

STRATEGIES OF THE MORMON CHURCH ©

by Janis Hutchinson
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The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon Church, teaches that God is a resurrected man from a previous world who, through a plurality of wives, produced the human spirits that now inhabit this planet. Further, that there are many gods and that LDS men and women are destined to become such.

Despite these and many other unbiblical doctrines, the LDS Church continues to double its population every ten to twelve years.¹ Presently, it boasts a membership nearing fourteen million and continues to add about a million new members every three years, which suggests a figure of twenty million by the year 2030.

The reason for their success lies in strategic advertising. Before Mormon missionaries appear at anyone's door, the church's high-tech public relations organization moves in with its sophisticated advertising techniques, electronic broadcasting, satellite dishes, print media, telecommunications, motion pictures, radio and the internet. In 1997 alone, the total audience reached through radio and television was 2.3 million adults per day, and 357.4 million people in a year. Worldwide, missionary activity grew by 16 percent,² and membership grew at the rate of 880 per day, 26,782 a month, 321,385 a year.³ (*Current figures unavailable*). With millions of dollars set aside for this, they are determined to see that their message reaches every home.⁴

And what is their message? Not that individuals can become polygamous gods, or that temple rituals are required for full salvation, or that heaven can only be gained through the certification of Joseph Smith—these doctrines and others are concealed.

Rather, they bombard the public with Christian values with the aim of convincing the public their theology is Christian, which draws in more converts.⁵ To further facilitate their goal, they enlarged the name of Jesus Christ in their logo.

(old)
THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

(new)
THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Leaders attempt to join ministerial alliances and ecumenical ministries, despite the fact that the National Council of Churches, World Council of Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church refuse to accept the Mormon religion as Christian.

Still, they push on. They attend Christian functions and continue televising messages on family values along side of Christian programming. For additional PR, they instruct missionaries to volunteer their time in community projects, approach Christian

churches and help with their youth, assist toddler programs at local YMCAs and serve in soup lines.

The church's advertising has, in the past, stressed that happiness and family solidarity can be gained by following the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in their (free) Book of Mormon. But, later they devised an even better strategy.

Instead of a free Book of Mormon, they offered a free Bible. The new "Bible" commercial generated more than twice the response of all their other TV spots combined. Eighty percent of viewers responded. Enthusiastic missionaries personally delivered them, intent on convincing them that the Bible is untrustworthy due to faulty translation, but the good news is that the Book of Mormon is the *pure* word of God. It is the old "bait and switch" strategy, meaning you are sold one thing, then delivered another. Sixty percent, however, go on to take the missionaries' second lesson.⁶

In third world countries, rather than portraying family values, their advertising may focus on health and hygiene, law and order, or obedience to authority—whatever is applicable to that country's situation. Even sports are used.

In South America, BYU basketball games were broadcast free for five years. When the Mormon missionaries were eventually sent in, they were instructed to look only for houses that had TV antennas. Introducing themselves as BYU students, they inquired if anyone in the household had seen the games. It was an automatic door opener.⁷

Advertising in foreign countries requires time. For example, the church had to invest ten years of broadcasting in the Dominican Republic before they were able to organize a mission. But it worked. They attributed the first one thousand baptisms to their advance publicity.⁸

In countries that are against missionizing, the Church sends the Tabernacle Choir and the BYU International Dance Team as goodwill ambassadors. However, they have more than goodwill on their mind. Their intent, as one BYU professor admitted, is to act in a "John the Baptist function in preparing these nations for the message of the (Mormon) gospel."⁹ After sufficient goodwill is established, LDS leaders approach government officials and ask if Mormons can live in their country, assuring them there will be no proselytizing. Deceptively, members move in and begin evangelizing underground. Those unfortunate to be caught by the secret police are quickly arrested and deported.¹⁰

After advertising paves the way in any country, including the U.S., the missionaries arrive and are instructed to talk about God only in orthodox Christian terms and conceal all unbiblical beliefs. Mormon leaders, F. Burton Howard and F. Enzio Busche, members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, said: "We have an obligation to conceal our doctrines; [because] we are trying to be a mainstream Christian church . . ." ¹¹ This deception is so successful, that converts who later leave the LDS Church after

discovering the real beliefs, said they believed they were simply joining another Christian church. (*In the U.S. in 2009, an estimated 83,483 left.*)

Because of the church's recent political involvements affecting the church negatively, it is now testing a different kind of campaign in the U.S., hoping to restore their image. The ads contain no Bible or Book of Mormon. It simply presents everyday Mormons talking about their lives, values and ambitions, to show they are "regular" people. At the end, they add, "...and I'm a Mormon." If this ad proves successful, the church will expand it nationally.

One reprehensible strategy used by missionaries, is to tell contacts that the yardstick for discerning truth is a "good feeling." After deceptively using Christian terms in their presentation (*that have a different meaning within Mormonism*), they ask: "Do you *feel good* about what you've heard so far?" Impressed with orthodox sounding-terms, most usually say "yes." The missionaries then explain that the Holy Ghost produces these feelings are. As the lessons progress, they ask the same question. Contacts soon become convinced that whatever unbiblical belief they "feel good" about must be God confirming the truth. No need to check the Bible. Further, when they are told to pray and ask God if Joseph Smith was a true prophet, rather than being told to use the Bible's criteria for testing a prophet, they are told to pray until they again receive a *good feeling*.

In addition, missionaries will give the impression that they believe in full salvation through Jesus Christ; but, in reality, they believe that to enter the highest heaven where God dwells, Jesus is not enough. One must participate in Mormon temple ordinances to learn secret passwords and signs so that they can pass by the angels who guard the gates of heaven, but still cannot enter without Joseph Smith's certification. Brigham Young stated:

No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the Celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith.¹²

This explains why a member is expected to acquire a "testimony" of Joseph Smith's divine calling.

Another strategy used by the missionaries is to convince contacts that Mormonism was part of God's long-range plan from the beginning. Therefore, in their first lesson they show from the Bible that God had a *plan* for history. He *planned* to create man in his own image; he made a *plan* whereby his children could progress; he *planned* to send Jesus Christ to redeem fallen humanity; he *planned* to establish the New Testament church; he *planned* a heavenly reward for the faithful. Over and over, the word "plan" is psychologically planted, creating a programmed mentality in the individual to anticipate *more* of God's plan. Missionaries reason thusly: "*If God had a plan, would he suddenly quit in the middle of human history after Jesus' resurrection? No. God would be continuously unfolding more of His plan so that He could provide more blessings for His children.*" With that logic, plus having the proper mindset already established, the individual is ready to hear that God's continued plan was to reject Christendom, restore

his only true church through Joseph Smith, and further reveal more of his *plan*, which includes a false priesthood, Book of Mormon, temple rituals, work for the dead, godhood and polygamy in heaven.

The subtle device used in the lessons, which often goes undetected, is the gradual replacement of Bible scriptures with Mormon scriptures. During the first lesson on God, the missionaries quote four Bible scriptures, but only one (*biblically-sounding*) Mormon scripture. Very convincing!

But then a gradual change is made. In the lesson on Jesus Christ, Bible scriptures are gradually reduced to *two* and Mormon scriptures increased to *four*. Each lesson thereafter subtly diminishes the use of Bible Scriptures until by the final lesson only Mormon scriptures are used, which are accepted by contacts without question.

Missionary lessons are given in the home of an officially-appointed “friendshipping family.” When the missionaries conclude their lessons and are ready to move on, any individual reluctant to join the church is left in the hands of the “friendshippers.” They are instructed to continue conversion efforts by downplaying religion and focusing on establishing friendly and social ties. This usually works.

The Mormon Church’s continued effort to promote a Christian image raises serious questions:

- How can they be Christian when they consider the LDS Church the only true church of Jesus Christ, and all other churches are apostate?
- Can they really be Christian, yet teach that God is an exalted and polygamous man?
- Can they declare publicly that they believe in salvation by grace through the cross, yet teach that Jesus’ sacrifice isn’t enough to be saved in the highest heaven where God dwells?
- Can they claim to believe in the truth of the Bible, yet teach Satan’s lie spoken to Eve in the Garden, “Ye shall become as gods?”(Gen. 3:5)
- Can they insist that temple ordinances are required, when the Bible teaches that they were done away with and nailed to the cross? (Col. 2:14)

Yes, it is the ultimate paradox. How can the LDS Church claim to be Christian, yet persist in anti-Christian beliefs. The fact that it can’t was summed up by Kenneth L. Woodward in his *Newsweek Magazine* article:

Even mainline Protestants like Presbyterians and Methodists reject Mormon baptisms as invalid. And in July the Vatican decreed that converts from Mormonism must be re-baptized, thereby signaling that Rome does not consider the latter-day saints to be Christians. (9/10/01)

If the LDS Church truly wishes to portray itself as Christian, there is only one valid way—quit concealing their unbiblical doctrines and publicly renounce them.¹³ (*See endnote.*) When they do that, the Christian community will be waiting with open arms.

END

Janis Hutchinson's book, *The Mormon Missionaries: An inside look at their real message and methods*, examines the missionaries' presentation in greater detail. This is an excellent book for someone investigating Mormonism; also to hand to former Mormons who need confirmation that they made the right choice in leaving.

ENDNOTES

¹ D. Michael Quinn, former LDS historian.

² Ron Rhodes, *The Culting of America* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1994), 15, 108.

³ As of April 1997. See "LDS Church reorganizes area leaders" by Vern Anderson, Associated Press, April 1997.

⁴ Ron Carlson and Ed Decker, *Fast Facts on False Teachings* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994), 164.

⁵ The often stated remark that the Mormon Church is not Christian means the church and its theology, not necessarily individual Mormons. This is because today, many deceived Christians have joined the LDS Church bringing their Biblical beliefs with them. Thus, they continue with Christian beliefs inside the Mormon Church until later, when they discover the church's unbiblical theology and leave.

⁶ These statistics were stated by a Stake Mission President and reported in the *Saints Alive in Jesus Newsletter* (Mar/April 1997), 3.

⁷ Anson Shupe, *The Darker Side of Virtue* (Buffalo, Prometheus Books, 1991), 27, 29.

⁸ Shupe, 27.

⁹ Shupe, 37. See also, "Touring Groups Touch Hearts," *Church News* (June 20, 1981): 4.

¹⁰ Shupe, 33.

¹¹ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, April 23, 1994. Cited in *The Evangel* (Marlow, OK, Sept. 1994), 4.

¹² Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Joseph F. Smith, ed. (1854-86; reprint, Salt Lake City: BYU Press, 1967), 7:289.

¹³ See the author's website article (www.janishutchinson.com), "Is the Mormon Church Turning Christian?" in the Newsletter archives. It explores the devastating problems that would be created if the LDS Church publicly renounced all their doctrines.

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