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Chapter 1 : Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion on blog.quintoapp.com

The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion Reviewer Truman G. Madsen, *It may or may not have been calculated, but there is an awesome appropriateness in the Michelangelo segment—the hand of God extended toward the hand of Adam—which appears on the cover of Sterling McMurrin's The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion.*

Posted on October 5, by Valerie Tarico Coauthor: Even some LDS quirks seem to be turning into positives. And on December 10, , the Mormon church renounced and denounced a part of its racist past. How mainstream are their beliefs? Tony Nugent, retired professor of religious studies, has compiled a list of twelve teachings that Mormons tend to downplay. The story of the Book of Mormon BoM is that the American continent was originally settled by people from the ancient Near East who came across the ocean in boats between and years ago. This includes four groups: Much of the BoM story focuses on two groups of Israelites in the New World, the Nephites and the Lamanites, descended from two of the sons of Lehi of the tribe of Manasseh. These groups fought continually, but when Christ came from heaven after his ascension to visit them in AD 34, they all believed in him and stopped fighting. However, in the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD, when the Lamanites stopped believing in Christ, these peaceful relations ended. Their renewed hostilities culminated in a great religious war in AD at the hill Cumorah in upstate New York, in which the Lamanites were victorious and , Nephites were killed. Then from where would Joseph Smith have gotten this story? The mistaken idea that the American Indians descend from the lost tribes of Israel was, in fact, a very popular idea in the United States in the early 19th Century. The many specific parallels between these two works have often been noted. How might Smith have known about this work? Other racist passages in the scripture have simply been changed by Mormon authorities—e. 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. Since blacks were a stigmatized race in Mormonism, black men were denied ordination to the priesthood in the LDS Church. While the LDS Church, under pressure, finally granted black men the priesthood in , the racism in their Scriptures remains as offensive as ever. The doctrine that black skin is a punishment was renounced by the Church hierarchy in December Among the many reasons for doubting this claim are the following: There is apparently no credible evidence that any of the following were present in the New World during this time period: But how would Nephi, for instance, who lived in the 6th Century BC, know passages in Old Testament books such as Malachi, written after his time, and in the New Testament, written years later? These are problematic statements. In addition, there is no biblical or other evidence that Israelites of the 6th Century BC spoke Egyptian or wrote using any of the forms of Egyptian hieroglyphics. It happens to be just 3 miles south of where Smith lives. He goes there and sees the plates in a stone box, but as soon as he tries to take them the angel forbids him. He returns to the same spot on the same night of the year for the next two years, without success. Grandin in Palmyra, NY, in March Where can we see these marvelous gold plates? These witness statements are printed at the beginning of each copy of the BoM. Three witnesses declare that an angel of God showed them the engravings upon the plates, while the eight others claim that that Joseph Smith showed them the plates with their engravings, which they also handled. A few years after the BoM was published these three witnesses were excommunicated and harshly denounced and insulted by Smith. All the Whitmer family witnesses were later excommunicated, although David eventually rejoined the church. In the section of the book supposedly written in about BC an Israelite by the name of Nephi reports that the biblical patriarch Joseph uttered this prophecy: Here we have a prophecy like a riddle, the answer to which is, of course, Joseph Smith, Jr. Not satisfied to have this prophecy of himself and his father only in the BoM, Smith goes further by adding nearly-identical verses to the text of the Bible. What is the basis for this and the many other Mormon additions to the Bible? Take parts of the 6th chapter of Genesis in the Inspired Version: These distinctive doctrines include the following: Humans can become angels, and angels can become humans, e. Michael refer

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to Temple Endowment ceremony, Noah used to be St. Gabriel, and the Nephite man Moroni became the angel Moroni. Matter has always existed, so the Creation was not ex nihilo. A deceased person who was never baptized can get to the Celestial Kingdom as a result of a proxy baptism in a Mormon temple. This revelation was kept secret from the general church membership until Brigham Young made it known in Dennison there to perform the operation; but he refused to operate. The mob poured tar over him, and then stuck feathers in it and left him. He kept this secret from Emma, but she caught them in flagrante delicto and ejected Fanny from the house. In July of a man by the name of Michael Chandler brought some Egyptian mummies and papyri which had been excavated near the ancient city of Thebes to Kirtland, OH, and sold them to Joseph Smith. Flinders Petrie, London Univ. Mercer, Western Theological Seminary. Although Joseph Smith was clearly very charismatic, there is considerable evidence that the official Mormon view of his pure moral character is a fiction. He deceived many farmers. He had a forked witch-hazel rod, later a peep-stone with which he claimed he could locate buried money or hidden things. Jo contrived in every way to obtain money without work. The farmers claimed that not a week passed without Jo stole something. I knew at least one hundred farmers in the towns of Phelps, Manchester, and Palmyra, N. They worked very little and had the reputation of stealing everything they could lay their hands on. When Jo told his neighbors about finding gold plates no one believed him nor paid any attention to it, he had humbugged them so much. Verse 21 of that section states: This revelation is at odds with his own life history. Beginning at least as early as , when he was 25 years old, until his death, Smith was continuously in trouble with legal authorities. In his lifetime Smith had to defend himself in forty-eight criminal cases and had a total of over suits brought against him. His troubles with the law caused the parents of his first wife, Emma Hale, to disown their daughter. However, his legal troubles predate his religious proclamations. The Church does not allow members to openly and independently investigate or question its core beliefs or historical claims, or to challenge its leadership or core values. In the 19th Century, when the clash between Mormons and mainstream Christians was more overt, deception was more overt as well. Should Mormonism be founded in an elaborate hoax, as much evidence suggests, then deception is not just an occasional practice, but the foundation structure upon which the entire edifice of the Mormon religion has been erected. Mormons of good faith are then inescapably caught between the demands of doctrine and their core moral values of honesty and integrity.

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Chapter 2 : Bruce Charlton's Notions: Sterling M McMurrin - Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion

Sterling McMurrin The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion from the publisher: A Philosopher, Sterling M. McMurrin () appreciated the similarities between Mormonism and Hellenistic Christianity.

Both Clark and Dave started by posting on the topics covered in the first eleven pages. Before diving in let me first say I have enjoyed this book. McMurrin is a philosopher and seems mostly interested in comparing Mormonism to the rest of Christianity to point out the theological similarities and differences. While he uses way too much technical jargon I found the overall information quite useful. Part of what I appreciate as a reader 40 years later is learning what he considered to be the dominant Mormon position on all sorts of sticky theological issues. So on to the issues! In a strict sense this is true I suppose. Brigham Young and lots of other church leaders taught that miracles are simply miracles from our limited perspective, but that God works within the laws of nature to accomplish them. This is a sort of naturalism, but certainly not the sort that an atheist would approve of since we simply replace faith in supernatural miracles with faith in a God that knows how to manipulate the Universe in ways we have not discovered yet. The [naturalism] continuity is attested especially by the rejection of the traditional Christian concept of eternity, which is essentially Greek in origin, where eternity means timelessness, the denial of temporality. Mormonism conceives of God as a being within both time and space. Based on some of the discussions we have had here it appears the timeless God of Greek philosophy has become the version of God many Mormons want to worship nowadays. On Necessity and Contingency This section is on what things are necessary, which in this context means what things are uncreated and beginningless, and what things are contingent, meaning the things that are created or that have a beginning. The point is that in most of traditional Christianity, only God is without beginning and all else was created by God out of nothing creatio ex nihilo. McMurrin points out that in Mormonism all matter is uncreated and even spirits are made up of matter. Anything has contingent being if its being is not necessary, that is if it could not exist. The question of whether spirits are necessary or contingent is not covered in this section, though it is discussed a bit in later sections. On Materialism In close conjunction with Mormon naturalism an humanism is Mormon materialism. As our scripture states: But calling Mormons strict materialists is somewhat misleading because materialism is traditionally the foundation of strict causal determinism. Basically causal determinism is the notion that every action is a reaction to prior causes. The problem is that Mormons are generally devoted believers in libertarian free will or free agency and that mean we believe that at least some of our actions are not caused by forces outside of us but are self caused. Basically Mormons are materialists that functionally act like dualists. Interestingly, the Third century theologian Tertullian held a belief similar to Mormons. On Monism and Pluralism This section talks about whether one believes that when everything that exists is reduced to its simple and necessary parts it is made up of one kind of stuff monism or that there are many kinds of fundamental stuff pluralism. The pluralistic character of the Mormon view of reality can be seen at many levels: This has become a long post and might be a lot to digest so I will stop here; but I thought it would be useful to lay a foundation for future theological discussions here at the Thang. I want to know how so many Mormons started believing incorrectly in my opinion that God lives outside of time and that spirits are simple and irreducible rather than made up of constituent parts since this book was writtenâ€¦ Must be a sign of the times ;-).

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Chapter 3 : Theology - The Encyclopedia of Mormonism

Mormonism is essentially Pelagian in its theology." (p) I have read every published discourse of Joseph Smith, was born in the covenant, raised an active member, served a mission, and graduated from BYU, and it wasn't until my last semester of college, in an elective class that I heard of Pelagius.

See this page in the original publication. Since scriptures and specific revelations supply Latter-day Saints with authoritative answers to many of the traditional concerns of faith, members of the Church tend to devote little energy to theoretical, speculative, or systematic theology. From the perspective of the restored gospel, what can be known about divine things must be revealed by God. Though rationally structured, coherent, and ordered, the content of Latter-day Saint faith is not the fruit of speculation, nor has it been deduced from premises or derived from philosophical or scientific inquiries into the nature of things. The word "theology" and much of what it describes originated with Plato, Aristotle, and the Orphics. The word is not found in the Bible or other LDS scriptures. What is typically understood as theology within Christianity was introduced by Origen A. Latter-day Saints have little interest in theology in the sense of trying to discover divine things with the unaided resources of the human mind. Even when theology is seen as essentially descriptive or apologetic, it is not entirely at home in the LDS community. These accounts may be said to contain "theology," but not in the sense that their meaning is discovered by human ingenuity instead of disclosed through the proclaimed word and will of God. The core of faith is not a confession to a creed but a personal witness that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ see Religious Experience ; Testimony. This leaves little room for systematic treatises intended to fix, order, and settle the understanding of the believers, though it does allow room for reason as a tool for attaining coherence and for working out implications in the revelations see Reason and Revelation. Nor is the Book of Mormon a theological treatise. Instead, it is a long and tragic history, filled with prophetic warnings about deviations from covenants with God. In this sacred text, the gospel of Jesus Christ-beginning with faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost-provides the foundation for all other beliefs. According to the plan of God, those who genuinely comply and endure to the end will eventually be saved in the kingdom of God. As both ground and substance of LDS faith, these points of doctrine are understood as realities, not as matters of conjecture. It is a mistake to see them or what is built upon them "line by line" through additional divine revelation as "theology," as that term is generally understood among Christians. Since the texts setting forth the gospel or doctrine of Jesus Christ are rooted in events that Latter-day Saints believe actually happened, it is in exegetical and historical work that both the explication and the defense of the faith usually take place. Latter-day Saints can scarcely be said to have much in the way of a dogmatic theology, though they sometimes informally borrow a Christian tendency to designate the whole of their beliefs and dogma by the label "theology. What they produced were initially called theological lectures see Lectures on Faith , and they seem to have been modeled after formal treatises like those by Charles G. Finney or Alexander Campbell But the formal methodology of these seven lectures has not been much adopted by other LDS writers. The early Latter-day Saints were fond of the word "theology," and it turns up conspicuously in some of their writings. A well-known example is Parley P. Such books have filled a need for a seemingly orderly explication of what was believed to have been revealed through Joseph Smith and for an indication of how to apply those revelations "in the duties of life" AF, p. To some extent, such works approach systematic theology, in that they are concerned with identifying truth, its structure, correspondences, and unity. These volumes have dogmatic dimensions with respect to the attributes and roles of God, his government, the creation, redemption, eschatology, and the like. They are also concerned with scrutinizing moral aspects of human life, free actions, suffering, ignorance, and sin. But their authors do not approach these topics by the use of reason unaided by revelation, nor are they considered officially authoritative by Latter-day Saints. The desire for definitive answers to a host of vexing and unsettled questions has been satisfied in the present era by books like Bruce R. This book did not derive from a philosophical culture, as did much of

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traditional Christian theology. It is more nearly an instance of what those outside of Mormon circles would label as dogmatic, rather than formal or systematic, theology. Such compendia have no official standing and represent the opinions of their authors. Their pronouncements, however, are popular among some in the Church. McMurrin, who has attempted to show how classical philosophy and Christian theology might be accommodated to what he defines as the metaphysics inherent in LDS teachings. Still, he discounts divine revelation, does not take the LDS approach to epistemology seriously, and looks instead for signs of naturalism and humanism. Thus, his views are incomprehensible to many Latter-day Saints, since he diverts attention away from historical matters and the crucial prophetic claims upon which the Latter-day Saint faith rests. Such explicitly theological literature seems selective, if not contrived or forced, and it has had virtually no impact on the life of believers. Instead, the influential scholarly works among Latter-day Saints tend to be either strictly historical or exegetical, though these works also have no official standing. For investigations from a Latter-day Saint perspective of the differences between the prophetic and theological approaches to matters of faith, see Hugh W. For an attempt to cast LDS beliefs in traditional theological terminology and then to compare and contrast those formulations with the views of various philosophers and theologians, see Sterling M. The historical grounds and tendencies of early Latter-day Saints to eschew systematic treatises and formal theology are discussed by Richard L. For additional sources on the subject, see:

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Chapter 4 : The Mormons . Frequently Asked Questions | PBS

I am finally getting around to reading Sterling McMurrin's book called "The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion". Clark already sponsored a reading club for this book about 18 months ago so in this post I will pick up on that long-dead discussion and follow Clark's outline.

Restoration Latter Day Saints Mormonism describes itself as falling within world Christianity , but as a distinct restored dispensation ; it characterizes itself as the only true form of the Christian religion since the time of a Great Apostasy that began not long after the ascension of Jesus Christ. In addition, Mormons believe that Smith and his legitimate successors are modern prophets who receive revelation from God to guide the church. They maintain that other religions have a portion of the truth and are guided by the light of Christ. In Mormonism, life on earth is just a short part of an eternal existence. Mormons believe that in the beginning all people existed as spirits or "intelligences," in the presence of God. In this process, people inevitably make mistakes, becoming unworthy to return to the presence of God. Mormons believe that Jesus paid for the sins of the world, and that all people can be saved through his atonement. The Earth is just one of many inhabited worlds, and there are many governing heavenly bodies, including the planet or star Kolob , which is said to be nearest the throne of God. Ordinances[edit] In Mormonism, an ordinance is a religious ritual of special significance, often involving the formation of a covenant with God. The term has a meaning roughly similar to that of the term " sacrament " in other Christian denominations. An eight-year-old girl being baptized in Cerro Punta, Panama Saving ordinances or ordinances viewed as necessary for salvation include: In Mormonism, the saving ordinances are seen as necessary for salvation, but they are not sufficient in and of themselves. For example, baptism is required for exaltation , but simply having been baptized does not guarantee any eternal reward. Because Mormons believe that everyone must receive certain ordinances to be saved, Mormons perform ordinances on behalf of deceased persons. Only ordinances for salvation are performed on behalf of deceased persons. Baptism for the dead. While Mormons believe in the general accuracy of the modern day text of the Bible, they also believe that it is incomplete and that errors have been introduced. These books, as well as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible , have varying degrees of acceptance as divine scripture among different denominations of the Latter Day Saint movement. Revelation Latter Day Saints In Mormonism, continuous revelation is the principle that God or his divine agents still continue to communicate to mankind. This communication can be manifest in many ways: Whatever God commands is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire. Mormons believe that Smith and subsequent church leaders could speak scripture "when moved upon by the Holy Ghost. In Mormonism, revelation is not limited to church members. It also teaches that everyone is entitled to personal revelation with respect to his or her stewardship leadership responsibility. Thus, parents may receive inspiration from God in raising their families, individuals can receive divine inspiration to help them meet personal challenges, church officers may receive revelation for those whom they serve. The important consequence of this is that each person may receive confirmation that particular doctrines taught by a prophet are true, as well as gain divine insight in using those truths for their own benefit and eternal progress. In the church, personal revelation is expected and encouraged, and many converts believe that personal revelation from God was instrumental in their conversion. Mormonism and Christianity Mormons see Jesus Christ as the premier figure of their religion. This discord led to a series of sometimes-deadly conflicts between Mormons and others who saw themselves as orthodox Christians. This gives rise to efforts by Mormons and opposing types of Christians to proselytize each other. Mormons believe in Jesus Christ as the literal Son of God and Messiah , his crucifixion as a conclusion of a sin offering , and subsequent resurrection. Mormons hold the view that the New Testament prophesied both the apostasy from the teachings of Christ and his apostles as well as the restoration of all things prior to the second coming of Christ. A belief that Jesus began his atonement in the garden of Gethsemane and continued it to his crucifixion, rather than the orthodox belief that

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the crucifixion alone was the physical atonement; [73] and an afterlife with three degrees of glory , with hell often called spirit prison being a temporary repository for the wicked between death and the resurrection. Mormons believe that the people of the Book of Mormon lived in the western hemisphere , that Christ appeared in the western hemisphere after his death and resurrection, that the true faith was restored in Upstate New York by Joseph Smith, that the Garden of Eden was located in North America, and that the New Jerusalem would be built in Missouri. Mormonism and Judaism Although Mormons do not claim to be part of Judaism , Mormon theology claims to situate Mormonism within the context of Judaism to an extent that goes beyond what most other Christian denominations claim. The faith incorporates many Old Testament ideas into its theology, and the beliefs of Mormons sometimes parallel those of Judaism and certain elements of Jewish culture. Later, he taught that Mormons were Israelites, and that they may learn of their tribal affiliation within the twelve Israelite tribes. The lineage is either through true blood-line or adoption. The LDS Church teaches that if one is not a direct descendant of one of the twelve tribes, upon baptism he or she is adopted into one of the tribes. Patriarchal blessings also include personal information which is revealed through a patriarch by the power of the priesthood. The Mormon affinity for Judaism is expressed by the many references to Judaism in the Mormon liturgy. For example, Smith named the largest Mormon settlement he founded Nauvoo , which means "to be beautiful" in Hebrew. In the s, Jewish groups vocally opposed the LDS practice of baptism for the dead on behalf of Jewish victims of the Holocaust and Jews in general. Brough, "Mormons who baptized , Holocaust victims posthumously were motivated by love and compassion and did not understand their gesture might offend Jews Relation to Islam[edit] Main article: Mormonism and Islam Since its origins in the 19th century, Mormonism has been compared to Islam , often by detractors of one religion or the other. Comparison of the Mormon and Muslim prophets still occurs today, sometimes for derogatory or polemical reasons [81] but also for more scholarly and neutral purposes. Mormonâ€™Muslim relations have been historically cordial; [82] recent years have seen increasing dialogue between adherents of the two faiths, and cooperation in charitable endeavors , especially in the Middle and Far East. Each religion sees its founder Muhammad for Islam, and Joseph Smith for Mormonism as being a true prophet of God, called to re-establish the truths of these ancient theological belief systems that have been altered, corrupted, or lost. In addition, both prophets received visits from an angel, leading to additional books of scripture. Both religions share a high emphasis on family life, charitable giving, chastity, abstention from alcohol, and a special reverence for, though not worship of, their founding prophet. Before the Manifesto against plural marriage, Mormonism and Islam also shared in the belief in and practice of plural marriage, a practice now held in common by Islam and various branches of Mormon fundamentalism. The religions differ significantly in their views on God. Islam insists upon the complete oneness and uniqueness of God Allah , while Mormonism asserts that the Godhead is made up of three distinct "personages. Despite opposition from other Christian denominations , Mormonism identifies itself as a Christian religion, the "restoration" of primitive Christianity. Mormons, though honoring Joseph Smith as the first prophet in modern times, see him as just one in a long line of prophets, with Jesus Christ being the premier figure of the religion. The two broad movements outside mainstream Mormonism are Mormon fundamentalism , and liberal reformist Mormonism. Mainstream Mormon theology[edit] See also: Personal prayer is encouraged as well. It has continuously existed since the succession crisis of that split the Latter Day Saint movement after the death of founder Joseph Smith, Jr. The LDS Church seeks to distance itself from other branches of Mormonism, particularly those that practice polygamy. For example, the LDS Church excommunicates members who practice polygamy or who adopt the beliefs and practices of Mormon fundamentalism. Mormon fundamentalism One way Mormon fundamentalism distinguishes itself from mainstream Mormonism is through the practice of plural marriage. Fundamentalists initially broke from the LDS Church after that doctrine was discontinued around the beginning of the 20th century. Mormon fundamentalism teaches that plural marriage is a requirement for exaltation the highest degree of salvation , which will allow them to live as gods and goddesses in the afterlife. Mainstream Mormons, by contrast, believe that a single Celestial marriage is necessary for exaltation. In distinction with the LDS Church,

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Mormon fundamentalists also often believe in a number of other doctrines taught and practiced by Brigham Young in the 19th century, which the LDS Church has either abandoned, repudiated, or put in abeyance. Mormon fundamentalists believe that these principles were wrongly abandoned or changed by the LDS Church, in large part due to the desire of its leadership and members to assimilate into mainstream American society and avoid the persecutions and conflict that had characterized the church throughout its early years. Others believe that it was a necessity at some point for "a restoration of all things" to be a truly restored Church. Liberal reformist theology[edit] See also: Others have formed new religions many of them now defunct.

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Chapter 5 : Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

Shelves: religion-lds-mormon, religion, religion-christianity, nonfiction Sterling M. McMurrin, the U.S. Commissioner of Education for two years during the administration of President John F. Kennedy (see Matters of Conscience), was one of the most intelligent and articulate persons I have ever had the privilege of hearing speak.

Introduction The religious experience of Church members is based on a spiritual witness from God that inspires the heart and mind, creating an interpersonal relationship directly with God. The list of questions is not comprehensive but represents some of the most common inquiries from news media. The Church does not embrace the creeds that developed in the third and fourth centuries that are now central to many other Christian churches. Jesus Christ is central to the lives of Church members. They seek to follow His example by being baptized see Matthew 3: The only way to salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. It is an appropriate term for God who is kind and just, all wise and all powerful. Latter-day Saints believe God is embodied, though His body is perfect and glorified. Do Mormons believe in the Trinity? The first article of faith for the Latter-day Saints reads: What is the Mormon view of the purpose of life? For Latter-day Saints, mortal existence is seen in the context of a great sweep of history, from a pre-earth life where the spirits of all mankind lived with Heavenly Father to a future life in His presence where continued growth, learning and improving will take place. Life on earth is regarded as a temporary state in which men and women are tried and tested “and where they gain experiences obtainable nowhere else. God knew humans would make mistakes, so He provided a Savior, Jesus Christ, who would take upon Himself the sins of the world. Do Mormons believe in the Bible? The Church reveres the Bible as the word of God, a sacred volume of scripture. Latter-day Saints cherish its teachings and engage in a lifelong study of its divine wisdom. Moreover, during worship services the Bible is pondered and discussed. According to Church apostle M. On the contrary, it expands, extends, and exalts it. Temples existed throughout Biblical times. These buildings were considered the house of the Lord see 2 Chronicles 2: Latter-day Saint temples are likewise considered houses of the Lord by Church members. In temples, members of the Church make covenants with God to live a virtuous and faithful life. They also offer sacraments on behalf of their deceased ancestors. Mormon temples are also used to perform marriage ceremonies that promise the faithful eternal life with their families. For members of the Church, family is of central importance. The Church is governed today by apostles, reflecting the way Jesus organized His Church in biblical times. Three apostles constitute the First Presidency consisting of the president or prophet of the Church and his two counselors , and, together with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles , they have responsibility for leading the Church worldwide and serving as special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each is accepted by Church members in a prophetic role corresponding to the apostles in the Bible. Do Latter-day Saints believe that the apostles receive revelations from God? When Latter-day Saints speak to God, they call it prayer. When God responds through the influence of the Holy Spirit, members refer to this as revelation. Revelation , in its broad meaning, is divine guidance or inspiration; it is the communication of truth and knowledge from God to His children on earth, suited to their language and understanding. It simply means to uncover something not yet known. Most often, revelation unfolds as an ongoing, prayerful dialogue with God: A problem arises, its dimensions are studied out, a question is asked, and if we have sufficient faith, God leads us to answers, either partial or full. Though ultimately a spiritual experience, revelation also requires careful thought. God does not simply hand down information. He expects us to figure things out through prayerful searching and sound thinking. The First Presidency consisting of the president or prophet of the Church and his two counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles receive inspiration to guide the Church as a whole. Individuals are also inspired with revelation regarding how to conduct their lives and help serve others. All women are daughters of a loving Heavenly Father. Women and men are equal in the sight of God. In the family, a wife and a husband form an equal partnership in leading and raising a family. While worthy men hold the priesthood, worthy women serve as

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leaders, counselors, missionaries, teachers, and in many other responsibilities—they routinely preach from the pulpit and lead congregational prayers in worship services. They serve both in the Church and in their local communities and contribute to the world as leaders in a variety of professions. Their vital and unique contribution to raising children is considered an important responsibility and a special privilege of equal importance to priesthood responsibilities. Latter-day Saints believe that God wants us to become like Him. But this teaching is often misrepresented by those who caricature the faith. 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: Do some Latter-day Saints wear temple garments? In our world of diverse religious observance, many people of faith wear special clothing as a reminder of sacred beliefs and commitments. This has been a common practice throughout history. These garments are simple, white underclothing composed of two pieces: Not unlike the Jewish tallit katan prayer shawl, these garments are worn underneath regular clothes. Temple garments serve as a personal reminder of covenants made with God to lead good, honorable, Christlike lives. The wearing of temple garments is an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior. Biblical scripture contains many references to the wearing of special garments. In the Old Testament the Israelites are specifically instructed to turn their garments into personal reminders of their covenants with God see Numbers

Indeed, for some, religious clothing has always been an important part of integrating worship with daily living. Such practices resonate with Latter-day Saints today. Because of the personal and religious nature of the temple garment, the Church asks all media to report on the subject with respect, treating Latter-day Saint temple garments as they would religious vestments of other faiths. Ridiculing or making light of sacred clothing is highly offensive to Latter-day Saints. Do Latter-day Saints practice polygamy? The practice of polygamy is strictly prohibited in the Church. The general standard of marriage in the Church has always been monogamy, as indicated in the Book of Mormon see Jacob 2: For periods in the Bible polygamy was practiced by the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, as well as kings David and Solomon. It was again practiced by a minority of Latter-day Saints in the early years of the Church. Polygamy was officially discontinued in 1890 years ago. Those who practice polygamy today have nothing whatsoever to do with the Church. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone. People of all races have always been welcomed and baptized into the Church since its beginning. During this time some black males were ordained to the priesthood. At some point the Church stopped ordaining male members of African descent, although there were a few exceptions. It is not known precisely why, how or when this restriction began in the Church, but it has ended. Church leaders sought divine guidance regarding the issue and in extended the priesthood to all worthy male members. The Church immediately began ordaining members to priesthood offices wherever they attended throughout the world. The Church unequivocally condemns racism, including any and all past racism by individuals both inside and outside the Church. In 1978, then Church president Gordon B. Hinckley announced that he could no longer consider himself to be in harmony with the teachings of the Church. Let us all recognize that each of us is a son or daughter of our Father in Heaven, who loves all of His children. We do not know exactly where the original site of the Garden of Eden is. While not an important or foundational doctrine, Joseph Smith established a settlement in Daviess County, Missouri, and taught that the Garden of Eden was somewhere in that area. For those who have passed on without the ordinance of baptism, proxy baptism for the deceased is a free will offering. According to Church doctrine, a departed soul in the afterlife is completely free to accept or reject such a baptism—the offering is freely given and must be freely received. Of course, proxy baptism for the deceased is nothing new. It was mentioned by Paul in the New Testament see 1 Corinthians 15:29. All Church members are instructed to submit names for proxy baptism only for their own deceased relatives as an offering of familial love. The missionary effort of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is based on the New Testament pattern of missionaries serving in pairs, teaching the gospel and baptizing believers in the name of Jesus Christ see, for example, the work of Peter and John in the book of Acts. Missionary work is voluntary, with most

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missionaries funding their own missions. They receive their assignment from Church headquarters and are sent only to countries where governments allow the Church to operate. In some parts of the world, missionaries are sent only to serve humanitarian or other specialized missions. See the current number of missionaries serving around the world. The health code for Latter-day Saints is based on a teaching regarding foods that are healthy and substances that are not good for the human body. Accordingly, alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee and illegal drugs are forbidden. A year UCLA study, completed in , tracked mortality rates and health practices of 10, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in California, indicating that Church members who adhered to the health code had one of the lowest death rates from cancer and cardiovascular disease in the United States.

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Chapter 6 : Twelve Beliefs the Mormon Church Might Not Want You to Know About | AwayPoint

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The Persecution of the Mormons During the 19th century, the newly formed Mormon religion encountered significant persecution. In 1820, Joseph Smith experienced what he later described as a vision of God and Jesus who told Smith that he would become the means for restoring the true Christian church. A while later, Smith told of being visited by an angel who led him to a spot near his home in western New York, where he unearthed a set of golden plates with strange writing on them. With divine guidance, Smith said that he was able to translate the golden plates into English. In 1830, he published what he believed to be the new revealed word of God, The Book of Mormon, named after an ancient prophet. Following additional visions and revelations, Joseph Smith came to believe that he was a prophet, empowered by God to restore "the only true and living church. Most people began calling the new religion the Mormon Church or simply, the Mormons. During the 1830s, the Mormons attracted many converts. But Mormon beliefs, although Christian, differed and even contradicted many of the Protestant beliefs of most Americans. Wherever Mormons gathered together to establish their "Kingdom of God," non-Mormons became suspicious, fearful, hostile, and sometimes even violent. This resulted in persecution against the Mormons. It also got them involved in an enormous struggle with the federal government over the relationship of church and state and the Mormon religious practice of polygamy. In 1831, Young moved his family to Kirtland, Ohio, where Smith had decided to gather several hundred of the Mormon faithful to establish the "Kingdom of God. Following Christian beliefs about the original 12 apostles of Christ, Young and the others became missionaries. In the winter of 1838, the majority of church members, including Brigham Young, followed Joseph Smith to Missouri, where he had previously organized a secondary Mormon colony. After Smith and the others from Ohio joined the Missouri colonists, fears of Mormon bloc voting and a "take over" again produced mob violence. Escalating violence between Mormon and non-Mormon settlers finally prompted the governor of Missouri to issue this order: Brigham Young avoided arrest and organized an exodus across the Mississippi River to Illinois during the winter and spring of 1839. Released from jail by Missouri officials, Joseph Smith again took charge of the Mormon community, now numbering several thousand. The Mormons established a new "Kingdom of God," which they named Nauvoo, meaning "beautiful place. The state legislature granted Nauvoo a liberal charter, permitting the city its own court system and militia, called the Nauvoo Legion. By the mids, Nauvoo rivaled Chicago as the largest city in Illinois. Smith at first limited multiple marriages, also commonly called polygamy, to church leaders. Later it was allowed among other spiritually and economically qualified church members. In 1842, Smith created the Council of Fifty that became "the Municipal department of the Kingdom of God set up on the Earth, and from which all Law emanates. Thus, the Nauvoo government took the form of a theocracy, a unified church and state. They particularly resented the Mormon practice of voting in elections as a bloc at the direction of Joseph Smith. Then in 1844, Smith decided to run for president of the United States. This combining of religion and politics further inflamed public opinion in Illinois. A dissenting newspaper in Nauvoo accused Smith of crowning himself king. State authorities jailed Smith and several others for inciting a riot. The governor sent a state militia to guard Smith against mob violence. But the militia itself became a lynch mob and shot Smith to death in his jail cell on June 27, 1844. But soon vigilantes began to burn the homes and farms of the Mormon settlers in a determined effort to drive them out of Illinois. Brigham Young and the other church leaders realized that they could not remain in Nauvoo under such dangerous conditions. They then led an epic migration of 16,000 Mormons to the Great Salt Lake Valley in the western wilderness. The Council of Fifty remained as the law-making body. In 1845, Deseret along with California applied for admission to the Union as new states. Suspicious of the Mormons, Congress denied statehood to Deseret but made it a U.

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President Millard Fillmore appointed Brigham Young the territorial governor. When Washington sent federal judges and other officials to Utah, the Mormons often refused to cooperate with them. In addition, church leaders selected all the candidates for the new territorial legislature. Back in Washington, many members of Congress thought that the Mormons did not respect federal authority or U. Adding to this perception, Brigham Young remarked that he would not surrender his office as governor if the president chose not to reappoint him. Also at this time, Protestant ministers everywhere were condemning Mormon polygamy as immoral. After several years delay, newly elected President James Buchanan appointed a new governor of the Utah territory in . But relations between the federal government and the Mormons had become so poisoned that Buchanan was persuaded a state of rebellion existed in Utah. He therefore sent a federal military force of 2, soldiers to forcibly install the new governor. Still acting as governor, with the Missouri and Illinois persecutions in his mind, Brigham Young declared martial law in Utah. He issued a proclamation preparing the Mormon people "to repel any and all such threatened invasion. He even considered setting it on fire. Things remained at a stalemate until June , when the Mormon leaders agreed to submit to federal authority if the army would camp outside Salt Lake City and not harm the people. The federal government agreed, and President Buchanan also pardoned all Mormon "seditions and treasons. Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders were charged under this law. But convictions were difficult to get because few marriage records existed and a wife could not testify against her husband under Utah territorial law. Moreover, most juries consisted of Mormons who, if not polygamists themselves, sympathized with the accused. In , two years after Brigham Young died, the U. The justices drew a line between religious belief and action. The court cited a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to James Madison shortly after the adoption of the Bill of Rights. Both men were highly instrumental in getting the Bill of Rights adopted. Jefferson wrote about the First Amendment: Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God; that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship; that the legislative powers of the government reach actions only, and not opinions, -- I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore man to all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties. Congress was deprived of all legislative power over mere opinion, but was left free to reach actions which were in violation of social duties or subversive of good order. United States] In and , Congress passed laws to force the Mormon Church to abandon its support of multiple marriages which never involved more than 20 percent of adult males. These laws did other things as well. They barred polygamists from jury service, voting, or holding office. They permitted a wife to testify against her husband. They revoked the right of women to vote which had been established in by the Utah territorial legislature. Finally, they took away the territorial charter of the Mormon Church, which allowed the federal government to confiscate its property and turn it over to the public schools. Altogether, more than 1, Mormon men were convicted , fined, and imprisoned for being married to more than one wife. Mormon leaders understood that if they continued to resist the anti-polygamy laws, Utah would never become a state. Therefore, in , the president of the Mormon Church issued a "Manifesto" calling for the Latter-Day Saints "to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land. For Discussion and Writing What were some of the problems Mormons encountered in the 19th century. Why do you think they encountered these problems? What is a theocracy? In what ways did the Mormons establish theocracies in Nauvoo and the Territory of Utah? Do you think theocracies are a good or bad idea for the United States? Do you think Congress was right to outlaw polygamy in the Utah territory, or, do you think this was a violation of freedom of religion under the First Amendment?

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Chapter 7 : BRIA 17 1 b The Persecution of the Mormons - Constitutional Rights Foundation

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What are the core tenets of the Mormon religion? Read the comments of historians, scholars and Mormons on Joseph Smith and his revelations. Read the comments of historians, scholars and Mormons on the Book of Mormon and the birth of the religion. Read the comments of historians, scholars and Mormons on the Mormon afterlife. The Articles of Faith also affirm a belief in the Bible as the word of God, insofar as it is correctly translated, and in the Book of Mormon as an equally important scriptural source. Like many conservative Christians, the Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus will return to earth to establish Zion, the paradisiacal Promised Land, but the Mormons believe specifically that Jesus will establish his new kingdom on the American continent. This expectation derives from revelation given through the prophet Joseph Smith, and it is in harmony with the history laid out in the Book of Mormon, a modern scripture that came into being through the agency of the prophet. This text, which reads something like the Old Testament, tells the story of an ancient Hebrew patriarch and prophet named Lehi, who, in roughly B.C. The group established themselves somewhere in North America and, according to this history, at least some Native Americans descended from these immigrants. From this civilization, God continued to call forth prophets, including one named Mormon, the original author of the text that would be engraved on plates of gold that Mormons believe Joseph Smith unearthed in the late 1820s. Along with the plates, Smith said he found the Urim and Thummim, a translating contrivance that allowed him to read the engravings on the plates. A group of followers coalesced around Smith as he dictated his translation of the plates to scribes. Soon after the Book of Mormon was published in 1830, the prophet and his followers organized the Church of Christ, an ecclesiastical institution that differed from all other Christian churches at the time because it was led by a prophet and had another sacred text in addition to the Old and New Testaments. Revelation told the members of this new church that theirs was the restoration of the New Testament church that had been removed from the earth during a "Great Apostasy" that occurred at the end of the apostolic era. The Saints believe that prior to being born, each person has a pre-mortal life. In the pre-mortal realm, spirits dwell with God, the literal father of all people, and develop talents and knowledge to prepare for mortal life. When their preparation is complete, individuals must progress and spend time on earth. Gaining a physical body, they practice actively choosing between good and evil the Articles of Faith reject the concept of original sin and gain new levels of knowledge that will allow them to become like God, the ultimate goal of Mormon spiritual development. Mormons believe that after death, the spirit leaves the body and moves on to the spirit world to wait for resurrection. The Plan of Salvation teaches that Heaven is divided into three separate kingdoms of glory: These kingdoms are where all men and women except a certain few known as Sons of Perdition, who will go to Outer Darkness will go after they are judged by God and their spirits are reunited with what will be their immortal bodies. Those judged to have followed the Gospel move on to the celestial kingdom, ruled by God himself. Since God is the ultimate judge, all people will be judged fairly and put into the kingdom where they will be most happy. Even so, according to Mormon theology, all three kingdoms are kingdoms of glory, and even the lowest is more glorious than man can currently comprehend. Read the comments of historians, scholars and Mormons on this issue. While it is true that the church has recently placed more emphasis on their Christian-ness than it once did, from the time the church was organized in 1830 onward, church members have always regarded themselves as Christians. Their name, "Latter-day Saints" references the fact that members of the "primitive" church in New Testament times were called Saints. Hinckley, president of the church, has said, "We are Christians in a very real sense and that is coming to be more and more widely recognized. Once upon a time people everywhere said we are not Christians. They have come to recognize that we are, and that we have a very vital and dynamic religion based

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on the teachings of Jesus Christ. There are Christians -- particularly among the modern evangelical and fundamentalist communities -- who argue that Mormons are not Christians. They base this contention on the fact that the Mormon conception of God -- summarized by LDS President Lorenzo Snow, who said, "As man is God once was, and as God is man may become" -- differs from traditional Christian ideas. Animosity between fundamentalist Christians and Mormons peaked in the 1850s, when the Southern Baptist Convention held an annual meeting in Salt Lake City, partly in hopes of converting Mormons to Protestant Christianity. More recently, some high-profile fundamentalist Christians have gone on record apologizing for past discord and accepting Mormonism as a branch of Christianity, but some tension remains. Why is the Mormon temple central to the faith? What happens in the temple? Take a virtual tour of a Mormon temple. The Mormon temple is considered an earthly point of contact with higher spheres of being. Mormons believe that God is present in the temple space. This makes it a sacred place set aside to learn things that allow individuals to progress toward becoming like God -- the temple ordinances, especially celestial marriage, make "eternal progression toward Godhood" possible. The family unit is central to Mormonism, and the primary ritual function of the temple is to perform ceremonies that seal families together, thus allowing them to dwell together for eternity when they pass on to the celestial kingdom. The temple is also used to perform the Mormon endowment ceremony. During this ritual, adult Mormons go through a series of lessons and exercises to deepen their faith, and they make covenants with God to keep his commandments. After receiving their endowments, Latter-day Saints wear a distinctive underwear on which special marks are embroidered. Known as "garments", this underwear, worn next to the skin at nearly all times, is meant to remind individuals of their commitment to their faith and to God. Men generally receive their endowment before going on a mission and women before they marry, but it is not a one-time ceremony like baptism. Saints are encouraged to return to the temple throughout their lives to continue growing their faith by experiencing the rituals of endowment. Before Latter-day Saints can go to the temple to receive their Endowments, they must obtain a Temple recommend, a card signed by a church leader to certify that the bearer is in good standing within the church. Inside the temple, men wear all-white suits and women wear floor-length white dresses. Non-Mormons and Mormons without a temple recommend are not allowed into the temple. The church says this is to preserve the sacred nature of the practices that take place inside and to avoid potential distractions and disruptions. The general public are also allowed to tour newly-constructed temples during the brief window of time before they are officially dedicated. Why is Mormonism sometimes described as a secretive religion? The most common and visible target for charges of suspicious secrecy in the Mormon religion are the temples. After dedication, these buildings are closed to the public and church members do not talk openly about the rituals that take place within. The church holds that the temple and its rituals are sacred and therefore private, not secret. They maintain that early Christianity featured similar special practices and bodies of knowledge that were kept quiet to preserve their sacred nature. Church finances are also kept confidential, provoking criticism that there is no way for church members or outsiders to know where money from tithing and other revenue goes. And the church has also been questioned about the secrecy surrounding their defense of doctrine. Latter-day Saints can face excommunication if, after being warned, they continue to publicly discuss problematic or provocative elements of Mormon theology that the church chooses not to draw attention to. Because disciplinary councils that can lead to excommunication are always private, the process of gathering information and the closed meetings that consider the fate of a disciplined member add to the perception of Mormon secrecy. What are some of the rituals of the faith? What are the restrictions and prohibitions? Read the comments of historians, scholars and Mormons on living a Mormon life. The rituals of the Mormon faith include ceremonies performed in the temple -- endowment, baptism of the dead, celestial marriage and family sealings -- plus several ceremonies that take place in Mormon chapels. Baptisms are held in the chapels when Mormon children turn 8 years old or when an adult converts to the faith. Family and friends generally attend both of these rituals. The Latter-day Saints also have a practice of anointing and blessing the sick if an ill individual so desires. Like other Christians, Mormons celebrate Christmas and Easter as their two most important

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religious holidays. It is around the time of this holiday that the church presents its elaborate history pageant at the Hill Cumorah in Palmyra, N. Mormons also observe the Sabbath each week. On Sundays, they attend a sacrament meeting at their chapel, which includes readings, hymns, prayers, communion and testimonies from a few speakers from the congregation. The rest of the Sabbath is observed by spending a quiet day at home, visiting friends or family, or performing charitable works. Latter-day Saints believe that the body is a gift from God to be cared for and respected, not to be polluted or abused. In their daily lives, Saints follow a set of health guidelines Joseph Smith received from God in called the Word of Wisdom. As interpreted today, this code states that Mormons should abstain from coffee and tea, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. Over time there has been dispute and changing mores within the church regarding exactly what the Word of Wisdom disallows. For example, the original document warned against drinking any hot beverages, but over time this has come to be interpreted as only hot beverages containing caffeine. Mormons are advised not to get tattoos and to limit body piercings to a single pair of plain earrings for women. Why is family life so central to Latter-day Saints? Why are they interested in genealogy? Read more about genealogy and the Mormon archives. In fact, eternal progression toward Godhood is limited to those who marry for time and eternity celestial marriage in a ceremony conducted by a properly ordained member of the LDS priesthood in a Mormon temple. Church President Hinckley has also stressed the importance of the family during mortal life, saying, "If you want to reform a nation, you begin with families, with parents who teach their children principles and values that are positive and affirmative and will lead them to worthwhile endeavors. That is the basic failure that has taken place in America. And we are making a tremendous effort to bring about greater solidarity in families. Parents have no greater responsibility in this world than the bringing up of their children in the right way, and they will have no greater satisfaction as the years pass than to see those children grow in integrity and honesty and make something of their lives, adding to society because they are a part of it. The Mormon interest in genealogy is closely linked to their doctrine of baptism for the dead and their belief that the family unit will continue to exist beyond mortal life. Mormons trace their family trees to find the names of ancestors who died without learning about the restored Mormon Gospel so that these relatives from past generations can be baptized by proxy in the temple. For the Saints, genealogy is a way to save more souls and strengthen the eternal family unit. Are Mormon marriages different? Mormon marriages are different from most marriages because they are considered eternal. If a husband and wife are sealed together in the temple, they can be together on into the celestial kingdom. However, the church does have a process for annulment and sees divorce as an unfortunately necessary evil. I am not one to say that it is never justified. But I say without hesitation that this plague among us, which seems to be growing everywhere, is not of God, but rather is the work of the adversary of righteousness and peace and truth. If a divorcing couple wishes to become unsealed, they must receive a cancellation of sealing, which requires approval from high-ranking church officials. A Mormon woman must receive a cancellation of sealing prior to remarrying if she wishes her next marriage to be sealed in the temple. However, because men are permitted to be sealed to more than one woman, they do not have to cancel a previous sealing in order to remarry in the temple.

Chapter 8 : What is Mormonism? Overview of Mormon Beliefs – Mormonism

foundations of the mormon religion for the central conclusion of this essay is that in mormonism there is not a total disparity of the divine and human natures p 23 christen-.

Chapter 9 : Mormonism - Wikipedia

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