

My intent here was to approach the Church's claims about itself, its history, and its mission, from several different perspectives, rather than relying on a single dimension. The conclusion seems inescapable: the Church is not what it claims to be, and the claims that it makes are demonstrably false. And while there is a wonderful community of believers at the 'grass roots' level, the actions, attitudes, and behaviors of the Institutional Church are incompatible with what a reasonable person would expect from God's 'true Church.'

The Church has actively discouraged its membership from seeking information from any source but those officially sanctioned and approved by the Church. Those who venture outside those restrictions are generally vilified, and seen as rebellious, wicked, not to be trusted. The epithet 'anti-Mormon' is attached to anything and everything that does not support the official positions and teachings of the Church, and members are strongly urged to avoid anything or anyone that might threaten their Testimony.

This attitude is the complete opposite to the openness to truth expressed by Church leaders like J. Reuben Clark and James E. Talmage, quoted at the very beginning of this document. Consider these more recent statements:

*"It is quite another thing to criticize or depreciate a person for the performance of an office to which he or she has been called of God. It does not matter that the criticism is true."*

Dallin H. Oaks, "Reading Church History," CES Doctrine and Covenants Symposium, Brigham Young University, 16 Aug. 1985, page 25

*"It is my province to teach to the Church what the doctrine is. It is your province to echo what I say or to remain silent."*

Bruce R. McConkie, 1981, in a Letter to Eugene England

*"I know that the history of the church is not to seek apologies or to give them," Oaks said in an interview. "We sometimes look back on issues and say, 'Maybe that was counterproductive for what we wish to achieve,' but we look forward and not backward." The church doesn't "seek apologies," he said, "and we don't give them."*

Dallin H. Oaks, Salt Lake City Tribune, Feb. 4, 2015

*"There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not. Some things that are true are not very useful."*

Boyd K. Packer, CES Symposium, Aug. 22, 1981

*"I have a hard time with historians because they idolize the truth. The truth is not uplifting; it destroys. I could tell most of the secretaries in the church office building that they are ugly and fat. That would be the truth, but it would hurt and destroy them. Historians should tell only that part of the truth that is inspiring and uplifting."*

Boyd K. Packer, Quinn (ed), Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History, p 103, fn 22

The authoritarian nature of current Church Leadership is demonstrated quite clearly in these quotes. If Church leaders were fully and humbly confident of the truthfulness of their claims, the accuracy of the history they teach the membership, this need for controlling the conversation, for discouraging open inquiry and discussion, would not exist.

The Church recently reduced the ages for Missionary service for both men and women. Whether or not this was the intent, one of the results would be to have these young members, who apparently

are leaving the Church in significant numbers, being more fully indoctrinated and committed to the Church during those critical post-adolescent years. This is when most people start the important process of asking serious questions about life, values, purpose, and begin the process of defining for themselves who they are.

In the interest of fairness, the following are links to a few of the 'Apologetic' websites, where active Church members attempt to address the various issues and controversies surrounding the Church, just a few of which I've touched on here.

I have read from these sites extensively, especially at the beginning of my journey. I found them interesting, but not convincing. My biggest dissatisfaction here is that they typically start with their conclusions, find evidence that will support that conclusion, and trivialize or ignore the evidence that doesn't. This is the opposite of the Scientific Method, as I've discussed above.

I have also been dismayed seeing so much energy there being spent attacking the individuals presenting arguments against the Church, rather than dealing with the issues themselves.

[FairMormon](#)

[Mormon Voices](#)

[SHIELDS](#)

[Jeff Lindsay's Website](#)

I also wanted to include links to the Church's recently published Essays on a number of topics. Some of these are difficult to find, and are not directly linked from the main homepages:

[Church Essays](#)

[Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo](#)

While these are not as complete or as thorough as many, myself included, would want, they are at least the first time where the Church has officially acknowledged these problems, with an attempt to respond to them. Before this, many of these issues were just dismissed as 'anti-Mormon lies.'

As I've stated earlier in this document, I fully expect there to be continued changes in both Church Doctrine and Policy, resulting from the pressures created by the ready availability of accurate information which undermines the basis for established Church Doctrine and Policy.

And most likely, these changes will be seen as the result of 'continuing revelation.' I would be more willing to accept this if in fact these changes and revelations expanded upon and clarified previous revelations, doctrine and policy. But instead, they completely contradict those prior 'revelations,' and those prior proclamations are then simply ignored. This completely undermines the validity of the whole process of 'revelation', past or present.