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NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

CHAPTER 13

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND THEIR OTHER NAMES

- **New Religious Movements (NRMs)**
 - Arose in modern times and have sufficient size, longevity, and impact to merit academic study
- Other names for NRMs
 - **Sect:** New and small group that has emerged from an established or larger religion
 - ~~**Cult:** Religious group that is extreme in its dedication to its beliefs~~

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND THEIR OTHER NAMES

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Cult is not an academic term;
often used as an insult to
religions outside mainstream

established or larger



COMMON DOCTRINES IN NRMs

- **Apocalyptic**
 - Belief that the world will end soon and be replaced by a perfect society
- **Millenarianism**
 - Belief in a thousand-year reign of peace on earth near the end of time
- **New Age**
 - Eclectic beliefs and practices aiming to bring the individual to a state of higher consciousness

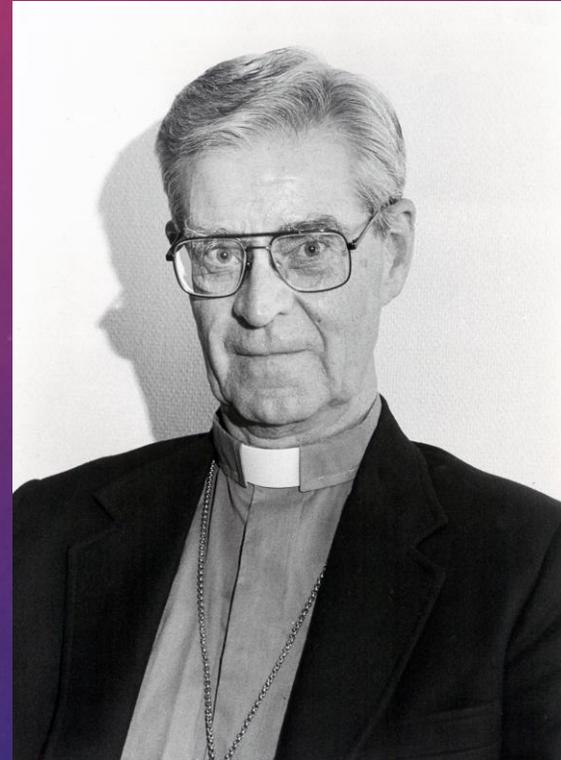
SIGNIFICANT NRMs IN THE UNITED STATES

- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Seventh-Day Adventists
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Scientology

THREE RULES OF RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

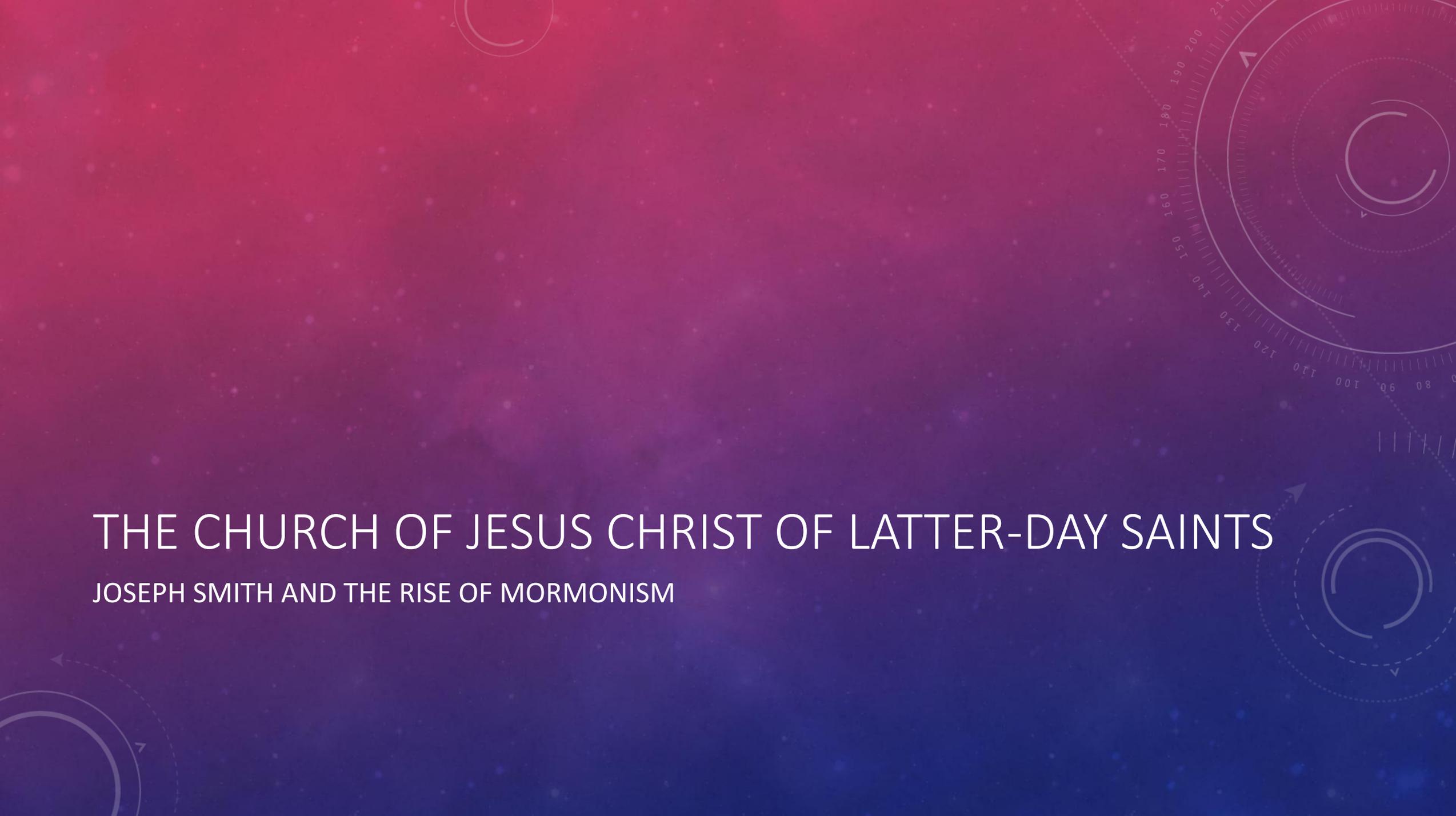
Three Rules of Religious Understanding

1. When trying to understand another religion, ask the adherents of that religion and not its enemies.
2. Don't compare your best to their worst.
3. Leave room for "holy envy" – i.e., recognize elements in other religions that you admire or wish could be reflected in your own religious tradition.



Krister Stendahl

Swedish theologian and New Testament scholar, and Church of Sweden Bishop of Stockholm. He also served as professor at Harvard Divinity School.

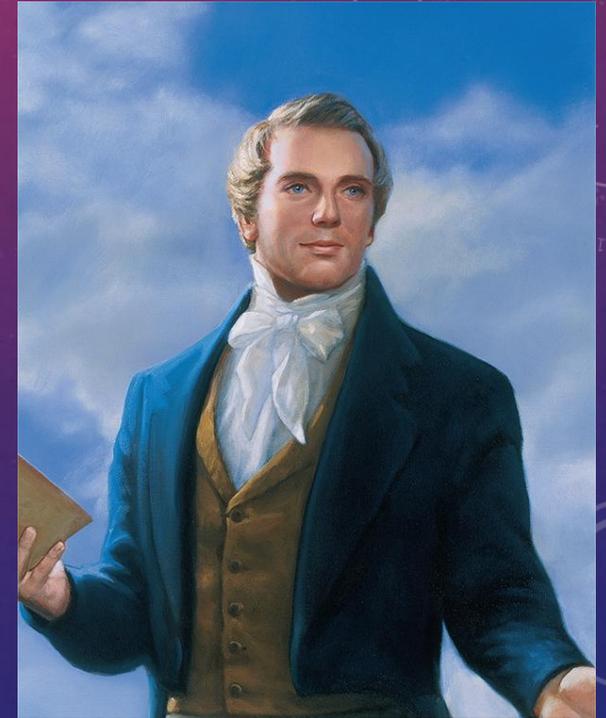


THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE RISE OF MORMONISM

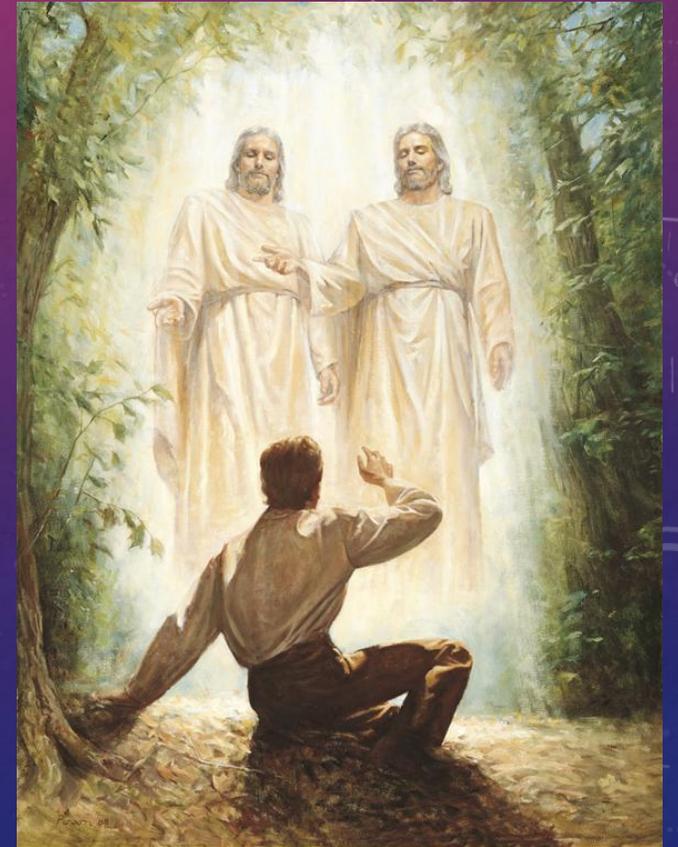
JOSEPH SMITH

- Born into a poor farming family in Vermont in 1805
- Due to business deal gone bad, family forced to sell the farm
- 1816 moved to Palmyra, in Western New York
- Forced to live by their labor
- After about two years, Smiths were able to acquire a farm
- Joseph had to work hard; little formal education



THE FIRST VISION

- Caught in cross currents of Second Great Awakening
- At about age 12, he became concerned about religion
- Read Bible verses that promised “if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally ... and it shall be given him.”
- Leads to “First Vision”



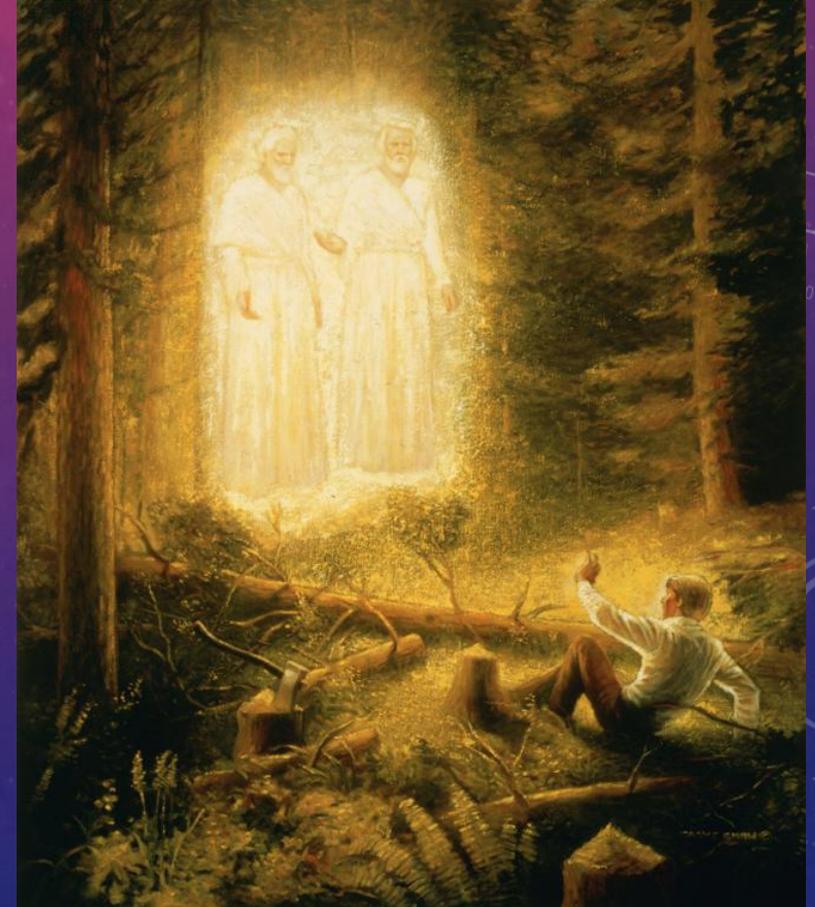
JOSEPH SMITH, AMERICAN PROPHET



SIGNIFICANCE OF FIST VISION

Theophany: Visible manifestation of deity

- Central to LDS theology;
- Christian sect but with significant differences:
 - Nature of Godhead (three separate, distinct personages)
 - Rejection of Trinity
 - Apostasy & Restoration
 - Rejection of historic Creeds
 - Continuing Revelation
 - Rejection of closed canon

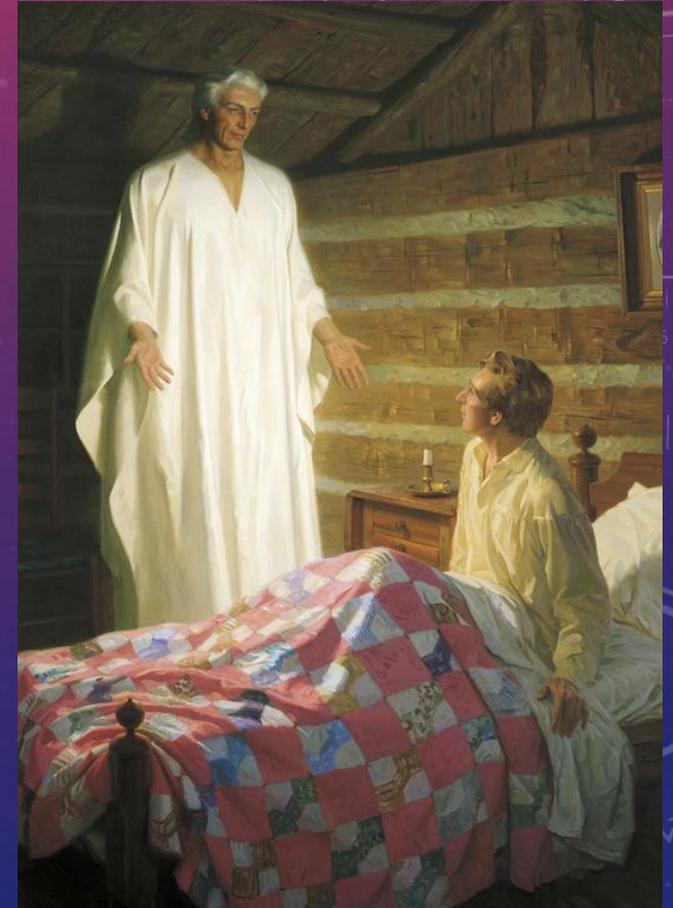


THE FIRST VISION

- First Vision did not interrupt routine
 - Ridiculed by local clergy for speaking of vision
 - Understood only in terms of person conversion
 - No sense of mission or prophetic identity

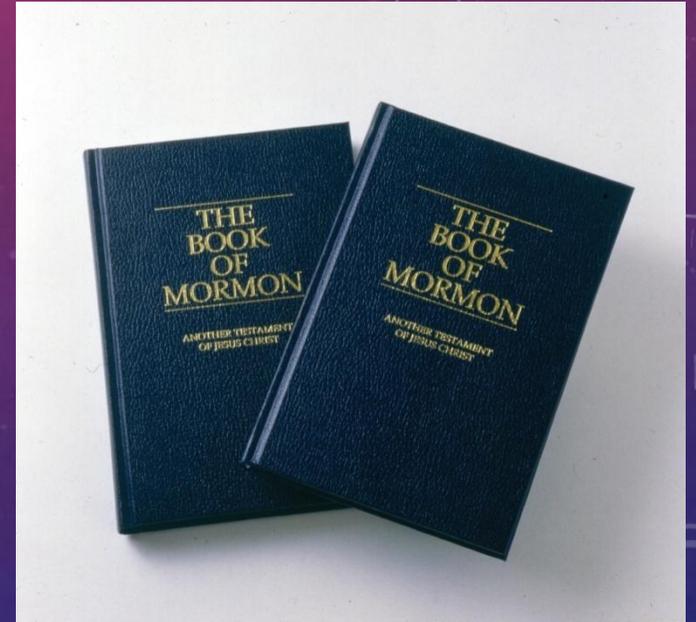
ANGEL MORONI

- Turning point in 1823
- Troubled by his sins and follies, he lay praying in his bed
- He noticed the room grow brighter, then a person appeared in the light standing above the floor
- Spoke of a book written on plates buried in a nearby hill
- Included with the plates were instruments that Joseph would use to translate the plates



BOOK OF MORMON

- Book of Mormon first uniquely American Scripture comparable to the bible (divided into books and chapters)
- Martin Harris called it “Mormon Bible”; critics called it the “Gold Bible”
- 1000 year (primarily religious) history of rise and fall of civilizations in the Western Hemisphere
 - Wars are fought, governments crumble, prophets rise, people are converted, and Jesus Christ appears after his resurrection



BOOK OF MORMON

- Christian message replete in Book of Mormon
- Book of Mormon anchors Mormonism to Christianity
 - However many innovations, Mormons never left basic Christianity behind
- Its historicity is the foundation for believing Joseph Smith was a prophet

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ;

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

- Following the publication of the Book of Mormon, the Church is formally organized in Fayette, New York April 6, 1830
- Persecution begins almost immediately; Smith charged with disorderly conduct; acquitted
- Active proselyting Church; virtually every male convert sent out as a missionary
- Sidney Rigdon, a Cambellite minister, converted in Kirtland OH; brings congregation of 100 with him
- Smith moves new Church to Kirtland

CITY OF ZION

CONCEPT OF GATHERING

- Independence MO selected as City of Zion
- Mormon converts directed to gather to Kirtland or Independence
- Links Smith and Mormonism to founding of Cities and Civic power
- Purpose of Gathering
 - Await the Second Coming
 - Temple Building
- Kirtland Temple is Built



ANTI-MORMON POGROMS

- Plans to build Zion constantly thwarted by Anti-Mormon Pogroms
- Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon tarred and feathered in 1833

Pogrom,
Mob attack, condoned by authorities, against persons and property of a religious, racial, or national minority.

TAR AND FEATHERS: LIMITS OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION IN FRONTIER AMERICA



ANTI-MORMON POGROMS

- Mormons in Jackson county suffer extreme violence
 - Tar and feathers, whippings, crop burnings, roofs destroyed; cabins burned to the ground and cattle driven off
- Mormons flee to Clay county, only to find more persecution. Flee again to uninhabited area in northern Missouri

Pogrom,

Mob attack, condoned by authorities, against persons and property of a religious, racial, or national minority.

MORMON WAR, 1838

- Unable to find legal redress or protection, Mormons vow to defend themselves
- Creation of Danites to defend property and expel dissenters
- Lilburn Boggs issues “Extermination Order”

“The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace – their outrages are beyond all description.”

HAUN'S MILL MASSACRE

- Oct 30 party of Missourians attack Mormon settlement at Haun's Mill
- Mormons were totally unprepared
- Missourians killed everyone who could not get away
 - 17 lay dead, including women and children
- Mormons forced to flee the state of Missouri



NAUVOO

- Welcomed by people of Illinois
- Establish Nauvoo on swamp land of the Mississippi
- 1840 City of Nauvoo chartered by State Government
 - Home rule with local militia
 - Smith becomes Mayor and military leader
- Within 4 years, Nauvoo is nearly the size of Chicago

POLYGAMY (PLURAL MARRIAGE)

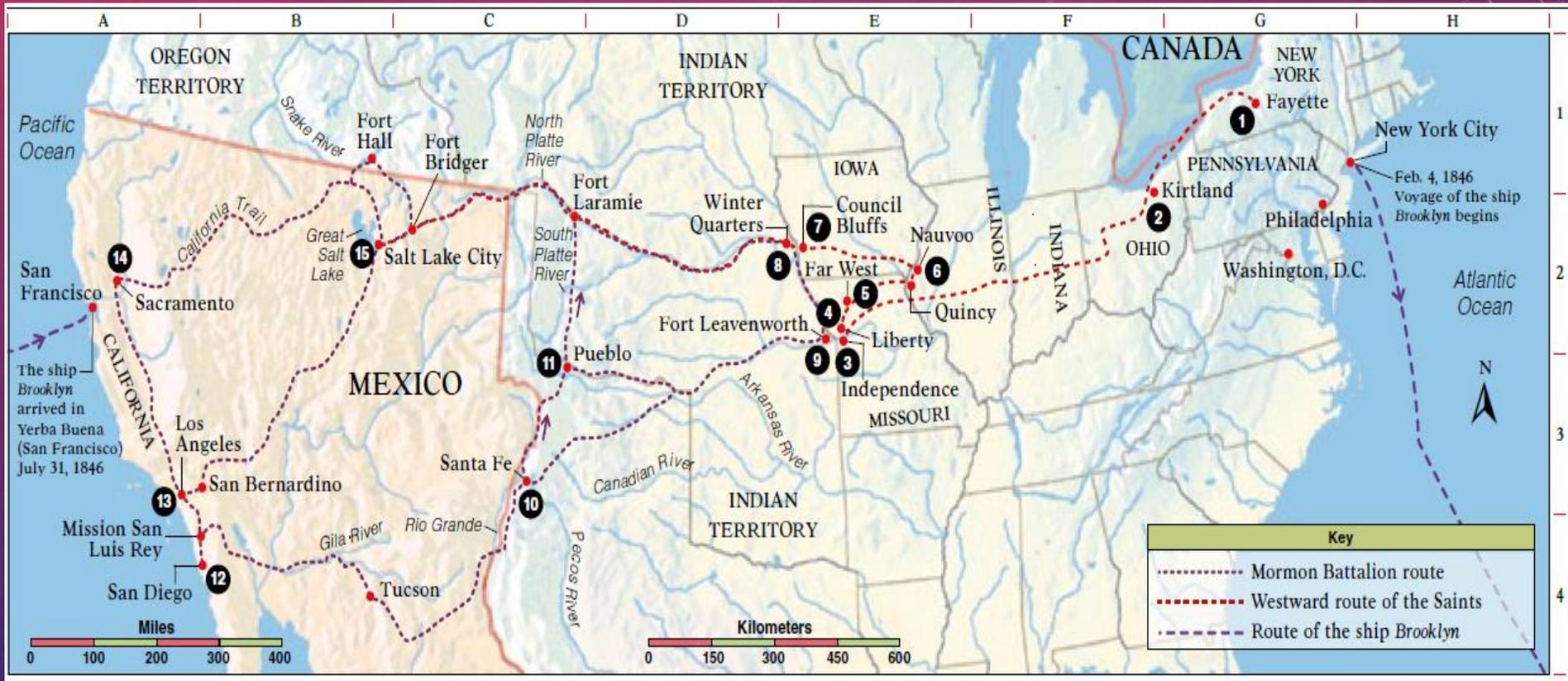
- Smith begins introducing polygamy quietly
- During Nauvoo era, polygamy was not openly taught
- Rumors begin to circulate; causes division among Mormons and disgust among enemies
- Emma was at times ambivalent, at times hostile
- Joseph takes several wives
 - Many were not conjugal
- Polygamy will be openly taught and practiced in Utah
- After lengthy battle with Federal Government, Polygamy discontinued in 1890

MARTYRDOM

- Mormon dissenters publish anti-Mormon newspaper, the Nauvoo Expositor
- Nauvoo City Council orders its destruction
- Joseph Smith ordered to Carthage to face charges
- While in jail, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum are shot and killed
- No one convicted of the crime



WESTWARD MOVEMENT & PUSH MIGRATIONS



DISTINCTIVE TEACHINGS

- Christian denomination but with important distinctions from Protestant and Catholic doctrines
- Articles of Faith
 - (1) Rejects creedal concept of trinity
 - (2) Rejects doctrine of original sin
 - (3) Salvation based on grace and works
 - (6) Apostacy and Restoration
 - (8, 9) Rejection of closed canon

STANDARD WORKS (SCRIPTURES)

Holy Bible

- *Believed to be the word of God “As far as it is translated correctly”*

Book of Mormon

- *Tells the story of ancient Israelites who sailed to America centuries before Jesus Christ, led by prophets*

Pearl of Great Price

- Selection from the Revelations, Translations, and Narrations of Joseph Smith

The Doctrine and Covenants

- *Contains the continuing revelation of God’s word through LDS prophets*

DISTINCTIVE TEACHINGS

- Word of Wisdom
- Law of Chastity (no sexual activity before marriage and absolute fidelity after marriage)

PRACTICES

- Lay leadership
- Missionary Work
- Temple Worship

TEMPLE WORSHIP

- Temple Ceremonies
 - Baptism for the dead,
 - Endowment,
 - Sealing of families
 - Temple clothing



TEMPLE CLOTHING



ANTI-MORMONISM

- Writings which seek to “expose,” ridicule, or disprove Mormon teachings and practices
- Stems from
 - cultural, political, and economic factors of the 19th century
 - Disaffected former Mormons
 - Non-Mormons offended by Mormon doctrines and/or success
- Use caution when researching Mormonism
 - Remember Krister Stendhal’s “Three Rules of Religious Understanding”

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

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THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

- Psychologically oriented NRM founded by L. Ron Hubbard in the 1950s
- Hubbard introduced his ideas through his books
 - “The Original Thesis” and “Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health”
 - Aimed to understand mental and emotional problems and offer means to end them



THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

- Broadened his focus after a few years to a more religious approach and called it Scientology
- Believed that the goal of human existence is survival in and enjoyment of the world
 - Deeds and thought habits that lead to survival are good and yield pleasure
 - Deeds that go against survival are destructive
- Believed that if the mind is not fully functioning, the “reactive mind” takes over

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

- **Engram:** Image of past experience stored in the mind that hinders full functioning
- Hubbard developed auditing to help people learn about their personal engrams and deal with them
 - **Auditing:** One-on-one counseling
 - Goal is to **clear** the mind of engrams
 - **E-meter:** Instrument used to identify engrams

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

- Exteriorization - When the individual consciousness senses that it has left the body
 - **Thetan**, the true self of every person, is a being distinct from the body
 - Interaction between Thetans gave rise to MEST, which led to the creation of the physical universe
 - **MEST**: Matter, energy, space, and time, which form the physical universe and trap thetans

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

- **Operating Thetan (OT) levels**
 - Levels at which a Scientologist lives as a fully conscious, well-functioning thetan
- **Dynamics:** The drive for survival that encompasses eight aspects
 - Aspects include the individual survival, the family, the nation, all humans, animals, the physical and spiritual sides of the universe, and infinity or God

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY - ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

- Flag Service Organization
 - Society of highly dedicated church members established by Hubbard
 - Headquarters - Clearwater, Florida
 - Provides instruction for the highest OT levels
- **Sea Organization**
 - Group of full-time church workers who assist national and local Scientology organizations

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY - ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

- Scientology functions through its local churches
 - Local churches are organized on a business model
 - Administered by the Church of Scientology International
 - Religious Technology Center (RTC) has final authority for the religion
 - The church launched a program in 2012 to transform all local Scientology churches into Ideal Organizations

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY - CONTROVERSIES

- Physicians and psychiatrists have charged that Dianetics involved practicing medicine without a license
- Scientology has been subject to opposition from the federal government
- Former members have criticized the church for:
 - Deceiving its members financially and harrying journalists
 - Acting vindictively against those who try to leave the church