

## **Do Latter-day Saints have a respect for diversity of faiths?**

The original document can be found at:

<http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/respect-for-diversity-of-faiths>

SALT LAKE CITY, 18 April 2008 - A respect for the diverse beliefs and unique contributions of all the world's faiths is one of the hallmarks of Mormonism. From the earliest days of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith elevated the principle of religious liberty and tolerance: "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may".

Well, this is not entirely accurate.

The beginning hallmark of Mormonism has been to believe that all of the world's churches are wrong, all professing Christians are corrupt, and that the Mormon Church is the only true church in the world today. This attack on historical Christianity began when the first Mormon prophet (Joseph Smith) is said to have seen Jesus Christ and God the Father in a vision when he was about 15 years old.

The account is viewable on the Church's official account of Joseph Smith's history, Volume 1:

[http://scriptures.lds.org/en/js\\_h/1](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/js_h/1)

Joseph Smith thought that God's church existed in one particular Christian denomination so was searching for which church to join. Unfortunately as verse 12 records, he lost confidence in the Bible in determining spiritual truth.

"In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion

of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.”

Joseph Smith was given a reply:

“My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know **which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join**. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for **they were all wrong**; and the Personage who addressed me said that **all their creeds were an abomination** in his sight; that **those professors were all corrupt**; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.”

While it is in the best interest of the Mormon Church to portray itself as having a respect for a diversity of faiths, history and current practice dictate otherwise when it comes to the Christian faith.

The vision of Joseph Smith is still a foundation for the Mormon belief that Christ’s Church as founded in the New Testament eventually ceased to exist on the earth and that Mr. Smith was called to institute a restoration. Contrary to what Jesus said in the Bible, the LDS belief is that the gates of hell were able to prevail against His Church until the supposed vision of the Mormon “prophet.”

Every year in Utah the city of Manti draws thousands of visitors who come to see the Mormon Miracle Pageant. Visitors are treated to a dramatical representation of the supposed appearance of Jesus Christ to the inhabitants of America just over 2,000 years ago. Talk of the eventual and supposed disappearance of Christ’s Church is also symbolized.

The premise of the need for a restoration is engrained in the minds of the viewers when the Christians of Joseph Smith’s day are mocked in the way their characters are portrayed. The Mormon Church has toned down this mockery in recent years, but it is still evident in the play.

So ... does the Mormon Church really respect a diversity of Christian faith groups?

Not really. But then again, that is the charm of an eloquent public relations team.

It would seem that the Mormon Church has a high regard for Islam's prophet, Muhammad. While not from the official web site, the following are quotes from <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/muslim.pdf> - A Message of Friendship (Muslims and Latter-day Saints):

“Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that Muhammad was an inspired teacher raised by God to teach His word.”

LDS Apostle George Q. Cannon stated:

“I believe myself that Muhammad, whom the Christians deride and call a false prophet and stigmatize with a great many epithets – I believe that he was a man raised up by the Almighty.”

“Like the Prophet Muhammad, Book of Mormon prophets like Alma and Moroni lived in times when many people held false beliefs and denied the one true God.”

If any one would take the time to study the Quran, he or she will notice that Muhammad taught his followers to deny the deity of Christ, His death on the cross, and the resurrection.

If this does not make Muhammad a false prophet, I cannot understand what other false teachings would.

Do you still accept the Mormon viewpoint of Muhammad being a Prophet?

It would seem that Latter-day Saints have more respect for the Islamic faith. Could you imagine what would happen to Mormons if they called some Islamic creeds abominable for being opposed to the core doctrines of Jesus Christ?