

## Crude Criticism, Politic Promotion

A small California newspaper published a Mormon church public affairs release: "Modern day Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ" would address Mormons "and our friends and neighbors" about families. The speakers were called "Special Witnesses of Christ." The paper requested public comment.

The first published comment opposed Mormonism. It included these words: "cult and occult," "pretends" and "pretentious," "racism," "polygamy and pedophilia," and other harsh characterizations of Mormonism.

The second comment, by a Mormon, invited people to observe and try out Mormonism; then if they were truly "His sheep" they would come to know it is true. The writer said the first writer's description of Mormonism was "tired, old, inflammatory." He said the "honest seeker after truth" could get more accurate information on official Mormon church Web sites.

Surely many who read the paper but didn't care one way or the other about Mormon religion, found the first opinion crude and rude. The Mormon's confident response, on the other hand, probably served his church well. PR-wise, a Mormon win.

The Mormon commenter was correct to note that many arguments still used against Mormonism are irrelevant, or "tired, old, inflammatory," vis-à-vis contemporary Mormonism and its members. (See P.S. #28, for example.)

## Misdirection

Christians and others can be misled by a Mormon's description of Mormon religion. Here's an example: the Mormon church's President Gordon B. Hinckley said in a public address (later published as a booklet titled *The Father, Son, & Holy Ghost*): • "Of course God is a spirit." • He is "the great Creator." • He gave His Son, "that whosoever

believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." • The Son's "atoning sacrifice...expiated the sins of mankind,...without any price on our part."

However, those words don't mean what a Christian might infer. Hinckley also said God has "a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's." And the priceless gift? Simply the *opportunity to earn eternal life*, an upgrade from *everlasting life* or existence, which all will enjoy, gratis.

Hinckley failed to explain that his "Creator" only *organized uncreated* matter, and that his "Christ" was a spirit descendant of heavenly parents in a premortal world before Creation, as were all future mortals, Christ's literal younger brothers and sisters.

According to Mormon leaders: One will receive in eternity only what is earned. A Mormon prophet, seer, and revelator wrote: "...a merciful God will grant to every soul adequate rewards for every good deed he does. God is just. He will compensate for every effort to do good, to repent, to overcome sin. Even the [worst of sinners] is justified in repenting and mending his ways and building up a credit balance in his favor." (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, Spencer Kimball.) And another wrote: "...the law of justification...assures...that no person will add to his position or glory in the hereafter by gaining an unearned blessing." (*Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce McConkie.)

## Redirection

In your conversation with a Mormon it helps to review what the Mormon church and many of its members actually believe, not only what they say. Listen, yes, but ask what their words mean. Steer the conversation to your understanding of the Good News: Eternal life really is free; no one can claim it based on a favorable record of good works; Christ became sin for us ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).