

Is God a Racist?



Pastor James Hazelton

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Questions or Comments

thenarrowschurch@gmail.com

(435) 592-2605

About the Author

I was born in 1971 and raised in a good home with great parents. We attended Christian churches but I was personally an Atheist until my LDS girlfriend introduced me to LDS missionaries in the late 80's. To make a long story short, I did not join the LDS church. Due to the love and persistence of my parents, the knowledge and godly wisdom of a Christian man named Marshall Almarode, and most importantly the sovereignty of God; I became a born-again Christian in 1989. When God saved me, He also birthed in me a love and passion for LDS people and I have been researching, writing, and talking with LDS people ever since. Before moving to Utah in 1995 I went to Calvary Chapel Bible College in Southern California and then finished my Bachelors of Theological Studies through The North American Reformed Seminary. I love the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! That is why I dedicate this booklet to them.

Introduction

I was raised in a predominantly white, upper-middle class community in Richland Washington. I was sheltered, and relatively ignorant of the vast cruelties, and racial injustices our world has created, especially for people with “black” skin.

We “white” skinned people, historically have not been pleasant to non-whites. Take for example the Aborigines in Australia. Countless Aborigines were murdered in the name of science. They were once believed to be an evolutionary “missing link” between monkey, and man. A demonstration of this horrific belief was witnessed by a New South Wales Christian missionary. He “was a horrified witness to the slaughter by mounted police of a group of dozens of Aboriginal men, women, and children. Forty-five heads were then boiled down and the 10 best skulls were packed off for overseas.”¹ These brutal murders were performed in the name of “research.”

We were just as cruel to the Pygmies. They were targeted for discrimination because they were short, black, and literally considered less than human. In fact, a Pygmy

¹ Ken Ham, Carl Wieland, and Don Batten, *One Blood The Biblical Answer to Racism* (Green Forest: Master Books, 1999), 121,122.

named Ota Benga, was actually displayed at the Bronx Zoo in the early 1900's along with apes.²

As a white man, I am ashamed of what we have done, and believed about human beings with skin darker than ours. We have discriminated, alienated, murdered, enslaved, and in the case of Ota Benga, even displayed, human beings. Why? Skin color!

What does Racism have to do with the LDS Church?

From the early days of the LDS Church until 1978 blacks were denied spiritual blessings that are required for exaltation including the priesthoods, the temple endowment or sealing ordinances. Why? The official answer to that question varies greatly, depending on what year the answer is given. 1978 is the pivoting point. This booklet is full of quotes from LDS leaders from both sides of 1978. Pay close attention to the dates as you read, you should be concerned.

The *average* Latter-day Saint today is not racist. Generally speaking, Latter-day Saints are very kind and compassionate towards people of color. However, historically LDS *doctrine*, revealed supposedly by *revelation* from God, has made a distinction between black and white.

² Ibid. Chapter 10

It is an unbiblical distinction that has caused a high level of offense. Consider the following statements by LDS Apostle Mark E. Peterson, speaking at the Convention of Teachers of Religion at Brigham Young University in 1954:

We cannot escape the conclusion that because of **performance in our pre-existence** some of us are born as Chinese, some as Japanese, some as Indians, some as Negroes, some Americans, some as Latter-day Saints. **These are rewards and punishments...** Is it not reasonable to believe that less worthy spirits would come through less favored lineage?...

Let us consider the great mercy of God for a moment. The Chinese, born in China with a dark skin, and with all the **handicaps** of that race seems to have little opportunity. But think of the mercy of God to Chinese people who are willing to accept the gospel. In spite of whatever they might have done in the pre-existence to justify being born over there as Chinamen, if they now, in this life, accept the gospel and live it the rest of their lives they can have the Priesthood, go to the temple and receive endowments and sealings, and that means **they can have exaltation** [Godhood]...

“Think of the **Negro, cursed as to the Priesthood...** This Negro, who, in the preexistence **lived the type of life which justified** the Lord in sending him to the earth in the **lineage of Cain** with a **black skin....** In spite of all he did in the pre-existent life, the Lord is willing, if the Negro accepts the gospel.. he can and will enter the celestial kingdom. He will go there as a **servant**, but he will get celestial glory.³

³ "Race Problems As They Affect The Church--by Elder Mark E. Petersen August 27th 1954," Utah Lighthouse Ministry, accessed

If you are white, try to imagine yourself as someone who is Chinese, Japanese or black. What feelings would the above words from the LDS Apostle stir up in your mind? The quotes in this booklet are meaty and hard to swallow. You may want to read them a few times and wrestle with what is being said.

A Short Summary of LDS Doctrine.

There are many details in the quotes in this booklet. To make things easier I will summarize what the LDS church taught *prior* to the pivotal year of 1978.

1. Skin color was determined by personal performance in the pre-existence. If you served God faithfully before coming to earth, you were born white and in a Mormon Family. If you served God poorly, you were cursed with dark skin and into other less fortunate circumstances.
2. Black skin is the “mark” God put on Cain for slaying his righteous brother Abel in the fourth Chapter of Genesis. The “curse” is a denial of LDS priesthood to blacks.
3. God’s children who performed less valiant in pre-existence are born on earth in the lineage of Cain. As punishment they have the mark of black skin and are denied the priesthood.
4. Blacks, prior to June 1978, were allowed membership in the LDS church but were denied the priesthood, could not be married in the temple, and could not marry a white man or women.

January 6, 2014, http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/curseofcain_appendix_b.htm.

5. Prior to 1978, LDS prophets emphatically said blacks would not receive the priesthood in this life or on this planet.
6. LDS leaders after 1978 contradicted former LDS leaders in allowing blacks to hold the LDS priesthoods today.

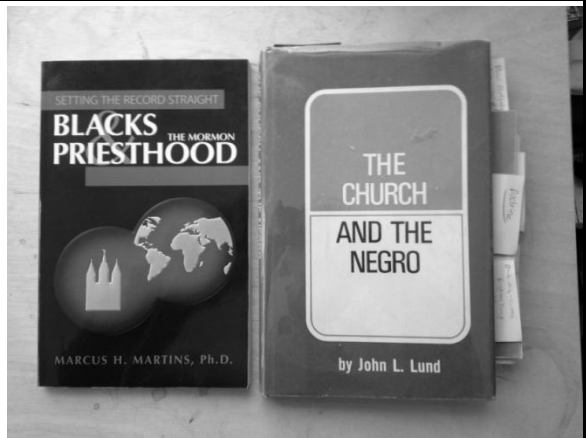
In recent years the LDS church has made great efforts to bury all this in the past. Young Latter-day saints know little about the former discrimination. Current LDS literature in many ways denies the church, or its leaders, even taught this *doctrine* and white-washes the past. For example, there is a new article on lds.org titled *Race and the Priesthood*⁴ that is worth reading, but it should be read in conjunction with writings prior to 1978. I will show some of the discrepancies in this booklet. If someone wants to know what the church actually taught they simply have to read Mormon literature written before the important date of June 9th 1978.⁵ An eye opening exercise I highly recommend doing is to purchase and read the two LDS books in the picture on the next page. The one on the left is *Setting the Record Straight Blacks and the Mormon*

⁴ "Race And The Priesthood," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>.

⁵ Two old books I suggest reading are *Mormonism and the Negro* by John J. Stewart (Written in 1960) and *The Church and the Negro* by John L. Lund (written in 1967). Both can be found on amazon.com

Priesthood by

Marcus H. Martins
Ph.D., published in
2007.⁶ The book on
the right is *The
Church and the
Negro* by John L.
Lund, published in



1967. Both books were written to defend position of the LDS church; one before 1978, the other after. If you do this exercise, you may be *unpleasantly* surprised how the Church has changed its official doctrines.

What happened in 1978?

In the modern LDS church there is little discussion about skin color, and priesthood restrictions. Prior to June 9th 1978 this was not the case. Today, it is common to see LDS leaders embracing black children and adults. This type of behavior has done wonders for the present public image of the church.

Before June 9th 1978, public pressure was intense. The public wanted the church to revise its doctrines concerning

⁶ Marcus H. Martins and Ph.d, *Setting the Record Straight Blacks and the Mormon Priesthood* (Orem: Millennial Press Inc, 2007).

the “Negro.” Small protests were common. Many college athletic programs refused to compete with Brigham Young University until the church changed its policies.⁷ Like a pressure valve on a tea pot, a June 9th 1978 announcement from the LDS church relieved a huge amount of tension. Below is the announcement removing restrictions on blacks, as reported in the LDS owned *Deseret News*:

We have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren [the Negro], spending many hours in the upper room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that **the long-promised day** has come when every faithful, worthy man in the church may receive the **holy priesthood**, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the church may be ordained to the priesthood **without regard for race or color.**⁸

For the general public, and the average Latter-day Saint, the above announcement put an end to the controversy. However, the problem has not gone away, it has only been comfortably taken out of the spot light.

⁷ For a full discussion of boycotts and protests see *The Curse of Cain? Racism in the Mormon Church*, by Jerald and Sandra. It is available at http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/curseofcain_contents.htm

⁸ *Deseret News*, sec. 1A, June 9, 1978.

What did Brigham Young actually say? Does it fit with the 1978 “Revelation?”

This is where you have to put on your thinking cap, and pull out your investigative tool bag. Notice, what the above 1978 announcement says in the second paragraph; **“the long promised day has come.”** Brigham did say that, but he also said a lot more stuff that was left out. By design, modern LDS leadership would have us believe God intended the curse to be lifted *in this life*. On June 10th, the day after the announcement, the *Deseret News* portrayed the change as a fulfillment of prophecy by Brigham Young. Suspiciously, they only quoted part of what Brigham actually said. Below is the statement with the misleading partial quote:

The announcement Friday fulfilled statements made by most LDS Church presidents since Joseph Smith that Blacks would **one day** obtain the full blessings of the church, including the priesthood. Speaking against slavery, **Brigham Young once told the Utah Legislature,** “...**the day will come** when all that race (blacks) will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have.”⁹

However, when we investigate what Brigham Young actually said, it becomes clear that June 9th, 1978 was not the right time for the change. Some significant details from Brigham’s speech were left out by modern LDS leaders.

⁹ *Deseret News*, sec. 1A, June 9, 1978.

Below is what Brigham actually said (Note: spelling errors are left intact from the speech dictation):

“What is that mark? You will see it on the countenance of every African you ever did see upon the face of the earth, or ever will see. Now I tell you what **I know**, when the mark was put upon Cain, Abels children was in all probability young; the Lord told Cain that he should not receive the blessings of the priesthood nor his see[d], **until the last of the posterity of Able had received the priesthood, until the redemption of the earth. If there never was a prophet, or apostle of Jesus Christ spoke it before, I tell you**, this people that are commonly called negroes are the children of old Cain. **I know** they are, **I know** that they cannot bear rule in the priesthood, for the curse on them was to remain upon the[m], until the resedue of the posterity of Michal and his wife receive the blessings, the seed of Cain would have received had they not been cursed; and hold the keys of the priesthood, until the times of restitution shall come, and the curse be wiped off from the earth.... **Then Cain’s seed will be had in remembrance, and the time come when that curse should be wiped off.**

Now then in the kingdom of God on the earth, a man who has has the Affrican blood in him cannot hold one jot or tittle of priesthood; Why? Because they are **true eternal principals the Lord Almighty had ordained**, and who can help it, men cannot. The angels cannot, and the powers of earth and hell cannot take it off, but **thus saith the Eternal I am...**¹⁰

Yes, Brigham Young did say that the curse on the priesthood would be lifted. However, he was clear about

¹⁰ Brigham Young, "Brigham Young's Speech On Slavery, Blacks, And The Priesthood--February 5th 1852," Utah Lighthouse Ministry, accessed January 6, 2014, http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/sermons_talks_interviews/brigham1852feb5_priesthoodandblacks.htm.

the timing of it, and it was followed by "thus saith the Eternal I am...." The promised day would not be "before the last of the posterity of Abel had received it." What does the strange phrase "before the last of the posterity of Abel" mean? Famous LDS author, John L. Lund answered that question in his 1967 book, *The Church and the Negro*.

The obvious question is "When will Abel's see be redeemed?" It will first of all be necessary that Abel marry, and then be resurrected, and ultimately exalted in the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom so that he can have a continuation of his seed (*Doctrine and Covenants 132:19-21*). It will then be necessary for Abel to create an earth for his spirit children to come to and experience mortality. These Children will have to be "redeemed" or resurrected. After the resurrection or redemption of Abel's seed, Cain's descendants, the Negroes, will then be allowed to possess the Priesthood. Joseph Fielding Smith has said that "the Lord decreed that the children of Cain should not have the privilege of bearing the priesthood until ABEL HAD POSTERITY who could have the priesthood and that will have to be in the FAR DISTANT FUTURE. When this his accomplished ON SOME OTHER WORLD, then the restrictions will be removed from the children of Cain who have been true to their 'second estate' (Joseph F. Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions, op. cit.*, 2:188.) This earth life is considered their "second" estate and those Negroes who prove through their individual righteousness their worth will certainly be blessed by God to possess the Priesthood in that distant future when Abel's seed has been redeemed."¹¹

Did Brigham Young give a prophecy that the restriction on the priesthood would one day be removed? Yes, but he

¹¹ Lund, 49

was also clear that it would not be in 1978, and not even on this planet!

These statements by Brigham Young are not isolated to him. All LDS prophets and apostles prior to 1978 taught the same thing; blacks would not receive the priesthood in this life. Modern LDS leaders understood exactly what Brigham Young meant but today are “singing another song.” For example, read how LDS Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie attempted to justify the obvious doctrinal contradictions between LDS statements before and after 1978:

There are statements in our literature by the early brethren which we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things... **All I can say to that is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation.... It doesn't make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June of this year [1978].** It is a new day and a new arrangement, and the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light out into the world on this subject. As to any slivers of light or any particles of darkness of the past, we forget about them.¹²

¹² "Following The Brethren, Speeches By Mormon Apostles Ezra Taft Benson And Bruce R. McConkie, March 1980," Utah Lighthouse Ministry, accessed January 6, 2014, www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/followingthebrethren.htm.

It would appear that the modern leadership of the LDS church would want us to believe that Brigham Young was unclear, or perhaps just giving his opinion as to when blacks could receive the priesthood. However, by simply reading Young's quotes, he does not leave any ambiguity. He is clear and to the point; as were other leaders prior to 1978. Brigham would disagree with the modern leaders. Young's comments were given in sermons, and this is what he had to say about his sermons:

I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call **scripture**. Let me have the privilege of correcting a sermon, and it is as good as **scripture** as they deserve. The people have the **oracles of God** continually.¹³

So what's the point? The bottom line is this: Church leaders, speaking as "mouth pieces for God," prior to 1978, taught that Blacks would not have the curse lifted in this life time. Modern leaders have quoted small parts of old prophecies to make it appear that 1978 was the right time for a change.

Now that you know what Brigham Young actually said, read the recent statement on lds.org. Notice how the Church is still misrepresenting Brigham's statements on when the restrictions would be removed.

¹³ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, p. 95

Church leaders pondered **promises** made by prophets such as Brigham Young that black members would one day receive priesthood and temple blessings. In June 1978, after “spending many hours in the Upper Room of the [Salt Lake] Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance,” Church President Spencer W. Kimball, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles received a revelation. “He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the **long-promised day** has come,” the First Presidency announced on June 8. The First Presidency stated that they were “aware of the **promises made** by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us” that “all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood.” The revelation rescinded the restriction on priesthood ordination. It also extended the blessings of the temple to all worthy Latter-day Saints, men and women. The First Presidency statement regarding the revelation was canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants as Official Declaration 2.¹⁴

By simply reading LDS statements prior to 1978 it becomes clear 1978 was not the "promised" time for the restrictions to be removed. If the church will misrepresent its own history, a logical question to ask is what else has been misrepresented?

Common responses by modern Latter-day Saints

The issue of racism and the LDS church is an uncomfortable one. Recently, the Church and its members have had to wrestle with questions about racism and have

¹⁴ "Race And The Priesthood," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed December 13, 2013, <http://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng&query=race+and+the+priesthood>.

responded in a number of ways. This section deals with those responses and how they inadequately handle the issue.

#1 New revelation supersedes old revelation.

A common first line of defense is generally to say that modern revelation put an end to the issue, and that all races are given equal privileges in the Church now, thus effectively causing the problem to disappear. The idea is that, modern revelation supersedes previous revelation. Former LDS Prophet, Ezra Taft Benson delivered a message in 1980 called, “Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets.” His third “fundamental” was “The living Prophet is more important to us than a dead Prophet.” He went on to say, “Beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets always take precedence.”¹⁵

Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie, writing after 1978 said:

There are statements in our literature by the early brethren which we have **interpreted** to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, ‘You said such and such, and how is it now that we

¹⁵ *Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets*, By President Ezra Taft Bensen, BYU Devotional Assembly, Tuesday, February 26th, 1980.

The whole message can be read at

www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/followingthebrethren.htm

do such and such?’ And all I can say to that is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. **Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation...**

It doesn’t matter a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June of this year (1978). It is a new day and a new arrangement, and the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light out into the world on this subject.”¹⁶

Marcus H. Martins, Ph.D., is an LDS author and a Black man. He recently published a book called, *Setting the Record Straight, Blacks & the Mormon Priesthood*. After reading the book I have concluded he did not “set the record straight” at all. In fact, he actually greatly misrepresented the record. In a section titled “Dealing with Statements from the Past” he quotes the above statement by Bruce R. McConkie as good advice to follow. He describes McConkie’s statement as “courageous.”¹⁷

Although the above response often appeases troubled minds, it does not solve at least two fundamental problems. First, the LDS Church at one time *did* teach this

¹⁶ "All Are Alike Unto God--by Bruce R. McConkie Of The Council Of The Twelve," Utah Lighthouse Ministry, accessed January 6, 2014, [http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/followingthebrethren.htm#ALL ARE ALIKE UNTO GOD](http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/followingthebrethren.htm#ALL%20ARE%20ALIKE%20UNTO%20GOD).

¹⁷ Martins, 27-29

discrimination; modern “revelation” cannot make that disappear (although they try hard to make it do so). The second issue is this; did the God of the Bible ever sanction such discrimination? The short answer is no!

#2 The point the finger at others response.

Another escape is to point out the sins of others in order to take the spotlight off the LDS Church. It is like a thief saying, “I’m not as bad as that guy, he is a murderer.” This is a common defense we humans use. I know I have, especially when I was younger. Although the first person’s sin may not be as bad as the other’s, it does not negate that the first person sinned!

Often, educated Latter-day Saints will point out the fact that many individual Christians and denominations (usually they point to Baptist denominations) also practiced discrimination and enslavement of blacks. Prior to the 1960’s and the civil rights movement, it was a common belief that blacks were of the cursed seed of Cain. This resulted in the justification for enslaving people of African ancestry. During the Civil War, many of those who did not want to free slaves were professing Christians. It is true; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not alone in their guilt. However, this does not in any way excuse the Mormon Church of guilt. A “just” judge in a court of law

would not pardon one person because someone else committed a crime also.

Why doesn't this defense method solve the problem? The Protestant Christians of the past who practiced racism were guilty of poor exegesis (Bible interpretation) in this *specific* area. It was the people who were guilty, not the God of the Bible. However, in the Mormon Church it is the Mormon God who is guilty; for He is the one who supposedly inspired Brigham Young, and subsequent LDS Prophets, that the sign of Cain's curse was a "flat nose and black skin." Big difference!

#3 The pleading ignorance response.

Another common defense is to plead, or even pretend, ignorance. Darl Anderson, author of the LDS book *Soft Answers to Hard Questions*, was asked a simple question: "Why do you refuse your priesthood to Black people?" In light of all the quotes from LDS prophets, apostles, and other leaders, his answer seems less than completely honest. This was his answer:

Though some have expressed their opinions as to possible reasons, Mormons really do not know why, I certainly don't know why.¹⁸

¹⁸ Darl Andersen, *Soft Answers to Hard Questions* (Mesa: 1989), 23-25.

Prior to the 1978 “revelation” Latter-day Saints generally knew the Church taught the restriction was because Blacks were of the cursed blood line of Cain. This teaching was not considered a matter of “opinion” but was church doctrine. To discover the facts of this, all one has to do is read just about any LDS book written prior to 1978 that mentions this issue.

Young Latter-day Saints, or new converts, may honestly plead ignorance because the Church has done a good job of sweeping the problem under the carpet. However, when an older Mormon answers as Darl Anderson did above, the honesty of the answer is severely questionable. Pretending not to know, when you do, is not honest at all.

#4 The "That was just their opinion" or "Those were not official statements" or "They never said that" or "You have misquoted LDS leaders" response.

This response has been used honestly and dishonestly. The average Latter-day Saint simply has not read the statements from the past and simply repeats answers they have been taught by current leaders of the Church. However, informed Mormons who know the past and teach others to use this escape are not honest.

Did Brigham Young think he was just stating his opinion in some unofficial way? Not at all! Here are some of his statements while discussing the “curse.”

“...they are eternal principles the Lord Almighty has ordained...”¹⁹

“...thus saith the Eternal I am, what I am...”²⁰

Brigham believed his statements on this subject were so official he said:

Let this Church which is called the kingdom of God on the earth; we will summons the first presidency, the twelve, the high council, the Bishoprick, [spelling errors his] and all the elders of Israel, suppose we summons them to appear here, and here declare that it is right to mingle our seed, with the black race of Cain, that they shall come in with us and be pertakers with us of all the blessings God has given to us. On that very day, and hour we should do so, the priesthood is taken from this Church and kingdom and God leaves us to our fate. The moment we consent to mingle with the seed of Cain the Church must go to destruction...”²¹

Obviously Brigham did not think he was simply stating his opinion.

¹⁹ Brigham Young’s 1852 speech on Slavery--See www.mrm.org/topics/documrnt-speeches/brigham-youngs-1852-speech-slavery

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Often, a Latter-day Saint will say “those are not official statements or scripture.” What this usually amounts to is a low level Latter-day Saint superseding the words of their own prophets and leaders. Whose statements are more “official?” On top of this, modern leaders will misquote parts of the “unofficial” statements from the past to support their modern “official” statements as demonstrated earlier. Below are some “unofficial” statements that seem rather “official” to those who are saying them.

Our living Prophet, President David O. McKay, has said, **“The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God.** (David O. McKay, Hugh B. Brown, N. Eldon Tanner, The First Presidency, CL, Decemboer 15, 1969: Quoted from, R. Clayton Brough, *His Servants speak, Statements by Latter-day Saint Leaders on Contemporary Topics*, Horizon Publishers 1975, p. 192,193)

The attitude of the Church with reference to the Negroes remains as it has always stood. **It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord...** (David O. McKay, Stephen L. Richards, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. The First Presidency, Aug. 17, 1951: Quoted from, R. Clayton Brough, *His Servants speak, Statements by Latter-day Saint Leaders on Contemporary Topics*, Horizon Publishers 1975, p. 193-194)

From the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith even until now, it has been the **doctrine of the Church**, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel... (George Albert Smith, J. Rueben Clark, Jr., David O. McKay. Letter written to Dr. Lowry Nelson, Provo Utah, by the First Presidency of the Church on July 17, 1947. Letter on file at BYU: Quoted in, R. Clayton Brough, *His*

Servants speak, Statements by Latter-day Saint Leaders on Contemporary Topics, Horizon Publishers 1975, p. 195)

...it is not the authorities of the Church who have placed a restriction on him [the negro] regarding the holding of the priesthood. It was not the Prophet Joseph Smith nor Brigham Young. **It was the Lord!** (President Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions Joseph Fielding Smith Vo.2*. 1958, p. 185)

From the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith until now, it has been the **doctrine of the Church**, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel. (John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro*, 1960, p. 46-47)

...the **spirit of the Lord saith** the Negro has no right nor cannot hold the Priesthood... no person of having the least particle of Negro blood can hold the Priesthood. (John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro*, 1960: Historical supplement by William E. Berrett, Vice President of Brigham Young University, *The Church and the Negroid People*, Quoting Joseph Smith, p. 10)

It is not a matter of the declaration of policy but of direct **commandment from the Lord**. (John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro*, 1960: Historical supplement by William E. Berrett, Vice President of Brigham Young University, *The Church and the Negroid People*, p. 16--quoting Statement by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the Negro Question, August 17, 1951)

I have given you the true principles and **doctrine**. (Brigham Young Addresses, Ms d 1234, Box 48, folder 3, dated Feb. 5, 1852, located in the LDS Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah)

In reality, the “that was their opinion” or “those were not official statements” or “they never said that” or “you have misquoted LDS leaders” escape does not work. The bottom line is this. The church did officially and clearly teach racism in the past as revelation from God.

#5 The “I bear my testimony” response.

It has been my personal experience when a Latter-day Saint feels uncomfortable or unsure of an answer they are taught to quote their testimony, challenging you to pray about the Book of Mormon. They have told me many times this is the only way to know for sure what truth is. It sounds reasonable; after all prayer is good, and God does answer it. However, there are some types of prayers He actually considers an abomination. If God has already spoken on an issue, we don't need to pray about it, we need to believe Him. Consider Proverbs 28:9.

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the **law**, even **his prayer is an abomination.**

Obviously, in actual Bible times they did not call the Bible "the Bible." The scriptures were referred to as "the law" "the writings" "the prophets" and other similar phrases. The point of the Proverb above is if you won't listen to the Bible (the law), then your prayer can actually be an abomination. For example, if someone claimed to be a prophet of God, and said God told him stealing is not a

sin, and you need to pray about it, you would not have to pray about that message, you simply would refer to the Bible and see God has already answered that question. The same is true about the Book of Mormon, and everything else that comes with it. We are not just praying about the rectangular shape but the contents of it, plus all that comes with the LDS church. If the law (the Bible) does not put any restrictions on people with black skin, we don't need to pray about a Church that says God did. That prayer would be as the Proverb says, "an abomination." Thus any positive response to that prayer would not actually come from God, but rather some other source.

Eyebrow Raising Quotes from LDS leaders.

Up to this point I have been discussing this issue with my personal thoughts, logic, and commentary. In this next section I will simply give quotes from LDS leaders. The quotes speak for themselves. Read them carefully, these are men who are supposedly speaking for God.

Brigham Young--December 12th 1854

Cain conversed with his God everyday, and knew all about the plan of creating this earth, for his father told him. But for the want of humility, and through jealousy, and an anxiety to possess the kingdom, and to have the whole of it under his control, and not allow anybody else the right to say one word, what did he do? He killed his brother. **The Lord put a**

mark on him; and there are some of his children in this room. When **all** the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, **and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity.**"²²

Brigham Young--October 9th 1859

You see some classes of the human family that they are **black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind.** The first man that committed the odious crime of killing one of his brethren will be cursed the longest of any one of the children of Adam. Cain slew his brother. Cain might have been killed, and that would have put a termination to that line of human beings. This was not to be, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the **flat nose and black skin.** Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race—that they should be the **'servant of servants;'** and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor is the least alter that decree. How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain on them, and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until **all** the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the **last** ones of the

²² Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, pp. 142,143

residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favorable position...²³

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie--1966

...Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a black skin. (Moses 5:16-41; 12:22) **Noah's son Ham married Egyptus, a descendant of Cain, thus preserving the negro lineage through the flood.** (Abraham 1:20-27)

Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. [Abraham 1:20-27] The gospel message of salvation is not affirmatively carried to them (Moses 7:8, 12:22) although sometimes Negroes search out the truth, and join the church... President Brigham Young and others have taught that in the **future eternity** [Notice, it is in eternity, not 1978] worthy and qualified negroes will receive the priesthood and every gospel blessing available to any man. (Way to Perfection, pp. 97-111).

...the negroes are **not equal with other races** where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are

²³ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 290-291

concerned, particularly the priesthood and temple blessings...²⁴

LDS President John Taylor--1882

Why is it, in fact, that we should have a **devil**? Why did not the Lord kill him long ago?... He needed the devil and great many of those who do his bidding just to keep... our dependence upon God,...When he destroyed the inhabitants of the antediluvian [pre-flood] world, he suffered a **descendant of Cain** [negroes] to come through the flood in order that he [the devil] might be properly represented upon the earth.²⁵

Brigham Young--1863

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. **This will always be so.**²⁶

The 10th President of the Church Joseph F. Smith--1935

Not only was Cain called upon to suffer [for killing Abel], but because of his wickedness he became the father of an **inferior race**. A curse was placed upon

²⁴ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 526-528.

²⁵ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 23, Oct. 29 1882, p. 336

²⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 110

him and that curse has continued through his lineage and **must do so while time endures**. ...In the spirit of sympathy, mercy and faith, we will also hope that blessings may eventually be given to our negro brethren, for they are our brethren—children of God—not withstanding their **black covering emblematical of eternal darkness**.²⁷

The above quotes are just a few of what is available. If you are interested in more, you can find many in a book called, *Curse of Cain, Racism in the Mormon Church*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. It is available free online at www.utlm.org.

What does the Bible actually teach?

The homework and research on this subject can be very involved and interesting. I literally have piles of papers, and books on the subject, and the internet is endless. The Latter-day Saint can argue that the ban was lifted in 1978; however, we must ask if the Bible actually supported the discrimination in the first place. The main text in question is Genesis 4:1-26. It is this Biblical passage that LDS leaders have quoted because it speaks of Cain, the curse, and the Mark. I thought it best to quote the whole chapter to get the flow of the story:

²⁷ *The Way to Perfection*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, Genealogical Society of Utah, 1935, pp. 101-102

“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, **but Cain was a tiller of the ground.** 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it."8 Now Cain talked with Abel his *brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where *is* Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?" 10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. 11 **So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.**" 13 And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! 14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen *that* anyone who finds me will kill me." 15 And the LORD said to him, *"Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD **set a mark on Cain**, lest anyone finding him should kill him. 16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. 17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son--Enoch. 18 To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech. 19 Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one *was* Adah, and the name of the second *was* Zillah. 20 And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those

who dwell in tents and have livestock. 21 His brother's name *was* Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. 22 And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain *was* Naamah. 23 Then Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech!
For I have killed a man for wounding me,
Even a young man for hurting me.
24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." 26 And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him *Enosh. Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD." (Genesis 4:1-26 NKJV)

Is the "mark" black skin? There is nothing in the text to suggest skin color has anything to do with the "mark." A black person would be, from the text, just as justified in saying the mark was white skin. The text simply says, "And the LORD **set a mark on Cain.**" Since God did not feel it was necessary to say what the mark was, we should not attempt to go beyond what He said. To make study easy I will list reasons why the LDS interpretation of the Bible is not proper:

1. The "curse" and "mark" were for Cain only. There is no mention in the text or the rest of the Bible, of it being passed on to his descendants.

2. Cain was gifted in agriculture. The “curse” was; “When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.” If the curse and mark were passed on to his descendants, 19th century white Americans would not have chosen blacks as slaves to do agricultural work. They simply would not have been good at it!

3. Had the curse affected black people, at least one instance of it would have been mentioned in the Bible in the context to black people. Some examples of blacks in the Bible are: Moses’ Ethiopian wife, the Queen of Sheba, the Ethiopian Treasurer of Queen Candace, Hagar, Egyptians, and others. There was no mention of the being passed on, it being black skin, or a denial of any priesthood.

4. The Mormon Church, prior to 1978 forbade interracial marriage with blacks. Also, if you had “one drop” of Cain’s blood in your veins, you would be denied the Priesthood. However, the Bible in no way carries these restrictions:
 - a. Moses married an Ethiopian and was not rebuked for it. See Numbers 12
 - b. The Mormon Church teaches that the curse was preserved through the flood via Noah’s son Ham. Rahab, in Christ’s genealogy in Matthew Chapter one, was a descendant of Ham, Ham’s son. Obviously, Jesus was not cursed.
 - c. Ruth, a Moabitess, also came from the “cursed” line. She married Boaz who was an Israelite, and is also in Christ’s genealogy of Matthew chapter one.²⁸

²⁸ Ham, 93-94

d. Thus, if the LDS theology is correct, Christ should have been cursed too.

The Curse of Cain doctrine was a popular teaching in days past, not just from the LDS church. Is there any legitimate use of the Bible to support such racism? No.

My Email conversation with a Black BYU Hawaii Professor

Occasionally, when I am out running errands I will stop at the local LDS book store to see what is new on the shelves. On one such occasion my eyes fell on a book called *Setting the Record Straight, Blacks and the Mormon Priesthood*. It is written by Dr. Marcus H. Martins. Dr. Martins earned a Ph.D. in sociology of religion, race, and ethnic relations. He is Mormon, a BYU Hawaii professor and black.

I had been researching and writing this booklet when I saw Dr. Martins' book. I thought to myself, "If anyone could respond well to this issue it would be a black Ph. D. BYU professor." I grabbed the book and with excitement, pulled out my wallet and headed for the checkout counter.

Over the next few days every spare minute was dedicated to reading this book designed for "setting the record straight." After reading the book I came to the only

conclusion I could. The *record* was not “set straight” rather the *record* was “curved” and avoided.

If you have read this booklet you would have seen the LDS “record” quoted extensively with detailed references for you to go view the clear record for yourself. I’m sure Dr. Martins is a nice guy who loves his family and friends. However, that is not what I’m concerned with at this point. As researcher I’m concerned with accurate representation of truth and facts.

Setting the Record Straight, Blacks and the Mormon Priesthood, is a bold title. The reader at the onset would be under the impression the record would be presented, defended, and explained. I’m sad to report that the book did not accomplish this. In fact, little if any of the record was even quoted.

By not actually quoting the record it becomes easy to promote continued faith for a worried Latter-day Saint. It is effective, but in my opinion, not necessarily honest. Dr. Martins does not deny blacks were banned from the LDS priesthood, but makes it appear that it was never really official doctrine. On page four of his book he said,

“Whether we like it or not, the priesthood ban is part of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ in this dispensation. But just like the Mountain Meadows massacre and other unfortunate episodes, the ban may be

remembered as an undeniable fact in history—**but never as a significant fact in the present.**”

That statement does not make sense to me. The past is the foundation for the present! Unfortunately, the LDS foundation on this issue happens to be sand. It is understandable why they would make every effort to take focus away from it.

How did Dr. Martins handle the Record?

“I have also **avoided the temptation of rehashing statements** made by Church leaders before 1978. As I mentioned previously, the priesthood ban is a fact of history but not a factor in the present.” (p. 5,6)

By not actually quoting the statements made by Church leaders of the past a picture can be painted that smooths out all the problems. The ill-informed reader has nothing to compare the writer’s comments against. Dr. Martins describes the statements he avoids quoting as “speculative ideas, hypotheses, proposed ideas, etc.” in his book. If you have read the “record” presented in this booklet, you should recognize this as a distortion.

Speaking about why Joseph Smith believed blacks should not be ordained to the priesthood Dr. Martins said,

We don’t know whether his views were somehow influenced by slavery, which was still legal in most of the United States at that time. It was possible, or at least conceivable, that the Prophet was just either trying to

uphold the law of the land or trying to avoid potentially dangerous situations. (p. 11)

Personally, I don't think Joseph was very concerned about the law of the land, polygamy was illegal but he practiced it anyway. Again, by not actually quoting the record, Dr. Martin can make it appear like LDS leaders of the past were simply caught up in the prevailing opinions of the day like everyone else. However, as we have seen, and will see again, the record is clear that the racism was sanctioned and commanded by the pre-1978 Mormon God.

With respect to past statements (that he does not quote) Dr. Martins said "People have a right to their own opinion" (p. 14). He also said, "...there are no scriptures or official declarations setting forth such a hypothesis as heavenly truth" (p. 14). When the record is actually quoted it is clear that the past LDS leaders believed what they said went far beyond "opinion."

In a section titled "Dealing with Statements from the Past" (p. 27) the professor makes some interesting comments. He quoted the advice of Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie:

Forget everything that I have said, or that President Brigham Young or... whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation... (p. 28)

If the past is the foundation, and the foundation is sand, you should not trust the present either! I'm glad the Bible Apostles never said anything like above. Dr. Martin brings into question the credibility of people like me (and possibly you) who challenge the church. He said,

The next question might be: What should we do when somebody quotes statements by Church leaders of the past regarding race, the priesthood ban, and so forth?

Let me preface my response by stressing that because of our belief in continuous revelation, certain statements are time sensitive. Besides, we have to be careful with the problem of **misquotations and misinterpretations disguised as official pronouncements by Church leaders.**

Often we hear popular statements that begin like this: "A Church leader once said..." When we hear people say something like this or ask a question based on a supposed statement by a church leader, we should ask, "Who said that? Who was the Church leader? What exactly did the Church leader say? Do you have an exact quotation? Where was the statement made, and in what context?" When we find people using this appeal to authority, or the "Church-leader approach," often they don't know exactly what was said. They sometimes say something such as, "Oh, my cousin has a friend whose brother was attending a ward barbecue, and I think there was a general authority there who said such-and-such... (p. 27,28)

If you have read this booklet, it should be obvious that the case I'm presenting is not based on logic like described above. This is why I chose to contact Dr. Martin by email.

Below is that conversation in full. Ask yourself, “who do you think is using faulty logic?”

My email:

Dr. Martins,

My name is James Hazelton. I am a born-again Christian in Southern Utah and have been reading your book "Setting the Record Straight, Blacks & the Mormon Priesthood." I have done some research on this subject and written a few things, and your book was the most recent thing I have read. Would you be willing to dialogue about it? I will be upfront; I have some concerns about the way you presented the information in the book. I look forward to having a healthy discussion with you.

Dr. Martins' response:

Pastor James Hazelton

Thank you for your message, Pastor Hazelton.

I'll be happy to clarify anything from my book. But let's establish right from the outset that neither you nor I have time for endless (and fruitless) debates. Most of our time must be spent bringing people to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, to teach them to have faith in him, repent of their

sins, and keep the commandments of God. We won't accomplish that important mission if we spend our precious time arguing among ourselves.

All the best,

Marcus Martins

My email:

Dr. Martins,

Thanks for responding. I greatly appreciate it! I agree about endless debates and arguing. I don't wish to do that. However, I do hope to have a fruitful discussion, even if we don't agree. The problem with email is you can't see my demeanor. I'm not combative; actually I'm very friendly so I hope you read this with that in mind.

Early on in your book you make the point you "avoided the temptation of rehashing statements made by Church leaders before 1978 (p. 5). The book throughout makes the impression that past statements about race were not necessarily "revelation," but past leaders were only giving speculative ideas, hypotheses, with limited understanding, opinions or perhaps just effected by the prevailing feelings of their times. By not actually quoting what past leaders said, the modern Mormon (for example one of your students) has their troubled heart comforted. With the

added direction of Bruce R. McConkie to "forget everything that I have said or that President Young... or whoever has said in days past...", the modern Mormon would not even be tempted to read what LDS leaders actually said prior to 1978. If the student were to actually read the past statements they would discover the leaders themselves believed it was "revelation" not opinion, speculative ideas etc... I'll quote a few for you. I don't believe these can be easily cast off by saying they are unofficial or isolated quotes. All one has to do is find LDS books written prior to June 9th 1978 and read them, this is a small representative of what would be found. All I do is grab the books and look up the subjects in the index or table of contents.

"Our living Prophet, President David O. McKay, has said, "The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God." (David O. McKay, Hugh B. Brown, N. Eldon Tanner, The First Presidency, CL, December 15, 1969: Quoted from, R. Clayton Brough, His Servants speak, Statements by Latter-day Saint Leaders on Contemporary Topics, Horizon Publishers 1975, p. 192,193)

"The attitude of the Church with reference to the Negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord..." (David O. McKay, Stephen L. Richards, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. The First Presidency, Aug. 17, 1951: Quoted from, R. Clayton

Brough, His Servants speak, Statements by Latter-day Saint Leaders on Contemporary Topics, Horizon Publishers 1975, p. 193-194)

"From the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith even until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel..." (George Albert Smith, J. Rueben Clark, Jr., David O. McKay. Letter written to Dr. Lowry Nelson, Provo Utah, by the First Presidency of the Church on July 17, 1947. Letter on file at BYU: Quoted in, R. Clayton Brough, His Servants speak, Statements by Latter-day Saint Leaders on Contemporary Topics, Horizon Publishers 1975, p. 195)

"...it is not the authorities of the Church who have placed a restriction on him [the negro] regarding the holding of the priesthood. It was not the Prophet Joseph Smith nor Brigham Young. It was the Lord!" (President Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions Joseph Fielding Smith Vo.2. 1958, p. 185)

"From the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel. (John J. Stewart, Mormonism and the Negro, 1960, p. 46-47)

"...the spirit of the Lord saith the Negro has no right nor cannot hold the Priesthood... no person of having the least particle of Negro blood can hold the Priesthood." (John J. Stewart, Mormonism and the Negro, 1960: Historical supplement by William E. Berrett, Vice President of Brigham Young University, The Church and the Negroid People, Quoting Joseph Smith, p. 10)

"It is not a matter of the declaration of policy but of direct commandment from the Lord." (John J. Stewart, Mormonism and the Negro, 1960: Historical supplement by William E. Berrett, Vice President of Brigham Young University, The Church and the Negroid People, p. 16-- quoting Statement by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the Negro Question, August 17, 1951)

"I have given you the true principles and doctrine." (Brigham Young Addresses, Ms d 1234, Box 48, folder 3, dated Feb. 5, 1852, located in the LDS Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah)

Dr. Marcus. I hope this was not too long of an email. I know your time is precious but I pray you will find/make time to engage further. My question is this: How do you reconcile these clear statements from the past with modern attempts that give the opposite impression?

In His grip,

James Hazelton

No response from Dr. Martins:

My attempt to get a response:

Dr. Martins,

I was wondering if you had time to think about a response to the quotes I brought up in my last email? I'm looking forward to reading your thoughts.

Pastor James Hazelton

Dr. Martins' response:

Greetings, Pastor Hazelton.

As I suggested in my previous message, lengthy discussions on historical matters will not change our faith in the Lord nor our determination to serve Him and keep his commandments. The Apostle Peter denied that he knew the Savior, and Abraham told Sarah to identify herself as his sister. Neither you nor I understand completely why that was so, but that does not change our commitment to God. I think you will agree with me on that.

Once again, let's make more productive use of our time by teaching the gospel and bringing people unto Jesus Christ.

All the best,

Marcus Martins

I'm just a simple Christian who can't spell but loves to research and write. Dr. Martins is a black BYU professor who wrote a book on this important subject. I had honest concerns and questions for the expert but he was unwilling to answer directly my reasonable questions. This is a

serious problem that any honest Latter-day Saint should take to heart and foster a desire to do some homework on the trustworthiness of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Conclusion

The leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints prior to 1978 made unbiblical distinctions between black and white and claimed these distinctions were doctrine revealed by God in the same way other LDS doctrines were revealed. The current leadership of the LDS church has simply lied about the past, calling it folklore or theories, but not official doctrine. If you are LDS you have a choice to make with this information. You can do as many do today, and ignore it. Or, you can act on it! The choice is yours.

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