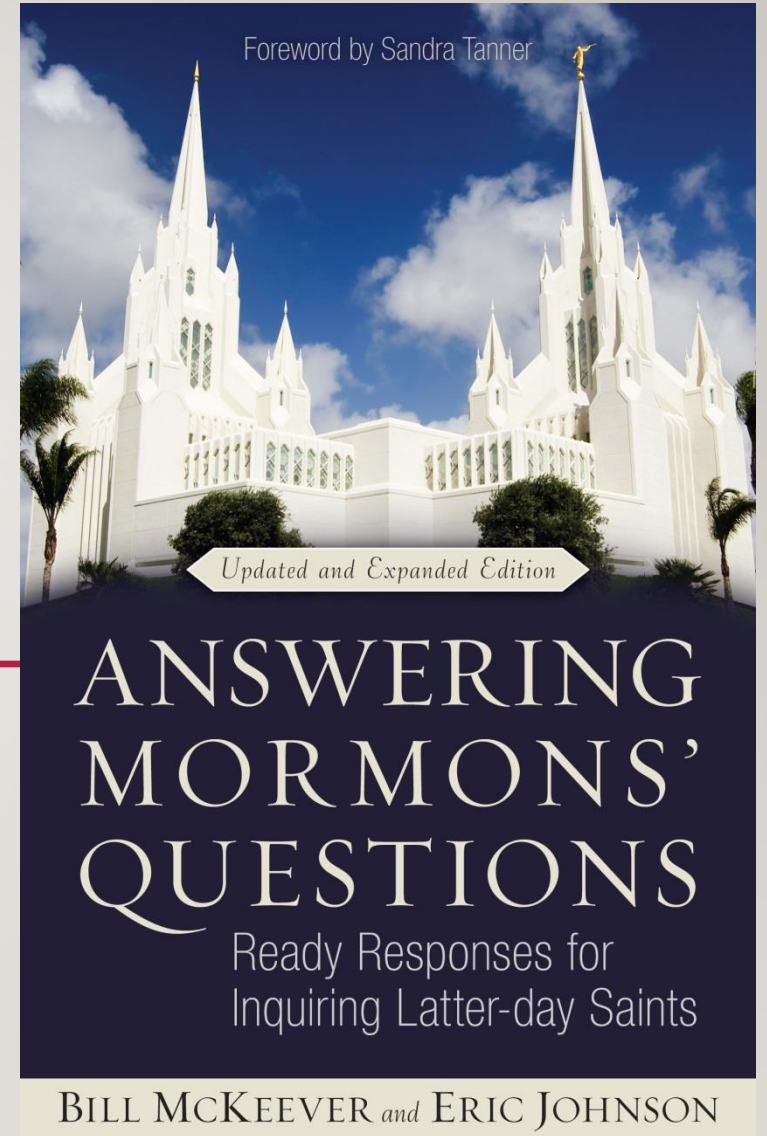


IS MORMONISM CHRISTIANITY?

Eric Johnson
Mormonism Research Ministry

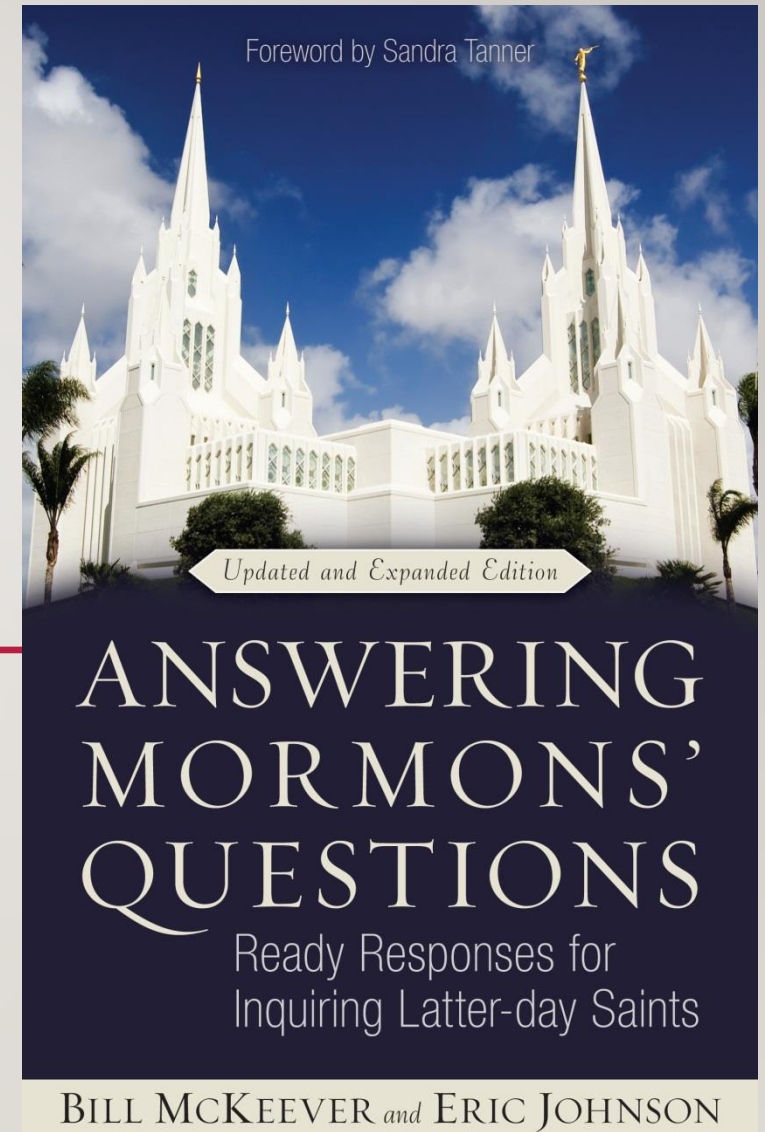


An online PDF file containing this PowerPoint is available at www.mrm.org/christianity

ANSWERING MORMONS' QUESTIONS

(KREGEL, 2013)

IN CHAPTER I OF OUR BOOK,
BILL AND I DEAL WITH A
COMMON QUESTION



WHY WON'T YOU ACCEPT MORMONS AS CHRISTIANS? DO YOU THINK WE'RE A CULT?

- Would you please define the meaning of “Christian”?
- Why does it bother you that I, as a Christian, won't accept Mormonism as a part of Christianity?
- Why do you think people assume that your religion is a “cult”?

DIFFERENCE IN LANGUAGE

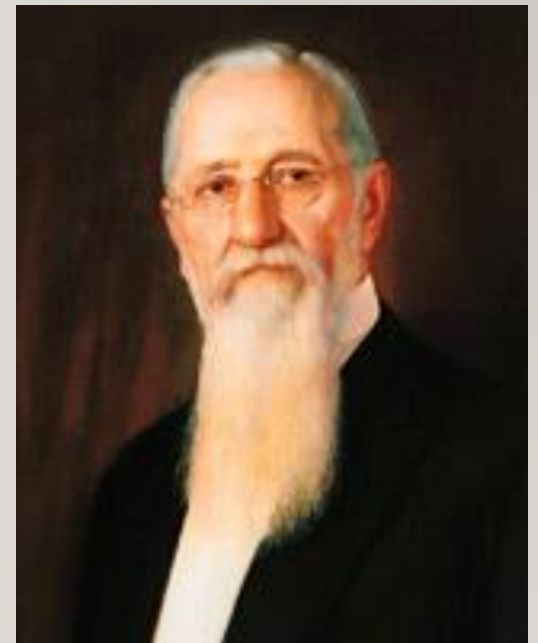
Humpty Dumpty and Alice in
Alice in Wonderland:

“‘When I use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.’ ‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things...’”



6TH LDS PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH 1838-1918

“I contend that the Latter-day Saints are the only good and true Christians, that I know anything about in the world. There are a good many people who profess to be Christians, but they are not founded on the foundation that Jesus Christ himself has laid.”



SEVENTY GARY J. COLEMAN

*Responding to 14-year-old Cortnee, the daughter
of an LDS mission president:*

“As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you are a Christian, and I am too. I am a devout Christian who is exceedingly fortunate to have greater knowledge of the true ‘doctrine of Christ’ since my conversion to the restored Church. These truths define this Church as having the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I now understand the true nature of the Godhead, I have access to additional scripture and revelation, and I can partake of the blessings of priesthood authority. Yes, Cortnee, we are Christians.”



WITNESSING TIP

When in doubt, ask the Mormon what they mean by a certain term

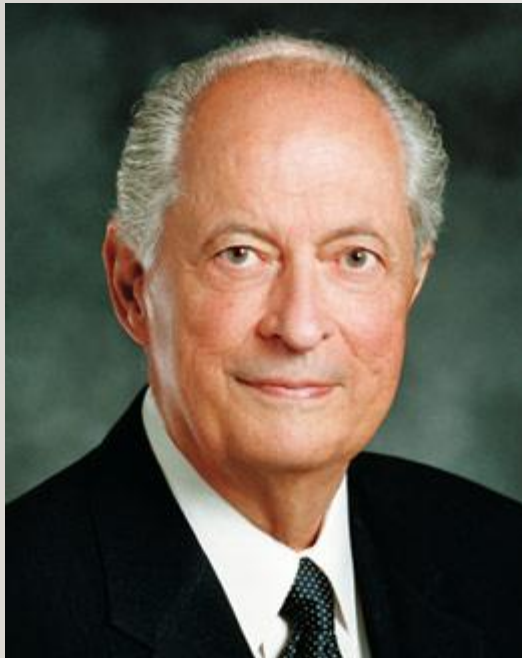
For example,

- “When you say you believe *Jesus is your Savior*, what do you mean?”
- “When you say you believe *salvation is by grace through faith*, what do you mean?”
- “When you say you believe in the *restored Gospel*, what do you mean?”

GENERAL CONFERENCE MESSAGE

“Being a More Christian Christian”

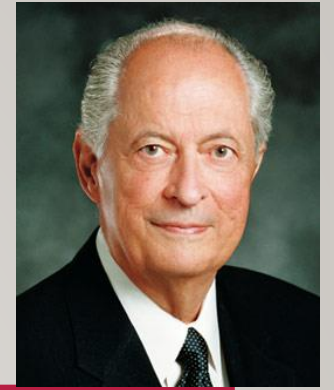
Ensign, November 2012, pp. 90-92 (delivered Oct. 7, 2012)



Apostle Robert D. Hales



“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” GOD THE FATHER



“Through the scriptures and the witness of Joseph Smith, we know that **God, our Heavenly Father**, has a glorified and perfected body of flesh and bone.”

God the Father: Also known as Heavenly Father, or Elohim. He was once a righteous human in another realm who died and then became God of this world He has a tangible body of flesh and bones (D&C 130:22).

LDS Church Founder Joseph Smith 1805-1844

- “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!”
- “We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. **I will refute that idea**, and take away the veil, so that you may see.”



HOW COULD SUCH A NOTION BE “IMAGINED”?

Standard works: Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price

- Moroni 8:18 – “For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but **he is unchangeable, from all eternity to all eternity.**”
- *Doctrine and Covenants* 20:17 – “By these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, **from everlasting to everlasting, the same unchangeable God**, the framer of heaven and earth and all things which are in them.”
- Psalm 90:2 – “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

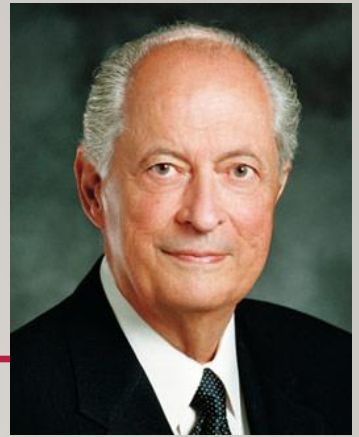
APOSTLE JAMES TALMAGE

1862-1933



“We believe in a God who is Himself progressive, whose majesty is intelligence; whose perfection consists in eternal advancement -- a Being who has **attained His exalted state** by a path which now His children are permitted to follow, whose glory it is their heritage to share ... the Church proclaims the eternal truth: **‘As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be.’”**

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” JESUS



“A Christian has faith in the **Lord Jesus Christ**,”

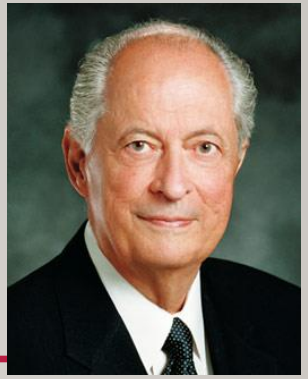
Jesus Christ: God the Father’s firstborn son and humanity’s eldest brother. Prior to his incarnation, he was known as Jehovah.

15TH GORDON B. HINCKLEY 1910-2008

“As a church we have critics, many of them. They say we do not believe in the traditional Christ of Christianity. There is some substance to what they say.”



“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” BEGOTTEN SON



“that He is the **literal Son of God** . . . Jesus Christ is His Only **Begotten Son** in the flesh.”

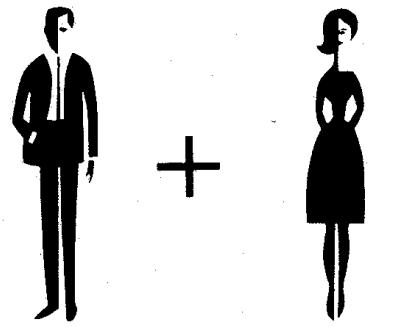
“Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is called the Only Begotten Son because He is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. He inherited divine powers from God, His Father. From His mother, Mary, He inherited mortality and was subject to hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, and death.”

13TH PRESIDENT EZRA TAFT BENSON 1899-1994



“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims that Jesus Christ is the **Son of God in the most literal sense**. The body in which He performed His mission in the flesh was sired by that same Holy Being we worship as God, our Eternal Father. Jesus was not the son of Joseph, nor was He begotten by the Holy Ghost.”

The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p. 7
See also the *Church News*, December 18, 2004, p. 16.



Daddy

Mommy



You

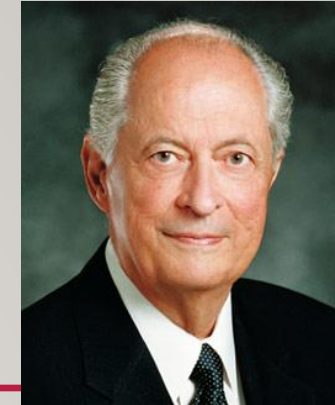
Our Heavenly
Father



Mary

Jesus

“At this point, discuss in your own words how Jesus was the only begotten Son of God. You might do this using the following illustration on a chalkboard or piece of paper.”

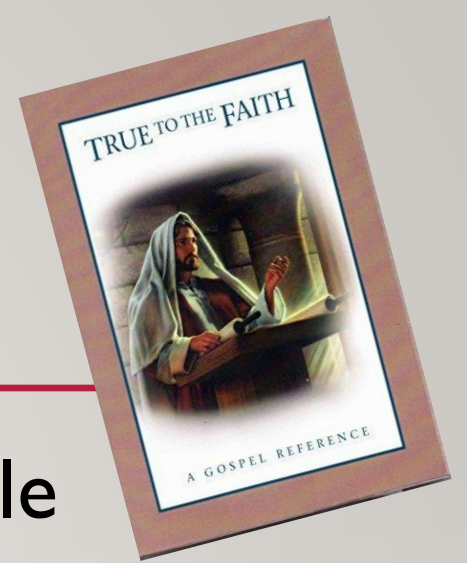


“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” ATONEMENT

“...to suffer for our sins in the supreme act of love we know as the **Atonement**.”

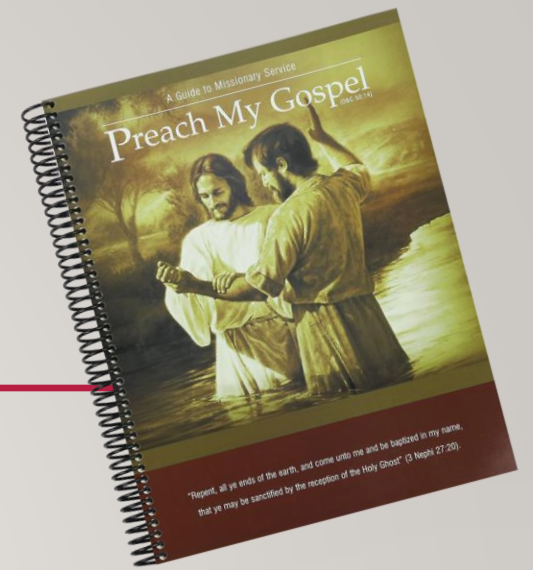
Atonement: Provided by Jesus’ suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross, allowing humankind to have a resurrection, as well as paving the way for potential exaltation.

TRUE TO THE FAITH



“Through the Atonement, Jesus Christ redeems all people from the effects of the Fall. All people who have ever lived on the earth and who ever will live on the earth will be resurrected and brought back into the presence of God to be judged (see 2 Nephi 2:5–10; Helaman 14:15–17). Through the Savior’s gift of mercy and redeeming grace, we will all receive the gift of immortality and live forever in glorified, resurrected bodies.”

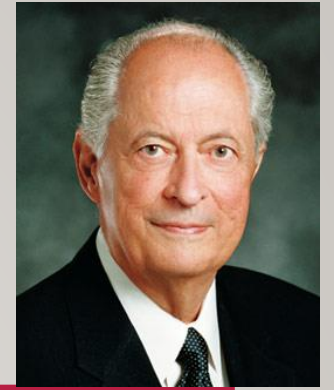
PREACH MY GOSPEL



“The Savior satisfied the demands of justice for those who repent of their sins and endeavor to keep all of His commandments when He stood in our place and suffered the penalty for our sins. This act is called the Atonement... However, Jesus did not eliminate our personal responsibility. He forgives our sins when we accept Him, repent, and obey His commandments. Through the Atonement and living the gospel we become worthy to enter the presence of our Heavenly Father permanently.”

) *Preach My Gospel*, 2004, p. 61. Ellipsis mine

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” HOLY SPIRIT

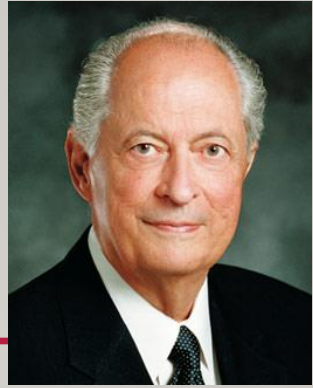


“The **Holy Spirit** is a personage of spirit whose work is to testify of the Father and the Son.”

Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost: A son of God the Father, as well as a brother of Jesus.

“He [the Holy Ghost] will help us understand that we can become exalted like our Heavenly Father. (See Romans 8:16–17.)”

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” GODHEAD



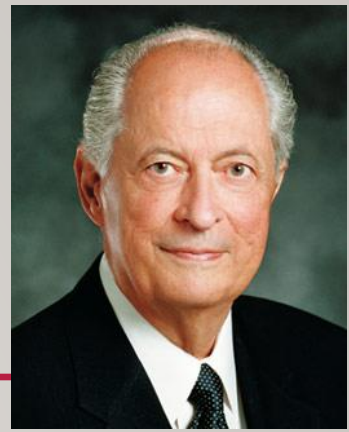
“The **Godhead** is three separate and distinct beings, unified in purpose.”

Godhead: Three gods—God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost—who, while distinct in being, are one in purpose.

“I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods.”

Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 370.

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” GRACE



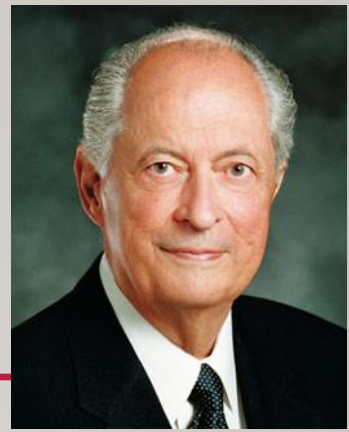
“A Christian believes that through the **grace of God** the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ...”

Grace of God: Enabling power to keep the commandments

LDS BIBLE DICTIONARY

“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. Divine grace is needed by every soul in consequence of the fall of Adam and also because of man’s weaknesses and shortcomings. However, grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient. Hence the explanation, ‘It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do’ (2 Ne. 25:23).”

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” REPENTANCE

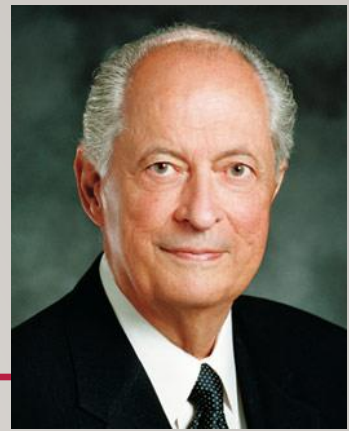


“... we can **repent**,...”

Repentance: The process by which a member receives forgiveness. True repentance involves six steps, including confession and a successful abandonment of sins.

“How can repentance help us progress? (When we repent, we abandon our sins, which keep us from improving and progressing.)”

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” COMMANDMENTS

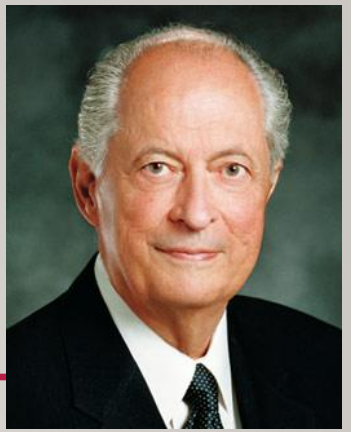


“forgive others, keep the **commandments**, . . .”

Commandments: Laws and rules as taught by the LDS Church.

“Our agreement to keep all the commandments is our covenant with God. Only as we do this may we deserve His blessings and merit His mercy.”





“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” ETERNAL LIFE

“...and inherit **eternal life**.”

Eternal life: Exaltation in the highest level of the celestial kingdom and living forever with one’s earthly family.

“As we are obedient to the commandments of God, we earn the right to live with him forever in the celestial kingdom.”

12TH PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL 1895-1985

“Eternal life hangs in the balance awaiting the works of men. This progress toward eternal life is a matter of achieving perfection. *Living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness* and assures one of exaltation... *incomplete repentance never brought complete forgiveness.*”



12TH PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL 1895-1985

“Your Heavenly Father has promised forgiveness upon total repentance and meeting all the requirements, but that *forgiveness is not granted merely for the asking*. There must be works—many works—and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit’...



12TH PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL 1895-1985

...It depends upon you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. *It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries* before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes.”



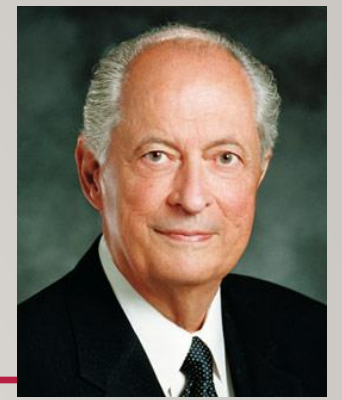
PRESIDENCY OF THE SEVENTY ROBERT C. GAY



“The Lord loves our righteousness but asks of us continued repentance and submission. . . . This is the **exchange** the Savior is asking of us: we are to give up all our sins, big or small, for the Father’s reward of eternal life. We are to forget self-justifying stories, excuses, rationalizations, defense mechanisms, procrastinations, judgmental thoughts, and doing things our way. We are to separate ourselves from all worldliness and take upon us the image of God in our countenances.”

October 2012 General Conference
“What Shall a Man Give in Exchange for His Soul?”

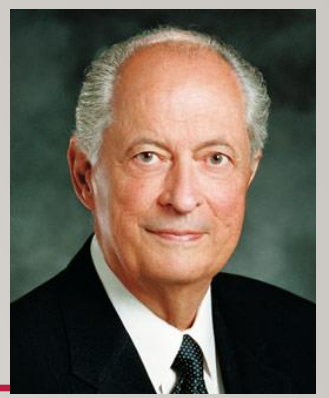
QUOTING D&C 110:13-16



“Denying ourselves of ungodly behavior is the beginning of repentance, which brings a mighty change of heart until ‘we have no more disposition to do evil.’”

Moroni 10:32: “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.”

D&C 58:43: “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.”



“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” BAPTISM

“We do this by being **baptized** and receiving the **gift of the Holy Ghost**.”

Water baptism: Required for remission of sins. Performed by immersion and valid only if administered by a Mormon male holding priesthood authority.

Gift of the Holy Ghost: Fullness of blessing available to LDS members after water baptism. The Holy Ghost remains with those who stay worthy, though He will withdraw when the commandments are not kept.

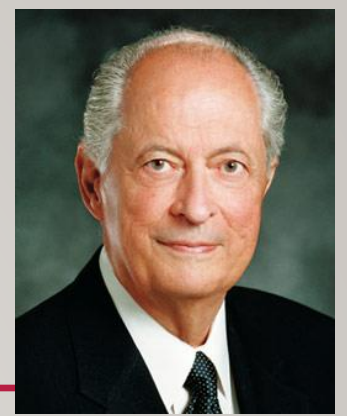
ENSIGN MAGAZINE



“We believe we must be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (through an ordinance called confirmation) to be saved in the kingdom of heaven... Baptism also includes a sacred covenant, a promise, between Heavenly Father and the individual who is baptized. We covenant to keep His commandments, serve Him and His children, and take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ.”

“We Must Be Born of Water and the Spirit,” *Ensign*, February 2013, p. 14. Ellipsis mine.

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” PRIESTHOOD

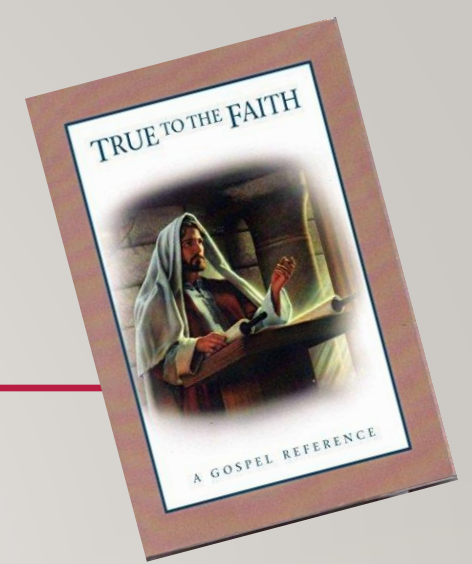


“...by the **laying on of hands** by those holding His **priesthood** authority.”

Laying on of hands: The act of priesthood leaders putting their hands on the head of a person to bestow a blessing.

Priesthood: There are two divisions: Aaronic and Melchizedek. Authority to hold the priesthood is for male members only.

TRUE TO THE FAITH



“Male members of the Church may begin their priesthood service when they reach the age of 12. They begin by holding the Aaronic Priesthood, and they later may qualify to have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred on them. At different stages in their lives and as they prepare themselves to receive different responsibilities, they hold different offices in the priesthood, such as deacon, teacher, or priest in the Aaronic Priesthood and elder or high priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood.”

“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” RESTORATION

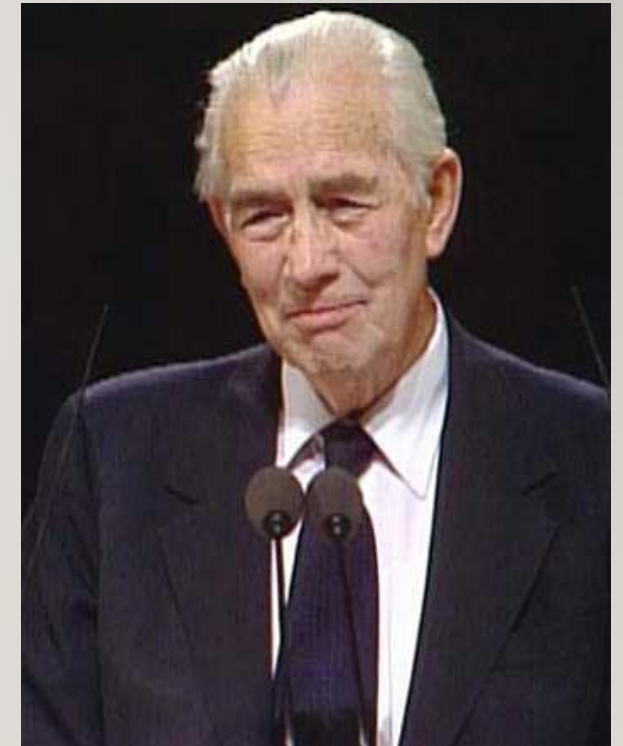


“A Christian knows that throughout the ages, God’s prophets have always testified of Jesus Christ. This same Jesus, accompanied by Heavenly Father, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the year 1820 and **restored** the **gospel** and the organization of His original Church.”

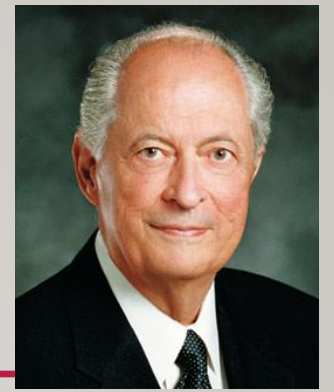
Restoration: Reestablishment of true gospel principles.

APOSTLE MARK E. PETESEN

“We Latter-day Saints have that new revelation. We have a new prophet and new scriptures also, which, added to the Bible, now point the way. This new revelation brought with it the true understanding of the nature of God and a restoration of primitive Christianity. That restoration is Mormonism. It came about through the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jun. He saw God and communed with him, even as did Moses.”



“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?” GOSPEL



“...restored the gospel and the organization of His original Church.”

Gospel: All doctrines, principles, laws, ordinances, and covenants necessary for a Mormon to receive exaltation.

APOSTLE RICHARD G. SCOTT 1928-2015



“Our Father’s plan for salvation in this life with the opportunity of returning to Him would be called the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

BONNIE OSCARSON

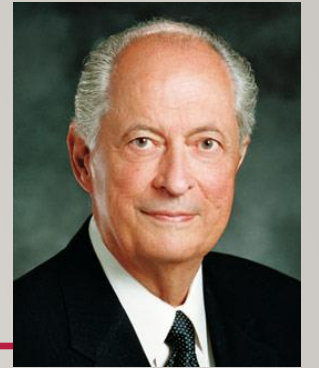
President, Young Women's Association

“We claim that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God and the only true Church on the earth. It is called the Church of Jesus Christ because He stands at the head; it is His Church, and all these things are possible because of His atoning sacrifice. We believe that these distinguishing features can be found in no other place or organization on this earth. As good and sincere as other religions and churches are, none of them have the authority to provide the ordinances of salvation that are available in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”



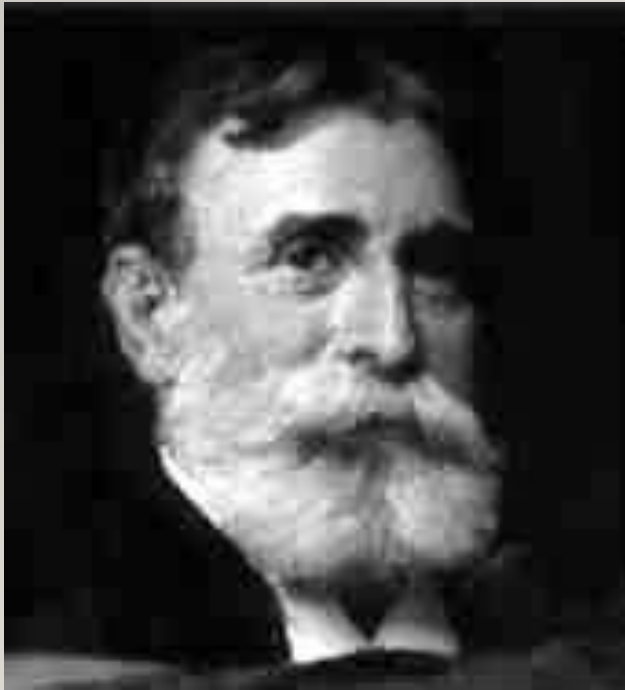
April General Conference, Ensign, “Do I Believe?” May 2016

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN? CONCLUSION



“With these doctrines as the foundation of our faith, can there be any doubt or disputation that we, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are Christian?”

B.B. WARFIELD
CHRISTIAN PASTOR
1851-1921



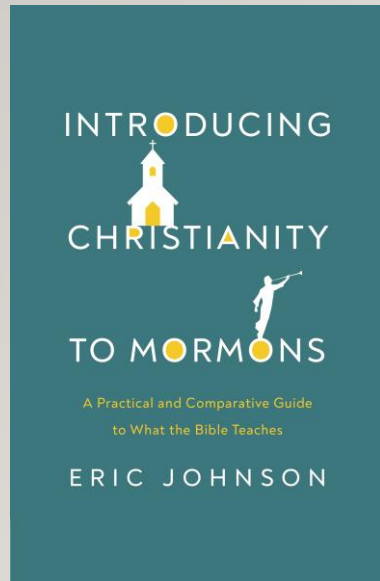
“If everything that is called Christianity in these days is Christianity, then there is no such thing as Christianity. A name applied indiscriminately to everything, designates nothing.”

Q&A

MORMONISM RESEARCH MINISTRY

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