

Why I'm Not a Mormon

by Cal Fullerton

To add balance to this website, I felt I should write **three major reasons I have never, and will never, join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS).**

One reason I will not become a member of, or regularly attend, a local chapel (ward) of the Mormon Church is that **their services don't include contemporary-style praise and worship.**

Lifting up the Lord with others in song is an important contributor to my spiritual growth. It attracts his presence, which is the only sustenance available in the universe by which I can overcome evil. Psalm 100:4 (NIV) says: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise."

In local Mormon congregations, traditional hymns are sung in a traditional manner. Only three per service, and those at separate times--an opening hymn, a sacrament hymn, and the closing hymn. (I can confidently say this is true of all their local meeting places because they all follow programs set by the leaders at Salt Lake City headquarters.)

It's true that many of these old hymns are powerful, such as the classic composed by Charles Wesley (1707-1788) titled, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." Most of you 50-or-over folks like me, should remember it:

Christ the Lord is risen today, Al-le-lu-ia
Where, Oh death, is now thy sting? Al-le-lu-ia!
Once he died our souls to save, Al-le-lu-ia!
Where thy victory, O grave? Al-le-lu-ia!

- -and if that's not familiar, you must recognize this!

Si - lent night! Ho - ly night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon vir-gin moth-er and Child . . .

Mormons sing these songs from their hymnals. There's certainly nothing

wrong with them. In fact, we should all praise God for them. But I prefer worship where I am free to dance (not that I dance very often), and free to get loud when the Spirit moves. I like the music of the band, the beat of the drum and the sounds of other instruments the Spirit of God uses to sink the lyrics deep into my spirit. I'd rather sing *to* the Lord than about him. I also prefer songs back to back, allowing Jesus' presence to be felt as it rises and builds, recharging me.

Another reason I'm not a Mormon and don't regularly attend LDS services is, of course, their false teachings. Being consistently exposed to their error might cause me to begin to believe some of it.

Mormonism is like a wire with three strands twisted around each other. Two of the strands carry good tidings of great joy (Luke 2:10 NIV). But unfortunately, the third strand carries legalistic rules and definitions that don't originate in God.

Through the good strand flows the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, who in obedience to God's plan of redemption, gave himself up to his enemies to do with him as they pleased. It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we receive the benefits bought for us by his suffering. We can't earn our salvation.

Praise God, the Mormon Church teaches these wonderful, necessary truths.

But through the third strand runs extracurricular activity. Human ordinances and decrees cause Mormons to stray from the Holy Spirit's direction. I don't want to be thrown left and right or slowed down by lies like a car dragging a loose exhaust pipe. I don't want to fling dangerous sparks around, needlessly offending non-Mormon Christians and grieving the love God placed in my heart. That is what would happen if I had a sectarian, exclusive attitude, thinking I'm on a higher level of truth when I'm really not.

Error also adds cloudiness, confusion, and complications to the gospel. It causes it to begin to lose its potency and power. I am sure we will all possess error-induced blemishes until perfection arrives (1 Cor. 13:10 NIV), but I'm not receiving any more than I have to!

A third reason I'm not a Mormon is that I don't need to be one.

"What do you mean by that?" someone asks.

The LDS denomination teaches that in order to experience the constant companionship of the Holy Spirit, you have to be baptized and have hands laid on you by the proper authorities. These authorities are found only within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That position is built on the premise that God used the Church's founder, Joseph Smith (1805-1844), to restore the full expression of the church of Jesus Christ to the earth. According to them, this restoration included the authority of God (priesthood), which includes the power to lay hands on repentant people so they may receive the Holy Spirit. The claim is that only certain Latter-Day Saints have the authority to use the name of Jesus to impart the Spirit for a constant live-in companion.

I am glad that many Mormons are finding Jesus through their faith in Joseph Smith's message. However, I found Jesus without Joseph! I came to know the Lord through the words of non-Mormon Christians. They can also operate the royal priesthood. First Peter 2:9 (NIV) indicates that all believers share in a "royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

And what's more, no one laid hands on me--not even an evangelical. The Spirit came straight from heaven to my heart. No jumper cables needed. Simple faith did it.

The Spirit then gave me assurance that I had entered his true church, made up of all Christians scattered among many denominations, ministries, movements, and circles.

Although Joseph Smith, through his followers, is spreading the good news that Jesus is the King of kings who died on a cross and rose from the dead, I was able to receive that news through someone else.

So the third reason I'm not a Mormon is that I don't need to be one!
. . . Neither do you!

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