

Mormonism & Union of Saints

Historical Retelling

We are not the church of assumption, but rather the church of truth, logic, justice and balance. We are an expression of our whole selves, female and male, goddess, and god. Never suppressed, held back or told we cannot do something because we are Sisters. We honor women, and we honor men, and we hold this understanding as one of our most important values, "the truth is the gospel, not the gospel is the truth."

Logic and Truth

Help Us Balance the Scales

Source:

<https://rsc.byu.edu/days-never-be-forgotten-oliver-cowdery/oliver-cowdery-doctrine-covenants>

Cowdrey & Cowdery:

Cowdery was a great part of early Mormonism, however he was excommunicated, and as potential family members, we feel it is important to honor his legacy and volunteerism as well. Mormonism remains one of the most welcoming, sincere and kind communities. There are many positives to this culture, and we feel it is important to honor the loving hearts of the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We respectfully continue our work and are so grateful for this wonderful community and all of the light they carry.

Remembering: Ozirah, Star of Seas vs. Osiram Keys

Critical Analysis

The Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Author

Publisher

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church)
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The pamphlet does not list an individual author because it is an official missionary publication produced by the Church.

Who?

The pamphlet teaches that:

- God the Father
- Jesus Christ
- Old Testament prophets
- New Testament Apostles
- Joseph Smith
- Modern LDS prophets

form one continuous chain of divine authority.

What?

Its primary claim is:

After Christ's Apostles died, the true Church disappeared through a worldwide apostasy and was restored only through Joseph Smith beginning in 1820.

When?

According to the pamphlet:

- Creation
 - Old Testament prophets
 - Jesus' earthly ministry
 - Great Apostasy (after Apostles died)
 - Restoration in 1820
 - Priesthood restored in 1829
 - Modern LDS Church continues today.
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Where?

Primary settings include:

- Ancient Israel
 - Judea
 - Early Christian Church
 - Upstate New York (Joseph Smith)
 - Modern worldwide LDS Church
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Why?

The pamphlet argues:

Because priesthood authority disappeared from Earth after the Apostles died, God had to restore His Church through Joseph Smith.

Positive Report

The booklet has several notable strengths.

1. Strong family emphasis

It repeatedly emphasizes:

- family unity
- love
- service
- peace
- forgiveness

These themes are presented consistently throughout.

2. Encourages prayer

Readers are invited to pray and seek personal spiritual confirmation rather than relying solely on authority.

3. Moral living

It encourages:

- repentance
 - kindness
 - peace
 - obedience to God
 - scripture study
 - service
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4. Consistent narrative

Internally, the pamphlet presents a coherent theological framework:

Creation

↓

Prophets

↓

Jesus Christ

↓

Apostasy

↓

Restoration

↓

Modern prophets

5. Scriptural integration

The pamphlet extensively cites:

- Bible
- Book of Mormon
- Joseph Smith—History

allowing readers to examine the referenced passages.

Logical Fallacies

Several arguments rely on reasoning that can be critiqued from a logical standpoint.

1. False Dilemma

The pamphlet generally presents only two possibilities:

Either

- the LDS Church is God's restored Church

or

- every other church lacks full authority.

This omits other possibilities, such as multiple traditions preserving elements of apostolic Christianity or differing understandings of ecclesial authority.

2. Circular Reasoning

Example:

Joseph Smith is a prophet because:

- the Book of Mormon says so,

and

the Book of Mormon is true because:

- Joseph Smith translated it.

Each claim reinforces the other rather than relying on independent evidence.

3. Appeal to Authority

Authority is repeatedly based upon:

- prophets
- priesthood
- revelation

rather than historical verification or external evidence.

4. Confirmation Bias

Readers are instructed to pray and interpret peaceful feelings as confirmation of truth. Critics note that adherents of many different religions report similar spiritual experiences, so such experiences alone may not distinguish between competing truth claims.

5. Appeal to Emotion

The pamphlet frequently emphasizes:

- peace
- joy
- love
- family

These themes may encourage favorable emotional engagement, though they are not, by themselves, evidence for historical claims.

6. Begging the Question

The existence of a universal apostasy is largely assumed as a premise in order to conclude that a restoration was necessary. Whether such an apostasy occurred is itself the central historical question under debate.

Potential Biases

Institutional Bias

The publication is an official missionary tract whose purpose is to explain and invite belief in LDS teachings. It is not intended as a neutral historical survey.

Selection Bias

The pamphlet presents scriptures and historical claims that support the LDS restoration narrative while omitting scholarly interpretations that reach different conclusions.

Confirmation Bias

Readers are encouraged to interpret personal spiritual experiences as confirming the truth of the message.

Survivorship Bias

The narrative focuses on the line of authority that leads to the LDS Church while giving limited attention to the historical development and continuity claims of other Christian traditions.

Historical Inaccuracies or Disputed Claims

These are areas where historians and Christian traditions differ from the pamphlet's presentation.

1. The Great Apostasy

The pamphlet teaches that Christ's Church disappeared after the Apostles died.

Most Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant traditions reject the idea of a complete apostasy, arguing that despite corruption and doctrinal disputes, Christianity continued in historical continuity.

2. Priesthood Authority

The pamphlet states priesthood authority was entirely removed from the earth.

This is a theological claim rather than one established by historical evidence, and it is disputed by other Christian denominations.

3. Joseph Smith's First Vision

The pamphlet presents Joseph Smith's First Vision as historical fact.

Historians note that multiple accounts of the First Vision exist, written at different times with varying details. Believers generally view these differences as complementary; critics sometimes view them as significant inconsistencies.

4. Restoration of Priesthood

The accounts of visits from John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John are accepted within LDS belief but are not independently corroborated by contemporary historical sources.

5. Book of Mormon

The pamphlet presents the Book of Mormon as an ancient record translated from gold plates.

The historical origins of the Book of Mormon remain a subject of scholarly debate. Some archaeologists and historians question aspects of its historical and archaeological claims, while members of the LDS Church accept it as scripture.

Overall Assessment

From a literary and organizational perspective, the pamphlet is clear, well-structured, and accessible. It effectively communicates the central doctrines of the LDS Church, encourages moral living, family relationships, prayer, and personal reflection, and presents its theological narrative in a consistent sequence.

From a critical perspective, however, many of its central claims, including the Great Apostasy, the restoration of priesthood authority, Joseph Smith's prophetic calling, and the historical status of the Book of Mormon, are matters of faith rather than conclusions accepted across the historical or broader Christian scholarly community. Its arguments also exhibit features common to confessional literature, such as institutional bias, reliance on internal authorities, and appeals to personal spiritual confirmation. This does not invalidate the beliefs presented, but it is important to distinguish theological assertions from claims that can be independently verified through historical methods.

Source: https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/ldsorg/content/english/manual/missionary/pdf/36920_the-restoration-eng.pdf?lang=eng&icid=osd