

*Editor: Sandra Tanner***Utah Lighthouse Ministry**1358 S. West Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84115
www.utlm.org

MORE LDS TEMPLE CHANGES— A NOD TO FEMINISM?

Opening their morning newspaper on Thursday, January 3, 2019, Utahans were surprised to read “LDS Church changes temple ceremony; faithful feminists will see revisions and additions as a ‘leap forward.’” The article went on to note:

Many women have complained in the past about the “endowment” ritual, which includes a re-enactment of Genesis, noting that Eve has no words during her sojourn with Adam after the couple’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Now that seminal female figure has a whole monologue, said the attendee, who did not want her name used because of the sacred nature of the ceremony. “She has more lines than Satan.”

And men and women make all the same covenants, or promises, to God, rather than separate ones. Women also no longer covenant to hearken to their husbands.¹

While Eve has been given a larger speaking part in the secret temple drama of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she merely quotes a passage from the Book of Moses, part of their scriptures known as the *Pearl of Great Price*. The endowment ceremony, only open to faithful members, depicts the story of Adam and Eve and their journey from the Garden of Eden to entering into God’s presence. The instructions, passwords and handshakes

learned in the ritual are considered necessary for eternal life, also called exaltation.

After the Fall is enacted and Lucifer ordered out of the garden, Adam now quotes part of Moses 5:10: “Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.” To which Eve responds, quoting Moses 5:11, “Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.”

Since Adam and Eve’s added dialogue is simply quoting from one of the LDS scriptures one wonders why it was not publicly acknowledged. The drama was also edited to add more mention of Eve. Previously Elohim addressed Adam alone, now he addresses both Adam and Eve.

Contrary to standard Christianity, the LDS scriptures and temple ceremony present a scenario of Adam and Eve being given two conflicting commandments in the garden. First, they were not to eat of the tree of knowledge and second, they were commanded to

have children. But according to Mormonism, as spirit beings, they couldn’t reproduce until they ate of the fruit and became mortal. Thus God set them up to break one of these commandments. This is why Eve is seen as performing a meritorious act by disobeying God and becoming mortal. According to an article in *The Ensign* posted on the LDS web site, the Fall was necessary:



Male Temple Clothing

¹ Peggy Fletcher Stack & David Noyce, “LDS Church changes temple ceremony . . . , *Salt Lake Tribune* (January 3, 2019), <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/01/02/lds-church-releases/>

Most Christian churches teach that the Fall was a tragedy, that if Adam and Eve had not partaken of the forbidden fruit, they and all their posterity could now be living in immortal bliss in the Garden of Eden. But truth revealed to latter-day prophets teaches that the Fall was not a tragedy—without it Adam and Eve would have had no posterity. Thus, the Fall was a necessary step in Heavenly Father’s plan to bring about the eternal happiness of His children.²

LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained:

The fall of Adam brought temporal and spiritual death into the world, and the atonement of Christ ransomed men from these two deaths by bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. **This makes the fall as essential a part of the plan of salvation as the very atonement itself.**³

After Eve quotes the passage from the Book of Moses, the temple patrons, dressed in white, are instructed to put on their green aprons, representing the fig leaf aprons of Adam and Eve. The white outfit and green apron are worn by all those being endowed, whether getting sealed that day or not, or whether the ceremony is for them personally or on behalf of a dead person. Most LDS missionaries have been through the endowment ceremony but have not been “sealed” in marriage—a ceremony that takes place after one is “endowed.”

Faithful LDS, who have been sealed to their partner, are also buried in the white outfit and green apron. Prior to January 2019 the temple veil would be put over the woman’s face just before closing the casket. Now the family has the option of using the veil or not.⁴

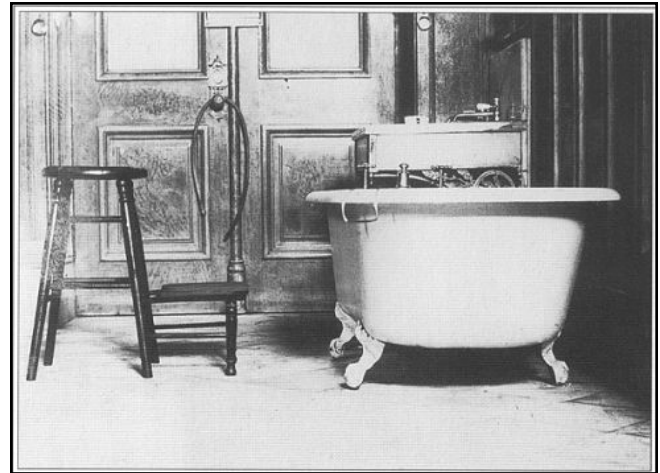
Another change is the elimination of women veiling their faces during the special prayer circle during the endowment ceremony. They still wear the thin, 3-foot square veil, but they are no longer instructed to veil their faces.

Feminists see these changes as a hopeful move toward equality for women and men in the ritual. While these recent changes are significant, they are just the latest in a long list of revisions since the temple endowment ritual was first introduced by Joseph Smith in 1842.

Currently the LDS Church has 209 temples “operating, announced or under construction.”⁵ These are special buildings, not open to the general public, where vicarious baptisms are performed on behalf of dead people, and where members go through the endowment ritual, and are either married/sealed for all eternity for themselves or in behalf of the dead. Their regular meeting houses are open to the public.

WASHING AND ANOINTING CHANGES

Originally the temple endowment ceremony began with a washing and anointing ceremony that required the member to totally disrobe and be ceremonially washed in a large tub and oil poured over his/her head. This was administered by someone of the same sex.⁶ A tub was used until after the turn of the twentieth century.⁷ Over the years this ceremony has been changed to make it less offensive to people.



Bathtub in the Salt Lake Temple, 1912.

In the 1969 version of the Washing and Anointing patrons, in divided areas for men and women, stored their regular clothes in lockers and then covered themselves with a “shield,” like a poncho, which covered the front and back of a person but open on the sides. Then in a small enclosed area attendants would reach under the cloth and ceremonially touch various parts of the attendee’s naked body with water, then with oil, as certain

2 “The Fullness of the Gospel: The Fall of Adam and Eve,” *The Ensign* (June 2006), <https://www.lds.org/study/ensign/2006/06/the-fullness-of-the-gospel-the-fall-of-adam-and-eve?lang=eng>

3 “The Plan of Salvation,” *Old Testament Seminary Teacher Material* (2018), <https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-seminary-teacher-material-2018/introductory-lessons/lesson-2?lang=eng>

4 Benjamin Wood, “Major Renovations to be unveiled for Salt Lake Temple . . .,” *Salt Lake Tribune* (April 7, 2019) <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/04/07/lds-church-president/>

5 Peggy Fletcher Stack, “On heels of temple changes, faithful Latter-day Saint women no longer need to be veiled before burial,” *Salt Lake Tribune* (January 29, 2019), <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/01/29/heels-temple-changes/>

6 Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony 1842-1990*, (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 2005), page 39; David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness*, (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), page 81.

7 See photo, *The House of the Lord*, James E. Talmage, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), page 118.

blessings were pronounced on the person. After these anointings the attendants would help the person pull on the special one-piece undergarment with Masonic-like markings on both breasts, the navel and the right knee.⁸ The person then returned to the locker area and donned their white outfit, with the hat/veil, green apron, robe and sash folded in a small parcel.

The original temple undergarment was like a one-piece union suit, full length with long sleeves, and ties. These were modified in 1923, allowing for the garment to end just below the knee and elbow.⁹ Through the years the garment has continued to evolve, becoming shorter and available in more fabric choices. A photo of the garment is posted on the LDS web site.¹⁰ Last year the church discontinued the embroidered markings on the garment in favor of silk-screening them on the back side of the material.¹¹



LDS temple undergarments.

Evidently in an effort to provide more modesty, in 2005 the clothing ritual was changed again. In the locker room the individual put on the LDS garment, which has been changed to a two-piece, and then the poncho-like “shield,” which was sewn up on the sides.¹² The patron then proceeded to the cubical for his/her anointing with water and oil on the forehead. Then the patron returned to the locker area to dress in the white outfit.

But this scenario has been changed. In 2019 the shield was eliminated and the person changes in the locker room into his/her garments and puts on the white

temple outfit, and then goes to the anointing booth where only the forehead is anointed.

These changes have given rise to a number of questions about the eternal nature of the ordinances. Brigham Young declared:

Has the holy Catholic Church got faith in Jesus that we have not got? Not a particle that is true and pure. But as for the ordinances of the House of God, we say, . . . that the mother church and all her daughters have transgressed the laws, every one of them; they have changed almost every ordinance of the House of God; . . . There is but one mode of baptism and that is by being immersed in the water . . .¹³

Changing from a total bath to simply touching the forehead with water and oil seems to be comparable to some Christians performing baptisms by sprinkling instead of immersion. Why is the LDS change condoned and the non-LDS change condemned?

LUCIFER’S APRON

In the 1984 version of the temple drama, after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, Lucifer came on the scene and Adam asked, “What is that apron you have on?” To which Lucifer responded, “It is an emblem of my power and Priesthoods.” The dialogue continues: “Adam: Priesthoods? Lucifer: Yes, Priesthoods.”¹⁴ This exchange was shortened in 1990 and then totally deleted in 2019. Lucifer’s apron is visible in the 2013 clandestine video of the live enactment of the ritual.¹⁵ Lucifer’s apron appears to be green in the video but has usually been described as black or navy blue. We are not informed as to the visibility of his apron in today’s live sessions. In the recent videos it is hard to see his apron.

But these are just the latest edits to Lucifer’s roll in the ritual. In the 1984 version, after Adam and Eve left the Garden and entered the Lone and Dreary World, Lucifer introduced them to a preacher. “Lucifer: Have you been to college and received training for the ministry? Sectarian Minister: Certainly! A man cannot preach unless he has been trained for the ministry. Lucifer: Do you preach the orthodox religion? Sectarian Minister: Yes, that is what I

8 Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987), pages 458-460.

9 Buerger, *Mysteries*, pages 138, 150.

10 “Temple Garments,” <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/temple-garments>

11 Jana Riess, “Commentary: Hallelujah! Mormon women’s temple garments just got a lot better,” *Salt Lake Tribune* (March 15, 2018), <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/03/15/commentary-hallelujah-mormon-womens-temple-garments-just-got-a-lot-better/>

12 Tanner, *Evolution*, pages 186-187.

13 *The Essential Brigham Young*, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), page 195.

14 Tanner, *Evolution*, page 73.

15 While Lucifer’s apron is not visible in the film version, it was visible in the live sessions. Lucifer is the man dressed in black. See at the 22 minute mark. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8sbYtFOnxk>

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preach. Lucifer: If you will preach your orthodox religion to these people, and convert them, I will pay you well.”¹⁶

Adam later summarized the minister’s teachings: “They preach of a God who is without body, parts, or passions; who is so large that he fills the universe, and yet is so small that he can dwell in my heart; and of a hell, without a bottom, where the wicked are continually burning but are never consumed. To me, it is a mass of confusion.” This has been completely removed.

Later, the minister, talking to Peter, realized that the devil had deceived him and he said: “This man told me that we should never have any revelation or apostles, but if any should come professing to be apostles, I was to ask them to cut off an arm or some other member of the body and then restore it, so that the people might know that they came with power.” The preacher then wanted out of the Devil’s employ but he refused to pay the minister since he didn’t convert Adam and Eve to his religion. For years people have complained that the LDS ceremony mocked Christian ministers and implied that they were only in it for the money. Researcher David John Buerger observed that several “Christian ministers were added in the 1850s. . . . By 1905 the ceremony had been edited to allow only one minister.”¹⁷ Finally, in 1990 the part of the minister was removed.¹⁸

ALL PATRONS STAND

Also changed is the number of times patrons need to stand up. In the past, when the ceremony got to the Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood everyone would stand and don their white robe, sash, with the green apron tied over these items, along with the hat/veil. Now they remain seated and don’t put on the robe and other items until the part about the First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood. This seems to be a time-saving adjustment, allowing the patrons to remain seated during the earlier part of the ceremony.

FROM MOVIE TO SLIDES

Originally the endowment ceremony was a live play, but in the 1970s the LDS Church began to incorporate filmed portions. Currently only the Salt Lake and Manti temples perform the story of Adam and Eve live. But these temples are scheduled to close at the end of 2019 for remodeling.¹⁹ However, one wonders if they will

continue to present the live drama when the two temples reopen in a few years?²⁰

In 2013 and 2014 the LDS Church introduced three new temple films. Each of the films used the same dialogue, but had different actors, thus providing a little variety as the films were rotated in use.²¹ Actors are seen playing the parts of Elohim, Jehovah and Michael communicating with Lucifer, Adam and Eve. It also showed Peter, James and John conversing with the various characters in the creation play.

However, this year the films have been eliminated. Now they only use slides depicting various scenes from the play while the audience listens to a recording of the actors’ voices. After going to such expense to create and translate these new films, why revert to slides?

One possible answer would be that it simplifies the task when making adjustments to the ceremony. A new version of the video would not need to be made. Also, it would be easier to adjust the length of the ritual when a translation into a foreign language takes longer than in English. Some have speculated that the removal of the films might have been to distance the church from the producer of the videos, who recently pled guilty to sex crimes.²²

THE CHURCH’S DEFENSE

On January 2, 2019, the First Presidency of the LDS Church issued the following statement in defense of the recent changes in the temple ceremony:

Whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth who will obey His word, they have been **commanded to build temples. Scriptures document patterns of temple worship from the times of Adam and Eve, Moses, Solomon, Nephi, and others.**

With the restoration of the gospel in these latter days, **temple worship has also been restored** to bless the lives of people across the world and on the other side of the veil as well.

²⁰ Wood, “Major Renovations,” <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/04/07/lds-church-president/>

²¹ Tad Walch, “LDS Church begins using a 3rd new temple film,” *Deseret News* (July 15, 2014), <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/865606973/LDS-Church-begins-using-a-3rd-new-temple-film.html>

²² Sterling Van Wagenen was the producer of the temple videos. AP, “Sundance Film Festival Co-founder, Sterling Van Wagenen, charged with sex abuse,” *USA Today* (April 12, 2019), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/movies/2019/04/12/sundance-film-festival-co-founder-sterling-van-wagenen-charged-sex-abuse/3445280002/>; Nate Carlisle, “Sterling Van Wagenen, Latter-day Saint filmmaker with old ties to Sundance, pleads guilty to sex abuse charge,” *Salt Lake Tribune* (April 30, 2019), <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2019/04/30/sterling-vanwagenen/>

¹⁶ Tanner, *Evolution*, page 80.

¹⁷ Buerger, *Mysteries*, page 80.

¹⁸ Tanner, *Evolution*, pages 83-84.

¹⁹ Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Manti Utah Temple,” <https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/manti-utah-temple/>

Over these **many centuries**, details associated with temple work have been **adjusted periodically, including language, methods of construction**, communication, and record-keeping. **Prophets have taught that there will be no end to such adjustments as directed by the Lord to His servants.**

A dedicated temple is the most holy of any place of worship on the earth. Its ordinances are sacred and are not discussed outside a holy temple.²³

Several problems come to mind after reading the statement. First, there is no commandment in the Bible for Adam and Eve to build a temple.

The forerunner to the temple in Israel was the tabernacle, which was first instituted during the 40 years Israel wandered in the wilderness at the time of Moses. The book of Exodus, chapters 26-30, records the instructions for the tabernacle, all its furnishings, and the rituals. Hundreds of years later, Solomon built the first permanent temple, following the pattern of the tabernacle.²⁴

The whole point of the Old Testament sacrificial system was to show that man's sins had separated him from God and he could only approach God through bringing his offerings to the temple for the priest to present at the altar. And then once a year on the Day of Atonement the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies to present an offering for both himself and all Israel.

All of this served as a forerunner to the ultimate offering for sin, when Jesus himself, as our great High Priest, would enter the true Holy of Holies on our behalf, and offer himself as the lamb slain for the sins of the world.²⁵

The Jewish priests never performed any rituals like the LDS endowment ceremony and marriages were never done in their temple. Jewish marriages were attended by family and friends, not a secret affair, as shown in the story of Jesus attending a marriage in Cana.²⁶

Second, there is no command in the New Testament for the Christians to build temples and they did not have access to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem to perform any rituals. Some of the early Jewish Christians met at times

in the courtyard of the temple, but not being Jewish priests they were not allowed into the temple itself.²⁷

On the LDS web site we read: "Temples serve as the only place where ceremonies such as baptism and eternal marriage can be performed in behalf of those who have died—a practice that Latter-day Saints believe was followed in New Testament times but that later was lost."²⁸

Yet no evidence of such rituals is cited. Christians met in homes, not church buildings. For instance, early Christian leaders Priscilla and Aquila had a church meeting at their home (Romans 16:3, 5). Paul also mentions a church meeting in the home of Nympha in Colossians 4:15. Christians did not have their own temple or buildings.

Third, both Jesus and Paul taught that marriage was for this life only. Why would Paul advise the unmarried to remain single if he believed in the Mormon doctrine that a temple sealing is necessary for exaltation?²⁹ Also see Matthew 22:29-30 and 1 Corinthians 7:39. If the Mormons are going to insist that their temple ritual is a "restoration" of a Christian ritual they will need to document when, where and how such a ritual was practiced.

Their statement that changes have occurred over "many centuries" is without merit as there is no evidence that any Christians had a ritual with the same meaning and purpose as the LDS endowment ritual. However, there are similarities to the Masonic ritual,³⁰ which has gone through various changes, but these have nothing to do with a Christian ritual designed by God for eternal marriage.

Fourth, their statement, "Prophets have taught that there will be no end to such adjustments as directed by the Lord to His servants" leaves one wondering what they are referring to? People have searched for such statements in LDS literature and failed to find anything where their prophets publicly taught there would be "no end to such adjustments" in relation to the temple ritual. In fact, we find just the opposite. On the LDS web site Joseph Smith is quoted as saying:

²⁷ Acts 2:46—This would have been in the courtyard; Acts 5:12—Apostles at Solomon's porch, outside of the actual temple. Acts 3:1-11.

²⁸ "Temples," <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/topic/temples>

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 7:8-9.

³⁰ Michael W. Homer, *Joseph's Temples: The Dynamic Relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014).

²³ "First Presidency Statement on Temple," <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/temple-worship>

²⁴ See 1 Kings 7 and 2 Chronicles 4.

²⁵ Hebrews 7:11-28, 9:1-15. Also see "Temples and Ordinances," at <http://mit.irr.org/category/temples-and-ordinances>

²⁶ See John 2:1-11.

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Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, **are not to be altered or changed**. All must be saved on the same principles.³¹

Obviously, the temple ritual has gone through periodic editing since Joseph Smith's day, but if it was originally a "revelation," why would it need altering? The alterations seem to be removing troubling parts, not giving more doctrine. The temple changes in 1990³² followed a church survey of several thousand members, which questioned them about their experience in the temple.³³ Does revelation come from surveys?

Since the Mormons are so concerned that baptisms and the prayer over the sacrament must be done exactly as instructed, one wonders why they think the temple ritual can be altered? Which version of the LDS temple ritual is the one the early Christians were supposed to have practiced? If the temple ritual is always open to change, how could it ever be considered "lost" in the first place? Wouldn't they just be earlier versions?

2019 VERSION

The 2019 version of the ritual has been clandestinely recorded and a typescript noting the changes can be read online as one listens to the ritual.³⁴ This also includes the new LDS introductory comments given at the start of the ritual. The narrator reads a statement by the First Presidency explaining that the new changes have been approved by their prophet and apostles:

Brothers and sisters, since the temple endowment was first administered in this dispensation **occasional adjustments** have been made by the First Presidency and the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, acting unitedly in their capacity as prophets, seers, and revelators.

Upon seeking the will of the Lord and after solemn prayer in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple, the Lord has again revealed **inspired adjustments** to the temple ceremonies.

These adjustments, which you will notice during your worship experience in the temple today, will bring harmony to the way men and women make covenants

31 "Receiving the Ordinances and Blessings of the Temple," *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, ch. 36, <https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-smith/chapter-36?lang=eng>

32 Vern Anderson, "LDS Leaders Revise Temple Endowment," *Salt Lake Tribune* (April 29, 1990); also quoted in *Salt Lake Messenger*, no. 75, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no75.htm>

33 "Survey of Adult Members in the United States and Canada," (1988), <https://archive.org/details/1988TempleSurvey>

34 "Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony" (January 2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VOB0XNjdXE>

with God. They deepen our understanding of His will and His relationship with his daughters and sons.

These **modifications** do not affect the sacred and **eternal covenants** associated with **the saving and exalting ordinances** of the temple. As a reminder, due to the sacred nature of all temple ordinances, the fact and content of these changes should not be discussed outside the temple.³⁵

Even though patrons take an oath of silence regarding any changes, there have been numerous exposés by those leaving the LDS church over the past 175 years, thus allowing comparisons to be made.³⁶

IN THE BEGINNING

Joseph Smith first founded the Church of Christ, now known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in New York in 1830, with the claim that it was the restoration of the original New Testament church, with all the same doctrines and rituals.³⁷ However, there was no teaching relating to eternal marriage, secret endowment rituals or the need for temples until years later. In fact, the only temple mentioned in the Book of Mormon was one built in the Americas and was evidently open to the public.³⁸

A year and a half later (November 1831) Smith revealed that the church was to build a temple in Independence, Missouri, to be the center point of Zion in preparation for the return of Christ. But this edifice was intended for public meetings, not secret rituals as are done in current LDS temples.³⁹ However, the Mormons were soon forced out of the city and have never built that temple to this day. On the LDS web site we read:

Missouri has been and will be the site of many key events in Church history. It was the location of the Garden of Eden and Adam-ondi-Ahman, where Adam gathered his posterity for a final blessing (see *D&C* 107:53–57). It was the place the Saints in Joseph Smith's day started

35 "Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony" (January 2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VOB0XNjdXE>

36 Tanner, *Evolution*; also "Temple Ritual Changed...Again," *Salt Lake City Messenger* (June 2005), <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/104saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>

37 See "Articles of Faith," *Pearl of Great Price*, verses 5-7.

38 Book of Mormon, Jacob 2:1-11; Mosiah 2:5-7

39 "Revised Plan of the House of the Lord," <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revised-plan-of-the-house-of-the-lord-circa-10-august-circa-4-september-1833/1#full-transcript>

to build Zion but were violently driven out before their dreams could be realized. It is the place where the Lord Jesus Christ will return again to a New Jerusalem (see *D&C 57:2-3; A of F 1:10*).⁴⁰

Then in 1836 Smith introduced a new ritual among the men in their temple in Kirtland, Ohio. Historian David John Buerger explained:

The Kirtland temple ritual was a simple, staged ceremony consisting of washing and anointing the body, blessing and sealing the individual, and washing the feet.⁴¹

While Smith claimed that the sealing keys had been restored at that time, it seems to have been related to sealing various blessings pronounced on each man in attendance, not to sealing a man and a woman in eternal marriage.⁴² Baptism for the dead was not taught until 1840.

SECRET POLYGAMY

Starting in 1841, in Nauvoo, Illinois, Joseph began to secretly take plural wives in some sort of marriage/sealing ceremony, but this was not the endowment/temple ceremony known today. These were not legal marriages as the state of Illinois had laws against bigamy.⁴³ These were usually done without his wife's knowledge or consent. Only the top leaders in the church were aware of Smith's new doctrine and practice. Smith's need for secrecy grew after former church leader John C. Bennett published an exposé of Joseph Smith and polygamy in 1842.⁴⁴ A way to secure his leaders' silence became apparent after Joseph Smith embraced Freemasonry with its oath of secrecy.

FREEMASONS

In March of 1842 Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were initiated into the Masonic Lodge in Nauvoo, Illinois, and became Master Masons. Researcher Michael W. Homer explained:

During these [Masonic] rituals Smith and Rigdon were given signs, due-grips, due-guards, pass-grips, words, passwords, and obligations of secrecy of those degrees. The Master Mason degree contained references that would become familiar to Mormons, including the "all-seeing eye, whom the sun, moon and stars obey,"

40 "Independence: Living in Zion," <https://www.lds.org/study/new-era/2005/05/independence-living-in-zion?lang=eng>

41 Buerger, *Mysteries*, pages 11-12.

42 Buerger, *Mysteries*, page 36.

43 "Problems in the LDS Essays on Plural Marriage," *Salt Lake City Messenger* (May 2015), <https://www.lds.org/study/new-era/2005/05/independence-living-in-zion?lang=eng>

44 John C. Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 1842.

the bee-hive as "an emblem of industry," the five points of fellowship, and the grand hailing sign of distress.⁴⁵

Within six weeks of Smith becoming a Master Mason, he initiated several men into a new "endowment" ceremony,⁴⁶ which included washing and anointing, signs, tokens, and penalties along with the potential to be kings and priests unto God. Smith clearly appropriated some of the same words and symbols of Masonry for his new temple ritual. However, women were not a part of the endowment ritual until a year later. David John Buerger explained:

As in Kirtland, Smith elected to administer new rituals, an expanded "endowment," to selected leaders before the [Nauvoo] temple was finished. In 1842 the new endowment was performed only for men, but in 1843 wives were included.⁴⁷

Two additional ceremonies were introduced in 1843 about a year following the initial conferral of the new endowment: celestial marriage for time and eternity and the fullness of the priesthood or the second anointing. Celestial marriage was applied to and equated with plural marriage until the late nineteenth century.⁴⁸

While the LDS Church maintains that the temple endowment ceremony came by way of revelation to Joseph Smith, no copy of such a revelation has been found.⁴⁹ Since his revelations on baptism and the sacrament have been recorded and published, one wonders why something so critical to a Latter-day Saint's eternal exaltation would not be recorded as well?

Only a limited number of Smith's closest followers had gone through the Nauvoo temple ceremony prior to his death. The next year, 1845, Brigham Young and the other top leaders recreated the ritual for those who still needed their endowments. William Clayton recorded the events at the temple on November 30, 1845:

At about 12 o'clock we clothed [in the temple robes] and . . . then offered up the signs of the Holy Priesthood and repeated them to get them more perfect. I was requested to keep minutes. President [Young] offered up prayers and dedicated the Attic story [of the unfinished Nauvoo temple], the male room and ourselves to God, and prayed that God would sustain and deliver from the hands of our enemies, his servants until they have accomplished his will in this house.⁵⁰

45 Homer, *Joseph's Temples*, page 150.

46 Buerger, *Mysteries*, pages 50-56.

47 Buerger, *Mysteries*, page 36.

48 Buerger, *Mysteries*, pages 58-59.

49 Buerger, *Mysteries*, pages 40-41, 73.

50 As quoted in *Mysteries of Godliness*, pages 73-74.

For the next two weeks Brigham Young and various leaders worked to arrange the attic with the necessary fittings, veils, etc. for the ritual, and also on getting the wording of the ritual more accurate. On December 13, 1845, William Clayton recorded:

Last evening an arrangement was made establishing better order in conducting the endowment. Under this order it is the province of Eloheem, Jehovah and Michael to create the world, plant the Garden and create the man and give his help meet. Eloheem gives the charge to Adam in the Garden and thrusts them into the telestial kingdom or the world. Then Peter assisted by James and John conducts them through the Telestial and Terrestrial kingdom administering the charges and tokens in each and conducts them to the veil where they are received by the Eloheem and after talking with him by words and tokens are admitted by him into the Celestial kingdom . . .⁵¹

Not only were the Mormons busy getting their temple endowments, they were also active in joining Freemasonry. According to David John Buerger, “in 1840 only 147 men in Illinois and 2,072 in the United States were Masons. By the time of the exodus to Utah in 1846-47, approximately 1,366 Mormon males in Nauvoo had been initiated into the Masonic order.”⁵²

BLOOD OATHS

Prior to 1990 those going through the Endowment Ceremony swore an oath of secrecy on pain of death. This was patterned after the Masonic oath. In the 1827 booklet *Free-Masonry Exposed* we read:

“I will . . . never reveal any part or parts, art or arts, point or points of the secret arts and mysteries of ancient Free-masonry . . . binding myself under no less penalty than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the roots.”⁵³

The initiate is instructed to draw “your right hand across your throat, the thumb next to your throat, your arm as high as the elbow in a horizontal position.”⁵⁴

The early LDS ceremony had very similar wording. In the 1931 exposé of the LDS ritual we read:

The left arm is here placed at the square, palm to the front the right hand and arm raised to the neck, holding the palm downwards and thumb under the right ear.

Adam . . . “We, and each of us, covenant and promise that we will not reveal any of the secrets of this, the first

token of the Aaronic priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign or penalty. **Should we do so, we agree that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots.**”

Sign—In executing the sign of the penalty, the right hand palm down, is drawn sharply across the throat, then dropped from the square to the side. . .⁵⁵

This oath was later modified. In the 1985 version the words were changed to “Rather than do so, I would suffer my life to be taken.” In 1990 the oath of secrecy no longer included the penalty of having one’s throat slit.⁵⁶

FIVE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP

Another element Joseph Smith borrowed from the Freemasons was the embrace on the five points of fellowship.⁵⁷ This was part of the culmination of the temple ceremony, where the

patron would come to the veil at the front of the room, put his/her left hand through a hole in the veil to the person’s shoulder, take the person by the right hand and embrace the person, with the veil in-between, on the “five points of fellowship.” Thus there would be five points at which their bodies would touch during the embrace. At that time the patron would give the man, representing God, the proper handshake and password which would make it possible to enter the next room, labeled the “Celestial room,” which represents entering the top kingdom of heaven.



Masonic Five Points of Fellowship

Since the revision of the ceremony in 1990, the embrace has been eliminated.⁵⁸ Now they simply place their “left arms . . . upon right shoulders.” They do not put their feet and knees together and all the wording concerning the Five Points of Fellowship has been completely deleted. On the next page is a comparison of a portion of the 1984 version with the 1990 version:

⁵⁵ Tanner, *Evolution*, page 16-17.

⁵⁶ Tanner, *Evolution*, page 78.

⁵⁷ *Duncan’s Masonic Ritual and Monitor*, http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/duncans_ritual/master_mason.htm

⁵⁸ Buerger, *Mysteries*, page 170.

⁵¹ Buerger, *Mysteries*, page 80.

⁵² Buerger, *Mysteries*, page 58.

⁵³ Capt. William Morgan, *Free-Masonry Exposed*, 1827, pages 22-23.

⁵⁴ Morgan, *Free-Masonry*, page 23.

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1984 Temple Ceremony	1990 Temple Ceremony
<p><i>Lord:</i> You shall receive it upon the Five Points of Fellowship through the veil.</p> <p>(The Officiator demonstrates the Five Points of Fellowship through the Veil with the temple worker who represents the Lord, as each point is mentioned.)</p> <p><i>Peter:</i> The Five Points of Fellowship are “inside of right foot by the side of right foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back, and mouth to ear.”</p> <p>The Lord then gives the name of this token, and asks:</p> <p><i>Lord:</i> What is that?</p> <p><i>Peter:</i> The Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Patriarchal Grip or Sure Sign of the Nail.</p> <p>(<i>Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony</i>, page 96)</p>	<p><i>Lord:</i> You shall receive it through the Veil.</p> <p><i>Peter:</i> It is received as left arms are placed upon right shoulders through the Veil.</p> <p>(The Officiator places his left arm through the mark of the compass and rests his hand on the right shoulder of the Lord, as the Lord places His left arm through the mark of the square and rests his hand on the right shoulder of the Officiator. The right hands remain clasped in the Patriarchal Grip.)</p> <p><i>Peter:</i> The Lord then gives the name of this token, and asks:</p> <p><i>Lord:</i> What is that?</p> <p><i>Peter:</i> The Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Patriarchal Grip or Sure Sign of the Nail.</p> <p>(<i>Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony</i>, page 138)</p>

In the 1990 revised version all references to the Five Points of Fellowship have been deleted.

Regardless of the reason for the change, it raises serious questions concerning the inspiration of church officials. If a person was previously compelled to receive the secret information necessary to enter heaven on the Five Points of Fellowship, how can the church leaders now by-pass God’s revealed way which was supposed to have been given to the prophet Joseph Smith? Wouldn’t this be equivalent to changing baptism by immersion to sprinkling?

As the patron gives the man at the veil the hand grip, he says the “name” of the Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is: “Health in the navel, marrow in the bones, strength in the loins and in the sinews, power in the Priesthood be upon me, and upon my posterity through all generations of time, and throughout all eternity.”⁵⁹ Notice that these code words contain no mention of God, Jesus, the atonement, no calling upon the grace of God. It is totally centered on gaining personal exaltation.

The person is then drawn through the veil into the last room of the endowment ceremony, representing the Celestial Kingdom, or God’s presence.

LECTURE AT THE VEIL

Sometimes at the end of an endowment session there would be a lecture given to the patrons. David John Buerger explained:

The St. George endowment included a revised thirty-minute “lecture at the veil” first delivered by [Brigham]

59 Tanner, *Evolution*, page 141.

Young. This summarized important theological concepts taught in the endowment and contained references to Young’s Adam-God doctrine. In 1892, L. John Nuttall, one of those who transcribed Young’s lecture, recalled how it came about:

In January 1877, shortly after the lower portion of the St. George [Utah] Temple was dedicated, President Young, in following up in the Endowments, became convinced that it was necessary to have the formula of the Endowments written, and he gave directions to have the same put in writing.

Shortly afterwards he explained what the Lecture at the veil should portray, and for this purpose appointed a day when he would personally deliver the Lecture at the Veil. Elders J.D.T. McAllister and L. John Nuttall prepared writing materials, and as the President spoke they took down his words. Elder Nuttall put the same into form and the writing was submitted to President Young on the same evening at his office in residence at St. George. He there made such changes as he deemed proper, and when he finally passed upon it [he] said: This is the Lecture at the Veil to be observed in the Temple.

A copy of the Lecture is kept at the St. George Temple, in which President Young refers to Adam in his creation and etc.⁶⁰

While Brigham Young’s lecture at the veil, including his Adam-God doctrine, is no longer used, one is left to wonder why a theological lecture by a prophet has been abandoned. Was Brigham Young wrong to preach it, or is the church wrong to reject it?⁶¹

60 Buerger, *Mysteries*, pages 110-111.

61 For more information on Young’s Adam-God theory, see *Changing World of Mormonism*, chapter 8, <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech8.htm>

ETERNAL MARRIAGE

Those who have received their endowments still need to be sealed to someone. To be “sealed” means you have entered into an eternal marriage. Many people, such as young missionaries, have been through the endowment ceremony yet still need to have a temple sealing. Mormons believe one cannot enter the highest level of the LDS Celestial Kingdom without this ceremony.

For years the LDS policy has been that a couple must do their wedding vows at the same time as they have their sealing ceremony in a temple, otherwise they must wait a year after a civil marriage to have a temple sealing. There was an exception for those living in a country that demanded a civil wedding prior to the temple ceremony, such as England. In those cases a couple did not need to wait a year after their public wedding to be sealed in the temple.

Traditionally, the LDS Church has put very strong emphasis on the value of a temple wedding, thus causing problems between families. The ruling meant that if a couple wanted to combine their wedding with their sealing the only ones who could witness the marriage were those who qualified to enter the temple. Thus non-LDS family and inactive Mormons were not allowed to see their loved ones get married. This has caused serious rifts in families.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported one woman’s experience of a temple marriage without her family:

Next month, Boise resident Kristen Talmage Lindsay and her husband will celebrate the 15th anniversary of their wedding in the Oakland Temple.

“I was the only member in my family, so my parents, my sister, grandparents and all the important people in my life had to wait outside,” she wrote on Facebook. “It was cruel and so painful for me. At the time, I told myself I was being obedient, and it’s just how it is. I so, so wish I had just had a civil ceremony.”

Lindsay had “sad tears on my wedding day,” she said. “I wanted to throw up because of how alone I felt without my family.”⁶²

However, couples will no longer be faced with this heartache. On May 6, 2019, the LDS leaders announced a new policy. Couples will no longer be penalized for having a civil marriage prior to the temple sealing. The statement reads:

62 Peggy Fletcher Stack and Scott D. Pierce, “LDS Church changes policy about civil ceremonies and temple sealings,” *Salt Lake Tribune* (May 6, 2019). <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2019/05/06/lds-church-changes-policy/>

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The policy requiring couples who have been married civilly to wait one year before being sealed is now discontinued. Couples who have been married civilly may be sealed in the temple when they receive their temple recommends.

Where possible, leaders should encourage couples to be both married and sealed in the temple. Where a licensed marriage is not permitted in the temple, or when a temple marriage would cause parents or immediate family members to feel excluded, a civil ceremony followed by a temple sealing is authorized.⁶³

Mormon author Jana Riess commented on the change:

In practice, the old policy created heartbreaking situations for many Mormons, especially converts who were sometimes the only people in their families to join the faith. Many have commented before that a religion that makes so much of uniting families forever in temples has caused unnecessary divisions in families here on earth.

In my own life as a Mormon, I’ve known many stories of exclusions from temple weddings. Protestant parents whose son converted to Mormonism were left in the cold when he married a Mormon woman in an LDS temple. His mother had a very hard time getting over the disappointment. And a woman I know who has experienced a “faith transition” and could not get her temple recommend renewed missed being part of her brother’s wedding with the rest of her family.

Now, hopefully, stories of exclusion from what should be a joyous event will be a thing of the past. Couples will be able to choose to have both a civil ceremony and a temple ceremony, though the First Presidency today encouraged local leaders to stress that it’s ideal to have both the wedding and the sealing in the temple.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

The LDS Church teaches that only members who receive their endowments and have been sealed in the temple will obtain the highest exaltation in the hereafter, meaning eternal life. For instance, President Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth prophet of the LDS Church, emphasized: “Only through celestial marriage can one find the strait way, the narrow path. Eternal life cannot be had in any other way. The Lord was very specific and very definite in the matter of marriage” (*Deseret News*, Church Section, November 12, 1977). On another occasion,

63 First Presidency Statement (May 6, 2019), <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/couples-married-civilly-authorized-for-immediate-temple-marriage>

64 Jana Riess, “Mormon leaders change policy on temple weddings,” *Salt Lake Tribune* (May 6, 2019), <https://religionnews.com/2019/05/06/mormon-leaders-change-policy-on-temple-weddings-no-more-one-year-waiting-period-after-civil-ceremony/>

President Kimball bluntly stated that “the ordinance of sealing is an absolute, and that without it there can be no salvation in the eternal world, no eternal life.”⁶⁵

Mormon theology teaches that those who have been married in the temple can become Gods. Apostle Hugh B. Brown taught:

Through the divine institution of celestial marriage, . . . men and women, joined together by the Holy Priesthood, may through their faithfulness attain immortality, eternal life and eternal increase; . . . When we speak of eternal increase, we speak not only of increase of posterity, we speak of increase of knowledge, and the power that comes with knowledge; . . . increase of intelligence, which is the glory of God; increase of all that goes to make up Godhood.⁶⁶

There is nothing in the Bible about a need for “celestial marriage” or an endowment ceremony. The Bible clearly proclaims that there is only one God (Isa. 43:10-11; 44:6, 8) and that “whosoever believeth

in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:15).

The fact that so many changes have been made in the temple ceremony over the years provides powerful evidence against the claim that it came to Joseph Smith by divine revelation.⁶⁷ While it is true that these changes have made the endowment more palatable to the LDS people, they do not bring the ceremony into conformity with Christian beliefs.

In Mark 2:21, Jesus said that “No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse.” The endowment ritual not only has many patches in it, but it also has patches on top of patches. Even though there have been improvements in the temple ceremony, it is still filled with material taken from the Masonic ritual and concepts that are not biblical. Sewing new patches on the many rents in this old garment will not solve the problem. The entire ceremony and the idea of men becoming Gods needs to be abandoned.

65 Spencer W. Kimball, “The Ordinances of the Gospel,” as cited in *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, (1976), page 204.

66 Hugh B. Brown, “Continuing the Quest,” as cited in *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, (1976), page 204

67 See timeline of the endowment’s historical development from 1842-2008, see <http://www.ldsendowment.org/timeline.html>

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE FREEMASONRY OF THE 1830s AND THE MORMON ENDOWMENT (PRE-1940)

By Richard Packham

Freemasonry (1820s)	Mormon Endowment (pre-1940)
Candidate is taken to a preparation room, where all his clothes are removed except his shirt. He is given a pair of underdrawers .	Patron removes all clothing, goes to a booth where he is clothed in a white undergarment .
Candidate is conducted to the door, where he is caused to give, or the conductor gives three distinct knocks , which are answered by three from within; the conductor gives one more, which is also answered by one from within. The door is then partly opened, and the Junior Deacon generally asks, “ who comes there? who comes there? who comes there? ”	Patron is led to the veil of the temple, where a worker gives three distinct taps with a mallet. Another worker asks from behind the veil, “ What is wanted? ”
Senior Deacon presses the point of a compass against the candidate’s naked left breast .	Symbol of the compass is in the patron’s garment over the left breast .
Meaning of the compass: “to keep us in due bounds with all mankind, but more especially with the brethren”	Meaning of compass: “an undeviating course leading to Eternal Life, a constant reminder that the desires, appetites and passions are to be kept within the bounds the Lord has set, and that all truth may be circumscribed into one great whole.”
Point of the mason’s square is pressed against the candidate’s naked right breast .	Garment has symbol of square over right breast .
Meaning of the square: “to square our actions”	Meaning of the square: “exactness and honor in keeping the covenants entered into this day”
“I also present you with a new name ; it is CAUTION”	“With these garments I give you a new name which is never to be divulged to anyone ... The name I give you is [a name selected from the Bible or the Book of Mormon].”
Grip of Entered Apprentice: “The right hands are joined together as in shaking hands and each sticks his thumb nail into the third joint or upper end of the forefinger.”	Grip or First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood: clasping the right hands and placing the joint of the thumb directly over the first knuckle of the other person’s hand.

Freemasonry (1820s)	Mormon Endowment (pre-1940)
Due-guard (or Sign) of Entered Apprentice: bring hands to front, palms one inch apart, the Master then draws his right hand across his throat, the hand open, the thumb next to the throat, and drops it down by his side.	Sign and penalty of First Token of Aaronic Priesthood: Sign: Raise right arm to the square, palm forward, thumb extended Penalty: place thumb under left ear, draw thumb quickly across the throat, drop hand to the side (done while reciting the penalty oath).
Oath: "I do hereby...solemnly swear...that I will ...never reveal... what I am about to receive... binding myself under no less penalty than to have my throat cut across, [and] my tongue torn out by the roots, ..."	Oath: "We ... covenant and promise that we will not reveal any secrets of this, the first token of the Aaronic Priesthood... Should we do so, we agree that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots. "
The Master and candidate holding each other by the grip of the Entered Apprentice, the Master says: 'What is this?' Ans: 'A grip.' M: 'A grip of what?' Ans: 'The grip of an Entered Apprentice Mason.' M: 'Has it a name?' Ans: 'It has.' M: 'Will you give it to me?' Ans: 'I did not so receive it, neither can I so impart it. ' (A similar dialog is repeated at each degree)	Peter gives Adam the first token of the Aaronic Priesthood Peter: 'What is that?' Adam: 'The first token of the Aaronic Priesthood.' Peter: 'Has it a name?' Adam: 'It has.' Peter: 'Will you give it to me?' Adam: 'I cannot, for it is the new name,' (A similar dialog is repeated at the veil for each of the four tokens)
The name of the grip is BOAZ	The name of the grip is the patron's "new name"
Entered Apprentice is given an apron of white lambskin, "an emblem of innocence "	Patron puts on a green apron "to cover your nakedness "
Due-guard of Fellow Craft Mason is given by raising the left arm until that part of it between the elbow and shoulder is perfectly horizontal, and raising the rest of the arm in a vertical position, so that that part of the arm below the elbow, and that part above it, forms a square.	Sign of the Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood is given by raising the left arm to the square , palm forward, right hand extended forward at the waist, with hand in cupping shape.
Penalty (called the "sign") is given by drawing your right hand flat with the palm of it next to your breast, across your breast, from the left to the right side, with some quickness, and dropping it down by your side	Penalty: placing the right hand across the chest with the thumb extended and then drawing it rapidly from left to right and dropping it to the side (done while reciting the penalty oath)..
Wording of oath: "binding myself under no less penalty than to have my left breast torn open, and my heart and vitals taken from thence and thrown over my left shoulder... to become a prey to the wild beasts of the field and vultures of the air ..."	"Should we [reveal the secrets of the Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood], we agree to have our breasts cut open and our hearts and vitals torn from our bodies and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. "
Pass-Grip (also called the "token") of Fellow Craft Mason is given by taking each other by the right hand as though going to shake hands, and each putting his thumb between the first and second fingers where they join the hand, and pressing the thumb between the joints. Real Grip is given by putting the thumb on the joint of the second finger where it joins the hand, and crooking your thumb so that each can stick the nail of his thumb into the joint of the other	The Grip is given by clasping the hand and pressing the thumb in the hollow between the first and second knuckles of the hand.
Name of Fellow Craft pass-grip: Shibboleth name of real grip: Jachin	Name of Second Token of Aaronic Priesthood: patron's own given name



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Freemasonry (1820s)	Mormon Endowment (pre-1940)
Sign of Master Mason is given by raising both hands and arms to the elbows perpendicularly, one on either side of the head, the elbows forming a square . The words accompanying this sign in case of distress are, " O! Lord, my God , is there no help for the widow's son?" As the last words drop from your lips, you let your hands fall in that manner best calculated to indicate solemnity.	Sign of First Token of Melchizedek Priesthood (pre-1930): The Sign is made by bringing both hands to the square , palms to the front. After 1930s: extending right hand, palm down, thumb extended; left hand extended, hand in cupping shape. Sign of Second Token of Melchizedek Priesthood: elevating both arms above the head to represent the crucifixion. The word "Pale" is spoken, the arms dropped to the square, "Hale," and then to the sides. "Hale"--thus--"Pale, Hale, Hale." (Since 1990 the words are " O God , hear the words of my mouth!" repeated three times.)
Due-guard (penalty) of Master Mason is given by putting the right hand to the left side of the bowels, the hand open with the thumb next to the belly, and drawing it across the belly, and let it fall ; this is done tolerably quick.	Penalty of First Token of Melchizedek Priesthood: right thumb is placed over left hip, drawn quickly across the belly, hands drop to the side (done while reciting the penalty oath).
Wording of oath: "...binding myself under no less penalty than to have my body severed in two in the midst , and divided to the north and south, my bowels burnt to ashes in the centre, and the ashes scattered before the four winds of heaven.."	Wording of penalty (First Token of Melchizedek Priesthood): "Should we [reveal these secrets], we agree that our bodies be cut asunder in the midst and all our bowels gush out."
The pass-grip of the Master Mason is given by pressing the thumb between the joints of the second and third fingers, where they join the hand	Grip of the First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood is given by placing the thumb on back of hand and the tip of forefinger in the center of palm, representing the piercing of the hand by a nail. It is called "The Sign of the Nail."
Name of the pass-grip of the Master Mason: Tubal Cain	Name of the First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood: "The Son," meaning the Son of God
Master's grip is given by taking hold of each other's right hand as though you were going to shake hands, and sticking the nails of each of your fingers into the joint of the other's wrist , where it unites with the hand. Sometimes called "the lion's paw."	Grip of Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood is given by clasping the right hands, interlocking the little fingers, and placing the tip of the forefinger upon the center of the wrist . Called the "patriarchal grip" or "sure sign of the nail."
Candidate is "raised" on the Five Points Of Fellowship by the Master: 1) inside of right foot to inside of right foot; 2) right knee to right knee; 3) breast to breast; 4) left hand to back; 5) mouth to ear. In this position he receives the secret word whispered, while hands are clasped in the Master's grip .	Patron converses with "God" through the veil, on the Five Points Of Fellowship : 1) inside of right foot to inside of right foot; 2) right knee to right knee; 3) breast to breast; 4) left hand to back; 5) mouth to ear. In this position he receives the secret name of the Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood while hands are clasped in the Patriarchal grip .
Secret Master's word, whispered to candidate on the Five Points of Fellowship: "Mah-hah-bone", which he is told means " marrow in the bone ."	Name of the Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood, given by God through the veil on the Five Points of Fellowship: "Health in the navel, marrow in the bones , strength in the loins and in the sinews, power in the Priesthood be upon me, and upon my posterity through all generations of time, and throughout all eternity."

Many writers who are familiar with both the Masonic rituals and the Mormon temple rituals (the "endowment") have remarked on their similarities as well as their differences. Many early Mormons were also Masons, and acknowledged the similarities, usually asserting that the endowment was the purer, uncorrupted form, restored to its original purity, sometimes referring to the endowment as "celestial Masonry." . . .

Conclusion

Even Masonic scholars and historians admit that the Masonic rituals did not originate in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem (as the Masonic legend relates), but were an outgrowth of the European builders' guilds of the late Middle Ages. This weakens the Mormon belief that the endowment ritual was given to Adam in the Garden of Eden. It seems much more obvious that Joseph Smith used basic elements from the 19th century Masonic ritual, and the Mormon endowment ritual is not ancient at all. The fact that the endowment has changed so much since its introduction in Nauvoo in 1842 also belies the Mormon claim that Joseph Smith was restoring the purity of the original (Adamic) ceremony.

(See Richard Packham's page at <http://packham.n4m.org/mason-endow.htm>)

MASONRY AND THE MORMON TEMPLE ENDOWMENT CEREMONY (EXCERPT)

By Sharon Lindbloom

mrm.org 18 February 2019

Earlier this month The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints posted a new essay to the Church History Topics section of its website. In the church's continuing effort to be more "transparent" about its past, the new essay, titled "Masonry,"¹ examines the relationship between the LDS temple endowment ceremony and Masonic ritual. . . .

The essay gives very little detail regarding the "similarities" between the LDS endowment ceremony and Masonic ritual, providing but one sentence in the introduction: ". . . Masons advance by degrees, using handgrips, key words, and special clothing," and another near the conclusion: "Masonic rituals deliver stage-by-stage instruction using dramatization and symbolic gestures and clothing . . ." Endowed Latter-day Saints recognize that similar elements are included in their temple endowment ceremony, but they have no way of knowing how closely the original ceremony imitated (and continues to imitate) the Masonic ritual. For example, it's not just that Masons use handgrips in their ritual; they appear to use virtually the *same* handgrips that Mormons are taught in the temple. BYU professor Charles Harrell notes,

Though different in certain respects, many similarities can be seen between this new temple endowment and Freemasonry. For example, the endowment incorporated the same five points of fellowship (since 1990 it has no longer been used in the Mormon endowment), the same kinds of gruesome penalties (also discontinued in 1990), and the same compass and square symbols. The Masonic ritual included a rehearsal of the "periods of creation" as initiates representing Adam progressed through stages according to their "sincere desire to make advances in knowledge and virtue." Initiates for Freemasonry also wore ceremonial regalia (aprons, robes, etc.) with instructions that they were "never to be forgotten or laid aside." BYU humanities professor George S. Tate notes that prayer circles were also conducted by "Freemasons of the period [who] arranged themselves in circular formation around an altar, repeating in unison the received Masonic signs."²

Regarding Masonry, the church essay claims "stark differences in . . . content and intent," yet the LDS temple endowment ceremony has much more in common with Masonic rituals – rituals that, according to the LDS church's essay, "originated in early modern Europe" – than it does with anything that God ever prescribed for His biblical temple. There are such fundamental differences between the biblical temple and LDS temples that, whether conceding the endowment ceremony's origination in Freemasonry or not, Mormon temples and the ceremonies performed therein are, in fact, unbiblical.

(See full article at: <http://www.mrm.org/masonry-and-the-mormon-temple-endowment-ceremony>)

1 <https://www.lds.org/study/history/topics/masonry?lang=eng>

2 Charles R. Harrell, *This Is My Doctrine*, Greg Kofford Books, 2011, p. 313.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS AND EMAILS

September 2018: I just wanted to thank Sandra for her videos on youtube. I am an ex-Mormon. I taught seminary for 2 years to teenagers and found it difficult to teach some of the things. I was advised by some good friends to leave it out if I didn't agree with anything.

I was a member for about 3 years in total and as a single female who was low down in the patriarchal system, I was usually very uncomfortable even very angry about being excluded from so many things unless I was married. . . . I just wanted to thank you for your knowledge and for explaining so much about the church to us so clearly.

September 2018: Hello Mrs Tanner: . . . you won't remember me but over 28 years ago you helped my wife and I come to know the Lord . . . I am . . . from New Zealand now coming back to USA.

September 2018: I was an LDS missionary serving in Fallon, NV in the spring/summer of 2000 and I nervously placed a mail order for 'Shadow or Reality.' I remember enclosing a note asking that the packaging not give any indication as to its contents since it would be passing through my Mission Office (as if it would come with a giant CONTAINS ANTI-MORMON LITERATURE stamped across the box or something—not sure what I was worried about lol).

I received the book a short time later (a beautiful hardcover when I'm pretty sure I had only ordered a paperback) with an invoice marked "NO CHARGE."

The book, of course, changed my life, but it was the gesture that touched me and has stayed with me all these years. Not sure who made the call back then to hook up a scared, broke missionary in such a kind way, but here's a heartfelt THANK YOU eighteen years later.

The Tanners and UTLM have done a lot of good for a lot of people. I'm one of them.

October 2018: I am a convert member of the lds church. I moved to Utah in august of 2017 . . . I have come across some peculiar information, mostly through your website as i try and read the journal of discourse concerning early church doctrine.

I am on a search for truth. I highly value salvation and its importance. If i am incorrect, i would rather be told so, than to slip myself to hell.

October 2018: Section 132 in D&C . . . gave me a lot of anxiety and devastation in my teens and 20's, and even 30's. It never felt like something Heavenly Father or Christ would say . . . yet the scripture said so, so I believed it had to be true . . . right? Well, I have been learning a lot over the past months, and I've found that my faith and confidence in Christ's character and how He has always treated and spoken to me is so much more important—and probably more correct than words men wrote in a book. I can lose confidence in men, but not in Christ.

In May of this year, I had just discovered that on the day my great (4 greats) grandmother Mary Ann Bradford was to marry Archibald Gardner, Brigham Young asked Archibald Gardner to also marry her mother. I found that very disturbing and perverse.

In researching Brigham Young's wives, I came across utlm.org and it mentioned Wife No. 19, Ann Eliza Young's book. I stayed up reading that book one night until it was light, and that morning, I felt the horror of that thing on my "shelf"—polygamy—that thing that always ate at me no matter how I tried to avoid it and trust it would be explained later, leave. I knew Christ could not be the author of such horror. I felt immense peace, love, and gratitude.

In the past month, I enjoyed your Mormon Stories interview and discovered that utlm.org is your website! Ha! There is a lot I do not yet know and I feel like I have been studying constantly for 6 months! But, I feel closer to Christ than ever.

November 2018: Sandra Tanner is not a very nice person she is the devil . . . Old nag lol.

November 2018: You saw me through my darkest hour and you don't even know it. One day, I will stop in at your bookstore and personally praise Jesus with you. Thanks sweet sister. You are doing God's work.

November 2018: Sandra, may you have a special Thanksgiving spent with family and those you love. Thank you so much for all the hard work you and Jerald did for so many years. God bless you for helping me to realize the falsehoods of Mormonism and how it lead me to the true Jesus Christ.

November 2018: Starting just a few months ago my eyes have been opened to the world outside of Utah and the Lds church. I haven't been able to put down you tube and podcasts. Thank you most to the Tanners and Mormon stories for helping me through my journey.

November 2018: Still is nasty as ever. I hope it's worth it, sucks to be you after this life.

December 2018: Years ago, I was a teenage convert to Mormonism. Needless to say, the missionaries did not tell me the whole story. When I started college, I met people with other worldviews and somehow I ended up receiving material from the Tanners. This was nearly 40 years ago and in my memory, I believe Sandra herself may have sent the tracts and a copy of the Book of Mormon with 3,000 errors which I requested. So, when I decided to look the Tanners up on the internet I found your site. I don't know the status of Mrs. Tanner but if possible I would like to say thank you and wish her well.

December 2018: Mrs. Tanner, thank so you so much for all of your hard work over these many years. I'm a Baptist Pastor in ___ Fl, but my family has a long history of LDS roots in England and Ireland. Thankfully, my grandmother realized the church wasn't true and the Book of Mormon was a clever attempt to deceive the massive by Joseph Smith. I can't tell you how helpful your books, articles, and interviews have been to me as I've witnessed and cared for Mormon people. Thank you so much! In Christ, Rev. M. H.

December 2018: I discovered this website in my research of how to help my Mormon friends see the Light of Jesus. All I can really say is thank you. Thank you for making this website. Thank you for providing everyone with this knowledge.

December 2018: Thanks so much for your lifelong effort to reveal the falsehood of Mormonism. I resigned my membership Oct. 6, 2018 – 42 yrs after my baptism in Ogden, UT.

I have so enjoyed the interviews you have done — John Dehlin, Ancient Paths, etc. I had never heard of you before this year.

God bless you and keep you in His tender care. You are a lovely lady. Wish I had met you a long time ago.

December 2018: Sandra, my Bride and I are so very thankful that God used you to influence our Daughter from joining the LDS and being unequally yoked. Jesus is everything, the cross is enough, Jesus plus nothing!

January 2019: I want to thank you for your years and years of work. I found my faith in the lds church failing in 1992 after attending the temple ceremony. I read everything I could to help me get to a better understanding. You and your husbands work was paramount to me! THANK YOU!

January 2019: I have watched many of Sandra's interviews and read many of her articles. It is hard to believe that intelligent people could be so misled. I have been impressed by her and her late husband's research to help people like myself (an uninformed Christian) become informed that I might better share with my Mormon friends. Also, I would like to subscribe to your newsletter.

January 2019: IT IS TOO LATE FOR JERALD. BUT THERE IS STILL A CHANCE FOR YOU! REPENT! Do not PROCRASTINATE the day of your repentance (Alma 34:33-35). You and your spouse have been leading thousands to Spirit Prison. Some of them are with him and many of them are in Paradise. Their eyes have been opened and they no longer believe your lies. He seems to be on the way to OUTER DARKNESS. YOU WILL JOIN HIM UNLESS YOU REPENT.

You are following the steps of KORIHOR. He preached and had success like You and Jerald.

You follow another False Jesus (Jesus' brother, Satan) and fight against The True Jesus and His True Church, the LDS Church or Mormons as most Gentiles call them by.

You call your anti-Christ teachings the Utah Lighthouse Ministry. Well, I went to your store and it was a DARKHOUSE!!! I do not want to go back there again.

There is an evil spirit in that house. One day, all your half-truths and lies will all be exposed. I can debunk most of them even now. After this, I don't want to waste my time reading your trash; and the satan's alive for the FALSE JESUS THE DEVIL. . . .

I WISH YOU WELL. Even though you have been LED ASTRAY, IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR YOU. COME BACK TO THE TRUE CHURCH. TAKE DOWN YOUR WEBSITE, CLOSE YOUR STORE AND RECYCLE ALL YOUR WRITINGS, TO START WITH. MARRY A FAITHFUL LATTER-DAY SAINT IN THE TEMPLE TO REPLACE JERALD.

OTHERWISE, I'm sorry for you, very, very sorry. Jerald wasted the days of his probation. Do not be another Korihor. Leave Jerald to his fate. Do not follow his bad example.

With Love, . . . Joseph Smith's Close Cousin

January 2019: Around 40 years ago your name was circulated around the area where I was growing up, as some kind of evil apostate. As you and I have the same first name, it caught my attention. Yet the “information age” had not quite dawned yet, so I was not able to get more information until about 15 years ago when a never-Mormon lent me “anti” books. Of course your “Shadow or Reality” book came as quite an enlightening read to me!

Well of course now your lectures and talks are easily available to watch and I have seen them all I suppose. Anyway, before the option is unavailable, I wanted to thank you. As a Mormon member for 40+ years and a direct descendant of Joe Smith and Brigham Young, etc. I was very conflicted about what I could clearly see as problems with the truth claims and fickle doctrines of the church and yet under blood oaths never to discuss my misgivings. The conflicts in my heart and mind drove me to seriously think of ending my own life.

I thought I was going crazy! My search for truths and the ideas by leaders that doing so was evil drove into my mind that I was completely full of darkness and unredeemable as a person. This ruined my marriage as well as poisoned my family relationships with siblings, parents, and my own children. Eventually I lost all my family, my home, and my birthright of Mormon faith. Just for seeking authentic truth outside the conflicting narrative LDS leaders spoon fed us members.

Your research, books, lectures, and all your work saved me! I wish I had words to express what a treasure you have been to many of us who have suffered by ignorance and blind obedience to Mormon lies.

Thank you, again and again.

January 2019: My wife _____ and I were married in 1997, later sealed in 1998. . . . Through a series of amazingly unlikely and absolutely God directed circumstances, [my wife] and I left the LDS church and found our faith in Christ in 2004 prior to ever stepping inside a Christian church. During an intense and very uncomfortable period of self-examination and questioning, pieces of your work found its way to me.

Thank you. I'll never forget praying to God and telling Him that I wanted to know the truth. I didn't care WHAT the truth was, but I just could not stand the possibility of being deceived concerning my relationship to Him. It was an older paper on the book of Abraham as I recall, which then lead me to some of your work on Church history and on and on to more of your work and the work of others.

In any case, God revealed His love and His grace to me and I was saved on my knees alone at a city park in May 2004, my wife found her way to Christ just a few short months later. Since then we have had the privilege of raising our family in a Christian home, been taught well in healthy churches, enjoyed a God centered marriage, and been instrumental in helping many others as they struggle with Mormonism and the very real fears associated with leaving. We've been able to work with our own Pastor, and several others as a resource and an advocate to those who are leaving, or whom are still damaged by their time and experience in the LDS faith. It seems like anger is the biggest challenge for many. Standing by them, and allowing them to work through it with someone who understands is not particularly thrilling work, but it's what

God has us doing. I'm certain that you can relate. It's on that note that I wanted to say a very overdue THANK YOU! You are respected and prayed for in our home.

March 2019: You cannot destroy the LDS church sweetheart it's gods church and it's here to stay good luck.

March 2019: I'm so grateful for all of research you and Jerald have done to outline the many changes to the church scriptures and the white-washed history of the Mormon church. I was able to mentally break from the church in 2014 and have never looked back. I will always be in your debt.

April 2019: It's amazing how you lie all the time. God will punish you, mark my words, God will punish you.

April 2019: I stumbled upon your site after I encountered several Mormons . . . and I wanted to figure what Mormonism was all about, and why it was considered a cult (I had no idea). Long story short, as I've begun to look into what they believe I've been shocked and saddened for the ways that they have been deceived, and just want to be more knowledgeable so that I know how to talk to them both about my faith, but also plant seeds of doubt about theirs.

I had begun some of my search by scouring through video after video, article after article, the official lds website, etc. I have been so overwhelmed with thankfulness as I've watched one video after another on youtube from Sandra Tanner. It has been such an incredible blessing to help me develop such a heart for the Mormon moms in my group, and their state of being lost. Mrs. Tanner is one of the best presenters of all the videos I've watched for sure.

April 2019: God help you after this life, you're one hateful lady. And I'm so glad that the LDS church is driving you guys nuts, yeah baby.

May 2019: You seem like a person who needs attention, I love you do you need a hug? Is there something missing out your life that you have to bash the LDS church. You live a very sad life and I feel so sorry for you why do you care what the church does? Do we kill you, did we talk mean about you or what? you seem like a woman who is searching and I feel so sorry for you.

May 2019: Why don't you go attack the Muslims who rape their kids or the Priest that molests little kids. By the way I am reporting you guys for slandering a religion.

May 2019: It was in the year of 2016, that I for the first time met LDS missionaries here in my hometown in Denmark. I was aware that Mormonism wasn't Christian, but I had not studied it much. Even though I know much more now, I still feel that must study it more. Last week I met with three Mormon missionaries from the U.S. and we had a lengthy conversation about who God is and differences between their beliefs and my own as a Bible believing Christian. So in the conversation it was made quite clear, that we have very different beliefs.

May 2019: I'm trying to figure out why people hate the Mormons so much.

REVELATIONS, POLICIES, DOCTRINES, AND DECREES

By Bill McKeever

Mormonism Research Ministry - mrm.org

On the morning of February 8, 1843, Mormonism founder Joseph Smith said that he had met with “a brother and sister from Michigan, who thought that ‘a prophet is always a prophet;’ but I told them that a prophet was a prophet only when he is acting as such” (*History of the Church* 5:265).

This escape clause is too convenient. Mormons often make reference to this statement in an attempt to dismiss embarrassing comments made by past leaders. A good counter to this excuse is asking how the Mormon knows Smith was “acting as a prophet” when he said this in the first place. After all, it was said in a private conversation in the Smith home and not from behind a pulpit at, let’s say, general conference. But let us assume Smith was offering a correct assessment.

In the March 2012 edition of *Ensign* magazine, Apostle Dieter F. Uchdorf wrote an article titled “Why We Need Prophets.” On page 5 he said, “Listen to general conference with an ear willing to hear the voice of God through his latter-day prophets.”

This comment is not at all out of harmony with statements from other general authorities. For example, 11th President Harold B. Lee gave a conference message in April 1973 where he said, “If you want to know what the Lord has for this people at the present time, I would admonish you to get and read the discourses that are delivered at general conference; for what the Brethren speak by the power of the Holy Ghost is the mind of the Lord, the will of the Lord, the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” (*Conference Reports*, April 1973, 176. See also Lee’s book, *Stand Ye In Holy Places*, 183).

Of course, comments like the above raise many questions. For example, if a prophet can be counted on to speak the mind and will of the Lord in general conference, was Brigham Young speaking the mind and will of the Lord in his April 9, 1852 conference talk when he said Adam was God and the “only God with whom we have to do”? The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints renounced Young’s teaching after his death, even though Young stated that this pronouncement was “doctrine” so important, that to treat it “lightly or with indifference,” it “will prove their salvation or damnation” (*Journal of Discourses* 1:51).

Since its inception in 1830, LDS Church leaders have claimed that what separates their religion from all others are prophets who provide “latter-day” or “modern”

revelation. They use this concept to maintain the trust of its members. While Doctrine and Covenants 3:2 says God does not “vary from that which he hath said,” the problem is that church history is replete with course corrections.

DOCTRINE OR POLICY?

Speaking in general conference in 1993, Mormon Apostle Boyd K. Packer stated, “Some things cannot be changed. Doctrine cannot be changed” (“For Time and All Eternity,” *Ensign* (Conference Edition), November 1993, 22). Such a statement must be confusing for LDS members. While leaders insist that doctrine remains constant, “policy” can be changed.

Consider that for much of its history, those of African heritage were denied the priesthood. In 1978 this was reversed, and today all worthy male members of the LDS Church are allowed to hold this important office. Was this not a doctrine? Prior to 1978 members were certainly led to believe this was so. In his book *The Way to Perfection*, 10th President Joseph Fielding Smith apparently thought it was when he said,

This doctrine did not originate with President Brigham Young but was taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith. At a meeting of the general authorities of the Church, held August 22, 1895, the question of the status of the negro in relation to the Priesthood was asked and the minutes of that meeting say: “President George Q. Cannon remarked that **the Prophet taught this doctrine**: That the seed of Cain could not receive the Priesthood nor act in any of the offices of the Priesthood until the seed of Abel should come forward and take precedence over Cain’s offspring” (*The Way to Perfection*, 110. Emphasis mine).

On August 17, 1949, the First Presidency, led by President George Albert Smith, sent an official statement to Brigham Young University President Ernest L. Wilkinson. It said,

The attitude of the Church with reference to the 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, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization**, to the effect that Negroes may become members of the Church but that they are not entitled to the Priesthood at the present time. (www.fairmormon.org. “Statements made by Church leaders regarding the priesthood ban”).

Fast-forward to the 21st century. On April 4, 2019, the church released a statement on its MormonNewsroom.org website titled “Presidency Shares Messages from General Conference Leadership Session.” Dallin H. Oaks, President Russell M. Nelson’s first counselor in the First Presidency, said, “While we cannot change the Lord’s doctrine, we want our members and our policies to be considerate of those struggling with the challenges of mortality.” The statement went on to say that

effective immediately, children of parents who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans-gender may be baptized without First Presidency approval if the custodial parents give permission for the baptism and understand both the doctrine that a baptized child will be taught and the covenants he or she will be expected to make. A nonmember parent or parents (including LGBT parents) can request that their baby be blessed by a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder.”

Oaks also said that “same-gender marriage by a church member still is considered a serious transgression. However, it no longer will be treated as apostasy for purposes of church discipline.” This announcement completely reversed an earlier mandate given in November of 2015, raising many questions regarding this “policy vs. doctrine” debate.

In 2015 it was announced that those in same sex marriages *were* to be considered apostates, and that children with parents involved in same sex marriage could not be baptized unless they disavowed the behavior and practice of their parents. This position was then included in *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* under headings 16.7.2 and 16.7.3.

On January 10, 2016, Russell M. Nelson detailed how the 2015 resolution came about in a talk called, “Becoming True Millennials.” Speaking to LDS young adults at BYU Hawaii, he said,

This prophetic process was followed in 2012 with the change in minimum age for missionaries and again with the recent additions to the Church’s handbook, consequent to the legalization of same-sex marriage in some countries. Filled with compassion for all, and especially for the children, we wrestled at length to understand the Lord’s will in this matter... We met repeatedly in the temple in fasting and prayer and sought further direction and inspiration. And then, when the Lord inspired His prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, to declare the mind of the Lord and the will of the Lord, each of us during that sacred moment felt a spiritual confirmation. It was our privilege as Apostles to sustain what had been revealed to President Monson.

Notice the language Nelson used. He made clear that the conclusion they reached in 2015 was sought by

prayer and fasting and that it was *revealed* to President Thomas S. Monson as “the mind of the Lord and the will of the Lord.” Nelson and his colleagues also “felt” a spiritual confirmation.

How is this any different than how Mormon doctrine comes about? Are we really to believe that God revealed this controversial “policy” in late 2015, but always had in mind that he would rescind it in April of 2019? Does it not show that “feeling” something to be true at the time can one day show that your feelings were misleading?

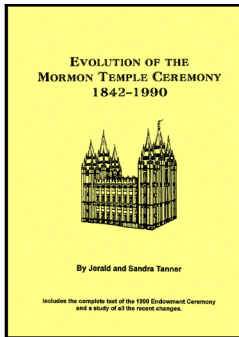
Consider also Nelson’s mention of lowering the age of male missionaries from 19 to 18 back in 2012. Why was this changed? We know that it hasn’t really affected the convert baptism rate. What we do know is since that was implemented, many young missionaries are coming home early due to homesickness. Compounding this feeling of failure is the shame many young people will experience when they return to their families and local congregations. Could this have been more a “policy” based in perceived pragmatism?

It appears that the leadership is knowingly engaged in a shrewd and confusing game of semantics. If the 2015 announcement was not technically a doctrine, it certainly seems to fit the definition of a “decree” since it was enforced with the full authority of the First Presidency behind it. That being the case, shouldn’t members follow the counsel of Alma 41:8 in the Book of Mormon? It states very clearly that “the decrees of the Lord are unalterable.” It ought to be pointed out that this verse has a footnote directing the reader to the LDS King James Version edition that references Mormon 9:9. It says, “For do we not read that God is the same, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?”

The next verse says, “And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles.” Since Mormons insist that they believe in a God of miracles, how is this contradiction to be explained?

Again, D&C 3:2 teaches how God does not “vary from that which He hath said.” If God really spoke to Monson and Nelson in 2015, does it make sense that He would reverse Himself in 2019?

Reversing its 2015 decision—whether it is called a “revelation,” “policy,” “doctrine,” or “decree”—appears to have been based on the trends within this secular culture or even the pressure put upon them by some LDS members. This is not the way that the God of the Bible operates. While church leaders tell their members that they are guided by revelation reflecting the mind and will of God, the evidence seems to suggest differently. ■



Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner Price: \$6.00

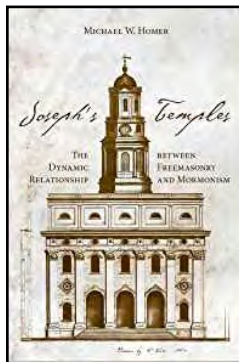
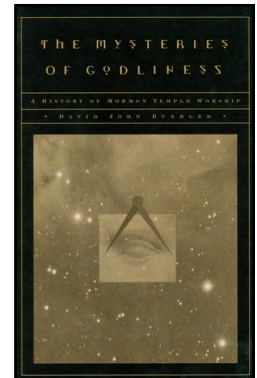
Contains the actual text of the 1990 revision of the highly secret endowment ritual and other accounts of the ceremony dating back to 1846. Shows that Joseph Smith borrowed from Masonry in creating the ritual and that it has evolved over the years. Also shows all of the serious changes made in the ceremony in 1990 and changes made in the washing and anointing ceremony in 2005.

The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship

By David John Buerger Price: \$20.00

Well-documented study of the development of LDS temple rituals and their relationship to Masonry.

Providing a fascinating chronology of developments associated with Latter-day Saint temples and temple ordinances, this source book discusses the origins of the temple concept, comparative rituals, and changes in ceremonies. Buerger charts the abandonment of the adoption sealing which once linked unrelated families and examines the near disappearance of the second anointing, once considered the crowning ordinance of the temple.



Joseph's Temples: The Dynamic Relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism

By Michael W. Homer Price: \$35.00

The parallels between Mormon ritual and doctrine and those of Freemasonry have long been recognized.

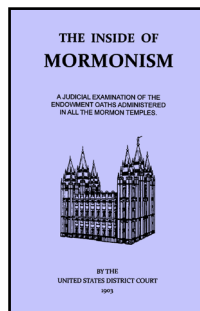
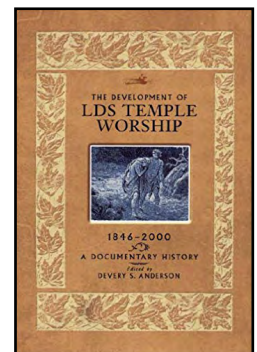
There are indications that Freemasonry was a pervasive foundational element in Mormonism and that its rituals and origin legends influenced not just the secret ceremonies of the LDS temples but also such important matters as the organization of the Mormon priesthood, the foundation of the women's Relief Society, the introduction and concealment of polygamy, and the church's position on African Americans' full membership.

Joseph's Temples provides a comprehensive examination of a dynamic relationship and makes a significant contribution to the history of Mormonism, Freemasonry, and their places in American history.

The Development of LDS Temple Worship: 1846-2000

By Devery S. Anderson Price: \$45.00

Devery S. Anderson has brought together a comprehensive collection of official documents on temple ceremonies, limited only by what would be inappropriate to discuss publicly. The documents include rulings by the First Presidency on changes to the ceremonies, letters to temple and stake presidents and bishops reminding them of temple policies, minutes of Quorum of the Twelve meetings, excerpts from sermons and Church publications, and commentary by apostles and temple presidents in diaries, letters, oral histories, and temple scrapbooks.



***The Inside of Mormonism: A Judicial Examination of the Endowment Oaths Administered in All the Mormon Temples* (1903)**

By The United States District Court Price: \$7.00

An early examination (1903) of the temple oaths and penalties, as well as their political implications.

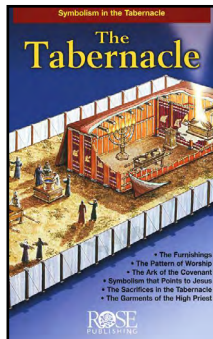
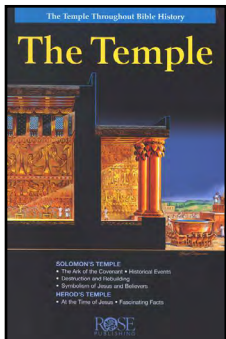
“The purpose in publishing this evidence at this time is to show that a man who is a member of any one of the three quorums which constitute the government of the Mormon Church and are the fountain of authority in that Church, is not a loyal citizen of the United States, and cannot, by the most liberal construction of his covenants and obligations, consistently qualify as a member of either House of Congress.” (Introduction, p. 4)

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