

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, popularly known as *Mormons*, is one of the most pervasive cults in the world today. It was founded by an American by the name of Joseph Smith, who claimed to have had a vision in which God forbade him to join any of the established churches when he was a teenager.

Some years later Smith had another vision where an angel called *Moroni* is said to have told him that God's true message for mankind was written down in Egyptian hieroglyphics on gold tablets buried in Palmyra, New York.

Not long after this Smith received permission to unearth the plates, and claimed that when he did, he was given the ability to translate them. This work, published in 1830, became known as the *Book of Mormon*. In that same year, Smith and some friends founded the "Church of Christ," which was later to be given its longer title quoted above.

The organization grew rapidly, but, apparently, persecution forced the group to transfer to Illinois, where Smith was shot dead while being held in custody on a number of serious charges. After this, Mormon leader Brigham Young took most of the church's members to Utah where it still remains strong today.

Joseph Smith's claims have long since been proven fraudulent and the Book of Mormon, the integrity of which was said to have been guaranteed by numerous angelic visits during its translating and printing, and said by Mormons to be the most correct book on Earth, has been altered about 3,000 times since its first edition.

Smith also claimed the right to guide his church through further revelations, one of which included permission for polygamous marriages, and the possibility for all males to become gods. The official church renounced the practice in 1890, but a significant breakaway group still holds to it.

Mormons believe in the theory of many gods and teach that all males have the possibility of attaining eternal divinity. Joseph Smith stated that God has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as that of any man, and that He lived on Earth as a human being before progressing to His present state.

In the Mormon church, Jesus Christ is seen as a separate god from the Father, Elohim. For them, Jesus was created as a spirit child by the father and mother in heaven, and is the older brother of all men and spirit beings.

Mormons further teach that Jesus was married, and that His death on the Cross does not provide full atonement for all sin, but it does provide everyone with a resurrection!