

P.S.

the evangelical Mormon Outreach Quarterly (MOQ)
Periodic Supplement #2
 Supporting Christian witness to Mormons

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A Christian asks,

How can I know what Mormons believe? I've heard and read things, but when I try to talk to them about their religion, they say that they don't believe this-or-that. When I tell them what I believe, they say that's what they believe, too. It's embarrassing. I'm frustrated.

In this issue of P.S. we look at some teachings of the Mormon church, citing its own contemporary publications. This provides Christians with *background* information—*context*—for accurate, urgent, and confident witness to Mormons.

Mormons may be happy with their religion, but it is seriously out of sync with Christian faith. Not all of them know or believe some details of their religion, and effective Christian witness aims not to instruct them on those tenets, but to “preach the gospel.” The Bible has good news for them.

At our [web site](#) you can see many short papers (we suggest links to several later in this paper), including the first in this new series, [P.S. #1](#).

Mormon Church Teachings : Consider Mormon Hymnody

The Mormon church is famous for its music, but little can be learned about its doctrines through the performances of, for example, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. More revealing are the hymns published by the church for use in local Sunday services.

Look at the musical milieu in which Mormons are raised. Although their hymnal includes some traditional Christian hymns (Isaac Watts’ “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” and John Newton’s “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken,” for example) and seasonal and patriotic music (such as Christmas carols, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” and “God Save the King”), hundreds of its hymns reflect Mormon doctrines foreign to Christian faith. Whether or not individual Mormons know or believe the doctrines, they cannot avoid being immersed in the doctrinal underpinnings of the religion.

To avoid fruitless discussions with Mormons on details of their religion, Christians can focus on a positive witness—not intended to debunk Mormon doctrines, but to expose Mormons to biblical truths—Good News.

A Christian can testify to this effect: ‘I follow the living prophet: Jesus Christ. In the Bible, I am assured that by God’s grace alone, by faith in Him I have eternal life—already!’ Why that? Because it is not an offensive frontal attack on Mormonism per se, but asserts the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible; sufficiency of grace and faith; certainty of salvation not of works—in contrast to Mormonism as expressed in its everyday music:

•**Living Prophet/Continuing Revelation.** The Mormon church teaches that (1) its president is God’s “living prophet” on earth today, and receives revelations equivalent to scripture; and

(2) obeying that prophet is one of many requirements for eternal life.

Half-a-dozen hymns honor the Mormon prophet, including: “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (#19), “We Listen to a Prophet’s Voice” (#22), and “God Bless Our Prophet Dear” (#24).

The greatest adulation is reserved for the religion’s original prophet, Joseph Smith (Hymn #27). He died in 1844, but Mormons sing: “Hail to the Prophet, ascended to heaven!” He is now “mingling with Gods,” and planning on behalf of his fellow Mormons. Kings and nations will extol and revere him.

In the same over-the-top vein, Hymn #51 honors Adam, who “holds the keys of salvation for the human family.” All are enjoined to “bow low before” him and “minister at his feet,” and to adore Eve when they return to earth.

•**Works (and Faith) Required.** Obedience to the “living prophet” is not the only requirement for eternal life. In a hymn, Mormon children and adults express a desire to learn and do all the things needed to qualify for heaven. Hymn #301, “I Am a Child of God,” pleads, “Teach me all that I must do to live with him someday.”

“O My Father” (Hymn #292) pleads for approval to dwell in heaven after completing all things required in mortal life. This hymn is doubly troubling because the plea is addressed to the “Mother” in heaven as well as the Father, seeking their “mutual [approval].”

•**The Gospel.** In dozens of hymns, starting with Hymn #1, the Mormon hymnal can give the impression that Mormonism itself is Christianity’s good news. The hymns recount the religion’s stories: the failure of the church established by Christ, its absence from the earth for a millennium-and-a-half, and, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, its permanent reappearance on earth in 1830 as The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints. [Mormons call this “The Restoration.”]

SEE FOR YOURSELF

Strongly recommended: Watch 20,000 Mormon adults and children praise Joseph Smith in Hymn #27 (posted with on-screen text by the Mormon church on YouTube [HERE](#).)

Also: You can see the hymns referred to in this paper and others—all 341 in the Mormon hymnal, music and lyrics, [HERE](#); or select hymns by title [HERE](#).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Sense the urgency. Mormons you know strive to deserve eternal life, and live with uncertainties of eternity.
2. Go ahead: start that conversation with a Mormon you know. Talk, yes; but listen, too.
3. Tell a Mormon what you believe, and why. Don’t try to tell a Mormon what he or she believes.
4. Don’t drift; don’t compromise. A Mormon may want to cite unique Mormon “scriptures” and “prophets”; stick to the Bible.
5. Understand that Mormonism is not simply a different, but harmless, Christian denomination. (Watch the Hymn #27 video again, and read the words if you have any reservations.)
6. Contact Immanuel Bible Church at ibc.moq@mac.com for support and information.
7. By all means, be confident and accurate. You can be certain that Mormon doctrines mentioned in this paper are the modern-day doctrines of that religion. They are relevant in all aspects of Mormon life—evidence that Mormons need to hear from you..

MORE INFO : USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.immanuelbible.net/images/stories/or-moq2102.pdf>
<http://www.immanuelbible.net/images/stories/or-moq1904.pdf>
<http://www.immanuelbible.net/images/stories/or-pp0907.pdf>

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