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Concerning Mormon beliefs

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A Mormon church is in fact NOT a Christian church, despite any claims to the contrary. We are asked now to refer to this religious body as "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints." We observe that many Mormons in these latter days do live saintly lives, but there's no way their *church* could be thought to belong to Jesus Christ.

In the Newsweek magazine for 9/10/2001 is an article by Kenneth L. Woodward about the Mormon church. It's title is "A Mormon Moment." It's reflecting on Salt Lake City's hosting the 2002 Winter Olympics. In this secular magazine, Woodward describes as kindly as possible what Mormons teach and what Mormons are expected to believe. It would be well for us to notice and to carefully read the article.

Mormons, the article points out, are taught that everyone will be resurrected to one of three (eternal) kingdoms based on their degree of faithfulness to their church. The diagram to illustrate this belief shows that prior to birth on earth, "Divine parents give birth to spirit children who will populate earth." At birth on earth, spirit children get bodies and work toward salvation. After the person dies here on earth, each such person enters a spirit world where families, eternally united, increase in knowledge and power. At the final judgment and resurrection, some enter a celestial kingdom where married couples make spirit children and progress toward godhood. Others enter a terrestrial kingdom where honorable heathens and imperfect Mormons live (on earth?). Grave sinners are sent to a "telestial" kingdom where they will endure a mundane afterlife. This is Mormon doctrine but is not at all Christian doctrine.

Like Israel of old (totally unlike the church of Jesus Christ), Smith's "growing flock" struggled to create a political, economic and religious kingdom on earth -- the "new Israel." In Kirtland, Ohio

2 they built the first Mormon temple, blessed at its dedication, according to their tradition, by appearances of Jesus and the Hebrew patriarchs Moses, Elijah and "Elias." [Is not Elias just a variant spelling of Elijah?]

In this Kirtland temple, Smith installed his own father as the Mormon's first "patriarch," whose personal blessing identified the Mormons then living as being members of Israel's ancient tribes. [This is not really a new way to gain ancestors, to just claim to be descended from them.] Later, in Nauvoo, Illinois, a Mississippi River town built by Mormons, Smith became mayor of a "millennial city" and leader of a Mormon militia. There additional "inspired books" were said to be "located" by Smith. It was during the years in Nauvoo that the "eternal plan of salvation" was first taught by Smith. Many years before that, God's eternal plan of salvation was disclosed by HIS Son, Jesus of Nazareth.

Mormons now are taught that all human beings have divine potential so that men can progress in this life and the next to become gods, just as Smith claimed that God did. To assist in this "growth" a man must take many wives, seeking to have children by each of them. Jesus said there would be NO marriage (or continued sexual pleasures) in Heaven. The teaching of the Mormon church is that marriage continues throughout eternity, and new children will continue to be born into Mormon families forever.

Today Mormons have the only "church" structured like a corporation, with all donations (Mormons are taught they must pay to their church a tenth of all income, as Jews also were taught) flowing from local wards to the headquarters in Salt Lake City and back according to need. Jesus said HIS kingdom was not of this earth. The Mormon "kingdom" is very much OF this earth.

The article points out that now the Mormon church is wealthy and claims 11 million members, a slight majority of whom live outside the U.S.A. Mormons are organized into "stakes" and "wards" rather than church congregations. Elders of each stake are not paid, I understand, but they devote most of their "free" time (free from earning their living) to teaching and looking after the members of their "stake." Most realize that the Mormons carefully provide for

their own, and also seek to share with those in need wherever the needy are found. Their charity is commendable and highly publicized.

The Mormon "church" was once staunchly separatist. It claims to be the only true "Christian" body. Today Mormons cooperate with other churches in providing international relief when disasters occur or need arises. The Mormon church leaders now want to be regarded as a Christian church. They claim to be the only "true church of Jesus Christ." But the name isn't right, and the teaching in many matters just isn't what the Christian Bible teaches.

The Way of salvation, as mentioned above, is not based on grace through faith in Jesus. It is solidly based on human works of righteousness. They expect to get rich rewards for following Christ, and they're taught they must EARN every one of those rewards.

Their church organization doesn't match anything taught in the Christian Bible (the New Testament). Yet the new "short" name by which they want to be known (rather than Mormon Church) is "Church of Jesus Christ." No one who loves truth could call their organization a church of Jesus Christ.

Mormons inhabit a very different religious world than Christians ever have or ever will live in. Mormons are taught that God was once "as man is now," that he "progressed" in knowledge and power to become a divine being with a body. He also has a divine wife, whom Mormons call the Mother. This theory obviously denies that God is eternal. He can't once have been a man, then BECAME God, and also have existed "in the beginning," as is the claim of the book we call The Bible.

Joseph Smith started the Mormon church. From the Old Testament he found doctrines he liked, including a priesthood and polygamy. From a "Book of Mormon" which he claims God revealed to him where it had long been hidden in a place in upper New York state, he formed other doctrines which also are no part of the Christian religion.

Mormons may seek to look, act, and talk like Christians. Many do. But if they believe the doctrines taught by the Mormon church,

4 they are Mormons and not Christians. The Newsweek article explains some of the claims of the Mormon teachers. It would be good for everyone to read who might have been thinking the Mormon church is just another Christian denomination. Mormon doctrine is ungodly and unChristian.

The Mormon church qualifies as a sect which bears little relation to New Testament Christianity. No true convert to Mormonism (one who believes what that church teaches) has become a Christian. No Mormon should be accepted into a Christian church so long as that person continues to accept as an inspired book the Book of Mormon, or any other book other than the 66 books which form the canon of the Protestant Christian Bible.

The Christian religion is not based on the Old AND New Testaments. We see that the Old Testament Way is not Christ's Way. His NEW Way is fully explained in the 27 books of the New Testament. The Old Testament is valuable as history and factual reports of what happened when the earth was created and through the years until Jesus was born. But the religion of those who lived before Christ is NOT at all the religion of the Christ.

The "Law of Moses" (that law which God gave to the "Jews" through Moses) was in effect fully completed and replaced when Jesus gave His life on Calvary's cross. No part of the Old Testament law is binding upon any man today. We do not live under the Ten Commandments even if nine of them are helpful guides to a godly life.

Instead, we follow the Way of Christ, which is first fully taught by His apostles. Christianity is not a mix of Old and New Testament teachings. It is not a mix of Bible teachings and unbiblical ethical dogma. The writings of Joseph Smith are no more inspired than those of Mary Baker Eddy or Mohammed or any other religious teacher. Mormonism is not Christianity. We should not be confused by claims or pretensions. That which is opposed to BIBLE truth is not godly. Only SOME Mormon teachings are from the Bible. Many teachings of the Mormon church flat-out contradict what the Bible clearly teaches.