



the evangelical Mormon Outreach Quarterly (MOQ) © 2013  
**Periodic Supplement #3**  
 Supporting Christian witness to Mormons

**Mormons say they are Christians.** Those who are unaware of Mormon beliefs and practices—or who don't care—may agree with Mormons, who often point out that Jesus Christ is even in the name of their church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Their workhorse scripture, the “Book of Mormon” (published in 1830), is subtitled (since 1982), “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” Generically, Mormons can seem to be Christians; they strive to appear and sound like Christians, but even better.

**Mormons say their church is neither Protestant nor Catholic.** They claim, instead, that it is “the Church”—not a denomination, but a latter-day restoration of doctrines, practices, authority, and organization long-lost soon after the days of the original apostles. They say their church is now the only true, complete Christian church; it is “[the kingdom of God on earth.](#)”

**Scoffers, critics, and cynics** ridicule Mormonism with irrelevant and inaccurate stereotypes and exaggerations. Too often Christians follow suit, trying to debunk Mormonism instead of presenting the Gospel.

Looking beyond stereotypes

**The Mormon church has stereotyped itself.** The image developed by its leaders and echoed by members: We are normal, everyday Christians, but widely misunderstood, and often misrepresented, innocently or maliciously.

Their thought seems to be, *If we tell them, others will embrace our faith, or at least understand and acknowledge our authentic Christianity—and stop criticizing us.*

Mormons aggressively promote their self-image. Two examples:

**1. The church's years-long “I'm a Mormon” campaign:** Thousands of Mormons, old and young, from many cultures, occupations, and former religious affiliations, testify that they are admirably ordinary: devout, happy, healthy, family-oriented, industrious, patriotic.

**2. A massive advertising cam-**

**paign in London.** [This video](#), avoiding doctrine, is the church's professional, news-like report of its own effort to pique interest, counter perceived (but unspecified) stereotypes, or “misconceptions,” and introduce “real Mormons.”

Keeping perspective

**What's worth talking about?**

Unfortunately, both secular and Christian critics often cite two stereotypes/criticisms that rile Mormons (polygamy and sacred undergarments). Background:

• **Polygamy**, the well-documented practice of Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith, and his successor, Brigham Young, among others, does not prove the religion is false. The Mormon church now bans polygamy and disavows any con-

nection to other factions of Smith's followers where “plural marriage” is still practiced. For perspective: False modern-day Mormon doctrines, not the century-old flirtation with polygamy, are ripe and relevant for personal conversation with Mormons. See *eternal life*, below.

• Critics often make light of Mormon temple rituals. Generally this is not a productive path for dialog with a Mormon. More importantly, the rituals are evidence of Mormonism's false ideas about eternal life. Christians, many Mormons, and others are barred from temples, the religion's “[gateway](#)” to eternal life, heaven, exaltation.

In temples Mormons are introduced to the 24/7/365 wear of unusual **undergarments** designed, manufactured, and sold by their church. [Here](#) is the church's public policy on intimate “temple garments” and “temple ceremonial clothing” (aprons and other clothing worn over the sacred undergarments in members-only rituals). You can read more about temple and ceremonial attire [here](#) (policy number 21.1.42).

Members who drink coffee or commit other church-defined sins are expected *not* to wear either garb.

In [P.S.#2](#) we cited some contemporary Mormon hymns, because they express the religion's differences with biblical

Christian faith (e.g.: a Mother in heaven; adoration of modern prophets and Adam and Eve; and multiple “Gods”). As serious as

those differences are, one that intrudes upon the physical and spiritual life of every Mormon is the ill-conceived idea that one must labor to gain eternal life.

**Eternal life**

A desire for eternal life underlies temple rituals and sacred clothing for Mormons today, and was one of the motivations for polygamy in its day. Mormons have always asked, What must I do to gain eternal life? From time to time their church tells them what to do.

Polygamy, once commanded for some men and women, is a dead issue for Mormons you are likely to meet. Now monogamy is required.

Undergarments are an intimate oddity Mormons will not want to discuss. In their sacred clothing and temple rituals they testify silently among themselves that they are doing the right things to merit eternal life.

Their church's “Bible Dictionary” tells them that “[grace](#) is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life after they have expended their own best efforts.”

We can agree with the stereotype popular among Mormons today: they are normal. Like all of us, they are sinners, unworthy. But their religion is not normative Christian faith.

Our urgent message: eternal life, God's unmerited gift to sinners by faith alone.

**We are marching, marching homeward to that bright land afar. We work for life eternal; it is our guiding star.** —Mormon hymn #225

MORE INFO: USEFUL LINKS

- [Sample Mormon testimonies](#)
- [Mormons aren't what they used to be](#)
- [The standard Mormon testimony](#)
- [Mormons on the Internet](#)

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