

Preface

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With the rapid and visible growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is inevitable that doctrinal differences will arise between Latter-day Saints and people of other faiths. Members of the LDS Church profess to be Christians, to be followers of Jesus Christ and recipients of his redeeming grace. They are not, however, associated with either Catholicism or Protestantism. Mormons believe that God called Joseph Smith in 1820 to restore saving truths and divine powers that had been lost to the world after the deaths of Jesus and his early apostles. They believe that he was commissioned to establish an organization—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—that is a restoration of the original Church of Jesus Christ. They believe that it possesses the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and is led today by divinely called modern apostles and prophets.

In spreading this message of the restoration to the world, Latter-day Saints do not wish to offend people of other faiths. There are clearly people of every Christian denomination who have devoted their lives to following the Lord, to serving others, and to spreading the message of redemption in Christ to the world. And there are people outside Christianity who live admirable lives devoted to the truths they understand. To Christian and non-Christian alike, the invitation of the restored Church of Christ is to come and see—see if the restored gospel does not have value for your lives, through the truths and powers restored by the Savior of mankind.

Latter-day Saints know that not all will accept this invitation. Yet they do not believe that doctrinal differences should motivate men and women to be less than Christian or civil in their interactions with persons of other faiths. There are so many problems in society—moral and ethical issues on which people of goodwill wholeheartedly agree—that it seems counterproductive to dissipate our strength or dilute our effectiveness when we could so easily join hands in stemming the tide of indecency and immorality.

Further, there is a pressing need in today's world for people of various religious denominations to better understand one another. Nothing good comes from misrepresenting another's beliefs. We hope that addressing a few of the questions most frequently asked about LDS beliefs and practices will contribute to understanding between Latter-day Saints and their friends of other faiths. The ten specific questions considered here get at the heart of the LDS faith and way of life. That persons outside our own faith may disagree with our position on this or that matter is understandable; that our position should be misstated or misrepresented is, however, not helpful to anyone.

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While this is not an official publication of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or Brigham Young University, the contributors have sought in their expressions to be in harmony with scripture and the teachings of modern church leaders. Each of the contributors has worked for many years in the educational system of the LDS Church and has taught and written a great deal on the topics discussed in this work. While much more could be said on these topics, we hope that this brief treatment will be sufficient to respond appropriately to questions that continue to arise.

Only when people are unafraid of truth will they find it. Therefore, we invite all to follow the admonition of Paul: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

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