

Dictionary of Mormonese

from

"Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons"

by

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One of the major difficulties in witnessing to Mormons is that they speak a unique language. Not only have they coined numerous words and expressions unique to Mormonism, but they have also given unique definitions to commonly used words and expressions. Some have called the language "Mormonese".

This dictionary is an attempt to help the non-Mormon understand Mormonese. On the one hand, I have tried to give as concise definitions as possible. On the other hand, I have frequently elected to quote their authoritative writings. The reason for doing this is twofold: (1) to support the definition given; (2) to illustrate how Mormons use a particular word.

In the case of numerous words, it was quite difficult to arrive at a single definition because Mormons themselves, and even their authoritative writings, differ on its definition. In such cases, I tried to give their most commonly used definition.

Occasionally, the biblical meaning of a word will be offered in contrast to the Mormon definition. These references to the biblical meaning are not meant to be thorough definitions.

Finally, it will be important to keep in mind that the definition given is not the biblical or Christian definition, but the *LDS definition*.

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD: Also known as the lesser priesthood. It serves as the entry point into the priesthood for boys twelve and older and adult male converts. Members of the priesthood supposedly experience "the ministering of angels." This priesthood is responsible for the church's temporal affairs.

ACCEPTING JESUS: (1) Believing that Jesus lives and is divine. Although Mormons say Jesus is divine, they view him as inferior to the Father. (See Son Of God.) (2) Trusting in Jesus' *plan of salvation* (Mormonism). In reality, "accepting Jesus" is equivalent to accepting Mormonism.

ADAM: Equated with Michael, the archangel. Mormons believe he was one of Heavenly Father's finest spirit children. He was sent to earth to make man mortal, which he accomplished through his fall. Because of this, Mormons consider his fall good. See 2 Nephi 2:22-25; Moses 5:10,11 (also see **FALL OF ADAM**).



ADAMIC LANGUAGE: The pure language, according to Joseph Smith, which God gave Adam. Smith claimed that God occasionally revealed to him a name or phrase from it. For an example, see **ADAM-ONDI-AHMAN**.

ADAM-ONDI-AHAMN: A name supposedly from the "pure Adamic language." It means where Adam dwelt, in other words, the place where Adam lived after he was driven out of the Garden of Eden. Mormons believe this is in Davies County, Missouri (North of Independence, Missouri). They believe Adam will return there shortly before Christ's return. See D&C 116.

AGENCY: A person's free will and natural capacity to choose the right. The Bible, however, teaches that mankind, by nature, is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) and thoroughly evil (Genesis 8:21). Agency is one of the most important underpinnings for Mormonism's works-righteousness. "No principle in time or eternity is so cherished as the right of agency, the right to consider alternatives and make choices without compulsion" (*Doctrines of the Gospel*, p. 30).

ANGELS: Not creatures of God distinct from humans as the Bible teaches Mormons themselves seem to be confused about their exact description. Most common is the explanation that "an angel is a resurrected or translated body, with its spirit ministering to embodied spirits" (*D&C Student Manual*, p.320). An example would be angel Moroni who supposedly appeared to Joseph Smith. According to the Book of Mormon, Moroni was originally a Nephite leader who sometime after his death, was resurrected. But Mormons further state that this description does not apply to the angels who appeared before Jesus' resurrection. McConkie, in *Mormon Doctrine*, also includes preexistent spirits and the spirits of just men made perfect in his discussion of angels. Also see **MINISTERING SPIRITS**.

ANOINTING: Ordinance performed on the sick and injured by holders of the Melchizedek priesthood. Many priesthood holders carry small bottles of consecrated olive oil for use in emergencies. Stories of miraculous healings are regularly reported.

APOSTASY: (1) Most commonly used to describe the act of leaving the LDS church. (2) Mormons also talk about the Great Apostasy which they describe as the time between the death of the apostles and Joseph Smith's establishment of the LDS church. They teach that during this long period of time the true church was gone from the earth.

APOSTATES: (1) Most commonly used to refer to people who leave the Mormon church. (2) Sometimes used as a reference to Christians. "The term (Christian) also applies to the whole body of supposed Christian believers; as now constituted this body is properly termed apostate Christendom" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 131). Also see **APOSTASY**.

APOSTLES: (1) Sometimes a reference to the original twelve apostles. (2) More often a reference to the twelve current apostles of the Mormon church, who serve immediately under the First Presidency of the Church.

APOSTLES' CREED: Along with all historical Christian creeds, it is considered an abomination by the LDS Church. See the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History 1:19.

APRIL 6th: (1) Date of LDS Church was organized. (2) Mormons also teach that this is the date of Christ's birth. See D&C 20:1.



AREA: Geographic regions of the church are gathered into administrative "areas" that are supervised by area authorities.

AREA AUTHORITY: A new position established in 1995. "These will be high priests chosen from the past and present experienced Church leaders. They will continue with their current employment, reside in their own homes, and serve on a Church-service basis. The term of their call will be flexible, generally, for a period of approximately six years. They will be closely tied to the area presidencies." (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 52) In 1997 these area authorities were grouped into the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums of Seventies. "Though all Seventies have equal scriptural authority, members of the First and Second Quorums are designated General Authorities, while members of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums are designated Area Authorities." (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1997, p. 6)

ARTICLES OF FAITH: Thirteen brief statements of faith that are often given to interested individuals. They do not mention any of the distinctive Mormon doctrines and thus give a deceptive picture of Mormonism. Being part of the Pearl of Great Price, they are considered scripture.

ATONEMENT: (1) Used almost exclusively as a reference to Jesus' conquering *physical death* for all people. By conquering physical death, Jesus made it possible for them to enter again into the presence of Heavenly Father-if for no other reason than to be judged by him. In other words, they are again at one with him, or atoned. (2) At times it includes the thought of Jesus' paying for their sins. But underlying all such references is the thought that they have to pay him back. For a good example of the LDS view of Jesus' atoning work, see *Gospel Principles*, pp.75-77. This in direct contradiction to Christianity which teaches that through his voluntary sacrifice, Jesus *made payment*, or atoned, for all sin. Therefore salvation is free and full in Jesus. No more payments can be made. See Hebrews 10:18.

AUTHORITY: Connected exclusively with the LDS priesthood. Thus the only valid voices in religious matters are LDS authorities; the only valid religious rites are those performed by members of the LDS priesthood.

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS: The various organizations within the Church, "auxiliary" to the priesthood, such as the Relief Society, Primary, Young Men's and Young Women's associations.

BAPTISM: By immersion either at the age of eight or when converted to the church. Mormons consider valid only baptisms performed by a holder of their priesthood. Baptism signals people's acceptance of Mormonism as the truth. Even though they are baptized with water "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 20:73), it is not a valid Christian baptism since the LDS church is not a Christian church.

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD: One of the three main missions of the LDS church is to redeem the dead by being baptized for them. Mormons believe that spirits who accept Mormonism in the spirit world cannot progress until they are baptized. Such spirits must receive baptism vicariously through a living person since they don't have a body that can be baptized. Such baptisms can be performed only in the temple.

BEAR A TESTIMONY: A popular expression for testifying about the truth of Mormonism. Also see **TESTIMONY**.



BEEHIVE: (1) A girl's organization. (2) The symbol of the state of Utah. (3) A popular LDS symbol emphasizing their work ethic.

BIBLE: One of four books Mormons consider scripture. They believe it to be the Word of God "as far as it is translated correctly" (Eighth Article of Faith). In addition they believe many precious parts have been lost from it (1 Nephi 13:28). Consequently they consider it the least reliable of their scriptures. Most Mormons are not familiar with it.

BISHOP: The head of the local ward (congregation). Bishops have no formal theological training. Often the major criteria for becoming a bishop is success in the business or professional world. Bishops remain in their secular occupation during their term of office. Although there is no specified length of service, most of them serve approximately five years. Bishops are highly respected in the LDS community.

BISHOPRIC: Each bishop has two counselors. These three men comprise the bishopric of each ward. Also see **COUNSELORS**.

BLESSINGS: There are various official blessings in Mormonism. These include, but are not limited to, the naming and blessing of children, confirming of new members, dedicating of homes and graves, and blessings administered by fathers on the members of their families. Melchizedek Priesthood Study Guide #3, *Come unto the Father in the Name of Jesus*, gives the proper wording and procedure for each blessing. See pp. 135-141.

BLOOD ATONEMENT: A concept not discussed much in modern Mormonism. Historically Mormonism taught that the only way murderers could atone for their crime was through the shedding of their own blood. A remnant of this teaching can be seen today in that Utah still offers the option of being executed by firing squad.

BODY: Having a physical body is essential for the attaining of godhood. "No other people on earth understand for the sacred nature and purpose of our physical bodies as do Latter-day Saints.... We knew that by gaining physical bodies to house our spirits, we would have the opportunity to become more like our Father" (*Come Unto Me*, p. 143). Also see **MORTAL**.

BOOK OF ABRAHAM: A section of the Pearl of Great Price, and thus a part of LDS scripture. It talks about gods creating the world and about Kolob, the star closest to God's throne. Joseph Smith claimed to have translated it from Egyptian papyri he obtained. This was disproved in 1967 when these papyri were found in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and it was ascertained that they contained a description of Egyptian burial rites.

BOOK OF MORMON: Subtitled "Another Testament of Jesus Christ," it is one of four books Mormons consider scripture. It contains the story of the supposed migration of groups of Jews to the Americas and their subsequent history in the Americas. It does not contain much LDS teaching. Mormons highly respect it, but many have never read it. Certain of its stories are commonly known, being taught to them since childhood.

BOOK OF MOSES: A section of the Pearl of Great Price and thus considered part of Mormon scripture. It contains teachings on the plurality of gods, Adam's "good" fall, and Satan's rebellion and fall.

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE: See **PERSONAL HISTORY**.



BORN AGAIN: An expression not commonly used in Mormonism. Following are a couple of examples of LDS usage. "Your key to becoming perfect in Christ is found through faith and obedience, which leads to being 'born again.' Then comes the 'mighty change in us, or in our hearts, *that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually*' (Mosiah 5:2)" (*Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, p.393, emphasis added). "The phrase, 'born again,' has a deeper significance than many people attach to it. This *changed feeling* may be indescribable, but it is real" (*To Make Thee a Minister and a Witness*, p. 19).

BRANCH: A congregation too small to qualify as a ward.

BRETHREN: The General Authorities.

BRIGHAM YOUNG: The second president of the LDS church. After Joseph Smith's death, he led the Mormons to Utah where they prospered under his leadership.

BROTHER: Male church members are commonly addressed as brothers.

BURNING IN THE BOSOM: (1) A feeling of peace and assurance that the Holy Ghost supposedly gives a person to confirm the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. (2) Also used to describe the feeling the Holy Ghost supposedly gives to confirm an individual's action. Also see **FEELING**.

BYU: Brigham Young University, located in Provo, Utah, with an enrollment of approximately 27,000. Very few non-Mormons attend.

CAFFEINE: See **COCA DRINKS**.

CALLING: A common expression for a specific task members have been called to within the Church. They might hold the calling, for example, of primary teacher or priesthood quorum president. Most active members serve in a specific calling. No one receives a lifelong calling except for the President of the Church, the Twelve Apostles, and members of the First Quorum of Seventy. Also see magnify a calling.

CANONIZED SCRIPTURE: Another term for the four standard works. At times, Mormons use this term to distinguish these books from the living prophet which are also considered scripture. This does not mean, however, that these books are more important than his words, since Mormonism also teaches that his words can supersede these scriptures. Also see **PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH**.

CELESTIAL KINGDOM: The highest of the three kingdoms of LDS heaven. There people will live with Heavenly Father and Jesus. There are three levels within the celestial kingdom: the top level equals exaltation, the purpose of the second level has not been revealed, and the third level is for faithful Mormons who were not married in the temple. These individuals become ministering servants.

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE: Being married in the temple for time and *eternity*, which is essential for exaltation. It is also called eternal marriage. This can also be performed vicariously for the dead. "Everything required of us by God is associated with the law, but the major crowning point of the law which man must obey is eternal marriage. Therein lie the keys of eternal life, or, as the Doctrine and Covenants puts it, 'eternal lives.' In other words, an eternal increase of posterity" (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, p. 4).



CELESTIALIZED: The process of entering the celestial kingdom or entering celestial glory.

CHOICE SPIRIT: A common LDS expression roughly equivalent to being a good person. It is rooted in their teaching of preexistence.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT: A common slogan in Mormonism. LDS teenagers often wear rings engraved with the initials CTR.

CHRISTIAN: (1) Mormons are increasingly applying this term to themselves. They claim that Mormonism is true Christianity. They base their claim to being Christian on the fact that they have Christ in their church name and because they honor him highly. "Mormonism is Christianity; Christianity is Mormonism; they are one and the same, and they are not to be distinguished from each other in the minutest detail" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 513). (2) Christians. But they believe that Christians do not have the "fullness of the gospel."

CHURCH: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

CIVIL WAR PROPHECY: D&C Section 87. Mormons often cite this as proof that Joseph Smith was a true prophet. Such "prophecies," however, were not uncommon in that period of history. Also parts of it did not come true. They also fail to mention, or don't even realize, that Smith made many other prophecies--none of which came true. For example, see D&C 84.

CLERK: The member in the ward who keeps track of church attendance and other data. During sacrament meetings he sits up front taking attendance and recording statistics.

COFFEE: The drinking of hot drinks is condemned in the Word of Wisdom. Hot drinks have been officially interpreted as coffee and tea. Drinking coffee disqualifies Mormons from entering the temple and is one of the worst sins they can commit.

COLA DRINKS: Many Mormons believe that it is a violation of the Word of Wisdom to drink caffeinated drinks even though it does not specifically forbid them. "The First Presidency has declared: 'With reference to cola drinks, the Church has never officially taken a position on this matter, but the leaders of the Church have advised, and we do specifically advise, against the use of *any drink containing harmful habit-forming drugs under circumstances that would result in acquiring the habit*. Any beverage that contains ingredients harmful to the body should be avoided.' [italics added]" (*Remember Me*, p. 226).

CONFIRMATION: An ordinance performed immediately after baptism, Mormons believe it confers the gift of the Holy Ghost, which means that he becomes their constant companion and will give them revelation through their feelings. Also see **GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST**.

CONSECRATION: To devote everything to the church. "The formal law of consecration, however, has been established only at certain times on the earth. It is an organized way in which individuals can dedicate all of their time, talents, and material resources to building up the kingdom of God here on earth" (*Learn of Me*, p. 40). For a brief period of time, Joseph Smith tried to put this into practice through a system called the United order.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES: On the basis of D&C 101:80 Mormons believe that it was inspired by God.



CONTINUATION OF THE SEEDS: The ability to bear spirit children, which is the essence of being a god. Thus only those who attain godhood will be able to have a continuation of the seeds. See D&C 132:19,20.

CONVERSION: Acceptance of Mormonism, which is evidenced by a change of lifestyle. "What does it mean to be converted? President Harold B. Lee said: One who is converted 'strive(s) continually to improve inward weakness and not merely the outward appearances.'" (*Ensign*, May 1996, p. 74-75). This contrasts with biblical conversion, which is a turning away from trust in one's own work to trust in Jesus' saving work. LDS conversion is rooted in feelings. "They will be converted when they feel the Spirit and act on the promptings they receive" (*Missionary Guide*, p. 1).

COUNSELORS: Every organization of the church, at every level of the church, is run by a presidency that consists of a president and two counselors. The counselors aid the president and act on his or her behalf.

COVENANT: A popular Mormon word. LDS covenants are always bilateral and conditioned on the obedience of man (unlike God's covenant of grace, which is unilateral and unconditional). Almost everything in Mormonism is considered a covenant. "Each ordinance and requirement to man for the purpose of bringing to pass his salvation and exaltation is a covenant" (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, p. 197).

CREATE: To organize eternal matter, in contrast to the biblical description of God creating the universe out of nothing. Mormons believe Jesus, under Heavenly Father's direction, "created" the earth, being aided by persons such as Moses, Abraham, James, John, Peter, and Joseph Smith in their preexistent forms.

CREEDS: Mormonism teaches that all historical Christian creeds are abominations. See Joseph Smith--History 1:19 in Pearl of Great Price. Mormons feel the early church's theology quickly became corrupted. Stephen E. Robinson is representative of this view. "I would point out, however, that disagreeing with the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon is not the same as disagreeing with the New Testament. (*How Wide the Divide*, p. 60)

CROSS: Mormons are repulsed by symbols of Christ's cross. They do not exhibit crosses in their meetinghouses or homes. Nor do they wear them as jewelry. They view the cross as a symbol of death and think that Christians have made it their idol.

CULT: Labeling Mormonism a cult is highly offensive to Mormons. They define a cult as a group that isolates its members from their families and thus cannot understand how anybody could consider Mormonism a cult.

CUMORAH: The hill in western New York State, where the gold plates containing the Book of Mormon were supposedly hidden and subsequently found by Joseph Smith.

DAMN: Refers to the stoppage of a person's progression to godhood, not to suffering eternal punishment in hell. The LDS concept of damnation is similar to the idea of damning a stream. All who do not gain godhood experience damnation to some extent.

DEACON: The first office of the Aaronic priesthood. Worthy boys enter it at the age of 12. Deacons help distribute the sacrament.



DEMONIC POSSESSION: The way demons attempt to gain a physical body. See **BODY**.

DEMONS: The spirit children who joined Satan in his rebellion. They were immediately consigned to outer darkness, thus depriving them of any chance of continuing their progression to godhood. Also see **SATAN, OUTER DARKNESS**.

DESERET: The Book of Mormon name for honeybee (Ether 2:3). Frequently used in names of LDS businesses because it implies industry.

DESERT INDUSTRIES: Similar to Goodwill industries. This church run organization employs handicapped and impaired persons who recondition and repair donated items that are then sold in outlet stores. Commonly called D.I.

DISCIPLINARY COUNCILS: Church "courts" held on the ward or stake level to decide appropriate "punishments" for serious sins. "A council can reach one of four decisions: (1) no action, (2) formal probation, (3) disfellowshipment, or (4) excommunication" (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, pp. 15, 16). In the recent past, members desiring to leave the church had to go before such a council. That no longer holds true.

DISFELLOWSHIP: This is a judgment arrived at by a disciplinary council for serious sin. It is one step removed from excommunication. "Disfellowshipment is usually temporary, though not necessarily brief. Disfellowshipped persons retain membership in the Church. They are encouraged to attend public Church meetings, but are not entitled to offer public prayers or to give talks. They may not hold a Church position, take the sacrament, vote in the sustaining of Church officers, hold a temple recommend, or exercise the priesthood. They may, however, pay tithes and offerings and continue to wear temple garments if endowed" (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, p. 16).

DISPENSATION: "A dispensation of the gospel is a period of time in which the Lord has at least one authorized servant on the earth who bears the holy priesthood and the keys, and who has a divine commission to dispense the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth" (*LDS Bible Dictionary*, p. 657). Mormons believe the last dispensation was inaugurated at the time of Joseph Smith.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: One of Mormonism's four scriptures. It consists of 140 "divine revelations and inspired declarations" received mostly by Joseph Smith. It teaches more Mormon doctrine than the other three LDS scriptures combined.

ELDERS: All holders of the Melchizedek priesthood.

ELIAS: The KJV translation of the name Elijah in the New Testament. Mormons, however, don't equate Elias with Elijah. Instead they surround this name with a confusing set of teachings. At times they speak of Elias as a separate individual, other times as a title for a forerunner, and still other times they identify him with Noah. The following quote illustrates this confusion: "The term Elias means forerunner. Noah, Elijah, John the Baptist and John the Revelator have been referred to as Elias in scripture, though the references to Elijah by this name are mistranslated. Summarizing the facts-- Joseph Smith revealed that Gabriel was Noah; Luke declared that it was the angel Gabriel who appeared to Zacharias and Mary; and the Lord has declared that Elias appeared to Zacharias and Joseph Smith. Therefore, Elias is Noah" (*Old Testament Manual* I, p. 54).



ELIJAH: Holder of the sealing power of the Melchizedek priesthood. Mormons believe he appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple in fulfillment of Malachi 4:5,6. Mormons claim he conferred on them the keys to this sealing power, which especially includes the power to perform ordinances for the dead (D&C 110:13-16).

ELOHIM: The Hebrew word for God. Mormons identify it exclusively with Heavenly Father. They say Jesus was Jehovah (translated LORD in English), although the Bible often uses both names in reference to the same person. For example see Genesis 2:4. Also see **JEHOVAH**.

ENDOWMENT: The initiatory temple rite that consists of being ceremonially washed, receiving a new name, receiving sacred garments, viewing the LDS version of creation and the fall, and learning various handshakes that are essential for exaltation. These rituals "are called endowments, because in and through them the recipients are endowed with power from on high" (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 226f.). Endowments are also performed vicariously for the dead.

ENSIGN: (1) The name of the official monthly magazine of the LDS church. According to the title page it is "pronounced N'sign not ensun." The May and November issues contain the transcripts of all speeches given at the latest general conference. These issues are called conference editions and are considered scripture. "If you want to know what the Lord would have the Saints know and to have his guidance and direction for the next six months, get a copy of the proceedings of this conference, and you will have the latest word of the Lord as far as the Saints are concerned" (Harold B. Lee, quoted in *D&C Student Manual*, p. 42). (2) "This ensign is the new and everlasting covenant, the gospel salvation [D&C 49:9]; it is the great latter-day Zion [D&C 64:41-43]; it is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Bruce R. McConkie, quoted in *Come unto the Father in the Name of Jesus Christ*, p. 31).

EPHRAIMITES: Mormons believe that converts to Mormonism literally become Israelites (see Israel). Up to this point in history they believe that "the great majority of those who have come into the Church are Ephraimites" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 138).

ETERNAL DEATH: To Mormons, this is not a description of hell. Rather it refers to the inability to procreate spirit children because of the failure to obtain godhood. Mormonism pictures this inability to produce offspring for all eternity as one of the worst fates that can befall people.

ETERNAL FAMILY: A favorite LDS expression. There are two aspects to an eternal family: (1) the earthly family unit will remain a family unit for all eternity; (2) the family will increase through the procreation of spirit children for all eternity. Only those who attain godhood will be able to have eternal families. "Our earthly families will remain permanently ours. And we can also continue to increase, adding spirit children to our posterity" (*The Latter-day Saint Woman Part A*, p. 69).

ETERNAL INCREASE: Another term for spirit children. See spirit children.

ETERNAL LIFE: (1) Officially, this is distinct from immortality. It doesn't describe living eternally with God but living eternally as with exaltation. "Exaltation means the same thing as eternal life" (*Learn of Me*, p. 72). (2) Unofficially, many Mormons equate it with immortality.

ETERNAL LIVES: Another name for spirit children. See **SPIRIT CHILDREN**.

ETERNAL MARRIAGE: See **CELESTIAL MARRIAGE**.



ETERNAL PROGRESSION: The LDS belief that a person can continue to progress throughout eternity, eventually obtaining godhood. This teaching is the heart and core of Mormonism.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT: Not punishment that lasts for all eternity, but punishment inflicted by an eternal god (cf. D&C 19:6-12). Mormonism's eternal punishment lasts a relatively short time. Also see **HELL**.

ETERNITIES: Mormons often talk about "the eternities" although they never explain what they mean by this plural form.

EVANGELIST: See **PATRIARCH**.

EVERLASTING BURNINGS: A reference to where God dwells, not a reference to hell. "You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves ... until you ... are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power" (Joseph Smith, quoted in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, p. 24).

EXALTATION: The highest level of the celestial kingdom, godhood. One of Mormonism's more popular "theological " terms.

EXCOMMUNICATION: "Excommunication is the most severe judgment a Church disciplinary council can take. Excommunicated persons are no longer members of the Church" (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, p. 16). With a great degree of effort an excommunicated person can be restored to church membership.

EXEMPLAR: A popular LDS title for Jesus. It reveals the Mormons' believe that Jesus saved them by being their example, not by becoming their substitute who has done everything for them.

EXTRACTION: The process of extracting names for centuries-old records (e.g., census rolls, church records). This work is vital since it supplies the raw data for the genealogical work. There are two extraction programs: the family home extraction program allowing members to work at home and the stake extraction program where members work at a centralized location. The LDS church claims to have already extracted over two billion names.

EYE BEING SINGLE: An expression for single-mindedness. An example of its use: "My eyes would be single to the Lord's purpose in Brazil" (*Ensign*, June 1991, p. 45).

FAITH: A word commonly used in Mormonism but quite difficult to define. (1) The belief that God exists and has given a good plan of salvation (Mormonism). "If we have faith, we trust in Jesus Christ to help us find ways to live his commandments" (*The Latter-day Saint Woman, Part A*, p. 7). (2) Often described as the power God gives people to resist sin and become perfect (faith) God will give him. "To those who have not begun the quest of comprehension, the word faith appears to be only a synonym for a kind of belief of conviction. ... It is a principle of power" (*Sharing the Gospel Manual*, p. 82). In contrast, biblical faith receives its value from its object, namely, Jesus and his death for our sins. Biblical faith involves more than knowledge. It is *trusting* only in Jesus' works, and not in one's own works, to get to heaven.

FAITH-PROMOTING: A popular expression used to describe approved types of literature, activity, etc.



FALL OF ADAM: Mormons believe it gave mankind the ability to have children; thus they regard it as good (2 Nephi 2:22-25). "Adam voluntarily, and with full knowledge of good and evil, that man might be...For his service we owe Adam an immeasurable debt of gratitude" (Marion G. Romney, quoted in *Doctrines of the Gospel*, p. 20).

FAMILY HISTORY: Genealogy. "We have worked earnestly to simplify genealogical research. The name was changed from genealogy to family history as a part of that effort" (*Learn of Me*, p. 81).

FAMILY HISTORY CENTERS: See **GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY**.

FAMILY HOME EVENING: Every Monday evening families are to spend time together studying and playing. No church activities are scheduled for Monday night.

FAREWELL: Shortly before people go on their missions, their local ward devotes one of their Sunday meetings to giving them a farewell. Family members and friends give speeches, making these farewells often quite emotional.

FAST AND TESTIMONY MEETING: Held on the first Sunday of every month. Instead of having assigned speakers, any member can come forward and give his or her testimony. Since the members have been fasting, these are usually quite emotional meetings. Also see fasting.

FASTING: Members are urged to fast for two meals or 24 hours the first weekend of the month. "The law to the Latter-day Saints, as understood by the authorities of the church, is that food and drink are not to be partaken of for twenty-four hours, 'from even to even,' and that the Saints are to refrain from all bodily gratification and indulgences" (Joseph F. Smith, quoted in *To Make Thee a Minister and a Witness*, p. 116). Many Mormons, however do not follow this strictly. The money that would have been used for food is donated as their fast offering to help the poor.

FEELINGS: Subjective feelings, rather than objective facts, are the most important thing to Mormons. They believe that revelation, knowledge, guidance, and the answers to prayer all come through the medium of a person's feelings. "The Holy Ghost also helps us remember things we once learned but forgotten... Other ways the Holy Ghost helps us solve problems are by revealing answers to us directly in a still, small voice... [If we receive the answer to our prayers from someone else, the Holy Ghost will give us the feeling that it is correct.]... Such promptings may simply be a feeling that we ought to spend more time with someone in our family or do something special for him... He tells us that if the decision we make is right, we will receive a feeling of peace in our hearts and in our minds" (*Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood B*, p. 106).

FELLOWSHIPPING: Many Christians use this term to describe socializing with their fellow Christians. Mormons, however, use it to describe the act of being friendly with nonmembers or new members as a way of doing mission work. An example of its usage: "Fellowshipping investigators (investigators = mission prospects) also has an effect on the quality of teaching." (*Ensign*, June 1991, p. 14).

FIRESIDE: A talk, often transmitted over satellite, given by a church leader, usually to one specific church organization. An example would be a fireside for the priest's quorum.

FIRSTBORN: "Jesus Christ is the Firstborn, then, in two senses of the word – he is the first spirit child born to God the Father in the premortal world, and he was the first one on this earth to be resurrected, or born from the grave." (Larry E. Dahl, *Ensign*, April 1997, p. 15). Also see **BEGOTTEN**.



FIRST ESTATE: See preexistence.

FIRST ORDINANCES: Baptism by immersion and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

FIRST PRESIDENCY: The President of the Church and his two counselors.

FIRST PRINCIPLES: Faith and repentance.

FIRST QUORUM OF SEVENTY: Title for, not the number of a group of General Authorities. (In November, 1997, there were 44 members in the First Quorum of Seventy.) Members of this body supervise a particular area or activity of the church's work. These men serve until the age of 70.

FIRST VISION: The vision of Joseph Smith supposedly received in 1820 when Heavenly Father told him not to join any church since they were all corrupt. Mormons believe that it proves that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God. "The key to a testimony of the gospel is Joseph Smith's first vision. All that we believe hinges on this account.... The greatest event that has ever occurred in the world since the resurrection of the Son of God from the tomb and his ascension on high, was the coming of the Father and of the Son to that boy Joseph Smith, to prepare the way for the laying of the foundation of His kingdom" (*Sharing the Gospel Manual*, pp. 33, 34).

FLESH AND BLOOD: A description of mortality. "Blood did not flow in Adam's veins (before the Fall), for he was not yet mortal, and blood is an element that pertains exclusively to mortality" (**Mormon Doctrine**, p. 268). Also see **FLESH AND BONES**.

FLESH AND BONES: A description of immortality. "After the resurrection from the dead our bodies will be spiritual bodies, but they will be bodies that are tangible, bodies that have been purified, but they will nevertheless be bodies of flesh and bones, but they will not be blood bodies, they will no longer quickened by blood but by the spirit which is eternal and they shall become immortal and shall never die" (Joseph Fielding Smith, quoted in *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, p. 76). Also see **FLESH AND BLOOD**.

FORGIVENESS: Mormonism teaches that person must earn God's forgiveness. "Peace comes only through forgiveness. But forgiveness has a high price. President Kimball tells us: 'To every forgiveness there is a condition.... The *fasting, the prayer, the humility must be equal to or greater than the sin*. There must be a broken heart and contrite spirit.... There must be tears and genuine change of heart. There must be conviction of the sin, abandonment of the evil, confession of the error to properly constituted authorities of the Lord' " (*Gospel Principles*, p. 243, emphasis added). Contrast this to the biblical view that God forgives us freely because Jesus has already paid the entire debt of our sin. See Hebrews 10: 17-18.

FOUR GENERATION PROGRAM: The program in which Mormons are to trace their family history back a minimum of four generations in order to make sure the temple work has been done for all their ancestors.

FREE SALVATION: An expression not commonly used in Mormonism. The LDS church defines it as the salvation that is *freely and fully available* to all people, but not free in the sense that they don't have to earn it. "Though salvation is free (fully available and not withheld from anyone because of time, location, or lineage), we must reconcile ourselves to God" (*Ensign*, July 1989, p. 60). In fact, Mormons label the Christian teaching of free salvation as satanic. "One of the most fallacious



doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation" (Spencer W. Kimball, quoted in *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, p. 36).

FRIENDSHIPPING: See **FELLOWSHIPPING**.

FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL: Mormonism. Mormons believe that Christian churches, at best, have only a part of the truth.

GABRIEL: "By modern revelation we know that Gabriel was known on earth as Noah, that he stands next in authority to Adam in the priesthood" (*Ensign*, Dec. 1990, p. 7). But also see **ELIAS**.

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE: The place of Jesus' greatest suffering. "Where and under what circumstances was the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God made? Was it on the Cross of Calvary or in the Garden of Gethsemane ... In reality, the pain and suffering, the triumph and grandeur, of the atonement took place primary in Gethsemane." (*The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, p. 172). Mormons base this on the fact that many people were crucified but only Jesus sweat drops of blood.

GATHERING OF ISRAEL: An important concept within Mormonism. (1) Mormons believe Israel is now being gathered spiritually by people joining the LDS Church (see Israel). (2) In addition, they believe Israel will be gathered literally at Christ's Second Coming with the ten tribes gathering at Independence, Missouri and Judah gathering at Jerusalem.

GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY: One or more rooms, often attached to a stake house, equipped for genealogical research. These libraries have extensive microfilm and computer resources. Non-Mormons can, and many do, make use of these facilities. The name has recently been changed to "Family History Centers". See **FAMILY HISTORY**.

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH: Before ordinances can be performed for the dead, they must be accurately identified. Hence the importance of genealogical research. Doing this research, especially in regard to their own families, is an important duty for every Mormon. Also see **FOUR GENERATION PROGRAM**.

GENERAL AUTHORITY: The title for a church leader whose authority is not limited to one geographical area but is general. The General Authorities consist of the First Presidency of the Church, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the First and Second Quorums of Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric.

GENERAL CONFERENCE: Held twice a year (April and October) in Salt Lake City. The General Authorities give speeches, which are then considered scripture. Also see *Ensign*.

GENTILES: Non-Mormons. "Some Latter-day Saints have referred to those who are not members of the Church as Gentiles, even though the nonmembers might be Jews!" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1991, p. 52).

GIFT: Rarely, if ever, used to describe an undeserved blessing. "By the grace of God--following devotion, faith and obedience on man's part--certain special spiritual blessings called gifts of the Spirit are bestowed upon men. Their receipt is always predicated upon obedience to law, but because they are freely available to all the obedient, they are called gifts" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 314).



GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST: The Holy Ghost becomes a person's constant companion and thus they become eligible to receive revelation. "The gift of the Holy Ghost is the privilege given to a baptized person, after he has been confirmed a member of the Church, to receive guidance and inspiration from the Holy Ghost.... A person may be temporarily guided by the Holy Ghost without receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.... Today many nonmembers of the Church learn, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the Book of Mormon is true. But the flash of testimony leaves them if they do not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*Gospel Principles*, p. 138).

GOD: Mormons believe that Heavenly Father was once a man who subsequently obtained godhood. A popular couplet states: "As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be." They call him an exalted man and believe he has a physical body. " ' I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345]. God is glorified and perfected man, a personage of flesh and bones" (*Gospel Principles*, p. 6). Believing that God has a physical body is one of the most important tenets of Mormonism.

GODHEAD: Mormons don't believe in the Trinity, but they do talk about the godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They believe it is structured similar to the first presidency of the church. Also see **TRINITY**.

GODHOOD: A Mormon's goal is to attain godhood; to become a god.

GODS: Although Mormons don't often talk about gods with non-Mormons, it is not uncommon to run across such references in their literature. They believe there are many who have progressed to become gods and many more who will progress to godhood.

GOING TO HEAVEN: Since Mormons believe that nearly everyone will go to one of the three kingdoms in heaven, it is often unproductive to talk to Mormons about "going to heaven." It is better to speak to them about living with Heavenly Father.

GOLDEN CONTACTS: Persons who are good prospects for joining the church.

GOLDEN PLATES: The plates on which the Book of Mormon supposedly was written. Mormons believe that the angel Moroni led Joseph Smith to the place on the hill Cumorah where they were allegedly buried.

GOSPEL: A common term for Mormonism or its intricate plan of salvation. "Mormonism so-called--which actually is the gospel of Christ, restored anew in this day" (*Sharing the Gospel Manual*, p. 176). It has nothing in common with the gospel contained in the Bible. That gospel is the *good news* of free and full salvation won for mankind by Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASSES: Adult Sunday School classes.

GOSPEL PRINCIPLES: (1) The laws of Mormonism. (2) The title of a manual for new members. It summarizes the teachings of Mormonism better than any other of their manuals.

GRACE: Not the unconditional, undeserved, unfathomable love on God's part that moved him to save us. Rather it is the power God gives people to save themselves, which he grants *only* after they have done everything they can do. "This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts" (*LDS Bible Dictionary*, p.



697). "We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23). Also see **FREE SALVATION**.

GRACER: Slang term some Mormons use for Christians.

HEAVEN: Consists of three kingdoms: celestial, terrestrial, telestial.

HEAVENLY FATHER: The most popular LDS term for God. Its popularity is rooted in their belief that they were spiritually procreated by him in the preexistence.

HELL: (1) Not a place of eternal punishment but the temporary state of suffering wicked spirits experience in spirit prison before Judgment Day. "That part of the spirit world inhabited by wicked spirits who are awaiting of eventual day of their resurrection is called hell.... Hell will have an end" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 165). (2) The regret the inhabitants of the lower kingdoms of heaven will experience as they see the glories of the celestial kingdom. "Of course, those who enter the telestial kingdom, and those who enter the terrestrial kingdom will have the eternal punishment which will come to them in knowing that they might, if they had kept the commandments of the Lord, have returned to his presence as his sons and his daughters. This will be a torment to them, and in the sense it will be hell" (*Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, p. 66).

HIGH COUNCIL: A council of twelve men on the stake level assisting the stake presidency.

HIGH PRIEST: An office of the Melchizedek priesthood. "General Authorities, stake presidencies, bishoprics, and patriarchs, are ordained as high priests" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 436).

HOLY GHOST: In Mormonism the Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit are two distinct entities. The Holy Ghost is a member of the godhead but not equal to the Heavenly Father. "The Holy Ghost is the third person in the Godhead. As such he possesses the power of Deity. However, he is not fully like the Father and the Son in that he does not have a body of flesh and bones. He is a personage of Spirit" (*Sharing the Gospel Manual*, p. 104). "He has a body of spirit.... He can be only in one place at a time, but his influence can be every place at the same time" (*Gospel Principles*, p. 34).

HOLY SPIRIT: A very confusing concept in Mormonism and therefore an expression Mormons don't employ much. It is not synonymous with the Holy Ghost but with the Spirit of the Lord, the Light of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ. "This other spirit is impersonal and has no size, not dimensions; it proceeds forth from the presence of the Father and the Son and is in all things. We should speak of the Holy Ghost as a personage as 'he' and this other Spirit as 'it', although when we speak of the power or gift of the Holy Ghost we may properly say 'it' " (*Ensign*, June, 1991, p. 26).

HOME TEACHER: "It is the practice of the Church to send priesthood brethren out as home teachers to visit the homes of all church members each month. These brethren go out two-by-two, frequently one holding the lesser priesthood going with a possessor of the Melchizedek Priesthood" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 363). They are to teach a brief lesson but their main purpose is to encourage and check up on their fellow members. These visits also serve as good training for future missionaries. "Home teachers should be charged more clearly to describe their mission to watch over, to strengthen, to see that members do their duty....They think of themselves as teachers of the gospel message only....We must do something to change the emphasis from teaching to guardians watching over the Church kind of concept. Until we get that into their minds, we are not going to do the kind of home teaching that is going to get results" (Harold B. Lee, quoted in *To Make Thee a Minister and a Witness*, p. 111).



IF: One of the biggest words in Mormonism. Every promise of God is conditional on the obedience of man. "All blessings are conditional. I know of none that are not" (Spencer W. Kimball, quoted in *Remember Me*, p. 23). Also see D&C 130:21.

IMMORTALITY: See **FLESH AND BONES**.

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI: (1) An important site to Mormons, sometimes referred to as Zion. They believe Jesus will return there and rule both from there and Jerusalem during the Millennium (see D&C 133). Before that happens, however, they believe a temple needs to be built on the spot indicated by Joseph Smith. (2) The site of the Garden of Eden.

INSPIRED VERSION: Another name for the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. LDS editions of the Bible contain excerpts of it in footnotes and an appendix. It is not widely used since the church claims that he never completed it.

INSTITUTE: College level courses on Mormonism. Near many college campuses, the LDS church has built institute buildings, which serve as the center of college life for many LDS students.

INTELLIGENCES: The part of mankind that Mormons say is eternal. They believe Heavenly Father (pro) created spiritual bodies for these intelligences to inhabit. "The word when preceded by the article *an*, or used in the plural as *intelligences*, means a person, or persons, usually in the spiritual estate. Just as we speak of a person or persons, we speak of an *intelligence*, or *intelligences*" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 220).

INVESTIGATORS: Prospects; non-Mormons who are interested in (investigating) the church.

ISRAEL: Mormons. They believe that most people who join the church have at least some Abraham's blood. If they don't, Mormonism teaches that their blood will literally be changed. ". . . the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham [naturally] must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost" (Joseph Smith, quoted in *Doctrine of the Gospel*, p. 57).

JACK MORMON: A slang expression for a non-active Mormon.

JAREDITES: According to the Book of Mormon, they were people whose language was preserved by faith at the time of the Tower of Babel. According to it, they subsequently came to America.

JEHOVAH: Jesus. "Jesus is Jehovah. He was God of the Old Testament" (**The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles**, p. 21). Also see **ELOHIM**.

JESUS: Mormons regard him in the following ways: (1) As the first spirit child of Heavenly Father. (2) As Jehovah. (3) As the only begotten Son. They believe he is the only Heavenly Father *physically begat on this earth*. Also see only begotten. (4) As the Savior. Not a Savior who did everything for mankind but rather one (a) who conquered physical death for mankind, (b) who paid our debt and is patient with us as *we pay him back in full*, (c) who served as our example, showing us what we have to do to save ourselves.



JOHN THE BAPTIST: The last legal administrator of the Aaronic priesthood. Mormons believe he appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on May 15, 1829 and bestowed upon them the Aaronic priesthood.

JOSEPH SMITH: The founder of the Mormon religion. Mormons often refer to him simply as the Prophet. They believe that he participated in the creation of the world, that his coming was prophesied in the Book of Mormon, and that all who enter the celestial kingdom will have to be approved by him. "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (D&C 135:3). Also see **FIRST VISION**.

JOURNAL: A personal record to be written in daily or weekly that will serve as a testimony to a person's descendants. Keeping a journal is an important responsibility. "I urge all of the people of this church to give serious attention to their family histories, to encourage their parents and grandparents to write their journals, and let no family go into eternity without having left their memoirs for their children, their grandchildren, and their posterity. This is a duty and a responsibility, and I urge every person to start the children out writing a personal history and journal" (Spencer W. Kimball, quoted in *Latter-day Saint Woman Part B*, p. 161).

JST: Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. See **INSPIRED VERSION**.

JUSTIFICATION: A term unfamiliar to most Mormons. In contrast to the biblical concept of justification (God's declaring us not guilty on the basis of Christ's atoning work), Mormonism describes it as God's strict confirmation of the merits or demerits of man's own actions. In other words, LDS justification is God's act of rewarding the right and punishing the wrong.

KEYS: Common LDS term denoting the power and authority of the priesthood. "Two different usages of the term *keys* are found in the revelations. One has references to the directive powers whereby the Church or kingdom and all its organizations are governed.... The other usage refers to the means provided whereby something is revealed, discovered, or made manifest.... President Joseph F. Smith said: 'What is a key? It is the right or privilege which belongs to and comes with the priesthood to have communication of God' " (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 410)

KINGDOM OF GOD: The church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "Let us understand that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the literal kingdom of God in the earth" (Marion G. Romney, quoted in *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, p. 108).

KING FOLLETT SERMON: The funeral sermon Joseph Smith preached in 1844 for a man named King Follett. Many Mormons consider this the greatest sermon ever preached. In it Smith outlined his thoughts on the nature of God and how man can become a god.

KINGDOMS OF GLORY: The three kingdoms of Mormon heaven: celestial, terrestrial, telestial.

KOLOB: The star nearest the throne of God (Book of Abraham 3:3-9). One of their hymns (284) is entitled: "If You Could Hie to Kolob." Also see **EVERLASTING BURNINGS**.

LAMANITES: (1) According to the Book of Mormon, the branch of Lehi's descendants that became unfaithful. (Lehi, according to the Book of Mormon, was a Jew who traveled to the Americas around 600 B.C.) Mormons believe they became the ancestors of the American Indians. (2) Most commonly used today as a term for the American Indians.



LAMBDA DELTA SIGMA: The church-sponsored sorority for college women. "Lamboda Delta Sigma is open to any single college woman under the age of thirty, regardless of religious affiliation, provided she is willing to live by Latter-day Saints standards" (*Relief Society Handbook*, p. 32).

LAW: In Mormonism most things are described as a law. Some examples are: the law of the gospel, the law of forgiveness, the law of justice, the law of sacrament. "Law provides the way for the Saints to grow, progress, and obtain happiness" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 393).

LDS: Abbreviation for Latter-day Saints. This abbreviation is used not just in connection with Mormon doctrine, but also Mormon people. Commonly Mormons describe themselves as LDS.

LEHI: An important figure in the Book of Mormon. He, with his family, supposedly traveled for Judah to America in 600 B.C. His descendants became the Lamanites and Nephites. LDS children learn about him and his voyage across the ocean.

LINE OF AUTHORITY: "Every priesthood holder should be able to trace his 'line of authority' back of Jesus Christ. This means he should know who ordained him and who ordained the person who ordained him, and so on back to Joseph Smith, who was ordained by Peter, James, and John, who were ordained by Jesus Christ. This is called the 'priesthood line of authority'" (*The Latter-day Saint Woman Part A.*, p. 77). Members of the priesthood carry cards, called "line of authority cards," that contain this information.

LINE UPON LINE, PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT: A common LDS expression roughly equivalent to progressing "one step at a time."

LIGHT OF CHRIST: See **HOLY SPIRIT**.

LIVING PROPHET: See **PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH**.

LORD'S SUPPER: See **SACRAMENT**.

MAGNIFY A CALLING: A common Mormon expression equivalent in meaning to performing your assigned tasks as faithfully as you can.

MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE: "Means that the Lord seals their exaltation upon them while they are yet in this life" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 326). Mormons believe this happens to only a select few.

MANKIND: (1) Existed in premortality as Heavenly Father's spirit children. (2) Are "gods in embryo" with the potential to obtain godhood. "Having within him the seeds of godhood and thus being a god in embryo, man has unlimited potential for progress and attainment" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p.3).

MANUALS: The LDS church provides manuals for every church organization and activity. These manuals are excellent sources for discovering what is being *officially* taught in the church.

MARTYRDOM: A reference to Joseph Smith's death on June 27, 1844 in the Carthage, Illinois jail.

MEETINGHOUSES: Mormon church buildings. Also commonly referred to as "stake houses" or chapels.



MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD: The higher priesthood that worthy young men enter at the age 18 or 19. Mormons believe Peter, James, and John bestowed it on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1829. The offices of the Melchizedek priesthood are elder, seventy, high priest, and patriarch.

MIA: Abbreviation for Mutual Improvement Associations, the name of their youth organizations.

MILLENNIUM: Mormons believe Jesus will return and rule for a thousand years on earth. They say that he will rule both from Jerusalem and Independence, Missouri. During this time, the temple work will be completed. To be ready for his coming is the driving force behind their food storage program and their political activism.

MINISTERING OF ANGELS: The belief that holders of the Aaronic priesthood can receive help from angels.

MINISTERING SERVANTS: The people who will inhabit the lowest level of the celestial kingdom. These are faithful Mormons who were not married eternally and thus cannot reach exaltation.

MINISTERING SPIRITS: "Joseph Smith explained the difference between an angel and a ministering spirit: an angel is 'a resurrected or translated body, with its spirit ministering to embodied spirits,' and a ministering spirit is 'a disembodied spirit, visiting and ministering to disembodied spirits' " (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 320). One example of ministering spirits are the spirits in paradise who go on missions to the spirits in spirit prison. Also see **ANGELS**.

MISSION OF THE CHURCH: The LDS Church has a threefold mission: (1) to perfect the saints; (2) to proclaim the gospel; (3) to redeem the dead.

MISSION PRESIDENT: The head of a mission district. There were over 275 mission districts in June of 1992.

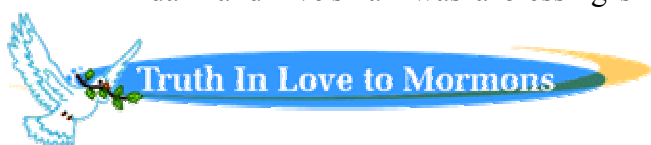
MISSIONARY: Many young LDS men, at the age of 19, go on a two year mission. Some young women go on eighteen-month missions at the age of 21. Increasingly, retired persons are also serving on missions. Ideally, all who go on missions are to support themselves, although many also receive support from the church. Missionaries who remain in the United States receive only two weeks of training, while those going to a foreign country receive two months of language and culture training.

MISSIONARY DISCUSSIONS: The six lessons missionaries give to investigators. Their official title is *Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel*. "To those missionaries who may be asked to present memorized discussion, it may be well to say that the General Authorities have been inspired to present a basic knowledge of the gospel this way" (*Sharing the Gospel Manual*, p. 114).

MORMON: Popular name for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is derived from the name of a prophet in the Book of Mormon. Although some Christians claim that using this name is derogatory to LDS people, it is one they themselves often use (e.g., Mormon Tabernacle Choir).

MORONI: The angel who supposedly appeared to Joseph Smith. His statue adorns the top spire of LDS temples. See **ANGELS**.

MORTAL: Included in the Mormon definition of mortality is the ability to have children. They claim that Adam and Eve's fall was a blessing since it made mankind mortal (able to have children). "When



Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden they were not yet mortal. They were not able to have children.... Their physical condition changed as a result of their eating the forbidden fruit. As God had promised, they became mortal. They were able to have children" (*Gospel Principles*. pp.32f).

MOTHER IN HEAVEN: Although not often mentioned, Mormonism teaches that there is an exalted mother in heaven, the spouse of Heavenly Father. "For as we have a Father in heaven, so also we have a Mother there, a glorified, exalted, ennobled Mother" (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, p. 129).

MTC: Abbreviation for the Missionary Training Center. The main one is in Provo, Utah. There are twelve such centers worldwide.

MURDER: On the basis of 1 John 3:15 and D&C 42:79 Mormons believe that murderers will never obtain exaltation but will still inherit the telestial kingdom.

MUTUAL: See **MIA**.

NEPHITES: According to the Book of Mormon, both they and the Lamanites descended from Lehi, a Jew who came to America in 600 B.C. The Nephites were his faithful descendants, who became corrupt, and were finally destroyed by the Lamanites. Much of the Book of Mormon is a description of the wars between these two groups.

NEW CREATION: See **ISRAEL**.

OBEY: A very important word in Mormonism. "Obedience is the first law of heaven, the cornerstone upon which all righteousness and progression rest....The whole system of creation and existence is thus centered around the eternal principle of obedience to law" (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 539f.). Also see If.

OFFERINGS: These are contributions given over and above their tithes (e.g., fast offerings and offerings to missionary fund or building fund).

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON: Mormons use this expression, not as Christians do to express Christ's divinity, but to refer to their belief that Jesus is the only person Heavenly Father physically begat on earth, "God was the Father of his fleshly tabernacle, and Mary--a mortal woman and virgin--was His mother. He is, therefore, the only person born who rightfully deserves the title 'the Only Begotten Son of God'" (Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, April 1991, p. 2). "We believe that he came into the world, born of Mary, literally and actually, as we are born of our mothers: that he came into the world, born of God the Eternal Father, the Almighty Elohim, literally and actually, as we are born of our earthly fathers" (Bruce R. McConkie, quoted in *Sharing the Gospel Manual*, p. 74).

ORDINANCES: Rites administered by the priesthood (e.g., first ordinances, temple ordinances, blessing of children, dedication of graves).

OUTER DARKNESS: The closest Mormonism comes to the biblical concept of hell. (Mormons define hell differently. See hell.) Outer darkness is the abode of Satan, demons, and the sons of perdition. Many Mormons believe that only a handful of people will qualify as sons of perdition and thus go to outer darkness. Also see **SON OF PERDITION**.



PARADISE: The section of the spirit world for the spirits of deceased Mormons. There they can continue their progression towards godhood; from there they can go on missions to spirit prison in order to convert non-Mormon spirits to Mormonism.

PATRIARCHAL BLESSING: A one-time blessing, given by a patriarch, that supposedly reveals a person's lineage and his or her future potential. The blessing, however, is conditioned on a person's faithfulness. These blessings are typed out and are highly valued. "In 1957 the First Presidency of the Church explained that a patriarchal blessing contains an inspired declaration of lineage. . .which tells us through which tribe of Israel we receive our blessings.... Because a patriarchal blessing is personal and sacred... its content should only be shared with those who are close to us and as we are directed by the Spirit" (*Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood A*, p. 74).

PATRIARCH: A man who is called to give patriarchal blessings. There is a patriarch for the whole church and one in most stakes. "In the organization of the Church of Jesus' time, patriarchs were called evangelists.... Most stakes of the church have at least one worthy Melchizedek Priesthood bearer who is called and ordained by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve to be the stake patriarch" (*Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood A*, pp. 70,71).

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE: One of the four Mormon written scriptures. It contains a collection of five brief items: the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham, Joseph Smith--Matthew, Joseph Smith--History, and the Articles of Faith. Because it is short, it is usually printed with the Doctrine and Covenants in one volume. Most Mormons have never read it.

PEEP STONES: Magical stones that were said to have been buried with golden plates. Joseph Smith supposedly used them to translate the Book of Mormon from the golden plates. He said he put these stones in his hat and the translation would miraculously appear on them. Also called the Urim and Thummim.

PERFECTION: The major emphasis of Mormonism. Becoming perfect is the key to becoming exalted. This emphasis places great stress on many Mormons. "Perhaps no idea creates more emotional stress for some of us than the idea that we need to be perfect right now--or soon!... And when we fail to achieve perfection in some area, we criticize ourselves harshly, even to the spirit of despair" (*Ensign*, Sept. 1990,p.50).

PERSONAL GOD: The expression Mormons use to refer to their belief that God has a physical body. They ridicule the biblical concept of God. "Soon pagan beliefs dominated the thinking of those called 'Christians'.... Members of this church believed that God was a being without form or substance" (*Gospel Principles*, p.105).

PERSONAL HISTORY: "A personal history is much shorter than a journal. A journal may be used as a basis for writing a personal history" (*Remember Me*, p.131).

PLAN OF SALVATION: All the laws and ordinances of Mormonism. Following the plan of salvation is the key to being exalted.

PLURALITY OF GODS: Mormons prefer this term to polytheism. They claim they are not polytheists, although they believe in a plurality of gods, because they worship only one god: Heavenly Father. Polytheism "is not to be confused with the gospel truth that there are 'gods many, and lord many. But



to us there is but one God, the Father. . . and one Lord Jesus Christ' [1 Cor. 8:4-7]. The saints are not polytheists" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 579).

PLURAL MARRIAGE: Mormons use this term instead of polygamy. In 1843 this doctrine became part of LDS scripture (D&C 132). Plural marriage had been practiced by Joseph Smith and selected others previous to this and continued to be practiced openly until 1890. At that time, the living prophet, Wilford Woodruff, supposedly received a revelation which forbade this practice (cf. D&C Declaration 1).

POLYGAMY: See **PLURAL MARRIAGE**.

POLYTHEISM: See **PLURALITY OF GODS**.

PRAYER: Answers to prayer come through feelings. A good feeling constitutes a positive reply while a bad feeling signifies a negative reply.

PREACHING: Not a common word in Mormonism. Their Sunday service centers on testimonies and talks given by different members each week rather than a sermon given by the bishop.

PREEXISTENCE: Also called premortality or our first estate. Mormons believe we existed before our earth-life as spirit children of Heavenly Father. Also see **SPIRIT CHILDREN**.

PRESIDENCY: Each organization of the church is run by a presidency that consists of a president and his two counselors.

PRESIDENT: The head of a church organization (e.g., stake president, quorum president).

PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH: Also called the "Prophet, Revelator, and Seer" or the living prophet. They believe that he, and he alone, receives direct revelations for the entire church. These revelations take precedence even over their written scriptures. This is a lifetime position. The apostle with the longest tenure becomes the church president at the death of the current church president.

PRESIDING BISHOPRIC: The three General Authorities who supervise the Church's financial affairs.

PRIESTHOOD: Entered into by all worthy male members. Defined as both the *authority* and *power* God gives to act on his behalf. "The priesthood is the greatest power on earth" (*Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood B*, p. 19). Only those rites and ordinances performed by holders of the priesthood are valid in Mormon eyes. They also believe that it gives them the power to receive divine revelations. There are two types of priesthood: the Aaronic and the Melchizedek.

PRIMARY: A Sunday school-like organization for children ages three to eleven.

PROBATION: "*Formal probation* is a temporary state of discipline, imposed as a means to help the member fully repent. The presiding officer of the council specifies the conditions under which the probation can be terminated. During the probation, the bishop or stake president keeps in close contact to help the individual progress" (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, p. 16).

PROPHET, THE: Joseph Smith.

PROPHETS: The President of the Church and the twelve apostles.



PROSELYTING: Evangelizing; doing mission work. Unlike in Christianity, it doesn't have a negative connotation. In Mormonism it is used in a positive sense.

QUORUMS: "A specified group of men, holding the same office in the Priesthood, organized for the more efficient advancement of the work for which the Priesthood in the Church is responsible" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 435). The various priesthood quorums on the ward level meet every Sunday.

RAISING RIGHT HAND TO THE SQUARE: When Mormons sustain their leaders they raise their right hands in such a way that a right angle is formed at the elbow. Also see **SUSTAINING**.

RECOMMEND: (1) Often used in reference to a temple recommend. See temple recommend. (2) Persons also receive a recommend for their bishop when they transfer from one ward to another. (3) Members of the priesthood receive recommends to perform certain ordinances.

REDEEM: Mormons use this synonymously with atonement. Their view, like the view of atonement, differs drastically from the biblical view of redemption. In the Bible, redemption is another beautiful word describing how Jesus, with his voluntary sacrifice, *bought us back* from the curse of sin.

REDEEM THE DEAD: One of the three main missions of the LDS church. See baptism for the dead.

REFORMED EGYPTIAN: According to Mormon 9:32, the language in which the Book of Mormon was supposedly written.

RELEASED: The vast majority of church positions are not lifelong callings. After a varying period of time, persons are released from their calling. Often they will be called to a new position.

RELIEF SOCIETY: The main LDS women's organization. Its emphasis is more on practical matters (e.g., being good homemakers, self improvement) than on theological matters. It meets every Sunday while the men meet in their various priesthood quorums.

REPENTANCE: Abandoning the sin. Mormon repentance follows faith rather than preceding it. "If we sincerely repent, we turn away from our sins and do them no more. We no longer have any desire to commit the sins" (*Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel*, p.2-14). "There is one crucial test of repentance. This is abandonment of the sin.... The saving power does not extend him who merely wants to change his life.... Nor is repentance complete when one merely tries to abandon sin. To try is weak" (Spencer W. Kimball, quoted in *Sharing the Gospel Manual*, p. 94). Biblical repentance, however, describes the *change of mind* when people turn away from trust in themselves and their works to trust in Jesus and his work for them.

RESTORATION: The period of history ushered in by Joseph Smith, Mormons assert that after the apostles died the true church left the earth (the great apostasy) until it was restored by Joseph Smith.

REVELATION: Their own feelings, even more than their written scriptures, are the vehicle through which Mormons receive revelation (e.g., "burning in the bosom"). "Feeling is a big part of the process of revelation ... the assurance comes through feeling" (*Lay Hold Upon the Word of God*, p. 56).

RLDS: Abbreviation for Reorganized The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, based in Independence, Missouri. It is not connected with the Salt Lake church and is much smaller. After



Joseph Smith's death, a group of Mormons recognized Smith's son rather than Brigham Young as their leader and founded the RLDS church. Until recently it was led by a direct descendant of Joseph Smith.

RM: Abbreviation for returned missionary.

SABBATH: Sunday. On Sunday they are not to work (even around the house), shop, go to the movies, or engage in sports. They are to attend church meetings, rest, visit with family or sick, read inspirational literature.

SACRAMENT: Used exclusively as a reference to the Lord's Supper. Mormons partake of the sacrament every Sunday. It consists of bread and water, and all members, including toddlers, receive it. Its purpose is to remind them of their obligation to obey God. " To keep his saints in constant remembrance of their obligation to accept and obey him--or in other words, to eat his flesh and drink his blood--the Lord has given them the sacramental ordinance" (*Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, p. 93).

SACRAMENT MEETING: The Mormon Sunday church service.

SACRED GROVE: The place where Heavenly Father supposedly appeared to the boy Joseph Smith and told him not to join any church because they were all corrupt.

SAINT: The term Mormons use to describe themselves. "A saint is not necessarily a person who is perfect, but he is a person who strives for perfection. . ." (*The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, p. 361).

SALVATION: (1) For most Mormons this is equivalent to resurrection, which is the only free gift in Mormonism. This is why many can say they believe that they are saved by Jesus alone. They mean that they believe they don't have to do anything to gain resurrection. (2) Sometimes used as a synonym for exaltation.

SANCTIFICATION: A term not commonly used in Mormonism. They use it to refer to a state of saintliness which is obtained as people purify themselves by overcoming sin. The Bible uses this term in two ways: (1) to describe the Holy Spirit's work of bringing people to the faith; (2) to describe the good works believers do by the power of the Holy Spirit.

SATAN: Heavenly Father's spirit child who proposed an alternate plan of salvation. After Heavenly Father rejected it, Satan rebelled. Heavenly Father sent him, along with his followers (demons), to outer darkness. This meant that they lost forever their chance to obtain physical bodies and to continue their progression to godhood. For many Mormons, Satan is the spiritual being of whose presence they are most aware.

SAVIOR: Mormons often refer to Jesus as their Savior. They believe he paid their debt to Heavenly Father and also conquered death for them. But they also believe that they have to pay him back in full. (For a good example of this, see *Gospel Principles*, pp. 75-77.) In other words, they believe he saved them by assuming their loan, refinancing it, and spreading out the payments. They do not believe that he saved them fully and freely by paying for their sins and then canceling the debt. Also see free salvation, Jesus.



SCRIPTURE: The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible. Mormons also refer to the messages of the living prophet and the talks given at general conferences as scripture. Also see **ENSIGN**.

SEALINGS: Being united for eternity. This can be done only in the temple. (1) Spouses are sealed to each other by being married in the temple. (2) Children are sealed to their parents in another temple ceremony. Both of these ceremonies can also be performed vicariously for the dead.

SECOND QUORUM OF SEVENTY: A title, not a number, for a group of General Authorities. (In November 1997, there were 23 members in this quorum.) They help supervise the worldwide operation of the church. Unlike members in the First Quorum of Seventy, these men do not all receive a lifetime calling. Also see **SEVENTY**.

SECTS: Christian churches. "Division and dissension, contention, confusion and discord--these are among the prevailing characteristics of the *sects* of Christendom. These various sects or *denominations* ..." (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 669).

SEER: The President of the Church is often referred to as "the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator."

SEMINARY: Not a theological school but the daily set of instructions on Mormonism offered to high school students. Often the LDS church will build a building close to a high school in which they conduct these classes. These seminary buildings become the social center for many LDS students.

SETTING APART: "Through a priesthood blessing, we are set apart from the world to focus our time and talents on a specific labor for the Lord.... As a priesthood ordinance, the action of setting an individual apart involves divine power, promise, and holiness.... When we are set apart, we also receive the right to obtain knowledge and revelation to accomplish our assigned tasks" (Ronald D. Maines, *Ensign*, Feb. 1992, p. 51).

SEVENTY: A title, not a number, of an office in the Melchizedek priesthood devoted to mission work. The name is taken from the account of Jesus sending out the seventy to witness. This office does not exist on the local level. In 1997 there were five Quorums of Seventies. The first two were comprised of General Authorities, the last three consisted of Area Authorities.

SIN: A word not commonly used by Mormons since Mormonism has a weak view of sin. Instead of talking about sin, they use words such as bad habits, infractions, mistakes, and poor judgments.

SISTER: Female members are commonly addressed as sister.

SKINS: A slang term some Mormons use to refer to their temple garments.

SON OF GOD: That Jesus is the Son of God is part and parcel of every Mormon's testimony. In saying that, however, they are not saying that they believe Jesus is equal with God the Father. "Jesus is greater than the Holy Spirit, which is subject unto him, but his Father is greater than he!" (*Book of Mormon Student Manual*, p. 74).

SON OF PERDITION: A person who goes to outer darkness. Some Mormons believe that hardly any, if any, will qualify as sons of perdition, while others use this mainly in reference to apostates. In



referring to sons of perdition Joseph Smith said, "This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (*Doctrine of the Gospel*, p. 93).

SOUL: "It is peculiar to the theology of the Latter-day Saints that we regard the body as an essential part of the soul. ... You will find that nowhere, outside the Church of Jesus Christ, is the solemn and eternal truth taught that the soul of man is the body and spirit combined" (James E. Talmage, quoted in *D&C Student Manual*, p. 198).

SPIRIT BODIES: The "bodies" of spirit children. "What are we like as spirits? (We do not have bodies of flesh and bones, but our spirit bodies are in the same form as the physical bodies we will have on earth.) ... As spirits, what can we do? (As spirits, we are able to move about, talk, listen, think, learn, make choices, and prepare for earth life.)" (*Walk In His Way A*, p. 22).

SPIRIT CHILDREN: Mormons teach that in preexistence everyone lived as a spirit child of Heavenly Father and mother. They claim that spirit children can develop characteristics and begin their progression to godhood through the wise use of their agency. Also see **SPIRIT BODIES** and **INTELLIGENCES**.

SPIRIT OF CHRIST: A term confusing to many Mormons, sometimes equated with conscience. "If a man who has never heard the gospel will hearken to the teachings and manifestations of the Spirit of Christ, or the Light of Truth, which come to him, often spoken as conscience ..." (Joseph Fielding Smith, quoted in *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, p. 146). Also see **HOLY SPIRIT**.

SPIRIT PRISON: The section of the spirit world where non-Mormon spirits go. LDS spirits from paradise can convert the inhabitants of spirit prison to Mormonism.

SPIRIT WORLD: (1) The place where all spirits go after death. It consists of two parts: paradise and spirit prison. (2) Sometimes used as a reference to the preexistent world.

SPIRITUAL DEATH: Except for the sons of perdition this is a temporary condition since everybody else attains some level of heaven. "Spiritual death is to be cast out of the presence of the Lord, to die as to the things of righteousness ... Spiritual death ceases for those spirits who come up out of hell to receive an inheritance in the telestial world" (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 756, 758).

STAKE: Similar to a diocese in Catholicism. It is an organizational unit consisting of number of wards. The term is derived from the picture of stakes holding down a tent, which, in this case, would be Zion or Mormonism.

STAKE HOUSE: The meetinghouse that houses the office of the stake president.

STAKE MISSIONARY: A person who is called to do part-time missionary work. "Your highest priority is planning your work is to provide enough people from this list so that each pair of full-time missionaries can teach twenty to thirty discussions each week" (*Stake Mission Handbook*, p. 2).

STAKE PRESIDENT: The head of a stake. He has no theological training. He, along with his two counselors, wields great power and authority. He is not a full-time church worker, but continues to work in his secular occupation while serving as a stake president. Usually, successful business or professional men are chosen for this position. There is no set term of office, but most stake president serve for five to ten years.



STANDARD WORKS: Synonymous with canonized scripture. Refers to the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible.

STEWARDSHIP: A favorite LDS term for responsibility.

STICK OF EPHRAIM: The Book of Mormon. This identification is based on a misinterpretation of Ezekiel 37: 15-19. Mormons identify the stick of Ephraim with the Book of Mormon because it supposedly is the history of Ephraim in the new world (see D&C 27:5). This Ezekiel passage, and the LDS interpretation of it, is one of the first things Mormons learn.

STOREHOUSES: Regional bishop's storehouses are maintained as part of the church's welfare plan. The goods from these storehouses can be distributed among the poor at the discretion of the bishops. During the early 1980s, the LDS Church downplayed their welfare program and closed many of these storehouses.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: "Sunday School is for all Church members and interested nonmembers twelve years of age and older.... All Sunday School classes must follow the courses of study and use the manuals approved by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve for the current curriculum year" (*Sunday School Handbook*, p. IV). Also see **PRIMARY**.

SUSTAINING: A procedure where the entire church body ratifies the calling of persons to various church positions. They do this by having members raise their right hands. Sustainings are a formality, being almost always unanimous, since they believe the person was called to that position by direct revelation. ... To sustain is to make the action binding on ourselves to support those people whom we have sustained" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 54).

TEA: The Word of Wisdom (D&C 89) forbids the drinking of hot drinks. This has been officially interpreted as coffee and tea. There is some debate over whether this forbids the drinking of iced tea. Also see **WORD OF WISDOM**.

TELESTIAL KINGDOM: The lowest kingdom of heaven. It is not visited by Heavenly Father or Jesus but only by the Holy Ghost. This will be the final destination of carnal and wicked people. Although it is the lowest kingdom, its glory, which is symbolized as the glory of stars, is described as surpassing all mortal understanding. Some Mormons refer to it as the "slums of heaven."

TEMPLE: A place not of joint worship but of individual sacred work. (Mormons would say that participating in the sacred work is worship.) Only temple-worthy Mormons can enter. There are three main temple rituals: (1) baptisms for the dead,(2) endowments both for living and the dead, (3) celestial marriage (sealings) both for the living and the dead. Participating in these rituals is essential for exaltation. Mormons are encouraged to have a picture of the temple hanging in their houses. In many ways, the temple holds the same place of reverence in a Mormon's life as Christ's cross does in a Christian's life. There are presently more than 50 temples worldwide.

TEMPLE GARMENTS: (1) The special garments worn only in the temple; (2) The sacred undergarments worn at all times which many feel gives them supernatural protection. Only temple-worthy Mormons can wear either of these garments.

TEMPLE MARRIAGE: See **CELESTIAL MARRIAGE**.



TEMPLE MORMON: A Mormon who is worthy to enter the temple. Only about 25% of Mormons qualify. See **TEMPLE-WORTHY**.

TEMPLE RECOMMEND: The small card that allows temple-worthy Mormons to enter the temple. Each time they go, it is checked at a security gate. It is issued by their bishop and a member of their stake presidency. It is good for one year, after which it needs to be renewed. Also see **TEMPLE-WORTHY**.

TEMPLE WORK: A favorite expression in Mormonism to describe participation in the various temple ordinances.

TEMPLE-WORTHY: Mormons who are worthy to enter the temple. To be worthy they must keep the Word of Wisdom, tithe, be morally upright, and be supportive of the church leaders. This is determined in yearly interviews with their bishop and a member of the stake presidency.

TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM: The middle kingdom of heaven where people will be visited by Jesus but not by Heavenly Father. This will be the final destination of honorable people and non-valiant Mormons (Jack Mormons).

TESTIMONY: The one thing Mormons believe assures them of the truthfulness of Mormonism. It is the most important thing a Mormon can possess. Nearly every testimony contains the following four parts: (1) Jesus is the true Son of God. (2) Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God. (3) The Book of Mormon is the true word of God. (4) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true church of God. They believe they receive their testimony, *not through facts*, but through *feelings*. "If the sole source of one's knowledge or assurance of the truth of the Lord's work comes from reason, or logic, or persuasive argument that cannot be controverted, it is not a testimony of the gospel. In its nature a testimony consists of knowledge that comes by revelation" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 785). They are encouraged to "bear their testimony" they also "build their testimony." Also see **REVELATION**.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS: The church's official name. They prefer it to the name Mormon.

THREE WITNESSES: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris testified that they saw the golden plates that contained the Book of Mormon. Their testimony is printed in the front of every copy of the Book of Mormon. Mormons state that their testimony is proof that Joseph Smith was telling the truth about the Book of Mormon.

TITHING: Giving 10% of your income to the church. It is an important requirement for remaining in good standing in the church. It is essential for becoming temple-worthy. "Accordingly, tithing becomes one of the great tests of the personal righteousness of church members. 'By this principle, 'President Joseph F. Smith says,' the loyalty of the people of this Church shall be put to the test. By this principle it shall be known who is for the kingdom of God and who is against it. ... There is a great deal of importance connected with this principle, for by it shall be known whether we are faithful or unfaithful' " (Bruce R. McConkie, quoted in *Temple Preparation Seminar Discussions*, p. 62).

TITHING SETTLEMENT: A yearly meeting members have with their bishop to make sure that they have paid their tithes.

TOBACCO: Forbidden in the Word of Wisdom (D&C Section 89).



TRACTING: An expression LDS missionaries use to describe handing out tracts door-to-door.

TRANSLATED BEINGS: Persons who are taken to heaven without dying. "During the first 2200 or so years of the earth's history. . . it was not uncommon occurrence for faithful members of the Church to be translated and taken into the heavenly realms without tasting death. Since that time there have been occasional special instances of translation, instances in which a special work of the ministry required it" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 804).

TRANSLATION: Not often used as a term to describe the process of rendering something from the original language into another language. Rather used to refer to (1) the transmission of the original text over the centuries. (2) the interpretation of the text, and (3) the revision of the text. "By translation is meant a revision of the Bible by inspiration or revelation" (*D&C Student Manual*, p. 136).

TRINITY: Mormons do not believe in the Trinity. "And virtually all the millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ whom they vainly suppose to be a spirit essence who is incorporeal, uncreated, immaterial, and three-in-one with the Father and the Holy Spirit" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 269).

TRIPLE COMBINATION: One volume that contains the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.

UNIFORM SYSTEM FOR TEACHING THE GOSPEL: See **MISSIONARY DISCUSSION**.

UNITED ORDER: See **CONSECRATION**.

UNRIGHTEOUS DOMINION: A common LDS expression describing the abuse of power and authority of a priesthood holder. Often used to describe the actions of an overbearing husband and father. (See D&C 121:39.)

URIM AND THUMMIM: See **PEEP STONES**.

VALIANT: Common LDS term for being faithful.

VEIL: (1) Most commonly used as a term for death. Dying is passing behind the veil.(2) Sometimes used as a term for ignorance.

VEIL WORKER: A temple worker who represents Heavenly Father in the endowment ceremony.

VICARIOUS WORK: A common Mormon expression describing temple work for the dead. It is most often used to describe being baptized for the dead.

VISTING TEACHERS: In contrast to home teachers, who are always male, these are women from the Relief Society. Like home teachers they are to visit their assigned women on a monthly basis.

WARD: The name for a local LDS congregation. Usually more than one ward meets in the same meetinghouses. (e.g., one meets from 9-12 on Sunday; the other from 1-4.) Wards vary in size from 400 to 800 members. When a ward reaches 800 members, it is divided. Wards are set up on a geographical basis, with the result that church members do not have a choice of what ward they can attend.



WELFARE PROGRAM: A highly publicized relief or assistance program of the LDS Church. In recent years it has come under intense scrutiny by non-Mormons. It appears that it is not very effective, and recently the Mormon church has downplayed it.

WORD OF WISDOM: Section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants. It rules out the use of liquor, tobacco, and "hot drinks"(which have been officially interpreted as tea and coffee). In a recent survey of LDS youth the #1 sin cited was breaking the Word of Wisdom; sexual immorality came in #5 (see *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 64,65). A Mormon must keep the Word of Wisdom to be temple-worthy.

WORKS: To some Mormons this is a confusing term. Some equate it almost exclusively with trying to overcome sin.

WORSHIP: Mormons have a weak view of worship, equating it most often with service. "We worship God as did our Master, by serving our fellowmen and by growing line upon line to the point at which we are prepared and fit to dwell with the Father of lights" (*By Grace Are We Saved*, p. 41).

WORTHY: A common word in Mormonism. Whatever Mormons do or whatever responsibilities are assigned them, they need to be worthy.

ZION: A commonly used LDS term that has a variety of meanings. Zion is where God dwells. Therefore it can refer to (1) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (2) Utah, (3) Independence, Missouri (since they believe that is where Jesus will return and from where he will rule), (4) a condition of the heart.

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