

Mormonism: Cult or Culture?

A Contextualized Approach to Ministry Among Mormons

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Latter-day Saints have a strong religio-cultural identity that makes them resistant to the gospel. Yet increasing numbers of Mormons are leaving the LDS Church, and many are open to the historic biblical gospel. Churches and ministries that are reaching Latter-day Saints are moving away from the doctrinal polemics of the past to wisely proclaim the gospel in ways that take into account the unique cultural identity of Latter-day Saints.

I. Who Are the Mormons? Understanding Mormonism as a cultural identity

A. Mormonism as a culture

B. Mormonism as an unreached culture

A “**people group**” is an ethno-linguistic group with a common self-identity that is shared by the various members. **Unreached** groups lack enough Christ-followers and resources to evangelize their own people.

2010 Utah Population Data
• 68% Mormon (1.9 million)
• 2.2% Evangelical Protestant (63K)
• 0.75% Ex-Mormon evangelicals (20K est.)

II. What is Contextualization? Understanding the apostolic model

Contextualization involves presenting the unchanging truths of the gospel in a way that is intelligible within the unique and changing contexts of cultures and worldviews.

The example of the apostle Paul
Pisidian Antioch (13:16ff)
Lystra (14:8ff)
Athens (17:16ff)

III. How Do We Reach Mormons? Doing ministry differently than in the past

A. Approaching Mormonism as a cult – “rational apologetics”

B. Approaching Mormonism as a culture – missiology

Missiology is the science of how to best communicate the gospel and its power to change lives in a way that draws on the insights of anthropology, history, education, and other disciplines, within the framework of biblical theology.

C. Examples

Narrative Theology

Experiential Epistemology

Persecution Complex

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(* = LDS author or point of view)

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