

Is it Fair for Christians to Criticize and Attack the Mormon Religion?¹

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints often complain that Christians persecute them and attack their religion. Is it fair to critically examine other religions? As a former agnostic, I had to critically examine Christianity in order to come to faith in 1988. I think that all religious people should critically examine their religion for truth - including those who are Christians. The Bible encourages a kind of faith based upon reason (see The Role of Reason in Christianity).

The LDS church does not encourage critical testing of their faith, but, in fact, discourages it. Mormons and potential converts are encourage to pray to determine if their faith is true. Given that the Mormon religion is based upon a feeling that it is true, can one person's feelings be tested against another's?

If the LDS church made no truth claims about their religion and other religions, testing would be difficult. However, since it's inception, the Mormon Church has attacked and accused all of Christianity of being apostate and being an "abomination" in the sight of God. The accusation is not backed by specifics, but merely through a "revelation" by its founder, Joseph Smith.² Official LDS scripture states that the Mormon Church is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth."³ The accusation that all of Christianity is apostate is still taught in current official LDS church publications, such as *Gospel Principles*.⁴

In reality, we are not attacking the Mormon Church, but merely defending ourselves from the original accusation leveled at the Christian church by Joseph Smith. Since the Mormon Church continues to this day to accuse the Christian Church of being false, it would be expected that we Christians would have the right and responsibility to defend the indestructible Church that Jesus Christ established in the first century.⁵

¹Written by Richard Deem. Permission given to freely distribute.

²My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” (*Joseph Smith—History of the Church Chapter 1:18-19*)

³And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually- (*Doctrine and Covenants: Section 1:30*)

⁴“More and more error crept into Church doctrine, and soon the destruction of the Church was complete. The period of time when the true Church no longer existed on earth is called the Great Apostasy.” *Gospel Principles*. 1997. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 105.

⁵And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (*Matthew 16:18*)