

MORMONISM

Introduction

Mormonism is a religion founded less than 200 years ago by one Joseph Smith. Smith believed that his movement, viewed as a cult by many today, would restore true Christianity and went so far as to declare that his church was the 'only true church on earth' (Mormon Doctrine, p. 670, 1 Nephi 14:10). Mormons call themselves The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS).

Origin

Joseph Smith, a Vermont native, said he had a vision from God when he was 14 years old, in which he was told not to associate or join any Christian denominational church. When Smith was 17, he claimed that an angel by the name of Moroni appeared to him and said he had been chosen to translate a text called the Book of Mormon that had been named after the angel's father, Mormon. Moroni told Smith that the book contained names and information on ancient people who lived in the Americas and could be found written on golden plates near Palmyra, New York. Smith retrieved the book in 1827, translated it and published the Book of Mormon in 1830. Smith claimed that John the Baptist appeared to him during the translation process and told him to restore the church by preaching the true gospel.

Upon publication, Mormonism spread westward, with Mormon communities established in Missouri, Ohio, and Illinois. Smith and Mormonism experienced major push-back by many for their teachings and assertions. In 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother were jailed in Carthage, Illinois for treason. During this incarceration, both were murdered by an anti-Mormon mob.

Mormons, in disarray, were not in agreement about how to proceed. Many followed Brigham Young, Smith's successor, to Utah and settled in the Salt Lake City valley in 1847. In the 1850s, Young coordinated the migration of more than 15,000 Mormons from Illinois to Utah. Soon thereafter, Young was named the president of the Mormon church and became the first governor of the Utah Territory, influencing religion and politics in the West for many years until his death in 1877.

Despite their isolation in the Utah Territory, Americans resisted Mormonism. In 1857, a Mormon militia murdered 120 people in a wagon train heading west from Arkansas, an event known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Details and motive about the attack are still debated and records show that the Mormon church tried to cover it up. Even today, it is still unknown who perpetrated the attack, with some blaming Brigham Young and others placing the blame on local leaders in Utah.

Main Beliefs

Mormons believe there are four divine works:

The Bible, “as far as it is translated correctly” (their 8th Article of Faith),

The Book of Mormon, asserted by Joseph Smith to be the “most correct book” on earth and the one through which people could draw closer to God more “then by any other book” (History of the Church 4:461).

Doctrines and Covenants, a collection of present-day revelations about the “Church of Jesus Christ as it has been restored.”

The Pearl of Great Price, considered by Mormons to supposedly clarify information in the Bible (Articles of Faith, pp. 182-185) and supplement the biblical text with their own teaching about the creation of the earth.

With this many sources considered to be divinely inspired, beliefs and practices of the Mormon church are extensive and are summarized in the following fourteen fundamental articles of Mormon belief that were written and now published on a website created by ex-Mormons*:

God was once a mortal married man who lived on another planet. According to Mormons, he lived in obedience to the gospel in his world, then died, was resurrected, and evolved to become a god before creating this world. Mormons believe he is still married and is but one god among many, maybe billions more. Mormon family life today is modeled after the family life they envision of their god and with whom humans will live as gods.

Humans are co-eternal with God. Humans existed first as *intelligences* (undefined), then given spirit bodies. Our *intelligences*, Mormon’s claim, existed forever like God’s and have been around him in different forms, though God has

progressed well ahead of us.

Jesus Christ was conceived by physical union of God with Mary. God being a man, this union with Mary was literal sex. Jesus is part man and part God, the first-born spirit and the most important in creation above any other. The words of Brigham Young about Jesus are very telling, “Now remember from this time forth, and forever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females, and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children “ (Journal of Discourses, Volume 1 15, Page 770, 1853).

Truth is determined by feelings. Anything, including known facts, that contradicts what we feel is to be disregarded. If we get a bad feeling, we must be hearing bad things or lies. We feel good when we read the Book of Mormon, hence it is true.

What a prophet said can be revised depending on the circumstances. Newer or contemporary prophets can override the messages of the prophets of old.

Saving our dead ancestors shows we are the only Christian church. We have temples in which we get the handshakes and passwords that allow us to become gods. We baptize by proxy dead people, so they can become Mormons.

Ex-Mormons (apostates) had sin in their life or never had a testimony. Those who leave Mormonism must never have had a testimony. If they left and did have a testimony, they will be cast into outer darkness.

We will only read church approved materials. Any literature that is critical of the Mormon church is viewed as satanic or was written by apostates who left the church and do not know the truth. These materials are to be ignored even if they have any reasonable arguments.

We need to convert the whole world to Mormonism. This will occur by sending 19–22-year-old men and unmarried women on missions throughout the world.

By being Mormons, we are assured of salvation – even if we are wrong (about our Mormonism) because God will forgive us. We are right about this and know that we will be together with our families as gods for eternity.

Since we have the name of Christ in our church, our church is the only true one. Only the true church would have the name of Christ in it.

We believe in the Book of Mormon. It contains a religious record of various people who lived in the Americas for more than 2,600 years from 2,200 BC to 420 AD. We believe that a second group of Jewish people who spoke Hebrew occupied the Americas but left no tangible proof of their existence.

The fruits of Mormonism prove it is the true church. We can show we have a superior belief system. Statistics, like the high divorce rate in Utah, are disregarded since they are embarrassing.

Our beliefs must be true since people oppose them. Only the true church would have anything bad said about it. The devil fights against the truth.

Demographics

According to the Pew Research Center[#], there are 6,721,032 Mormons in the United States, comprising 1.7% of the American adult population. Though their numbers are smaller than evangelical Protestant churches and Catholics in America, Mormons are more numerous than other small religious groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses (0.7%), Buddhists (0.7%), Muslims (0.6%), and Hindus (0.4%). Here is a breakdown of Mormons in America:

Area/State	% of the population
Northeast	4
Midwest	7
South	12
West	76
Utah	35
California	13
Idaho	7
Nevada	5
Oregon	4
Arizona	4

Mormons can also be found in numerous countries on five continents and Oceania.

Closing Thoughts

Mormonism claims to be the true 'church' but is far from the central teachings of the Christian Church that Jesus gave his life for on the Cross and has been documented clearly for over 2,000 years. To compare Mormonism to other religions, we invite you to explore www.sourceoftruelife.com/Resources/ComparisonofReligions

This is an introduction on the subject of **Mormonism**. Here are a few other resources you may wish to explore:

[What is Mormonism? What do Mormons believe? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[Mormons - HISTORY](#)

[9 Things You Should Know About Mormonism \(thegospelcoalition.org\)](#)

[The 8 Beliefs You Should Know about Mormons When They Knock at the Door \(thegospelcoalition.org\)](#)

* [The fourteen fundamental articles or beliefs of Mormons | Recovery from Mormonism \(exmormon.org\)](#)

[A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S. | Pew Research Center \(pewforum.org\)](#)

[The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints membership statistics - Wikipedia](#)