

# Pastors' Perspective!

Supporting Christian Witness to Mormons

Because "some men...are...wanting to change the Gospel of Christ." Galatians 1:7

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UNDERSTANDING MORMON RELIGION

**MORMON CLAIMS: "WE ARE TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY"**

*and* **BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM OUR PROPHETS WILL MEET WITH ADAM AND CHRIST IN MISSOURI**

**Are Mormon doctrinal inventions**

**harmless, reasonable variations of Christian faith?**

**Mormon pretensions are not "incidental," "traditional," or true.**

## 1. Mormon pretensions.

**The Mormon view.** "People say, 'Where are you in relation to traditional Christianity?' I think our answer to that is we are traditional Christianity, because it is our message to the world that traditional Christianity had fallen away from the basic teachings of Jesus Christ, and it was necessary to have a restoration of the fullness of Christian doctrine and the original organization of the church with 12 apostles as Jesus established it." (Mormon apostle Dallin H. Oaks, 2007, "Religion and Ethics" on PBS.)

Oaks added, "Where the Garden of Eden was located is an important but incidental doctrinal matter."

## 2. The Mormon Millennium: Coming soon.

**The Mormon view.** After Christ returns to earth, peace and righteousness will reign. The world will be ruled for 1000 years from two cities, with a religious government in Jerusalem, and civil government in New Jerusalem, also called Zion, a city yet to be built in the United States. For 1000 years Mormons will perform unprecedented numbers of rites in their temples to make salvation available to billions of the dead, and among the living will see unprecedented success in their continuing missionary program. Then, judgment.

**The official Mormon church bottom line.** New Jerusalem "will be built in the state of Missouri, in the United States, just before the beginning of the Millennium." In 1838 God revealed to Joseph Smith that Spring Hill, Missouri, in Adam's language known as "Adam-ondi-Ahman," means "Valley of God, where Adam dwelt." Shortly before "the time of Christ's second coming, Adam will come again to Adam-ondi-Ahman and hold a great council. All the prophets who have held keys of priesthood authority upon the earth will come to this council to give a report of their work to Adam. Jesus Christ will then come to Adam-ondi-Ahman, and Adam will return the priesthood keys to him. Christ will then...begin the Millennium...." (From *Gospel Fundamentals* and instructional materials for Mormon primary children. These and other details can be read at the Mormon church web site, [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).)

**Translation/explanation: The Mormon view.** Adam lived and died in what is now Missouri, the site of the

Garden of Eden, where he will return to meet with all the prophets of the present and previous dispensations. Adam, who has been overseeing the work of the prophets will hear reports covering thousands of years. When Christ returns to meet with the prophets, Adam will give back to Christ the priesthood keys. Only then will Christ's return become known to the world, and the Millennium will begin. Secular and religious authorities will rule over all the earth from Missouri and Israel.

## 3. The Mormon and final dispensation: Here, now.

**Background. The Mormon perspective.** From Adam to the present, God has organized "gospel dispensations" on earth, each led by a prophet "who bears the keys of the holy priesthood." Between dispensations there were no true prophets, no legitimate priesthood, no true church.

Some prophets who led long-past dispensations: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus Christ.

The gospel dispensation led by Christ ended about 1700 years ago, and a Great Apostasy followed when no true church, prophet, or priesthood existed on earth. That apostasy ended when God organized the current and final dispensation through the Prophet Joseph Smith in the early nineteenth century.

Prophets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints lead this final "dispensation of the fulness of times" and exercise all the keys (or authorities) of "the holy priesthood," the same keys once borne by Christ, Moses, *et al* when they led their dispensations.

**The official Mormon church bottom line.** In each dispensation "the gospel is revealed anew so that the people of that dispensation do not have to depend on past dispensations for knowledge of the plan of salvation." (From *Preach My Gospel*, the church's latest guide for Mormon missionaries, page 44.)

**Translation/application: The Mormon view.** The Bible, written in past dispensations, was corrupted during the Great Apostasy. Uncorrupted Christian religion has been revealed more recently to Mormon prophets. The Bible now is understood more perfectly by these new prophets and supplemented by new scriptures. That is: The Bible contains some truths, but if you want the whole truth and nothing but the truth, get it from Mormons.

**Can this really be harmless tinkering with Christian faith?**

**Is it better, or not, for Christians to be aware?**

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