

“This is a fantastic resource. Bill and Eric have really done their homework and provided an insightful and easy-to-use reference with answers to the most common questions Mormons ask. We highly recommend it.”

JOSH MCDOWELL & SEAN MCDOWELL
Coauthors of *More Than a Carpenter*

“*Answering Mormons’ Questions* is a very useful handbook that should be kept close at hand by anyone engaged in faith conversations with Latter-day Saints. It gives up-to-date answers on a wide range of topics that actually come up in discussion. Answers are brief but not shallow. The issues are treated in a thoughtful and civil manner. With practical tips and thought-provoking questions, this tool shows us how to have more dialogue with our Mormon friends and neighbors.”

ROSS ANDERSON
Author of *Understanding Your Mormon Neighbor*

“Mormonism is on the rise. This powerful book will equip you—and your church—to present the truths of the Bible and the love of the true Savior to friends and family members ensnared in Mormon teachings.”

MARK MITTELBERG
coauthor of *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, and author of
The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask (with answers)

“*Answering Mormons’ Questions* is an informative study that specifically addresses the unique challenges of twenty-first-century Mormonism. Under the guise of “Christianity,” the modern day LDS Church is seeking to launch a most sinister deception on an unsuspecting world. This book offers simple yet profound answers that will equip the Christian community to meet the LDS challenge head-on.”

CHIP THOMPSON
Director, Tri-Grace Ministries

“Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson draw from their extensive experience and expertise in one-on-one witnessing to Mormons, along with their fair, balanced research into the teachings of the LDS Church, to give Christians who desire to reach Mormons the tools they need to do so in a loving fashion that honors God’s truth. *Answering Mormons’ Questions* is a great addition to any believer’s library, as well as an excellent introduction to the work of evangelizing a religious group that sorely needs to hear about the one true God and the gospel of grace.”

DR. JAMES WHITE
Alpha and Omega Ministries

“Answering Mormons’ Questions comes across with clarity, fairness, and a sense of concern for those who are blinded by a works-approach attitude to salvation. It will help those of us who are passionate about reaching Mormons with the gospel of grace, but will also benefit any believer who desires to be clear on major doctrines of Scripture.”

DR. GARY COOMBS
President, Southern California Bible College

“Answering Mormons’ Questions was one of the first books I read (in the 1990s) to help me understand how Mormons use the Bible and to answer the questions of my Mormon friends. This updated version is even better. I have learned a great deal from McKeever and Johnson, and this book will only add to their legacy of careful research, compassionate boldness, and love for the gospel. Highly recommended.”

KEITH WALKER
Evidence Ministries

“When I was first given *Answering Mormons’ Questions* during my Mormon mission in the 1990s, it was meant to help me combat “anti-Mormon” questions. However, the book ended up leaving me with my own questions, and I later left the church. In this new edition, the authors took a great book and made it even better.”

DAVE NEELEY
Former Mormon Missionary

“Answering Mormons’ Questions is the first volume that should be read and consulted by anyone who is interested in this topic. McKeever and Johnson have produced a carefully researched and irenically written book that should be in the library of every Christian pastor and church worker, and of every college and seminary, in North America. Recommended without reservation.”

DR. RONALD YOUNGBLOOD
Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Hebrew
Bethel Seminary, San Diego

“The political, social, and spiritual climate of the moment—and all its attendant confusion, both intentional and otherwise—makes *Answering Mormons’ Questions* an especially timely resource. McKeever and Johnson’s approach is careful, thorough, and informed.”

PAUL CARDEN
Director, Centers for Apologetics Research (CFAR)

“McKeever and Johnson are right up there at the top of my list for producing some of the most credible resources for helping Christians reach their Mormon friends and loved ones for Christ. Truth is, they know their Mormon doctrine better than many Mormons do. This new edition is long overdue and very much needed.”

DR. RONALD HUGGINS
Associate Professor of New Testament
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Answering Mormons’ Questions is a book that every Mormon should read. It is well-written and well-documented, responding to those questions and challenges Mormons have raised through the years. A must-read also for Christians desiring to share the true gospel with Mormons.”

DR. JAMES BJORNSTAD
Professor of Philosophy
Cedarville University

“As a pastor of a local church in Utah, the first resource I recommend inquirers to explore in order to know more about Mormon beliefs is the ministry of Mormonism Research Ministry. In *Answering Mormons’ Questions*, Bill and Eric have provided yet another excellent, well-researched, and factual resource that I can heartily recommend to others.”

CORY ANDERSON
Senior Pastor, Shadow Mountain Church
West Jordan, Utah

“What a great guide to help live out Peter’s injunction to ‘give an answer to everyone’! Bill and Eric know Mormonism and love Mormons. They are the ablest equippers the church today has in responding to the issues that separate Mormonism and Christianity. Right now, more than ever, we need to be ready to answer Mormons’ questions, and this book will help you do just that. I hope everyone in my church reads it.”

DR. BRYAN HURLBUTT
Lead Pastor, Lifeline Community
West Jordan, Utah

“I have been a missionary in Utah for more than fifty years and I have read and reviewed many books on Mormonism. *Answering Mormons’ Questions* is one of the most practical books for helping readers respond to LDS claims with solid, thoughtful answers and still show Christian love in doing so. It will be a great help to anyone who witnesses to Mormons.”

MARVIN COWAN
Serving with Missions Door in Utah

“Answering Mormons’ Questions is meticulously researched, well-documented, and clearly written, exposing biblical and theological fallacies of Mormon faith and practice. The authors always seek to be honest, fair, and charitable. Most importantly, they are driven by a passion to lead Mormons to an authentic saving faith in Jesus Christ.”

DR. MARK L. STRAUSS
Professor of New Testament
Bethel Seminary, San Diego

“Combining years of study and dialogue, McKeever and Johnson invite all to a better grasp of the Mormon message—its roots and development—through the words of highly placed LDS leaders. Their presentation is respectful, their use of questions is stimulating, and the text reminds all of the need to seek God with spirit and understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15).”

DR. JAMES D. SMITH III
Professor of Church History
Bethel Seminary, San Diego

“Answering Mormons’ Questions is very helpful in understanding Mormonism. I love the work these men are doing.”

PASTOR TERRY LONG
Calvary Chapel, Salt Lake City

“In the course of our journey out of the LDS Church and into a saving relationship with Jesus based on biblical truth, we had many questions regarding what we had believed and what was, in fact, correct. To a seeking LDS person, the answers meticulously researched and lovingly presented by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson provide the essential information needed to let go of religion and embrace the saving truth of the gospel. I highly recommend *Answering Mormons’ Questions* as a great resource for anyone with a desire to reach out to those lost in the fog of Mormonism.”

MICAH WILDER
Founder, Adam’s Road Band

ANSWERING
MORMONS'
QUESTIONS

Updated and Expanded Edition

ANSWERING MORMONS' QUESTIONS

Ready Responses for
Inquiring Latter-day Saints

BILL MCKEEVER *and*
ERIC JOHNSON

 **Kregel**
Publications

*Answering Mormons' Questions: Ready Responses
for Inquiring Latter-day Saints*

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*To our wives,
Tammy McKeever and Terri Johnson*

*A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. . . .
Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.*
—PROVERBS 31:10, 29 (NIV)

*And to our parents,
Barbara Lanphere and James and Betty Johnson*

Parents are the pride of their children.
—PROVERBS 17:6B (NIV)

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

—1 PETER 3:15–16 (NIV)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

—2 TIMOTHY 2:15 (ESV)

. . . speaking the truth in love . . .

—EPHESIANS 4:15

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Foreword

WITH TENS OF THOUSANDS of Mormon missionaries carrying their message around the world, many Christians find themselves challenged to answer questions about their own faith and trying to understand how Christianity differs from Mormonism. When I left the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints many years ago and started to visit other churches, I soon found that there were far greater differences between Christianity and Mormonism than I had originally thought. *Answering Mormons' Questions* addresses many of the same questions I had and prepares Christians to more clearly share the gospel as presented in the Bible.

Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson have been involved in outreach to the LDS people for many years and have authored several books on the subject, including *Mormonism 101*. Through Mormonism Research Ministry, they have taught seminars to equip Christians to be more effective in sharing their faith and to better understand the uniqueness of Mormon doctrine. They are regularly involved in evangelism at various venues such as Mormon temple openings and the Mormon Miracle Pageant in Manti, Utah. They also meet with Latter-day Saint people one-on-one.

I have long valued my friendship with these men and have a great respect for their abiding faith in Christ. Their book represents years of research and countless hours spent in dialogue with Mormons. Theirs is a knowledge born of experience and shared in love.

SANDRA TANNER
Cofounder, Utah Lighthouse Ministry
Coauthor, *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality*

Acknowledgments

WE WANT TO THANK Sharon Lindbloom, our associate at Mormonism Research Ministry, who spent many hours looking over the chapters and providing valuable insights. Sharon, we greatly appreciate your valuable help! In addition, we want to acknowledge a number of our friends in ministry for their feedback on certain issues. If we e-mailed you and you responded, know that your response made this book even stronger.

Introduction

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST of Latter-day Saints (we will also refer to it as the *LDS* or *Mormon Church*, to the religion as *Mormonism*, and to church members as *Latter-day Saints* or *Mormons*¹) officially began on April 6, 1830, having six initial members. According to the LDS Church’s history, Joseph Smith (1805–1844) claimed to have been visited by both God the Father and Jesus Christ, who told him all the churches were “wrong” and that “all their creeds were an abomination in his sight.” In addition, they said that the Christian “professors were all corrupt” and that “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”²

Three years later, an angel named Moroni is said to have directed Smith to ancient gold plates (written in “Reformed Egyptian”) that were buried near the Smith home in Palmyra, New York. He eventually translated these plates and published the Book of Mormon in 1830. This was the beginning of a church that today numbers in the millions, with more than half its members living outside the United States. It boasts of congregations on every continent and in the vast majority of the world’s countries, with its missionary force numbering in the tens of thousands.

Perhaps you are a Christian believer who wants to share your faith with Mormon friends, family, coworkers, or neighbors. Maybe someone you know has recently converted to Mormonism. Or possibly two nicely dressed missionaries recently visited your home and you want to better understand this religion from a Christian point of view. Regardless, we’re glad you have a desire to learn more, and we hope this book will facilitate respectful conversations with Latter-day Saints. At the beginning of each chapter, there are possible questions you can ask the Latter-day Saint when that particular topic is introduced. Then, at the end of each chapter, we include a witnessing tip paragraph as well as several study questions; those who are interested in using this book in a study session may want to look at www.mrm.org/amqstudy for possible strategies in using these questions to stimulate dialogue within the group.

Since we are often told to “ask a Mormon” in order to properly learn about Mormonism, we will regularly cite the official LDS standard works—the Bible (unless otherwise noted, we’ll quote the official version of the church, the King James Version), the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. In order to understand the historical and current views of Mormon doctrine, we utilize numerous quotations from the LDS Church’s General Authorities, who are called prophets, apostles, and seventies. In order to assist the reader with a timeline, we will include the birth/death date of a deceased General Authority the first time he is mentioned in a particular chapter.

As a quick background, here are some facts about the Mormon Church.

Official name of the church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Unofficial names used throughout this book: Mormon or LDS

Founded: April 6, 1830

Founder: Joseph Smith

Headquarters: Salt Lake City, Utah

Leadership: Top leaders are males called General Authorities or the Brethren. They are:

- Prophet or President: The top leader of the church
- First Presidency: The top three members of the leadership, including the prophet
- Apostle: A member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- Seventy: A member of one of the Quorums of the Seventy

Since we emphasize the teachings of the prophets/presidents, here is the list of these men (and the years they served as the top leader), in chronological order.

1. Joseph Smith (1830–1844)
2. Brigham Young (1847–1877)
3. John Taylor (1880–1887)
4. Wilford Woodruff (1887–1898)
5. Lorenzo Snow (1898–1901)
6. Joseph F. Smith (1901–1918)
7. Heber J. Grant (1918–1945)
8. George Albert Smith (1945–1951)

9. David O. McKay (1951–1970)
10. Joseph Fielding Smith (1970–1972)
11. Harold B. Lee (1972–1973)
12. Spencer W. Kimball (1973–1985)
13. Ezra Taft Benson (1985–1994)
14. Howard W. Hunter (1994–1995)
15. Gordon B. Hinckley (1995–2008)
16. Thomas S. Monson (2008–)

Also utilized throughout are quotations from official LDS Church manuals and magazines. And although their views are not considered authoritative or officially binding, we will also cite Mormon apologists as well as professors from LDS institutions, including Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Our goal is to provide pertinent statements showing the membership's prevailing view on particular topics. We have done our best to include as much of the context as possible in order to make the quotes understandable since we realize that not every reader will have access to these sources.

We fully understand that not everyone reading this book will have much exposure to the basic teachings of Mormonism.³ Therefore, we have included several tools in the back of the book. Appendix 1 has ten potential questions that can help guide a conversation to important topics. Appendix 2 provides a quick reference to Bible verses to use in witnessing situations. There is also a glossary of Mormon terms and their unique definitions; feel free to utilize the glossary any time you might be unaware of the definition of a particular word. While at points some chapters may seem to get very deep and complicated, we encourage you to do your best to stay with it. We purposely didn't call this book *Simple Answers to Mormons' Questions* because, quite frankly, such a title would be terribly misleading. Mormons generally are not going to seriously consider uninformed, thoughtless answers to their honest questions. However, if you work hard and use this book's tools, we believe you can respond with reasonable answers.

Because we emphasize logical arguments, some might mistakenly accuse us of claiming that salvation can come through rational reasoning. Let us say clearly that this is not our view. Of course, truth conforms to logic, meaning that using good thinking skills rather than emotions is crucial. But it is impossible to bring anyone to submission to the gospel through argumentation alone, no matter how reasonable the presentation may be. Faith, not knowledge, allows a person to have a personal relationship with God. And, most

important, people are brought to God only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Still, we are responsible to present the gospel message to open and willing minds in a clear, logical manner that honors the text of Scripture. As the apostle Paul explains, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:15, 17). Let it be known that prayer is the vital ingredient in successful evangelism efforts. Without this as the backbone to evangelism, fruit will never be produced.

Galatians 4:16 asks, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Knowing that it is common within our culture to equate disagreement with hatred or bigotry, we wish to make known up front that our work is born out of a genuine love and sincere compassion for the Latter-day Saints, many of whom we personally know. We want only the best for them. Our goal is to provide them the truth through God’s Word, which Jesus said would set a person free (John 8:32; 17:17). Therefore, this book is not to be used as a bludgeon but rather as an aid to assist you in sharing God’s truth. Christian, are you ready to engage in healthy dialogue?

Soli Deo gloria.