012 the donation slips were changed in a way that allows the church to legally re-purpose any donations it receives. This, along with the lack of financial reporting by the LDS church makes it difficult or impossible to accurately determine how much is donated or spent on welfare related projects.

HEAVEN AND HELL

The Mormon afterlife consists of a variety of kingdoms rather than the binary heaven and hell taught by many religions. These were first outlined in 1832³⁹⁸.

³⁹² <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/aaronic-priesthood/8.5?lang=eng&r=1#85>

³⁹³ http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Fast_Offerings

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ <https://www.lds.org/church/news/a-look-back-at-the-church-welfare-plan?lang=eng>

³⁹⁶ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/58/US_Unemployment_1910-1960.gif

³⁹⁷ See Improvement Era, Dec. 1902, p. 148, Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 184

³⁹⁸ See D&C section 76 for a more full discussion of the kingdoms and doctrine.

There are two places for spirits to wait for judgement (paradise and spirit prison). After judgment, they are assigned to one of 3 kingdoms. The Kingdoms are described as follows:

- 1) Celestial Kingdom³⁹⁹
- 2) The Telestial Kingdom
- 3) The Terrestrial Kingdom⁴⁰⁰

In addition to these 3 kingdoms, there is a place called 'outer darkness' which is reserved for the Devil, his angles⁴⁰¹, and those who leave the Mormon faith⁴⁰².

The Mormon Heaven (celestial kingdom) is further divided into 3 parts:

- 1) The highest degree where one can become like god⁴⁰³
- 2) A middle degree for those who are not married.
- 3) A lower degree for those who die before the age of accountability (age 8)⁴⁰⁴.

Members are taught that it is their goal to be in the highest sub-kingdom so that they can become like God⁴⁰⁵. The two other sub-kingdoms within the celestial kingdom are inferior and not widely discussed.

There is substantial evidence⁴⁰⁶ that many (most?) of these teachings were borrowed from Emanuel Swedenborg and that Joseph Smith likely came into contact with these philosophies prior to 1828. Craig Miller points out 19 similarities between "uniquely Mormon Doctrines" and teachings of Swedenborg in his most popular work, "Heaven and Hell".⁴⁰⁷

Some of the more interesting parallels include:

- 1) Three levels of heaven
- 2) Three heavens or partitions in the celestial kingdom.
- 3) Priesthood robes are worn in heavenly marriage ceremonies
- 4) You must be married in heaven to inherit the highest heaven
- 5) The world of spirits is a place of preparation for either heaven or perdition

³⁹⁹ The highest kingdom where god reigns.

⁴⁰⁰ The lowest kingdom where the Holy Ghost reigns (when he gets a glorified body and ceases to be a personage of spirit)

⁴⁰¹ The Devil's angels are those who followed him during the pre-existence, aka before people were born when there was a 'war in heaven' between Jesus and his followers and Satan and those that followed him.

⁴⁰² It is taught that only those who have had a witness of the spirit and then denied the Holy Ghost go to this eternal damnation. In practice, this usually refers to apostate members.

⁴⁰³ The concept of become a God is in many writings, though Mormons are quick to point out that God will always be our God, even after one becomes a God (equal to him in power).

⁴⁰⁴ It is taught that children who die before the age of 8 will be raised by their parents to adulthood during the millennium. If this were true, it is unclear if this part of the celestial kingdom would be inhabited.

⁴⁰⁵ Spencer Kimball specifically taught that people who were not married would not be happy in this 2nd part of the celestial kingdom. See: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/10/the-importance-of-celestial-marriage?lang=eng>
"Some might say, 'Well, I'd be satisfied to just become an angel,' but you would not. One never would be satisfied just to be a ministering angel to wait upon other people when he could be the king himself."

⁴⁰⁶ Detailed arguments are found in books by Quinn and Bushman.

⁴⁰⁷ *Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine?* Craig Miller.
http://craigwmiller.tripod.com/interest.htm#_ftn28

- 6) The 3 kingdoms are like the sun, moon, stars
- 7) The church that Christ established has passed from the Earth (aka apostasy, need for restoration)

Joseph Smith admitted to being familiar with Swedenborg's work on at least one occasion.⁴⁰⁸

Joseph Smith did modify some of these beliefs to make them uniquely Mormon. This includes the need to enter into a polygamist relationship to enter the highest degree in the Celestial Kingdom⁴⁰⁹. In Swedenborg's work, polygamists were confined to lower kingdoms. It also appears that Joseph coined the term "Telestial".

THE 2ND COMING

Like many churches at the time, the early Mormon movement believed in an imminent second coming⁴¹⁰. Such a belief is often useful in gaining converts. The concept of impending destruction is referenced in the LDS canon in their 1830 founding revelation:

...the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear: **Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh**; and the anger of the Lord is kindled, and **his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth**; and the arm of the Lord shall be revealed; and the day cometh, that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophet, and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people: For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant, they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and **whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall**:

Wherefore I the Lord, **knowing the calamity which should come** upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph...⁴¹¹

It appears that in 1830 or 1831 both Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon were promising the 2nd coming no later than 1833.

1830:

"He (Oliver Cowdery) proclaims **destruction upon the world within a few years** - holds forth that the ordinances of the Gospel have not been regularly administered since the days of the Apostles... and many other marvelous things too numerous to mention."⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ In 1939 Joseph Smith said, "Emanuel Swedenborg had a view of the world to come, but for daily food he perished." Hunter, William E., Edward Hunter, Faithful Steward, 1970, pg 51. See

<http://craigwmiller.tripod.com/interest.htm>

⁴⁰⁹ Note: The kingdom doctrine was introduced around 1832. The Polygamy as a requirement for the highest part of heaven probably came around 1842, and may have been an afterthought or justification for polygamy.

⁴¹⁰ This view is commonly held by various non-believing and believing historians. See

<https://youtu.be/EIPwELSSI7g?t=468> , <https://youtu.be/Q4zGStQVX2I?t=117> ,

<https://youtu.be/LH144d4w6Dk?t=1707> (church historian) and <https://youtu.be/Q4zGStQVX2I?t=120> (church historian).

⁴¹¹ Book of Commandments. Ch1 vs. 3-4 (similar to D&C section 1 vs. 11-17).

⁴¹² Painesville Ohio Telegraph, Tuesday November 16, 1830 as recorded in A New Witness for Christ in America (Kirkham) page 434.

In 1831:

"First of November last, Oliver Cowdery...and three others arrived at the village with the "New Bible," on a mission to the notorious Sidney Rigdon, who resides in the adjoining town. Rigdon received them graciously - took the book under advisement, and in a few days declared it to be of 'heavenly origin.'

"Rigdon, with about twenty of his flock, were dipped immediately. They then proclaimed that there had been no religion in the world for 1500 years, --that no one had been authorized to preach and for that period, --that Joe Smith had now received a commission from God for that purpose, and **that all such as did not submit to his authority would speedily be destroyed. The world (except the New Jerusalem) would come to an end in two or three years. The state of New York would (probably) be sunk**"⁴¹³

In 1833, during a large meteor shower, it appears that Smith thought he had seen a sure sign of the imminent 2nd coming. In his journal he recorded:

November 13th nothing of note transpired from the 4th of November until this day in the morning at 4 O'clock I was awake by Brother Davis knocking at my door saying Brother Joseph come get up and see the signs in the heavens and I arose and beheld to my great Joy **the stars fall from heaven yea they fell like hail stones a literal fulfillment of the word of God as recorded in the holy scriptures and a sure sign that the coming of Christ is close at hand.** Oh how marvelous are thy works Oh Lord and I thank thee for thy mercy unto me thy servant Oh Lord save me in thy kingdom for Christ sake Amen ⁴¹⁴ *[some spelling and grammar corrected/modernized]*

In 1835, Smith prophesied that members should be ordained to the ministry and "...go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of the Lord, which is nigh – even fifty-six years should wind up the scene."⁴¹⁵ Several of the first apostles in 1835⁴¹⁶ were blessed to live until Christ returned⁴¹⁷. Another 1836 blessing told Lorenzo Barnes that he would remain until the coming of the Son of man and see the winding up scene.⁴¹⁸ Parley

⁴¹³ Palmyra Reflector, Feb 14, 1831 as quoted in A New Witness for Christ, page 440.

⁴¹⁴ "Journal, 1832–1834," p. 19, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1832-1834/20>

⁴¹⁵ The quote above is from a special meeting held in Kirtland on February 14, 1835. History of the Church, Volume 2, pg 182. This corresponds to the year 1891.

⁴¹⁶ As Quinn points out, Joseph called 12 apostles in 1830 to preach, but then reorganized the Q12 in 1835. This second organization is the one recognized by the modern movement. In the early church they were in charge of missionary efforts and the church wherever a stake was not established.

⁴¹⁷ On February 14, 1835, the same day that Joseph gave the prediction regarding the "winding up of the scene", the twelve apostles were chosen and some of them received a blessing. Heber C. Kimball was blessed "that he may stand unto the coming of our Lord, and receive a crown in the Kingdom of our Lord; that he be made acquainted with the day when Christ shall come". The following day, blessings were given to some other apostles. The blessing for Orson Hyde stated that "he shall stand on the earth and bring souls till Christ comes". William E. McLellin was blessed that "his days may be prolonged until the coming of the Son of Man," (<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/blessing-to-william-e-mccllellin-15-february-1835/1>) John F. Boynton was told "thou shalt see the face of thy Redeemer in the flesh," and William Smith was blessed to "remain on the earth, until Christ shall come to take vengeance on the wicked" Millennial Star Vol 15, pp 206-207. <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/MStar/id/6776>

⁴¹⁸ "Thou shalt remain until the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven y[e]a thou shalt see the winding up seen of all things & stand with the hundred forty & four thousand on Mount Zion." "Blessing to Lorenzo Barnes, 3 January 1836," p. [52], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/blessing-to-lorenzo-barnes-3-january-1836/6>

P. Pratt was also convinced that the second coming was imminent⁴¹⁹. David Whitmer later recalled that “the second great work should commence when nearly all the witnesses to the first plates had passed away.” This second great work would occur after “A civil war more bloody and cruel than the rebellion... a smashing up of this nation” and would involve “the translation of the sealed plates.”⁴²⁰

On April 6th, 1843, some church members pressed the prophet to know when the 2nd coming would occur. This may have been in response to earlier messages about the 2nd coming or the increasing popularity of the Millarites who believed that the 2nd coming would occur in 1844.⁴²¹ Smith said that a voice told him the following:

‘My son, if you livest until you art eighty-five years of age, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man.’ I was left to draw my own conclusions concerning this; and I took the liberty to conclude that if I did live to that time, He would make His appearance. But I do not say whether He will make his appearance or I shall go where He is.

... There are those of the rising generation who shall not taste death till Christ comes. ⁴²²

... I prophecy in the name of the Lord God -& let it be written: that the Son of Man will not come in the heavens till I am 85 years old 48 years hence or about 1890...⁴²³

In 1890 there was a widespread belief that the prediction of 1835 (and 1843) would be fulfilled.⁴²⁴ In addition to these various revelations, a number of early church members received patriarchal blessings promising them that they would live to see Christ's 2nd coming. This may have been a turbulent time for the members, as new polygamist marriages were forbidden in the same year that members had been expecting Christ to come and reign (and to reinstitute polygamy).

Brigham Young prophesied that the saints would be separated from the wicked (with the people of Enoch?) within 120 or 125 years of 1857 (i.e. by 1982).⁴²⁵

In 1916, Talmage predicted the gathering of the lost tribes (an event associated with the second coming) as follows:

“The ten tribes shall come; they are not lost unto the Lord; they shall be brought forth as hath been predicted; and I say unto you **there are those now living—aye, some here present—who shall live to**

⁴¹⁹ As described by Terryl Givens here: <https://youtu.be/SprRralyrnk?t=1538>

⁴²⁰ Interview with David Whitmer by Dr. Poulson. Deseret News 1878.08.21. https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=2650899&q=whitmer&sort=rel&year_start=1878&year_end=1878&facet_paper=%22Deseret+News%22

⁴²¹ After the Great Disappointment, this group went on to become what is currently known as the 7th Day Adventist church. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Disappointment

⁴²² History of the Church, Vol 5, p 336.

⁴²³ Joseph Smith's diary, March 10 1843-July 14, 1843 under the date April 6, 1843.

⁴²⁴ Kalus J. Hansen, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Autumn 1966, pg 76.

⁴²⁵ “On 8 March (1857), Woodruff attended a meeting during which Young alluded to the city of Enoch and its inhabitants, which Mormons believe was physically removed from the earth because of righteousness. Young suggested that within 125 years the Saints along with the portion of the earth they occupied would be separated from the wicked.” Establishing Zion by Eugene Campbell, pg 194. The original journal states: “...this people are a good people & they are advancing faster than any other people that ever lived it would not be 120 years instead of 365 before this people would with a portion of the Earth which they occupy be separated from the wicked. The Lord will bless this people if you will do as well...”

read the records of the Lost Tribes of Israel, which shall be made one with the record of the Jews, or the Holy Bible, and the record of the Nephites, or the Book of Mormon, even as the Lord hath predicted”⁴²⁶

In the early church, about 7% of all blessings (at least 57) have promises that the recipient will live to see the second coming⁴²⁷. However, after 1900, the number drops to about 2%. In the 1970s there were anecdotal urban legends of individuals who had been promised in their patriarchal blessings that they would live to see the second coming. Perhaps in response to these blessings, patriarchs are admonished in their handbook from the year 2000:

A patriarch should pronounce only those promises that are prompted by the Spirit. He should avoid sensational or extravagant promises. For example, he **should not make references to world calamities or the timing of the Second Coming.**⁴²⁸

Predictions of the 2nd coming associated with the year 2000 are often based on interpretations of the 7 seals in the book of Revelation. It appears that some Mormons in the 1970s⁴²⁹ and the period between the 1990s-2000s may have believed that this event was imminent.

According to some sociologists, when movements are facing crisis or during their genesis, they tend to focus on the second coming or another apocalyptic event. An increase in mentions of the second coming in the late 2010s could be a reflection of uncertainty associated with the rapid change in policy and organization instituted by Russel Nelson, the movement’s leader. Regardless of this recent uptick, the general belief within the movement of an imminent second coming and emphasis on 1000 year periods (or millennia) has decreased significantly since its founding. Currently only about 20% of members think that the second coming will happen in the next 50 years and roughly 50% of members give the 2nd coming a probability of occurrence of greater than 50% sometime in the future.⁴³⁰

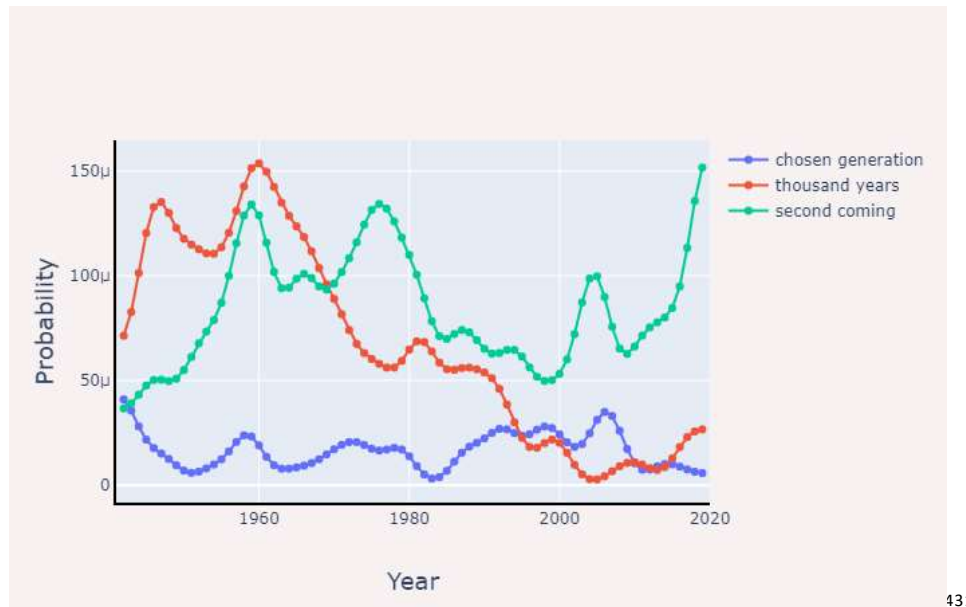
⁴²⁶ Conference Report, Oct. 1916, p. 76. See: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/old-testament-student-manual-kings-malachi/enrichment-d?lang=eng>

⁴²⁷ https://www.reddit.com/r/mormon/comments/6rctgu/if_your_patriarchal_blessing_indicates_you_will/

⁴²⁸ This handbook was leaked in 2016, but was removed from public access by request of the legal department of the LDS church. As such, it is no longer publically available. This instruction may have been printed in earlier publications as 2nd coming prophecies are rare after about 1980.

⁴²⁹ Spencer Kimball (prophet) in 1976: “As we near the year 2,000, our message is the same as that which Peter gave. And further, that which the Lord himself gave ‘unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear: ‘Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh.’”
<https://www.lds.org/study/ensign/1976/06/the-false-gods-we-worship?lang=eng>

⁴³⁰ Statistics by Ryan Cragun, sociologist. See https://youtu.be/4tKB90Uho_Y?t=570



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DOCTRINES UNIQUE TO MORMONISM

While most doctrines found in Mormonism exist in some form in at least one other religion, there are a few which seem to be unique. These include:

- 8 yrs as the age of accountability.** According to this doctrine, anything which you do prior to the day of your eighth birthday which is wrong is not a sin because you're not accountable. If you die prior to this age, you get a direct ticket to heaven (the Celestial Kingdom). Everything which you do after age 8 which is wrong is a sin. This doctrine does not take into account the differences in intellectual ability and intelligence of children except in extreme cases of mental retardation, in which case the person is considered to be under the "8 year old threshold" for their entire life.⁴³²
- Becoming a God** in the future and having eternal increase. According to this doctrine, men can become like God and literally become the Gods to their future spirit children. This process repeats itself as an eternal cycle.
- Garden of Eden in the US.** This doctrine places the Garden of Eden (and all subsequent events in the Old Testament up to the flood) in Jackson County Missouri. As part of this doctrine, the continents were split apart during the great flood and America was uninhabited after the flood until it was first peopled by the Jaradites and later the Nephites and Lamanites.⁴³³ There are indications that at least parts of this doctrine have been deemphasized since about 2006⁴³⁴.

⁴³¹ General Conference mentions of specific terms, some smoothing applied. Graphics Source: <https://search-mo-db.herokuapp.com/>

⁴³² Children can be baptized and officially join the church at age 8, but cannot leave without parental approval prior to age 18.

⁴³³ <https://www.lds.org/study/ensign/1976/06/a-promised-land?lang=eng>

⁴³⁴ <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/approaching-mormon-doctrine> "...the precise location of the Garden of Eden is far less important than doctrine about Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice."

- **Jesus will come to Zion (Jackson County Missouri) for his second coming.** The Saints will migrate to Jackson County in preparation of his return⁴³⁵. This will happen sometime in the near future because we are living in the “Latter-days”.
- **Baptism of the earth.** According to this doctrine, the earth required baptism as part of its process to becoming perfect and receiving its paradisiacal glory. This occurred during the great flood of Noah when it was immersed with water.⁴³⁶ While many Christians view the flood as symbolically pointing towards baptism, the extent and nature of the LDS interpretation is unique⁴³⁷.
- **Jesus suffered and performed the atonement for all of God’s various planets.** According to this teaching, God has many worlds, but there is only one Jesus who suffered for everyone’s sins on this planet. People on other planets will learn about Jesus through their prophets.⁴³⁸ It is further believed that we (aka people of planet earth) are the wickedest planet and the Jews are the wickedest people - the only ones who would crucify their savior.
- **Near deification of the family.** While all religions have doctrines related to the family, the Mormon concept which extends the family to both the premortal and post-mortal lives is likely unique in its emphasis on familial bonds.⁴³⁹

DOCTRINES AND PROPHECIES ABOUT OTHER PARTS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Mormons have a number of doctrines that are not widely known, but at least at some point in their history met the definition of doctrine. They are listed here as a curiosity, even though they are not discussed by the modern church and many members would not be familiar with or believe in these doctrines.

- 1) Joseph Smith Jr. and Senior both are said to have taught that the moon was peopled, that they dressed very much like Quakers, and that the gospel would be preached to them by people living in the 19th century⁴⁴⁰.
- 2) Joseph Fielding Smith prophesied in 1958 that men would never go to the moon or into outer space.⁴⁴¹
- 3) Brigham Young taught that people live on the moon and the sun.⁴⁴²
- 4) Joseph Smith (and possibly Brigham Young) taught that the lost tribes had gone to the North Pole and had spun off into outer space. They would return to the earth when the earth reels to and fro prior to the 2nd coming.⁴⁴³
- 5) Joseph Smith taught on at least one occasion that the city of Enoch was taken from the Gulf of Mexico⁴⁴⁴.

⁴³⁵ See for example Journal of Discourses Vol 24 pp 150-157 (Joseph F. Smith, 1882). <https://jod.mrm.org/24/150>

⁴³⁶ <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/flood-at-noahs-time>

⁴³⁷ <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/let-us-reason-together/was-noah-s-flood-baptism-earth>

⁴³⁸ <https://www.lds.org/study/ensign/1976/04/i-have-a-question/is-jesus-the-creator-and-redeemer-of-other-worlds-besides-this-one?lang=eng>

⁴³⁹ <https://youtu.be/EIPwELSSI7g?t=630>

⁴⁴⁰ <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/moonsun.htm>

⁴⁴¹ D. Michael Quinn, Elder statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 2002) p. 498. See also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Fielding_Smith

⁴⁴² Prophet Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 13, p. 271

⁴⁴³ See various quotes on <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/losttribes.htm>

⁴⁴⁴ From a 2nd hand account: “Joseph Smith said . . . in the hearing of some of the saints still surviving, that the City of Enoch would again take its place in the identical spot from which it had been detached, now forming that chasm of the earth, filled with water, called the Gulf of Mexico” See <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/book-mormon-fourth-nephi-through-moroni-zion-destruction/17-zion-zion-zion-keys>

OBSOLETE ORDINANCES

The following practices and ordinances are no longer practiced within Mormonism⁴⁴⁵:

- 1) The washing of feet outside of temples
- 2) Rebaptism (to show commitment, for remission of sins, or prior to entering the temple).
- 3) Baptism for the restoration of health⁴⁴⁶
- 4) Use of a home altar for prayers
- 5) Blessing of the sick and prior to child-birth by women⁴⁴⁷
- 6) Speaking in tongues, especially Adamic.⁴⁴⁸

New ordinances added recently include:

- 1) Dedication of graves (1976)

MORMON HISTORY

REWRITING HISTORY

Historical events are sometimes reinterpreted or changed in order to create a cohesive, faith-promoting narrative. When this occurs, it often follows certain patterns.

1. Need

Historical events are created or reinterpreted based on a need. This need is for the leadership to show that they are divinely appointed or that a competitive individual or group does not have the backing of God.

2. Timing

Mythical historical events⁴⁴⁹ are generally created or repurposed between 3 and 20 years after the actual event occurred or was said to have occurred.

3. Story

An event is created with its accompanying story. This is usually first told by a prominent leader within the movement, sometimes in a prominent publication or large conference meeting (especially General Conference).

4. Embellishment

In some cases, the newly developed history will be “remembered” by other witnesses (present or not) and additional details and testimonies of the event will be added.

5. Conflict

Historians researching the events will often discover the actual history and publish their findings. This may leave members conflicted when the version which they are taught in church does not match the historical record. In some cases, the church will deny the historically accurate version of events in their official literature for 100 years or more.

6. Dual Narrative and the Creation of ambiguity

⁴⁴⁵ <https://youtu.be/Nc26a1nDiKQ?t=12m46s>

⁴⁴⁶ This was practiced in Utah, but formally discontinued in about 1922/1923.

⁴⁴⁷ Blessings by women were discouraged by about 1923, but may have continued during childbirth into the 1940s(?)

⁴⁴⁸ Glossolalia was strongly discouraged no later than 1922. See **Mormonism in Transition (last chapter)**.

⁴⁴⁹ As used in this context, ‘myth’ refers to something which exaggerated or changed to be ‘faith promoting’ generally for the purpose of increasing group cohesion around a common religious premise.

In some cases, the church may choose to adopt a dual-narrative⁴⁵⁰. When they do, they acknowledge the historically accurate version as being at least partially correct, while also maintaining that their fabricated version has validity. The dual narrative may take the following form: *“We have a few precious insights into this event”. In (year), (church leader taught) (historical version 1). Another witness noted this version of events (i.e. historical version 2). Both were satisfied that (historical event) was inspired/caused by God.*

An essential element of the dual narrative phase is to maintain ambiguity. Church leaders may use phrases such as, *“The details of the event may be considered less important than the divinity of the material produced or the way in which God interacts with ‘his people’.”* For example, “we may not know all of the details about how the creation took place” or “we have very little insight into the actual process that Joseph used when translating the plates”. This dual-narrative phase, where both historical version are maintained as having validity may last for a generation (40 years) or longer. Often the more faith-promoting doctrine is taught to younger members or investigators and the more historically correct version is reserved for individuals who are highly invested in the movement.

7. ***“We have always maintained”*** (historical version 2).

In some cases, there is an attempt to completely eliminate a version of history previously taught. Previous versions are no longer repeated and when questions are asked, the answer generally states that those who taught these former histories “did not have the full light and knowledge that we have today”.

JOURNALS AND ARTIFACTS

The Mormon Church actively collects and preserves journals and artifacts associated with early church leaders. The bulk of these are located in the following locations:

- 1) The LDS Church History Department and Historical Archives
Located adjacent to Temple Square. This building has more than 270,000 books and 150,000 journals⁴⁵¹.
- 2) BYU Library/archives
- 3) The First Presidency’s Vault
- 4) Other vaults (quorum of the 12, Salt Lake Temple, etc)

The first two are accessible by historians and the public.⁴⁵² The latter two remain generally inaccessible. A partial list of what is likely contained in the First Presidency’s vault is available online.⁴⁵³ In 2010, many historical artifacts from the first presidency’s vault were given to the history department.⁴⁵⁴

Wilford Wood had collected many early artifacts between 1918 and 1960. He also helped the LDS church to purchase a number of properties. In 1958 he published copies of the 1830 version of the Book of Mormon and the 1833 Book of Commandments under the title “Joseph Smith Begins His Work”. Also contained in his collection is

⁴⁵⁰ A good example of a dual narrative that is active today is with polygamy. This is still an official doctrine and per early quotes necessary for salvation, but it is currently completely forbidden, with those who practice this doctrine being excommunicated from the church.

⁴⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_History_Library

⁴⁵² Between about 1986 and 1992 the Historical Archives were closed to researchers who did not sign away a right of review for all material which they published prior to publication. See: <https://youtu.be/fG4ZHIwAmCI?t=53m15s>

⁴⁵³ <https://exploringmormonism.com/our-own-peek-into-the-first-presidency-vault/>

⁴⁵⁴ Elder Snow, interview on Gospel Tangents <https://youtu.be/fAnZmq-zUmU?t=288>

one of Smith's original seer stones and his Jupiter Talisman. The museum housing his collection in Bountiful Utah is arguably the most important private collection within Mormonism.

TYPES OF CHURCH HISTORIES

Most literature written about the Mormon church falls broadly into the following categories:

- 1) **Correlated History:** This is what you get at LDS church services and through their official manuals and publications. Since the 1960s, the Correlation Department and Doctrine Committee have reviewed all publications to make sure that the material presents teachings as currently taught and presents history in the best possible light. It selects details that are "faithful" and "faith promoting" and may or may not be accurate. Details which do not lead one to the desired conclusions are often omitted. For example, one may be told the story of a girl hiding in the corn fields with pages of the early D&C⁴⁵⁵ and staying up all night reading the Book of Mormon⁴⁵⁶. However, you will not be told that the same girl was later asked by Joseph Smith to be a polygamist wife even though she was already married to someone else at the time⁴⁵⁷.

As Dallan H. Oaks explained:

Balance is telling both sides. *This is not the mission of official Church literature or avowedly anti-Mormon literature. Neither has any responsibility to present both sides.*⁴⁵⁸

- 2) **Apologist⁴⁵⁹ History:** This is history that is bent in a way to make it seem possible that the church could be true in spite of damning evidence to the contrary. The main sources of this are FARMS, Fair Mormon, and a host of Mormon apologists that change with each generation. Hugh Nibley is perhaps the most famous LDS apologist and was most active between about the 1960s-1990s.
- 3) **"Anti-Mormon" Histories:** Some Christian churches (particularly Evangelical and Baptist) produce histories about Mormonism to dissuade people from joining this "non-Christian" religion. Some of these are also written with the purpose of "converting Mormons to Christianity". They typically cherry-pick historical events and to make the church seem unreasonable, corrupt, and non-Christian (i.e. not founded on the New Testament). The actual events and quotes are often accurate, but may be presented in a way that makes the LDS church seem non-credible. A good example of this type of literature is "The Changing World of Mormonism" by the Tanners.
- 4) **Modern Histories** written by Mormon and non-Mormon authors. Beginning perhaps with Faun Brodie and certainly after the 1960s, we get what Mormons like to refer to as "warts and all" histories by both Mormon and non-Mormon authors. These were championed by Arrington and others. Depending on the author, they may have a pro or anti-mormon bias, but they are generally based in fact and are well researched and referenced.

Of these types of history, Boyd K. Packer stated:

⁴⁵⁵ <https://www.lds.org/liahona/1990/03/caroline-and-mary-elizabeth-rollins?lang=eng>

⁴⁵⁶ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2016/11/saturday-afternoon-session/look-to-the-book-look-to-the-lord?lang=eng>

⁴⁵⁷ <http://www.wivesofjosephsmith.org/09-MaryRollinsLightner.htm>

⁴⁵⁸ 1985 CES symposium talk by Dallan H. Oaks. See <http://mormonexpositor.com/refmaterial/45/ReadingChurchHistory-Oaks-CES.pdf> pg 18.

⁴⁵⁹ The word "apologist" is often misunderstood by members of the LDS church who are not academics. It is not derogatory; it is simply the technical term for what a member would call a "defender of the faith".

There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of church history to want to tell everything whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not.

Some things that are true are not very useful.

Historians seem to take great pride in publishing something new particularly if it illustrates a weakness or mistake of a prominent historical figure. For some reason historians and novelists seem to savor such things.⁴⁶⁰

- 5) **Journals** and other raw materials. With the Joseph Smith Papers project, raw materials from some early church leaders are becoming more accessible. These raw sources require a lot of time to investigate, but allow the curious explorer to draw their own conclusions based on source materials.

THE FIRST HISTORY

As Mormonism began to take form, it began to carefully write and rewrite its history and narrative. From the first official church meeting in April 1830, Mormons believe that the Lord commanded them to keep a record.⁴⁶¹ The first revelations of God to this new church were published in 1833, but significantly altered before republication in 1835. By 1835, concepts of the priesthood and the laying on of hands of ancient prophets to deliver the priesthood to Oliver and Joseph had been inserted into the historical record and several chapters in the Doctrine and Covenants were modified to accommodate this⁴⁶². The first history of the church was started in the 1830s and completed in 1856⁴⁶³. It was compiled by a number of authors who wrote events as if they had been recorded by Joseph Smith.⁴⁶⁴ Revelations and events were added, modified, or deleted in order to create a cohesive and faith promoting narrative. The assistant church historian at the time was very upset by these modifications.^{xxi}

As Walter Benjamin once noted, "History is written by the victors". Mormons may have believed that they were championing a righteous cause, and as such if they were to be victorious they felt that they needed to control the narrative of their history^{xxii}. In any case, from the beginning Mormon leaders have written, rewritten, and changed both scriptural writings and their written history in order to meet the perceived needs of their organization.

BH ROBERTS

B. H. Roberts was the assistant Church Historian and an apostle in the early 1900s. He edited and published an updated History of the Church (7 volumes) dealing with the life of Joseph Smith, as well as The Comprehensive History of the Church (6 volumes) which is considered the most accurate and complete history written to that time. While having a Mormon bias, it is nonetheless a well written and informative work. It was first published as weekly installments in the American Historical Magazine between 1909 and 1915 before being compiled, updated, and republished in 1930⁴⁶⁵.

⁴⁶⁰ The Mantle Is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect, Boyd K. Packer, 1983. See:

<http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2055&context=byusq>

⁴⁶¹ D&C section 21 vs 1: Behold, there shall be a record kept among you...

⁴⁶² <http://www.2think.org/hundreds/ship/boc/boc28.shtml> see also <https://redd.it/74j3qi>

⁴⁶³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Church_\(Joseph_Smith\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Church_(Joseph_Smith))

⁴⁶⁴ Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History", BYU Studies, 11 (Summer 1971) 439.

⁴⁶⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_History_of_The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints

There have been some efforts from within the church to present a more accurate history. In 1922, B. H. Roberts⁴⁶⁶, one of the presidents of the quorum of the 70s, gave a presentation to the first presidency, the 12 apostles, and the Seventy's presidents about the textual and historical problems in the Book of Mormon. He recommended that these problems be researched and publicly discussed.⁴⁶⁷ This recommendation was not followed. According to Roberts, "Such a question as that may possibly arise some day, and *if it does, it would be greatly to the advantage of our future Defenders of the Faith, if they had in hand a thorough digest of the subject matter.*"⁴⁶⁸ His studies were first published more than 50 years after his passing in 1985 under the title "Studies of the Book of Mormon".

ARRINGTON 16 VOLUME HISTORY

A wealth of research in order to obtain an accurate history of Mormonism has been done starting during the early days of the church and continuing to the present day. The first book to question the narrative being developed by the early church was *Mormonism Unveiled*⁴⁶⁹ published in 1834. This book may have inspired the church to compile (and alter) its own written history. In 1945, "*No Man Knows My History*" was yet another attempt to understand the life and motivations of Joseph Smith⁴⁷⁰. This book served as the most influential and authoritative on the subject of Joseph Smith for many years.

In the 1970s, Leonard Arrington became the first *historian* to serve as the director of the LDS church's history department in more than 100 years. He transformed and opened the department making material available to researchers. This led to a renaissance in Mormon studies until he was replaced and controls were tightened in the early 1980s^{xxiii}. Many ambitious projects were begun during these years, including a 16 volume church history. In July of 1980 Arrington and his division were renamed and moved to BYU. By Feb 1981 the project was canceled.⁴⁷¹ Bushman states that during the review of his book on Joseph Smith by general authorities, they canceled the series.⁴⁷² His book was slated to be the 2nd of the series to go to press.

Of these 16 volumes, it appears that roughly 8 of them were eventually published by various presses⁴⁷³:

Originally planned volumes:

⁴⁶⁶ B.H. Roberts was a polygamist with 3 wives, one of which was taken after 1890. When elected to congress, he was not seated due in part to a protest petition signed by 7 million citizens. <https://www.lds.org/topics/the-manifesto-and-the-end-of-plural-marriage?lang=eng#41>

⁴⁶⁷ Jan 4, 1922 - From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Brigham H. Roberts presents detailed summary of textual and historical problems in Book of Mormon to combined meeting of First Presidency, apostles, and Seventy's presidents. He recommends that these problems should be researched and publicly discussed. http://www.i4m.com/think/history/mormon_history.htm

⁴⁶⁸ B. H. Roberts' letter to Elder Richard R. Lyman, 24 October 1927.

⁴⁶⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormonism_Unveiled

⁴⁷⁰ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Man_Knows_My_History Brodie was Mormon, but later excommunicated from the LDS church.

⁴⁷¹ The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology by Lavina Fielding Anderson, Dialogue V26 No 1. https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N01_23.pdf pg 15. Some authors such as Thomas Alexander insist that the primary reason it was not published was because authors did not complete their works. Others speculate that the project was killed by Packer, Bentson, or other conservative members of the 12 who did not consider the works to be faith inspiring. Ultimately, these explanations are not mutually exclusive.

⁴⁷² See <http://www.mormonstories.org/richard-bushman-and-rough-stone-rolling-part-1-experiences-as-a-mormon-historian/> 32:30 – 36 minutes into the program.

⁴⁷³ <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4207&context=byusq> see page 4.

- Volume 1: Introduction and Background, to 1830: Richard L. Anderson (BYU)
- Volume 2: The Ohio Experience, to 1838: Milton V. Backman Jr. (BYU)
- Volume 3: The Missouri Experience, to 1838: Robert J. Matthews (BYU)
- Volume 4: The Illinois Period, 1839-1846: T. Edgar Lyon (Institutes of Religion)
- Volume 5: The Crossing of the Plains: Reed C. Durham Jr. (Institutes of Religion)
- Volume 6: The Early Pioneer Period, 1847-1869: Eugene E. Campbell, BYU
- Volume 7: The Later Pioneer Period, 1869-1900: Charles S. Peterson, Utah State Univ.
- Volume 8: The early Twentieth Century, 1900-1930: Thomas G. Alexander, BYU
- Volume 9: The Church from 1930-1950: John L. Sorenson, BYU
- Volume 10: The Contemporary Church, 1950-1980: James B. Allen, Asst. Church Historian
- Volume 11: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Europe: Douglas F. Tobler, BYU
- Volume 12: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Mexico and Central and South America: F. LaMond Tullis, BYU
- Volume 13: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Far East and Oceania: Lanier Britsch, BYU
- Volume 14: A History of the Missionary Program of the Church: S. George Ellsworth, Utah State Univ.
- Volume 15: A Social and Cultural History of the Latter-day Saints: Davis Bitton, Assistant Church Historian

The following works were published which approximate

- Volume 1: Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* - Illinois University Press, 1984
- Volume 2: Milton V. Backman Jr's *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-Day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1838* - Deseret press 1983
- Volume 3: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Clay County, Missouri, from 1833 to 1837 by Max H. Parkman⁴⁷⁴
- Volume 4: (T. Edgar Lyon⁴⁷⁵ finished by) Glen M. Leonard's *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* - Deseret press 2002⁴⁷⁶.
- Volume 5: Crossing the Plains by Reed Durham (Unpublished and incomplete).⁴⁷⁷
- Volume 6: Eugene Campbell's *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West, 1847-1869*, Signature Books, 1988
- Volume 7: 1870-1889 (Unpublished. Charles S. Peterson did publish *Utah: A History*.)⁴⁷⁸
- Volume 8: Thomas Alexander's *Mormonism in Transition, A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* - Illinois University Press, 1986

⁴⁷⁴ This paper is not the actual volume/book, but was intended to be part of the volume on Missouri. It is a doctoral thesis from 1976 available at BYU. "Leonard Arrington had asked me to write the volume on Missouri." <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/conversations-mormon-historians/max-h-parkin> See also: <https://books.google.com/books?id=fgotngEACAAJ&dq=inauthor:%22Max+H.+Parkin%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewj48cjpoCHjAhVsT98KHfuhAcEQ6AEIjAB> and <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1979/04/missouris-impact-on-the-church?lang=eng>

⁴⁷⁵ <https://youtu.be/iIKK-RmtiSs?t=1h6m15s>

⁴⁷⁶ This book is likely part of the series but has not been confirmed from multiple sources.

⁴⁷⁷ It appears that he did most of the research for the book, which can be found in his papers: <http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv87060> see also: <http://www.mormonstoriesessays.com/>.

⁴⁷⁸ <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/conversations-mormon-historians/charles-s-peterson>

- Volume 9: Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century*, Deseret Book, 1985.
- F. Lamond Tullis' *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* - Utah State Univ Press, 1987⁴⁷⁹
- R. Lanier Britsch's *Unto the islands of the sea: A history of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* – Deseret press 1986 and R. Lanier Britsch's *Mormonism in Hawii* Deseret Book, 1990

Probably part of the series, but not confirmed:

- R. Lanier Britsch's book "From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851-1996"⁴⁸⁰

Based on the existing books, it seems like the following volumes were also planned:

- Mormons in Europe
- Mormons in South America
- Mormons in Canada
- 1 additional volume of unknown content

In more recent years, both Mormon and non-Mormon scholars have attempted to shed light on the life, actions, and motivations of the founder of the church. Much of the research is well done, but in many cases it remains inaccessible to a larger audience due to the scholarly nature of the publications. Many of these works concentrate on the life of Joseph Smith and end with his death. In addition to the authors listed above, a few of the modern historians who have made significant contributions include Jan Shipps, Dan Vogel, and D. Michael Quinn. Most of the contributors to the field are current or former Mormons⁴⁸¹.

FAITH PROMOTING STORIES & URBAN LEGENDS

Fabrications and folklore surrounding Mormonism have been part of the official narrative since the early days of the church. The narrative regarding the Book of Mormon translation & the Urim and Thummim in the form of spectacles was shared by Oliver Cowdery and others by 1834. This corresponds roughly to the rewriting of the history and inserting priesthood restoration and the concept of Melchizedek priesthood by the laying on of hands.

Urban legends also form part of the narrative⁴⁸². Some of the more prominent ones which continue to be taught in church include:

- 1) That Thomas B. Marsh left the church over a dispute which his wife had with another woman regarding cream.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁹ <https://youtu.be/iIKK-RmtiSs?t=1h5m50s>

⁴⁸⁰ R. Lanier Britsch's book "From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851-1996" seems like it would have fit into this series and was probably one of the intended 16 volumes. According to Amazon, the book was "25 years in the making", meaning that it was started around the early 1980s when this project was active.

⁴⁸¹ D. Michael Quinn was the highest profile historian excommunicated for publishing books and articles containing controversial information. He was one of the "September 6".

⁴⁸² See <http://www.exmormon.org/mormon/mormon060.htm> and https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Mormon_urban_legends_or_folklore for some prominent Mormon Urban legends.

⁴⁸³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_B._Marsh#.22Milk_and_strippings.22_story see also: <https://bycommonconsent.com/2009/07/01/the-milk-strippings-story-thomas-b-marsh-and-brigham-young/>

- 2) That Brigham Young was transfigured to look like Joseph Smith when he was speaking to the congregation after Joseph Smith's death.⁴⁸⁴
- 3) That three boys carried 500 stranded pioneers across an ice filled river and later died from exposure and received eternal life for this brave act.⁴⁸⁵
- 4) That Brigham Young proudly stood and proclaimed "This is the place" when they entered the Salt Lake Valley.⁴⁸⁶
- 5) That seagulls came in answer to prayers and were responsible for saving the crops of the early pioneers⁴⁸⁷.

GOSPEL TOPICS

Articles on controversial subject in church history were released between 2013 and 2015. These were preceded by a few events which evidently convinced some of the leadership within the LDS church of the need to be more honest and open with its members. While we do not know all of the particulars, some of the motivations for this move appear to be based on members leaving the church.

- 2010 (November 28): A number of Swedish members including a former 70 have a lot of questions. An emergency fireside is given by some members of the 70 and church historians to try to address these questions. Several of these members leave the church in what is perhaps the largest modern apostasy in Sweden.⁴⁸⁸
- 2011 (roughly): The church starts "The Rescue" initiative. This is sometimes referred to as the Swedish Rescue. The goal of this program is introduce members to controversial church history directly rather than allowing them to first encounter it on the internet. As part of this program, the church will now address sensitive topics directly on its website rather than only referring those with questions to apologist websites such as FARMS or FAIR. The process culminated in the Gospel Topics essays. The Gospel Topics subjects (12 items) were approved by the Quorum of the 12 in May 2012⁴⁸⁹.

The project was initiated by Richard Turley⁴⁹⁰ and Marlin Jensen. The articles were written by historians and other members and/or apologists and sent to "the Brethren" (groups of 70s and church historians and later the 12 apostles and first presidency) for review⁴⁹¹. Long essays, some about 50 pages in length were written in the initial draft. Originally the intention was to have long, short, and medium responses for members to read⁴⁹². After they were condensed and revisions were made, the articles were published and presented as "Gospel Topics Essays". Only 12 questions were initially approved⁴⁹³, however, the output of the project was 13-14 articles. It is possible that one "softball" question was added to try to lessen the impact of other articles – this being the first topic (alphabetically and in the release dates), "Are Mormons Christian". It is also

⁴⁸⁴ https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V34N0102_171.pdf see pg 172.T

⁴⁸⁵ See <https://byustudies.byu.edu/file/5164/download?token=nJyqsf1w>

⁴⁸⁶ Brigham Young was sick lying in a wagon and entered the valley 2 days behind the first members of the party.

⁴⁸⁷ Seagulls did eat some of the pests, though they arrived about a month after the first infestations and popular accounts are often at odds with first-hand journal accounts.

⁴⁸⁸ See www.mormonthink.com/glossary/swedish-rescue2.htm

⁴⁸⁹ <https://youtu.be/BS6hRBfYqHc?t=97>

⁴⁹⁰ https://youtu.be/YH7fmZ36_HI?t=510

⁴⁹¹ https://youtu.be/MN1yFbQB_bs

⁴⁹² <https://youtu.be/S-MxUhCJl5U?t=1m>

⁴⁹³ Interview with Steven Snow. See: <https://youtu.be/BS6hRBfYqHc?t=99>

possible that polygamy was a single question which resulted in 3 articles, moving the number from 12 to 14. The 13/14 articles are as follows:

- o [Are Mormons Christian?](#) November 20, 2013
- o [First Vision Accounts](#) November 20, 2013
- o [Race and the Priesthood](#) December 6, 2013⁴⁹⁴
- o [Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah](#) December 16, 2013⁴⁹⁵
- o [Book of Mormon Translation](#) December 30, 2013
- o [Book of Mormon and DNA Studies](#) January 31, 2014⁴⁹⁶
- o [Becoming Like God](#) February 24, 2014⁴⁹⁷
- o [Peace and Violence among 19th-Century Latter-day Saints](#) May 13, 2014⁴⁹⁸
- o [Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham](#) July 8, 2014
- o [Plural Marriage in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints](#) Oct 22, 2014⁴⁹⁹
- o [Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo](#) October 22, 2014⁵⁰⁰
- o [The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage](#) October 22, 2014⁵⁰¹
- o [Joseph Smith's Teachings about Priesthood, Temple, and Women](#) October 23, 2015
- o [Mother in Heaven](#) October 23, 2015

A conscientious decision was made to not advertise or widely inform members about the release of these new essays⁵⁰². Between 2013 and 2015, the topics were listed along with dozens or perhaps 100s of other topics in an alphabetical index, so finding the controversial new entries was somewhat difficult⁵⁰³. One of the essays (polygamy in Kirtland and Nauvoo) was left out of the index so that the only way to find it was via a Google search⁵⁰⁴. Later, they were grouped together and made easier to access. About May 23, 2016, the polygamy essays were nested within each other making it less likely for members to accidentally come across information

⁴⁹⁴ The first draft of the essay was written by Paul Reeve. See <https://wheatandtares.org/2017/03/02/paul-reeve-wrote-the-race-essay/> and <https://youtu.be/BS6hRBfYqHc?t=155>

⁴⁹⁵ Probably written by Kathryn M. Daynes or Kathleen Flake. <https://youtu.be/S-MxUhCJI5U?t=3m15s>

⁴⁹⁶ This essay was largely written by Ugo Perego. See: <https://youtu.be/qN-lhu7QUUU?t=6m25s>. A larger paper on this topic was published by Perego here: <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/is-decrypting-the-genetic-legacy-of-americas-indigenous-populations-key-to-the-historicity-of-the-book-of-mormon/>

⁴⁹⁷ Possibly written by Terryl Givens. See <https://redd.it/4hctgn> and https://www.reddit.com/r/latterdaysaints/comments/d29gax/i_am_terryl_givens_ama/ezupc63?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x

⁴⁹⁸ Possibly Patrick Mason https://youtu.be/YHZfmZ36_HI?t=300

⁴⁹⁹ Some sources consider this to be one of the controversial Gospel Topics entries. However, Church sources do not list this entry as part of the project.

⁵⁰⁰ Bryan Hales was purportedly involved in this project. <https://youtu.be/S-MxUhCJI5U?t=3m10s>

⁵⁰¹ Possibly written by Kathleen Flake. See <https://youtu.be/S-MxUhCJI5U?t=3m15s> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathleen_Flake

⁵⁰² See an interview with Steven Snow, head of the Church History department at the time: <https://youtu.be/BS6hRBfYqHc?t=255>

⁵⁰³ Bryan Hales was purportedly involved in this project. See <https://bycommonconsent.com/2015/07/10/how-to-currently-find-the-gospel-topics-essays-and-topics/>

⁵⁰⁴ According to at least one purported former church employee, this was intentional. See <https://redd.it/72k6fx> comments by "VeritasOmnia".

about polygamy during the Kirtland and Nauvoo eras⁵⁰⁵. The number of clicks required to access the essays increased significantly at this time. However, they remained easy to access on the Gospel Library app for I-phone & Android. In 2019, the organization of the essays was changed again and it became easier to reach the controversial polygamy essay directly. The *Polygamy in Kirtland and Nauvoo* essay has been moved around and reorganized at least 4 times - more than any of the other essay - possibly due to its controversial content including the admission that Joseph may have had sex with at least one 14 year old⁵⁰⁶. An internal study to determine who was viewing the essays, how much, and how people felt about them was conducted by the church in 2014⁵⁰⁷.

THE NEW HISTORY – “SAINTS”

A new history is being published in 4 volumes and is scheduled to be released between 2018 and 2021. It has been written in a novel format based on historical events to improve readability. It is written on a 9-10th grade reading level and contains many faith promoting stories.⁵⁰⁸ It is meant to be solid history mixed with a pleasing narrative style while meeting the needs of a global audience.⁵⁰⁹ Rick Turley managed the project in the early stages.

- 1) Volume 1: 1820-1846 “Saints: The Standard of Truth”
- 2) Volume 2: 1846-1893 “Saints: No Unhallowed Hand”
- 3) Volume 3: 1894-1954 “Boldly, Nobly and Independent”
- 4) Volume 4: 1955-2010 “Sounded in Every Ear”

Official sources claim that one of the main purposes of the book is to “...help readers (*navigate*) safely through the gap between naïve faith and informed mature faith.”⁵¹⁰ The first volume evidently took about 6 years to produce, in part due to a lengthy approval process⁵¹¹. This means that the book project may have started in earnest around 2012, or in a similar timeframe as the Gospel Topics essays and shortly after the Swedish Rescue. Some sources indicate that it could have begun in some form in 2008 under the direction of Jensen and Turley⁵¹².

SACRED TEXTS

Mormons rely primarily on 4 sacred texts which are (in rough order of importance):

- 1) The Book of Mormon
- 2) The Bible
- 3) The Doctrine and Covenants

⁵⁰⁵ <https://redd.it/4komc1>

⁵⁰⁶ The essay heavily infers that he did not have sex by taking some quotes out of context. The bulk of the evidence however points to the conclusion that this was a sexual relationship.

⁵⁰⁷

https://mormonleaks.io/wiki/index.php?title=File:The_New_Gospel_Topics_Articles_on_LDS.org_that_Deal_with_Challenging_Information-2014-09.pdf

⁵⁰⁸ see <https://www.timesandseasons.org/index.php/2017/06/new-official-church-history-volumes-forthcoming/> and <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865681321/Church-Historian-details-forthcoming-new-comprehensive-Church-history.html>

⁵⁰⁹ <https://youtu.be/0hsIS9pR3qY?t=210>

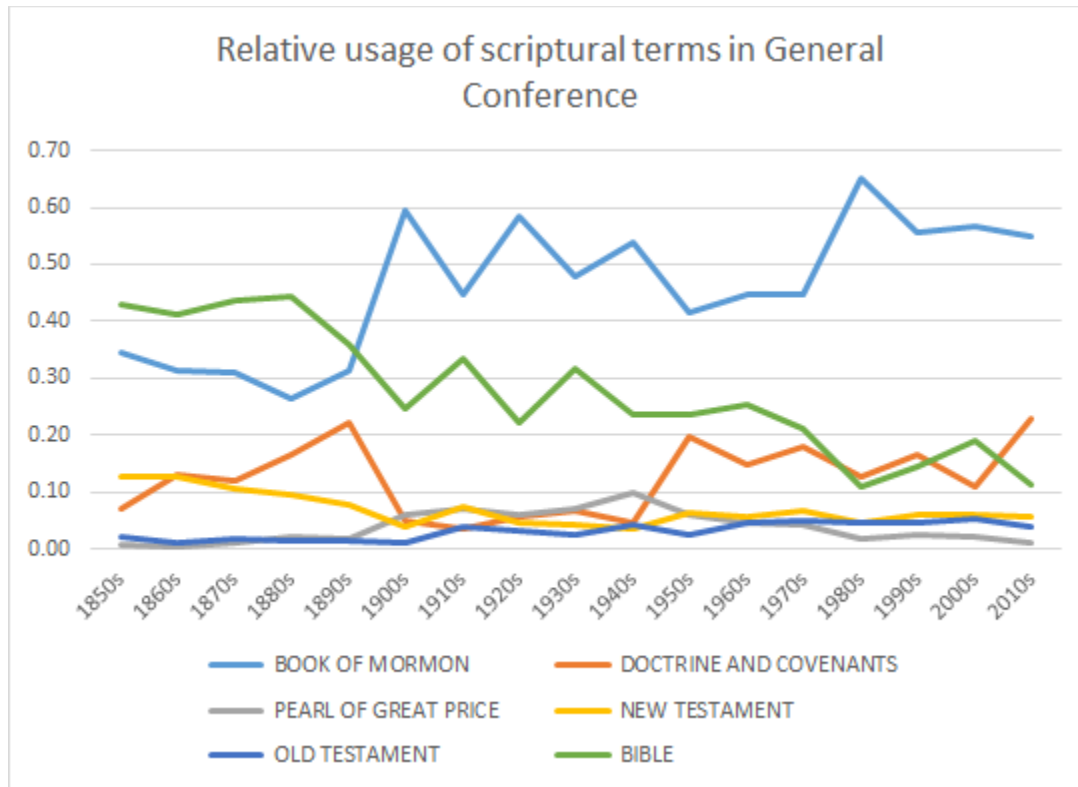
⁵¹⁰ <https://www.lds.org/church/news/6-reasons-why-you-should-read-the-new-church-history-book-saints?lang=eng>

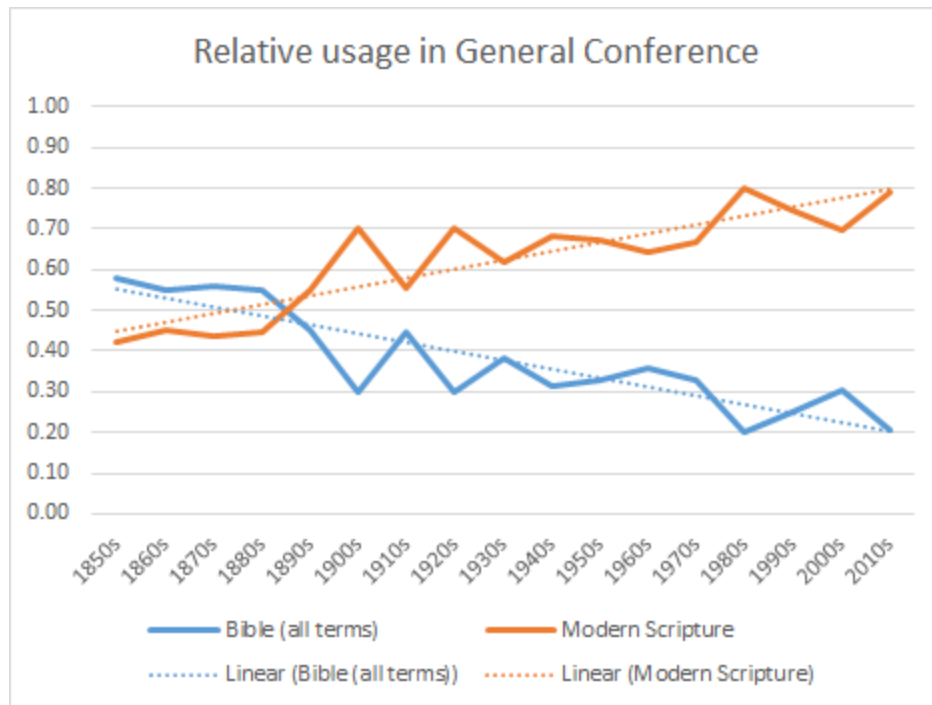
⁵¹¹ <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/first-volume-saints-now-available> and https://www.reddit.com/r/exmormon/comments/9f7bu2/it_took_six_years_to_write_saints_volume_one/

⁵¹² <https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2018/making-saints> and <https://youtu.be/9AehxueXacQ?t=310>

4) The Pearl of Great Price

The Bible was relatively more important to the early church until about 1900, when the movement needed a new identity after polygamy was abandoned. This time period also corresponds roughly to when the first generation of members (all converts) died off. The Old Testament had been widely used to justify polygamy during the 1870s and 1880s. The Book of Mormon and the First Vision filled this void and modern scripture has dominated since the early 1900s.





THE BOOK OF MORMON

I think right now the Book of Mormon is a puzzle for us. Even [for] people who believe it [inaudible] in every detail, it's a puzzle. To begin with, we've got the puzzle of translation. Translating the book without the plates even in sight, wrapped up in a cloth on the table. It's not something that comes right off the pages, [that is] the characters on the plates. So we don't know how that works. And then there's the fact that there's phrasing everywhere, long phrases that if you Google them, you'll find them in 19th century writings. The theology of the Book of Mormon is very much 19th century theology, and it reads like a 19th century understanding of the Hebrew bible, as an Old Testament: that is, it has Christ in it, the way Protestants saw Christ everywhere in the Old Testament.⁵¹³

-Richard Bushman

According to Smith, the Book of Mormon was a translation of an ancient American record of the inhabitants of the Americas (North and South) which was kept by ancient prophets, with the bulk of the events occurring between 600 BC and 421 AD. Between 1823 and 1827, Smith claims to have visited the site of the plates each year on the autumn solstice⁵¹⁴ (sept 21st or 22nd) and to see an angle and receive instruction. He claimed to take the book from the hill Camorah (near his residence) and had it in his possession from 1827-1829. When he completed the

⁵¹³ Richard Bushman, based on an interview with Bill Reel as quoted here: <https://medium.com/@jellistx/the-week-in-mormonism-11-29-15-19th-century-phrases-in-the-book-of-mormon-ken-jennings-on-the-298b2ac8d182>.

⁵¹⁴ This was probably due to the idea espoused by Joseph and his contemporaries that guardian angles of treasures were weakest at these times and this was the ideal time to unearth such treasures.

“translation”, the plates were either deposited back in the hill or returned to an angel who in turn took the plates to heaven.⁵¹⁵ This angel may have been “Nephi” as Joseph claimed on most occasions, or “Moroni” as later church leaders have maintained.

Smith used a variety of scribes in the project early on, and eventually lost the first 116 pages containing the “Book of Lehi”⁵¹⁶. He continued the translation starting with the Book of Mosiah and completed through Moroni before continuing with the first books of Nephi through Words of Mormon which were the last sections created or translated by Smith. Changes in the preferred word usage by Smith (wherefore vs. therefore; whosoever vs. whoso) corresponds to chronological sections of the Book of Mormon and the D&C, which is a strong indication of a single author for the entire book⁵¹⁷.

One of the primary themes of the book is that *secret combinations* were responsible for the downfall of the civilized “white and delightsome” Nephites to their enemies, the “dark and lithesome” Lamanites (or Native Americans). These secret combinations and the negative feelings surrounding them are likely a thinly veiled reference to Masonry and the anti-masonic feelings of the time.⁵¹⁸

Official church teaching and histories talk about the use of magical glasses, known as the “Urim and Thummim” as being used for the translation. Since 2013, the church has admitted that a “seer stone” which was also used for treasure hunting was the actual source of the “translation”⁵¹⁹. It currently (2019) maintains a narrative involving both the Urim and Thummim and the seer stone, and has not specified how much of the book was translated by each method. The actual method of translation via the brown seer stone was widely known by early critics and New York members and was publicized by 1834⁵²⁰.

Martin Harris mortgaged his farm in order to pay for publication of the Book of Mormon⁵²¹. The book cost \$3000 to publish 5000 copies (\$0.60/copy). The book was originally sold for about \$1.75/copy⁵²². The price was said to have been revealed^{xxiv}. The price was later lowered to \$1.25/copy after poor sales.

⁵¹⁵ The location of this heaven is unclear, but it could refer to a planet near the star Kolob on which God is said to reside. Assuming that angels cannot travel faster than the speed of light, the plates may still be in transit. Several accounts in the 1800s indicate that the plates were restored to a secret cave within the hill Camorah.

⁵¹⁶ These pages were lent to Martin Harris who showed them to his wife. His wife later claimed that she had burnt the text. The first edition of the BOM had a disclaimer regarding these 116 pages which was removed in subsequent versions of the publication.

⁵¹⁷ See the section entitled, “There are a couple of stylistic word-choice shifts...”

https://www.reddit.com/r/mormon/comments/bgjm60/mosiah_priority/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web
[2x](#)

⁵¹⁸ The Anti-Masonic party was founded in upstate New York in 1826 and managed to get 33,000 votes and carry the state of Vermont in the 1832 national election. The party elected 53 candidates to congress. See: The American Past, A survey of American History by Joseph R. Conlin ©2009. Pg 254.

⁵¹⁹ Actually, the official gospel topic essay appears to allow for both the Urim and Thummim and the seer stone, leaving a level of strategic ambiguity for members who wish to keep believing the teachings of the last 150+ years.

⁵²⁰ Earlier newspaper publications in the Palmyra area talking about the seer stone were available by 1830, but the first publication in book form was Howe’s Mormonism Unveiled in 1834.

⁵²¹ The farm was lost by Harris after sales of the BoM failed to meet expectations.

⁵²² “The Mormons said the price of the ‘Book of Mormon’ was established at \$1.75 by revelation. It did not sell well and they claimed to receive another to sell it at \$1.25.” - Sylvia Walker, Naked Truths About Mormonism, volume 1, page 1 as quoted on <http://mormonismexposed.blogspot.com/>

The book of Mormon was published and went on sale on March 26th, 1830. One early edition⁵²³ was called “the most correct book of any book on earth” by Smith. Critics note that there have been about 3913 changes (mostly grammatical, but with several emendations) made between the first edition and modern editions.⁵²⁴

Major revisions to the book include the following:⁵²⁵

1830 – Original Edition. Largely followed Joseph’s handwritten manuscript, though the printer divided the book into chapters and made a number of spelling, grammar, and other corrections. In spite of these changes, the text is plagued with poor grammar and many run-on sentences.

1837 – Significant grammatical changes by Joseph Smith with several key wording changes to align with the new doctrine concerning the Godhead that the church had adopted around 1835.

1840 – Joseph compared the printed text with the original manuscript and noticed a number of deviations. Some of the original text was restored in this edition. NOTE: Most of these corrections by Joseph Smith were not included in future editions.

1841 - British publication by Parley P. Pratt in the UK. This edition largely follows the 1837 edition but with British spellings for certain words. This text formed the basis for future editions.

1879 – Orson Pratt: Versification and shorter chapters.

1920 – with major revisions by Talmage (who had also edited the 1905 and 1911 editions). Major corrections to wording and grammar were included in this edition as well as smaller wording changes which might be considered substantive changes.

1981 – This edition brought back a few changes from the original editions (about 20), but kept more than 95% of the changes which had accumulated in the 1920 edition.⁵²⁶ Of note were changes to try to make the text less racist, such as changing “white and delightsome” to “fair and delightsome”. This edition also included extensive footnotes, new chapter headings, and a new binding which combined all LDS scriptures into a single, matching edition.

2006 – The title page is changed from claiming that the Lamanites in the BoM are the “principle ancestors” of Native Americans to “among the ancestors” of Native Americans. Critics speculate that this is due to the complete lack of DNA evidence tying Native Americans to Israelites⁵²⁷.

⁵²³ This quote was given November 28, 1841. This may refer to the 1840 (3rd edition) of the Book of Mormon.

⁵²⁴ <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/3913intro.htm> . According to FairMormon, a quasi-official apologist source, the total number of changes is closer to 100,000. See https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Book_of_Mormon/Textual_changes/Why_were_these_changes_made

⁵²⁵ See <http://emp.byui.edu/satterfieldb/pdf/bmpublicationhistory.pdf> for a more thorough overview of the various editions of the Book of Mormon.

⁵²⁶ A full list of changes can be found here:

http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/pdf/bookofmormonchanges1920_1981.pdf

⁵²⁷ Those who highlighted the lack of DNA evidence were excommunicated for their publications. See: <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/695221057/DNA-claims-rebutted-on-Book-of-Mormon.html>

2013 - Minor wording changes, which correspond to ongoing evolution of doctrines. For example, the idea that Mormons can become Gods has been de-emphasized in the media since the late 90s. Alma 12:31—"becoming as Gods" was changed to "becoming as gods" (lowercased gods).

Inspiration and source material used in creating the Book of Mormon likely includes the Bible (King James Version) as well as *The Late War*⁵²⁸ and *View of the Hebrews*⁵²⁹. Early parts of the Book have similarities to Robinson Crusoe⁵³⁰. Alma 40 appears to be heavily influenced by the Westminster Confession⁵³¹. While church leaders maintained until at least the 1980s that the hill Cumorah in New York where Joseph claimed to have found the book was the site of two great battles involving the deaths of 100s of thousands of people, archeologically the area contains very few signs of any Native American inhabitants.⁵³²

THE BIBLE

One of the fundamental claims of Mormonism is that the true church which Christ had established during his lifetime had fallen into apostasy. It followed that the Book of Mormon was needed and special because it was *pure scripture*, preserved in its original form from God. Between the spring of 1831 and the summer of 1833, Smith retranslated the Bible in response to several revelations commanding him to do so. This new "translation" did not use any Greek or Hebrew source materials, but rather relied on the King James Version of the Bible and Smith freely added or deleted parts as he was inspired to do so. He claimed that he was restoring the Bible to its original state. Consistent with other translation efforts, Smith in some cases changed certain sections 2 or 3 times. In one case, he translated a chapter in the New Testament two times (due to a mistake when changing scribes) and the two translations differ significantly in content.

The translation method for the Bible was claimed to be similar to the Book of Mormon. On the first pages of the New Testament translation, it states that it is a "translation of the New Testament translated by the power of God."

In 1837 as the 8th article of faith, Smith wrote:

We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly. We also believe the book of Mormon to be the word of God⁵³³.

Several revelations commanded for the printing of this new translation, but this was not done during the lifetime of Smith, even though it was completed in 1833. After his death, the manuscript belonged to Emma Smith who gave it to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints⁵³⁴ in 1866. It was published in 1867. Some early church leaders such as Orson Pratt argued for its adoption. Joseph Fielding Smith also stated that the church

⁵²⁸ <http://wordtreefoundation.github.io/thelatewar/>

⁵²⁹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/View_of_the_Hebrews

⁵³⁰ <https://i.redd.it/rphps66qu6ky.png>

⁵³¹ <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech5b.htm>

⁵³² <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1382&context=jbms>

⁵³³ Note: The articles of faith in other languages indicate that only the English version of the Book of Mormon is officially considered to be the word of God.

⁵³⁴ Note: The name of this "reorganized church" led by Joseph Smith III was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints until the late 1880s when it was changed for legal reasons to avoid problems with the Federal Government that was seizing the property of the Utah Mormon church with the same name. This church is currently known as the Community of Christ.

would adopt it if he were made president, but this change never occurred. The 1944 version is considered to be accurate to the original manuscript and was sold during the 1980s at Deseret Book.

The Inspired Version is problematic on multiple levels:

1. This version claims to be a restoration of the original text. However, an analysis of the Dead Sea scrolls which contain very early versions of the original text, to not indicate that the changes made by Smith are consistent with the earliest copies of the original text. Claims by early Mormon leaders⁵³⁵ that the Catholic Church changed or removed large portions of the Bible are seriously brought into question by the Dead Sea scroll findings.
2. The Inspired Version is not consistent with bible quotations used in the Book of Mormon.
3. Joseph Smith did not use the Inspired Version when quoting from the Bible in writings and sermons, but rather preferred to use the King James Version (even after he had completed the inspired version).
4. Certain changes in the inspired version are not consistent with current LDS teachings. This includes racist verses.⁵³⁶
5. In some cases where biblical scholars (including Mormon scholars) are in agreement that the King James Version is incorrect, the Inspired Version follows the KJV.⁵³⁷
6. Evidence suggests that Joseph relied on Adam Clarke's Biblical Commentary (published in 1810 and commonly used and available in the 1820s and 1830s) as the guide for many of these changes.⁵³⁸

While Mormon leadership is comfortable in making literally 1000s of changes to the original text of the Book of Mormon,⁵³⁹ they have resisted efforts to translate the text into modern English⁵⁴⁰. Similarly, they resist changing the official Bible used in the church from the King James Version even though many modern versions are better translated, more accessible, and more accurate to the original Greek and Hebrew texts. Some of these other translations are used in BYU bible courses, but they are not typically used in official church meetings or instruction.

Starting in 1980, the KJV Bible published by the LDS church contains some of the edits of the *Inspired Version* in foot-notes. In 1992 the church released a statement doubling down on using the KJV which included the following claim:

⁵³⁵ Orson Pratt published a number of pamphlets mocking this bible as being incomplete or poorly translated. See Tanner, *Changing World of Mormonism*, pp 366-367.

⁵³⁶ Book of Moses chapter 7 verses 8,12,22 (Genesis chapter 7?) "...and there was *a blackness* came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people.... Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Cainan, to repent. ... the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them."
<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/moses/7.5?lang=eng#p4>

⁵³⁷ 1 John 5:6-8.

⁵³⁸ See BYU Journal of Undergraduate Research, A Recently Recovered Source: Rethinking Joseph Smith's Bible Translation (March 16, 2017) - <http://jur.byu.edu/?p=21296> and Adam Clarke's biblical commentary - <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/cmt/clarke/index.htm> See also <https://youtu.be/UOvu0O88sXM> <https://redd.it/7r79fv> and <https://redd.it/i4v35>

⁵³⁹ The vast majority of the 3000+ changes are spelling and grammatical, but there are 5-10 substantial changes including a few doctrinal changes and name changes in some places. A recent claim by Fair Mormon, the main apologist group for the LDS church claims that there have been over 100,000 changes if you include punctuation differences.

https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Book_of_Mormon/Textual_changes/Why_were_these_changes_made

⁵⁴⁰ See <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1993/04/news-of-the-church/modern-language-editions-of-the-book-of-mormon-discouraged?lang=eng>

Many versions of the Bible are available today. Unfortunately, **no original manuscripts of any portion of the Bible are available for comparison to determine the most accurate version.** However, the Lord has revealed clearly the doctrines of the gospel in these latter-days. **The most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical passage is not by comparing different texts, but by comparison with the Book of Mormon and modern-day revelations.**⁵⁴¹

In 2018, Thomas Waymont – a professor at BYU published an updated translation of the New Testament for a LDS audience which was subsequently published by Deseret Book.⁵⁴²

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

First published in 1833, the Doctrine and Covenants (or Book of Commandments as it was first called) contains a number of revelations, the vast majority of which were received by Joseph Smith. Both the revelations included and the contents of these revelations have changed significantly over time.

The 1833 edition was the first publication and contained 65 revelations and 160 pages. The printing press was destroyed by a mob during the printing process, and only about 100-300 copies were made from the papers that survived.

Of this first edition, David Whitmer said:

The revelations were printed in the Book of Commandments correctly. This I know, and will prove it to you.

These revelations were arranged for publication by Brothers Joseph Smith, Sydney Rigdon, Orson Hyde and others, in Hiram, Ohio, while I was there, were sent to Independence to be published, and were printed just exactly as they were arranged by Brother Joseph and the others. And when the Book of Commandments was printed, Joseph and the church received it as being printed correctly.⁵⁴³

When the 1835 version was printed, there were changes in many of the revelations, particularly those dealing with priesthood and the restoration⁵⁴⁴. In some cases, a significant number of verses were added^{xxv}. The 1835 edition introduced the idea of the laying on of hands by John the Baptist and Peter James and John to restore the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. It also introduced a creed stating that marriage was a civil ordinance and a commitment that the church *did not* practice polygamy⁵⁴⁵.

Another major addition to the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was the inclusion of the Lectures on Faith. These lectures, originally given at the school of the prophets in Kirtland, were canonized in 1835 and later

⁵⁴¹ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1992/08/news-of-the-church/first-presidency-statement-on-the-king-james-version-of-the-bible?lang=eng>

⁵⁴² The Waymont translation (by an active LDS professor at BYU) was well received and back-ordered for about 6 months after its introduction in late 2018. This could indicate a demand for more accessible translations.

⁵⁴³ An Address to all Believers in Christ, by David Whitmer, page 56

⁵⁴⁴ <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changingtherevelations.htm>

⁵⁴⁵ This was originally introduced as section 101 and was more of a statement of belief than a revelation.

removed in 1921.⁵⁴⁶ They may have been removed because certain teachings about the godhead which resemble the trinity rather than the modern Mormon conception of God.

The 1832 revelation now included as section 87 in the D&C was first published in 1851. It was first included in the relatively major revision published in 1876. Also in this (1876) revision, the policy statement stating that polygamy was prohibited and not practiced by the church was removed⁵⁴⁷ and the section received by Joseph Smith commanding Emma to accept polygamy (current section 132) was added. Foreign editions printed during the 1880s sometimes included two new revelations from John Taylor⁵⁴⁸. John Taylor had a number of revelations, but the only one included in the current canon of Mormonism is section 135, a eulogy of Joseph Smith written after he was killed in 1844.

Early versions used code names for some of the people and places referenced in the text. In the 1980 version, the original names were restored to the text.

Major editions⁵⁴⁹:

1833: First edition containing 65 revelations of the early church. Prior to completion, the press was destroyed by a mob. Only about 100-200 copies were bound from those papers that could be saved/salvaged. Few original copies remain⁵⁵⁰.

1835: Title changed to Doctrine and Covenants. The “Doctrine” part was the Lectures on Faith. The “Covenants” part consisted of the revelations, which numbered 101 at this time⁵⁵¹. In addition, two statements of belief (one on marriage, the other on relationships with government) are at the end of the volume.

1844: Eight additional sections added.

1864: Section forbidding plural marriage (now Section 111) is still included⁵⁵².

1876: 26 additional sections added. After section 132 was added (justifying plural marriage), the section forbidding plural marriage (101) was removed.

1908: The first Manifesto on Plural Marriage (Official Declaration 1) given in 1890 was first included. The second Manifesto⁵⁵³ was not included.

⁵⁴⁶ https://dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V20N03_73.pdf In addition to addressing the Lectures on Faith, this article provides excellent insight into the process of canonization within the LDS church.

⁵⁴⁷ This early revelation had been used by missionaries, including ones practicing polygamy, to “prove” that the church did not practice polygamy at least into the 1850s.

⁵⁴⁸ See https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/champion-liberty-john-taylor/john-revelator-written-revelations-john-taylor#_edn99

⁵⁴⁹ See http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Doctrine_and_Covenants_Editions for a more detailed overview.

⁵⁵⁰ The book was reprinted by Wilford Wood in 1962 under the title, “Joseph Smith Begins his Work” Vol II.

⁵⁵¹ Section 66 was duplicated in the numbering, so the total appears to be 100.

⁵⁵² <https://archive.org/details/bookdoctrineand00saingoog/page/n340>

⁵⁵³ The 2nd manifesto reiterated that Polygamy was not to be practiced by members of the church and threatened them with excommunication for continuing the practice. In 1906, two members of the twelve who continued to believe, teach, and perform polygamist marriages were removed from their position in the 12.

1921: The Lectures on Faith were removed from the compilation. Prior to this edition, the revelations (still contained in the D&C) were positioned after the Lectures on Faith and were called the “Covenants and Commandments”.

1981: Sections 137, 138, and Official Declaration 2 (ending institutional racism) were added.

2013: Introductions to the Official Declarations are changed as follows:

New introduction to Official Declaration 1:

The Bible and the Book of Mormon teach that monogamy is God's standard for marriage ***unless He declares otherwise***⁵⁵⁴ (see 2 Samuel 12:7–8 and Jacob 2:27, 30). Following a revelation to Joseph Smith, the practice of plural marriage was instituted among Church members in the early 1840s⁵⁵⁵ (see section 132). From the 1860s to the 1880s, the United States government passed laws to make this *religious practice* illegal⁵⁵⁶. These laws were eventually upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. After receiving revelation, President Wilford Woodruff issued the following Manifesto, which was accepted by the Church as authoritative and binding on October 6, 1890. This ***led to the end*** of the *practice* of plural marriage in the Church⁵⁵⁷.

New Introduction to Official Declaration 2:

The Book of Mormon teaches that "*all are alike unto God*," including "black and white, bond and free, male and female" (2 Nephi 26:33)⁵⁵⁸. Throughout the history of the Church, people of every race and ethnicity in many countries have been baptized and have lived as faithful members of the Church. During Joseph Smith's lifetime, a few black male members⁵⁵⁹ of the Church were ordained to the priesthood. Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent⁵⁶⁰. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice⁵⁶¹. Church leaders believed that a revelation from God was needed to alter this practice and prayerfully sought guidance. The revelation came to Church President Spencer W. Kimball and was affirmed to other Church leaders in the Salt Lake

⁵⁵⁴ This specifically contradicts teachings of the LDS church given between 1852 and 1890, when it was stated that Polygamy always accompanied God's true church.

⁵⁵⁵ Joseph Smith had a marriage or affair with Fanny Alger around 1833-35 and additional sexual relations with other women starting no later than 1838.

⁵⁵⁶ Plural marriage has always been illegal where the Mormons have resided (including Mexico, Canada, and the Utah territory), and was in some cases prosecuted under bigamy laws.

⁵⁵⁷ Defining the end date is difficult, but new officially sanctioned marriages ceased around 1904-1908.

⁵⁵⁸ The book of Mormon also teaches that dark skin is a curse from God in response to wickedness and that righteousness can make one's dark skin become "white and delightsome". The scripture mentioned (2 Nephi 26:33) is probably a rephrasing of Galatians 3:28.

⁵⁵⁹ Q. Walker Lewis, Elijah Abel, and Black Pete are the only 3 blacks known to have received the priesthood prior to the ban.

⁵⁶⁰ This occurred about 1850, a few years after Joseph Smith's death.

⁵⁶¹ For some excellent insight into the origins of this policy, see this video produced by Mormon Apologists:
<https://youtu.be/Y8h80kEdrE4?t=23m40s>

Temple on June 1, 1978⁵⁶². The revelation removed all restrictions with regard to race that once applied to the priesthood.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE (POGP)

The Pearl of Great Price was first published in England by then missionary and apostle Franklin D. Richards in 1851. It contained the Book of Abraham, extracts from Joseph Smith's translation of the bible (Mathew, Genesis (Book of Moses⁵⁶³)), several sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, the articles of Faith, and a poem "Truth"⁵⁶⁴. This book became official scripture/cannon for the LDS church in 1880. This version included the "Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, including Plurality of Wives" – currently known as D&C section 132.

The Book of Abraham was translated by Joseph from some scrolls that had been buried with Egyptian mummies dating to between about 150 and 250 BCE. Of this translation process, Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph's mother stated:

She said, that when Joseph was reading the papyrus, he closed his eyes, and held a hat over his face, and that the revelation came to him; and that where the papyrus was torn, he could read the parts that were destroyed equally as well as those that were there.⁵⁶⁵

The Book of Abraham is particularly problematic because it does not match with the purported source material (a papyri from the 2nd century AD). Likely source material for the book of Abraham consists of the Bible, Josephus, and various other sources.⁵⁶⁶ The Book of Abraham is important theologically because it is the primary source of LDS theology with respect to temple worship and the concept of pre-existence. Indeed, the new names given to all temple participants during the lifetime of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young was "Abraham" and "Sarah". Concepts of the pre-existence were and are used to justify racial prejudice and gender and marriage doctrines.

It appears that Joseph Smith was interested in Egyptian because it was seen as being a "gateway" to Adamic or the pure language of God⁵⁶⁷. One of the concepts expounded in the Book of Abraham was the importance of the priesthood and that this was an inherited gift of the fathers. Some of the translation occurred in 1835, which was very near to the time when Joseph Smith was instituting and codifying concepts around the higher or Melchizedek priesthood. Other key theological contributions from the book include the residence of God (i.e. near Kolob) and the curse of Ham (and hence banning blacks from the priesthood).

In 1902, duplicate materials from the Doctrine and Covenants were removed from the PoGP.

In 1912, the New York Times published a piece critical of the Book of Abraham claiming that it was a common Egyptian Funeral burial text and that it was not in any way related to Abraham.⁵⁶⁸ A self-professed Dr. created a

⁵⁶² Researchers including Dr. Matt Harris believe that Spencer Kimball worked through various strategies to convince other members of the Q12 of the need for this change between 1973 and 1978 and that the change was more of a process than a singular event. See <https://youtu.be/3p8sCdc9fQI?t=155>.

⁵⁶³ This book consists of the first several chapters of Genesis taken from the *Inspired Translation* completed between 1831 and 1833.

⁵⁶⁴ This poem corresponds to the hymn "Oh say what is Truth" in the current LDS hymnal.

⁵⁶⁵ Friends' Weekly Intelligencer, 3 Oct. 1846, 211. See:

<http://egyptianalphabetandgrammar.blogspot.com/2014/04/statement-by-lucy-mack-smith-that.html>

⁵⁶⁶ <https://redd.it/79pkuz>

⁵⁶⁷ <https://youtu.be/v3-SKjINOCQ?t=765>

⁵⁶⁸ <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/nytimes1912papyrus.htm>

response for the LDS church which allowed them to reassure their members⁵⁶⁹. Criticism resurfaced after pieces of the papyri emerged from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1966. By no later than 1968, these pieces had been translated and it was clear to independent observers that they had nothing to do with Abraham. At least as damning as the original papyri was the “Book of Egyptian Letters and Grammar” which Joseph Smith had constructed to facilitate the translation. The book shows not only that he used the recovered pieces to create the book of Abraham, but also that he had no understanding of the Egyptian language, often taking a single character to create one or more paragraphs of text. This corresponds to the claims made with respect to Book of Mormon characters, which often were translated to one or more sentences in English.

In 2013, the LDS church published an essay on their website which concludes:

None of the characters on the papyrus fragments mentioned Abraham’s name or any of the events recorded in the book of Abraham. Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham...

The essay goes on to encourage members to still believe in the work as divinely inspired scripture and redefines the word “translation”, using the word 27 times as it encourages the used to embrace a broader definition of the term.⁵⁷⁰ Other scholars have similarly mentioned the need for a “paradigm shift” with respect to the meaning of translation.⁵⁷¹

ORGANIZATION

EARLY ORGANIZATION AND SUCCESSION

The organization structure of the early church was fluid. In the beginning, Joseph was one of many more or less equals. The Whitmers and Hiram Page^{xxvi} also had seer stones (as did Joseph’s father) and for a time revelations came from various sources, generally through seer stones until about 1831 or 1832.

Though the church for all practical purposes started meeting in 1829, it was formally/legally established in 1830. At this time, there was a first Elder (Joseph) and second Elder (Oliver). Sidney Rigdon joined the movement in 1832 and brought with him his established congregation of more than 100 members in Kirtland Ohio including Parley P. Pratt and Edward Partridge. He became a councilor to Joseph Smith around that time. Rigdon was a skilled orator and his contribution to early doctrine was significant, but is often overlooked by modern LDS believers due to his later split with the main branch after the death of Joseph Smith⁵⁷². It was natural to move the headquarters of the new movement to this new center of power, and Joseph and some of the New York believers made this move. In addition to increasing the membership rolls, the move helped Joseph to avoid ongoing legal problems in New York.

Although “Mormonites” were attacked in various local newspapers, the first major attack against the early church was published in 1834 - “Mormonism Unveiled”. This book recorded the accounts of several neighbors of Joseph

⁵⁶⁹ This was just one of several responses, published by the church both in their newspaper and in their main religious publication, “The Improvement ERA”. Over a period of 6 months, up to 1/3 of each issue was devoted to the topic. Various church scholars addressed the topic from a number of angles until they felt that they had effectively rebuffed the (accurate) claims.

⁵⁷⁰ <https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng&old=true>

⁵⁷¹ See <https://youtu.be/y3-SKjINOCQ?t=1465> and <https://www.mormonstories.org/podcast/richard-bushman-and-rough-stone-rolling-part-1-experiences-as-a-mormon-historian/> (Part 3, 51 minutes into the recording).

⁵⁷² Rigdon made significant contributions to the Lectures on Faith which were first canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835. He also was a primary influence in the institution of the socialist living experiments (law of consecration) practiced by the early Mormons.

Smith and included details of his money digging, beliefs in the supernatural, “laziness”, and use of seer stones. While some of the stories were probably exaggeration, affidavits of neighbors and Joseph’s father-in-law probably seemed credible to the community. The Ohio converts generally did not believe in seer stones as they weren’t culturally accepted in this part of the country. Oliver provided a strong defense for the Book of Mormon translation process with his account of the Urim and Thummim published in 1834. These accounts also talked about angels literally coming down from heaven, ordaining Joseph and Oliver and giving them the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood. These accounts strengthened Joseph’s position within the movement, and also gave Oliver back a significant standing within the movement which he had largely lost after Sidney Rigdon joined with his congregation.

Although there were apostles called around 1830 to preach, the group was formally organized as the 12 apostles around 1835. This was one of several groups (such as the high-council, the 70) and was a separate group from the first presidency. There was no natural progression between the two organizations as would later be formed under Brigham Young. In fact, the high council in Nauvoo arguably had as much or more authority than the 12 apostles at that time. In 1837 after the failure of the Kirtland Bank, 10 of the original 12 apostles left the church⁵⁷³. Replacements to the Q12 were chosen by the High Council in Missouri, which may be an indication of the relative powers of the two groups at that time.

Joseph Smith’s leadership was challenged at various points in the early church. As a new charismatic leader in a quickly evolving religion, he understood that he was in a precarious position.

Various direct or indirect attacks on his authority include:

- Hyrum Page and his revelations through a competing seer stone.
- Edward Partridge in his work as a Bishop
- Early splinter religions formed by Ezra Booth, Hiram Page, David Whitmer and others.⁵⁷⁴

After Kirtland where many had called Joseph a “fallen prophet” and he was excommunicated by the local congregation, it appears that he felt a need to consolidate power even further in Nauvoo. This he did in the following ways:

- 1) He was head of the church leadership - President and prophet of the church.
- 2) He was head of the town – Mayor of Nauvoo.
- 3) He was the chief justice.
- 4) He was the head of the board of health
- 5) He was the registrar of deeds
- 6) He was head of the military – the Nauvoo Legion (General Smith).
- 7) He was head of the council of the 50 – a secret, parallel political leadership organization. This organization anointed him as King.
- 8) He was running for president of the USA when assassinated and argued for a theocratic government.

⁵⁷³ This was a traumatic time for the early church. Joseph and other church leaders had prophesied in the name of the Lord that the bank would not fail. When it did so less than 6 months later, many church members lost their entire savings. This resulted in large numbers of church members leaving the church. The church survived in large part because the members in Missouri were not affected by this event. Joseph was kicked out of the church in Kirtland by some of the believers, so one might argue that it was Joseph who left the church rather than the apostles, who still had a quorum.

⁵⁷⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_denominations_in_the_Latter_Day_Saint_movement

- 9) He controlled the Danites – a secret paramilitary-like organization charged with enforcement (similar to a secret police organization). He also had a series of personal body guards including Porter Rockwell⁵⁷⁵.
- 10) He was married to many of the prominent women in the community or their daughters.

In addition to this, family members headed other organizations of power, including his wife Emma who was in charge of the Relief Society (women's organization in the church). Several brothers were in the quorum of the 12, Hyrum was the 1st assistant to the president and the head of the local Masons, and Joseph Smith Senior was the Patriarch of the church until his death (when Hyrum was given the role).

By having multiple leadership roles, maintaining power was made significantly easier. For example, when William Law threatened his church leadership by calling him a fallen prophet, he used his office as Mayor and Chief Justice to order the destruction of the printing press.

Because Joseph was the head of many institutions, his death resulted in a power vacuum and significant confusion.

Succession of the leadership of the church would have probably gone to Hyrum Smith, the prophet's brother and 1st councilor in the 1st presidency, had he survived. This may be why he was killed by the mob at Carthage. Several other successors were logical, including Joseph's brother William⁵⁷⁶, Joseph's son, the second councilor in the first presidency (Rigdon)⁵⁷⁷, the head of the high council of Nauvoo, or the head of the quorum of the 12 (Brigham Young).

Brigham Young had the support of many members. He represented those who believed in and/or were practicing polygamy. Because this included most of the highly placed church leaders at the time, he had a number of high level supporters. He solidified this support by taking some key actions early on:

- 1) He eliminated contenders for the position, by excommunicating Sidney Rigdon and others.
- 2) He and the quorum of the 12 effectively bribed Emma Smith by paying her \$1000 prior to the meeting to decide the next leader for the church⁵⁷⁸. Emma had been an outspoken critic of polygamy, and would have likely sided with Sidney for that reason alone.
- 3) He solidified support by continuing the ongoing programs started by Joseph Smith. The most noteworthy of these was completion of the Nauvoo Temple.
- 4) He allowed for a transition period of about 3 years before claiming to be the leader of the church. In the intermediate time, he was the Trustee in Trust for the church.
- 5) He always spoke highly of Joseph (in some cases bordering on deification) claiming that approval from Joseph Smith was required to get into heaven.
- 6) He claimed that all of his teachings were based on those of Joseph Smith and things which he had heard the prophet teach.

⁵⁷⁵ Rockwell admitted late in his life to killing people and making an attempt on the life of Governor Boggs on the request of Joseph Smith.

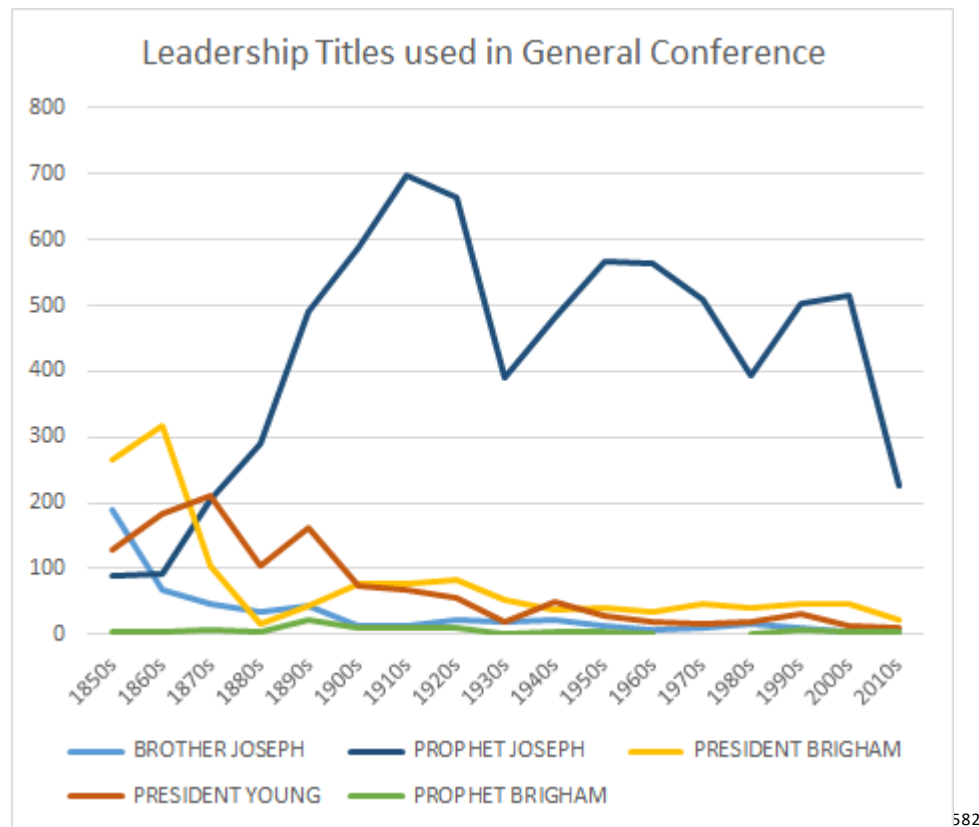
⁵⁷⁶ William was evidently considered for the post, but died in somewhat mysterious circumstances about a month after Joseph and Hyrum. Some early members suspected poisoning.

⁵⁷⁷ According to the legal incorporation of the LDS church at the time in Illinois, legal/property succession would go to the 1st presidency.

⁵⁷⁸ He later sent a bill to Emma for \$1000 for unpaid debts of Joseph.

While the main branch of the early church followed Brigham Young, there were several other notable branches including the Strangites, The Church of Jesus Christ (Rigdon), and The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Joseph Smith III), to name just a few.⁵⁷⁹

Brigham Young was the leader and President of the church, but generally not considered “the prophet”⁵⁸⁰. This title was reserved for Joseph Smith⁵⁸¹. The first leader to assume this title after Joseph Smith was Heber J. Grant.



The process of succession changed from the first presidency to the quorum of the 12 by Brigham Young. Rules for seniority within the quorum (which had a direct impact on succession) was subsequently changed 3 times in the 19th century⁵⁸³.

⁵⁷⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_crisis_\(Latter_Day_Saints\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_crisis_(Latter_Day_Saints)) The RLDS church was not started until about 1860.

⁵⁸⁰ JD 5:77 “I am not going to interpret dreams; for I don't profess to be such a Prophet as were Joseph Smith and Daniel; bit I am a Yankee guesser; and I guess (that James Buchanan will send an army across to Utah as reported by papers of the time)”. There was one exception to this where he was sustained as “prophet, seer, and revelator” in General Conference around 1857 or 1858. Add reference from Quinn.

⁵⁸¹ Early on, the term “Brother Joseph” dominated, but this was replaced by the “Prophet Joseph Smith” in the decades following his death. Brigham Young was sustained as prophet in 1857 and then again around 1876, but generally sustained only as president of the church in general conference during these years.

⁵⁸² Data obtained from <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>

⁵⁸³ <https://youtu.be/512L0cE1Vmg?t=9m20s>

For the most complete and accurate overview of succession after Joseph's death, see *The Mormon Hierarchy, Origins of Power* by D. Michael Quinn.

GERONTOCRACY

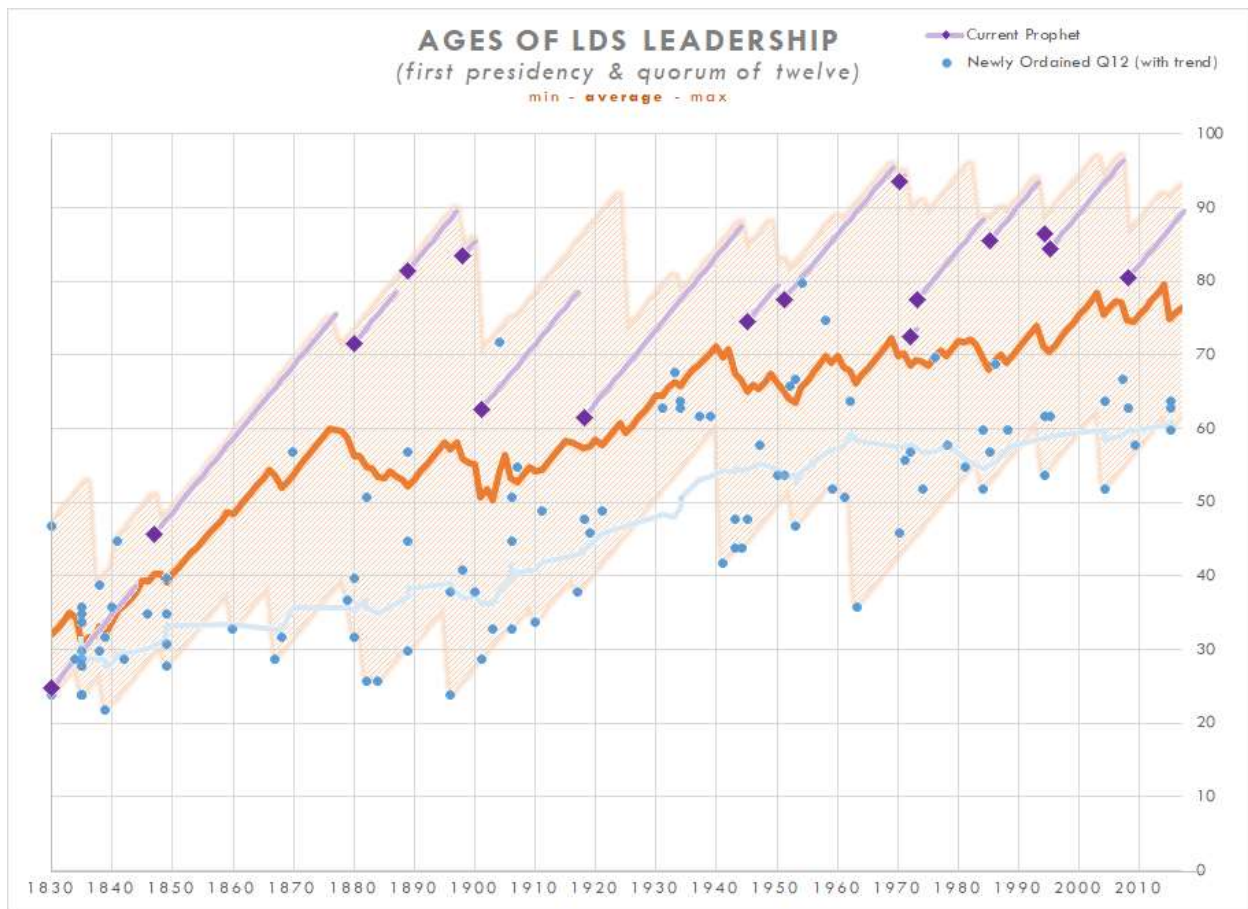
The early church leadership had members in their 20s and an average age of about 35. Due to regular apostasy of leadership in the early days, the leadership stayed young during the Kirtland and Nauvoo periods. However, Brigham Young established a system whereby leadership succession went to the senior member of the quorum of the 12 and changed the rules for seniority, causing the leadership to age. Older leaders began selecting older replacements, which further increased the average age of the top leadership. In 2015, for a brief period the average age of this primary leadership group was over 80 years old.⁵⁸⁴

Lenard Arrington noted some practices which he thought should be changed to improve the LDS church⁵⁸⁵:

- "Insistence on unanimity among the Twelve [apostles], which means that the most obstinate member, the one holding out against the rest, wins....
- "Insistence on choosing a new president from the senior member of the Twelve. This means [the LDS Church] will always have a president far beyond his energetic, creative period of life."

⁵⁸⁴ <http://archive.slttrib.com/article.php?id=2245029&itype=CMSID>

⁵⁸⁵ <http://archive.slttrib.com/article.php?id=3991307&itype=CMSID>



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In the 1970s, the Quorum of the 70 established a policy whereby a retirement age of 70 was established. This mitigated problems associated with aging in that quorum.⁵⁸⁷

Other movements such as the Community of Christ have emeritus status for both the Quorum of the 12 and for the Prophet, though this has not been publicly proposed within the modern LDS movement. The result is that there have been large periods of time when the person officially in charge of the church (the president or prophet) has been partially or fully mentally incapacitated for long periods of time during their tenure.⁵⁸⁸

SPLINTERING OF ZION

When Joseph died, he was the clear leader within Mormonism. However, before this time many had left the movement or “apostatized” due to the changing doctrine, changing locations, or ethical problems associated with Joseph. Some of the key periods and events of the early church are as follows:

- 1) New York Period (1829-1832)
- 2) Kirtland Period (1832-1837)

⁵⁸⁶ <https://imgur.com/gallery/JOIZ8> and <https://redd.it/7b1yzu>

⁵⁸⁷ See <https://youtu.be/512L0cE1Vmg?t=1m13s>

⁵⁸⁸ David O. McKay (1967-1970); Spencer Kimball, 1981-85. Ezra Benson, 1993-1994., Thomas Monson, 2015-2017. See also: <https://www.dialoguejournal.com/archive/dialogue-premium-content/fall-2016/> Gerontocracy and the Future of Mormonism, pg 89.

- 3) Missouri Period (1835-1840)
- 4) Nauvoo Period (1838-1846)

During the New York period, there was relative equality within the membership. All members could receive revelations, talk in tongues, cast out devils, etc. Many members had seer stones and the leadership consisted of the first and second elder (Joseph and Oliver). The New York period is a period of mysticism and frontier magic.

The Kirtland period was a time of organization and relative calm. There were visions in the temple, but use of seer stones was less common⁵⁸⁹. During at least the early years of this period, the traditional Christian notion of the trinity was accepted. During this period, the basic doctrines of the afterlife took form.

The Nauvoo period included a rapid expansion of doctrine and power. The leader became much more authoritarian during these years and new doctrines regarding the afterlife and polygamy were introduced. Now polygamists were the only ones to go to the highest part of heaven, God was an exalted man, and leadership was clearly top down.

Various splinter groups generally reflect the doctrines and beliefs of one of these periods. The Brighamite movement (LDS church) is a continuation of the Nauvoo period. The RLDS church⁵⁹⁰ reflects the teachings and attitudes of the Kirtland period. The Whitmer and Page movements reflect the teachings and belief of the Nauvoo period.

One of the more interesting and prominent splinter groups was started by Joseph Strang after the death of Smith. Strang claimed to have a set of plates which he translated. These plates were seen by 1000s of people and the characters actually corresponded to the translated text. Many of the early saints followed Strang, including the bulk of the surviving witnesses of the Book of Mormon. While originally resistant to polygamy, Strang later embraced it and had 4 wives. The Strang movement died out after he was murdered and the local mob dispersed the followers after taking all of their material possessions.⁵⁹¹

After the Brighamites went to Utah, the appearance of new splinter groups continued. Often, the formation of these groups corresponded to the changing of doctrine by the main body of the church. The following events contributed to the formation of splinter movements:

- 1) The introduction of polygamy
- 2) The end of polygamy
- 3) Giving priesthood to the blacks

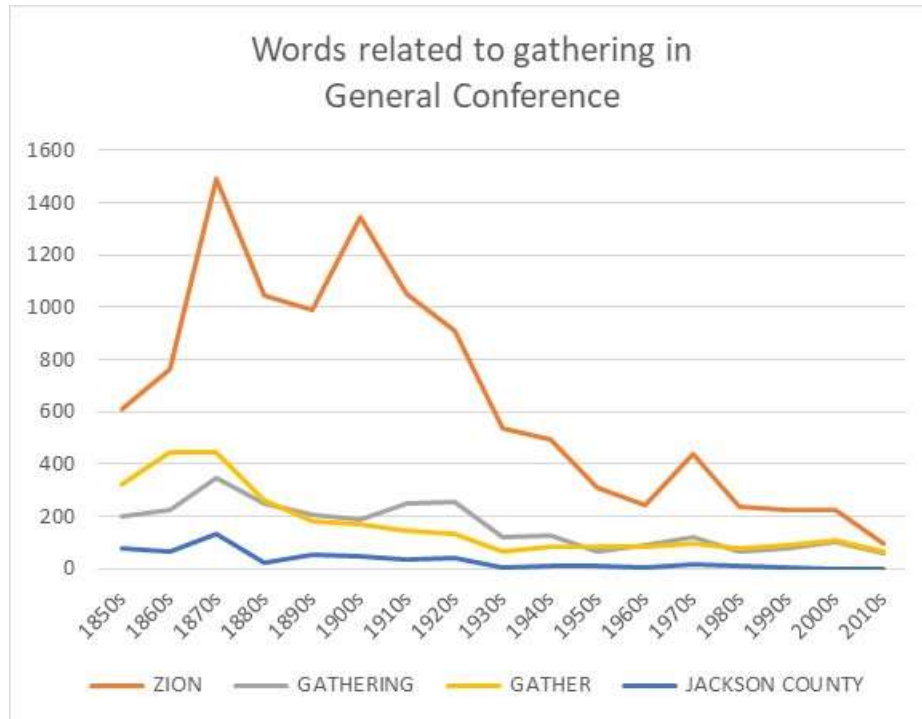
GATHERING OF ZION AND SPREADING IT OUT

The concept of Zion and the gathering of the saints was established shortly after the founding of the church in 1830. The official, scriptural area for this gathering is Jackson County, Missouri. It was prophesied by Joseph Smith that a temple would be built there in the lifetime of those living when he gave the talk, and that Christ would appear there at the time of his "second coming". This belief, in some form, is still held by members of the church.

⁵⁸⁹ The white seer stone was used in the Book of Abraham translation project during this period.

⁵⁹⁰ The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is currently known as the Community of Christ.

⁵⁹¹ See <https://youtu.be/-TVU1ikJ9po?t=49m5s> and <https://bycommonconsent.com/2008/09/03/hymns-in-the-key-of-strang/>



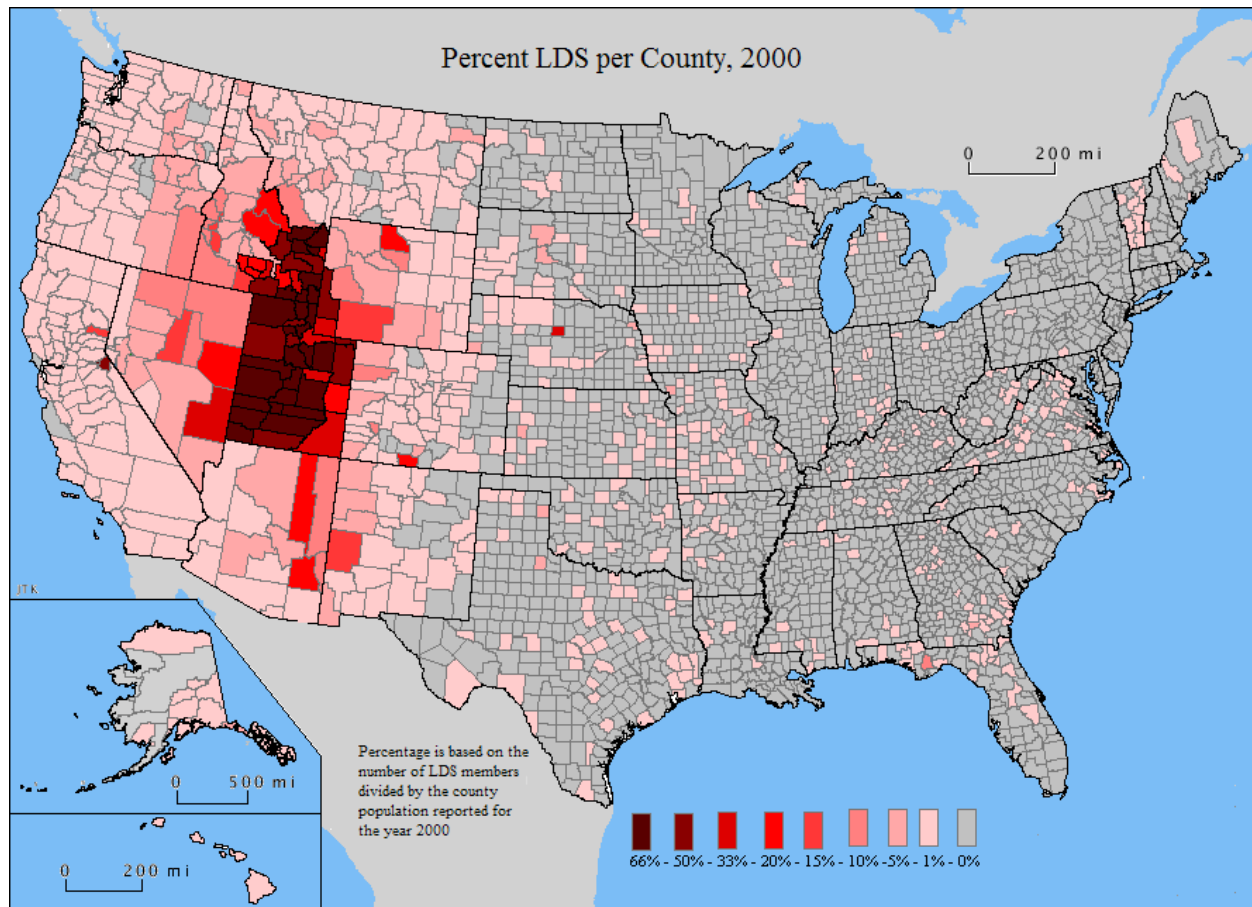
The headquarters of the church was split between Kirtland and Jackson County in the mid 1830s. Although the effective Zion would move to Nauvoo Illinois, and later Salt Lake City Utah, the concept was generally the same. Brigham Young taught in 1844 that “North and South American is Zion as soon as the Temple is done and you get your endowments”⁵⁹². After the church began to become established in Salt Lake, members were sent to establish communities in the surrounding states including areas in Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, and Arizona. In the 1880s, settlements were also established in Cardston Alberta, Canada and Mexico to avoid the harassments of the US government caused by the continuing practice of polygamy.

The emphasis on gathering slowed after 1900⁵⁹³. Part of the reason for this may have been the ban on emigration by the Danish government based on ongoing polygamy concerns. In part because almost all temples were located in Utah, many members emigrated to get their endowments and never returned to their native lands. Even though the practice of gathering was actively discouraged by the 1950s⁵⁹⁴, the effect of these early communities remains and influences the populations of believers in the movement today. The areas including Utah, northern Arizona, and southern Idaho are known as the “Mormon Corridor”.

⁵⁹² Joseph Smith Jr., History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter/day Saints, ed. B.H. Roberts, 7:258 as quoted in The Mysteries of Godliness pg 70.

⁵⁹³ <https://archive.org/stream/millennialstar6921eng#page/324/mode/2up>

⁵⁹⁴ <http://emp.byui.edu/satterfieldb/Papers/Papers/ChurchHistoryScatteringGatheringForClass.htm>



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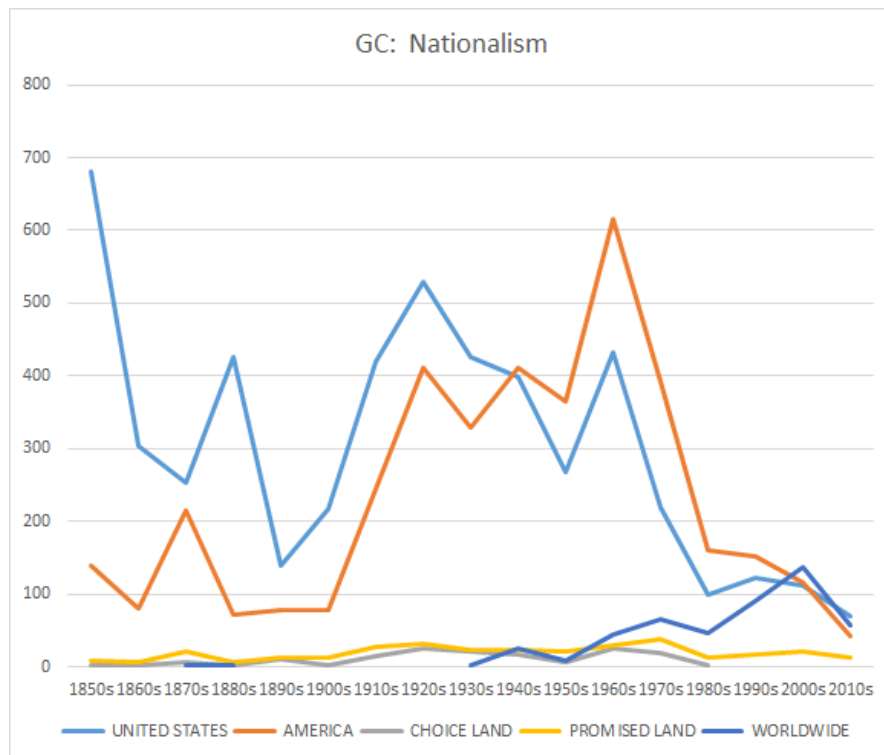
Starting around 1980, leadership began de-emphasizing the American nature of the Mormon religion and tried to emphasize it as a global movement. This has led to a de-emphasis of America as the 'choice land' or 'promised land' (as outlined in the Book of Mormon). After 2000, the growth of the church has been most significant in South America and Africa. This is consistent with other similar religious movements such as the JWs⁵⁹⁶ and Adventism⁵⁹⁷. Recent research indicates that Christians are most religious in the US, South America, and Africa.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁵ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/35/LDS_Percentage_of_Population_2000.PNG

⁵⁹⁶ <https://youtu.be/fc0jzouf9Tc?t=550>

⁵⁹⁷ <http://www.geocurrents.info/cultural-geography/religion/the-global-spread-of-heterodox-christianity>

⁵⁹⁸ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/22/the-worlds-most-committed-christians-live-in-africa-latin-america-and-the-u-s/>



Emphasis on American terms vs. the worldwide nature of the church in general conference talks⁵⁹⁹

CORPORATE MORMONISM

Large growth was difficult for the Utah-based religion. In the 1950s, it was quickly evolving from a small, manageable, Utah-based religion to a world-wide religion. The religion had attracted members from many places in Europe for more than 75 years, but now it was asking them to stay in Europe and build up units there. Sizable units were also being established in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, and elsewhere. A new level of coordination was required to maximize growth and to create a consistent experience across the organization.

THE EARLY CORPORATION⁶⁰⁰

The early Mormon Church was established, at least in part, as a money-making venture. The Book of Mormon was sold at a healthy profit, and this was to be used by Joseph Smith to support his family. However, Joseph had a number of ups and downs financially and arguably was not particularly good at corporate governance. Changing the church effectively from a religious body to a religious body that acted and functioned like a corporation would come later. The seeds of this happened during the mid-1800s in Utah. According to historian Michael Quinn:

"In 1870 Brigham Young publicly announced a revelation for Mormons to invest in a railroad. In 1881 John Taylor privately dictated a revelation to organize an iron company, and in 1883 another revelation to

⁵⁹⁹ Frequency of various terms by decade in General Conference addresses. Data from <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>

⁶⁰⁰ For an excellent overview of the corporate nature of the church and how this evolved, see: <http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/2010/10/how-corporatism-has-undermined-and.html>

invest tithing funds in a gold mine. In the 1890's the hierarchy gave certain men the religious 'calling' or obligation to invest thousands of dollars each in a sugar company."

This focus on the financial over the spiritual was starting to take its toll on the Church. Brigham Young, Jr. felt it had all gone too far. "There is too much time given to Corporations, stocks, bonds, policies, etc. by our leaders to please me," he wrote in his diary, "We are in all kinds of business interests. Even the members of the Twelve represent businesses which are jealous of each other and almost ready to fight each other."⁶⁰¹

According to one blogger:

Sometime around 1900, the office of Trustee-in-Trust was reformed, then a few years later the financial interests of the "Church" were protected under the "Corporation of the Presiding Bishop." Finally in 1923, church lawyers found The Holy Grail: a rare, little known, and hardly ever used mode of incorporation known as The Corporation Sole.

Virtually unknown in America, and tracing its origins to ancient Roman law, the corporation sole was the way the vast riches of the Holy Catholic Church had been protected under Emperor Constantine. All financial power was vested in one man - in their case the pope, in our case, the prophet.⁶⁰²

In the corporate charter, "the President" is mentioned. The word "Prophet" doesn't appear. This incorporation was not necessary for tax purposes, but did allow the "Corporation" to create rules for automatic succession to the head of the 12 apostles. Church bureaucracy was born. No longer would there be any question with respect to succession within the church. The longest serving apostle would control the Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day saints. The official name of the church is a trademark of Intellectual Reserves, a subsidiary of the Corporation. Intellectual Reserves also owns the membership records of all members, past and present.

RISING THROUGH THE RANKS

In the church, most callings are associated with a gender. The vast majority of leadership positions are open only to males who hold the priesthood. In general, a person serves as a bishop prior to serving as a stake president. Those called to be members of the first quorum of the 70 are former mission presidents, temple presidents, or stake presidents⁶⁰³. The church records information from interviews with these individuals during regular interviews in order to create a list of candidates for new 70s. Apostles are chosen from the 70s. The vetting process for choosing leaders takes a number of years and allows the organization to choose leaders, many of whom have been members for 4 or more generations, who are heavily invested in the movement and unlikely to apostatize.

(UN)PAID CLERGY

Mormonism has always had some form of paid clergy. In the early church, Joseph Smith and his family members were perhaps the main beneficiaries. Brigham Young used his position to achieve significant wealth in Utah⁶⁰⁴. By

⁶⁰¹ <http://puremormonism.blogspot.se/2010/10/how-corporatism-has-undermined-and.html>

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ John Dehlin in an interview in 2018: <https://youtu.be/x8UueyVlw-0?t=58m14s>

⁶⁰⁴ BY's estate was valued at more than 1 million USD at the time of his death, but it was determined that more than a million of this was owed to the church so family members split the remaining \$224,000. See <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/brighamyoungsestate.htm>

the 1860s, bishops and stake presidents were both paid positions. Bishops were paid up to 8% of the tithing revenue of their ward and Stake presidents received 2% of the tithing income of their stakes. By about 1900 these payments were withdrawn with the last payments of this kind occurring probably no later than 1920⁶⁰⁵.

General authorities continued to be compensated after bishop and stake presidents no longer were. David McKay standardized payment levels so that all general authorities received equal compensation during his term. As of 2012, the annual compensation (living allowance) for members of the 12 apostles and quorum of the 70 is about 120,000 USD/year. In addition, they receive unspecified benefits which may include housing allowances, vehicle allowances, education allowances for children, etc. Mission presidents also receive benefits for themselves and their dependents.

TITHING - THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

Mormons believe in the law of tithing. This was defined by Bishop Edward partridge in 1837 as “two cents on the dollar or one fiftieth of what we are worth after deducting what we owe.”⁶⁰⁶ This was redefined in July of 1838 via a revelation which was dictated by Joseph Smith. It stated that all surplus property was to be given to the church. After that, members were required to pay annually: “And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually”⁶⁰⁷

Modifications and collection of 1/10th of ones increase were made in the following years, with the quorum of the 12 voting themselves exempt from paying tithing in 1845.⁶⁰⁸ Between 1851 and 1870, saints who failed to pay their tithings risked excommunication, though it appears that this was rarely enforced. In some cases, leaders excused people from paying tithing due to their extreme poverty. Brigham Young estimated that members only paid 1/10th of 1/10th – or 1% in tithing.

In an effort to increase payments, Taylor instituted the first requirement for tithing payment as a prerequisite for temple attendance in 1881. As temples were required to get into the highest order of heaven (as was plural marriage), for the first time a person's contributions were associated with their ability to achieve salvation within Mormonism. In May of 1899, Lorenzo Snow dropped the requirement of giving 10% of one's personal wealth upon conversion but required 10% of the annual income.⁶⁰⁹ The requirement for tithing in order to get into the temple was repeated and emphasized in April of 1910⁶¹⁰, but became a formal requirement in 1921.

After 1908, Mormons were discouraged from paying tithing in labor, personal property, livestock, and produce. At this time cash was requested. However, instructions for receiving produce, etc., continued to exist in the leadership manuals (Bishops handbook) through about 1950. More recently, some Mormons (particularly those who are wealthy) pay tithing in stocks and/or bonds.

⁶⁰⁵ <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/102-17-29.pdf>

⁶⁰⁶ Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-40* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 131; compare to Howard D. Swainston, 'Tithing,' in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1481.

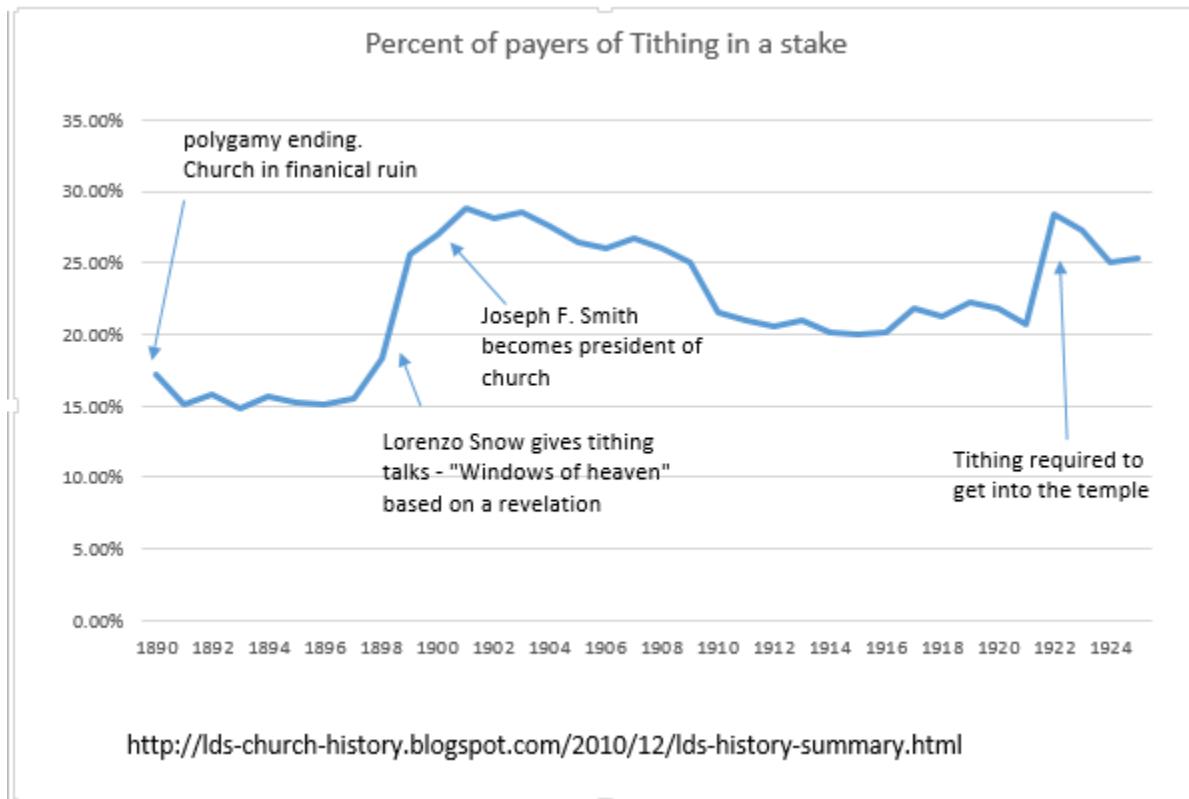
⁶⁰⁷ D&C 119:1,4.

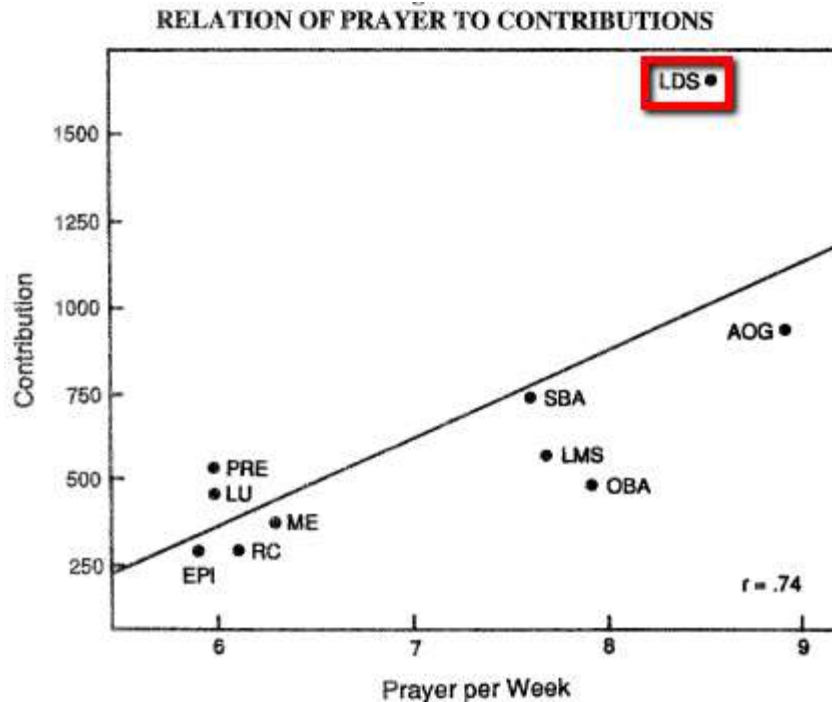
⁶⁰⁸ <http://lds-church-history.blogspot.com/2010/12/lds-history-summary.html>

⁶⁰⁹ Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 16-17; Richard Edgley and Wilford G. Edling, 'Finances of the Church,' and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Paul Thomas Smith, 'Lorenzo Snow,' in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:508, 3:1370; E. Jay Bell, 'The Windows of Heaven Revisited: The 1899 Tithing Revelation,' *Journal of Mormon History* 20 (Spring 1994): 45-83.

⁶¹⁰ William H. Smart diary, 5 Apr. 1910, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library. Smart was a stake president in Utah.

As of 2015, it is estimated that between about 30-40 percent of all North American Mormons pay tithing (or 10% of their annual income) to the church. This is similar to the activity rate in the US. This is about double the rate of giving compared to other denominations requiring similar activity levels and accounts for the relative wealth of the church.





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Tithing is taught to be the key to unlocking prosperity. Tithing and donations from even the poorest members is encouraged and required for good standing in the movement.

Now we have been teaching people in very poor circumstances . . . materially speaking, materially poor circumstances. And we teach them **God's law of prosperity**. What is that law of prosperity? **We call it tithing**. Now I have lived long enough to see the changes that come to a nation when its citizens start to pay tithing. Why do we teach tithing to the poor? Because it takes the poverty out of the children, out of the people. Heavenly Father made a promise to His children. It is recorded in the first book of the Old Testament, and in the last book of the Old Testament, and many times in between: That the windows of heaven will be open to the tithe-payers. Blessings would be poured out among the people. So *we teach tithing to the poor. So they won't be poor anymore.*⁶¹²

Not all countries provide a net positive tithing income for the church. Countries known to provide a positive net income to the church as of 2010 include: USA, Canada, England, and Japan. There are probably 2-3 other countries on this list. Most countries in South America, Africa, and Europe use more funds than they provide via tithing.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL PROSPER

Also known as "The Gospel of Prosperity", there is a widespread belief in Mormonism that everyone is equal before the Lord, but those who are doing well financially are slightly "more equal". It is believed that the Lord blesses those that keep the commandments. Materially and wealthy individuals within the church are therefore considered by at least some to be more righteous. Bishops, Stake Presidents, Mission Presidents, and General

⁶¹¹ Based on a study done in 1994. See Figure 2 in <https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Hoge-Yang.pdf>

⁶¹² M. Russel Nelson, Apr 2018 speaking in Asia. See <https://redd.it/8dvzcc>

Authorities are often chosen from wealthy individuals.⁶¹³ Persons holding high leadership positions are more likely to have advanced degrees than the general church population.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Since at least the 1840s, the LDS church has presented figures to the public which do not accurately portray the number of active members. In 1844, at Joseph's death, the official newspaper claimed a membership of "not less than 200,000"⁶¹⁴. Modern LDS sources list the figure at about 26,000⁶¹⁵.

Growth in the early church was generally positive, though very sporadic. There was negative growth during the final years of the 1850s, probably as the result of the Reformation of 1856 to 1857. During this event, members were asked to answer a number of questions regarding their beliefs and in some places the membership rolls were purged of less-committed members, including those who refused to be re-baptized into the movement.⁶¹⁶ Polygamy was at its peak and women were routinely married at ages of between about 14-16 during these years.

In more recent times, the membership has been estimated to be above 16 Million by LDS leaders (2018). The estimated active membership is about 5 million, with an activity rate of roughly 30%-35%.⁶¹⁷ Activity rates vary widely by geographical location, as well as based on age, sex, etc. There are more active females than males, with the ratio being 60/40 or higher in certain age groups and locations.⁶¹⁸

The LDS church defines the following as members:

- 1) Children age 0-9 that have been given a blessing in church.
- 2) Everyone who is baptized into the church, until they are 110 years of age unless they are recorded as dying

Until about 1989, the only way to leave the church was via excommunication or death⁶¹⁹. Though the concept of resignation was forced upon the Mormon Church by the US Supreme Court, church leaders now encourage some members to resign to avoid the excommunication process. Most of those who leave the church do so via inactivity and few members formally resign.⁶²⁰

In 2014, a presentation was given by church insiders which provided the following information which may or may not be correct⁶²¹. According to the source:

- 48% Percent of Mormons lived in US or Canada

⁶¹³ When calling new stake presidencies, the member of the 70 who is visiting the area receives a list of the top 10 tithing payers in the geographic area. These 10 individuals are often interviewed and in many cases one of them may be called as the new leader of the stake. Arrington, the former Church Historian stated that he wished that the church would stop "*Appointing the highest tithe payers to positions of leadership rather than the most capable or worthy.*" <http://archive.satrib.com/article.php?id=3991307&itype=CMSID>

⁶¹⁴ See Times and Seasons Vol 5 #13 under "communications".

<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8375>

⁶¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints_membership_history Note: Quinn lists the number as being less than 26,000.

⁶¹⁶ [http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Reformation_\(LDS\)_of_1856-1857](http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Reformation_(LDS)_of_1856-1857)

⁶¹⁷ <http://archive.satrib.com/story.php?ref=/satrib/lifestyle/57369318-80/church-percent-lds-growth.html.csp>

⁶¹⁸ <http://utahvalley360.com/2015/08/28/utah-women-know-single-numbers/>

⁶¹⁹ <http://www.mormonnomore.com/legal-precedent>

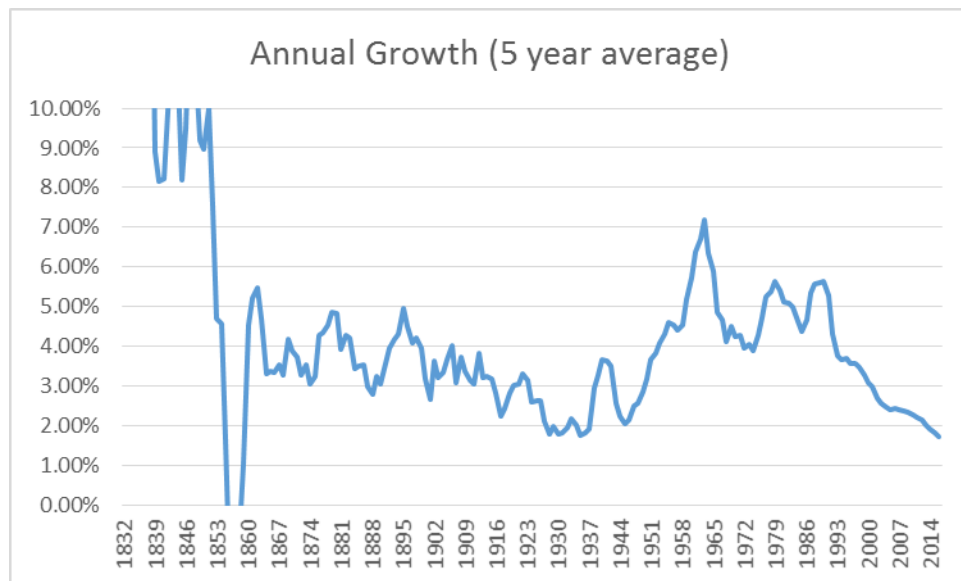
⁶²⁰ <https://quitmormon.com/stats>

⁶²¹ <http://brucefey.blogspot.com/2014/10/lds-spokesman-breaks-down-membership.html>

- 37% Lived in Mexico, Central, or South America
- 3% in Europe
- 3% in Africa
- 3% in Oceania
- 7% in Asia

Another chart indicated:

- 42% Adult Female
- 35% Adult Male
- 13% in Primary (age 1-12)
- 10% are youth (12-18)
- 36% Attend sacrament meeting weekly (activity rate?)
- 5% can't read or write
- 21% live in countries with less than \$9,200 per person GDP.
- 48% joined the church after 1995.



The 5-year averaged growth in 2017 was the lowest since 1859⁶²². Based on extrapolation, it is predicted that the LDS church will continue to experience positive growth through at least about 2026. Much of this growth will likely occur in south-east Asia, South America, and Africa.

SHARING THE GOSPEL

Missionary work has been a tenant of Mormonism since the 1830s, with missionaries first going to England and other European countries in the late 1830s. The first missionaries (Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris) would preach and endeavor to sell copies of the Book of Mormon. Early missionaries were often married with families.

⁶²² Graph is based on data taken from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints_membership_history

Starting in the 1850s, they would sometimes bring home additional plural brides⁶²³. Even after the turn of the century, married men continued to go out to preach.

Starting around 1930, and certainly after the last polygamist prophet of the LDS church died in 1945⁶²⁴, the polygamist label/image was something which the church worked hard to shed. Growth was a priority. It accomplished this through an intensive marketing campaign and by sending out an army of missionaries. This effort was particularly successful in the years after World War II. Europe was in ruins and America was in a unique position of cultural dominance around the world. Missionaries were sent to a variety of countries in Europe, South America, and Asia. In many countries, membership growth rates were high. Overall church growth was as high as about 6% per year, more than double the population growth at the time.

Missionary conversions increased significantly after the introduction of Anderson Plan in about 1949.⁶²⁵ Missionaries are encouraged to use techniques similar to high-pressure sales tactics including not accepting 'no' for an answer.^{xxvii}

Starting around the mid-1950s, all males were encouraged to go on a 2 year mission when they were in their early 20s. Foreign missionaries served for 3 years in order for them to become more proficient in their teaching languages. In 1960, the minimum age was reduced from 20 to 19 years⁶²⁶. A training center was established in Provo to train the missionaries in various languages and to allow for crash courses in foreign cultural religious beliefs⁶²⁷. Mission presidents began serving for a standardized 3 year term & many practices were established that remain today.

Beginning in the 1960s and continuing in some cases into the early 1980s, some missionaries in England, Brazil, the Philippines, Japan, and elsewhere were encouraged to baptize young people without teaching them details about the church. These are often known as *baseball-baptisms* because the potential converts often came from church sponsored sports leagues.⁶²⁸

A few policies have since been modified resulting in shorter missions (2 years for all male missionaries) and younger ages for the missionaries. As of 2014, young men are encouraged to serve at age 18 and young women at age 19.

⁶²³ Source needed.

⁶²⁴ The last church president who was a polygamist *while he was prophet* was Joseph F. Smith who died in 1918.

⁶²⁵ See <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1092&index=6> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Lloyd_Anderson This was also known as the Anderson-Bankhead plan.

⁶²⁶ <https://askgramps.org/when-did-the-church-start-sending-out-19-year-old-missionaries/>

⁶²⁷ Established about 1961-1963. <https://askgramps.org/when-did-the-church-start-sending-out-19-year-old-missionaries/>

⁶²⁸ <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/093-30-44.pdf>

Opportunities to share the “gospel” are not to be missed. Funeral services are designed as a converting tool as people in mourning are more “teachable”.⁶²⁹ Missionaries are encouraged to see out people who may be going through significant life changes as they are more susceptible to conversion during these periods⁶³⁰.

Mormons encourage their members to have large families, and family sizes of 5-7 children were not uncommon between the 1930s-1970s. On average, Mormons had families with 1-3 more children than their larger communities⁶³¹.

CORRELATION

The Mormon Church decided to address issues associated with growth by modifying their hierarchy in such a way as to all for a more structural control both of doctrine and leadership. The resulting system is known as correlation.

Correlation had a number of consequences including the following:

- Power was centralized, with the quorum of the 12 under the direction of the first presidency having direct authority and management of all other organizations within the church. Previously, organizations such as the primary and relief society had significantly more autonomy. The office of the presiding patriarch (historically a descendant of Joseph or Hyrum Smith) was dissolved.
- Church magazines were brought under direct control of the quorum of the 12. Advertising within these magazines was eliminated. Doctrine became more tightly controlled.
- The Relief Society which had previously been largely autonomous were reorganized directly under the control of the Quorum of the 12. The leader of this organization would no longer serve until death. This change was not immediate, but the first woman to stop serving prior to their death was Belle Spafford who was released in 1974 (about 1 year after Spencer W. Kimball started to lead the LDS church). She had served about 40 years at the time. The next leader served 10 years, and 5 years became standardized service period in 1997.
- All teaching material and publications including lessons for the missionaries became standardized and controlled by what would become the Priesthood Correlation Department. This allowed for a single message with respect to both history and doctrine. Church Sunday school lessons were also standardized, meaning that the same lessons would be taught around the world on any given Sunday. All material was written in SLC in English and then translated to various languages for distribution.
- All tithing and donations went directly to headquarters and wards/units received back a relatively small allowance based on their attendance.⁶³²

⁶²⁹ Bishops preside and speak at all Mormon funerals. They are instructed to concentrate on teaching the gospel rather than on the deceased. *"Many attend funerals who do not come to church regularly. They come subdued in spirit and are teachable. How sad when an opportunity for conversion is lost because a funeral is less than it might have been."* <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1988/10/funerals-a-time-for-reverence?lang=eng>

⁶³⁰ This includes deaths, births, moving, changing employment, etc. See <https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/archive/worldwide-missionary-broadcast/2016/01?lang=eng> working with members, retention, and activation. Also available here: <https://youtu.be/w9y26iFXBi4?t=4m30s>

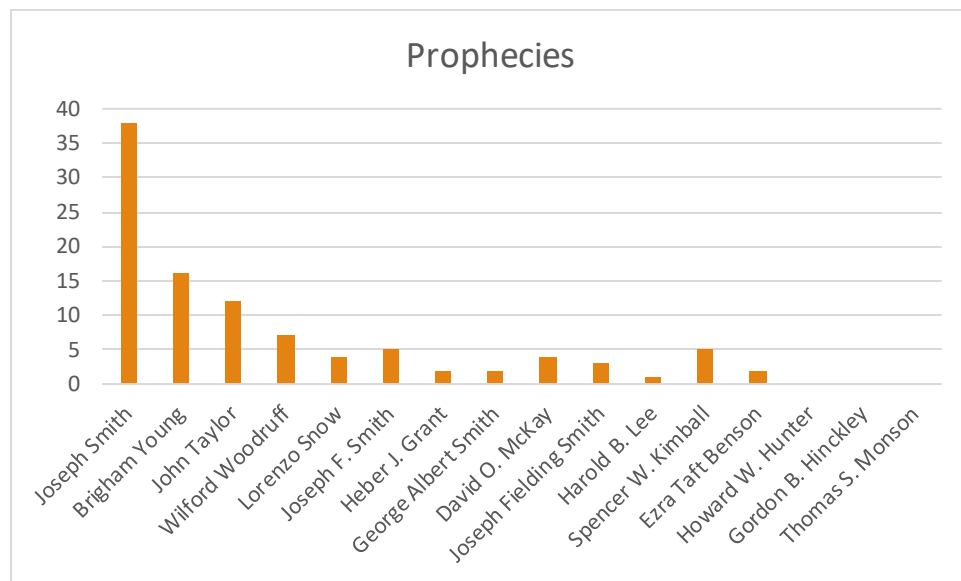
⁶³¹ This does not apply to communities where large families were encouraged by other competing religions, such as Catholicism.

⁶³² This change occurred in 1990. See <http://puremormonism.blogspot.se/2010/10/how-corporatism-has-undermined-and.html>

D. Michael Quinn has joked that the purpose of correlation is to make sure that a general authority visiting anywhere in the world should feel at home. While this may be an exaggeration, the level of consistency across diverse cultures is significant. The meetings are similar, with similar meeting schedules and lesson material in countries around the world.

The process of correlation was not a single event, but rather an evolutionary power shift which occurred over a number of years and leaders as the bureaucracy evolved. However, some of the most significant changes occurred around 1970 and in the early 80s⁶³³.

As the church became more corporate and more institutionalized, the number of prophecies given by church leaders had decreased as illustrated below:



Number of prophecies of LDS prophets, 1830-present⁶³⁴

MISSION STATEMENT

In 1981, Spencer Kimball outlined the 3-fold mission of the church as follows:

- 1) Proclaim the gospel
- 2) Perfect the Saints
- 3) Redeem the dead.

In 2009, a fourth element⁶³⁵ was added:

- 4) To Care for the Poor and Needy.

SURVEYS AS A BASIS FOR POLICY

⁶³³ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priesthood_Correlation_Program for a brief overview of correlation.

⁶³⁴ <http://www.afterallwecando.com/count-of-modern-lds-prophecies>

⁶³⁵ http://archive.satrib.com/story.php?ref=/faith/ci_13965607

The following is a partial list surveys conducted since about 1988 which are conducted by the research branch of the church and which may be used to influence policy decisions:⁶³⁶

1. [1988 Temple Survey](#)
2. [Survey on Garments and Temple Clothing](#); [SLTrib article on the garments survey](#)
3. [March 2014 Survey on the Essays](#)
4. [Survey on Women and the Priesthood, Apostasy](#)
5. [Survey on Same Sex Issues](#)
6. [2015 Youth Survey](#)
7. [Survey on Sabbath Observance](#)
8. [Survey on Beliefs in Mormon Doctrines - oh, and go see Meet the Mormons, too!](#)
9. [September 2014 Member Panel Survey](#)
10. [Survey on Technology Usage](#)
11. [Survey about Controversial Topics, including same sex marriage, essays, and mission age change](#)
12. [Church Service Mission Slogan Survey](#)
13. [1999 Surveys on Less-Active Members and Reactivated Members - referenced in 1999 GC talk](#)
14. [1991 Surveys of Single Members' Concerns](#)
15. [Member Trends Surveys, 2005-2013, see footnote 4](#)
16. [Focus Groups on Mission Age Change \(note, this is an anecdotal account\)](#)
17. [The New "Gospel Topics" Articles on LDS.org that Deal with Challenging Information – Feedback from Bishops and Active Adult Members in the USA - Sept 2014](#)
18. [A survey regarding gays in the church in 2017](#)⁶³⁷
19. [Survey regarding church history catalogue.](#)⁶³⁸

The church does not comment on these surveys or and often does not acknowledge them, though they are often commissioned by the Quorum of the 12 and other leadership groups who later reviews the results. As of 2017, the church had about 30 sociologists and other social scientists in their employ. They are responsible for surveys & test marketing of new programs, curriculums, etc.

REVELATION

Revelation in the early church consisted of people claiming to receive divine guidance from God. Revelations were common, and the cannon grew rapidly. After the death of Joseph Smith, the number of revelations decreased markedly, as did the number of canonized revelations. No president of the church after Joseph Smith has added more than 2 revelations to the cannon of LDS scripture.

In 1995, The Proclamation on the Family was released⁶³⁹. Although it may not have been written for this purpose, it was referenced by church lawyers when they tried to gain standing to be involved in an ongoing legal dispute regarding gay marriage in Hawaii in 1996. Richard Wilkins, a Law professor at BYU, may have been the primary author prior to review by the Q15⁶⁴⁰. According to Packer, all of the Q15 were involved in reviewing the document

⁶³⁶ <https://redd.it/46eugi>

⁶³⁷ <https://redd.it/7a7jih>

⁶³⁸ Sept 2019: <https://imgur.com/a/zLsncFh>

⁶³⁹ This was the 5th proclamation released by the LDS church. See the footnote 15 under: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Family:_A_Proclamation_to_the_World

⁶⁴⁰ <https://redd.it/743o3a>

and in (at least) the final wording of the document.⁶⁴¹ Authorship by anyone outside of the Q15 has not been publically acknowledged by the church.

POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

The official policy of the church is as follows:

The Church is neutral regarding political parties, political platforms, and candidates for political office. The Church does not endorse any political party or candidate. Nor does it advise members how to vote.⁶⁴²

In practice, Mormons in the US are the most republican voting block of all major religions with 70% republican supporters and about 19% democratic.⁶⁴³ The last time Utah voted for a democratic presidential candidate was in 1964 (LBJ).

Mormons often voted as a block early on (1830s-1840s). When Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith ran for political office in the 1840s, the 12 apostles were sent on campaigning missions. During Joseph Smith's presidential bid, there were more missionaries than at any point previously in the church and they were virtually all campaigning on his behalf. Block voting was one of the reasons that people in the local communities around Mormon settlements were so upset with the Mormons. While political party block voting is now officially discouraged, the Church regularly takes a stance on what it terms "moral issues". In the 1960s, this included fighting against civil rights legislation. The church sponsored an active campaign to defeat the ERA in the 1970s, and has worked to defeat all marriage equality initiatives since the early 90s. These efforts were placed in the limelight after the high-profile effort to pass proposition 8 in California in 2008. It is estimated that about half of the 40 million USD raised to pass the measure was donated by members at the urging of their leadership. The initiative passed with 52% of the popular vote.⁶⁴⁴ The victory was short-lived when the law was found unconstitutional in 2010. After the backlash surrounding Prop. 8 in California, the church may have chosen to take a quieter approach with respect to lobbying.

MORMONS IN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Joseph Smith had a desire to create a theocracy and argued that this was the ideal form of government. The theocracy which he preached was a tolerant form which included the freedom of religion for others. However, his being anointed King and his run for President were seen as threatening by some, particularly when he enforced his position of power through the destruction of the printing press for the Nauvoo Expositor.

Brigham Young followed the model established by Joseph and was the territorial governor from 1850-1858 until the federal government appointed a replacement. While the council of the 50 continued to exist and meet into the 1880s, the primary purpose during this period was simply to fight the federal government and in particular various anti-polygamy measures. The last meeting was in 1884.

Nevertheless, Mormons have been active in politics on a national level since Utah obtained statehood. In the early 20th century, an active member of the Quorum of the 12 (Reed Smoot) served in congress. Benson took a leave

⁶⁴¹ <https://www.deseret.com/1999/11/15/19475657/lds-church-leaders-speak-about-congress-of-families-br-celebration-adds-impetus-to-1999-world-event>

⁶⁴² <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/selected-church-policies/21.1?lang=eng&r=1#211>

⁶⁴³ http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/23/u-s-religious-groups-and-their-political-leanings/ft_16-02-22_religionpoliticalaffiliation_640px-2/

⁶⁴⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/15/us/politics/15marriage.html>

from the 12 to serve as agricultural secretary in the 1950s under Eisenhower. He later espoused conspiracy theories of the Birch society that Eisenhower was a communist which caused a falling-out with Eisenhower. More recently, about 6% of the representatives in the Senate are Mormon compared with 1.8% of the general population.⁶⁴⁵ This reflects a larger trend of various religious groups being overrepresented in the senate.

Though many Mormons benefited from and supported the liberal politics of FDR, these policies were publically decried as being socialist by some in church leadership including Grant, the prophet at the time. Since about the mid 1960s, Mormons have voted overwhelmingly Republican.

NEPOTISM IN LEADERSHIP

The idea of family dynasty was manifest in several ways in the early church. Joseph appointed several of his family members to leading positions in the church. His father was the presiding patriarch. His brother Hyrum was the 1st councilor in the first presidency in Nauvoo and would have most likely been the successor had he not been killed at Carthage. His son Joseph Smith III was blessed to be a future leader of the church and eventually became the 2nd prophet for the Restored Church of Jesus Christ, the 2nd largest branch of Mormonism. William Smith was an apostle in the LDS and later in the Strangite movement. Emma Smith was the president of the Women's Relief Society – a lifetime calling which in many ways mirrored her husband's prophetic role.

The trend to appoint family members to key roles continued in the church for at least 150 years and arguably still exists today. As Golden Kimball once quipped:

Some people say a person receives a position in this church through revelation, and others say they get it through inspiration, but I say they get it through relation. If I hadn't been related to Heber C. Kimball I wouldn't have been a damn thing in this church.

Brigham Young ordained 3 of his sons to be apostles: John Willard Young, Brigham Young Jr., and Joseph Angell Young. Only Brigham Jr. ever became a member of the quorum of the 12 however. John served in the first presidency between 1876 and 1877 when it was dissolved upon the death of his father. Due to changes in rules regarding seniority, he did not become president of the church even though he was the most senior apostle. He resigned as a counselor to the quorum of the 12 and was released in 1891.⁶⁴⁶

John Taylor's son John W. Taylor became an apostle at age 26 and was an apostle between 1884 and 1905. He was one of two apostles dismissed from the quorum after the Smoot hearings due to his continued support for performing new plural marriages.

Abraham O. Woodruff was the son of Wilford Woodruff and was made an apostle in 1897 at the age of 24. He died prematurely of smallpox in 1904.

Joseph Fielding Smith was the son of Joseph F. Smith and called as an apostle in 1910 at the age of 33.

For a better overview of nepotism within Mormonism⁶⁴⁷, see D. Michael Quinn's *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* pp 163-197, 641-725, and 731-745.

⁶⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_affiliation_in_the_United_States_Senate#Mormon

⁶⁴⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Willard_Young

⁶⁴⁷ For a brief overview of nepotism in Mormonism, see: <http://www.mrm.org/nepotism>. There is some indication that since the 1990s, the level of nepotism within the Quorum of the 12 has been decreasing.

ADVERTISING

The first effort to produce a film by the church was undertaken in 1913 and entitled “One Hundred Years of Mormonism”. It was an expensive undertaking at the time (\$2500) and received positive feedback from the church members who viewed it.⁶⁴⁸

In 1929, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir began broadcasting a weekly radio program called Music and the Spoken Word. The Choir toured Europe in the 50s and 60s and was part of the missionary and PR campaign of the time. This PR campaign is ongoing, and the choir has performed at the inaugurations of LBJ, George Bush Sr., Ronald Reagan, George Bush Jr., and Donald Trump.

Public relations work began in earnest in 1935 under the direction of Gordon B. Hinkley who would later become the leader of the Mormon Church.

In 1935 the Church formed a Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee to develop ways to use the latest communications media in missionary work. The committee produced film strips, pamphlets, tracts, books, recordings, radio programs, and exhibits and supervised translations of the Book of Mormon. Under President David O. McKay, the Church began to use professional **public relations consultants**, who recommended that the Tabernacle Choir make recordings with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and worked to obtain press coverage of the Cumorah Pageant in New York. In 1957 the Church Information Service was begun, with a primary purpose to distribute accurate information about Church activities of interest to the general public. In 1972 the Church formed a Department of Public Communications.⁶⁴⁹

From the early 70s through late 80s, the Mormon Church had an ongoing stream of TV commercials known as the “Homefront” series which later became “Homefront Jr”. These were meant to promote values and to come across as wholesome but not preachy. Many of these were made with the help of famous directors and many of the stories were taken from actual experiences of the Mormon writers. Several are highly acclaimed.⁶⁵⁰

Starting in 2010, the “I’m a Mormon” campaign consisted of a series of videos which is meant to show Mormons for a variety of different walks of life. This Mormon ad campaign is not unique as many faiths have similar advertising and branding strategies.⁶⁵¹ The point of the messages is to show that Mormons are normal people. Doctrine and beliefs are not discussed. The church insists that this was not timed to reduce biases regarding Mitt Romney or Jon Huntsman who were running for national political offices around this time. Indeed, the campaign continued long after the election.⁶⁵² This campaign was taken to England in 2013.⁶⁵³

⁶⁴⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Hundred_Years_of_Mormonism

⁶⁴⁹ http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Public_Relations

⁶⁵⁰ <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/julie-through-the-glass-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-mormon-tv-commercial>

⁶⁵¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/25/faiths-ad-campaigns-chase_n_813987.html

⁶⁵² <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/18/us/mormon-ad-campaign-seeks-to-improve-perceptions.html>

⁶⁵³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJqxomXN4KY>

The LDS church has an annual Christmas advertising campaign. In 2015, it was particularly successful and ranked as one of the 10 most viewed.⁶⁵⁴ In 2015, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with APCO Worldwide was given an award (31st place) the crisis management campaign for “The Book of Mormon Musical Response and Launch of ‘Ask a Mormon’ Advertising Campaign”.⁶⁵⁵

It appears that Eldelman was the church’s primary PR firm from about 1995-2008.⁶⁵⁶ APCO Worldwide started doing PR work around 2007 for the Romney presidential campaign⁶⁵⁷ and has been the primary PR firm for the LDS church since sometime around 2008.⁶⁵⁸

THE NAME OF THE CHURCH

Mormon leaders teach that the name of their church is a sign of its divinity.⁶⁵⁹ The Book of Mormon⁶⁶⁰ states:

“And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name then it be Moses’ church; or if it be called in the name of a man [like Mormon] then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel” (3 Nephi 27:8).

Historical names of the main branch of the Mormon Church are as follows:

Church of Christ – Apr 6 1830

The Church of the Latter Day Saints – 3 May 1834⁶⁶¹

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints - 26 April 1838

At various times, the following names have also been used (mostly between 1834-1838):

The Church of Jesus Christ

The Church of God

The Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints

MORMON VS. THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

⁶⁵⁴ http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/llds/llds-church-s-a-savior-is-born-ad-campaign-th/article_e4fb21d0-cf77-5b26-b774-5eb688600553.html

⁶⁵⁵ <https://www.holmesreport.com/events-awards/sabre-awards/global-sabre-awards/2015-global-sabre-awards>

⁶⁵⁶ <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/402945/LDS-CHURCH-HIRES-EDELMAN-WORLDWIDE.html?pg=all>

⁶⁵⁷ http://www.philcooke.com/branding_mormons/

⁶⁵⁸ Sources are sparse that this point is based on conjecture.

<https://www.exmormon.org/phorum/read.php?2,1430763>

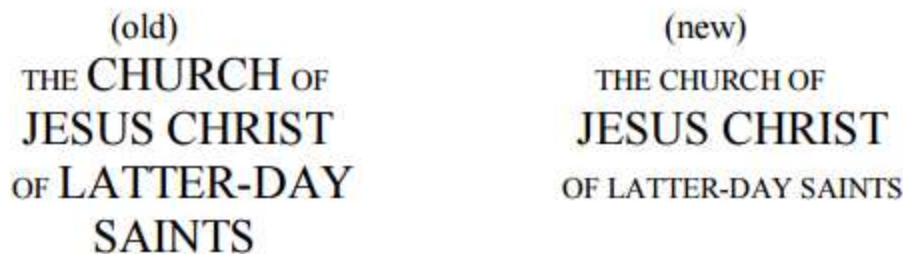
⁶⁵⁹ See for example: <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2011/10/the-importance-of-a-name?lang=eng>

⁶⁶⁰ The book of Mormon is the foundational scriptural work of the religion, dictated in 1829, 1 year prior to the founding of the Mormon sect

⁶⁶¹ This is the name used on the Kirtland Temple.

In 1995, the LDS church hired Edelman (a Jewish owned PR firm) to help with its public relations.⁶⁶² Edelman has had some scandals associated with their clients in the past including work done for Microsoft to avoid anti-trust lawsuits and creating a false “grass roots” campaign with the backing of Walmart.⁶⁶³

The first move was changing the logo of the church to emphasize Jesus Christ and de-emphasize Latter-Day Saints:



1974-1995 (left) and post 1995 (right) church logos

Church President David O. McKay said "the Saints were first called Christians. It was first applied to them in derision just as the word 'Mormon' was first applied to the Church in this day, but later was accepted as an ***honorable title***."

Starting in around 2001, a policy was put in place (also presumably proposed by Edelman) to reduce the usage of Mormon when referring to the Church.⁶⁶⁴ The policies were proposed internally by the Public Affairs Committee and the Missionary Executive Council.

The official policy is:

Referring to the Church as “the Mormon Church,” “the Latter-day Saints Church,” or “the LDS Church” is *discouraged*.⁶⁶⁵

According to the minutes where the topic was discussed⁶⁶⁶:

The term “Mormon fundamentalist” is specifically discouraged because it implies a connection with the Church by third parties who have no such affiliation and who espouse beliefs and engage in practices like polygamy that are forbidden by Church doctrine.⁶⁶⁷

This is slightly ironic given that the church has never officially stopped believing in polygamy, only forbidding its practice in accordance with law.

⁶⁶² <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/402945/LDS-CHURCH-HIRES-EDELMAN-WORLDWIDE.html?pg=all>

⁶⁶³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edelman_\(firm\)#Notable_work](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edelman_(firm)#Notable_work)

⁶⁶⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/19/us/adapting-mormon-to-emphasize-christianity.html>

⁶⁶⁵ <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/selected-church-policies/21.1?lang=eng&r=1#211> section 21.1.34

⁶⁶⁶ <https://www.docdroid.net/LaF5sVU/executive-council-minutes.pdf.html#page=16>

⁶⁶⁷ Note that the Church has never officially stopped believing in polygamy, only forbidding its practice in accordance with law.

In spite of not wanting to use the Mormon term, the church has attempted to own the term by trademarking it and limiting its use by others including other splinter groups which trace their history to Joseph Smith and the early Mormon movement.⁶⁶⁸

As of about 2015, the usage of Mormon was okay. This was based on research conducted by the LDS church.⁶⁶⁹ In 2018, Nelson changed course and discouraged the usage of this term.⁶⁷⁰ This resulted in the change of the names of many institutions including the Mormon Tabernacle Choir (Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square), LDS.org (www.churchofjesuschrist.org/), mormon.org (www.comeuntochrist.org/), etc.

PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY

When Mark Hofmann sold a series of forgeries to the LDS church in the early 1980s, the LDS church received significant negative publicity. Gordon B. Hinkley of the first presidency had met with Hofmann on a number of occasions to make the purchases. Church funds and artifacts, in excess of \$40,000 and possibly much higher sums⁶⁷¹ had been used to make the purchases. The materials which were purchased were only brought to light after Hofmann planted rumors of their existence and the church was pressured to do so. The material was embarrassing as it, among other things, talked about a salamander leading the way to the Golden Plates. However, arguably more embarrassing was that church leadership had publically argued that the salamander was simply another description for angel Moroni.⁶⁷² The highest levels of church leadership, who claim to receive direction directly from God, had been fooled by a conman. When Hoffmann later killed two people as part of the cover-up (and nearly killed himself), local and national law enforcement got involved and requested that Hinkley testify in court. This testimony was avoided as part of a plea agreement and possibly in part as the result of perjury by Hinkley⁶⁷³. Oaks, a lawyer and member of the 12 apostles accused the press of "some of the most sustained and intense Latter-day Saints Church-bashing since the turn of the century" for their coverage of the affair.⁶⁷⁴

After the Hoffmann affair (and arguably before), the church never again wanted to be in a situation where it appeared that they had engaged in unethical activities. Although one can argue that the practice of using front organizations and other non-church entities to do the dirty work goes back to the Dannites in the 1830s, renewed efforts began in the 1980s.

One method employed is to have wealthy church members purchase artifacts that the church wishes to own and then have them donate them to the church. The member receives a tax rebate for making a charitable contribution and the value of the contribution is generally insignificant relative to their incomes. The church gets

⁶⁶⁸ <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/02/not-mormonr-still-mormon>

⁶⁶⁹ See <https://youtu.be/BErrfz7XL-g?t=21m40s> where a former employee discusses this.

⁶⁷⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/17/us/mormon-church-name-trnd/index.html>

⁶⁷¹ Some sources list the figure as about \$900,000. However, it is important to keep in mind that many of the purchases were made by wealthy church members who were encouraged to purchase the items as private individuals and then to donate them to the church.

⁶⁷² 1985 CES Doctrine and Covenants Symposium," pages 22-23. See <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/trackingconfessions2.htm> or the original talk here: <http://mormonexpositor.com/refmaterial/45/ReadingChurchHistory-Oaks-CES.pdf> Note: Hinkley later argued that these events were simply part of a recycled criticism of the church and the people who believed the forgeries were deceived in a conference talk: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1985/09/keep-the-faith?lang=eng>

⁶⁷³ Hinkley claimed limited contact with Hofmann, in spite of evidence that they met on more than 30 occasions. The content of these conversations never came to light as Hinkley claimed that he could not remember any of this.

⁶⁷⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/08/09/us/mormon-official-castigates-press.html>

the item which they wanted, and can hide away controversial items in its vaults. The church can rightly deny that they purchased the artifact and when the donation is private, they are rarely under any pressure to make the new artifact public. If the artifact is discovered to be a fraud, the church hasn't purchased anything and there is no financial loss or loss of face. In addition to many of the Hoffman forgeries⁶⁷⁵, artifacts obtained in this way include at least the green seer stone of Joseph Smith in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

Part of maintaining plausible deniability includes owning source material of the early church. Journals of prominent leaders and other artifacts have been carefully collected since the late 1800s. Many items, including some which are associated with magical beliefs in the early church, have not been shared with the greater church membership.⁶⁷⁶

The Mormon Church has been very active in trying to project a positive image of itself on the internet. This includes extensive advertising and search engine optimization. At least as important as having LDS approved sources appear high in search results, is making sure that other information sources about the LDS church from non-believing sources are suppressed. The "More Good" foundation, a private entity run by LDS members is an active participant in this work. This foundation buys up hundreds of URLs and places web pages on popular search terms, linking these pages back to the official LDS pages⁶⁷⁷. In this way, non-approved sites which may have less flattering images or portrayals of Mormon history or Doctrine are effectively suppressed. Unofficial communication channels are open between the LDS employees working on internet strategies and employees of the More Good Foundation so that work and target areas are well coordinated. Mormons are encouraged to give to these unofficial efforts to "share the gospel". Though it previously denied receiving official support, the site receives some of its financial backing from the LDS church (450K USD as of 2014).⁶⁷⁸

These activities on the internet are merely an extension of earlier policies and practices developed over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries in other media. In the 1960s, missionaries donated "update histories" of Mormons to libraries, and asked for the "inaccurate, outdated" histories in return as one method to control the messages available to the public.

The concept of shell corporations and plausible deniability can be summarized by the disclaimer on Book of Mormon central's website:

*If we are successful, the Church benefits. If we are not successful, the Church is not embarrassed.*⁶⁷⁹

JOSEPHITES OR CHRISTIANS

⁶⁷⁵ The LDS church owns 446 documents forged by Hoffman. See:

<https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900002408/looking-back-at-the-mark-hofmann-bombings-and-his-life-of-deceit.html>

⁶⁷⁶ Many of the most interesting and controversial items are stored in the vault of the 1st presidency. A partial list of its contents can be found here: <https://exploringmormonism.com/our-own-peek-into-the-first-presidency-vault/>

⁶⁷⁷ At least 644 domains are currently being run. See: <http://reversewhois.domaintools.com/more-good-foundation> and http://mormoncurtain.com/topic_moregoodfoundation.html

⁶⁷⁸ <http://futuremissionary.com/more-good-foundation-gets-450k-from-church-denies-it/>

⁶⁷⁹ <https://bookofmormoncentral.org/content/donor-frequently-asked-questions> retrieved 2019.06.18.

Mainstream Christian religions have criticized Mormons in part because the Mormon belief in godhood is so different from the traditional Christian beliefs. Mormons mirrored this critique, claiming from their inception that all other faiths were in a state of apostasy.

Early leaders taught that approval from Joseph Smith was required to get into heaven. Joseph Smith was emphasized in church talks and those of other faiths often accuse Mormons of worshipping Joseph Smith.

Leadership has concentrated more on Christ in talks since the 1950s, with additional emphasis after the 1980s. The temple recommend interview was updated in the early 80s to include additional questions regarding a belief in Christ. The number of mentions of Joseph Smith are the lowest between 2000 and 2010 than they have been since about 1850.⁶⁸⁰ The logo of the church was updated in 1996 to emphasize the name of Christ⁶⁸¹, and in 2018 the church undertook a major effort to rebrand and rename everything that was Mormon and LDS to “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”⁶⁸²

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

The LDS church has not released any financial statements in the US since 1959. During the late 1950s and early 60s, there was significant deficit spending to construct buildings with the hope of attracting more members. Deficit spending was reigned in during the 1960s and the church currently maintains a health balance sheet. N. Elton Tanner was in charge of much of the fiscal discipline and restructuring.

Some estimates place the annual income of the church from the tithing of its members at about 7 Billion, of which 6 Billion comes from members in the US and 0.5 Billion from Canada. The final 0.5 Billion comes from the rest of the world.⁶⁸³ The LDS church does make financial statements from the UK and Australia publically available as required by law in those countries.

Assets of the LDS church are estimated to be at about 35 Billion (temples and meetinghouses) in addition to significant holdings in land, cattle, shopping malls, etc. The US stock holdings of the LDS church are valued at over 32 billion USD⁶⁸⁴.

In 2012, a change was made to the financial contribution forms allowing the church to redirect any funds given it by members.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸⁰ Statistics from <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>. See also

<http://www.116pages.com/2016/12/occurrences-in-gen-conference-jesus.html>

⁶⁸¹ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1996/10/news-of-the-church/new-church-logo-announced?lang=eng>

⁶⁸² <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/29/us/mormon-church-name-change.html>

⁶⁸³ <http://investigations.nbcnews.com/news/2012/08/13/13262285-mormon-church-earns-7-billion-a-year-from-tithing-analysis-indicates> Quinn disputes this in his latest book and estimates that annual tithing income is about 33 Billion USD. See: *The Mormon Hierarchy: Wealth and Corporate Power*.

⁶⁸⁴ <https://kutv.com/news/local/mormonleaks-says-new-documents-link-lds-church-to-companies-worth-over-32-billion>

⁶⁸⁵ “Though reasonable efforts will be made globally to use donations as designated, all donations become the church's property and will be used at the church's sole discretion to further the church's overall mission” <http://archive.slttrib.com/story.php?ref=sltrib/blogsfaithblog/54371289-180/church-font-tithing-mormon.html.csp>

In Utah, 92% of the citizens are in favor of increased transparency within government. Only 36% of “very active” Mormons in the survey support additional transparency of religious organizations.⁶⁸⁶

APOSTATES

A man is accepted into a church for what he believes and he is turned out
for what he knows. (Mark Twain)

Like many cohesive groups, Mormons tend to label and shun those who leave the group⁶⁸⁷. Those who have never been associated with Mormons and who are ignorant of their belief are called non-mormons. Those who are not of the faith, but are helpful to Mormons are called “Mormon-friendly”⁶⁸⁸. Those who leave the Mormon Church may call themselves ‘ex-mormons’ or ‘former members’, but are often termed ‘inactive’ or ‘less active’ by believers unless they formally resign. Those who leave the Mormon Church for reasons of belief are called “apostates” by believing members.

If someone who has left the church or who is a non-believer writes anything critical about the church, it is generally considered anti-mormon literature or propaganda.

Historically, some people have left the church and published information about the church which is perceived as being negative by believing members. This has occurred from the very early days of the church. Some of the largest departures by members (or “apostasies”) occurred when the church changed location, changed core doctrine, or both.

A few events that caused large numbers of members to leave include the following:

- 1) Deemphasizing seer stones and their usage (as early as 1831).
- 2) Changing the definition of the godhead from the traditional trinity to 3 separate beings (between about 1833 and 1838). This roughly corresponded with the rewriting of early revelations to include the concept of the priesthood being restored by angels.
- 3) Introducing doctrines of the afterlife including 3 separate kingdoms (Celestial, Terrestrial, Telesial)
- 4) The failure of the Kirtland bank and the resulting loss of savings for many members.⁶⁸⁹
- 5) The private introduction of polygamy between about 1837 and 1844. In some cases, the husbands of women whom Joseph Smith proposed to left the church along with their wives.⁶⁹⁰
- 6) The migration of the body of the church from Nauvoo to Salt Lake. Many members chose to stay behind or continued to California.

⁶⁸⁶ Survey in 2017. See <http://www.sltrib.com/news/2017/11/03/utahns-split-on-desire-for-more-church-transparency-but-most-active-mormons-say-it-isnt-needed/>

⁶⁸⁷ Brigham Young summarized this attitude when he stated, “[if] there is a despicable character on the face of the earth, it is an apostate from this Church. He is a traitor who has deceived his best friends, betrayed his trust, and forfeited every principle of honor that God placed within him. They may think they are respected, but they are not. They are disgraced in their own eyes. **There is not much honesty within them; they have forfeited their heaven, sold their birthright, and betrayed their friends.**” Young, Brigham (1867), Journal of Discourses, 12:94

⁶⁸⁸ In the 19th century, these people were termed “Jack Mormons”.

⁶⁸⁹ This loss was especially hard for two reasons: 1) Joseph prophesied that the bank would not fail and 2) The piles of hard currency (coins) which investors were shown were faked. See Brodie *No man knows My History* or <https://lifeafterministry.com/2015/02/05/the-kirtland-safety-society/>

⁶⁹⁰ The apostasy of William Law (one of the members of the first presidency) after Joseph tried to marry Law’s wife lead indirectly to the killing of Joseph Smith after Smith ordered a printing press destroyed.

- 7) The Reformation of 1856-1857, where members who would not be rebaptized and actively show their commitment had their names removed from the church⁶⁹¹.
- 8) The advent of the internet and increased access to information, particularly early church history.⁶⁹²
- 9) Increased secularization of society, particularly between 1900-1940 and 2000-present.

A few prominent members who were kicked out or chose to leave the Josephite/Brighamite church include:

- 1) All 3 of the "Three witnesses" of the book of Mormon⁶⁹³.
- 2) All of the "8 witnesses" of the book of Mormon.
- 3) 8-9 of the original "12 apostles" of the church.
- 4) Many members of the first presidency between 1833-1844.

John Taylor claimed that apostates had been guilty of "consenting to the loss of innocent blood" referring to the killing of Joseph Smith and that they would have "have no forgiveness in this world or in the world to come"⁶⁹⁴.

The LDS church teaches that members leave for the following reasons:

1. Pride
2. Committing sins and or a desire to commit sins (which drives them to alienation from God)⁶⁹⁵
3. They have taken offense to something trivial
4. They are deceived by Satan

In 2012, people who have left the LDS church lists the following reasons for leaving:⁶⁹⁶

- 1) Ceased to believe in the doctrine/theology of the church (74%)
- 2) Studied church history and lost belief (70%)
- 3) Lost faith in Joseph Smith (70%)
- 4) Lost faith in Book of Mormon (65%)
- 5) Stance on homosexuals (48%)⁶⁹⁷
- 6) Stance on race issues (43%)
-(additional reasons with varying scores).
- 20) Wanted to participate in activities considered sinful by the church (4%) (See #2 in LDS teaching)

⁶⁹¹ Rebaptism applied not only to the gathered saints, but also to members in Great Britain and Scandinavia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebaptism_\(Mormonism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebaptism_(Mormonism)) See also <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1974/07/highlights-of-the-church-in-scandinavia?lang=eng>.

⁶⁹² This trend is still in its infancy, and began sometime between about 2005 and 2010. See:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mormonchurch-idUSTRE80T1CM20120131>

⁶⁹³ Martin Harris reconverted to the Brighamite movement in 1870 and settled in Utah until his death in 1875.

⁶⁹⁴ Times and Seasons, Monday July 1, 1844, pg 568 <http://www.latterdaytruth.org/pdf/100150.pdf>

⁶⁹⁵ Bruce R. McConkie taught, "**The basic cause of apostasy is sin.** Men leave the Church because they are sensual and carnal. It is not a matter of rejecting gospel doctrine, or preferring a more liberal interpretation or application of revealed truth. These are excuses. **The basic reason** for rebellion against the truth **is a desire to enjoy the lusts of the flesh.**" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, vol. 3, pp. 426-427). This reasoning continues to be taught and emphasized. See <https://web.archive.org/web/20180315013842/http://www.lds.org/What-a-Young-Man-Fascinated-by-Anti-Mormon-Taught-Me-About-the-Atonement-Repentance/s/87605> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTx-n8Yx5eg&feature=youtu.be&t=580>

⁶⁹⁶ http://www.whymormonsquestion.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Survey-Results_Understanding-Mormon-Disbelief-Mar2012-1.pdf Note: This survey is NOT a random sample, and as such the results are suspect. See: <https://youtu.be/2A0FgnTHQmE?t=160>

⁶⁹⁷ This may have increased after the November policy (2015) which has been controversial among some groups.

21) Was offended by someone in the church (4%) (See #3 in LDS teaching)

Other surveys point to members leaving primarily out of apathy and societal secularization, often in their late teens⁶⁹⁸. Mormons are sometimes told to avoid former members who may oppose the church.⁶⁹⁹ Associating with or agreeing with apostates was grounds for not receiving a recommend to allow one to participate in Temple ceremonies which are required for salvation.⁷⁰⁰

FIRED BY THE CHURCH

When working for the LDS church or a church-owned school, minor acts of non-compliance can result in firing. These include publishing information which the church considers embarrassing or controversial. A few cases which resulted in firing include:

- 1) A man who published books about early Mormon history (D. Michael Quinn, fired from BYU).
- 2) A man who refused to disassociate himself from his gay friends/associates.⁷⁰¹
- 3) A woman who made a Facebook post supporting gay rights.⁷⁰²

Students have also been kicked out of church-owned schools for having facial hair, even when the said facial hair is required by their religion.⁷⁰³

EXCOMMUNICATION

Since the 1970s, the church has on several occasions excommunicated prominent members in order to try to keep the body of the church going in a certain direction. Some of these include:

Sonya Johnson – 1979 – Excommunicated for her work in promoting the ERA.

The September 6 (1993), including the following:⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁸ <https://youtu.be/2A0FgnTHQmE?t=320>

⁶⁹⁹ <http://www.slttrib.com/news/3805769-155/byu-grads-encouraged-to-keep-an?page=2> "We should disconnect, immediately and completely, from listening to the proselytizing efforts of those who have lost their faith, and instead reconnect promptly with the holy spirit." Also see Boyd K. Packer "Remember: when you see the bitter apostate, you do not see only an absence of light, you see also the presence of darkness. Do not spread disease germs." from "The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect," speech given August 1981 at BYU, Brigham Young University Studies, Summer 1981.

⁷⁰⁰ The 6th question on the temple recommend interview was: "Do you affiliate with *any group or individual* whose teachings or practices are contrary to or oppose those accepted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or do you sympathize with the precepts of any such group or individual?" This was changed in Oct 2019.

⁷⁰¹ <https://www.cityweekly.net/utah/man-fired-from-lds-church-for-refusing-to-give-up-gay-friends/Content?oid=2153419>

⁷⁰² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/07/19/mormon-university-instructor-fired-after-facebook-post-supporting-lgbt-rights-she-says/>

⁷⁰³ See https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/18/us/campaigning-to-change-the-cleanshaven-look-at-brigham-young-university.html?_r=0 and <https://bycommonconsent.com/2014/11/19/byu-religious-freedom-or-its-lack-and-beards/>

⁷⁰⁴ The September 6 are known as such because they were all excommunicated at the same time. Though the church officially denies this, it appears that this was a coordinated move from the highest levels of the Strengthening the Members Committee.

- D. Michael Quinn—Historian and BYU professor from 1976-1988. He was excommunicated for his writings about belief in seer stones in the early church and the practice of polygamy with official sanction after the 1890 manifesto⁷⁰⁵.
- Lavina Fielding Anderson— Scholar, writer, editor, and feminist. Her detailed account of spiritual abuse by Mormon leaders between the 1970s and 1990s was the grounds for her excommunication.⁷⁰⁶
- Lynne Kanavel Whitesides – Noted speaker on Mother in Heaven
- Avraham Gileadi –Author and interpreter of the Book of Isaiah. He was later reinstated into the church and continues to publish on the book of Isaiah.
- Paul Toscano (and later wife Margaret in 2000) were excommunicated for their writings about the whitewashing of Mormon history, hierarchical authoritarianism, and feminist issues.
- “Maxine Hanks is a Mormon feminist theologian, who compiled and edited the book Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism (1992). She was excommunicated on September 19... In February 2012, Hanks was rebaptized as a member of the church”⁷⁰⁷

Post Sept. 6 excommunications, possibly part of the same or a similar wave of actions :

- David Wright, a professor of Hebrew studies and the Bible at Brandeis University⁷⁰⁸, excommunicated in April 1994 for articles asserting the Book of Mormon was a 19th-century creation of church founder Joseph Smith.⁷⁰⁹
- Michael Barrett – 1994: Assistant general counsel for the CIA, excommunicated for disobedience after writing letters to editors of several newspapers correcting news stories about Mormonism.⁷¹⁰
- Brent Metcalfe – 1994: Editor of the anthology "New Approaches to the Book of Mormon," published by Signature Books in Salt Lake City. Metcalfe also edited "American Apocrypha," which included the article in which Murphy used genetic research to challenge the Book of Mormon doctrine that American Indians are descendants of ancient Israelite families.⁷¹¹ Metcalfe developed the theory that the Book of Mormon was translated starting at Mosiah and that the first books in the current manuscript were produced later⁷¹².
- Janice Merrill Allred –A relative and collaborator with several of the September 6, Allred is a feminist who was disciplined in 1994 and excommunicated in 1995. Some consider her excommunication as part of the September 6. She is the mother of 9 and her husband was a physics professor at BYU.
- Margaret Toscano – 2000: A classics professor at the University of Utah, excommunicated for writing on feminist issues after being told not to. Margaret was originally slated to be excommunicated at the time

⁷⁰⁵ The official charges seem to concentrate on his homosexuality, but given his writings, being fired from BYU, and the timing with 5 other high-level excommunications of other scholars, this seems very unlikely.

⁷⁰⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavina_Fielding_Anderson

⁷⁰⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_Six retrieved 2019.10.17.

⁷⁰⁸ Prior to teaching as the only non-Jewish professor at this well respected university, he taught at BYU (but was dismissed for his non-orthodox beliefs).

⁷⁰⁹ https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/dissident-lds-intellectuals-say-excommunications-will-continue/article_76202a5a-4c5c-5129-9fcd-aefbe0988466.html see also <http://www.lds-mormon.com/dpw.shtml>

⁷¹⁰ https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/dissident-lds-intellectuals-say-excommunications-will-continue/article_76202a5a-4c5c-5129-9fcd-aefbe0988466.html

⁷¹¹ https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/dissident-lds-intellectuals-say-excommunications-will-continue/article_76202a5a-4c5c-5129-9fcd-aefbe0988466.html

⁷¹² This theory is now widely accepted by scholars both inside and outside of the LDS church.

of the September 6, but her Bishop refused to follow the direction of the upper church authorities.⁷¹³ Her husband, Paul, was one of the September 6.

- Martha Nibley Beck – Scholar and author. Resigned in Sept 1993 along with her husband John Beck, possibly to avoid excommunication(?). She became controversial for her public writings which were deemed to be critical of the church. She was a parttime faculty at BYU at the time and is the daughter of Hugh Nibley, a well-known Mormon apologist. Her most controversial claim was that Hugh Nibley had sexually abused her as a child, based on recollection of suppressed memories.

Prominent Excommunications after the year 2000:

- Shane LeGrande Whelan, author of "More Than One: Plural Marriage, A Sacred Heritage, A Promise For Tomorrow," excommunicated Aug. 11 2002 for refusing to stop marketing his self-published book. His wife, Rhonda, who researched material for the book, was disfellowshipped two weeks later. She has since divorced him.⁷¹⁴
- Denver Snuffer – 2013 – Excommunicated for publication of his 2011 book, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*. Fundamentalist religious leader and author. Created a fellowship after excommunication and now leads a small movement. Among other things he claims to have seen Jesus and that faithful members can do the same.
- Kate Kelly – 2014 – Feminist and founder of the Ordain Women movement. This movement arguably played a role in women being allowed to give prayers in General Conference since 2013. Others in the movement have had their temple recommends taken away⁷¹⁵ and/or been excommunicated.
- Rock Waterman – 2014 – Conservative Mormon blogger claimed that Mormons were paying too much tithing⁷¹⁶ based on the historical development of the doctrine. Excommunicated for his blog⁷¹⁷.
- John Dehlin – 2015 – Host of Mormon Stories podcast. He advocated honesty in evaluating the historical claims of the LDS church and tried to stay in the faith while not believing the divinity claims. He has interviewed 100s of people starting in 2005 and discussed a number of topics including their experiences with general authorities, excommunication, losing their faith, etc.
- Jeremy Reynolds – 2016 – Author of "The CES Letter" was disciplined for creating a document which asks questions regarding the history of the LDS faith and challenges its truth claims. The letter was written in about 2013 and went viral shortly thereafter. He resigned during his excommunication proceeding.
- Sam Young – 2018 – Leader of the "Protect LDS Children movement" which was encouraging church leaders to stop asking sexually explicit questions to minors during one on one interview.
- Bill Reel - Dec 2018 – Popular Mormon podcaster who among other things created a podcast which accused Holland of telling 5 specific lies.
- Leah and Cody Young – 2019 – Although not prominent, these members were excommunicated for starting a support group for former or questioning members. Although they were deliberate to not reach out to active members, their Stake president chose to excommunicate them for their efforts to help

⁷¹³ <https://youtu.be/xqO9PqJ-l88?t=11200>

⁷¹⁴ https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/dissident-lds-intellectuals-say-excommunications-will-continue/article_76202a5a-4c5c-5129-9fcd-aefbe0988466.html

⁷¹⁵ This includes Bryndis Roberts, the chair of Ordain Women. <https://www.athoughtfulfaith.org/bryndis-roberts-awakening-the-mother-god/> The source below talks about the coordinated nature of this event coming from SLC through her stake president rather than originating from her bishop: <https://youtu.be/xqO9PqJ-l88?t=7700>

⁷¹⁶ <http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/2012/12/are-we-paying-too-much-tithing.html>

⁷¹⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/19/us/critical-online-comments-put-church-status-at-risk-mormons-say.html>

others. This is one of several cases between 2010 and 2020 where low-level members are excommunicated due to social media posts or other seemingly benign actions.

Generally, excommunicated members often fall into one of several categories:

- Those who commit “grievous sins”, often sexual in nature (such as adultery), but also including murder, etc.
- Those who teach conservative doctrines, esp. with respect to polygamy, Adam-God doctrine, or who claim divine revelations (Denver Snuffer, etc).
- Historians, who publish histories that do not confirm the correlated historical narrative.
- Those who challenge the divinity claims of the church.
- Activists or bloggers who shed light on early church history or other practices which they believe to be harmful to members or who advocate for an expanded role for women in the movement.

Those listed in this section fall into the latter four categories.

Since about 2010, some members of relatively low stature/standing have been excommunicated for communicating versions of history that are not accepted by the mainstream body of the church or its leadership. Generally this occurs after they have made posts on Facebook or other forms of social media.⁷¹⁸ Since Nov. 2015, married homosexual members have been excommunicated for being in a gay marriage.

Historically, the church had maintained that disciplinary decisions are *made by* local leaders.⁷¹⁹ This position was called into question in part by the timing of various excommunications including the September 6. More recently, the church has stated that, “Church discipline is *administered by* local leaders”, leaving open the possibility that decisions are made at a higher level.⁷²⁰ A more complete list of excommunications can be found at: <https://lds-data.github.io/lds-church-discipline/>

MORMON CULTURE

Just as Jews have their own sub-culture, so too Mormons have a community and culture with its own peculiarities. These aspects of the religion are considered to be non-doctrinal, but still are an integral part of the Mormon identity for many members of the faith, particularly those living in the Mormon Corridor (i.e. Utah, southern Idaho, etc).

COMMUNITY

It takes a village to raise a child, and Mormonism provides one such village. Between the 1830s and the early 1900s, the most devout Mormons gathered to “Zion” where they generally tried to be self-sufficient as a community. This meant that they would control all aspects of their local economies. Purchasing from local Mormons was encouraged and this sometimes led to resentment from other local non-mormon enterprises. In some cases Mormons provided services for the non-believers, including a distillery and brothel in Salt Lake which was run by the church officials in the late 1800s. The brothel proved especially useful as they could in some cases

⁷¹⁸ Several examples of such individuals have been interviewed on the Mormon Stories podcast with John Delin.

⁷¹⁹ In 2002, church spokesman Dale Bills made this claim. https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/dissident-lds-intellectuals-say-excommunications-will-continue/article_76202a5a-4c5c-5129-9fcd-aefbe0988466.html

⁷²⁰ See: <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900032216/sam-young-announces-he-was-excommunicated-by-local-church-leaders.html>

use it to blackmail officials who were in Utah to enforce anti-polygamy laws. Generally Mormons had their own newspaper and often supported political candidates between about 1835 and 1935.

Modern Mormon communities provide a tight-knit social network which meets the needs of members in many ways. Some of these include:

- 1) Assistance in times of death or sickness: Members (often through the women's Relief Society organization) regularly provide food for funerals and for families in need (such as when there is a birth in the family).
- 2) Assistance in moving: The men's organization often organizes to help people move, especially with packing and unpacking moving vans.
- 3) Members are assigned to regularly visit each other and present gospel messages. They are encouraged to ask the person they are visiting if they need any help.
- 4) Women often help each other by watching each other's children. This occurs informally and is not an official program of the church.
- 5) There are formal employment services where members who live in areas with high Mormon populations help each other find employment. In addition, there is an informal network where members help fellow members find employment. Members looking for babysitters generally employ young people in their local congregation (ward).
- 6) The youth groups (age 12-18) regularly perform "service projects" for ward members. This may include yard maintenance for elderly members.
- 7) All adult members in a congregation (ward) are given callings where they are given the opportunity (required?) to teach a class or otherwise be involved in the congregation. This includes the Bishop who is in charge of the local ward. Some youth also receive callings starting at age 12⁷²¹.
- 8) There are regular group activities, both as a ward and as smaller groups within the ward. These groups are usually split based on age and gender. This may include picnics, dances, or other outdoor activities like camping or canoeing. When a larger groups and/or new faces are desired, they can be organized as a stake which generally consists of about 6 wards or congregations. These activities were more frequent in the 1960s and 70s, but still exist in the present organization.

Generally members moving to a new area are welcomed into the social group or community almost immediately and can access the above benefits essentially no-questions-asked. The only requirements are that you share the common belief structure and that you contribute to the community. Public signs of conformance including adherence to the dress/modesty codes, language codes, eating codes, and expressing belief are generally required to be considered a member in good standing which in turn gives one full access to the social benefits of the organization.

Community is often one of the aspects most valued by members. An appeal to this sense of community was made recently by an Apostle when he asked in a highly publicized talk, "Where will you go?"⁷²²

FAMILIES OF FAITH

Faith is often considered within Mormonism to be something which one more or less inherits. Families who can trace their ancestry to early church leaders have an informal special status. Their testimonies and words are given additional weight. Perhaps because of this, many church leaders are related. This practice of appointing family

⁷²¹ As of 2019, children can participate in the calendar year when they turn 12.

⁷²² <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2016/10/to-whom-shall-we-go?lang=eng>

members to significant positions within the church started with Joseph Smith who had brothers of his in the Quorum of the 12, his brother Hyrum in the 1st presidency, and who named his father as the Church Patriarch. His wife, Emma, was the first president of the women's organization – the Relief Society. Plural wives of Joseph Smith (who later married Brigham Young) were the 2nd and 3rd presidents of the Relief Society.

Perhaps it was best summarized by one early church leader:

Some people say a person receives a position in this church through revelation, and others say they get it through inspiration, but *I say they get it through relation*. If I hadn't been related to Heber C. Kimball, I wouldn't have been a damn thing in this church.

- J. Golden Kimball after he was called to the First Council of the Seventy in 1892

For additional information regarding relationships within the leadership of the Church and nepotism, see D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*⁷²³.

DRESS

MODESTY

Mormons believe that modesty involves covering the body. Early garments were modified undergarments (long-johns). Modesty was defined in the 1800s in terms of covering the body from ankle to wrist. When the garments were modified around the 1920s, many members resisted the changes which allowed one to show uncovered knees and elbows.

It was in the early '80s that BYU first allowed women to wear pants. In 1991, BYU updated its dress code and allowed students to wear knee-length shorts.⁷²⁴ Beginning around 1970, Mormons consider bare shoulders to be immodest, especially on girls or women. Skirts are encouraged to be knee length or longer. Beards or sideburns lower than the ear are not allowed at BYU or by other church employees.⁷²⁵ Beards were once required in at least some foreign missions up until about 1900.⁷²⁶

In 2017 the LDS church allowed employees at their corporate offices to start wearing pantsuits or dress slacks for the first time.⁷²⁷

USE OF THE CROSS

Early Mormons used the cross as a symbol for their Christian beliefs. This includes Amelia Folsom Young, one of Brigham Young's wives who wore a cross necklace. However, by the early 20th century there was a cultural shift

⁷²³ A brief overview can be read here: <http://www.mrm.org/nepotism>

⁷²⁴ <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/151613/BYU-APPROVES-NEW-HONOR-CODE-DRESS-AND-GROOMING-STANDARDS.html>

⁷²⁵ The no beard rule started in 1969 and was meant to be a rejection of the popular hippy dress styles of the day. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/education/2016/11/21/the-history-of-byus-honor-code-from-an-institution-practically-without-rules-to-one-that-exterminates-beetles-beatniks-or-buzzards-and-beyond/> see also: https://mormonleaks.io/wiki/documents/f/fa/HR_Policies_and_Code_of_Business_Conduct_and_Performance_Management_Training.pdf page 10.

⁷²⁶ <http://archive.sltrib.com/story.php?ref=/sltrib/news/56042739-78/beard-beards-byu-church.html.csp>

⁷²⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/06/28/mormon-church-starts-offering-paid-maternity-leave-changes-dress-code/?utm_term=.a02fc1fed38

underway. David O. McKay became president of the church in 1953. In 1955, pointed to a catholic church, he stated the following:

There are two great anti-Christ's in the world: Communism and that church⁷²⁸

Two years later, he forbade wearing the cross in jewelry for all girls/women, stating that it was purely a catholic symbol.

MORMON PSYCHOLOGY

GOD'S ONE AND ONLY

The belief that there is only one truth, and that oneself is in possession of it, is the root of all evil in the world.

– Max Born, Nobel Prize Physicist

Mormonism teaches that it is the “One and only church upon the face of the earth with which God is pleased”. It teaches that only members of the faith who have obtained certain ordinances will be saved in the best part of heaven. It is one of only two major American religions who teach that people who are not of their faith cannot achieve salvation. In part for this reason, when one partner in a relationship leaves the faith, divorce rates are higher than for many mainstream faiths.⁷²⁹

AUTHORITY

The church of Joseph Smith started as an informal organization. People could preach and cast out devils, and many women were given the power to heal. Meetings sometimes lasted for several hours or days. Smith went by “the Prophet Joseph” or more often “Brother Joseph”. Later, in the Nauvoo period when we had many roles, he preferred the title of “General Smith”. Joseph saw the need for authority in maintaining order.

Whatever seeds of hierarchy Joseph may have planted, Brigham Young was the one who cultivated and exploited them. He had a nearly dictatorial leadership style and was referred to as “President Young” or “The Lion of the Lord”.

When Joseph F. Smith was made president of the church around 1900, it was required to use his middle initial in order to differentiate him from his uncle, the founder of the movement. However, what followed was an adoption of the use of the middle initial or middle name by all subsequent leaders of the movement. This added an element of importance or dignity to them, and further separated them from the members of the movement who are called only by their last names in typical interactions with other members (Brother or Sister Smith). Sometimes first names are used, especially if the ages of those interacting is similar.

While Joseph may have talked to a large crowd without a lectern of any kind, the construction of the Mormon tabernacle in 1856 included a sizable pulpit. The use of large pulpits would later become standard throughout the

⁷²⁸ http://archive.satrib.com/story.php?ref=/ci_12256269

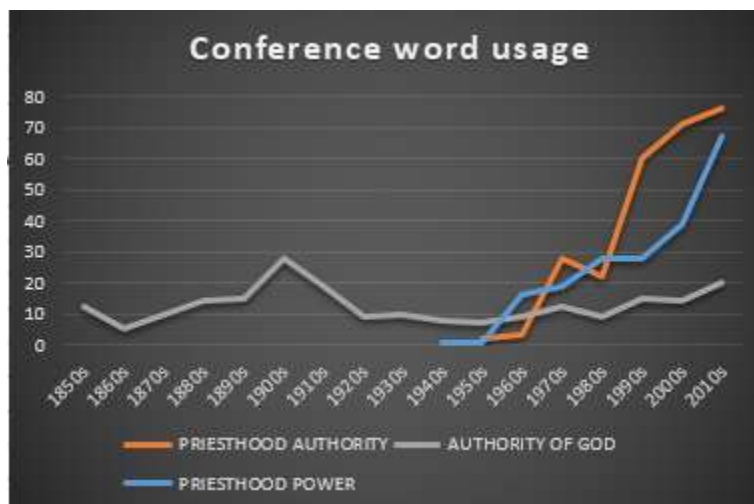
⁷²⁹ Divorce rate for mixed faith marriages are much higher for Jews and Mormons than other US faiths. See http://www.religioustolerance.org/ifm_divo.htm and In Faith and In Doubt.

church. The size of the pulpit is associated with the authority of the speaker⁷³⁰, and the pulpit at the main church meeting site is significantly larger than those found in local meeting houses.

Significant Tabernacle/Assembly Hall pulpits:

- 1) Original pulpit (round corners?)
- 2) Square pulpit used throughout the 1960s-70s.
- 3) Apr 1981 – new, larger pulpit with built in teleprompter. This pulpit had 3 beehives as decoration.
- 4) Oct 1987 – New, slightly smaller pulpit with external teleprompters (3 beehives)
- 5) Apr 2000 – New pulpit at the assembly hall – the largest of all with 7 beehives for decoration (3 on the front and 2 on each side)⁷³¹

The size of the pulpits is not uniform throughout the church, though generally they are slightly large in Stake meeting houses than they are in ward meeting houses. The original pulpit in Kirtland was small and would hold no more than about 2 sheets of 8x10 inch paper. The beehive is a common symbol of masonry and was previously adopted on the Salt Lake Temple, along with many other mason symbols.



An analysis of the phrases “priesthood authority” and “priesthood power” indicates that they were introduced around the 1950s and have been increasing in usage and popularity among the leaders of the movement.

HAVING A TESTIMONY OF “THE RESTORED GOSPEL”

It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.

– Mark Twain

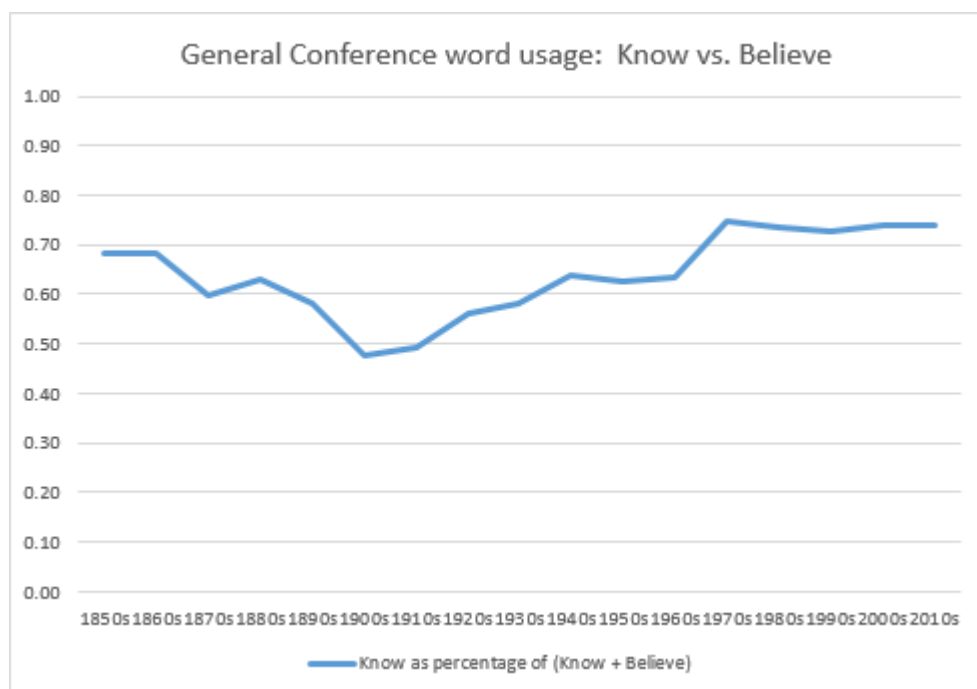
⁷³⁰ The Nazis understood this well, as it evident from their propaganda videos. Another movements which use pulpits and staging to show power effective is the Scientologists.

⁷³¹ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2000/04/to-all-the-world-in-testimony?lang=eng>

The development of *testimony* is a key goal within Mormonism and defines one's identity within the group. Having a strong testimony is a gating requirement for full fellowship and is a requirement for many of the positions or callings within the organization, including essentially all leadership positions.

The development and sharing of "testimonies" begins at an early age. Perhaps 90% of all testimonies shared by those under the age of 10 in weekly worship services start with the words, "I'd like to bear my testimony that I know that this church is true". In about half of the testimonies, the next sentence is "and I know that my family loves me". The truth of the church is tied to love that one feels as being part of a family or larger church group.

At an early age, the words "know" are used almost exclusively. The term "believe" is rarely used and when used may be frowned on and seen as less genuine or valued than "knowing". An analysis of general conference word usage indicates that roughly 75% of all references to belief use the phrase "I know" rather than "I believe".



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Figure 6 - Ratio of "I know" to "I believe" statements

A "testimony" is meant to be testified or told to others. Personal belief is not valued in the organization as much as belief which is expressed or shared. These shared beliefs and the process of sharing forms the basis of the community. The meeting on first Sunday of each month is reserved for fasting and sharing of testimonies.

In gaining a testimony, members are encouraged to share their feeling whether or not they know that they are true.

⁷³² Data extracted from <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>

Another way to seek a testimony *seems astonishing* when compared with the methods of obtaining other knowledge. **We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it.** Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them.⁷³³

To the youth listening today or reading these words in the days ahead, I give a specific challenge: **Gain a personal witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith.** Let your voice help fulfill Moroni's prophetic words to *speak good of the Prophet*. Here are two ideas: *First, find scriptures in the Book of Mormon that you feel and know are absolutely true. Then share them with family and friends in family home evening, seminary, and your Young Men and Young Women classes, acknowledging that Joseph was an instrument in God's hands.* Next, read the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Pearl of Great Price or in this pamphlet, now in 158 languages. You can find it online at LDS.org or with the missionaries. This is Joseph's own testimony of what actually occurred. *Read it often. Consider recording the testimony of Joseph Smith in your own voice, listening to it regularly, and sharing it with friends. Listening to the Prophet's testimony in your own voice will help bring the witness you seek.*⁷³⁴

When seeking a marriage partner, individuals are encouraged to find an individual with a strong testimony of the movement. Members are highly discouraged from marrying outside of the faith. Testimony, the way in which a person lives their life (especially their perceived level of honesty), their attitude, and their willingness to help those in need or those in authority who request help are the primary ways that members are judged within the movement.

One of the key techniques employed in gaining and strengthening testimony is the use of repetition and the *illusory truth effect*⁷³⁵.

INNOCULATION

In the 1970s, Arrington as the church historian introduced the concept of inoculation. Tidbits of church history such as the use of the brown seer stone to produce the book of Mormon was included in the children's monthly magazine. The theory behind this was discussed by believing historian and BYU professor Michael Quinn in 1981:

...believing Mormon historians like myself seek to write candid church history in a context of perspective in order to **inoculate** the Saints against historical "disease germs" that apostates and anti-Mormons thrust upon them.⁷³⁶

Elder Ballard repeated the concept, this time with the full backing of the first presidency in 2016:

The effort for gospel transparency and spiritual inoculation through a thoughtful study of doctrine and history, coupled with a burning testimony, is the best antidote we have to help students avoid and/or deal with questions, doubt, or faith crises they may face in this information age.⁷³⁷

⁷³³ Dallin Oaks, April 2008 <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2008/04/testimony?lang=eng>

⁷³⁴ Neal Andersen, October 2014 <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/10/joseph-smith?lang=eng>

⁷³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illusory_truth_effect

⁷³⁶ D. Michael Quinn, 1981. *On being a Mormon historian*. <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/on-being-a-mormon-historian/> Quinn was excommunicated in 1992 for his efforts to inoculate.

⁷³⁷ <https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/evening-with-a-general-authority/2016/02/the-opportunities-and-responsibilities-of-ces-teachers-in-the-21st-century?lang=eng>

Steven Snow also reiterated that the purpose of the Gospel Topics essays was to provide an inoculation to members regarding troubled historical facts and practices of the church.⁷³⁸

A RELIGION THAT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD

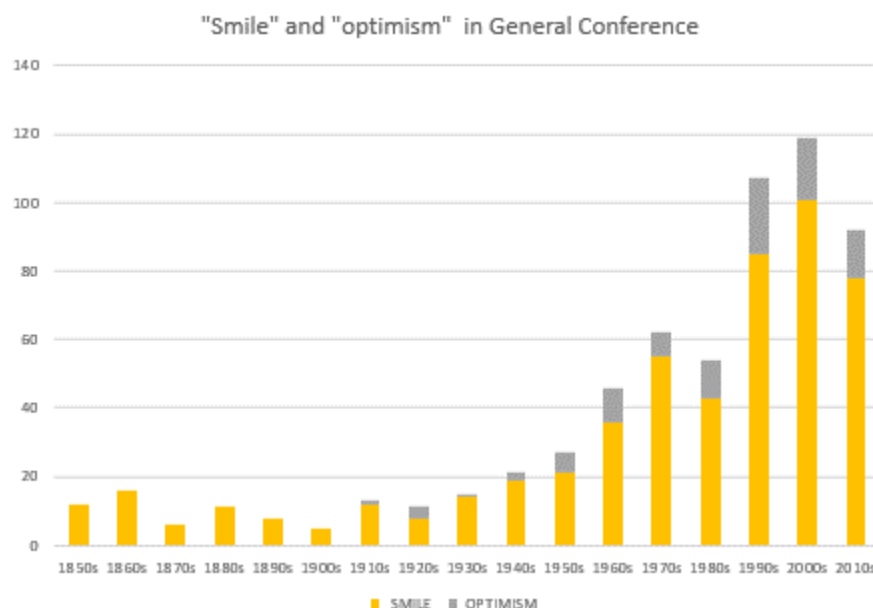
The feeling of certainty, especially absolute certain, which is often associated with belief in matters of faith and politics is addictive and provides a chemical high to the brain.⁷³⁹

A study conducted at the University of Utah and published in 2016⁷⁴⁰ shows that the members experience the spirit most strongly, their brains light up in certain characteristic patterns. At least 3 areas of the brain light up, including the reward centers in a pattern similar to those when a person experiences love, sex, gambling addictions, or certain pleasurable drugs.

Another finding of the study was that when presented with various stimulus (personal prayer, familiar scriptures, church videos, etc., that respondents had the highest incidence of feeling the spirit when they were watching the church produced videos. Since at least the 1960s, the church has been involved in producing a number of videos which it uses for proselyting and to help its members gain and maintain faith. These videos are effective in helping people to have an emotional experience which they describe as feeling the spirit. These early productions were often written and produced via Brigham Young University (owned and operated by the LDS church).

BEING HAPPY

Mormons are encouraged to smile and be happy. Indeed, why would the people who have God's complete truth be anything but happy?

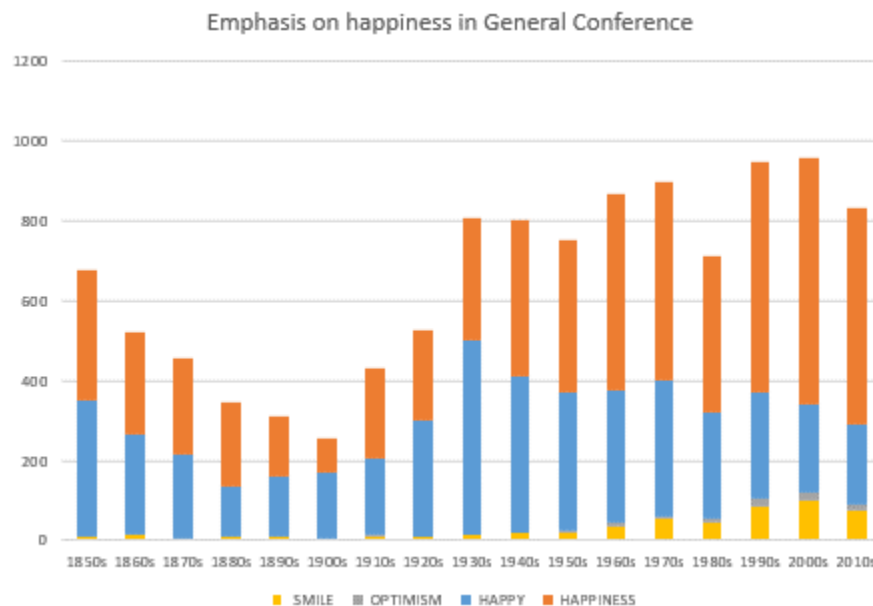


⁷³⁸ <http://www.mormonstories.org/elder-steven-e-snow-lds-gospel-topics-essays-not-advertisex/>

⁷³⁹ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-certainty-bias/>

⁷⁴⁰ <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17470919.2016.1257437>

Happiness and being happy are associated with being part of the movement. In some cases, leaders differentiate between “worldly happiness” and “true joy”, the latter of which can only be found “through living principles of the Gospel”.



The late 1800s (including the issues surrounding polygamy) were tough on the movement and possibly the happiness of its members. However, the concept of happiness has been a topic of emphasis throughout the history of the movement.

THOUGHT TERMINATING CLICHÉS

According to Wikipedia:

Thought-terminating clichés, also known as thought-stoppers, are words or phrases that discourage critical thought and meaningful discussion about a given topic. They are typically short, generic truisms that offer seemingly simple answers to complex questions or that distract attention away from other lines of thought. They are often sayings that have been embedded in a culture's folk wisdom and are tempting to say because they often sound true or good or like the right thing to say. Some examples are: "Stop thinking so much", "here we go again"...

The term was popularized by psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton in his 1961 book, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of "Brainwashing" in China*. Lifton wrote, "The language of the totalist environment is characterized by the thought-terminating cliché. The most far-reaching and complex of human problems are compressed into brief, highly reductive, definitive-sounding phrases, easily memorized and easily expressed. These become the start and finish of any ideological analysis".

Sometimes they are used in a deliberate attempt to shut down debate, manipulate others to think a certain way, or dismiss dissent. However, some people repeat them, even to themselves, out of habit, conditioning or as a defense mechanism.⁷⁴¹

⁷⁴¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clich%C3%A9#Thought-terminating_clich%C3%A9

The use of thought terminating clichés is rife within Mormonism. Those that are repeated most often and held in highest regard are those that are attributed to church leaders. Some of the more prominent ones include:

Table 1 - Thought terminating clichés

Cliché	Implication or meaning
They (apostates) can leave the church, but they can't leave it alone	One doesn't need to consider any of the concerns of those who have left because they are necessarily wrong.
Wickedness never was happiness.	Those who do not believe and act in the same way that Mormons do are by definition unhappy, regardless of how they feel or appear.
I've had too many spiritual experiences to ever deny that the Church is true.	My subjective feelings are more important than any facts or information which may be contrary to my feelings.
Follow the prophet/Sustain the brethren	One doesn't need to critically analyze direction from church leaders, because they are always right.
It is not pertinent to your salvation.	Historical and doctrinal issues that lie outside of the central core doctrines can be ignored without repercussion or discussion.
The gospel is perfect, the members are not	The church is still perceived to be perfect even though the leaders lie or do other things which are immoral. The idea is that the church is a separate entity from all of the leaders who choose what the church should be and how it operates.
Doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith ⁷⁴² .	Trust the institution and choose to believe rather than to critically examine elements of the faith which may be harmful or false.

QUESTIONS AND QUESTIONING

Early church leaders were generally not opposed to investigation, perhaps believing that they had the ultimate truth. This attitude seems to have peaked with some intellectuals in the church in the 1930s, but continued into the 1950s and 1960s when it was believed that *true science* would ultimately prove the truthfulness of the church⁷⁴³. Researchers were sent to South America to try to prove the historicity of the Book of Mormon⁷⁴⁴. An early leader boldly proclaimed:

If a faith will not bear to be investigated; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴² Made famous by Deiter Uchdorf in 2013 <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/come-join-with-us?lang=eng>. Derived from a quote by F.F. Bosworth, a Pentecostal Pastor and faith healer who stated, "The evidences for faith are so much stronger than those for doubting. *Don't doubt your faith; doubt your doubts*, for they are unreliable." He went on to write, "Some have been miraculously healed while reading the next sermon in this book" on the same page. See http://www.despatch.cth.com.au/Books_V/Christ%20the%20Healer%20-%20F.%20Bosworth.pdf

⁷⁴³ See the improvement era, Sept 1962:

<https://archive.org/stream/improvementera6509unse#page/n19/mode/2up/search/plates>

⁷⁴⁴ Most of the research in Central America trying to prove the Book of Mormon was done between 1948 and 1970. See: <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/01/how-mormon-lawyer-transformed-archaeology-mexico-and-ended-losing-his-faith>

⁷⁴⁵ George A. Smith (Journal Of Discourses, Volume: 14, Chapter: 4, Page: 217

Starting around the 1970s, there appears to have been a change in attitude⁷⁴⁶. Certain questions are difficult for church leaders to answer and these questions are typically not addressed⁷⁴⁷. On rare occasions, firesides have been held to address difficult questions of members.⁷⁴⁸ Often the questions are limited to friendly sources and pre-screened with answers prepared in advance.

We don't have to question anything in the church, don't get off into that. Just stay in the Book of Mormon. Just stay in the Doctrine and Covenants. Just listen to the prophets. Just listen to the apostles. We won't lead you astray, ***we cannot lead you astray.***⁷⁴⁹

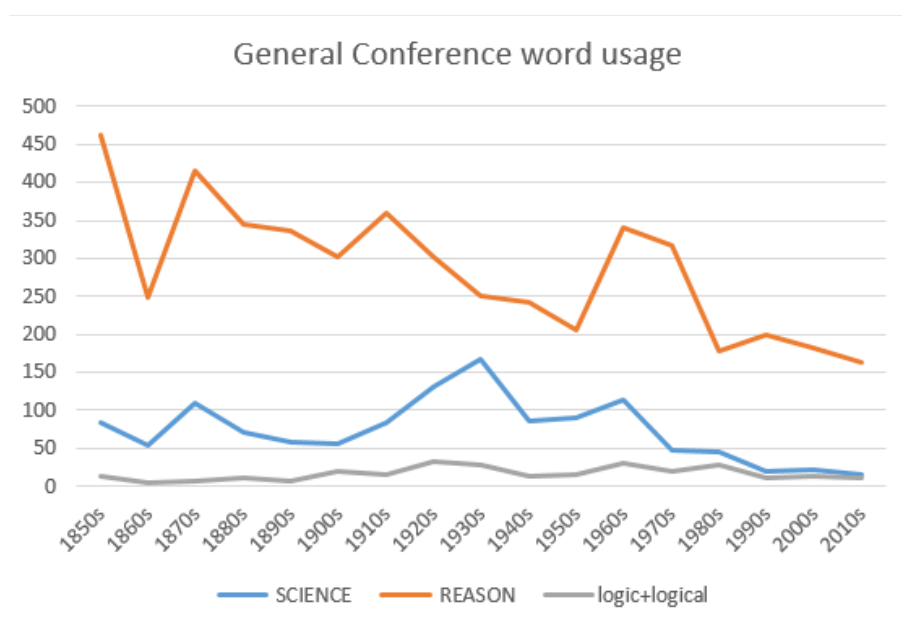


Figure 7 – Usage of various terms in General Conference per decade

PERSECUTION

Mormons may feel that they have been persecuted throughout their history and that they continue to be persecuted. This feeling of being unfairly treated by society is similar to the persecution complex enjoyed by other religions including Jehovah's Witnesses and Scientologists. The higher level of persecution towards JW's and Scientologists may be correlated to their being further from mainstream society and beliefs.

In the 19th and early part of the 20th century, the emphasis on polygamy and differing views regarding fundamental doctrines⁷⁵⁰, Mormons were well outside of mainstream American culture and the perceived level of persecution was high. This may have reached a peak during the crackdown on polygamy (1885-1890) or during the Smoot

⁷⁴⁶ This may have been in part a reaction to the discovery of the papyruses that formed the source material for the Book of Abraham.

⁷⁴⁷ <https://youtu.be/F-DnXjG-37A?t=2m23s>

⁷⁴⁸ Known as the Swedish Rescue: See <http://www.mediafire.com/file/ot7rh9xj9m9898m/fireside-in-sweden-part1.mp3>

⁷⁴⁹ Address by Ballard, M. Russell Ballard at YSA Devotional, Provo, October 2015. Available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3g0j1CYhLRXam5IMDNjbGhkt2M/view>

⁷⁵⁰ The Mormon conception of the godhead/trinity, the afterlife, and the concept of Grace differ from main-stream Christianity.

hearings shortly thereafter⁷⁵¹. During the 1960s-80s, Mormons fit much better into a conservative American movement and they experience high levels of growth and less perceived persecution. After about 2008, the increasing emphasis on the sinfulness of homosexuality combined with a societal acceptance of homosexuals and equal marital rights has caused Mormonism to drift away from mainstream culture, and the sense of being persecuted may be on the rise.⁷⁵²

Persecution of the perception of persecution often stimulates an automatic response to shut out or fight the perceived cause of the persecution. Leaders of the movement use this to effectively label members who left the faith as Gentiles, anti-mormons, apostates, etc. and teach that these people are inspired by the devil to persecute true believers.

PRAYER

Mormons are encouraged to pray to find answers to their questions and concerns. Prayer is considered to be the ultimate tool in confirming the truthfulness of the church. At the same time, members are discouraged from praying about things do not align with the church's teachings/doctrines. The following instruction in a recent manual is insightful:

Before concluding the lesson, it may be wise to tell students that some people who have apostatized from the Church are practicing plural marriage today. They urge people to pray and ponder about whether it is right to practice plural marriage today. **We should not seek to receive revelation that is contrary to what the Lord has revealed through His prophets.**⁷⁵³

The only ones in the church who are authorized to pray about things which are contrary to what the Lord has revealed through his prophets are the prophets themselves, as in the case of Official Declarations 1 and 2. Even suggesting that church leaders out to pray about something (as in the case of those in the Ordain Women initiative) can result in excommunication.

SHUNNING

The practice of shunning, or removing people from your life who have left the faith, is not practiced among Mormons in the same way or to the same degree that it is among the Jehovah's Witnesses or Scientologists (disconnection). However, in some cases it has been encouraged, particularly in the 1960s-1980s. In some cases, terminating contact with "apostates" has been encouraged. This may include encouraging divorce⁷⁵⁴:

.. Avoid those who would tear down your faith. **Faith-killers are to be shunned.** The seeds which they plant in the minds and hearts of men grow like cancer and eat away the Spirit.⁷⁵⁵

A member of the quorum of the 12 added in 2014:

⁷⁵¹ The Reed Smoot hearings occurred between 1904 and 1907. See:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reed_Smoot_hearings

⁷⁵² This is largely a societal drift to the left, rather than a change in Mormonism per se. This might be similar to the view of racism within Mormonism, which was first an issue raised by the greater society as society became less racist in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁷⁵³ <https://www.lds.org/manual/foundations-of-the-restoration-teacher-manual/lesson-20-plural-marriage?lang=eng>

⁷⁵⁴ <https://youtu.be/zFgkYUxSpwI>

⁷⁵⁵ https://www.lds.org/ensign/1981/11/opposition-to-the-work-of-god?lang=eng&_r=1

...the admonition to prefer Christ above all others, even our closest family members, applies also to those who may have been born in the covenant. Many of us became members of the Church without opposition, perhaps as children. The challenge we may confront is remaining loyal to the Savior and His Church in the face of parents, in-laws, brothers or sisters, or even our children whose conduct, beliefs, or choices make it impossible to support both Him and them. It is not a question of love. We can and must love one another as Jesus loves us...But, the Lord reminds us, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." So although familial love continues, ***relationships may be interrupted and, according to the circumstances, even support or tolerance at times suspended for the sake of our higher love.***

In reality, the best way to help those we love—the best way to love them—is to continue to *put the Savior first*. If we cast ourselves adrift from the Lord out of sympathy for loved ones who are suffering or distressed, then we lose the means by which we might have helped them. If, however, we remain firmly rooted in faith in Christ, we are in a position both to receive and to offer divine help. If (or I should say **when**) the moment comes that a beloved family member *wants desperately to turn to the only true and lasting source of help, he or she will know whom to trust as a guide and a companion*. In the meantime, with the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide, we can perform a steady ministry to lessen the pain of poor choices and bind up the wounds insofar as we are permitted. Otherwise, we serve neither those we love nor ourselves.⁷⁵⁶

The following comments were made at the BYU commencement address in 2016:

A few of you may have run into some who have ceased to hold fast to the iron rod, have wandered off the strait and narrow path, and have become lost. They started sometimes with online tours of the territory of the faithless. This indiscretion is often accompanied by failing to earnestly study the Book of Mormon every day and by the companion problem of gradually becoming lax in keeping other commandments. This sometimes leads to listening and then hearkening to those who mock the Church, its leaders, or its history.

The faithless often promote themselves as the wise who can rescue the rest of us from our naïveté. One does not need to listen to assertive apostates for long to see the *parallels between them and the Koriaths, Nehors, and Sherems of the Book of Mormon*. **We should disconnect, immediately and completely**, from listening to the proselytizing efforts of those who have lost their faith and instead reconnect promptly with the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵⁷

SITUATIONAL ETHICS

Joseph Smith stated in a letter proposing (plural) marriage to a follower that:

Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. But we cannot keep all the commandments without first knowing them, and we cannot expect to know all, or more than we now know unless we comply with or keep those we have

⁷⁵⁶ CES fireside by D. Christofferson (Quorum of 12 apostles) Sept 2014.

<https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/ces-devotionals/2014/01/saving-your-life?lang=eng>

⁷⁵⁷ https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/l-whitney-clayton_getting-staying-connected/

already received. ***That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another.***

God said, "Thou shalt not kill;" at another time He said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy." This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. ***Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is,*** although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire.

If we seek first the kingdom of God, all good things will be added. So ***with Solomon***: first he asked wisdom, and God gave it him, and with it *every desire of his heart*, ***even things which might be considered ABOMINABLE to all who understand the order of heaven only in part,*** but which in ***reality were right because God gave and sanctioned by special revelation.***⁷⁵⁸

Using Joseph Smith was justifying Polygamy as a commandment from God and explaining why it was actually right (for him to marry teenagers and other men's wives, etc).

Mormon missionaries in Europe routinely lied about the practice of polygamy through at least the late 1850s⁷⁵⁹. This includes John Taylor who had 5-6 wives at the time.⁷⁶⁰ Many members who joined in Europe first learned about polygamy when they arrived in Salt Lake. Some left as a result.

Situational ethics were encouraged of members when they were trying to avoid incarceration for crimes associated with polygamy especially in the 1880s. This practice may have continued for members who lived in polygamist relationships through about the 1930s. The vast majority of these individuals were married prior to 1890 or in Mexico.

GOOGLE AND OTHER THREATS

GOOGLE AS A TOOL

The Mormon church has a long history of being interested in PR and creating a positive public image. This goes back to the work that Smoot did in convincing Hollywood execs to not release movies critical of Mormon in the 1920s.⁷⁶¹ By 2000 however, Google was a more important and influential news and entertainment source than Hollywood.

The Mormon church is active in sponsoring internet sites and advertising with Google and other search engines in order to promote their viewpoints and preferred views of history. Content and comments on pages associated with the Mormon church are highly censored⁷⁶². Members are encouraged to use the internet to "share the gospel"

⁷⁵⁸ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith pp. 255-256.

⁷⁵⁹ See for example Letters of an Apostate Mormon to his Son pg 68. In this example, the new converts asked if the rumors that Brigham Young had 12 wives were true. They were told by the missionary that they were not true. The missionary later explained their denial by saying that Brigham Young actually had about 30 wives at the time. <https://archive.org/details/lettersofapostat00infree/page/68>

⁷⁶⁰ See Ann Eliza Webb Young's "Wife No. 19" pp 328-332. <http://imgur.com/a/xQ1vW>

⁷⁶¹ The studios agreed to not release the film in return for Reed Smoot supporting legislation which would help the film industry.

⁷⁶² This includes sites which are funded through donations provided by the LDS church, but are not officially sanctioned by the church, including those run by the "More Good Foundation". Rule #1 on one site is, "Do not post, upload, or otherwise submit anything to the site that is derogatory towards The Church of Jesus Christ of

Members are encouraged to use the Internet to flood the earth with testimonies of the Savior and His restored gospel. They should view blogs, social networks, and other Internet technologies as tools that allow them to amplify their voice in promoting the messages of peace, hope, and joy that accompany faith in Christ.⁷⁶³

Beginning around 2007, the church recognized the power of social media and began to steer its recruitment efforts in this direction⁷⁶⁴. In 2011 L. Tom Perry remarked:

Today's "manner of conversation" seems to involve the Internet more and more. **We encourage people, young and old, to use the Internet and the social media** to reach out and share their religious beliefs. As you utilize the Internet, you may come across ongoing conversations about the Church. When directed by the Spirit, do not hesitate to add your voice to these conversations.⁷⁶⁵

In 2014, Elder Bednar further encouraged:

...what has been accomplished thus far in this dispensation communicating gospel messages through **social media channels** is a good beginning—but only a small trickle. I now extend to you the invitation to help transform the trickle into a flood. Beginning at this place on this day, I exhort you to *sweep the earth with messages filled with righteousness and truth*—messages that are authentic, edifying, and praiseworthy—and literally to sweep the earth as with a flood.⁷⁶⁶

GOOGLE AS A THREAT

The spread of information is seen (rightly) as a threat to the church's ability to dominate its narrative. Because of this, efforts are made to avoid the spreading of information that might be damaging. All speeches given in General Conference are first reviewed by the Priesthood Correlation committee⁷⁶⁷. Recording or distributing notes from regional and stake conferences is discouraged/prohibited.

Church members should not record the talks or addresses that General Authorities and Area Seventies give at stake conferences, missionary meetings, or other meetings.⁷⁶⁸

Any **notes** made when General Authorities, Area Seventies, or other general Church officers speak at stake conferences or other meetings **should not be distributed** without the consent of the speaker. Personal notes are for individual use only.⁷⁶⁹

Latter-day Saints, its teachings, or its leaders. Anti-LDS *Propaganda* will not be tolerated anywhere." Source: <https://mormonhub.com/forums/announcement/1-mormon-hub-rules-please-be-familiar-with-these-rules-before-posting/>. Deseret News vets all comments prior to posting and only posts comments which agree with current church positions.

⁷⁶³ <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/selected-church-policies?lang=eng> 21.1.22

⁷⁶⁴ <https://devotional.byuh.edu/node/145>

⁷⁶⁵ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2011/10/perfect-love-casteth-out-fear?lang=eng>

⁷⁶⁶ <https://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/to-sweep-the-earth-as-with-a-flood?lang=eng>

⁷⁶⁷ This started in 1984 after a talk given was seen as apostate and rewritten/re-recorded prior to release.

<https://redd.it/3a9kww> and <https://redd.it/6ip7ir>

⁷⁶⁸ <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/selected-church-policies/21.1?lang=eng&r=1#211> section 21.1.33.

⁷⁶⁹ <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/selected-church-policies?lang=eng> section 21.1.39

Members are encouraged to not use Google when they have questions about the church. This policy was laid out by a member of the 12 apostles, the primary governing body of the church in 2016:

Teach them about the challenges they face when relying upon the Internet to answer questions of eternal significance. Remind them that **James did not say, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him Google!"**

Wise people do not rely on the Internet to diagnose and treat emotional, mental, and physical health challenges, especially life-threatening challenges. Instead, they seek out health experts, those trained and licensed by recognized medical and state boards. Even then, prudent people seek a second opinion.

If that is the sensible course to take in finding answers for emotional, mental, and physical health issues, it is even more so when eternal life is at stake. **When something has the potential to threaten our spiritual life, our most precious family relationships, and our membership in the kingdom, we should find thoughtful and faithful Church leaders to help us.**⁷⁷⁰

Church News articles from 2017 also belittle Google and the information which it can provide:

(Doctrinal Mastery – the new Seminary Teaching program) is good because we are getting help from somebody who ... is **a true source, not from Google or something.**⁷⁷¹

A recent video promoting some new church publications proclaimed:

...When I'm hanging out with friends and things are being thrown at us. "Just Google it" (um) But **sometimes you can't just Google something.** Church History (the book) can help us, not only understand the church, and how it came to be, and what a blessing it is, but it can help us understand ourselves and understand what our purpose is in life.⁷⁷²

In spite of the teachings that Google is not accurate and should not be used when studying church history, the church invests heavily in advertising with Google. Most Google searches related to Mormonism result in ads from the Mormon Church. A typical search on the term "Joseph Smith" or "Mormon" in 2017 will result in 7 or more of the top 10 hits leading to church sponsored or owned web sites. Factual and historical information is available from Wikipedia, which often ranks high, but other accurate or critical sites generally do not make the top 20 results. The pervasiveness of advertising is demonstrated by the fact that there are even Mormon ads on the ex-mormon site on Reddit which is highly critical of the church⁷⁷³. Figures regarding spending on these campaigns are not publically available. It is estimated however that the Mormon Church spends more than 3.6 Million USD/year in direct advertising with Google alone.⁷⁷⁴

Between 2011 and 2018, Mormonthink.com was the only known religious site which is blocked from the pseudo-public⁷⁷⁵ WIFI available in all LDS buildings. According to some reports, CESLetter.org and Reddit (including

⁷⁷⁰ <https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/evening-with-a-general-authority/2016/02/the-opportunities-and-responsibilities-of-ces-teachers-in-the-21st-century?lang=eng>

⁷⁷¹ <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865674663/One-year-into-Doctrinal-Mastery.html>

⁷⁷² <https://youtu.be/ISJv6nAZTgc?t=37s>

⁷⁷³ Ads were run for a short period in Feb 2017. Later, these ads were removed. However, FairMormon ads have been run on various reddit forums including the faithful and doubting forums in 2018 and 2019.

⁷⁷⁴ <https://www.quora.com/How-much-money-does-the-mormon-church-spend-on-Google-advertisements-each-year>

⁷⁷⁵ The password, "Pioneer47" is used in all buildings and is widely available online.

reddit.com/r/exmormon) are also blocked in some buildings starting around 2015. Around June 2017, it appears that the site www.reddit.com had been blocked from at least some LDS buildings.

SECULARISM

Secularism is increasing in the US and the west resulting in virtually all religions losing millennials in large numbers⁷⁷⁶. The LDS church is no exception and is working hard to maintain this demographic. The number of people growing up as Mormon who no longer claim the church as adults has gone from about 10-20% in the 1980s to about 36% as of 2014⁷⁷⁷. While this number is lower than most other religions, the general trends of western society towards secularism has had an impact on Mormonism.

LOWER BIRTH RATES

Lower birth rates in the US have caused the rate of growth in the church to fall substantially. However, Mormons still have the largest number of children of any major American faith at an average of 3.4 children⁷⁷⁸. Leaders continue to emphasize early marriage, women staying at home rather than entering the workplace⁷⁷⁹, and large family sizes. This emphasis may have increased after birth rate trends became clear around 2010.⁷⁸⁰ The effect of birth rates on growth is not limited to Mormonism and has had a significant impact on the growth of evangelicals as well⁷⁸¹.

SO WHAT?

From their earliest days, Mormons have often been described as 'good people'. This account from 1835 is typical:

While I am exposing these palpable impositions of the apostles of Mormonism, candor obliges me to say, that many of the common people are industrious, good neighbors, very sincerely deceived, and possibly very sincere christians. They seem to delight in the duty of prayer, and the services of devotion, and their zeal goes far beyond anything seen among sober christians. Some are enterprising and intelligent, conversant with the bible, and fond of reading; and here, I apprehend, many who have heard of them only by common report, are mistaken; supposing them all to be ignorant and degraded, and beneath the notice of all respectable people. The prevalence of religious delusion is not to be attributed so much to mere ignorance, as to the structure and prejudices and pernicious habits of the mind, a predisposition to be captivated with anything that is new or wonderful.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁶ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/13/a-closer-look-at-americas-rapidly-growing-religious-ones/>

⁷⁷⁷ See <https://religionnews.com/2016/04/14/mormons-20s-30s-leaving-lds-church/> and <https://religionnews.com/2019/03/27/how-many-millennials-are-really-leaving-the-lds-church/>

⁷⁷⁸ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/22/mormons-more-likely-to-marry-have-more-children-than-other-u-s-religious-groups/>

⁷⁷⁹ See for example: What Do You Envision in Life? by Erich W. Kopischke - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6KbbL1nSLE>

⁷⁸⁰ See <https://youtu.be/FBH045ooaY0?t=7m> where the Quorum of the 12 talks about a report on this subject.

⁷⁸¹ Evangelicals have among the highest birth rates of any religious group and this accounts for much of their growth. See <https://religioninpublic.blog/2018/01/29/the-graying-of-white-evangelicalism/>

⁷⁸² Truman Coe "Mormonism," The Ohio Observer (Hudson), 11 August 1836. The Cincinnati Journal and Western Luminary, 25 August 1835 (p. 4) as quoted: <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/Coe.html>

Many Mormons are genuinely nice people. The church strives to create a moral community that both inspires and shames its members into living within a strict moral framework. This framework values honesty, chastity, hard work, and patriotism⁷⁸³.

Indeed, being religious in any religion has several health benefits as noted in the Telegraph:

Reports have shown that churchgoers live an average seven years longer than heathens. They report lower blood pressure, recover quicker from breast cancer, have better outcomes from coronary disease and rheumatoid arthritis, have greater success with IVF and are less likely to have children with meningitis.⁷⁸⁴

At the same time, it is clear that the LDS church is not what it claims to be. It claims to be the Kingdom of God on the earth with unchanging doctrine and direct authority granted by angels in 1829. It claims that its founder, Joseph Smith, was an honest, upright man who could translate ancient languages and who was only following the direct commandments of God and angels⁷⁸⁵ when he married or had intimate relationships with more than 30 women. Racist doctrine established by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young led to institutionalized discrimination for more than a century⁷⁸⁶. 19th century teachings, beliefs, and practices were buried for the correlated history developed in the 20th century. In more recent times, DNA testing makes claims about Israelites being the ancestors of all native peoples in North & South America and the Pacific Islands as outlined in the Book of Mormon seem ridiculous. Claims about Adam being the father to the whole human population living in 4000 BC, as well as the literal interpretations of Noah's Flood and the Tower of Babel are not consistent with empirical evidence or critical biblical research.

Many Modern Mormons would simply say: "So what?" They believe that the modern teachings of the church are virtuous and moral, and that this alone allows them to forgive any past "errors in judgement" that the church might have made. These members may choose to believe a figurative interpretation of scripture rather than the literal interpretation that was taught from the pulpit through the 1960s.

The Mormon Church has not performed a leadership role on many important ethical and social issues. At best, it is typically a 'slow follower' of societal reforms. The bulk of the talks given in General Conference regarding the problems associated with alcohol were given in the 1930s after prohibition was lifted. The church welfare program was up and running about 8 years after the need appeared in the form of the Great Depression and one year before employment rates started returning to normal. Civil rights groups were derided by church leadership as being a front organization for communists. On the one issue where Mormons were more progressive than their surrounding culture (women's suffrage), appears to have been motivated by church officials trying to maintain political power by controlling the vote and elected offices.

⁷⁸³ Patriotism has been valued within Mormonism since about the first world war (1920s). Until about 1930, the oath of vengeance (on the United States) for the killing of Joseph and Hyrum was repeated as part of the endowment ceremony in the Temple.

⁷⁸⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10914137/What-God-does-to-your-brain.html>

⁷⁸⁵ Joseph stated to at least 3 women that an angel with a sword appeared to him and threatened his life if he did not marry them. Here is the apologetic account of this incident:
<https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Question: Did Joseph claim that an angel threatened him with a %22drawn sword%22 or %22flaming sword%22 if a woman refused to marry him%3F>

⁷⁸⁶ This discrimination is now blamed on the leaders and their culture and is rejected as having ever been doctrine.

Most doctrines or practices have both positive and negative consequences. While one can argue whether or not the positive outweighs the negative, it is important to realize that the impact of the church in one's life is mixed.⁷⁸⁷ Here are some of the modern teachings which may have unintended negative consequences.

- 1) **Be ye therefor perfect:** The Mormon perspective on this New Testament commandment is that there is a literal requirement to become perfect, and that this perfection is among other things perfect charity for those around them and the absence of negative thoughts or actions. This can be a motivating factor which helps members to act more charitable towards people, especially people in their group (i.e. the church). However, this requirement can also lead to anxiety and depression. In some cases, it can also lead to sin/repentance cycles when members take the sacrament on a weekly basis, making impossible promises (covenants) of perfection and then repeatedly breaking them. This cycle may be the basis for depression or low feelings of self-worth among some members.⁷⁸⁸ In other cases, it makes believing members more likely to become victims of abuse.
- 2) **Racial purity doctrines:** In the late 1800s, polygamist church members were referred to as being genetically deficient⁷⁸⁹ and impure by the educated populations in the east. Perhaps in part to respond to this, racial purity, including the exclusion of Blacks from the priesthood was practiced⁷⁹⁰. This probably led to greater unity within the movement. However, it also led to widespread discrimination against black and a justification of white privilege. These doctrines have been changing since the ban on blacks holding the priesthood was lifted in 1978. Nevertheless, there is still a strong tendency to depict Christ as a northern European. Works of Carl Bloch are ubiquitous in church buildings and official publications. Members are taught that Christ has blue eyes and was seen as such by a prophet in vision. It is taught that church members and most people in the church are literally descendants of Abraham and that this is an important factor in determining the spirituality (i.e. value) of an individual. Members continue to be discouraged from marrying interracial⁷⁹¹ and pictures of mixed marriage couples are generally not included in conference publications. Perhaps for this reason, the ethnical diversity of the Mormon movement has failed to increase despite this trend in virtually every other American religion.⁷⁹²
- 3) **Testimony doctrines:** Members are taught that anyone who wants to believe can and will have a manifestation of the spirit. They are taught that skepticism in spiritual matters is evil and that people who engage in skeptical, critical thinking in this realm are in danger of eternal consequences and are acting against the will of God. Members are taught to value spiritual experiences as more important than rational conclusions based on research and study. The emphasis on faith serves to bind the community

⁷⁸⁷ See also an excellent analysis here:

https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https://github.com/faenrandir/a_careful_examination/raw/852010ca825193b8e3e2913795f7f1a29a1963bd/documents/helps_and_harms/Helps_and_Harms.pdf

⁷⁸⁸ A good example of this was George Albert Smith.

<http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1056&context=mormonhistory>

⁷⁸⁹ On a side note, due in part to intermarriage and polygamy, Utah is an ideal laboratory for studying rare genetic disorders. See for example: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/31/us/by-accident-utah-is-proving-an-ideal-genetic-laboratory.html>

⁷⁹⁰ While it is true that Mormons were considered to be “non-white” or genetically defective by those in the east, this judgment probably came after the anti-black doctrines were established in the about 1850. The basis for these doctrines comes from the writings of Smith including the Book of Abraham and his rewriting of Genesis.

⁷⁹¹ A prominent speech from 1976 discouraging interracial marriage is still included in the official lesson manuals of the church. See: <https://www.lds.org/manual/aaronic-priesthood-manual-3/lesson-31-choosing-an-eternal-companion?lang=eng>

⁷⁹² See http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/pf_15-05-05_rls2_diversity640px/

together, and allows uneducated members to gain relatively high status within the organization. However, it can also effectively ostracize those who fail to have the promised religious experiences. Studies suggest that about 10% of individuals are prone to spiritual experiences, 10% are prone to not have them, and 80% are somewhere in between. Mormon society values those individuals who have natural or cultivated tendencies to have spiritual experiences. Ironically however, spectacular spiritual experiences (such as claiming to see God or Jesus) which were highly valued in the early church are now often treated as signs of apostasy⁷⁹³.

- 4) **Financial Success:** Mormons are taught that financial success is associated with righteousness. When Stake presidents are being chosen, the authority who comes to make the call often reviews the amounts of the 10 highest tithe givers in the stake and uses this information in selecting candidates for the new presidency. This often results in people with good organizational skills leading the group. Any tendency to embezzle might also be lower because the leaders are wealthy. However, this teaching may lead those who are unsuccessful financially to question their righteousness. Similarly, members may judge each other based on this doctrine more than they otherwise would.
- 5) **Marriage as a requirement for heaven:** Heterosexual marriage is taught as being important for a happy family in this life and as necessary to get into heaven⁷⁹⁴. This teaching encourages members to continue in relationships when they are difficult and to prioritize their marriages. At the same time, this teaching has a huge impact on homosexuals, who cannot go to the highest degree of heaven. Homosexuals are taught that their desires are evil and that any expression of physical love will result in their eternal punishment. Though at least in the 1980s, homosexuals were encouraged to marry someone of the opposite sex in order to 'cure' their homosexuality. These beliefs and practices have led to a very high rate of suicides among gays within Mormon communities, especially among teens⁷⁹⁵. Another group that it impacted significantly by this requirement is the older single population, which is under significant pressure (external and internal) to get married. Up to about the 1970s, members were taught that those who did not make it to the celestial kingdom would have their sexuality/gender removed in the afterlife.⁷⁹⁶
- 6) **Sex being evil and forbidden prior to marriage and young marriage is encouraged:** The moral purity requirements may influence people in some cases to marry prematurely and to an incompatible partner. Members who have premarital sex and become pregnant are by default counseled to marry whether or not they have fundamentals required to create a successful marriage. Divorce rates for such marriages are high⁷⁹⁷. It is considered more righteous and normal within Mormonism for a couple that is 20 years old and has known each other for 2 months to get married than it is for a 50 year old couple that has dated for 10 years to start living together without formal marriage.
- 7) **Financial priorities:** Members are commanded by leadership (and, based on their beliefs God) to prioritize the church in their financial giving. This may lead to insufficient funds for retirement and other financial stress, particularly for poor members. This can be especially hard for students who may take out

⁷⁹³ See: <http://www.mormonstories.org/how-the-lds-q12-think/>

⁷⁹⁴ While one can get into the lower levels of the Celestial kingdom (heaven) without being married, the highest degree is reserved for those who are wed.

⁷⁹⁵ This is seen particularly in Utah, especially after 2010.

⁷⁹⁶ Doctrines of Salvation. vol. 2, pg. 287-288 - <https://archive.org/details/Doctrines-of-Salvation-volume-2-joseph-fielding-smith>

⁷⁹⁷ <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865632962/U-professor-finds-new-trends-between-age-and-divorce-rates.html>

larger educational loans in order to be able to pay tithing. Members are encouraged to pay tithing even if they do not have the means to feed their children.⁷⁹⁸

- 8) **Divorce** is to be strictly avoided, except in some cases when members are counseled to leave unbelieving spouses. Avoiding divorce is to be admired in some individuals, but the blanket application arguably is bad counsel for those involved in abusive relationships. Divorce rates within Mormonism on the whole are similar to the larger populations in which they live. However, Mormon-Mormon divorce rates are lower, with those in mixed-faith marriages being significantly higher than the surrounding population.⁷⁹⁹
- 9) **Group cohesion:** The trust within the larger group allows Mormons to efficiently build relationships based on a common belief in God and a common value structure. An informal employment network is formed which helps many members find work and advance in their careers. However, this trust also leads to abuse in the form of multi-level marketing campaigns which are common within Mormonism, particularly in Utah.
- 10) **Truth as a value:** Mormonism values truth and requires this of the membership, but not the leadership⁸⁰⁰. This paradox requires adherents to live with cognitive dissonance, which in some cases can lead to frustration, anger, or other negative emotions.
- 11) **No other success can compensate for failure in the home:** This quote, repeated by David O. McKay is meant to emphasize the importance of parenting. However, when children choose to leave the Mormon church, it may make their parents feel like failures. In some cases, parents have been encouraged to kick out children who are homosexual.⁸⁰¹
- 12) **The Good Name of the Church is the highest priority:** This is underscored in disciplinary councils and in the way in which sexual abuse scandals are handled. This leads to cash payments of millions of dollars in settlements rather than going to trial where unpleasant facts about the church's mishandling of abusers and abused might come to light.⁸⁰² Because the church prioritizes its own corporate health and image over that of individuals, it unnecessarily harms a great number of individuals. For this reason, some consider the Mormon church to have corporate narcissistic tendencies.

WHAT'S NEXT

GAY AND MORMON

In 1890 and 1904, the Mormon Church renounced polygamy through a series of Manifestos. These were not meant to change doctrine so much as the actual practice, and the official doctrine of polygamy remains within the

⁷⁹⁸ See <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2012/12/sacred-transformations?lang=eng>

⁷⁹⁹ In the book "In faith and Doubt", the author argues that interfaith marriages are often successful and can be made to work in most cases. However, he gives two exceptions which are statistically much more difficult: Mormons and Jews. In these cases, the mixed faith marriage has about double the divorce rate.

⁸⁰⁰ Numerous examples of the church leadership lying or being deceitful have been made, and punishment is extremely rare. In one extreme case, Paul H. Dunn was found to have fabricated stories in his talks for more than 20 years. He also claimed to have been a semi-pro baseball player. He was dismissed from his calling, but never formally censured or disciplined.

⁸⁰¹ This course of action was advocated by Apostle Boyd Packer around 1980. As late as 2007, Apostle Oaks stated, "I can also imagine some circumstances in which it might be possible to say, 'Yes, come, but don't expect to stay overnight. Don't expect to be a lengthy house guest. Don't expect us to take you out and introduce you to our friends, or to deal with you in a public situation that would imply our approval of your "partnership."'

<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/interview-oaks-wickman-same-gender-attraction>

⁸⁰² See <https://redd.it/89u8d5> and

https://mormonleaks.io/wiki/index.php?title=File:INSTANCES_OF_CHILD_SEXUAL_ABUSE_ALLEGEDLY_PERPETRATED_BY_MEMBERS_OF_THE_CHURCH_OF_JESUS_CHRIST_OF_LATTER-DAY_SAINTS-2017-06.pdf

Mormon faith. However prior to the change, a series of statements indicated that were a change to be made, this would indicate that the church had gone into apostasy or that it was never true. Given that the Republicans ran on a platform of abolishing slavery and polygamy in 1860, the Mormons were effective in holding out against the prevailing social opinion for at least 30 years. Prior to making the change, the pressure of the existing laws were so great that in 1884 there appears to have been an entrenchment where leaders were forced to either actively participate in polygamy or resign from their positions. Believing in plural marriage was required for a temple recommend in the earliest record we have of the worthiness interview.

Very similar statements were made with respect to given the priesthood to blacks. In this case, the social pressures to change the priesthood doctrine began around the late 50s. By the late 60s, these pressures increased when Stanford University refused to participate in athletic events with BYU. Other legal actions during the 70s may have increased the pressure. However, even in the mid-1970s, those who failed to *believe and support* the restrictive priesthood policy were according to some accounts not considered worthy to enter the temple. When the change was made in 1978, of Utah County residents, 39 percent said that they did not think that it would ever happen (priesthood given to blacks) and an additional 40 percent expected it to happen years in the future (after Christ's return), during the Millennium, or "not in my lifetime".⁸⁰³ In this case (as with the change in polygamy), church members appear to have been caught off-guard.

There are two prominent social issues today where most western churches have made shifts and where one could imagine a shift within Mormonism over the next 50 years. The first is in respect to the way they treat gays and their children. The second is how they treat women and their role within leadership of the organization.

Mormon author John L Lund summarized as follows:

Social pressure and even government sanctions cannot be expected to bring forth a new revelation... all the social pressures in the world will not change what the Lord has decreed to be...⁸⁰⁴

Modern Mormons would probably agree with this sentiment. However, they may not realize that he was talking about *Blacks not receiving the priesthood*, and not about gays being limited within Mormonism or women being restricted from the priesthood.

When on trial, Lorenzo Snow (prophet and president of the LDS church) stated:

Though I go to prison, *God will not change His law of Celestial Marriage (polygamy)*. But the man, the people, the nation, that oppose and fight against this doctrine and the Church of God, will be overthrown.⁸⁰⁵

The Nov 2015 policy included requirements for a child with homosexual parents⁸⁰⁶ who wants to be baptized, confirmed, serve on a mission, etc., included the following:

1. The child accepts and is committed to live the teachings and doctrine of the Church, and *specifically disavows* the practice of same-gender cohabitation and marriage.

⁸⁰³ Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pp 318-319.

⁸⁰⁴ John L. Lund, *The Church and the Negro*, 1967 pp 45-49. As quoted in Tanner, pg 317.

⁸⁰⁵ Historical Record, p. 144 quoted in Tanner, pg 269.

⁸⁰⁶ <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865640835/Church-updates-policies-on-families-in-same-sex-marriages.html>. Quotes taken from Handbook 1. This new policy or doctrine was put in place in response to the legalization of gay marriage in the US.

2. The child is of legal age and *does not live with a parent* who has lived or currently lives in a same-gender cohabitation relationship or marriage.

The requirement to disavow a certain way of living is reminiscent of earlier requirements to embrace polygamy at least in theory in order to be able to go to the temple or the celestial kingdom. For many years the church taught that “same gender attractions” were evil *because* the participants were not married⁸⁰⁷. Now LDS leaders teach that gays in committed relationships are evil *when* they are married.

In 2016 on Sept 25th, the church published a flier to Stake presidents and Bishops which stated in part the following:

Will the Church Ever Change Its Doctrine and Sanction Same-Sex Marriages?

Central to God’s plan, the doctrine of marriage between a man and woman is an integral teaching of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and **will not change**.⁸⁰⁸

On Apr 4, 2019 after less than 3 years, the LDS church publically dropped at least some parts of its controversial November Policy.⁸⁰⁹ Oaks, who had been called out as one of the 10 ten homophobes in the world by one magazine in 2018⁸¹⁰ delivered the address regarding the reversal. While some updates were made in the May 2019 handbook, many of policies regarding homosexuals and their children remain unchanged and same-sex marriage remains an act of apostasy as of June 2019.

While one can only speculate as to when, if, or how policies regarding gays and women will change within the church, these are the two primary areas where societal norms are significantly divergent from church norms⁸¹¹. In the case of the priesthood ban, the “doctrine” was publically changed to a “policy” several years before it was changed. It is likely that the church will follow a similar course should it decide to change its practices towards Gays or women.

WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD

Women played an active role in the early church, especially after the organization of the Relief Society in 1842. They were involved in healing the sick through the laying on of hands.

In the next meeting, Joseph Smith specifically addressed the propriety of women giving blessings: “If God gave his sanction by healing . . . **there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick than**

⁸⁰⁷ It was intended that *we use this power only with our partner in marriage*. I repeat, very plainly, physical mischief with another man is forbidden. It is forbidden by the Lord. [Boyd K. Packer, “To Young Men Only,” General Conference, Oct. 1976.] See: <http://www.lds-mormon.com/only.shtml> or the video: https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/10/media/session_5_talk_1/2680671857001?lang=eng

⁸⁰⁸ <https://imgur.com/a/THQtm> retrieved 2017.02.10

⁸⁰⁹ <https://www.slttrib.com/religion/2019/04/04/lds-church-dumps-its/>

⁸¹⁰ <https://www.advocate.com/news/2018/12/24/10-biggest-homophobes-and-transphobes-2018#media-gallery-media-0>

⁸¹¹ <https://www.docdroid.net/FifHhYu/prince-mcmurrin-lecture-protected.pdf> - a speech given by active Mormon Greg Prince - provides a clear argument for a change of policy with respect to homosexuals.

in wetting the face with water." There were women ordained to heal the sick and it was their privilege to do so. "If the sisters should have faith to heal the sick," he said, "let all hold their tongues"⁸¹²

It is important to note that women who were healing in a variety of roles (both inside and outside of the temple) were healing by the "power of God" and not by the "power of the priesthood". The concept of the priesthood as a unique power seems to have developed much later, perhaps as late as the 1960s.

By the early 20th century, laying on of hands by women was discouraged. In 1926, Heber J. Grant stated:

(priesthood leaders) do **not encourage calling in the sisters to administer to the sick**, as the scriptures tell us to call in the Elders, who hold the priesthood of God and have the power and authority to administer to the sick in the name of Jesus Christ.⁸¹³

In keeping with this trend of reduced participation or authority given to women, by the 1960s women were not allowed to pray in sacrament meetings:

The First Presidency recommends that only those who bear the Melchizedek Priesthood or Aaronic Priesthood be invited to offer the **opening and closing prayers in sacrament meetings**, including fast meetings. This also applies to priesthood meetings.⁸¹⁴

Not only can women not pray in larger meetings, but they are not even supposed to translate blessings unless a male priesthood member cannot perform this function. The following comes from the current (2016) leadership manual:

A presiding officer may ask a priesthood holder to interpret an ordinance or blessing if the recipient is deaf or hearing impaired. If a priesthood holder is not available, a presiding officer may ask a woman to do the interpretation.⁸¹⁵

In 1978 church president Spencer W. Kimball said it is "permissible for sisters to offer prayers in any meetings they attend."⁸¹⁶ They have been allowed to say prayers in sacrament meeting since that time. Since 1984, women have spoken regularly in General conference (though at a much lower frequency than men – roughly 5%)⁸¹⁷.

In 2013, an online campaign to allow women to say prayers in General Conference was arguably successful.⁸¹⁸ Since April of 2013, women have said some of the prayers in each general conference.

⁸¹² https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N03_23.pdf pg 22. This article gives a much more full account of how women participated in actions now reserved to men holding the priesthood.

⁸¹³ Heber J. Grant to Zina Young Card, March 26, 1926, Zina Card Brown Family Collection, Church History Library, Salt Lake City (as quoted by: <https://www.lds.org/topics/joseph-smiths-teachings-about-priesthood-temple-and-women?lang=eng>)

⁸¹⁴ The Priesthood Bulletin, 1967.

⁸¹⁵ <https://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/selected-church-policies/21.1?lang=eng&r=1#211>

⁸¹⁶ This may have been in response to pressures relating to the Church's strong stance against the ERA movement. See Marvin K. Gardner, "News of the Church," Ensign, Nov. 1978, 100 for the full quote and announcement.

⁸¹⁷ <http://www.116pages.com/2016/05/women-speaking-at-lds-general.html> NOTE: As women started speaking in general conference after 1966, the 3% statistic in this source is misleading. The current figures are probably 5% or slightly higher.

⁸¹⁸ <http://letwomenpray.blogspot.com/>

The Ordain Women movement was founded on March 17th 2013 by Kate Kelly.⁸¹⁹ The stated purpose of the organization was to ask *the brethren* to pray about the possibility of women receiving the priesthood. One part of the movement included direct action where women requested permission to attend the priesthood sessions of conference. Kate Kelly was excommunicated in abstentia June 23, 2014. Other followers of the movement and family members of Kate Kelly who were not themselves involved in the movement have been released from callings or had their temple recommends taken away.

Greg Prince has argued that Kate Kelly and other activists have hurt the progress of women in the church due to the tendency by church leaders to react negatively to perceived pressures to change the movement.⁸²⁰ Given the level of sexism within members of the LDS movement⁸²¹, any change regarding priesthood is not expected in the near term.

Nevertheless, a key change was made to wording of the endowment in 2019 to remove much of the sexist language and allowing women to covenant directly with “Christ” rather than their husbands. Eve was also given a larger role in the presentation. Also in 2019 Nelson seemed to emphasize that women have some form of the priesthood (to be used only in the temple) based on their temple ordinances⁸²².

LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

Joseph Smith interpreted the book of Genesis literally, as was common of American Christians in his life-time. However, he also wove parts of this story into the Book of Mormon. The tower of Babel is the starting point for the Jaredite people who were said to inhabit the Americas from about 2500-2200 to 600 BCE. They were said to be the first inhabitants of the Americas and spoke in the pure Adamic language.

Prophets up to and including Joseph Fielding Smith (active in the 1950s-1970s) taught a literal version of these early events and taught that the scientific theories of Evolution were false.^{xxviii} Such teachings were made over the pulpit in General Conference at least as late as 1975 by an apostle⁸²³. Noah’s ark and the flooding of the entire surface of the earth is taught as being the baptism for the earth. Some modern apologists have gone so far as to conclude that the earth is filled with water and that this water was the source for the rains that covered all land masses during this catastrophic event.⁸²⁴

⁸¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordain_Women

⁸²⁰ <https://youtu.be/CACWV1CODTw?t=1h14m5s>

⁸²¹ <https://religioninpublic.blog/2019/06/17/support-for-womens-equality-across-religious-groups-varies-considerably/>

⁸²² <https://www.thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2019-10-05/general-conference-october-2019-president-nelson-women-session-163179>

⁸²³ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1975/10/once-or-twice-in-a-thousand-years?lang=eng> Bruce R.

McConkie: “One such event took place *six millennia* ago in a garden which was planted eastward in Eden when the man Adam and the woman Eve fell that men might be. Another such event altered the course of history when an aged prophet believed God and built an ark wherein he and seven others, out of all the inhabitants of the earth, were saved from a watery grave.” In 1978 Kimball published “A letter to a friend” which states on page 12, “I am expressing the truths of God as interpreted by six thousand years of the Lord’s prophets...” which infers but does not explicitly state a young earth.

⁸²⁴ Dean Sessions – See: <http://www.sltrib.com/home/5139231-155/byu-and-uvu-scientists-question-research>. Sessions is not officially associated with the Church when he teaches this material at conferences, but virtually of the attendees to this paid forum are Mormons.

Modern Mormons who are educated may struggle with official proclamations about Adam and Noah as scientific evidence and consensus is very clear on both of these matters. The earth is 100's of millions of years old and there is no genetic "Adam" of the human species. Evolution is the basis of modern biological studies.

Leadership may be preparing for a doctrinal shift on these subjects through the following measures:

- 1) Stating that the Book of Mormon isn't meant as a historical text.⁸²⁵
- 2) Taking a neutral stance on Evolution after about 1970 in some cases.⁸²⁶ In 1971, evolution which had been banned from the church owned university (BYU) since about 1910 was reintroduced into the science curriculum.

Rather than focusing on Evolution, post 1980s Mormon leaders generally focus on the concept that:

1. Adam is the first man – literally, and Eve was the first human woman⁸²⁷.
2. Adam fell and this fall necessitated Christ and the atonement
3. The atonement is necessary for every person's salvation

On some occasions, particularly away from General Conference, church leaders still state or strongly infer that the age of the human populated earth is about 6000 years. One apostle made this claim as late as 2016.⁸²⁸ They have also stated that they do not believe in evolution as late as 2007.⁸²⁹

By avoiding the topic in general church meetings, they may be hoping to avoid the controversies around evolution and pave the way for some sort of doctrinal shift in the future. An official statement⁸³⁰ in Feb 2016, while avoiding a direct statement on the topic, hints that evolution and a creation of Adam and Eve could be compatible. Time periods for the creation are inferred to correspond with the accepted scientific timelines.⁸³¹ In Oct 2016 they clarified that "The church has no official position on the theory of evolution... Nothing has been revealed concerning evolution." However, they went on to say that "God *directed the creation* of Adam and Eve and placed their spirits in their bodies. *We are all descendants of Adam and Eve*, our first parents, who were created in God's image. There were *no spirit children of Heavenly Father on the earth before Adam and Eve were created*."⁸³² They seem to be drawing a distinction between "humanoid" forms of people who lived prior to 6000 BC and Adam and Eve, who are the physical progenitors of all of humanity.

⁸²⁵ <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1993/07/a-treasured-testament?lang=eng>

⁸²⁶ One notable exception was the Jan 1998 article in the Ensign entitled *The Flood and the Tower of Babel*: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1998/01/the-flood-and-the-tower-of-babel?lang=eng>

⁸²⁷ See <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015/04/where-justice-love-and-mercy-meet?lang=eng> for a typical example

⁸²⁸ Marriage stated as an institution that is "5000 years" old. <https://youtu.be/tFxIUxKhVBY?t=7m40s>. In stake conference, Holland has claimed that there were 4000 years between Adam and Christ as recent as 2016. See https://youtu.be/K4_LcENySzQ?t=4m11s

⁸²⁹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2007/05/16/in-focus-mormonism-in-modern-america/>

⁸³⁰ While considered by apologists to be an official statement (<https://youtu.be/HKsaK0ZKbVt?t=1400>), it should be noted that it was printed in the youth magazine and not the adult literature or more official Ensign magazine.

⁸³¹ <https://www.lds.org/study/new-era/2016/02/to-the-point/what-does-the-church-believe-about-dinosaurs.html?lang=eng>

⁸³² <https://www.lds.org/study/new-era/2016/10/to-the-point/what-does-the-church-believe-about-evolution?lang=eng>

By way of comparison, Catholicism has accepted evolution since about 1950 (while still insisting that God creates the souls of individuals).

As of 2014, about 11% of Mormons believe that humans evolved due to natural processes.⁸³³ By comparison, 98% of scientists believe in evolution⁸³⁴ and 33% of Americans believe that evolution occurred due to natural processes.

THE BOOKS OF JOSEPH

Joseph Smith claimed to have divinely created the following texts:

- 1) The Book of Mormon
- 2) Lectures on Faith
- 3) The Doctrine and Covenants
- 4) The Pearl of Great Price (including the Books of Moses and Abraham)
- 5) The inspired version of the Bible (Joseph Smith Translation).

Each of these are problematic to a greater or lesser degree, and several were not canonized during his lifetime. The LDS church has removed the Lectures on Faith from the D&C, so decanonizing scripture is not without precedence. Given the problems of historicity with the Book of Abraham, the RLDS church recognized it as something other than what it claimed to be in the 1970s⁸³⁵. There is purportedly some pressure at high levels within the LDS church to decanonize the book of Abraham.⁸³⁶

The Inspired Version of the Bible was never canonized, and there is little reason to believe that this will change given the many problems with the text⁸³⁷.

The Book of Mormon suffers from anachronisms, plagiarism, and a lack of physical evidence⁸³⁸. This is compounded with problems created by a changing historical narrative regarding how the work was produced. For these reasons, within the RLDS faith there are varying views with respect to the divinity of the BoM. Allowing for such diversity of opinion within the LDS faith would mark a major doctrinal shift, and as such may be unlikely in the near term. This is compounded by the fact that the Book of Mormon accounts for about 55% of all scriptural references in conference since the year 1900.

In 2018, several apologists have been promoting the Catalyst theory. According to this theory, Joseph Smith used various events or objects as a “catalyst” to receive revelation which results in scripture or sacred text. This has been applied to:

⁸³³ <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/compare/views-about-human-evolution/by/religious-denomination/> see also: <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/12/30/publics-views-on-human-evolution/> and <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/10/darwin-day/>

⁸³⁴ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/10/darwin-day/>

⁸³⁵ The RLDS church (Community of Christ), never canonized the Book of Abraham, so it did not have to remove this from the cannon when it was discovered to have nothing to do with the Egyptian funeral texts which it was said to have been based on.

⁸³⁶ Currently, these are rumors and the individuals involved have denied discussing this matter.

⁸³⁷ Various problems include plagiarism (Adam Clark’s biblical commentary) as well as inconsistencies between the JST and other revealed scripture (such as the Book of Mormon which quotes from the standard KJV of the Bible).

⁸³⁸ DNA evidence, archeological evidence, mentioning of steel, metallurgy, goats, sheep, honeybees, etc.

- 1) The Book of Abraham⁸³⁹
- 2) The Temple Endowment⁸⁴⁰
- 3) The Joseph Smith Translation⁸⁴¹
- 4) The Book of Mormon⁸⁴²
- 5) D&C⁸⁴³

RECOMMENDED READING

The following books may give the reader additional insight into Mormonism

Books about Joseph Smith

- 1) **No Man Knows My History** – by *Faun Brodie*. This was one of the first biographies written about Joseph Smith and is still a classic for those interested in early Mormon History. It was the most accurate biography for more than 50 years. Some of the theories regarding offspring of Joseph's polygamist marriages have since been disproven, but on the balance this is an accurate introduction into the life of Joseph Smith. The church originally gave the book positive reviews, but then considered it "anti-mormon" literature for a number of years. In spite of that, it was used in advanced religion classes at BYU. Brodie was the niece of president David O. McKay..
- 2) **Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet** (Vogel)⁸⁴⁴: Vogel argues that Joseph Smith created Mormonism to support his family and to solve conflicts between his parents.
- 3) **Early Mormonism and the Magic World View** (Quinn): Discusses in some detail aspects of 19th century culture and mysticism that shaped Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other early church leaders.
- 4) **Rough Stone Rolling** – by Richard Bushmann. This is arguably the best serious biography of Joseph Smith written by a church member who has not been excommunicated for their writings. Bushman discusses essentially the same material as Brodie, but leaves room for faith in the narrative. Some members reportedly find the book disturbing, though others claim that it strengthens their faith.

Books about Polygamy

In Sacred Loneliness – Tod Compton. Written by a believing Mormon, this work documents the lives and struggles of the early polygamist wives of Joseph Smith.

⁸³⁹ "...the physical artifacts provided an occasion for meditation, reflection, and revelation. They *catalyzed a process* whereby God gave to Joseph Smith a revelation about the life of Abraham, even if that revelation did not directly correlate to the characters on the papyri." <https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng>

⁸⁴⁰ https://www.reddit.com/r/mormon/comments/am3rbe/catalyst_theory_advanced_regarding_endowment/

⁸⁴¹ See: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/revelations-in-context/joseph-smiths-bible-translation?lang=eng>. The word revelation is used 40 times in this article.

⁸⁴² Sometimes it is referred to in faithful literature as a "revelatory translation". See <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/why-new-testament-words-and-phrases-are-in-the-book-of-mormon-part-9-above-all-were-these>

⁸⁴³ In the case of D&C, the claim is made that: "the translation process (of the JST Bible) served as the direct catalyst for many revelations contained in that book (i.e. D&C)" see: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/revelations-in-context/joseph-smiths-bible-translation?lang=eng>

⁸⁴⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Smith:_The_Making_of_a_Prophet currently out of print, but available online here: <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/joseph-smith-the-making-of-a-prophet/>

Mormon Enigma - Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery. Written by two believing Mormons, this work documents early church history through Emma's perspective and covers polygamy in some depth while covering the events of Emma's life. The two authors were forbidden at speaking in church for about 1-2 years after publishing this book, but were not excommunicated.

Books about Mormonism in General

- 1) **An insider's view of early Mormonism** – Grant Palmer: This book provides an overview into a number of topics on early church history. Arguably not as well written and factual as books written by Quinn and Vogel, it nonetheless provides an overview of a number of topics of interest to those studying early church history.

All of the books by: D. Michael Quinn including:

- 1) **The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power**
- 2) **The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power**
- 3) **The Mormon Hierarchy: Wealth and Corporate Power**
- 4) **Same-sex dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon example.**
In this work, Quinn discusses attitudes to gays/lesbians in early Mormonism. He argues that the early church was much more tolerant than it has become in the 21st century.

Blacks and the Priesthood

- 1) **Black and Mormon**, Edited by Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith. This book gives the reader a good overview of the events surrounding the history of Blacks receiving the Priesthood. The introduction is found here:
https://books.google.se/books?id=0ZVdAAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=sv&source=gb_s&sum_mary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Some key articles:

- History of succession (new prophets) within Mormonism. (Starting on page 92)
<http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1080&context=mormonhistory>
- History of garments: <http://www.i4m.com/think/temples/mormon-garments.htm>
- Post-manifesto polygamy (1984) <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/037-8-27-35.pdf>
- Polygamy in Canada (one wife brought to Canada in most cases):
https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N03_110.pdf

TIDBITS:

Interesting dates & events:

http://www.i4m.com/think/history/mormon_history.htm

Adam-ondi-ahmen (where Adam is said to have lived):

<http://emp.byui.edu/satterfieldb/quotes/Adam-ondi-Ahman.html>

An overview of how the history of the church was edited early on:

<http://www.lds-mormon.com/history.shtml>

Early LDS hymnal with more of an emphasis on Zion, Gathering, and a few hymns about the “red man”.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=kSxOAAAAYAAJ>

List of what’s in the 1st presidency’s vault:

<https://exploringmormonism.com/our-own-peek-into-the-first-presidency-vault/>

Examples where the transcript was changed from the talk:

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1981/04/turning-the-hearts?lang=eng>

<https://youtu.be/6qIr30dtCvo>

MORMONS VS. OTHER RELIGIONS

Pew Research has done a number of surveys comparing the beliefs and practices of various American faiths. A summary of these studies provides insight into how Mormons are perceived in larger society, as well as their beliefs about various issues of morality.

http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/10/darwin-day/ft_16-02-12_darwinday_640px/

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Joseph Smith may have been influenced by things which he read or heard about when formulating Mormonism. Some possible sources of influence include the following:

Doctrine or text	Possible source material
Book of Mormon	KJV Bible The Late War between the United States and Great Brittan Textual parallels Numbering parallels Stories such as Joseph's Father's vision , etc...
Temple ceremony	Masonic practices Creation story from the Book of Genesis

Doctrine or text	Possible source material
Book of Abraham	<p>The Book of Genesis (creation story)</p> <p>An incorrect reconstruction of missing parts of an Egyptian scroll</p> <p>Philosophy of a Future State (star/numeric counting systems).</p>
Word of Wisdom	<p>Codification of the temperance movement</p> <p>Subtle jab towards women (banning coffee and tea)⁸⁴⁵</p> <p>MEANS OF PRESERVING HEALTH, AND PREVENTING DISEASES (1806)</p>
Polygamy	" Spiritual Wifery " system of the Cochranites *
<p>Kingdoms -3 degrees of Glory</p> <p>Heavenly Marriages in White Robes</p> <p>Need for a restoration</p>	Emanuel Swedenborg's (1740) view of heaven and hell.
First vision	Multiple copycat sources from 1815-1821 - Norris Stearns (1815) and Charles Finney (1821) being among the most similar to the 1842 account.
Prophecies [ie: civil war prophecy]	Retelling of a newspaper stories around that time and area [see Painesville Telegraph].
Anthon Transcript	Characters copied from an 1823 manuscript found by Joseph's uncle and published in a local paper.

⁸⁴⁵ "...one of the brethren suggested that the revelation should also provide for a total abstinence from tea and coffee drinking, intending this as a counter 'dig' at the sisters." (David Whitmer). (Des Moines Daily News, 16 Oct 1886:20 c. in: Newell & Avery 1994:47).

Doctrine or text	Possible source material
God using Intelligence / Matter which is indestructible	John Dalton's "A New System of Chemical Philosophy" (1808, quotes in link)
The JST	Adam Clarke's Biblical Commentary
Articles of Faith	Significantly influenced by writings of Oliver Cowdery and by other Mormons of the time

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18th century religious debates addressed in the Book of Mormon

Adam Clark's Biblical Commentary may have also been a source for some of the ideas in the Book of Mormon.⁸⁴⁷

END NOTES

i FATE OF THE GREEN SEER STONE

(personal account from the MTC around 2001):

Jay Mitton told our whole MTC district the story of acquiring the seer stone during some random Sunday evening lesson. There were probably 10 of us there. In a way the story seemed kind of like a humblebrag-- he had tons of money, was part of church history, knew President Hinckley well, etc. etc.

Here are a few other details that he told us:

- The transfer of the seer stone took place like a scene out of a movie: he showed up with a briefcase full of money, they showed up with the seer stone and there was a transfer.
- He said he took it to BYU to have the geologists look at it but that the geologists weren't sure what it was (or results were inconclusive). This definitely made us missionaries think it was some otherworldly material with magic properties.
- The sellers did not want to sell the stone to the member of the LDS church (his words). Jay Mitton had to pretend to be just a random collector of Mormon history items. He made it sound like he pulled the wool over his eyes.
- The people he bought it from had it in the family for generations, but they all seemed to run into financial problems at the same time. He insinuated that God had made that happen to force them to sell.
- He wasn't sure what President Hinckley was going to do with the stone once he had it.

That's about all I remember. I was told this story 16 years ago so the details are a little fuzzy. Hopefully something I said helps in the search for information.

Jay W Mitton – an asset management attorney (retired). An attempt was made to contact Mr. Mitton to confirm this account, but he did not respond to inquiries.

⁸⁴⁶ Source: <https://redd.it/8fl2si>

⁸⁴⁷

https://www.reddit.com/r/mormon/comments/df1dmi/adam_clarke_in_the_book_of_mormon/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x

Source: <https://redd.it/59adiw>

Personal notes:

Based on a personal conversation with the person who sold the stone:

1. These stones generally come up as a part of a will. It's a matter of dividing a precious item between heirs. The easiest way to do it is to sell it.
2. There is nothing "Indiana Jones" about the sales process.

The BYU Geology department was contacted (2017), but no one on staff had any recollection of seeing or examining the stone.

ii THE FATE OF THE WHITMER SEER STONE

One of the Whitmer Seer stones was owned by Steve Christiansen, but it was later resold to a "private collector". It may have been donated to the LDS Church in the mid-late 80s.

Steve had just purchased, what was believed at the time to be the Hyrum Page seer stone. He paid 10s of Thousands of dollars for it. He actually let me take it home one night and I took it to the meeting (you know, that was the intention, to take it to the meeting with Ron (Walker) and Dean) ... it was so distinctive looking – it looks like a stone cassette tape (for lack of a better analogy). ... We're thinking it's more closely related to the Whittmer Family. Now, keep in mind Hyrum Page is brother-in-law with David Whitmer, and so on. He married one of the daughters in the family as did Oliver Cowdrey, and so there's a whole bunch of interrelationships there. We're thinking that it may have been even more attached to the Whittmer siblings. And so, whether or not that proves to be true, we'll see.

See: 67.00-69.30 minutes into <http://www.mormonstories.org/brent-metcalfe-mark-hofmann-salamander-letter-bombings/> (episode 493):

iii OLIVER COWDREY'S WRITINGS ABOUT THE URIM AND THUMMIM

These were days never to be forgotten; to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, "interpreters," the history or record called "The Book of Mormon." Letter from Oliver Cowder to W.W. Phelps (Letter I), (September 7, 1834). Published in Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate, Vol. I. No. 1. Kirtland, Ohio, October, 1834. Published in Letters by Oliver Cowdery to W.W. Phelps on the Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Liverpool, 1844.

iv JOSEPH FIELDING SMITHS WRITINGS ON SEER STONES

SEER STONE NOT USED IN BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION. We have been taught since the days of the Prophet that the Urim and Thummim were returned with the plates to the angel. We have no record of the Prophet having the Urim and Thummim after the organization of the Church. Statements of translations by the Urim and Thummim after that date are *evidently errors*. The statement has been made that the Urim and Thummim was on the altar in the Manti Temple when that building was dedicated. The Urim and Thummim so spoken of, however, was the seer stone which was in the possession of the Prophet Joseph Smith in early days. This seer stone is now in the possession of the Church.

While the statement has been made by some writers that the Prophet Joseph Smith used a seer stone part of the time in his translating of the record, and information points to the fact that he did have in his possession such a stone, yet there is *no authentic statement* in the history of the Church which states that the use of such a stone was made in that translation. The information is all hearsay, and personally, I do not believe that this stone was used for this purpose. The reason I give for this conclusion is found in the statement of the Lord to the Brother of Jared as recorded in Ether 3:22-24.

These stones, the Urim and Thummim which were given to the Brother of Jared, were preserved for this very purpose of translating the record, both of the Jaredites and the Nephites. Then again the Prophet was impressed by Moroni with the fact that these stones were given for that very purpose. ***It hardly seems reasonable to suppose that the Prophet would substitute something evidently inferior under these circumstances.*** It may have been so, but it is so easy for a story of this kind to be circulated due to the fact that the Prophet did possess a seer stone, which *he may have used for some other purposes.*

Doctrines of Salvation Volume 3 pp 254-256. NOTE: Section headings were probably added by Bruce R. McConkie and not Joseph Fielding Smith.

v REFERENCES TO THE SEER STONE BETWEEN 1880 AND 2013

After the late 1800s, the next prominent reference to the seer stone comes in *Doctrines of Salvation* written by Joseph Fielding Smith, compiled by Bruce R. McConkie in 1956. In this volume he states that:

- 1) Joseph Smith had **a** seer stone.
- 2) That this is in the church's possession.
- 3) That it was not used in translating the book of Mormon.

The last point is the title of the section, but details are somewhat vague in the text. It concludes that it simply would not make sense for him to use the seer stone when the Urim and Thummim were available. ***"It hardly seems reasonable to suppose that the Prophet would substitute something evidently inferior under these circumstances"***.

Joseph F. Smith served the longest tenure as historian in the history of the church. He was assistant church historian from 1906 to 1921 and church historian from 1921 to 1970. He was the grandson of Hiram Smith who borrowed the stone from Chase on behalf of Joseph Smith and failed to return it. As historian, he had a special vault where he kept materials which he thought might be embarrassing to the church. He was the president of the quorum of the twelve when *Doctrines of Salvation* was compiled and would remain so for about 19 years, later becoming the 10th leader of the LDS movement. By 1970 he had access to the first presidency's vault and the 2 or more stones contained therein at that time.

Between 1956 and 2013, there are 1000s of references to the Urim and Thummin and about 6-8 to seer stones. Of these references, most deny the use of seer stones, though a few acknowledge them. After 2013, a mostly accurate history regarding the use of the brown seer stone in the translation of the Book of Mormon has been available in church literature, though many church members are still unfamiliar with the historically accurate version of the production of the book of Mormon and the use of seer stones.^v The Gospel Topics entry on the Book of Mormon gives a significantly more accurate overview of how the seer stone was used than that told routinely between 1835 and 2010.

^{vi} GOSPEL TOPICS: TRANSLATION OF THE BOOK OF MORMON – DEC 30, 2013

While the article is not entirely clear and accurate, it does acknowledge the use of the seer stone. We note one example of misleading the reader in the abbreviated quote provided by Oliver Cowdrey:

Of his experience as scribe, Cowdrey wrote, "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven."^{vi}

If we go to the original quote as used by the church extensively in the past, it states:

These were days never to be forgotten; to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated **with the Urim and Thummim**, or, as the Nephites would have said, "interpreters," the history or record called "The Book of Mormon."

This historical record from multiple sources leads one to conclude that the seer stone was exclusively employed in the translation of what would later be published as the book of Mormon. This includes the entire period that Oliver acted as a scribe. Hence, his reference to the use of the Urim and Thummim, with a specific reference to the Nephites and Book of Mormon is fraudulent and may be the reason that this part of the quote was removed.

Another example of deception comes from a footnote (18) which states:

Joseph Smith probably possessed more than one seer stone; he appears to have found one of the stones while digging for a well around 1822. (Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984], 69–70.)

Brigham Young placed the total number of seer stones at 5, and this may be a low estimate. So to say that Joseph Smith "probably possessed more than one seer stone" seems *more than a little conservative*.

Willard Chase states clearly in his 1833 affidavit that it was he who found the stone and not Joseph. Joseph had borrowed it on two occasions and on the second refused to return it. He was still trying to get the stone back as late as 1830 (about 8 years after he had first lent it).^{vi} Other sources state that Willard and/or Alvin were involved in the digging, but that Joseph was not (and as such could not have found the stone)^{vi}. Hence, the claim that "he appears to have found one of the stones while digging for a well" is incorrect.

The current online article seems to leave room for both the seer stone and the Urim and Thummim within the story of the translation of the book of Mormon. The seer stone was used,

"Apparently for convenience, **Joseph often translated with the single seer stone rather than the two stones bound together to form the interpreters**. These two instruments—the interpreters and the seer stone—were *apparently interchangeable* and worked in much the same way such that, in the course of time, Joseph Smith and his associates *often used the term "Urim and Thummim" to refer to the single stone* as well as the interpreters.

In fact, for the whole book of Mormon (excepting *possibly* the 116 pages that were lost), the seer stone was the **only object used** for dictation, as stated by Emma Smith and others. At least some early church members knew that when one talked of the Urim and Thummim they were actually referring to the (chocolate colored or white) seer stone. The term Urim and Thummim appears to have been used to describe both of these stones at different times. It is unclear if it ever referred to any of the other seer stones used by Joseph Smith. There does not appear to be any record of later church leaders using Joseph's or other stones as an instrument to receive revelation.

vii OPENING UP ABOUT THE SEER STONE – SORT OF...

The method of producing the Book of Mormon which had been widely denied since at least 1832 was first acknowledged by the church between about 1905 and 1936. After that time, seer stones were widely denied or de-emphasized until 2013. It is unclear how many members are aware of seer stone usage. The first official pictures appeared in Dec 2017 in the Ensign. Anecdotal evidence suggests that fewer than 20% of adult Mormons and 10% of those under 20 are aware of the usage of seer stones in the production of the book of Mormon. Curriculum in church classes and art used by the church still depict the translation method taught for more than 180 years and in all images used the golden plates are present, even though witnesses state clearly that the plates were not used.

Photos of the seer stone used in producing the book of Mormon and held by the Church since at least the 1880s were first published in Aug, 2015 (see <http://www.sltrib.com/news/2802019-155/mormon-church-to-release-more-documents>). In the article, the concept of the seer stone and its use in producing the book of Mormon was more than ½ way through the article which was titled “Joseph the seer”. Accompanying the article are four artists’ renderings of Joseph translating the book of Mormon by looking at golden plates. There are no pictures of him looking into a hat in the way that the actual creation of the book of Mormon took place. Hence, a casual or uninformed reader scanning the article would have not understood how Joseph created the book of Mormon. See <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2015/10/joseph-the-seer?lang=eng>

A commentary regarding the stone was made by a member of the first presidency on their facebook page in June, 2016 as follows (emphasis added):

Dieter F Uchtdorf

June 21 ·

Not long ago, the Church published photos and background information on seer stones. People have asked me, “Do you really believe that Joseph Smith translated with seer stones? How would something like this be possible?” And I answer, “Yes! That is exactly what I believe.” This was done as Joseph said: by the gift and power of God¹.

In reality, most of us use a kind of “seer stone” every day. **My mobile phone is like a “seer stone.”** I can get the collected knowledge of the world through a few little inputs. I can take a photo or a video with my phone and share it with family on the other side of our planet. ***I can even translate anything into or from many different languages!***²

If I can do this with my phone, if human beings can do this with their phones or other devices, who are we to say that God could not help Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the Restoration, with his translation work? If it is possible for me to access the knowledge of the world through my phone, ***who can question that seer stones are impossible for God?***³

Many religions have objects, places, and events that are sacred to them. We respect the sacred beliefs of other religions and hope to be respected for our own beliefs and what is sacred to us. We should never be arrogant, but rather polite and humble. *We still should have a natural confidence*, because this is the Church of Jesus Christ.

In Dec 2017 in the Ensign, an article *Joseph Smith: Strength Out of Weakness*, discusses the translation process as follows:

Joseph dictated it word by word as he looked into instruments the Lord had prepared for him, including the Urim and Thummim and *at times a seer stone*, using a hat to shield his eyes from extraneous light in order to plainly see the words as they appeared.

Contemporary sources indicate that the seer stone was used for the entire translation after the lost 116 pages, or all of what is in the current Book of Mormon.

Notes:

- 1) The phrase “Gift and power of God” in reference to the translation of the Book of Mormon was used by Joseph Smith, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. The phrase has been used as titles of Ensign articles in Sept 1977 and Jan 1997. In at least two of the known quotes, the Urim and Thummim are mentioned in conjunction with the translation and the “Gift and power of God” phrase.
- 2) *Unlike the seer stone, the current I-phone does not support translating from reformed Egyptian to English.*
- 3) The use of seer stones was attacked by Apostle Bruce R. McConkie in his influential work, *Mormon Doctrine*. [Bruce R. McConkie, p 565+] under the entry “Peep Stones”.

viii **Golden Plates deposited in a Cave**

Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates. Joseph did not translate all of the plates; there was a portion of them sealed, which you can learn from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, **the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room**. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more plates than probably many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls. The first time they went there the sword of Laban hung upon the wall; but when they went again it had been taken down and laid upon the table across the gold plates; it was unsheathed, and on it was written these words: “This sword will never be sheathed again until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and his Christ.” I tell you this as coming not only from Oliver Cowdery, but others who were familiar with it, and who understood it just as well as we understand coming to this meeting. . . . [Don] Carlos Smith was a young man of as much veracity as any young man we had, and he was a witness to these things. Samuel Smith saw some things, Hyrum saw a good many things, but Joseph was the leader.

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 17 June 1877 – see <http://www.josephsmithfoundation.org/wiki/hill-cumorah-cave/> see also <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1360&context=jbms> for 10 original 2nd hand accounts.

Whitmer stated that they were in a cave near to the hill Comorah. – see <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6931npj/2650899>

ix **SAMUEL LAWRENCE “SEES” THE URIM AND THUMMIM IN 1825**

<http://www.mormonthink.com/essays-bom-translation.htm> It was another Palmyra seer named Samuel Lawrence who first developed the concept of special glasses to read the golden plates. According to Willard Chase, a cabinetmaker whose sister Sally used a green-colored seer stone, Smith took Lawrence to the hill in 1825 and showed him the spot where the plates were supposedly buried. Lawrence, who evidently looked in his own seer stone, asked Smith “if he had ever discovered any thing with the plates of gold; he [Smith] said no: he then asked him to look in his stone, to see if there was any thing with them. He looked, and said there was nothing; he told him to look again, and see if there was not a large pair of specks with the plates; he looked and soon saw a pair of spectacles, the same with which Joseph says he translated the Book of Mormon.” - E. D. Howe, *Mormonism*

Unvail'd: or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time (Painesville, Ohio: E. D. Howe, 1834), 243. Dan Vogel, ed., Early Mormon Documents, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996-2003), 2:68.

^x **Mormon Doctrine: The entry on "Negroes"**

Negroes:

...**Those who were less valiant in the pre-existence** and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality **are known to us as the negroes**. Such spirits are sent to the earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a black skin... Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstance can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty...The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them... President Brigham Young and others have taught that *in the future eternity* worthy and qualified negroes will receive the priesthood and every gospel blessing available to any man.

The negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow therefrom, but **this inequality is not of man's origin. It is the Lord's doing**, it based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of a lack of spiritual valiance...

...Many of them certainly live according to higher standards of decency and right in this life than do some of their brother of other races, a situation that will cause judgment to be laid "to the line, and righteousness to the plummet" (Isa. 28:17) in the day of judgment. (Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie (1st edition – entry on Negroes)).

^{xi} **THE RESTORATION OF THE LAW OF SACRIFICE AND SACRIFICING OF ANIMALS**

"Thus we behold the keys of this Priesthood consisted in obtaining the voice of Jehovah that He talked with him [Noah] in a familiar and friendly manner, that He continued to him the keys, the covenants, the power and the glory, with which He blessed Adam at the beginning; and the **offering of sacrifice, which also shall be continued at the last time; for all the ordinances and duties that ever have been required by the Priesthood, under the directions and commandments of the Almighty in any of the dispensations, shall all be had in the last dispensation**, therefore all things had under the authority of the Priesthood at any former period, shall be had again, bringing to pass the restoration spoken of by the mouth of all the Holy Prophets; then shall the sons of Levi offer an acceptable offering to the Lord....

... it is generally supposed that sacrifice was entirely done away when the Great Sacrifice [i.e.,] the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was offered up, and that there will be no necessity for the ordinance of sacrifice in future; but those who assert this are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges and authority of the Priesthood, or with the Prophets.

The offering of sacrifice has ever been connected and forms a part of the duties of the Priesthood. It began with the Priesthood, and will be continued until after the coming of Christ, from generation to generation. We frequently have mention made of the offering of sacrifice by the servants of the Most High in ancient days, prior to the law of Moses; which ordinances will be continued when the Priesthood is restored with all its authority, power and blessings....

These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings. This ever did and ever will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest; else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the Holy Prophets be brought to pass. It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will be established again with all its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the prophets; but those things which existed prior to Moses' day, namely, sacrifice, will be continued.

It may be asked by some, what necessity for sacrifice, since the Great Sacrifice was offered? In answer to which, if repentance, baptism, and faith existed prior to the days of Christ, what necessity for them since that time? The Priesthood has descended in a regular line from father to son, through their succeeding generations."—Joseph Smith (Oct. 5, 1840), in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp 171-73.

^{xii} **AFFIDAVITS OF EARLY NON-MORMONS REGARDING THE CHURCH**

CHAPTER XVII - Isaac Hale and Hurlbut Affidavits (not included due to length, but can be found online at:

<http://www.truthnet.org/Mormon/Mormonismunveiled/17Isaachale.htm> (quoted from *Mormonism Unveiled*)

^{xiii} **POTENTIAL ABORTIONS IN THE EARLY CHURCH**

Sarah Pratt, wife of early LDS Apostle Orson Pratt, related a story from when she lived in the Mormon community of Nauvoo, Illinois:

"One day they came both, Joseph [Smith] and [John C.] Bennett, on horseback to my house. Bennett dismounted, Joseph remained outside. Bennett wanted me to return to him a book I had borrowed from him. It was a so-called doctor-book. I had a rapidly growing little family and wanted to inform myself about certain matters in regard to babies, etc., — this explains my borrowing that book. While giving Bennett his book, I observed that he held something in the left sleeve of his coat. Bennett smiled and said: 'Oh, a little job for Joseph; one of his women is in trouble.' Saying this, [sic] he took the thing out of his left sleeve. It was a pretty long instrument of a kind I had never seen before. It seemed to be of steel and was crooked at one end. I heard afterwards that the operation had been performed; that the woman was very sick, and that Joseph was very much afraid that she might die, but she recovered." Bennett was the most intimate friend of Joseph for a time. He boarded with the prophet. He told me once that Joseph had been talking with him about his troubles with Emma, his wife. 'He asked me,' said Bennett, smilingly, 'what he should do to get out of the trouble?' I said, 'This is very simple. GET A REVELATION that polygamy is right, and all your troubles will be at an end.'" (Dr. W. Wyl, *Mormon Portraits: Joseph Smith The Prophet — His Family and His Friends*, 61-62)

The following is the sworn testimony of Joseph Smith's brother, Hyrum:

On the seventeenth day of May, 1842, having been made acquainted with some of the conduct of John C. Bennett, which was given in testimony, under oath...by several females who testified that John C. Bennett endeavored to seduce them, and accomplished his designs by saying it was right; that it was one of the mysteries of God, which was to be revealed when the people was strong enough in faith to bear such mysteries — that it was perfectly right to have illicit intercourse with females, providing no one knew it but themselves, vehemently trying them from day to day, to yield to his passions, bringing witnesses of

his own clan to testify that there were such revelations and such commandments, and that they were of God; also stating that he would be responsible for their sins, if there were any, and that he would give them medicine to produce abortions, provided they should become pregnant.” (History of the Church, 5:71)

xiv TEACHINGS REGARDING POLYGAMY IN THE CHURCH (1850-1890)

From the Seer pg 172 (Orson Pratt): **...the great Messiah** who was the founder of the Christian religion, **was a Polygamist**, as well as the Patriarch Jacob and the prophet David from whom He descended according to the flesh. Paul says concerning Jesus, “Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the see of Abraham.” (Heb. 2:16) Abraham the Polygamist, being a friend of God, **the Messiah chose to take upon himself his seed; and by marrying many honorable wives himself, show to all future generations that he approbated the plurality of Wives under the Christian dispensation, as well as under the dispensations in which His Polygamist ancestors lived.**

We have now clearly shown that **God the Father had a plurality of wives, one of more being in eternity, by whom He begat our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born, and another being upon the earth by whom He begat the tabernacle of Jesus, as His Only Begotten in this world.** We have also proved most clearly that the Son followed the example of his Father, and became the great Bridegroom to whom kings’ daughters and many honorable Wives were to be married. We have also proved that **both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ inherit their wives in eternity as well as in time:** and that God the Father has already begotten many thousand millions of sons and daughters and sent them into this world to take tabernacles; and that God the Son has the promise that “of the increase of his government there shall be no end;” it being expressly declared that the children of one of His Queens should be made Princess in all the earth. (see Psalm 45:16)

xv AN OVERVIEW OF POLYGAMIST PROPHETS

Presidents of the LDS faith who had practiced Plural Marriage include the following:

JOSEPH SMITH

- 30-45+ wives or relationships with women. It appears that most of these were sexual in nature.
- At least 9 relationships with women under 20 years old (2 were 14 years old).
- At least 10 that were married to other men during his relationships with them.
- Never publically admitted polygamy, adultery, etc. Ordered the destruction of the printing press which exposed his polygamy to the Nauvoo community. Subsequent events and reaction lead to his death.

BRIGHAM YOUNG

- About 55 wives
- About 8 of these wives had previously been wives to Joseph Smith.
- The youngest wives were 15-16 years old.
- First publically admitted polygamy in 1852, about 10 years after he started taking plural wives.
- At the time of his death, he was divorced from about 10 of the wives. Only 16 of his wives received an inheritance.

JOHN TAYLOR

- Various sources claim 8-15 wives, 3 of which divorced him^{xv}. He lived with 8 wives and the other 7 were sealed to him in 1846, but for various reasons left shortly thereafter or chose not to live with him.^{xv}
- Married his last wife, Josephine Elizabeth Rouche in 1886. He was 78 and she was 26 at the time.

WILFORD WOODRUFF

- Some sources claim 9 wives. Others claim he had more than 10.^{xv}
- He was also sealed to 336 dead single women.^{xv}
- Not all of these marriages were concurrent. Four of the women left him shortly after the marriages or divorced him. By 1890, when the manifesto was issued, he only had one wife living with him. He married his last plural wife (Eudora Dunford – age 24) in 1877.

LORENZO SNOW (1814-1901)

- 9 wives.
- Married Eleanor Houtz when she was 14 and Sarah Minnie Ephramina Jensen when she was 15
- Married one woman who was 17, (he was 57 at the time).
- First child born Jan 23, 1847. Last child born 5 November 1896.

JOSEPH F. SMITH (1838-1918)

- His first wife was his cousin, Levira Annette Clark Smith who was 16 when she married him. He took his 2nd wife on the orders of Brigham Young about 7 years later.
- His first wife (Levira) divorced him because she was upset about his polygamy.
- He was the last divorced president of the LDS church.
- He had 6 wives and 48 children.^{xv} Eleven of the children were born after 1890. He reportedly continued to live the “law of polygamy” until his death in 1918.
- The last documented plural marriage ended with the death of one of the two living polygamous wives in 1954.
- Smith admitted under oath, in 1904, before a U.S. Senate committee hearing that he was in violation of both the law of the land as well as in violation of the law of the Church for his continued practice of polygamy.

HEBER J. GRANT (1856-1945)

- 3 wives. One died in 1893, with a second one passing in 1908. He was living the “law of polygamy” until this time.
- Married the second and third wives only a day apart. It appears that this may have been a requirement for him to be an apostle and that he may have been a ‘reluctant polygamist’ at first (as Brigham Young had once been). He did not abandon nor divorce any of his wives. His wives were about the same age as him (not younger as in the case of previous prophets).
- He paid a fine of \$100 in 1899 when Emily’s last child was born.^{xv}
- Died in 1945. Last polygamist president of the LDS church.

^{xvi} HOMOSEXUALITY – ENSIGN JULY 1974 PG 14

Homosexuals and lesbians **seldom are happy people**. Theirs is a relationship that is **unnatural**, one not bound by fidelity, trust, or loyalty, and one totally lacking in the meaningful family relationships that marriage offers.

Homosexuality often espouses emotional problems because of the **constant insecurity** inherent in a relationship neither sanctioned by nor protected by the law.

Because there is no legal bond, homosexuality too often encourages, or at least permits, promiscuity.

To say that "no one gets hurt" is presumptive. Homosexuals are hurt by the unacceptability of the relationship, not only by society, but also by themselves. This is evidenced by their almost universal desire that their children (if they have any) not follow the same pattern.

Someone does get hurt. There is harm in homosexuality. Many homosexuals seek to introduce others into their practice, often those in their tender, impressionable years. Many studies have indicated that such early homosexual experience may interfere with normal sexual adjustment in subsequent marriage.

Nor is homosexuality compatible with peace of mind, tranquility of soul, or with the Spirit of our Father in heaven that all of us want, need, and enjoy when we live in accordance with his laws.

Just as the Word of Wisdom is the Lord's way with or without medical proof of its value to our health, so likewise the moral law taught by the Church does not require any medical proof of its value to our spiritual and physical health. It is sufficient that the Lord has told us to marry, to have children, and to do this according to the righteous ways of the law of God. In this lies physical health, emotional stability, and true happiness.

^{xvii} **CHANGES TO THE HANDBOOK REGARDING HOW GAYS AND THEIR CHILDREN ARE TREATED**
<https://medium.com/@jellistx/why-are-the-children-of-gay-parents-newly-unwelcome-in-the-mormon-church-67161add297a#.h87h5pki7> Changes to the handbook (section 16.13) are as follows:

A natural or adopted child of a parent living in a same-gender relationship, whether the couple is married or cohabiting, may not receive a name and a blessing.

A natural or adopted child of a parent living in a same-gender relationship, whether the couple is married or cohabiting, may be baptized and confirmed, ordained, or recommended for missionary service only as follows:

A mission president or a stake president may request approval from the Office of the First Presidency to baptize and confirm, ordain, or recommend missionary service for a child of a parent who has lived or is living in a same-gender relationship when he is satisfied by personal interviews that both of the following requirements are met:

1. The child accepts and is committed to live the teachings and doctrine of the Church, and *specifically disavows the practice of same-gender cohabitation and marriage*.
2. The child is of legal age and does not live with a parent who has lived or currently lives in a same-gender cohabitation relationship or marriage.

^{xviii} **BLACK SATAN IN THE TEMPLE**

Because of recommendations made by Harold B. Lee, of the First Presidency, and a committee including Howard W. Hunter (president of the Genealogical Society) working from 1968 to 1972 to investigate endowment procedures, several phrases used in ceremony film scripts were subsequently dubbed out in the mid 1970s.

For example, the preacher's reference to Satan having black skin was omitted. Another omission was the preacher leading the audience in a Protestant hymn. Satan and the preacher no longer fix a specific salary to proselytize the audience for converts.

According to Spencer Palmer who portrayed the minister in the third filmed version, the role of Satan was to have originally been filled by an African-American, but due to protests by LDS Polynesians, a Caucasian filled the role.

From: David John Buerger, The Mysteries of Godliness – A History of Mormon Temple Worship Pages 166-170

NOTE: Black clothing for Satan had been standard in the temple (as it remains), but black skin is not mentioned in the 1931(1927?) version of the endowment. The reference to black skin, if accurate, would have only occurred between about 1930-1975 (or likely for a shorter period).

^{xix} TEMPLE ADMISSION QUESTIONS

Temple recommend questions were first formalized in the 1880s. Early questions included:

- Have you murdered anyone in Cold-Blood?
- Have you knowingly branded another person's cattle or livestock?
- Have you plowed or harvested grain from a field that was not your own?
- Do you, and your family, wash or bathe as regularly as you are able?

see

<http://www.mormonmatters.org/2009/02/16/temple-recommend-questions-by-guest-aaron-reeves/>

The 1976 temple recommend questions are as follows:

1. Have you ever been involved in a transgression relating to the law of chastity that has not been resolved with the appropriate priesthood authorities?
2. Do you sustain the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, recognizing no other person on the earth as authorized to exercise all priesthood keys?
3. Do you sustain the other General Authorities and local authorities of the Church?
4. Do you earnestly strive to live in accordance with the accepted rules and doctrines of the Church?
5. Do you have any affiliation with or sympathy for any groups or individuals who teach or practice doctrines not officially approved by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?
6. Are you a full tithe payer?
7. Are you **totally honest** in your dealings with your fellowmen?
8. Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?
9. Do you wear the regularly approved garments both night and day?
10. Will you earnestly strive to do your duty in the Church; to attend your sacrament, priesthood, and other meetings; and to obey the rules, laws, and commandments of the Church?
11. Is there anything amiss in your life that has not been fully resolved with the appropriate priesthood authorities that should be cleared up at this time?
12. Have you ever had a divorce that has not been cleared by appropriate priesthood authorities where required?
13. Do you consider yourself worthy in every way to go to the temple?

The 1991-1995 temple recommend questions are as follows:

1. Do you believe in God, the Eternal Father, in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost; and do you have a firm testimony of the restored gospel?
2. Do you sustain the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the prophet, seer, and revelator; and do you recognize him as the only person on the earth authorized to exercise all priesthood keys?
3. Do you sustain the other General Authorities and the local authorities of the Church?
4. Do you live the law of chastity?
5. Is there anything in your conduct relating to members of your family that is not in harmony with the teachings of the Church?
6. Do you affiliate with any group or individual whose teachings or practices are contrary to or oppose those accepted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or do you sympathize with the precepts of any such group or individual?
7. Do you earnestly strive to do your duty in the Church; to attend your sacrament, priesthood, and other meetings; and to obey the rules, laws, and commandments of the gospel?

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8. Are you **honest** in your dealings with your fellowmen?
 9. Are you a full-tithe payer?
 10. Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?
 11. Have you ever been divorced or are you now separated from your spouse under order of a civil court? If yes,
(a) - Are you current in your support payments and other financial obligations for family members, as specified
by court order or in other written, binding commitments? (b) Were there any circumstances of transgression in
connection with your divorce or separation that have not been previously resolved with your bishop?
 12. If you have received your temple endowment -- (a) Do you keep all the covenants that you made in the
temple? (b) Do you wear the authorized garments both day and night?
 13. Has there been any sin or misdeed in your life that should have been resolved with priesthood authorities but
has not?
 14. Do you consider yourself worthy in every way to enter the temple and participate in temple ordinances?

In each interview, emphasize to the applicant the need to safeguard the recommend. It must never be loaned and should be reported immediately to the issuer if lost or stolen. (See "Lost, Stolen, or Revoked Recommends" on the preceding page.)

OLD Questions 11 & 12 (replaced by 11a & 11b)

11. Have you ever had a divorce that has not been cleared by appropriate priesthood authorities, where required?
 12. If you have ever been divorced or separated, are you presently fulfilling your obligations for the support and maintenance of your family?
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The Oct 2019 questions were updated as follows:

1. Do you have faith in and a testimony of God, the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?
2. Do you have a testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and of His role as your Savior and Redeemer?
3. Do you have a testimony of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
4. Do you sustain the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the prophet, seer, and revelator and as the only person on the earth authorized to exercise all priesthood keys?
 - a. Do you sustain the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators?
 - b. Do you sustain the other General Authorities and local leaders of the Church?
5. The Lord has said that all things are to be "done in cleanliness" before Him (Doctrine and Covenants 42:41).
 - a. Do you strive for moral **cleanliness in your thoughts** and behavior?
 - b. Do you obey the law of chastity?
6. Do you follow the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ in your private and public behavior with members of your family and others?
7. Do you support or promote any teachings, practices, or doctrine contrary to those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?
8. Do you strive to keep the Sabbath day holy, both at home and at church; attend your meetings; prepare for and worthily partake of the sacrament; and live your life in harmony with the laws and commandments of the gospel?
9. Do you **strive to be honest** in all that you do?
10. Are you a full-tithe payer?
11. Do you **understand** and obey the Word of Wisdom?
12. Do you have any financial or other obligations to a former spouse or to children?
 - a. If yes, are you current in meeting those obligations?
13. Do you keep the covenants that you made in the temple, including wearing the temple garment as instructed in the endowment?
14. Are there serious sins in your life that need to be resolved with priesthood authorities as part of your repentance?

15. Do you consider yourself worthy to enter the Lord's house and participate in temple ordinances?

(source: <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/october-2019-general-conference-temple-recommend>)

^{xx} **NECESSITY OF THE TEMPLE FOR RICH MEMBERS**

On May 1st, 1842, in Joseph Smith's journal it states:

preached in the grove on the keys of the kingdom charity &c.— The keys are certain signs & words by which false spirits & personages may be detected from true.— which cannot be revealed to the Elders till the Temple is completed.— **The rich can only get them in the Temple. The poor may get them on the Mountain top as did moes.**

^{xxi} **CHANGES TO THE EARLY PUBLISHED CHURCH HISTORY**

Regarding changes to the history of the Church between 1844 and 1856:

Charles Wesley Wandell, an assistant church historian, was aghast at these emendations. Commenting on the many changes made in the historical work as it was being serialized in the *Deseret News*, Wandell noted in his diary:

I notice the interpolations because having been employed in the Historian's office at Nauvoo by Doctor Richards, and employed, too, in 1845, in compiling this very autobiography, I know that after Joseph's death his memoir was 'doctored' to suit the new order of things, and this, too, by the direct order of Brigham Young to Doctor Richards and systematically by Richards.

The Quorum of the Twelve, under Young's leadership, began altering the historical record shortly after Smith's death. Contrary to the introduction's claim, Smith did not author the History of the Church.

^{xxii} In History of the Church Volume 1, first paragraph, the motivation for writing the history as given by Joseph Smith (or a later ghost writer) as: *Owing to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all of which have been designed by the authors thereof to militate against its character as a Church and its progress in the world—I have been induced to write this history, to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such facts in my possession.*

^{xxiii} **REPLACEMENT OF ARRINGTON IN THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT**

In the early 1980s, Lennard Arrington was replaced as the church historian and the office was turned returned to being a religious rather than a scholarly office. This replacement was orchestrated by Ezra Taft Benson, along with Mark Peterson and Boyd Packer of the 12. See: <https://youtu.be/1nGYgQWbHhk?t=11m19s> Lennard Arrington was the only professional historian to fill the post in the history of the church and presided over a period of openness which was in stark contrast to the previous 100 years of the office.

Arrington wrote in his journal at the time: "It is clear that President Benson will not stand for our 'real' history. And since he is next in line, and president of the Twelve, we are in a powerless position, and no one wishes to consider our own rationale," Arrington wrote Sept. 6, 1976. "... The question for me is shall I retain the job ... and try to write history which will be approved by [the church's] Correlation [Department] or shall I resign and continue to write 'real history.'" (Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History, p 339.)

xxiv INFORMATION ABOUT HOW THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS SOLD

"After the Book was published, I frequently bantered him [Martin Harris] for a copy. He asked fourteen shillings a piece for them; I told them I would not give so much; he told me [they] had had a revelation that they must be sold at that price. Sometime afterwards I talked with Martin Harris about buying one of the Books and he told me they had had a new revelation, that they might be sold at ten shillings a piece." (Henry Harris, in *Mormonism Unveiled*, page 252)

"The Mormons said the price of the 'Book of Mormon' was established at \$1.75 by revelation. It did not sell well and they claimed to receive another to sell it at \$1.25." (Sylvia Walker, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, volume 1, page 1)

"Five thousand copies were published – and they said the angel told Smith to sell the book at a price which was one dollar and eight cents per copy more than the cost, that they 'might have the temporal profit, as well as the spiritual.'" (David Marks, Baptist minister, *The Life of David Marks*, 1831, page 341. Quote made after visiting with David Whitmer and the Whitmer family) – see <http://mormonismexposed.blogspot.com/2008/02/cost-of-original-book-of-mormon-in-1830.html>

xxv REWRITING OF THE EARLY REVELATIONS TO INSERT THE PRIESTHOOD

With respect to the 1833 Book of Commandments, David Whitmer stated in *An Address To All Believers in Christ* pg 64: "Priesthood means authority; and authority is the word we should use. I do not think the word priesthood is mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon. Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church – until Sydney Rigdon's days in Ohio. This matter of two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and **lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon**. He explained these things to Brother Joseph in his way, out of the old Scriptures, and got Brother Joseph to inquire, etc. He would inquire, and as mouthpiece speak out the revelations just as they had it fixed in their hearts. As I have said before, according to the desires of the heart, the inspiration comes... This is the way that High Priests and **the "priesthood" as you have it, was introduced into the Church of Christ almost two years after its beginning** – and after we had baptized and confirmed about two thousand souls into the church.

Lemar Peters further two in *Problems In Mormon Text*, pp 7-8: "...The notable revelations on Priesthood in the Doctrine and Covenants before referred to, sections 2 and 13, are missing, and Chapter 28 gives no hint of the Restoration which, if actual, had been known for four years. More than four hundred words were added to this revelation of Aug 1829 in Section 27 of the D&C, the additions made to include the names of heavenly visitors and two separate ordinations. The Book of Commandments gives the duties of Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons, and refers to Joseph's apostolic calling but there is **no mention of Melchizedek Priesthood, High Priesthood, Seventies, High Priests, nor High Councilors**. These words were later inserted into the revelation on **Church organization and government of April, 1830, making it appear that they were known at that date, but they do not appear in the original**, Chapter 24 of the book of Commandments three years later. Similar interpolations were made in the revelations known as Sections 42 and 68.

xxvi SEER STONE OF HYRUM PAGE

The seer stone of Hyrum Page functioned in exactly the same way as it was reported that Joseph's seer stone worked:

"Father [Emer] Harris said the Apostle said we have to fight against principalities and powers in high places. Bro. Hiram Page dug out of the earth a black stone [and] put it in his pocket. When he got home, he looked at it. **It contained a sentence on paper to befit it. As soon as he wrote one sentence, another sentence came on the stone**, until he wrote 16 pages. Bro. Joseph was told of the fact. One person asked Joseph if it is right. He said he did not know, but he prayed and got revelation that the stone was of the devil. Then it was broke to powder and the writings burnt. It was a work of the power of darkness. Amen."

Source: Footnote 1, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2011/10/a-time-to-prepare?lang=eng>
Primary source: Provo Utah Central Stake general minutes, Apr. 6, 1856, vol. 10 (1855–60), Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 273 (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization modernized).

xxvii **PRESSURE TACTICS IN GAINING CONVERTS**

From one training to mission leaders

(https://mormonleaks.io/wiki/documents/b/ba/Utah_Areas_Annual_Mission_Presidents_Seminar-2015-09-09.pdf):

They will get to yes one no at a time: **a. Don't ever accept no for an answer.** b. Help them build faith beyond the first no. **c. Ask three or four times in different ways.** d. Do something positively different (e.g. after the last no, ask if "we can sing you a song" or "show you a picture of their family") after the third or fourth no. e. Alternate asking questions between companions.

xxviii **THE EVOLUTION OF THE LDS CHURCH'S STANCE ON EVOLUTION**

The following list of quotes and references gives an overview of the LDS church's position with respect to evolution, and how it has changed over the last 150+ years. See <https://redd.it/686d8z>

- 1830 - The Book of Mormon is published in which it suggested there was no death prior to the fall of Adam, "If Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end." - 2 Nephi 2:2
- 1832 - In section 77 of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith Jr. describes the earth's "temporal existence" as being 7,000 years old.
- 1872 – Orson Pratt in a Christmas address states, "We know that six thousand years have not yet elapsed since the creation, but we know that they have very nearly expired." <http://jod.mrm.org/15/253>
- 1882 - Church President John Taylor, in his book Mediation and Atonement stated, "The animal and vegetable creations are governed by certain laws, and are composed of certain elements peculiar to themselves. This applies to man, to the beasts, fowls, fish and creeping things, to the insects and to all animated nature These principles do not change, as represented by evolutionists of the Darwinian school, but the primitive organisms of all living beings exist in the same form as when they first received their impress from the Maker. ... [Man] did not originate from a chaotic mass of matter, moving or inert, but came forth possessing, in an embryonic state, all the faculties and powers of a God."
- 1909 - The first official statement on the issue of evolution was published by the church, marking the centennial of Charles Darwin's birth, titled The Origins of Man. "It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth, and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men. The word of the Lord declares that Adam was "the first man of all men" (Moses 1:34), and we are therefore in duty bound to regard him as the primal parent of the race ... all men were created in the beginning after the image of God; and whether we take

this to mean the spirit or the body, or both, it commits us to the same conclusion: Man began life as a human being, in the likeness of our heavenly Father."

- 1910 - Amid disagreements on whether or not to teach evolution at BYU, two faculty members were fired and others resigned out of sympathy. The decision to NOT teach evolution was made by church president Joseph F. Smith who said "Teachers in a Church school [should] not be given opportunity to inculcate theories that [are] out of harmony with the recognized doctrines of the Church, and hence that they be required to refrain from so doing."
- 1925 - Under a new presidency the church issued a reaffirming second official statement on evolution, titled "Mormon" View of Evolution. "'God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.'" In these plain and pointed words the inspired author of the book of Genesis made known to the world the truth concerning the origin of the human family."
- 1930 - B.H. Roberts (Q. of 70), drafted a priesthood manual which stated that death had been occurring for millions of years prior to the fall of Adam, and that human-like pre-Adamites had lived on the earth. Junior apostle Joseph Fielding Smith "vigorously promulgated [the] opposite point of view" in a speech that was published in a church magazine stating, as doctrine, that there had been no death on earth until after the fall of Adam and that there were no pre-Adamites.
- After, both men were given the opportunity to present their views to the First Presidency. A memorandum was sent to the general authorities which discouraged public discussion of controversial topics, stating "Upon the fundamental doctrines of the Church we are all agreed. Our mission is to bear the message of the restored Gospel to the people of the world. Leave geology, biology, archaeology and anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church."
- 1931 - Apostle James Talmage published in the Deseret News, "I'd not regard Adam as related to – certainly not as descended from – the Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon, the Peking, or the Piltdown man. Adam came as divinely directed, created and empowered, and stands as the patriarchal head of his posterity.... He is born in the lineage of Deity, not in the posterity of the brute creation."
- 1954 - Now President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Joseph Fielding Smith published a book titled Man, His Origin and Destiny where we wrote at length regarding his views on science and evolution. "It has been truthfully said that organic evolution is Satan's chief weapon in this dispensation in his attempt to destroy the divine mission of Jesus Christ."
- 1954 - Compiled writings of Joseph Fielding Smith by son-in-law Bruce McConkie titled Doctrines of Salvation is published, further propagating many anti-evolutionist views. "If men prefer to believe the strong delusions taught by evolutionists, rather than what the Lord has revealed, we cannot help it, but it certainly shows in them a lack of faith, which is not to their credit." Furthermore JFS clarifies that "Adam was placed here, not a wild, half civilized savage, but a perfectly-developed man, with wonderful

intelligence, for he helped to create this earth. He was chosen in pre-existence to be the first man upon the earth and the father of the human race, and he will preside over his posterity forever."

- Later JFS boldly declares that "IF EVOLUTION IS TRUE, THE CHURCH IS FALSE. If life began on the earth, as advocated by Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel (who has been caught openhanded perpetrating a fraud), and others of this school, whether by chance or by some designing hand, then the doctrines of the Church are false."
- 1958 - Sharing many of the same views of his father in law, Bruce McConkie publishes Mormon Doctrine describing the pre-Fall state of life. "Adam and Eve and all forms of life, both animal and plant, were created in immortality; that is, when first placed on this earth, all forms of life were in a state of immortality. There was no death in the world; death entered after the fall."

His views on evolution and the age of the earth, "Evolutionary theories assume that hundreds of millions of years were involved, first in the creation of the earth as a habitable globe, and again in the evolution of spontaneously generated, single celled forms of life into the complex and multitudinous forms of life now found on its face. We have rather specific scriptural indications that the creative period was of relatively short duration... There is no harmony between the truths of revealed religion and the theories of organic evolution."

- 1971 - To help its students prepare for biology graduate programs at other universities, BYU resumed undergraduate evolution courses. Though Ezra Taft Benson made this suggestion to parents "If your children are taught untruths on evolution in the public schools or even in our Church schools, provide them with a copy of President Joseph Fielding Smith's excellent rebuttal in his book Man, His Origin and Destiny." - Era, Dec 1970
- 1975 - In the Oct. General Conference, Bruce R. McConkie states that "One such event took place six millennia ago in the garden which was planted eastward in Eden when the man Adam and the woman Eve fell that men might be."
- 1979 - The Bible Dictionary published as an appendix to the King James bible, states under "Fall of Adam" that "Before the fall, Adam and Eve had physical bodies but no blood. There was no sin, no death, and no children among any of the earthly creations."
- 1982 - Christ and the Creation, published in the Ensign stated that "[m]ortality and procreation and death all had their beginnings with the Fall."
- 1985 - Boyd Packer said in the October General Conference that "no one with reverence for God could believe that His children evolved from slime or from reptiles."
- 1988 - Boyd Packer speaking about the 1910 and 1925 statements about evolution reaffirmed that "The doctrines in both of them are consistent and have not changed."

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- 1992 - BYU released a packet with comments from the LDS Church's First Presidency and the Encyclopedia of Mormonism stating "The scriptures tell why man was created, but they do not tell how, though the Lord has promised that he will tell that when he comes again..."
 - 1997 - President Gordon Hinckley said "None of us ... knows enough. The learning process is an endless process. We must read, we must observe, we must assimilate, and we must ponder that to which we expose our minds. I believe in evolution, not organic evolution, as it is called, but in the evolution of the mind, the heart, and the soul of man. I believe in improvement. I believe in growth."
 - 2012 - Russel Nelson in discussing the human body stated that "some people erroneously think that these marvelous physical attributes happened by chance or resulted from a big bang somewhere." - April General Conference
 - 2015 - Russell Nelson said in a Pew Research Center interview "to think that man evolved from one species to another is, to me, incomprehensible. Man has always been man. Dogs have always been dogs. Monkeys have always been monkeys. It's just the way genetics works."
 - 2016 – Feb. New Era magazine (aimed at youth aged 12-18) states: "Did dinosaurs live and die on this earth long before man came along? *There have been no revelations on this question*, and the scientific evidence says yes. (You can learn more about it by studying paleontology if you like, *even at Church-owned schools*.) The details of what happened on this planet before Adam and Eve **aren't a huge doctrinal concern of ours**. The accounts of the Creation in the scriptures are not meant to provide a literal, scientific explanation of the specific processes, time periods, or events involved. *What matters to us* is that as part of His plan for us, God created the earth and then created Adam and Eve, who were our first parents and were instrumental in bringing about the Fall, which enabled us to be born on earth and participate in God's plan.
 - 2017 - Current Church view is that "The Church has no official position on evolution, and each member is entitled to his or her own personal views on the subject." See: https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Question:_What_is_the_Church%27s_stance_on_the_theory_of_organic_evolution%3F