

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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The Title of Liberty, maker unknown, Cuna Indian from Panama (mola—cloth appliqué, reverse embroidery and embroidery, 13" × 15"). In rallying his people to defensive battle, Captain Moroni rent his coat and wrote upon it: "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children—and he fastened it upon the end of a pole . . . and he called it the title of liberty" (Alma 46:12–13). Church Museum of History and Art.

Despite many battles, Moroni did not become bloodthirsty. He operated within legal authority, and when he gained advantage over enemies, he offered them freedom if they would lay down their weapons and take an oath not to war again. He introduced new armor and fortifications and sought the direction of a prophet about what his armies should do (Alma 43:23; *see also* BOOK OF MORMON, HISTORY OF WARFARE IN). Five hundred years later, MORMON, the chief editor and compiler of the Book of Mormon, wrote, "If all men had been . . . like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever" (Alma 48:17). Mormon even named his son, MORONI₂, after him.

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MELVIN J. THORNE

MORONI₂

Moroni₂ is the last prophet and author of the last book in the Book of Mormon. His life spanned the latter part of the fourth century and the early fifth century. He led ten thousand troops in the last battle against the LAMANITES, serving under his father MORMON, who was commander in chief. Prior to the final war, Mormon had abridged the PLATES of Nephi that covered a thousand years of his people's history. He commanded Moroni to conclude the Nephite record by writing "the sad tale of the destruction of [their] people" (Morm. 8:3) and to preserve all the sacred writings (Moro. 9:24).

After Moroni wrote the required postscript to his father's record and prophesied its future discovery (Morm. 8–9), he added an abridgment of ancient Jaredite engravings, a record of a nation that had inhabited the Western Hemisphere for approximately 1,700 years prior to the Nephites' arrival, or perhaps overlapping their arrival (the Book of Ether). "According to the will of the Lord," he then added ten concluding chapters on ORDINANCES, principles, and church practices that he called the Book of Moroni.

Moroni spoke with prophetic assurance of conditions in the LAST DAYS because "Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Morm. 8:35). With fervor, he proclaimed Christ to be a God of miracles who is the same in all ages unless unbelief causes miracles to cease. He spoke with confidence of the divinity and teachings of Jesus Christ because "I have seen Jesus, and . . . he hath talked with me face to face, . . . even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things" (Ether 12:39).

Moroni also recorded prophecies of the BROTHER OF JARED, a Jaredite prophet, who helped lead his colony to the New World. These prophecies are "sealed" to come forth at a future day (Ether 4:1–7).

Moroni's last entry in the Book of Mormon was likely written about A.D. 421, thirty-six years after the final battle. He then finished writing the title page of the Book of Mormon and finally buried the Book of Mormon plates to preserve them for a future generation.

Fourteen hundred years later this same Moroni, then a resurrected being "sent from the presence of God," appeared to Joseph Smith, a seven-

teen-year-old youth, on the night of September 21, 1823, and told him of the sacred records deposited in a stone box in a nearby hill (the hill Cumorah) in what is now Ontario County, New York, within a few miles of Joseph's home in Manchester Township. Moroni appeared to Joseph more than twenty times during the next six years, tutoring him for his calling as a prophet and giving counsel and information concerning the acquisition, translation, and guardianship of the Book of Mormon plates (Joseph Smith—History 1:27–54).

Moroni is frequently identified with the Church because portrayals of him blowing a trumpet, handling the gold plates, or instructing Joseph Smith are commonly displayed—for instance on LDS temple spires, on covers of several printings of the Book of Mormon, and in paintings. A depiction of Moroni with a trumpet is the official emblem on grave markers of American Mormon servicemen.

Moroni is commonly portrayed with a trumpet because of an interpretation of a prophecy of John the Revelator wherein he saw an angel heralding the return of the everlasting gospel to the earth in the last days:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters [Rev. 14:6–7].

[See also Angel Moroni Statue.]

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H. DONL PETERSON

MORRILL ACT OF 1862

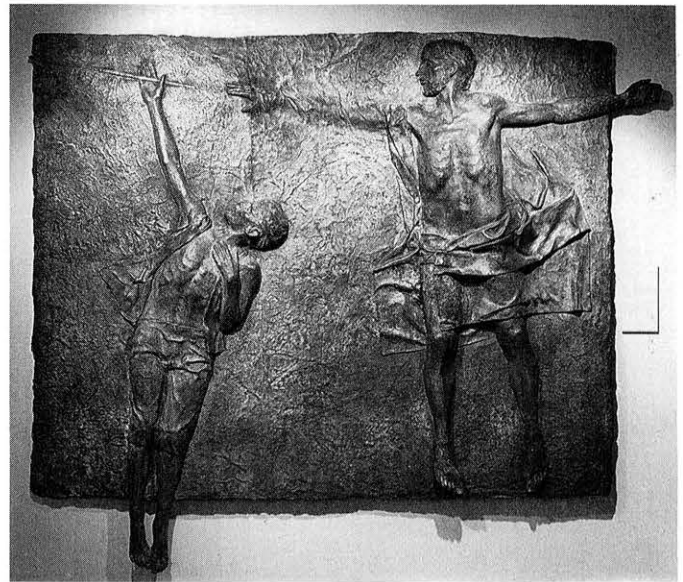
See: Antipolygamy Legislation

MORTALITY

Mortality is not viewed as a curse by Latter-day Saints, but as an opportunity and an essential stage

in progress toward obtaining EXALTATION. The ultimate purpose of the period of mortality from birth to death is to prepare to meet God with a resurrected body of glory (John 5:25–29; Alma 12:24). Death is a temporary separation of the body and the spirit, and, for those who have striven to live in accordance with God's commandments, is not something to be feared: "Fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full" (D&C 101:36; cf. Mosiah 16:7; D&C 42:46).

Although mortality is a temporary stage of life, it is essential for an individual's ETERNAL PROGRESSION for two reasons. First, it is necessary to receive a PHYSICAL BODY. God the Father, in his perfected state, has a body of flesh and bone, as does the Son (Luke 24:36–39; D&C 130:22). Mortal men and women, as the spirit offspring of God, also gain physical bodies in mortality that are indispensable to their progress, and will rise in the RESURRECTION and be perfected (Job 19:25–26; Luke 24:39). Without a physical body one cannot have a fulness of joy.



The Rod and the Veil, by Franz Johansen (1975, cast bronze and resin, 84" × 99"). "The figure reaching through the veil suggests those in the spirit world concerned about our progress in mortality; the iron rod itself, reaching into both spheres, is the sure guide through mortality upon which all of us, like the slipping boy, must struggle to retain a firm grip" (artist's description). Church Museum of History and Art.