

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries



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March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

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The Missionary Discussions



1. The Plan of Our Heavenly Father
2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ
3. The Restoration
4. Eternal Progression
5. Living a Christ-like Life

6. *Membership in the Kingdom*

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The Missionary Discussions



6. Membership in the Kingdom

- Jesus Christ is the Creator, Redeemer and Savior, Exemplar, and Judge
- Through obedience to his Mormon church, we can attain “exaltation”, or the highest level of salvation
- We become gods of our own worlds
- The Mormon church’s mission, therefore, is to help “perfect the saints, proclaim the gospel, and redeem the dead”

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The Missionary Discussions



6. Membership in the Kingdom (Cont.)

- We must heed the inspired guidance of Mormon leaders, follow the scriptures, perform the ordinances and serve
- Spreading the Mormon message is crucial to our own advancement, so we must cultivate a missionary spirit

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The Missionary Discussions



6. Membership in the Kingdom (Cont.)

- By researching our family trees and performing proxy temple work for our dead ancestors, we enable them to become Mormons (and gods) too

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The Catholic Response



- Topics for Discussion
 - Jesus Christ
 - Prophets
 - Public/Private Revelation
 - Missionary Work
 - Genealogy and Proxy-Work
 - Three Degrees of Glory
 - Exaltation

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LDS Jesus Christ



- Jesus Christ is a subordinate, lesser god than the Father (the Holy Ghost is lower still)
- Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of the Father (in the flesh)
- God the Father (an immortal Personage) begot Jesus in the flesh through copulation with the Virgin Mary
- There are limitations on Christ's atonement
- Jesus Christ fathered children with his plural wives

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The Real Jesus Christ



- Jesus Christ is True God and True Man - the second person of the Blessed Trinity
- Jesus is the eternal Son of God
 - He was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered crucifixion and death, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
- Jesus accomplished perfectly the divine mission of priest, prophet, and King
 - Signified by his anointing as Messiah (Christ)

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LDS Prophets



- The Mormon church calls its leadership “prophets” and “apostles”
- Christ’s church must be led by prophets (Amos 3:7) and apostles (Eph. 2:19-20)
- President Gordon B. Hinkley (94) is the current “prophet, seer, and revelator”
- Apostles are also “prophets, seers, and revelators”
- In addition to written scripture we need continuous revelation from living prophets to guide us

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Christian View of Prophets



- The age for new, publicly binding revelation is over (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- Christ is the fulfillment of the Scriptures (Luke 24:44)
- John the Baptist is the last (and greatest) of the prophets (Luke 1:76, 7:26-28; Matthew 11:9-13)
- Scripture warns that there will always be false prophets presuming to speak for God (Deuteronomy 18:20, 22; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

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LDS Revelation



- The Lord continually reveals His word to prophets for the contemporary guidance of His people
- Revelation to the Church is continuous
- Only the President of the Church (prophet, seer, and revelator) has the right to receive new revelation for the Church
- The words of the prophet are to be received as if they came from the mouth of the Lord
- The prophet will never lead the Saints astray

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LDS Revelation (Cont.)



- Only by revelation from God can we gain knowledge about God; we cannot learn about the existence and character of God by reasoning alone
- Revelation from God to each of us as individuals is necessary for our salvation
- Personal righteousness is a prerequisite for receiving revelation
- Every Church member is entitled to revelation in the performance of his/her calling in the Church

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Problems with LDS Revelation



- The need for continuous revelation implies that the Bible is deficient (incomplete)
- Continuous revelation is used to complete, correct, or add to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)
- “The Prophet can receive revelation on any matter – temporal or spiritual” (Ezra Taft Benson)
- “The Prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time” (ibid)

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Problems with LDS Revelation (Cont.)



- Polygamy is condemned in the Book of Mormon (Jacob 2:26-27)
- Later revelations contradict earlier revelations (D&C 132 in 1843 and the 1890 Manifesto to “refrain” from polygamy)
- Polygamy is still a requirement for godhood
- Failure to receive individual revelation is an indication of a lack of righteousness
- Personal revelation based on subjective feelings and emotions (burning of the bosom)

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Public Revelation in the Catholic Church



- God has said everything in His Word
 - “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)
 - Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father’s one, perfect, and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one. (CCC 65)
- There will be no further Revelation
 - No new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (CCC 66)

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Private Revelation in the Catholic Church



- Some “private” revelations have been recognized by the authority of the Church
- “Private” revelations do not belong to the deposit of faith (they are not binding on the faithful)
 - It is not their role to improve or complete Christ’s definitive Revelation
 - The magisterium knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church
 - Christian faith cannot accept “revelations” that claim to surpass or correct the Revelation of which Christ is the fulfillment (CCC 66)

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LDS Missionary Work



- The gospel is to be preached to every person on earth
- Missionaries are to serve the Lord with all their heart, might, mind, and strength
- There is joy in missionary service – the Lord greatly blesses the lives of those who serve as missionaries to the world
- People are not to function as missionaries unless they are set apart and authorized to preach the gospel by one who has authority

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LDS Missionary Work (Cont.)

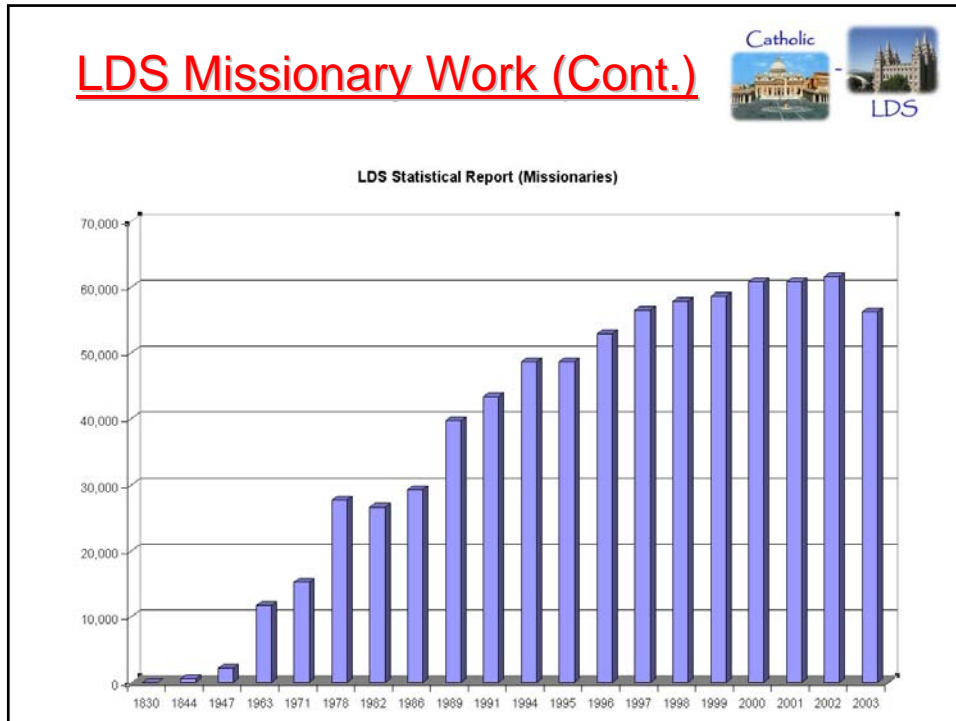


- Every person who has received the gospel is under obligation to take the gospel to his or her neighbor
- The Saints of God are to be a light to the world by setting an example of righteous living
- When teachers (missionaries and speakers) bear testimony of a gospel truth they have taught, the Spirit of God witnesses the truth thereof to the heart of the honest seeker

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Catholic Missionary Work




- Trinitarian Missions
 - To accomplish the divine plan of the triune God for the redemption of humanity, the Son and the Holy Spirit were “sent” into the world (CCC 257, 689)
- Apostolic Mission
 - Just as He was sent by the Father, Jesus sent His Apostles into the world to continue His own saving mission (CCC 858)

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Catholic Missionary Work (Cont.)



- Church as Mission
 - The Church is missionary by its very nature, continuing the mission or work of Christ through the Holy Spirit, according to the plan of God
 - This apostolic mission of the Church is fulfilled according to their different states of life by the clergy, laity, and religious (CCC 849, 863, 913)
- Missionary activity is sometimes given in a more specific sense as the work of initial evangelization and establishment of the Church in non-Christian lands

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LDS Genealogy and Proxy-Work



- Mormons are expected to redeem the dead
 - Those who die outside the LDS church will be given the opportunity to hear the “true gospel” while they are in “spirit prison”
 - Should they accept it, they must be “baptized” into the Mormon church and receive all its other ordinances by proxy
- Genealogical research helps to identify those dead souls in need of proxy temple work
 - Each member is expected to know or trace his family tree back at least four generations
 - Member must submit names to temple for proxy work

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Problems with Genealogy and Proxy-Work (Cont.)



- Avoid stupid controversies and genealogies (Titus 3:9)
- Do not occupy yourselves with myths and endless genealogies (1 Timothy 1:4)
- 1 Cor. 15:29 (“Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?”) used to support LDS baptism for the dead
 - Taken out of context (see 1 Cor. 15:20-34)
 - Paul is defending the general resurrection rather than teaching baptism for the dead

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LDS Three Degrees of Glory



- Doctrine and Covenants Section 76
 - All shall come forth in the resurrection (both the just and the unjust)
 - Sons of perdition suffer eternal damnation, all others gain some degree of salvation
 - Three degrees of glory
 - **Celestial kingdom** (ruled by God the Father)
 - **Terrestrial kingdom** (ruled by Jesus Christ)
 - **Telestial kingdom** (ruled by the Holy Ghost)

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Problems with the LDS Three Degrees of Glory



- Mormons point to 1 Cor. 15:40-42 to support the notion of three degrees of glory
 - All of chapter 15 deals with the resurrection – Christ’s and ours
 - How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?
 - The mortal body is buried in its corruptible state but comes forth in glorious immortality
 - Just as heavenly bodies (sun, moon, and stars, or “celestial”) differ in glory from earth’s (“terrestrial”), so too does the glorified human body differ from the mortal one

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Problems with the LDS Three Degrees of Glory (Cont.)



- Telesstial is a term made up by Joseph Smith by running the words celestial and terrestrial together
- No Christian scriptural or historical evidence to support the concept of three degrees of glory
- This scheme effectively denies the reality of an eternal hell
- Deifies man and humanizes God
- Minimizes the effects of sin and the justice of God
- Only “Sons of Perdition” will be eternally lost to outer darkness with Lucifer and his spirit followers

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LDS Exaltation



- Highest level of the Celestial Kingdom
- Only those Mormons married in the temple will attain exaltation
- Exaltation = godhood
- Elohim is the God of this world - he is an exalted man from another world
- In order to be exalted in the Celestial Kingdom a man must have more than one wife
- Jesus Christ was married at the wedding at Cana to one of His plural wives

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Problems with LDS Exaltation



- Deifies man and humanizes God
- No Christian scriptural (Book of Mormon agrees) or historical evidence to support the concept of exaltation
- Salvation = Resurrection (everyone)
- Salvation without Exaltation is Damnation (Mormon saying)
- The serpent tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit saying, "your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5)

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Summary



- Jesus Christ is True God and True Man - the second person of the Blessed Trinity
- The age for new, publicly binding revelation is over (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- Missionary work
 - Trinitarian Missions
 - Apostolic Mission
 - Church as Mission
- Avoid stupid controversies and genealogies (Titus 3:9)

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Summary (Cont.)



- No Christian scriptural or historical evidence to support the concept of baptism for the dead or three degrees of glory
 - Read 1 Cor. 15:29;40-42 in the proper context – Paul is defending the general resurrection
- LDS exaltation deifies man and humanizes God (see Genesis 3:4-5)
- The Catholic Church contains the fullness of truth
- The Church is the Pillar and bulwark (foundation) of the truth (see 1 Tim. 3:15)

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Summary (Cont.)



- Know, love, and practice your own faith
- Use good Catholic Christian charity when speaking to the Mormon missionaries
- Be prepared to respond with your own “testimony” of the fullness of truth contained only in the Catholic Church
- No “Total Apostasy” means no need for Restoration

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Question and Answer



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