



A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS & SECULAR MEDIA

MORMONISM'S FREE RIDE

FAMOUS PEOPLE - INFAMOUS RELIGION

By Albert James Dager

When Glenn Beck held his Restoring Honor rally in 2010, he was joined on the platform by patriots of every stripe, including many prominent Christian leaders. Those leaders lauded him not only for his commitment to morality and Constitutional government, but for his faith in God. There was no question of Beck's religious commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), or Mormons. His religious beliefs were certainly made all the more evident in his book, *The 7: Seven Wonders That Will Change Your Life*, co-authored with psychiatrist Keith Ablow, M.D. Beck's popularity rates high among Christians who, because of their fondness for him, have been willing to overlook the blasphemous doctrines of the religion he so vociferously professes.

The current candidacy of former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney for the office of President of the United States has again brought Mormonism into the spotlight. Taking advantage of the moment, the LDS is currently conducting a vigorous campaign of its own with constant ads on radio and television depicting their members as everyday citizens who end their treatise on their occupations with the words, "And I'm a Mormon."

As much as believers in the true Jesus are vexed by these ads, we recognize that they are just another appeal to another false religion, expected of the world system. Our concern is not as much with the world's response to all the hype promoting Mormonism as a valid Christian religion, as it is with the response of many Christians. There is a growing tendency within Christianity to overlook the spiritual threat of Mormonism in favor of a perceived temporal benefit by joining with it for moral and political purposes.

On stage with Romney throughout the various debates among Republican contenders are a number who claim to be Evangelical Christians. Adhering to proper campaign etiquette, none of the professed Evangelical Christians running against him has made an issue of Romney's religion. When the pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, Robert Jeffress, was interviewed shortly after

introducing Rick Perry at the Values Voter Summit in October, he pointed out that his denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, "has officially labeled Mormonism as a cult." Adding that Romney is a "non-Christian," he created a media flap that put Perry on the spot. In response, Perry campaign spokesman Robert Black quickly dissociated Perry from Jeffress' comments, stating, "The governor does not believe Mormonism is a cult. He is not in the business of judging people. That's God's plan."

Although Evangelical Christianity has historically held that Mormonism is indeed a religious cult according to several benchmarks, the presidency of Barack Obama has contributed greatly to Christians accepting Mormonism on the grounds of a shared conservative political philosophy and moral ethic. Major voices that claim fellowship within Evangelical Christianity have backed off exposing Mormon doctrine, and have tried to find whatever common beliefs they can in order to justify their social and political agendas.

Since 2000, even before Obama took the office of president, teams of Mormon scholars have held closed-door dialogue sessions with evangelical teams led by Fuller Theological Seminary president Richard Mouw. And although these sessions have not been officially sanctioned by the LDS, Mormon president Thomas S. Monson permitted an ecumenical group of 90 Utah evangelical churches to use the Salt Lake City Tabernacle for a revival meeting in September, 2009. Evangelicals and Mormons sang Christian songs and prayed together.

World-famous pastor Rick Warren openly promotes his church growth training series to all churches including the LDS. In regard to this ecumenical approach, Warren stated in a 2003 interview with *USA Today*, "I'm not going to get into a debate over the non-essentials. I won't try to change other denominations. Why be divisive?" He cited as his model Billy Graham, whom he called, "a statesman for Christ ministering across barriers."



PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MITT ROMNEY

I suppose Warren considers “non-essential” the nature of God, particularly who Jesus and the Father are, the meaning of salvation, the ultimate achievement of deity for faithful Mormons, etc.

During the 2008 presidential campaign the divide crumbled further. One among many examples is an article that appeared in *Christianity Today* written by Mormon Robert Millet, professor of ancient Christian Scriptures at Brigham Young University, and evangelical Gerald McDermott, professor of religion at Roanoke College. The two co-wrote the book, *Claiming Christ: A Mormon-Evangelical Debate* (Brazos Press, 2007). In their *Christianity Today* article the two disregarded the essential differences between biblical faith and Mormonism. They gave a false impression that there is a unity of beliefs:

...Mormon beliefs are not as un-evangelical as most evangelicals think. Unlike Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons hold firmly to the deity of Christ. For Latter-Day Saints, Jesus is not only the Son of God but also God the Son. Evangelical pollster George Barna found in 2001 that while only 33 percent of American Catholics, Lutherans, and Methodists agreed that Jesus was “without sin,” Mormons were among the “most likely” to say that Jesus was sinless.

Most evangelicals would also be surprised to learn that the Book of Mormon contains passages that teach salvation by the merits and grace of Christ (“There is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” 2 Nephi 2:8) and others that require personal trust in Christ for salvation, such as 1 Nephi 10:4-6: “All mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be saved they should rely on this Redeemer.”

Of course there is still doctrinal distance between Mormons and evangelicals. But this has not stopped important evangelical leaders—such as Richard Land, the late Jerry Falwell, Franklin Graham, Chuck Colson, and Cal Thomas—from saying that these doctrinal differences should not by themselves disqualify Romney from a presidential nomination. As Marvin Olasky, editor of *World* magazine, put it, “If he faces Hilary Clinton, I’ll vote for him in a Utah minute.”¹

These are but a few examples of how evangelicals’ dissatisfaction with the direction American politics has taken the past several decades—particularly the election of Barack Obama—coupled with Mitt Romney’s candidacy, is steadily eroding the once sacred distinction between biblical faith (or at least “orthodox Christianity”) and blatantly false religion. If Christians are going to support Romney, or any other candidate who is a Mormon, they should be aware of the spiritual impetus that propels their lives.

¹ Robert Millet and Gerald McDermott, “Mitt’s Mormonism and the ‘Evangelical Vote’: Can conservative Protestants vote for a member of what they consider a cult?” *Christianity Today*, May, 2007. (Web only: christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/mayweb-only/122-42.0.html?Start=2)

There have been many excellent exposés of Mormonism, so I need not go into detail here. But a refresher on just a few critical Mormon doctrines is in order.

God Is an Exalted Man

Mormonism teaches that God the Father is a “perfected man” (Doctrines & Covenants 130:22). This means the Father was at one time a sinful man, but attained godhood through the resurrection according to his faith and works. He has a resurrected body of flesh and bones (D. & C. 88:27). “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!...I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil so that you may see....God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did; and I will show it from the Bible (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345-347). Smith “proves” that God was a man who dwelt on an earth (not **the** earth) by allegedly quoting Jesus: “As the Father hath power in Himself, even so hath the Son power.” He then asks, “to do what?” then answers, “Why what the Father did. The answer is obvious—in a manner to lay down His body and take it up again.” In other words, Jesus had power to raise Himself from the dead; ergo, the Father must have been raised from the dead. That is quite a reach. Besides, there is no such saying of Jesus. What Smith may have been trying to reference was John 10:17-18:

Therefore My Father loves Me because I lay down my life so that I may take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

There is no proof from Scripture that the Father was ever a man who died and was resurrected. The god of Mormonism is a false god of Joseph Smith’s imagination.

God the Father Has a God Over Him

Joseph Smith claims to have received “a testimony concerning Abraham,” which supposed that “Intelligences exist one above another, so that there is no end to them.” He continues: “If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor? And everything comes in this way. Paul says that which is earthly is in likeness of that which is heavenly. Hence if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that He had a Father also?” (*Teachings*, p. 373). (Continued on page 13)

Man Can Become a God Like the Father

“As God is, man can become; the saints of the ages have devoutly sought godhood itself” (D. & C. 132:17-20, 37).

According to the Mormon doctrine of “Eternal Progression,” men begin their progression and advancement in pre-existence as spirit offspring of exalted Parents (our heavenly Father is believed to have many “wives” through whom he procreates in sexual unions without end). This means that all humans were procreated by God, not created. The angels are procreated sons of God, and

some become men or women when born through women on earth. Man gains a mortal body during his earth life and should work toward the goal of attaining a state of glory, honor and exaltation to be like the Father, eventually ruling over and populating his own universe. It is believed that Adam was in his pre-existence the archangel Michael, who is the prince of God's people.

Satan Is The Spirit Brother of Jesus

Satan, the Devil, is a spirit son of God who was born in the morning of pre-existence (D. & C. 93:25).

Mormonism teaches that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three gods who work in unity as one God. At some time in eternity past, the Father presented His plan of salvation—the plan whereby the “spirit children” of the Father would be enabled to gain tangible bodies and, if faithful in all things, progress to godhood, equal to the Father. Before he became Satan (“adversary”) one of the Father’s spirit sons offered to be the Redeemer. But because he was not in full agreement with the Father’s plan he was cast down to become Satan, “the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will” (Mormonism’s Book of Moses 4:1-4).

This means, according to Mormon doctrine, that Satan was at one time a son of God no differently than was Jesus. Had he been found faithful, Satan rather than the Word of God who created all things would have become the Redeemer.

The Jesus of Mormonism is a different Jesus than the Jesus of the Bible who is the I AM from eternity (John 8:58).

There are myriad other aberrant doctrines of Mormonism that, as I’ve said, have been well-addressed for the past century and a half. The purpose of this writing is to bring into question how true believers in Jesus and the God of the Bible should view the candidacy of Mormon politicians.

We do not disagree with Romney’s generally conservative political posture. Christians may agree or disagree on most of the issues without calling into question the genuineness of their faith. Nor is there any question of Romney’s ability to govern, or of his good intentions. He appears to be a moral man who genuinely cares about the direction this country is headed.

But what about the credibility he brings to Mormonism? Christian leaders have already given much credibility to that false religion by lauding Glenn Beck. By unequivocally endorsing Romney, Christians run the risk of further blurring the lines between biblical faith and Mormon deceptions. Not only non-believers might be persuaded to join the LDS based on a shared moral/political agenda, but undiscerning, ignorant, and baby Christians might find themselves being swayed into joining. And as long as Christian leaders refuse to proclaim and explain the difference between Romney’s beliefs and the true Gospel, whether or not they support his candidacy, they are aiding and abetting Satan’s work of deception.

Which is more important to the believer in Jesus—achieving political dominance in the nation, or maintaining and defending the purity of the faith? Are the cares of this world of greater interest to the average Christian than loyalty to the Kingdom of Heaven? It appears as if the answer is increasingly yes.

If there is one person who might be led into the Mormon deception because of Christian leaders pandering to the political agenda of conservatives at the expense of spiritual truth, there will be much to answer for before the Lord.

With the current ecumenical mood sweeping through evangelical Christianity the discernment of Christians is becoming more and more muted. Leaders within the churches and Christian media are focusing more on cooperation with organizations that support moral objectives at the expense of the Gospel and the purity of the faith. That goes for political candidates who profess Christianity as well. They would rather compromise the faith than stand firm for biblical truth.

I would have had more respect for Rick Perry and Herman Cain were they to at least state their agreement with Romney on political issues while making it clear that his religion is a satanic deception. Admittedly that would virtually destroy their campaigns, but frankly, the way they’ve conducted themselves of late seems to have done that for them anyway.

At this time the frontrunner for the Republican nomination is Newt Gingrich, followed in second place by Mitt Romney. Gingrich has his own baggage, and is out of favor with many Christians for his two divorces, particularly his first, which has been reported in a manner that gave the false impression that he decided to divorce his wife after she was stricken with cancer. Gingrich’s first wife, Jackie Battley, has consistently maintained that the circumstances surrounding their divorce have been greatly overstated by the media. She had inaugurated discussion of divorce months before she was hospitalized. She had been Gingrich’s high-school math teacher in Columbus, Georgia. They began dating after he graduated, and were married in 1962 when Gingrich was only 19 and she was 26. The couple had already decided to divorce in 1980. They had been separated for months when Battley was hospitalized. During her ordeal Gingrich did what he could to help her and to bring their two girls to visit her.

I state these things not to paint a rosy picture of Newt Gingrich (who converted to Roman Catholicism), or to promote him as the desired choice between the two frontrunners, but to set the record straight for Christians. In no way do I condone his divorces. But there is a lesson for us. Some Christians who would shun Gingrich for his past sins have no problem endorsing Romney whose entire life is lived in spiritual deception. Gingrich has admitted his sin, at least in relation to his two divorces. Romney continues to deceive others (including many Christians) by his public defense of Mormonism.

God can forgive them both, and both should be in our prayers.❖

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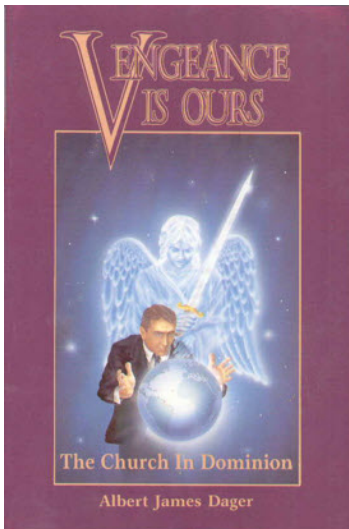


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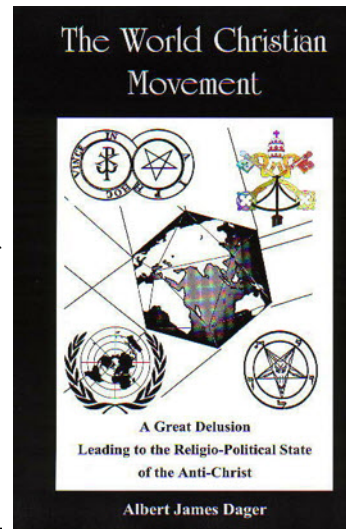
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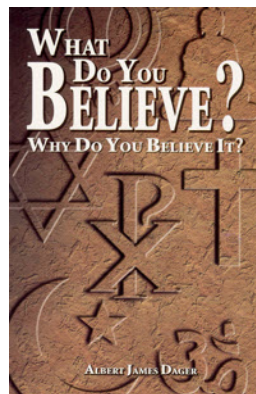
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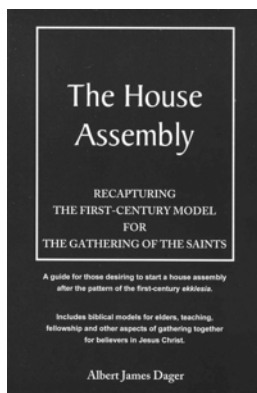
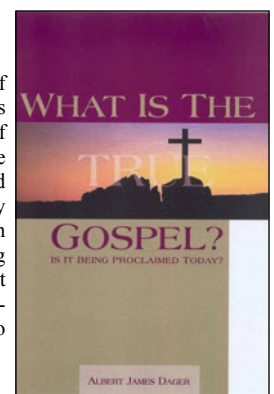


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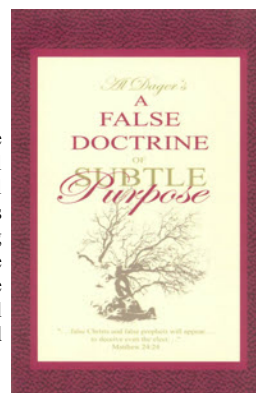
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