

# The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (Mormonism)

## *History, Beliefs, and Practices*

**Identity:** A religious organization founded in Fayette, New York, in 1830 by Joseph Smith, Jr. (see history below). The Latter-day Saints (LDS) understand themselves as a restoration movement. They regard themselves as the means through which divine authority and true doctrine, which they claim were lost from the earth when the early Christian church fell into apostasy<sup>1</sup> following the death of the apostles,<sup>2</sup> have been and are being restored. Mormonism holds to the principle of continuing revelation through its prophets to supplement biblical teaching and to correct errors in Christian churches. It does not regard the Bible as the sole source and norm of teaching, and claims “an expanded canon” to include additional writings by Mormon prophetic leaders (see “Texts” below). Latter-day Saints claim that the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored only in its organization and that they are “the only true and living church upon the face of the earth.”<sup>3</sup>

**Founder:** Joseph Smith

**Statistics:** 12.6 million members worldwide (2005); 47,000 missionaries (2005)

**History:** Joseph Smith (1805-1844) on September 21, 1823, claimed to have been visited by an angel Moroni in a vision, in which he was told of a book written on golden plates. Four years later the plates supposedly were given to Smith. He translated the plates with the aid of two stones also given to him (from an ancient language referred to as “Reformed Egyptian,” with the help of Oliver Cowdery) and published *The Book of Mormon*<sup>4</sup> in 1830.<sup>5</sup> The “Church of Christ” (the original name, which was later changed to the Church of the Latter-day Saints and in 1838 became The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints) was founded by Smith on April 6, 1830, in Fayette, New York, with six members. The group soon left New York over religious differences with local denominations and settled in Kirtland, Ohio, where Sidney Rigdon, a Campbellite minister, and nearly all of his followers joined the Mormon church. Following economic collapse in Kirtland in 1838, the group fled to Missouri, where it soon experienced strong opposition from local residents and civil authorities. It again fled, this time to Nauvoo, Illinois. There Smith’s teachings on polygamy and his own multiple marriages provoked exposure by the

---

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith, founder of the Latter-day Saints, in his first “vision” identified the early creeds of the Christian church as “an abomination” and their falsehoods as evidence of the apostasy that had overcome the church and rendered it in need of restoration. *Joseph Smith—History, 1:19*. See *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957).

<sup>2</sup>See Robert L. Millet, *A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 39-65. In this recent book, Millet, in his words, has tried his “very best...to be true to the central teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (166), though his book is technically not an official LDS source.

<sup>3</sup>*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1:30, in *The Book of Mormon—The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—Pearl of Great Prince*, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.

<sup>4</sup>In a recent book authors Wayne L. Cowdrey, Howard A. David, and Arthur Vanick have amassed historical evidence shedding new light on the “Spaulding Enigma,” according to which Joseph Smith and others conspired to transform a work of fiction by Solomon Spaulding titled *The Manuscript Found* into *The Book of Mormon*. (*Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?*[St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005].).

<sup>5</sup>*The Book of Mormon* relates the history of people who migrated to pre-Columbian America from the Holy Land at the time of the Old Testament: the Jaredites, Lamanites (Native Americans) and the Nephites. After many battles, the Lamanites reduced the Nephites only to Mormon and his son, Moroni, who buried the book in 384, until a day when God would raise up their spiritual descendants at time of restoration.

newspaper *The Nauvoo Expositor* led by four previous converts. Following the destruction of the newspaper office, Smith and his brother Hyrum were arrested and while being held in a Carthage, Illinois, jail were murdered by a lynch mob on June 27, 1844. The Latter-day Saints split into two main groups, one following Smith's brothers William and Joseph Smith III (forming the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; renamed in April 2000 "Community of Christ") and the other following Brigham Young (1801-77). After local opposition, Young led the Mormons to the Great Salt Lake Basin, arriving in 1847. Salt Lake City became the church's headquarters. The current president of the church is Gordon B. Hinckley (1995—).

**Texts:** King James Version of *The Holy Bible* (annotated by the LDS)  
*The Book of Mormon*  
*The Doctrine and Covenants*  
*The Pearl of Great Price*

### Beliefs and Practices

It is not possible in this brief format to discuss in detail or in full Mormon teaching and practice. Presented below, however, is a summary of foundational tenets and core teachings, especially as they relate to the Mormon plan of salvation.

- *Continuing Revelation.* The LDS holds to the principle of modern and continuing revelation through its prophets.<sup>6</sup> Latter-day Saints "do not believe that the Bible contains all that God has spoken or will yet speak in the future."<sup>7</sup> The canon of authoritative scripture therefore is open to expansion, and includes the Mormon "Standard Works" (*Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price*). Hence, "*The Book of Mormon* is the word of God."<sup>8</sup> The president of the church is the "seer, revelator, a translator, and a prophet, having all the gifts of God which he bestows on the head of the church."<sup>9</sup>
- *Authority.* Basic to Mormon theology are two priesthoods which are viewed as the power and authority of God delegated to humans on earth: Aaronic Priesthood and Melchizedek Priesthood. The Aaronic Priesthood, believed to have been imparted to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in a May 15, 1829 appearance of John the Baptist, is conferred on "worthy young men" (who progress through the offices of teacher, deacon, and priest). The Melchizedek Priesthood contains "the power of apostleship and contains the right to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost and perform certain ordinances (sacraments)." This priesthood has five offices: elder, high priest, patriarch, seventy, and apostle. It originated, say LDS sources, in an 1829 appearance of Peter, James, and John to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. It is the principal channel of continuing revelation.<sup>10</sup>
- *God.* The Father and Son and Holy Ghost worshipped by Mormons are separate beings, three distinct Gods.<sup>11</sup> "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us."<sup>12</sup> God and

<sup>6</sup> The LDS' ninth Article of Faith reads: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom."

<sup>7</sup>Millet, 76.

<sup>8</sup>Articles of Faith, 8. *Missionary Guide: Training for Missionaries*, 1988, 21.

<sup>9</sup>*Doctrine and Covenants*, 107:92.

<sup>10</sup>See Millet, 189, 200, 203; see also appropriate entries in George A. Mather and Larry A. Nichols, *Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 370. See Millet, 70, 117. God is regarded as "one" in the sense of being one "community" of personages, the Father being "one fount of divinity," and one "set of properties." Millet, 117, 142 [citing Alma 11:44; D & C 20:28].

<sup>12</sup>*Doctrine and Covenants*, 130:22.

man are not a “different species.”<sup>13</sup> Latter-day Saints regard as “a central and saving doctrine” that the “Father” was once a man<sup>14</sup> and is a man having a body of flesh and bones. “God is a glorified and perfected man, personage of flesh and bones.”<sup>15</sup> *Elohim* (Hebrew name for God) is “the name-title of God the Eternal Father, the Father of the spirits of all men and women.”<sup>16</sup> *Elohim* was once a human on another planet who attained the status of deity.<sup>17</sup> *Elohim* sired every single person in the premortal existence before the earth was created.<sup>18</sup> The doctrine of the Trinity as understood in historic and creedal Christian teaching is rejected.<sup>19</sup>

- *Jesus.*<sup>20</sup> Jesus is Jehovah of the Old Testament, “the premortal God of the ancients,” who came to earth as Jesus of Nazareth. LDS speaks of Jesus in his premortal existence as the Father’s first-born spirit child who had already progressed to godhood in his preexistence: “The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ,”<sup>21</sup> who in premortality “advanced and progressed” to become one “‘like unto God’ [Abr. 3:24].”<sup>22</sup> As Jehovah, Jesus created the world.<sup>23</sup> He volunteered and was chosen to carry out the Father’s plan of life and salvation. LDS appears to teach that the conception of Jesus was a physical act between the heavenly Father (who has flesh and bones) and the Virgin Mary: “She [was]...about to give birth to a half-Deity. No other man in the history of the world of ours has ever had such ancestry—God the Father on the one hand and Mary the Virgin on the other....”<sup>24</sup> An LDS writer states that Jesus “inherited powers of Godhood and divinity from his Father, including immortality, the capacity to live forever.”<sup>25</sup> He further states, “..the scriptures attest that the Father had power, knowledge, glory, and dominion that Jesus *did not have* at the time [in mortality].”<sup>26</sup>
- *Sin.* The LDS does not subscribe to the doctrine of original sin, according to which the guilt of Adam’s transgression has been imputed to all his offspring and man’s nature and will have been totally corrupted. An LDS writer states: “Joseph Smith did not believe that human beings, because of intrinsic carnality and depravity are incapable of choosing good and evil. And he did not believe that children are born in sin, that they inherit the so-called sin of Adam, either by sexual union or by birth.”<sup>27</sup> Joseph Smith taught that “it is in the power of man to keep the law and remain also without sin.”<sup>28</sup> Sin is a potentiality, not a condition of depravity from birth, and comes into existence by a conscious action of wrongdoing.<sup>29</sup> Sin *becomes*

<sup>13</sup> Millet, 117. See note 22.

<sup>14</sup> Lorenzo Snow, quoted in Millet, 144.

<sup>15</sup> *Gospel Principles* (1978, 1979), 6, quoted in Mark Cares, *Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), 19.

<sup>16</sup> Millet, 195.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Selected by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 370.

<sup>18</sup> *Pearl of Great Price*, Abraham 3:21-22.

<sup>19</sup> Bruce McConkie wrote in his *Mormon Doctrine*: “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* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979], 269.)

<sup>20</sup> The current president of LDS, Gordon B. Hinckley, has written of Joseph Smith: “The experience of Joseph Smith in a few moments in the grove on a spring day in 1820, brought more light and knowledge and understanding of the personality and reality and substance of God and his beloved Son than men had arrived at during centuries of speculation” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 236.).

<sup>21</sup> *Gospel Principles*, 9, quoted in Cares, 78.

<sup>22</sup> *The Life and Teaching of Jesus and His Apostles*, 24, quoted in Cares, 78. LDS Elder Bruce McConkie has written of Jesus, “He was born, as were all the spirit children of the Father. God was his Father as he is of all the rest” (*Promised Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 46).

<sup>23</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants*, 76:24; Moses 1:33; 7:30.

<sup>24</sup> *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, 10; see also Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, April 1991, 2; Bruce McConkie, quoted in *Sharing the Gospel Manual* (1976), 74; *Missionary Guide: Training for Missionaries*, 1988, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Millet, 67.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Millet, 87.

<sup>28</sup> *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 5:2.

<sup>29</sup> *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, 410.

part of human nature as people grow up; they become responsible for the results of the fall at the time of accountability<sup>30</sup> at the age of eight.<sup>31</sup> The Fall in Genesis 3 introduces mortality, with the capacity to have children, so that spirit children may receive bodies in which to progress toward salvation. The Fall is viewed as a positive development.<sup>32</sup>

- *Plan of Salvation (Gospel)*. According to Mormon belief, salvation is a process that begins in premortal existence and culminates in judgment and resurrection to degrees of glory. Sometimes the LDS plan of salvation is called the law of eternal progression, according to which the process of being saved involves three stages of existence.<sup>33</sup> Human beings are spirit sons and daughters of God who lived in a premortal existence before birth who in their “first estate” progressed in obedience to God’s eternal law.<sup>34</sup> These spirit children become mortals to operate in their “second estate” as they continue to progress toward god-likeness.<sup>35</sup> This estate involves receiving a body of flesh and bone, experiencing sin, having faith in Christ and Gospel, repentance, baptism by an LDS Priest, reception of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, obedience to “the laws and ordinances of the Gospel,” gaining a Temple Recommend by achieving and maintaining personal worthiness, and receiving endowment, marriage and sealing for time and eternity in an LDS temple ceremony. Upon death everyone goes to a postmortal existence, first to an interim state, and then to a post judgment/resurrection state: 1) Paradise (temporary state reserved for righteous spirits) or the Spirit Prison (place where the wicked dwell; Hell). Righteous spirits may visit the wicked spirits in hell to share the message of salvation. Through baptism for the dead in LDS temples and proxy marriage, non-Mormons may receive the benefits of the LDS Gospel through repentance. Following Christ’s second coming and the final resurrection of all people, judgment will take place on the basis of obedience. 2) All except the sons of perdition (the most wicked)<sup>36</sup> will be assigned to three degrees of glory in three heavenly kingdoms: telestial (for wicked, the majority of humankind), terrestrial (moral non-Mormons and some Mormons), and celestial, the state of exaltation (salvation; reserved for those who have been obedient to the Mormon Gospel).

Foundational to Mormon teaching on salvation is the statement of *The Book of Mormon*: “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do*” (2 Nephi 25:23). Salvation is faith in Christ *and* obedience. Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane and His atonement *enable* mortals to achieve salvation through moral choices of the human will (which is inherently good and can attain toward perfection and worthiness) and obedience to the Mormon Gospel and its ordinances. The LDS *Missionary Guide* thus speaks of Christ making it “*possible* for Adam and all of us to repent and overcome spiritual death.” Christ’s resurrection “*made possible* our return to our Heavenly Father.”<sup>37</sup> (emphases added) In summary, “[Jesus] became our savior and has done his part to help us return to our heavenly home. It is now up to each of us to do our part and to prove ourselves worthy of exaltation.”<sup>38</sup>

- *Sacraments*. To be valid, baptism must be performed by immersion and by a member of the LDS priesthood. A trinitarian formula is used. Children are baptized at the age of eight. The Lord’s Supper, partaken of every Sunday, consists of bread and water.

---

<sup>30</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants*, 18:42.

<sup>31</sup> Millet, 87.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g., 2 Nephi 2:22-25; Moses 5:10,11; *Gospel Principles*, 30-31; James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 1982, 65.

<sup>33</sup> See Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979) for a review of this process.

<sup>34</sup> *Pearl of Great Price*, Abraham, 3:26.

<sup>35</sup> Often quoted in this connection is the statement of Lorenzo Snow: “As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be.” Quoted in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, 59.

<sup>36</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants*, 76:31.

<sup>37</sup> *Missionary Guide*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Gospel Principles*, 17.

All members, including small children, partake. It is seen as a reminder of the obligation to obey God.<sup>39</sup>

## A Lutheran Response

The response that follows focuses on key issues related to the LDS “plan of salvation.” It is not possible in this brief format to address many other Mormon teachings that Lutherans regard as contrary to the Holy Scriptures (e.g., baptism for the dead, provisions in Joseph Smith’s “Word of Wisdom,” eternal marriage, millennial views, premortal existence of humans, etc.). Readers are directed to the sources listed at the end of this evaluation. It should be noted that this response addresses the *teachings* of Mormonism. It neither makes nor implies any judgment about the personal faith of individuals. It is written in a spirit of Christian love and respect for our Mormon friends and neighbors.

A foundational teaching of the Lutheran Church is “that the *only* rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments *alone*, as it is written, ‘Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Ps. 119[:105], and Saint Paul: ‘If...an angel from heaven should proclaim to you something contrary,...let that one be accursed!’ (Gal. 1[:8])” (emphasis added).<sup>40</sup> Lutherans understand the Scriptures of the biblical canon to teach that God has directed and bound all Christians to the Word of the Apostles and Prophets on which alone [*the* foundation] the church is built (Eph. 2:20; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Nowhere does the Bible promise new revelations of Christian doctrine above and beyond the biblical revelation. Thus, Lutherans reject any claim<sup>41</sup> of modern revelation given to “supplement” or “add to” the Word of God itself as in principle contrary to and a rejection of the “Scripture alone” (*sola scriptura*) principle.<sup>42</sup>

Lutherans confess that the Scriptures teach “that there is one divine essence which is named God and truly is God. But there are three persons in the same one essence, equally powerful, equally eternal: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.”<sup>43</sup> Together with Christians from the very beginning of the Christian era, Lutherans confess in the words of the Nicene Creed that Jesus Christ is “the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father....” LDS writers reject such creedal statements as “a superimposition of Greek philosophy upon Christian theology” that fail to “represent the simple Gospel of the New Testament,” and thus produce a “different God” than the one believed in and worshipped by first-century Christians.<sup>44</sup> While ostensibly professing faith in the Trinity<sup>45</sup> and in the divinity of Christ, LDS explains this doctrine to mean that there are three entities or beings, three gods. Moreover, the oneness of the Trinity is not a oneness of essence (as the Christian church has always taught and confessed in its historic creeds), but only a oneness in terms of love, purpose, and “community.”<sup>46</sup> Lutherans reject such teaching as clearly contrary to the Bible, which teaches the doctrine of the Trinity as summarized in the words of the eternal Son of God Himself (John 8:58), the Second Person of the Trinity who became incarnate, suffered, died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. The Risen but not yet

<sup>39</sup>*Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, 93.

<sup>40</sup>Formula of Concord, Epitome, Binding Summary, Rule, and Guiding Principle, I. (*The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000], 486.) See also reports of the LCMS’ Commission on Theology and Church Relations on *The Inspiration of Scripture* (1975) and *Gospel and Scriptures* (1972) at: <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=513>

<sup>41</sup>As Pastor Mark Cares has rightfully pointed out, the founders of Islam and the Unification Church both claimed divine revelation.

<sup>42</sup>A Mormon writer states: “Latter-day Saints hold a view of canon that does not restrict itself to revelations of the past, whether they be those which they revere in common with their fellow Christians [sic] or those believed uniquely by the Saints. Their view is broader: the canon is not closed, nor will it ever be. To them revelation has not ceased; it continues in the Church....” Kent P. Jackson, “Latter-day Saints: A Dynamic Scriptural Process,” in *The Holy Book in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Frederick M. Denny and Rodney L. Taylor (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1985), 63. (Cited in Millet, 9-10.).

<sup>43</sup>Augsburg Confession, I. Kolb/Wengert, 36.

<sup>44</sup>See Millet, 54-57; 174; 193.

<sup>45</sup>Articles of Faith, 1.

<sup>46</sup>S. O. Bennion, “Fundamental Principles of the Gospel,” 22, quoted in Edgar Kaiser, *The Latter-day Saints* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995 Revised Edition), 17. See Millet, 141-42.

ascended Lord commanded baptism in “*the name*<sup>47</sup> of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19; see also Rom 8:11; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:4-6; 2 Thess. 2:13 etc.).

The Mormon “Plan of Salvation” or “gospel” assumes that human beings are *not* born in a state of original sin. Thus, they do not possess a totally corrupted will and all humans from birth have the power within them (assisted by grace) to advance toward perfection through choices between good and evil. The Holy Scriptures plainly teach, however, that since the fall of Adam all people born in the natural way are conceived and born in sin. St. Paul wrote, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all *sinned*...” (Rom. 5:12).<sup>48</sup> Referring to our natural state as human beings prior to conversion, St. Paul writes: “You are dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked” and “were *by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind*” (Eph. 2:1,3). Hence, “the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and *he is not able* to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). “Those in the flesh *cannot please God*” (Rom. 8:8). (emphases added)

A key passage for the Mormon understanding of the “plan of salvation” is the previously mentioned statement of 2 Nephi 25:23: “...for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do*.” Mormon writings are replete with assertions that humans are saved or “obtain eternal life” through faith in Christ (see above for Mormon understanding of Jesus) *and obedience*, and that the atonement of Christ *makes possible* salvation.<sup>49</sup> Such teaching, Lutherans hold, radically redefines the biblical Gospel and in fact is in the words of Paul “another Gospel” that comes under divine judgment (Galatians 1). Against the Galatian error that justification by faith includes obedience, St. Paul argues forcefully that “no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Gal 3:11). “‘Cursed be every who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them,’” says Paul. The good news is that “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us...” (Gal. 3:13). “In him [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7). To suggest or claim that in any sense God’s justification of the sinner through the work of Christ includes obedience to the law renders the death of Christ unnecessary and nullifies the grace of God (Gal. 2:21). Such a claim also undermines St. Paul’s central argument that human beings are justified before God by *faith alone*, exclusive of works (Rom. 3:28). To be sure, while justification is by faith alone, faith is never alone; it is followed by works (Eph. 2:10). Obedience to Christ and His will is indeed a necessary fruit of faith (Gal. 5:22ff.). But obedience is in no sense the cause or basis of our salvation, nor does it give us any claim to our salvation.

Lutherans understand the Scriptures to mean that the sacraments (Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper) are to be administered as instituted by Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Since the Risen Lord commanded that Baptism be administered in the name of the Triune God and since Mormonism rejects the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, Lutherans do not regard Mormon baptism as a valid sacrament.<sup>50</sup> Lutherans believe that Baptism is God’s work, a precious means of grace through which He imparts the blessings of salvation earned by Christ, that its validity does not depend on human actions, the authority of those who administer it, or human responses, and that God intends it for “all nations” (which does not exclude infants). Lutherans also hold that the Mormon Lord’s Supper is not administered in accord with Christ’s institution and therefore is not a valid sacrament.

<sup>47</sup>The Greek term *onōma* occurs only once in this text and “expresses the unity of being” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:274).

<sup>48</sup>Paul uses the aorist tense in Greek, referring to a completed action in the past. This means that when Adam sinned, all humans *sinned*. Sin does not come into existence as a result of human volition or choice at some point in life. It is a *state* into which we are born because of our participation in Adam’s sin. See C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 1:274-79.

<sup>49</sup>*Missionary Guide*, 5-6. One Mormon writer states: “Therefore, acting alone, the grace of Christ is not *sufficient* for salvation. The works of man—ordinances of salvation, the deeds of service and acts of charity and mercy—are *necessary* for salvation.” Robert Millett, *By Grace Are We Saved* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 70.

<sup>50</sup>See Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3:262-63. In 1971 the Division of Theological Studies of The Lutheran Council of the U.S.A. issued an opinion stating that “former members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are to be baptized, following appropriate instruction in the Christian faith.” “Statement on Mormon Baptism,” Division of Theological Studies of The Lutheran Council of the U.S.A., 1971, 1.

## *For Further Reading*

- Cares, Mark J. *Speaking the Truth in Love*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993.
- Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992. 5 Volumes.
- Kaiser, Edgar P. *The Latter-day Saints*, in “How to Respond Series.” St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995.
- Millet, Robert L. *A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.
- Van Gorden, Kurt. *Mormonism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.

## *Links and Websites*

[http://www.mormonwiki.com/mormonism/The\\_Church\\_of\\_Jesus\\_Christ\\_of\\_Latter-day\\_Saints](http://www.mormonwiki.com/mormonism/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints)

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/mormon/mormon.html>

<http://www.lds.org/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_of\\_Jesus\\_Christ\\_of\\_Latter-day\\_Saints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints)

<http://utlm.org/>

<http://www.equip.org/store/details.asp?SKU=J0964>