

Newsletter March 2012

Willard Mitt Romney's run for the Presidency of the United States by seeking the Republican nomination in 2012 has been generally welcomed by the Mormon church as a way to improve their religion's standing in the eyes of the public. However, critical scrutiny of Romney's religious background as a devout Mormon has also awakened evangelical Christians in particular to the radical cultic nature of Mormonism.

In Book III, *Pentecost to the Eternal Ages*, page 375, we very briefly discussed Mormonism as a major cult within a general historical context. In its simplest definition, a cult is a religious organization that has a strict religious ritual or system of worship that is devoted to a single radical principle. All too often, that principle is actually devotion to and elevation of a human person who is the sole founder of a particular religious group. Most cults can simply be classified as false religions that must stand or fall on their own internal merit.

However, still other cults attempt to masquerade as mainstream Christianity or as a valid sect (a legitimate branch) of Christianity. For that reason, they are often referred to as "Christian cults." They embrace major doctrines that lie well outside the bounds of any acceptable Christian doctrine based upon apostolic biblical authority, and/or they have fabricated a severe distortion of one or more widely accepted Christian precepts or principles. Mormonism is such a cult that is masquerading as Christianity. This is clearly evidenced by its radical unbiblical doctrines as well as its simultaneous claim to Christianity represented in its official title, "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" (often shortened to "the LDS church").

Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith Jr., was born in Vermont in 1805 into a poor family. However, he was not inclined to labor in the fields, preferring instead to search for hidden treasures and claiming that he had visions or theophanies telling him where they were to be found. One of his alleged visions in 1823 was that of an angel named Moroni through which he claimed that he was given two inscribed gold tablets and two seers' stones that he used as spectacles to read the inscriptions. Hidden behind a curtain, Smith dictated what he said was the translation of the two tablets to others beginning with his wife Emma and the majority to Oliver Cowdery who wrote it down. The result of that dictation was to become *The Book of Mormon* that was published in the 1830's. It should be noted that Mormons often quote directly from the Authorized KJV Bible, but they do not consider the Bible as having absolute doctrinal authority, deferring instead to their own writings contained in *The Book of Mormon*, *The Pearl of Great Price*, and *Doctrines and Covenants* (all of which were supposedly revealed to the church through their major prophet, Joseph Smith).

Additional alleged visions led Smith further and further away from orthodox Christianity. One of the more egregious doctrines is that men may become gods through extreme human effort thus embracing Satan's lie to Eve (Ge.3:5). This god-like state was then to be sealed by participating in various secret temple rituals. God, it is believed, was once a man who evolved into a state of deity, and both God the Father and the Son are believed to have physical bodies, as do all men. It is further believed that all beings, including men, angels, demons, Jesus, Lucifer, and the Holy Spirit, are close kindred spirits that were fathered by a Heavenly Father and Mother. All human souls are believed to have existed in eternity prior to entering into a human body at physical birth, and can therefore eventually evolve into "man-gods."

Smith had easily become the mayor of his own community in Nauvoo Illinois. In 1843, he purportedly put forth what is commonly referred to as the “White Horse Prophecy,” in which a day would come when the U.S. Constitution would “hang by a thread.” At that time, the Mormons (the people of the White Horse) would step forth to save the government, possibly by electing a “man-god” President and establishing a Mormon theocracy. Although widely known and discussed among Mormons in individual churches, the LDS has publicly refuted this prophecy as mere speculation, not official church doctrine. (It should be noted that the white horse of Revelation 6:2 is commonly interpreted by Bible scholars as the antichrist; also refer to Book III, page 602). In 1844, Smith boldly declared his own candidacy for President of the United States, but it came to naught.

Joseph Smith soon raised the ire of mainstream Christians living in and near Nauvoo as he embraced the dual radical doctrines of plural (polygamous) and celestial marriage. Christian marriage ends upon the death of either of the two spouses thus freeing the living spouse to remarry. Thus, marriage always exists only between one man and one woman. The erroneous doctrine of “celestial marriage,” insists that all marriages on earth never end but continue in Heaven throughout eternity. (Jesus clearly stated that there is no continuance of the marital state when the resurrected saints enter into Heaven (Mt.22:30)).

Joseph Smith apparently believed that through an ultimate Adamic “man-god” engaging in sexual union with many women (Eves), the earth over time would become fully populated with Mormon “man-gods.” The Mormon’s “Jesus” was created through a physical sexual union between a particular “man-god” and Mary. Therefore, their “Jesus” was not born of a virgin and could not be considered special eternal deity. Jesus is also believed to have visited believers in North America during his brief life on earth, as is related in *The Book of Mormon*.

Smith was eventually accused of corrupting and seducing women by a Nauvoo newspaper whereupon he had the press destroyed. He, his brother Hyrum, and various close associates were subsequently charged with violation of first amendment freedom of the press and were incarcerated in the jail at Carthage pending trial. Fearing their release after initial charges of seduction were subsequently dropped, a large mob stormed the jail and both Smith and Hyrum were killed. Joseph Smith was soon replaced by Brigham Young who later led the Mormons out of Illinois into the western desert, which later became the present day state of Utah.

A virtual war later broke out for a time between the United States government and Mormons living in the Utah territory over the issue of polygamy. Although Mormons finally agreed to end the practice prior to Utah becoming a state in 1896, the statement endorsing polygamy remains unaltered in their *Doctrines and Covenants*. Polygamy is still practiced by various sub-cults of Mormonism within private isolated groups and compounds in other countries as well as in the western United States as this is being written.

Black skinned persons are considered by Mormons to be of a peculiar race that is accursed by God, as is set forth in *The Book of Mormon*. Mormons eventually did allow African Americans to join the priesthood in 1978 when, as with polygamy before, their practices were forced to evolve to avoid severe public criticism and even criminal prosecution. The Mormon’s Garden of Eden was believed to have been located in Missouri. Consequently, Jesus is expected to return in the last days to a temple built in Missouri rather than in Jerusalem. Mormons consider all historical Christian creeds without exception to be

an abomination and therefore entirely void. This alone separates them from a wide segment of mainstream Christianity.

Mormons believe it is essential to ritually baptize the dead through proxy (by baptizing living members in their place) in order to save those who earlier died outside of Mormonism from eternal condemnation. This doctrine, falsely derived out of general biblical context from 1Co.15:29, has led to the creation of a massive genealogical database owned by the LDS church and stored in a secure vault in Utah. None of the dead is spared from this “baptism of the dead.” At one time, even Jews that had died in the German Holocaust were being baptized by proxy, until a public outcry apparently caused this practice to cease. (For still more about Mormonism, see Walter Martin’s book entitled *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Bethany House Publishers).

As to Willard Mitt Romney, he was born into a Mormon family in 1947. His great-great-grandfather, Parley Pratt, was a Mormon apostle who had twelve wives. His great grandparents were also polygamist Mormons. Miles Park Romney was born in 1843, was married to five wives, fathering thirty children by them. That family moved to Mexico after the LDS church was forced to outwardly prohibit plural marriages in the late 1800s. Mitt Romney’s father, George Romney, former governor of Michigan (1963-1969), was born in Mexico where there is still an extended family remaining today. Romney’s wife of 42 years, Ann Lois Romney (née Davies) was by all accounts a nominal Episcopalian, but she converted to Mormonism prior to their marriage in 1969. They have five sons together from that monogamous union.

Mitt Romney served as an LDS missionary in France for two years from 1966 to 1968, further serving as a missions president at the end of his stay. He has said that his faith in Mormonism had been greatly strengthened through that missionary experience. Before Mitt Romney entered into U.S. politics, he served as a Mormon Ward Bishop presiding over various Mormon congregations in Massachusetts. In 1994, he ran for the office of U.S. Senator from Massachusetts, but was defeated by incumbent Edward Kennedy. Mitt Romney served as governor of Massachusetts from 2003 to 2007 after which he attempted to gain the Republican nomination for President of the United States in 2008. He lost that nomination to John McCain in early Republican primaries.

Considering Romney’s radical religious background, most devout evangelical Christians would find it extremely difficult or impossible to vote him into the high office of President of the United States. Therefore, should he ultimately be nominated by the Republican Party in August, conservative voters could very well become split in the November 2012 election, possibly initiating a large evangelical write-in vote for president. That schism would almost certainly assure Barack Obama’s reelection for an additional four years. He would likely carry with him additional liberal progressives into Congress to continue the concerted campaign toward achieving socialism through vastly expanded national government. (See Book III, Chapter 19.4 and our earlier January 2012 newsletter).
Arthur J. Smith March 2012