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Mere Mormonism

Thomas B. Griffith

Devotees of C. S. Lewis will recognize that I have adapted the title of my remarks from *Mere Christianity*, his classic exposition of the fundamentals of the Christian faith.¹ An hour lecture is not the forum to attempt for Latter-day Saint Christianity what Lewis achieved for traditional Christianity. In any event, I lack the skill to pull that off. What follows is something much more modest. I will speak from my own observation and try to identify what is at the heart of the Mormon experience in an attempt to provide an introduction to the faith. A disclaimer is needed. I am not speaking as an official representative of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You will notice that my shirt is not white, and I wear no black nametag. I am here only as a lay member of that church to give a “reason of the hope that is in” me (1 Pet. 3:15). I confess at the outset that I would like nothing more than to say something that might spark your interest to “come and see” (John 1:39) and learn more about us.

And I will not address directly a question sometimes posed about the Mormon faith: Are Mormons Christians? By the end of this hour, however, I hope you will see why Latter-day Saints take umbrage at the suggestion that we are not. We readily acknowledge that we represent a departure from the traditional Christianity that emerged from Nicea. We claim more ancient roots, grounded in biblical Christianity, and we proclaim, with all the fervor and adoration we can muster, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer and Savior of humankind.

In a recent essay in the online version of *The Atlantic*, Ross Douthat wrote of Christianity: “The Christian story is not . . . a theological or philosophical treatise. It’s not a set of commands or insights about our moral duties. Nor is it a road map to the good life. It has implications for all of

those questions, obviously. . . . But fundamentally, the Christian story is *evidence* for a particular idea about the universe: *It recounts a series of events that, if real, tell us something profound about the nature of God, and His relationship to His creatures.*"² That observation is especially apt during this Holy Week as Christians commemorate the Passion and the Resurrection of Christ. The teaching authority of Christianity, the foundation of its claim to have unique insights into the nature of things, is the historical reality of Christ's life, his suffering, his death, and his resurrection. Likewise, the claim of Latter-day Saint Christianity to unique authority rests on historical events. I'll speak first of those events. Then I'll turn to some insights they provide. Finally, I'll describe how those insights work together in Mormon life.

The Events

Three events give Mormonism its reason for being and its continued vitality. Like the Resurrection of Christ, each is miraculous. For some, the recency of these events makes them less plausible. Surely rational moderns can't believe in miracles! But for Latter-day Saints, these events are significant *because* they took place in modern times. They witness to God's contemporary involvement in human affairs.

Joseph Smith's First Vision. In the early nineteenth century, Joseph Smith was a teen living with his family on the frontier of western New York. Affected by the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening, Joseph became concerned with two questions: How could he be forgiven of his sins? And was there a church uniquely authorized to carry on Christ's work? After wrestling with each question for some time, Joseph followed the injunction in the first chapter and fifth verse of the Epistle of James in the New Testament and retired to the seclusion of a grove near his home to seek answers from God through prayer. A vision ensued in which Joseph saw and spoke with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He was told that his sins were forgiven through the grace of Christ, a not uncommon experience for Christians of the age, and that he was not to join any existing church because God would use him to reestablish Christ's church. It was with this charge and promise that Joseph moved into uncharted territory.

Restoration of the Priesthood. Latter-day Saints call the reestablishment of Christ's church in modern times the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mormonism views itself as the successor to the New Testament church, which lost its way shortly after its founding by Christ and its period of apostolic leadership. Central to the Restoration, ancient prophets and apostles, now resurrected, came in bodily form—not in apparition—to Joseph Smith and others and gave them priesthood authority to organize

anew Christ's church. John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, and other ancient worthies visited Joseph Smith and conferred on him this authority, which has remained with the Church since. In Mormon teaching, this priesthood link to Christ gives vitality to the ordinances of the Church and facilitates continuing revelation to its current apostolic leadership.

Recovery of the Book of Mormon. As part of the Restoration, an angel gave Joseph a record kept on golden plates that tells the story of a group of Hebrew pilgrims who left Jerusalem in about 600 BC to prepare for the coming of the Messiah.³ Their God-directed journey eventually led them to ancient America. (According to Mormon scholars, the best available evidence suggests they settled in Mesoamerica.) Named in recognition of its primary compiler and editor, the Book of Mormon covers roughly a thousand-year period and recounts the religious and political history of this group and its descendants.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Book of Mormon is its account of a people who looked toward the birth of Christ with an anticipation that was rewarded by his personal ministry among them as risen Lord after his death and resurrection. The risen Christ taught his gospel, healed the sick, and formed a church among this group in ancient America. Joseph Smith translated the record into English through miraculous means, and it is, along with the Bible, part of the Latter-day Saint canon. The subtitle of the Book of Mormon explains its purpose: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Mormon Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland has written, "The Book of Mormon's highest purpose is to restore to the universal family of God that crucial knowledge of Christ's role in the salvation of every man, woman, and child who now lives, has ever lived, or will yet live upon the earth."⁴

Each of these three events is remarkable for what it claims about God's purposes in modern times. Two of them are noteworthy in another way. Although the First Vision was a private encounter between a boy and God with no other witness, the restoration of the priesthood and the recovery of the Book of Mormon were not solitary experiences. They involved the participation of other people who made the same claims about what took place as did Joseph Smith. There is, for lack of a better word, a physicality about these events that removes them from the subjective realm of the visionary and, like the bodily resurrection of Christ, places them in time and space.

For example, Joseph Smith and his companion Oliver Cowdery tell that John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John literally placed hands on their heads while ordaining them to the priesthood. Smith and Cowdery *felt* those angelic hands on their heads. This is not the stuff of mystical vision or the ineffable. It is a straightforward claim that angels appeared in the clear light of day in bodily form and acted at God's direction. That is what I

mean by physicality. Likewise, Joseph wasn't the only one to see, touch, and handle the golden plates. At least eleven other people felt the plates, hefted them, and examined the writing on them. Each stood by his claim that the plates were real, which is all the more noteworthy in the case of those who later parted ways with Smith over his direction of the Church.

The Book of Mormon, whose translation was dictated by Joseph Smith in the presence of others, is not a theological treatise, but is an account of the struggles, triumphs, and tragedies of a real people. Its historicity has been the subject of a robust debate. Although believing Latter-day Saints don't rely exclusively or even primarily on scholarly works to justify their faith in the book's authenticity, they point to sophisticated literary, linguistic, anthropological, and archeological studies that lend support to the claim that the Book of Mormon could not be the product of the nineteenth century, but is, as it claims, an ancient document written by authors with Near Eastern ties.⁵

I mention this feature of the Mormon story because it suggests that the claim these events actually took place is susceptible to some rational analysis. Like the witness of first-century Christians that Jesus was physically resurrected, Mormons proclaim that God has acted in modern times in a miraculous fashion that has been seen and experienced by eyewitnesses. By subjecting these claims to rigorous scrutiny, we can make some determination whether they were more likely to have happened than not. If these events did not take place, if they are nothing more than fanciful tales concocted by an imaginative, devious, or even pious fraud, Latter-day Saints have little of worth to offer the world. We may be interesting specimens of a particular type of religious experience, but we have no claim to your attention on ultimate issues.

But if these claims are true accounts of real events—if Joseph Smith saw and talked to God and Christ, if he received priesthood authority under the hands of ancient prophets and apostles, and if he is the transmitter of ancient scripture specially prepared to bear witness of a living Christ to an increasingly secular world—then Latter-day Saint Christians have something marvelous to offer.

The Insights

From these historical events, insights emerge into the nature of God, our relationship with him, and our relationship with our fellow humans. Mormon life is built around these insights. A caveat: The trained theologian may be disappointed with the lack of systematic thought in Mormonism. We have no *Summa Theologica* and lack anything approaching a catechism. While some see this as a result of our comparative newness as a religion,

others think something more fundamental is at work. For a Latter-day Saint, the biblical imperative to love God and neighbor is foremost (Matt. 22:34–39). Our focus is on how God expects us to act and what he expects us to become. And so the insights I describe are not the products of attempts to provide a methodic explanation of the nature of God and humankind. Instead, they come from revelation incident to the effort to follow Christ in a fallen world.

The Nature of God. The most obvious point from these events is that God lives, that he has been seen by and has spoken with moderns, and that he is active in human affairs. God is not remote. He is immediate and proximate, moved by his love for us and his yearning to tutor us.

In a revelation to Joseph Smith recounting a vision God gave to Enoch, an ancient prophet mentioned only briefly in Genesis, Enoch sees the Creation and the history of humankind. The vision is interrupted, however, when Enoch notices that God is weeping. “How is it that thou canst weep,” Enoch asks in amazement, “seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?” (Moses 7:29). The answer, Enoch learns, is that it is in the very nature of God to weep over his creation. He weeps over you and me. In contrast to the views of the Greek philosophers who had a profound influence on the development of traditional Christian and Jewish thinking, the God Mormons worship is both personal and passible. He feels joy and sadness and even suffers. Subsequent revelations confirmed to Joseph Smith what he had learned in the First Vision: that God has a physical form. As distinctive as that teaching may be in the postbiblical world, “God’s physical form is not the point. That God has a heart that beats in sympathy with ours is the truth [we have to offer] . . . that He feels real sorrow, rejoices with real gladness, and weeps real tears.”⁶

Latter-day Saints are Trinitarians with a twist. A theologian would call our view “social trinitarianism.”⁷ From the Bible, the experiences of Joseph Smith, and the uniquely Mormon scriptures, we believe that the Trinity is composed of three separate and distinct beings: God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit. “Although the three members of the Godhead are distinct personages, their Godhead is ‘one’ in that all three are united in their thoughts, actions and purpose, with each having a fulness of knowledge, truth, and power.”⁸

Latter-day Saints affirm the reality of the bodily resurrection of Christ to a world in which faith has diminished or vanished under the withering effects of secularism. As Joseph Smith and a colleague wrote, “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of [Christ], this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that

he is the Only Begotten of the Father—that by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created” (D&C 76:22–24). Mormons attest that the Atonement of Jesus Christ is not only the central act in the history of the universe, but it is the most important event in each of our lives. It is through Christ’s Atonement that God draws us to him in love and moves us towards others in love. Mormon scripture, exegesis, belief, ritual, and practice all center on the Atonement of Christ. Christ’s chief project is to prepare the world for his imminent millennial reign, hence the name of the Church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As it was in New Testament times, that church is directed today by Christ through apostolic leadership.

Our Relationship to God. Fundamental to understanding our relationship with God is recognizing that Christ, through the power of his Atonement, intends to transform us from fallen creatures into beings who reflect his glory. The teachings in the first chapter of 2 Peter in the New Testament, that Christ intends us to be “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), resonate with Latter-day Saints. On this point, we are most like Eastern Orthodox Christianity with its emphasis on *theosis*, the ultimate transformation of the faithful into the likeness of God.⁹ Latter-day Saints recognize the seemingly insurmountable chasm that exists between God and humans, but we believe that it is God’s work and his glory to bridge that gap through the Atonement of Christ.

And we believe that is possible not only because of what Christ has done, but also because humans are the offspring of God. All of us lived with him as spirits before birth. In this life our spirit joins our body to form the personality we will have for eternity. The nature and quality of our life to come depend on our becoming the type of person our Heavenly Father urges us to be. The chief purpose of this life is to take the initial steps in that direction. Yielding to Christ’s grace enables us to make those steps. To help us make those steps, God desires to speak with his children. It should not be surprising that in a movement that began with the prayer of a boy, personal revelation is the quintessential religious experience. Mormon meetings are filled with stories of people who have sought and received revelation in their personal and family affairs.

Because Mormons believe that our divine transformation is God’s purpose, we take conduct seriously. Our meetings are filled with exhortations about how a disciple should act and what a disciple should be. Accepting Christ as personal Savior and making him the object of one’s worship and adoration are indispensable elements of this process of transformation. But they are only the start of an eternal journey.

Our Relationship to Others. For a people who believe that God is near and that he is not silent, Latter-day Saints place surprisingly little emphasis on the contemplative life. Our primary focus, instead, is on relationships with other people. This comes in part from the belief that all humans are, quite literally, the offspring of God—a view that carries with it an optimism about human potential that encourages sociality. But this impulse toward the social is also rooted in the Mormon view that the relationships we experience in this life are but a prelude to what our lives will be like in the hereafter. Joseph Smith taught, “That same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with an eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:2).

In short, we like people, and that which we do best is build communities. The beehive, which was a common feature in nineteenth-century Mormon art and architecture, may be the closest thing we have to an icon. Our success building communities reflects, no doubt, the lessons we learned from pulling together in the face of persecution, but there is something else going on here. Mormon life is profoundly social, and activity in the Church involves us deeply in the lives of others because in Mormonism God is served best—and perhaps only—by serving others. An oft-quoted passage from the Book of Mormon teaches, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

How the Insights Work Together

These insights into the nature of God and humankind work together in Mormon life through the idea of covenant—the voluntary decision to bind oneself to another in a continuing relationship. Two covenants in particular help explain much of what Mormons do: baptism and marriage. Each is a covenant with God, who seeks our transformation by binding himself to us, but each is at the same time a covenant with others, people we will be tied to through eternity.

The Baptism Covenant. Baptism mimics Christ’s death and resurrection and the death of our fallen nature and our rising into a new life with him. In baptism, we bind ourselves to Christ through covenant, but, just as important in the Mormon view, we also join a community. The local Mormon congregation is called a ward. For the committed Latter-day Saint, the activities of the ward are second in importance only to family life. Typically capped at about four hundred members, the ward gathers each Sunday for members to take communion, which Latter-day Saints call the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. In the sacrament, we renew our covenant with Christ made at baptism.

The emblems are simple: bread and water. They are passed through the congregation from one person to another. There is a democratic element to the experience. Priestly mediation is at a minimum. The sacrament is not only the most important devotional act of the week, but it is also the focal point of the communal life of the ward. From this shared experience all other ward activities flow.

Sunday is hardly a day of rest for committed Mormons. The sacrament is only one part of three hours of Sunday services. Three hours can be a bit long even for the hardest Mormon. Recently, I heard a seven-year-old in the pew behind me mark the end of the services by proclaiming, "Victory! It's the closing hymn!" In fact, the life of an active Mormon involves far more than three hours on Sunday. The phrase "religion on steroids" may be about right.¹⁰ Beyond services, Sunday is filled with activities that begin with early morning planning meetings for those with leadership responsibilities and includes choir practices, training meetings, visits to each other's homes, and evening activities for the youth. And that's just the first day of the week!

Each school day, Mormon high school students gather before school in a class for scripture study. Weeknight activities involve Scouting and service projects. Ward socials are regular features of many weekends. Mormons dance. We sing. We put on musicals. We play instruments. There are more homes with pianos per capita in Utah than any other state in the nation.¹¹ There is a reason for all this activity, beyond mere neighborliness, that is best captured by C. S. Lewis's insight, "Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses."¹²

Two features of the way the ward is organized bear special mention. First, a Mormon doesn't choose which ward he or she will attend. Membership in a ward is determined by where one lives. This often leads to racially diverse congregations. (Sunday is *not* the most segregated day of the week in Mormonism.) Second, because there is no paid clergy, almost everyone in the ward has some responsibility. There is much sweat equity. That makes for amateurish contributions on occasion, but, more importantly, it creates a level of meaningful participation in a close-knit community of faith and service.

Notice what happens when these two characteristics work in tandem. Because Church members attend a ward based on where they live rather than their personal preferences, and because each member of the ward will most likely have some responsibility beyond simply attending Sunday services, Latter-day Saints invariably find themselves working side by side in church with people they may never have chosen to have lunch with. It is for this reason, as one careful observer noted, "Church involvement teaches

us compassion and patience as well as courage and discipline. It makes us responsible for the personal and marital, the physical and spiritual welfare of people we may not already love (may even heartily dislike), and thus we learn to love them. It stretches and challenges us, even when we are disappointed and exasperated, in ways we would not otherwise choose to be stretched and challenged. Thus it gives us a chance to be made better than we may have chosen to be—but need and ultimately want to be.”¹³

The first Sunday of each month, Mormons fast twenty-four hours and donate at least the amount of money that would have been spent on food to a fund that provides direct assistance to those in the ward who are struggling financially. And each adult member is asked to visit the home of a few other members each month to see what service can be provided. In short, we try to take care of each other. What is intended from all of this, of course, is that we will come to appreciate and even love those whose backgrounds, personalities, and interests are different from our own. That is the beginning of wisdom.

The Marriage Covenant. Some of the most sacred ordinances for Latter-day Saints are performed in the temple, a holy space that is set apart from the world. The model is the temple of the Hebrew Bible. In the LDS temple, covenants are made with Christ. The crowning covenant is the ordinance of marriage, “sealing” in Mormon parlance. The highest aspiration of a committed Latter-day Saint is to create a family that finds its strength in the sealing ordinance. Sealing is an interesting word to describe this ordinance. It evokes a sense of unity, love, and permanence. Unity is both the mark and the result of Christ’s Atonement, which works to make us “at one” with him and “at one” with others. Latter-day Saints believe the family is the primary place for learning how to achieve that type of unity.

Great emphasis is placed on preparing for marriage, which tends to happen at an earlier age among Mormons than among most Americans. For example, fifty-four percent of the graduating class this year at Brigham Young University were married. Mormon parents are likely to have more children than is typical of their neighbors. There is much devotional and recreational activity in Latter-day Saint families. For many, each day includes family prayer and scripture study. As mentioned, Sundays are filled with church meetings and activities. And each Monday evening the family gathers for family home evening—a devotional service in which religious principles are taught, games are played, songs are sung, prayers are offered, and chocolate is consumed in large quantities.

Mormon life is not intended to be confined to the family and the ward. They are but training grounds for Christian living in the larger world.

It was Joseph Smith's breathtaking ambition to seal together the entire human family. He taught that the hard work of the Church was to see that "the whole human family, back to Father Adam, be linked together in indissoluble bonds."¹⁴ I'll speak of two elements of this audacious enterprise. The first involves temples. I've already mentioned that families are sealed in temples. Even more distinctive is the ritual of performing the ordinances of salvation for those who have passed on—a biblical practice that gives expression to the Mormon belief that Christ's grace is extended to all humankind, even those who lived and died without hearing about his gospel. This practice of linking the past with the present through saving ordinances is a critical element of the Mormon project to join together all humankind.

Permit me a personal story that illustrates this facet of the Mormon experience. Several years ago, while awaiting our turn to perform baptisms in the Church's temple just outside Washington, D.C., my family watched as a group of black and Latino Latter-day Saints from the Bronx were baptized on behalf of Asians from the nineteenth century. In that setting, barriers of race, nationality, culture, geography, and time were transcended by a sense of unity, an achievement—if only momentary—of at-one-ment. At-one-ment through Christ is the idea that gives life to modern Mormonism.

But there is more. In keeping with Joseph Smith's declaration that "friendship is the grand fundamental purpose of Mormonism,"¹⁵ Latter-day Saints are urged to become actively involved in the larger world. While there was a season in our history when we retreated from civilization to the wilderness of the Great Basin in the western United States, since the middle of the twentieth century, Latter-day Saints have been moving into the mainstream of national life wherever we live. The Mormon diaspora away from the Intermountain West has brought with it an emphasis on living among others in a way that makes a positive contribution.

Although still little known to many (hence a talk such as this), Latter-day Saints in the United States, for example, have achieved disproportionate success in political life (Mitt Romney, Harry Reid, and Orrin Hatch are all Mormons) and even in popular culture. The Osmonds, Steve Youngs, and Danny Ainges have been joined by Ken Jennings of *Jeopardy* fame and successful contestants on *American Idol*. Indicative of the Mormon move into the larger society is our emphasis on education. A significant portion of the Church's revenues is spent in support of its educational system. Studies have shown that religious commitment among Mormons increases with their level of educational training.¹⁶ Brigham Young University is the Church's flagship school and, in addition to its success in athletics, has graduated

more students who go on to complete doctorates than all but nine other universities in the world.¹⁷

The best known of the Church's outreach efforts is its vigorous missionary program. It is the expectation that all able young men will spend two years living away from home proselytizing and serving in always spartan and sometimes primitive circumstances. Many young women and retired seniors serve as missionaries as well. There is a purpose to this effort beyond creating new members. The missionary experience has become a rite of passage in which the chief ethic is service to those outside the household of faith.

Less well known but of increasing importance in terms of resources spent and emphasis given is the Church's humanitarian service, which focuses on disaster relief as well as teaching principles of economic self-sufficiency in developing areas of the world. This effort, which is carried on by both the institutional Church and individual members in service of their own choosing, is a response to the scriptural imperative described by Joseph Smith: "A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."¹⁸ "[His duty] is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church, or in any other, or in no church at all, wherever he finds them."¹⁹

Mormonism is a work in progress. At its core is a belief in the literal fatherhood of God; the actual kinship of humankind; the centrality of Christ and the power of his Atonement to transform individuals, families, and communities; and the recognition that we live in a climactic moment in world history. Latter-day Saints haven't made a perfect run at what we believe we are called to do. Even a casual look at us will disclose that we are painfully fallible. But on careful examination, you will find a community that is vibrant, idealistic, adaptable, and committed to Christ and his purposes. I hope you will "come and see."

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School that is intended to be an introduction to the teachings and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

1. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1996).
2. Ross Douthat, "The Implications of Christmas," *The Atlantic*, http://ross-douthat.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/12/the_implications_of_christmas.php (December 25, 2008), emphasis added.
3. See Hugh W. Nibley, "The Book of Mormon: A Minimal Statement," in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 151.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 7.
5. Oxford University Press has published a reliable account of the debate over the provenance of the Book of Mormon. See Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 89–184. That Oxford has published a sympathetic account of the book's origins may invite the curious to actually study its text. As non-Mormon scholar Thomas O'Dea observed: "The *Book of Mormon* has not been universally considered by its critics as one of those books that must be read in order to have an opinion of it." Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 26.
6. Terryl L. Givens, "'Lightning Out of Heaven': Joseph Smith and the Forging of Community," Forum Address, November 29, 2005, at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, available at <http://speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=10924>.
7. See Daniel C. Peterson, "Mormonism and the Trinity," *Element* 1 (Spring and Fall 2007): 14–22.
8. Paul E. Dahl, "Godhead," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:552.
9. The most famous formulations of this New Testament idea (see, for example, Romans 8:16, 17: "we are . . . heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ") come from St. Irenaeus of Lyons, who taught that "through his transcendent love, our Lord Jesus Christ became what we are, that he might make us to be what he is," and St. Athanasius of Alexandria, who taught that "[God] became man, that man might become god." See James R. Payton Jr., "Keeping the End in View: How the Strange Yet Familiar Doctrine of Theosis Can Invigorate the Christian Life," *Christianity Today* 52, no. 10 (October 2008): 67, available online at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/october/36.66.html>.
10. The phrase, as applied to Latter-day Saints, came to my attention in comments Dr. Richard Land made about how some view the Mormon faith. See Jason Szep, "In U.S., Mormons Are in the Spotlight," *Reuters*, June 10, 2007 (quoting Dr. Land), available online at <http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSN0527023320070610>.
11. Paul Pollei, founder and artistic director of the Gina Bachauer Foundation, as quoted by Edward Reichel, "Return of the Bachauer," *Deseret News*, June 1, 2004, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,595069560,00.html>.
12. C. S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 40.

13. The ideas in this paragraph come from Eugene England, *Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986), 4–11; the quotation is found on page 5.

14. George Q. Cannon, *The Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 516. B. H. Roberts described Smith's vision this way: "[The Church's] mission is to link family with family, and generation with generation, until all the chains are complete which shall bind the whole race of men and women in bands of love and salvation to our Father and our God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." B. H. Roberts, "Religious Faiths: The Claims, Doctrines, and Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Improvement Era* 1, no. 11 (September 1898): 835.

15. Joseph Smith, sermon of July 23, 1843 (Sunday afternoon), in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 234.

16. Stan L. Albrecht, "The Consequential Dimension of Mormon Religiosity," *BYU Studies* 29, no. 2 (1989): 95–105.

17. See Brigham Young University: 2009 Academic Rankings, <http://yfacts.byu.edu/viewarticle.aspx?id=273>.

18. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 4:227.

19. *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 732.