

# Selected Newspaper Articles on Mormons and Mormonism Published During 1982

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Each year the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints receives several hundred thousand column inches of space in national and local newspaper. News items range from the local LDS missionaries in the community to the major eight-part series on the Mormon Church in the *Denver Post*. The greatest percentage of news items are favorable to the Church, thanks to the carefully groomed image which the LDS Church Public Communications Department generates. Over the years the LDS Church has received national coverage on the issues of blacks and women. But since the priesthood was given to the blacks in 1978 and after the death of the ERA, the emphasis seems to be turning to the Church's finances. Articles have appeared recently in several major newspapers, including the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *New York Times* on the Church's business affairs.

During 1982 the LDS Church received a boost to its credibility with the disclosure of two letters, one by Martin Harris and the other by Lucy Mack Smith. Coverage of these discoveries extended from coast to coast.

Receiving a great deal of publicity was the eight-part series in the *Denver Post* by John Aloysius Farrell. He covered a number of issues weighing heavily on many Mormons: the family, Mormon/non-Mormon relations, pornography, cable TV laws, Planned Parenthood, Mormon scholars and their plight, politics, and business and economics. His articles hit home with a number of liberal Mormons who are seeking to find a place in the predominantly conservative LDS atmosphere.

Also receiving a great deal of coverage were two proposed LDS temples, one near Chicago and the other outside Denver. Local church authorities ran into opposition from the local residents which resulted in a barrage of newspaper articles. Announcements were also made concerning the construction of several new temples including one in East Germany and one in Australia. In 1982 the Manti Temple was renovated, the Hawaiian Temple vandalized, and the Atlanta Temple completed.

Surveying what is being published in the newspapers gives one a feeling of what is important on the national level (business, politics, church leaders) while on the local level temple weddings, family home evening, food storage, missionaries, and church dedications are of importance. Newspapers present a wealth of material on not only what is happening, but what is important to the Mormons of this generation.

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