

The 95 LDS Theses

INTRODUCTION

Today is October 31st, “Reformation Day”, 2013. It was on this day 496 years ago that Martin Luther nailed the “Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences” (commonly known as “The Ninety-Five Theses”) unto the door of The Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. “The Ninety-Five Theses” is widely regarded as the primary catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. So it is with a hopeful spirit for reformation in our lifetime that we offer these Ninety-Five Theses to a modern church that is badly in need of it.

And while we offer these theses to the public in general for discussion, debate, and consideration, we offer them even more specifically to the LDS Church and its members in light of Joseph Smith’s challenge ...

“. . . call upon them [Mormon Critics] to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest. Wherefore, let them bring forth their strong reasons against”

(Doctrine & Covenants 71:7)

... and in agreement with Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt who said:

“. . . convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God, and we will be ever grateful for the information, and you will ever have the pleasing reflection that you have been instruments in the hands of God of redeeming your fellow beings from the darkness which you may see enveloping their minds.”

(Orson Pratt, “The Seer”, pp. 15-16)

So without further ado we present . . .

The Disputation of Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Ninety-Five Theses for consideration, discussion, and action regarding a modern church badly in need of reform

(aka “The 95 LDS Theses”)

Question:

What's wrong with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

Behavior Control Issues

1. LDS President Spencer W. Kimball said, "*Brothers and sisters,*

pray for the critics of the Church" ("Remember the Mission of the Church", Ensign, May 1982, p.4) but today's LDS Church is quick to label and denounce internal and external critics as "enemies out to destroy" even when they're simply speaking the truth, seeking to gain understanding, and/or trying to make the church a better place.

2. The LDS Church focuses on the needs and interests of the institution over the needs and interests of the members. For example, on January 29, 2013, the LDS Church announced that the Benemerito De Las Americas private school in Mexico would be closed and converted into a Missionary Training Center leaving its more than 2,000 LDS students to the mercy of the vastly inferior Mexican public education system.

3. D&C 121:39 says: "*We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.*"

Yet the modern LDS Church tolerates abuse of ecclesiastical power by LDS church leaders through various means from refusing to directly answer troubling questions from its members up to and including excommunication of members who speak truth to power.

4. LDS President, John Taylor, said, "*I for one want no association with things that cannot be talked about and will not bear investigation.*" (Journal of Discourses, Vol.

20, p. 264) but today's LDS leaders refuse to publicly address members concerns about difficult facts of Mormon History and suppresses loyal dissent from within its ranks via disciplinary action up to and including excommunication.

5. The LDS Church website says, "*Those who are married should consider their union as their most cherished earthly relationship.*" Never-the-less, due to the doctrine of Celestial Marriage members often feel pressured to choose between the potential to be exalted into the Celestial Kingdom and their apostate (or non-member in the case of a convert) spouse. Choosing the former all too often results in divorce.

6. LDS Church leaders denounce and scorn former members and encourage members to do the same. To cite one example, the chapter in the official church curriculum "Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith" entitled "Beware The Bitter Fruit of Apostasy" (pp. 315-326) is a demonstration of how church leaders do this.

7. It asserts in the strongest language that doctrinal differences, criticisms, or questions about LDS Church policies and/or leaders are sin, for the 'prophet' is always right. Those who engage in such behaviors – or refuse to comply with the status quo – are subject to discipline up to and including excommunication. An example of this is the recent excommunication action taken against Denver Snuffer.

8. It drives a wedge between member and non-member family members. Ex-Mormon family members in particular are to be avoided but the LDS Church also encourages members to steer clear of "Never Mormon" family members who are

openly critical of the LDS Church. For example, one Temple Recommend Question asks, "Do you support, affiliate with, or agree with any group or individual whose teachings or practices are contrary to or oppose those accepted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?" The wording of this question strongly implies that temple worthiness requires eschewing those with beliefs opposing the LDS church. This often includes former members and/or family members critical of the church.

9. The LDS Church is the largest sponsor of Boy Scout units with over 30,000 units nationwide. Conversely, the Young Women's Personal Progress Program receives significantly less funding and attention and demonstrates pronounced gender inequality. Why, for example, aren't there an equal number of church sponsored Girl Scout units for girls?

10. The culture that results from LDS doctrine pressures members to marry too quickly often resulting in marriage between incompatible strangers. For example, 12th LDS President Spencer W. Kimball taught, *"It was never intended by the Lord that a large portion of one's life should be spent in the unmarried state... Long-delayed marriages are certainly not approved of the Lord."*

("The Marriage Decision", Ensign, Feb. 1975)

11. The Lord, it is claimed, said, *"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness."* (D&C 58:27) But today LDS Leaders use the Temple Recommend process as a subtle, barely discernible means of manipulative coercion rather than allowing members to engage their free will.

12. It puts its untrained clergy in a position where they must give counsel on vital life issues that they are not qualified or equipped to competently

address. The result, all too often, is ecclesiastical malpractice.

13. The LDS churches places an inordinate amount of emphasis on a commandment that enriches itself financially - the tithing. It is the only commandment that requires a yearly meeting with the bishop and must be paid without regard to a person's personal welfare:

"If paying tithing means that you can't pay for water or electricity, pay tithing. If paying tithing means that you can't pay your rent, pay tithing. Even if paying tithing means that you don't have enough money to feed your family, pay tithing."

("Sacred Transformations", Ensign, Dec 2012. p.38)

14. The original 1835 D&C 101 said, *"all marriages in this church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, should be solemnized in a public meeting"* but today's church drives a wedge between friends and family members by compelling Latter-day Saints to get married in private Temple services that exclude not only all non-members and their families, but even non-Temple Recommend holding LDS family members in addition to all children below a certain age - Mormon and non-Mormon alike.

15. The Apostle Paul wrote *"there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:28). Yet the LDS Church gives men an exalted status over women; refuses them the Priesthood; denies that women are co-equals; and chooses instead to subordinate them to men.

16. LDS church leaders replace *"ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves"* (Helaman 14:30) with obedience to trivial and arbitrary rules. Things like ear piercings, movies, tattoos, and clothing choices have nothing to do with salvation - therefore, these are areas where individual Free Agency and the leading of the Spirit should prevail.

17. It imposes vague, scientifically discredited 19th Century dietary regulations on members via the “Word of Wisdom” (Doctrine & Covenants section 89). This isn’t a trivial matter since a lack of compliance to these standards can result in the loss of one’s temple recommend - per the Temple Recommend Worthiness Interview question which directly asks, “*Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?*”

18. It quells and compromises good scholarship within its rank by demonizing, disfellowshipping and excommunicating members who produce scholarly works discussing Mormon History, Theology, or culture that have scholastic integrity. The classic example of this are The September Six - the six esteemed, respected, and in some cases award winning, Latter-day Saint scholars who were excommunicated in September 1993 for producing such work.

19. D&C 58:27 states “*men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness*” and Joseph Smith stated “*I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.*” (“The Organization of the Church”, Millennial Star, Nov. 15, 1851, p. 339). However, the church often does exactly the opposite: Such as rewarding Paul H. Dunn with a General Authority position for his compliant use of “faith promoting” lies, but excommunicating D. Michael Quinn for continuing to tell the authentic truth despite being told by Mormon leaders to stop.

20. By requiring a full tithing to participate in the temple endowment ceremony, and thereby achieve exaltation, the LDS church disregards Moroni's censure:

“Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins.” (Mormon 8:32)

21. It uses employment in LDS Church and member owned institutions and businesses to coerce obedience to its dogma and leaders. An example of this is John P. Hatch being terminated from Deseret Book for simply expressing his opinion regarding, “*the Church’s efforts to suppress access to honest history.*” in a letter to the Salt Lake Tribune without warning or asking for clarification on the letter.

22. Its leaders and members use ad-hominems, insults, slurs, derogatories, labeling, and character assassination in their dealings with critics and apostates and then deny that they do so – often going so far as to claim that those who call them on this behavior are persecuting them.

23. It allows members to privately believe whatever they want – even if it’s atheistic or contradicts LDS orthodoxy – as long as they publicly “toe the party line” and continue to contribute their time and money to the LDS Church.

24. It privately judges and abandons members that have life problems rather than patiently, encouraging, undergirding, supporting, and attempting to restore them to a healthy, productive place. This while publicly declaring that the LDS Church treats all such cases with benevolent kindness. For example, many prisoners are excommunicated in absentia once convicted of a crime. And while a small number of individual members may volunteer for a local prison-ministry in their area, there is currently no formal church sponsored outreach to prisoners. The same can be said for those suffering from alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual addiction, gambling addiction, etc., etc., etc. Further, many snared in these life situations simply experience church discipline in various forms and are told to repent – nothing more.

25. It tends to view any doubt, character flaw, or personal deficiency as “sin” rather than as a normal expression of the human condition and life experience. Thus it has created an implied and unstated expectation that members must always be perfect and/or “all together” or they're in sin and unworthy of advancement within the organization.

26. It practices graceless, merciless, condemning, legalistic disciplinary extremes – far beyond Biblical standards – in regard to those who have engaged in sexual activity outside of marriage that, as been reported by many, often leads to a “no-win” double-bind spiral into hopeless despair. Seventh LDS President Heber J. Grant articulated this extremism well when he said, *“There is no true Latter-day Saint who would not rather bury a son or a daughter than to have him or her lose his or her chastity – realizing that chastity is of more value than anything else in all the world.”*

(Heber J. Grant quoted in, *“Gospel Standards”*, compiled by G. Homer Durham, p. 55)

27. The Apostle Jude commanded *“Be merciful to those who doubt”* (Jude 1:22, NIV). Instead LDS leaders often demand blind compliance from those questioning and wavering. Failing at that they will expose, quarantine, isolate – and if necessary expel – doubters rather encouraging, supporting, and protecting them while they work through their doubt.

28. It preaches extreme, legalistic, and arbitrary sexual standards regarding masturbation that are not scripturally or scientifically supportable.

29. Via the Priesthood Correlation Program it tries to turn everyone into a Utah Mormon and every Chapel, Ward, and Stake into a Utah Chapel, Ward, and Stake rather than encouraging – even celebrating – each culture’s unique distinctives.

30. It has created a culture whereby fear of their family’s reaction puts pressure on disenfranchised LDS Missionaries to continue with their missions whether they want to or not.

31. Women are inappropriately subordinate, not equals, with men in the LDS church. For example, in the Temple Endowment Ceremony women swear obedience to God *and* to her husband while the man swears obedience only to God. Additionally women may not act as a voice in prayer circles and instead must veil their faces.

32. It claims to be “pro-family” while simultaneously creating a culture that breaks up both Mormon and non-Mormon families via the aforementioned.

33. It has a double standard for treating non-members with charitable benevolence (as a means of proselytizing and public relations) while exacting, high, often unattainable standards that members must meet to receive the same levels of attention, aid, and assistance.

34. Despite the fact that The Book of Mormon says, *“For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.”* (Moroni 8:37) the First Presidency chooses to invest billions in building ornate malls and temples rather than using that money to show love to the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.

Information Control Issues

35. Although the LDS church sates that *“we believe in being honest”* (13th Article of Faith), it regularly substitutes faith promoting “spin” to its members, the media, and investigators instead of telling the full truth regarding its history and theology.

36. The LDS Church has suppressed – and allegedly has even destroyed – church owned documents and artifacts that would expose the fact that it's not telling the full truth regarding its history and theology. Examples of suppressed documents include: a) the contents of the First Presidency's Vault; b) The Mark Hofmann forgeries that the church purchased from him, and; c) The Joseph Smith seer stones that were used to “translate” the Book of Mormon and receive many of the revelations in Doctrine & Covenants, and many others.

37. Since 1959 it has suppressed its financial records in the United States and other countries where churches aren't required to publicly disclose such records, thus eliminating full accountability in terms of how member contributions are used.

38. I Nephi 13:9 warns, *"for the praise of the world do they destroy the saints of God, and bring them down into captivity,"* yet the behavior of today's LDS Church would suggest its core unifying principle seems to be “Image over truth always and in all things.” Could today's Latter-day Saints be captives destroyed by their quest for the praise of the world rather than a peculiar people?

39. It contrives man-created “revelations” and claims that they are of divine origin. Two examples of this are Official Declarations 1 and 2 – one (OD-1) of which is essentially a policy statement in the form of a press release that addresses, “To whom it may concern” and the other (OD-2) which hints at a revelation but fails to produce it in any form within the actual declaration.

40. Hymn #292, "O My Father" acknowledges the LDS doctrine of a heavenly mother. Mormon leaders throughout history have confirmed this doctrine. However, Heavenly Mother is rarely discussed, is demonstrative of male bias within the

LDS Church, and is illustrative of how the church deceives investigators and others.

41. It allows unsubstantiated "faith promoting" stories to run unchecked. Examples include Three Nephite sightings, attribution of magic protective power to temple garments, and falsely implying that all the apostles have been personally visited by Jesus.

42. It restricts distribution of the LDS “Church Handbook of Instruction Book 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops” (aka “Handbook 1”) to only the Bishopric level and higher. This eliminates transparent “bottom up” accountability enabling ecclesiastical abuse because lay members can't confront local leaders and/or report policy violations to higher authorities for rectification.

43. Gospel Principles explains, *"Whenever we lead people in any way to believe something that is not true, we are not being honest."* (see Chapter 31) yet LDS Church leaders mandate that Mormon History must always be presented to members (even privately) in a manner that's uplifting and only presents the LDS Church in a favorable light – even if the resulting narrative is not true.

44. It deceptively claims to be “Christian” when in reality it has taken Christian words, terms and forms and then changed the underlying meaning and content to an extent that they're no longer congruent with historic, mainstream, Christian orthodoxy.

45. When it claims, “No tithing dollars were used for this building or project - the funds came from for-profit, church-owned entities” it ignores and/or obfuscates the fact that the seed, start-up, or acquisition funds logically and ultimately came from member tithes – a fact which negates the original claim.

46. It wavers on whether its ultimate authority for doctrine is the Bible, Mormon scriptures, statements of former Mormon prophets, statements of living Mormon prophets, and individual “revelation” even though these sources are often mutually contradictory.

47. It refuses to acknowledge and apologize for the role of high ranking church leaders in the massacre of 120 innocent people in 1857 at Mountain Meadows.

48. It makes extraordinary – even outrageous – truth claims that are easily discredited by science, history, and the Biblical record. For example: The genomics project has a vast body of DNA evidence that conclusively demonstrates that the American aborigines were from Asia not the Middle East; Those aborigines had already migrated and were well established in the Americas thousands of years prior to the alleged arrival of the Book of Mormon people, and; The Bible plainly states that the gospel, with its inclusion of Gentiles, was not fully revealed until after Christ's death (see Ephesians 3:3-7).

49. It excuses, rationalizes, justifies, and white washes the crimes of its founder, famous members, and past leaders. To cite just one of many such examples, polygamy was *never* legal whenever and wherever it was practiced by Latter-day Saint leaders and members.

50. On August 17, 1949, the First Presidency of the LDS Church stated:

"The attitude of the Church with reference to Negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord"

Yet the LDS Church refuses to acknowledge and apologize for the fact that until 1978 - as a point of official doctrine (not folklore, opinion, or speculative theology) and policy - the church taught

racism and excluded blacks from the priesthood and temple.

51. It has used home teachers and the “Strengthening Church Members Committee” as a means of surveillance on and control of members.

52. It hypocritically claims that polygamy has no place in the contemporary LDS Church even though Joseph Smith’s revelation on polygamy (Doctrine & Covenants 132) is still canonized scripture and “Celestial Polygamy” (being eternally married to at least one more woman after being widowed or divorced) is practiced. Currently, three widowed Mormon Apostles (Dallin H. Oaks, L. Tom Perry, and Russell M. Nelson) are Celestial Polygamists.

53. It claims that the LDS Church is patterned after the early church of Jesus’ apostles, but there are major differences. To cite just one of many examples, Christ only had 12-apostles but the LdS Church has 15.

54. It rationalizes and excuses the sin, bad behavior, errors of judgment, and disastrous decisions of its prophets. They are buried, ignored, or ‘spun’ as “well-meaning human error with no need for apology or confession”.

55. It rationalizes away the revelations – even those that were fully canonized – of present or past “Living Prophets” that contradict contemporary LDS Church teachings and culture. The no-longer-in-vogue revelations are buried, ignored, or recast as “opinion not divine”. The “He was speaking as a man not a prophet” apologetic is typically used as the rationalization in these cases. Hence the critic's couplet: "As heresy is, Mormon doctrine once was. As Mormon doctrine is, heresy will it become."

56. It tolerates the chronic practice of eisegesis (injecting words and ideas into the text

that the author did not intend, use or mean) by LDS Church Leaders as their standard hermeneutic in interpreting the Biblical, historical, and scientific record.

57. It rationalizes the failed prophecies of future events by past “Living Prophets” by burying, ignoring, or spin doctoring them as “just his opinion”, or as requiring more time for fulfillment.

58. It undermines intellectual integrity when, by following the example learned from LDS Church Leaders and Church Educational System (CES) curriculum members engage in eisegesis as a lifestyle in all areas of life – not just scriptural interpretation but just about anything, and everything. Well known LDS Apologist Hugh Nibley is one of many examples of how this works:

"...Nibley often uses his secondary sources the same way he uses his primary sources--taking phrases out of context to establish points with which those whom he quotes would likely not agree. I asked myself frequently what some authors would think if they knew that someone were using their words the way Nibley does..."

(Kent P. Jackson, "Review of Hugh Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies*," *BYU Studies* 28 no. 4 (1988), pp.115-17; also see <http://lds-mormon.com/nibley1.shtml>)

59. It uses the term “official doctrine” as a means of silencing critics and dissents even though there is no formal, codified definition for what constitutes “official doctrine”.

60. It tolerates an untenable situation whereby the canonization process isn't officially defined or codified yet is used to deny past publications, prophetic revelations, and other utterances from past Mormon Leaders that are no longer in vogue. For example, despite the fact that the twenty-six volume "Journal of Discourses" contains General Conference addresses from 1854-1886 that were

vetted and approved by the General Authorities at the time, they are soundly now rejected as "unofficial". This despite Brigham Young's assertion that, *"I say now, when they [his discourses] are copied and approved by me they are as good Scripture as is couched in this Bible . . . "* ("Journal of Discourses", vol. 13, p. 264; see also p. 95)

61. Alma 41:8 says, *"Now, the decrees of God are unalterable; therefore, the way is prepared that whosoever will may walk therein and be saved."* yet the LDS Church keeps changing its scripture. Examples include the 1921 removal of the "Lectures on Faith"; the "Santa Biblia: Reina Valera 2009" which deviates wildly from both the source 1909 edition and the English LDS Edition of the Bible; the 2013 changes to all the English editions of The Standard Works; and the changes to the Book of Mormon that have been ongoing since 1830 - such as the 1981, post OD-2 change of "white and delightsome" to "pure and delightsome" in 2 Nephi 30:6.

62. It has failed to officially, publicly, and directly address the ever mounting discrepancies between the claims of The Book of Mormon and the archaeological, historical, theological, and scientific body of evidence.

63. It has failed to explain the incriminating consistency between the claims of The Book of Mormon and the empirical 19th Century, political, literary, cultural and theological record. For example, the Book of Mormon was so infused with 19th Century Campbellite doctrine and ideas that primitive Mormonism was referred to as "Campbellism Improved" by outsiders.

64. It has failed to provide an adequate, rational explanation for how Joseph Smith could “translate” the Book of Abraham from a set of Egyptian Book of Breathing papyri.

65. It has failed to reasonably explain how Joseph Smith could, via The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, append the Bible with “translations” of entire new books and chapters that have utterly no manuscripts backing them while simultaneously purging words, verses – even entire books – that are substantially supported by the extant manuscript base.

66. D&C 42:71-73 commands paid clergy: Saying in part, *“they are to receive a just remuneration for all their services”*. And while in actual fact the LDS Church compensates leaders via employment in church owned businesses, generous honoraria, stipends, grants, scholarships, gifts, company cars, free travel and lodging, housing and other non-cash contributions, in public it deceptively claims that “The LDS Church has no paid clergy”.

67. It hypocritically denounces those who claim to bring forth new scripture and revelations using the same methods and means that Joseph Smith did because they fail to conform to established LDS Church orthodoxy. This, while simultaneously criticizing the mainstream Christian Church for rejecting Mormonism because the revelations and scripture of its founder and subsequent “prophets” fail to conform to established Christian orthodoxy. One such example of this is Christopher Nemelka’s “The Sealed Portion”.

68. It allows LDS Church leaders and the Church Educational System (CES), to distance themselves from the work of LDS Apologists so as – it is believed – to create a “plausible deniability” escape hatch should the work of said Apologists be discredited by more qualified, objective scholarship. Nevertheless, both cite from the work of LDS Apologists (albeit typically not credited) while allowing the LDS Church to quietly fund the work of said apologists through indirect cash flows.

69. It engages in political action via direct and indirect cash flows and privately exhorts members to organize and engage in particular causes and then publicly denies any involvement. California’s Propositions 22 (circa 2000) and 8 (circa 2008) are two cases in point.

70. It publicly (and loudly) trumpets its philanthropic work when compared to other churches its per capita outlay is less than what smaller, less wealthy, less organized religious organizations spend:

“A study co-written by Cragun and recently published in Free Inquiry estimates that the Mormon Church donates only about 0.7 percent of its annual income to charity; the United Methodist Church gives about 29 percent.”

(Caroline Winter, “How The Mormons Make Money”, Business Week; July 18, 2012)

71. It has allowed LDS Church leaders to obfuscate, spin-doctor, and blatantly lie to the media rather than standing with integrity and boldly telling the world what the LDS Church really believes, teaches, and practices. Such behavior should be denounced and condemned not tolerated, justified, or praised. One example of this Gordon B. Hinckley lying to journalists about the role and function of the Lorenzo Snow couplet within LDS Theology.

72. It fails to recognize the over sixty (60) active Latter Day Saint movement denominations (aka “splinter groups”) while hypocritically condemning the denominationalism of Christianity as a proof of apostasy and lack of divine legitimacy. This hypocrisy is even more pronounced when one considers that over the 180+ year history of the LDS movement there have been over 200 Latter Day Saint denominations in total with new ones forming at a rate will be eventually far exceed and outpace the total number of Christian denominations.

Thought Control Issues

73. It teaches an irrational and subjective epistemological system while simultaneously belittling epistemology based on reason, objectivity, and empiricism.

74. It employs circular logic. For example, consider its core truth claim: "The only true church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints says it's the only true church." Another poignant example of circular logic is the infamous Doctrine & Covenants 9:8 "burning in the bosom" truth test that (in the vernacular) goes something like this: "If you don't get it, you did something wrong. If you do, that proves the church is true." Further, when taking this test, you don't ask God if the church is true, but rather to show you that it is true: *"I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right."*

75. LDS Church Missionary training and policies employs Mind Control techniques and tactics.

76. It keeps members so busy with LDS Church related activities that they don't have time for personal reflection and self-autonomy. This is especially true of men as the demands of lay leadership tend to deprive them of real, regular, authentic family time.

77. It erroneously asserts that former members didn't leave the LDS Church for any thoughtful or legitimate reasons but rather that they were thin skinned reactive, malcontents who left the LDS Church because they wanted to sin with impunity, or because of a perceived offense. Stated plainly, this is a hypocritical double standard: It's OK to be troubled by, doubt, criticize, and even leave other churches, but this one can't be questioned or left.

78. It discourages intellectual self-autonomy and self-responsibility and encourages dependency on LDS Church Leaders.

79. It engages in Mind Control tactics and techniques in recruiting, indoctrinating, and retaining members.

80. The LDS Church denies being man centered or exalting - claiming that it only lifts up Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as worthy of its worship. Yet its Hymnal contains songs of praise and adoration that exalts both dead (#27 "Praise to the Man") and living men (#19 "We Thank Thee O God For A Prophet").

81. It requires members to remain in a "snapped" psychological state in order to remain believing members. For example, when members encounter troubling facts about Mormon History and/or doctrine they're either told to pray about it or "put it on the shelf". This is called "Thought Stopping" and it's a technique that Mind Control Cults use to avoid the rigors of logic, reason, and uncomfortable realities.

82. The Book of Mormon warns, *"Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil"* (2 Nephi 15:20) yet the LDS Church requires members to adhere to moral relativism, loose ethics, and intellectual dishonesty in support of a belief system that lacks ethical congruity, consistency, and integrity. Some of the most obvious examples of this are: The practice of polygamy and the rationalization of that past polygamy today; A failure to acknowledge and apologize for its pre-1978 institutionalized racism, and finally; The practice known as "Lying for the Lord" throughout Mormon History.

83. It hypocritically rails against sound logic and reason as "the hollow and vain philosophies of men, not God" and then hypocritically attempts to (albeit

poorly and inconsistently) employ logic and reason in its arguments and rhetoric.

84. It poisons members who leave the LDS Church against all other Theistic religions. This is best illustrated by the cliché used by both members and former members that goes something like this, “If the Mormon Church isn’t true then nothing is true.”

Emotional Control Issues

85. It damages member psychology via the use of manipulative fear and unachievable standards of “worthiness”. Sadly, this lament is all too common:

“Of course I do [have a testimony]! That’s what’s so terrible. I know the gospel’s true. I just can’t do it. I’ve tried and I’ve tried, but I can’t do it all, all of the time.”

(Stephen E. Robinson, "Believing Christ"; Ensign, April 1992)

86. Whereas, Mormon Prophet Brigham Young preached, "*A good man, is a good man, whether in this church, or out of it.*" ("The Lions of the Lord: A Tale of the Old West" by Harry Leon Wilson, chap XXVIII, par 2) the modern LDS Church engenders arrogance and self-righteousness in members by telling them that they’re more enlightened and morally superior relative to the general population – including other good people of faith.

87. It uses guilt as a means of controlling members.

88. It “love bombs” investigators and new converts as a means of drawing them in.

89. It uses arbitrary, capricious, and ever changing criteria for Temple Recommend “worthiness”. For example Brigham Young’s 1856 worthiness questions (also see this ByteLine article) are almost completely different than the current set of Temple Recommend Interview questions.

90. The Book of Mormon speaks of those who, "*do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts ...yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts.*" (Mormon 8: 36) Despite this the LDS Church culture engenders clannish, elitist, and pride in members via it a Temple, Priesthood, and oligarchical calling system that puffs member up rather than encouraging and rewarding humility.

91. It encourages arrogant, condescending pride in members at all levels by telling them that they “have the whole and restored truth” that “apostates” only have in part and “gentiles” lack entirely.

92. It teaches that a rape victim has “lost her chastity” and that a woman should fight off her attacker or be killed in the attempt. For example, Apostle Spencer W. Kimball, in his book "The Miracle of Forgiveness" said, "*far-reaching is the effect of loss of chastity. Once given or taken or stolen it can never be regained. Even in a forced contact such as rape or incest, the injured one is greatly outraged. If she has not cooperated and contributed to the foul deed, she is of course in a more favorable position. There is no condemnation when there is no voluntary participation. It is better to die in defending one’s virtue than to live having lost it without a struggle.*" (p. 196) Thus, young Mormon women are taught that their chastity is more valuable than their life. The result is that a Mormon woman who survives a rape is made to feel guilty, and is thus victimized again, this time by her church.

93. It bestows the title “Elder” onto adolescent men (typically 18-years old) with little to no real life experience, thus puffing them up with arrogance and deluding them with prideful ignorance.

94. It hypocritically defines polemic arguments as “persecution” and then engages in polemics with its critics and those of other faiths. For example, consider how it trains its missionaries to speak of other churches:

"Without the Apostles, over time the doctrines were corrupted, and unauthorized changes were made in Church organization and priesthood ordinances, such as baptism and conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost. Without revelation and priesthood authority, people relied on human wisdom to interpret the scriptures and the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

False ideas were taught as truth. Much of the knowledge of the true character and nature of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost was lost. The doctrines of faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the

Holy Ghost became distorted or forgotten. The priesthood authority given to Christ's Apostles was no longer present on the earth. This apostasy eventually led to the emergence of many churches."

("Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service"; Official LDS Church Missionary Training curriculum, p.35)

95. It creates undue demands as well as mental, emotional, and spiritual stress and strain on members via all the above.

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