

Ten Lies I Told As A Mormon Missionary

[Excerpts]

by Loren Franck

The Bible predicts a dreadful fate for liars. For instance, while banished on the island of Patmos, the Apostle John saw that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Similarly, the beloved disciple writes, liars are doomed to an eternity outside of God's presence (Revelation 22:15). Because Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44), lying is extremely serious sin.

As a full-time Mormon missionary from 1975 to 1977, I lied for the church countless times. I spoke truthfully about my background, but touted many Mormon teachings that contradict the Bible. I can't remember all of my missionary lies. Some were small, others grandiose, but all were false and misleading. Here are ten I'll never forget:

1. We're Not Trying to Convert You: Of all my lies, this was the most frequent. A standard door-to-door proselyting pitch began with, "We represent The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Interrupting, many people said they had their own religion. "Oh, we're not trying to convert you," I responded. "We're sharing a message for all faiths."

2. The Bible is Insufficient: According to their eighth Article of Faith, Mormons accept the Bible as the word of God only when it's translated correctly. How convenient for a missionary. When a non-Mormon's interpretation of scripture differed from mine, I frequently blamed faulty Bible translation. And since I believed the Bible was missing "many plain and precious things," as the Book of Mormon claims in 1 Nephi 13:28-29, I urged prospective converts not to trust it completely.

3. We're the Only True Christians: For decades, the Mormon Church has tried to blend with mainstream Christianity. Accordingly, during my mission a quarter-century ago, I worked hard to convince prospects that Mormons believe in the biblical Jesus. So which Jesus and gospel do Mormons preach? While a missionary, I taught that Christ was the firstborn spirit child of the Father in a premortal life. (The remainder of humanity was born as spirits later in this "pre-existence.") But I didn't tell prospects this was a literal birth, the result of literal fathering, as Mormon prophets and apostles have claimed. If asked, I taught that the devil was born as one of God's noble spirit sons during the pre-existence, but had rebelled and started a war in heaven.

4. We're the Only True Church: According to our script, Smith prayed in 1820 about which church to join. He claimed the Father and Son appeared and told him that all Christian churches of the day were wrong. Smith said he was forbidden to join any of them, that their creeds were abominable and their professors all corrupt.

5. We Have a Living Prophet: I criticized Christians because their church lacked a living prophet. Mormons claim the true church must have one. My favorite Bible proof text to back this claim was Amos 3:7, which reads, "Surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

6. The Book of Mormon is Scripture: Joseph Smith claimed that the Book of Mormon is the most correct book on earth, adding that man would become closer to God by following its precepts than by obeying any other book ("History of the Church," Vol. 4, p. 461). Replace "Book of Mormon" with "the Bible" and Smith would have told the truth.

7. You're Saved By Works: More than any other Mormon lie, this undermines Christ's atonement, which is the most sacred doctrine of the Bible. Mormons usually equate salvation with resurrection. Likewise, they refer to eternal life as...

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