

# True to the Faith: A Snapshot of the Church in 2004

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In July 2004, the LDS Church published *True to the Faith*, a handbook of doctrines and beliefs arranged alphabetically from A (“Aaronic Priesthood”) to Z (“Zion”): 190 pages of what Mormons are supposed to believe, know, and do.<sup>2</sup> Arguably, in creed-free and catechism-free Mormonism, the appearance of this concise compendium represents a new development. Its closest parallels may be the missionary “white book,” which spells out behavioral rules, the pocket-sized handbooks for Latter-day Saints in the military, or the newest revision of “For the Strength of Youth,” which provides explanations of principles governing correct behavior but is also quite clear about what that correct behavior is. All of these works are contemporary and concise.

In terms of doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine* is very authoritarian but not “authorized,” and the procedures and policies in the *Church Handbook of Instructions* are not generally available to members. In contrast, *True to the Faith* is available at any distribution center and is quoted on the Church’s official website. In some stakes, including my own, every teenager got a personal copy.<sup>3</sup> For the first time, it makes available an authoritative, correlated source upon which members can draw with complete reliance that “this is what we believe.”

It is obviously designed for universal application. Although the brief prefatory message from the First Presidency says that the book is aimed specifically at “youth, young single adults, and new converts,” that part of the message comes near the end. The first sentence says: “This book is designed as a companion to your study of the scriptures and the teachings of

latter-day prophets." The reader is instructed to "refer to it as you study and apply gospel principles. Use it as a resource when you prepare talks, teach classes, and answer questions about the Church" (1).

It is difficult to answer the normal questions one would ask of a book: Who is the author or authors? Where did the idea come from for this book? Why is there a need for it, and what ends is it supposed to achieve? What did the process of writing involve? There is no clue anywhere about the presumed committee or individuals who wrote and reviewed this book, which is, admittedly, standard procedure in producing manuals. Its anonymity is virtually complete. Although knowing the history of its genesis and production would be fascinating, *True to the Faith* still has enormous importance as a snapshot of the Church in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

### Overview

The first message this book communicates is its size. Beginning in 1995 but definitely since 2001, publications designed for youth have been printed in this rather off-size format: 4 3/4th inches wide by 7 inches tall. It is much smaller than the Church's magazines and administrative handbooks, which are all 8½ by 11. It is shorter and wider than the scriptures and the adult class manuals, nor is it the size of a standard paperback, a pamphlet like the Joseph Smith story, or notecards (4x6 or 3x5 inches). Hymnbooks, on the other hand, fit the standard of most American tradebooks—6x9.<sup>4</sup>

The book has no index, which means that internal references to subjects that are not the main topic of an entry are difficult to trace. However, its 105 alphabetical entries are liberally enhanced with 66 "see" references. For instance, someone looking for "Stake" would find no entry on that topic but be referred to "Church Administration." For "Standard Works" see "Scriptures," for "Sunday" see "Sabbath; Worship," and for "Swearing" see "Profanity" (all on p. 167).

If I were selecting three adjectives to describe the book, they would be "authoritative," "timeless," and "Christ-focused."

1. The authoritativeness of the book is communicated clearly. It is published by the Church, introduced by the First Presidency, and sold at distribution centers. Another indication of its authority lies in its low-key but dogmatic prose. This is a book of answers that does not acknowledge the existence of questions. Typically, the material is addressed directly to

the reader: "Your testimony will grow stronger," the preface promises the reader. "You will remain true to the faith" (1). "As you become more reverent, . . . you will be less troubled and confused. You will be able to receive revelation to help you solve personal and family problems" (145). While these simple statements may be reassuring, it may be more problematic to read that abortion "has become a common practice, defended by deceptive arguments" (4), because there seems to be little room for discussion and few acknowledgments of the complexity of some topics.

Another strong characteristic of its authoritative nature is its clearly limned view of reality. For example, the entry on "Creation" begins, "Under the direction of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ created the heavens and the earth. . . . You are a spirit child of God, and your body is created in His image. To show your gratitude for these blessings, you can care for your body by obeying the Word of Wisdom and other commandments. . . . You can also respect other people as children of God" (44-45). The tone, though muted and low-key, is definite.

2. The second characteristic of *True to the Faith*, its timelessness, is both a cause and an effect of its authoritativeness. Although the preface is a message from the First Presidency, they are not identified by name. The subtext is therefore that, no matter which individuals comprise the First Presidency, these statements will presumably stand forever without revision. As another manifestation of timelessness, there are virtually no internal clues about when it was written or allusions that might date the material. No Church president or General Authority except for Joseph Smith is quoted, even when some entries represent the thinking and sometimes the language of individual General Authorities in recent conference talks. Instead, the text relies heavily on the scriptures. For example, the entry on "grace," which is slightly under two pages, quotes six scriptures and cites an additional sixteen.

3. The third characteristic, its focus on Christ, is a refreshing one. The entry on "Atonement of Jesus Christ," at a little over six pages, is one of the lengthiest in the book. Although I did not read through checking specifically on this point, I think that virtually every entry incorporates a reference to the Savior in some way, even when it is used somewhat coercively as in the entry on "Modesty," which it defines as not dressing, speaking, or acting in ways that "draw undue attention to yourself." The test of modesty it recommends is: "Would I feel comfortable with my appearance if I were in the Lord's presence?" (106)

As another example of the focus on Christ in *True to the Faith* is this statement: "Temple ordinances lead to the greatest blessings available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. All we do in the Church—our meetings and activities, our missionary efforts, the lessons we teach and the hymns we sing—should point us to the Savior and the work we do in holy temples. . . . The endowment helps us focus on the Savior, His role in our Heavenly Father's plan, and our commitment to follow Him" (170–71). I think these statements are an effort to assert a more explicit connection between the Savior and temples than may otherwise be apparent.

A similar effort may prompt the definition of "worship" as "participation in priesthood ordinances," which specifies: "As you reverently partake of the sacrament and attend the temple, you remember and worship your Heavenly Father and express your gratitude for His Son, Jesus Christ" (188).

### Belief and Behavior

As I read the 105 entries, I tentatively classified them as dealing with "belief" (e.g., concepts or doctrine), or "behavior." These classifications are quite subjective, since a typical entry on belief also spells out the desired behavior that will result from this belief. I classified sixty-seven entries (roughly 64 percent of the total) as primarily doctrinal or theological. They are Aaronic priesthood, Abrahamic covenant, adversity, agency, apostasy,<sup>5</sup> articles of faith, atonement of Jesus Christ, charity, Church administration, Church disciplinary councils, civil government and laws, conscience, conversion, covenant, creation, death (physical), death (spiritual), eternal life, faith, fall, family (proclamation), foreordination, forgiveness, godhead, God the Father, gospel, grace, gratitude, happiness, heaven, hell, Holy Ghost, honesty, hope, humility, Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith, justice, kingdoms of glory, laying on of hands, light of Christ, love, Melchizedek Priesthood, mercy, millennium, ordinances, original sin, paradise, peace, plan of salvation, priesthood, prophets, Relief Society,<sup>6</sup> repentance, restoration of the gospel, resurrection, reverence, signs, sin, soul, spiritual gifts, teaching the gospel, temples, temptation, ten commandments, war, worship.

These beliefs, many of which we share in common with other Christians, are also part of our history; but as expressed in *True to the Faith*, they present a normative Mormonism that has little in common with the radi-

cal, marginalized, experimental movement of its first two generations. Instead, the Mormonism described in these pages is extremely conservative and self-consciously respectable.

This presentation of unspectacular religiosity is nowhere so clear as in *True to the Faith's* discussion of testimony. A testimony consists of five core pieces of knowledge: (1) "that Heavenly Father lives and loves us"; (2) "that Jesus Christ lives, that He is the Son of God, and that He carried out the infinite Atonement" (this three-part "knowing" is the most complex element and suggests, in my opinion, the book's increased focus on Christ); (3) "that Joseph Smith is the prophet of God who was called to restore the gospel" (there is no mention here of either the First Vision or the Book of Mormon); (4) "that we are led by a living prophet today"; and (5) that the Church "is the Savior's true Church on the earth" (178). These propositions are, in essence, the minimum beliefs that an orthodox member must sustain. The first two—those concerning Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ—are shared with all of Christendom; the last three are distinctively Mormon. They assert our specialness, our chosenness.

However, *True to the Faith* stresses restrained, subdued, organic spiritual experiences. A testimony comes "through the quiet influence of the Holy Ghost, . . . as a quiet assurance, without spectacular displays of God's power." It will "grow gradually" (179). "Quiet spiritual promptings . . . are more powerful" than "visions or angelic visitations" (141). Revelation comes "when you are reverent and peaceful" (141). Revelation "will probably come to you 'line upon line. . . .' Do not try to force spiritual things. Revelation does not come that way" (143). The Holy Ghost communicates through our feelings, especially "a feeling of comfort and serenity" (144). This depiction of revelation and spiritual experiences would, needless to say, have excluded most converts to the Church in its first twenty years.

I'm sure that *True to the Faith* will be a rich mine for those who want to explore Mormonism's contemporary theological and doctrinal landscape, but I had a greater personal interest in the other category—behavior, which is where I categorized thirty-eight items (about 37 percent of the total). These behavioral expectations spell out what Mormons will do or areas on which there is a Church policy that can be used as a standard for evaluating orthodoxy. They include: abortion, abuse, adoption, baptism, birth control, body piercing, chastity, cross, debt, divorce, education, family history work and genealogy, family home evening, fasting and fast of-

ferings, gambling, judging others, marriage, missionary work (young men have a “duty” to serve missions; young women and older couples have a “responsibility”), modesty, obedience, patriarchal blessings, pornography, prayer, profanity, revelation, Sabbath, sacrament, salvation, Satan, scriptures, the second coming of Jesus Christ (which is discussed exclusively in terms of individual preparation), service, sacrifice, tattooing, testimony, tithing, unity, welfare, and the Word of Wisdom.

I found it interesting that the policy on abortion is identical to that in the *Church Handbook of Instructions*: “Members . . . must not submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for an abortion. If you encourage an abortion in any way, you may be subject to Church discipline” (4).<sup>7</sup> *True to the Faith* also spells out the long-accepted three “exceptional circumstances” that may justify an abortion: if the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest, if a “competent” doctor determines that continuing the pregnancy will put the mother’s life “in serious jeopardy,” or if the fetus has such “severe defects” that it “will not . . . survive beyond birth” (4). However, both *True to the Faith* and the handbook quickly add, “Even these circumstances do not automatically justify an abortion. Those who face such circumstances should consider abortion only after consulting with their local Church leaders and receiving a confirmation through earnest prayer” (4). The handbook does not specify that the prayer should be “earnest,” so *True to the Faith* actually amplifies it on this point.

The policy on abuse—“physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional”—is far short of what I think we need, considering the severity of the problem. In fact, it is watered down from the version in the handbook, given that one of its primary audiences is young men and women who are at greater risk than adults of being victims of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. *True to the Faith* states that abuse “can cause confusion, doubt, mistrust, and fear,” suggesting, rather improbably, that abuse may also cause none of these effects. It further states, “Abusive behavior may lead to Church discipline” (6). Unfortunately, the conditional verb here may not provide the reassurance that a shaken young victim needs to seek help from an ecclesiastical leader.

The next three-paragraph section in the “Abuse” entry is “counsel for the abuser” and the second section is “help for victims.” I found it puzzling that the needs of victims are listed last. Advice to abusers include instructions to repent, to ask the Lord and their victims for forgiveness, and to “speak with [note: not “confess to”] your bishop . . . so he can help you



through the repentance process and, if necessary, help you receive additional counseling or other assistance."

This guidance seems inadequate, considering the extent and resulting trauma of abuse problems in our culture. The abuser is told to seek "an eternal perspective" that will help him see that "your anger has almost always come in response to things that are not very important." A sexual abuser is advised to "discipline your mind" and "stay away from pornography" (6).

The "Help for Victims" section is slightly better. The victim, it says, should "immediately" talk to his or her bishop who will "guide you through the process of emotional healing. . . . You are not to blame for the harmful behavior of others. You do not need to feel guilt. . . . Rather than seek revenge, focus on matters you can control, such as your own outlook on life. Pray for the strength to forgive those who have hurt you" (7). I am concerned that this counsel does not assure the abuse survivor that abuse is illegal, that reporting is mandatory, that legal and judicial remedies are available, that therapy is almost always helpful, and that seeking justice is not the same as seeking "revenge."

The abuse policy in the *Church Handbook of Instructions* is much longer; and even though it is directed primarily to the bishop, I think every member of the Church should also be aware of it. It strongly states that "abuse cannot be tolerated in any form," that abuse "violate[s] the laws of God and man," and that abusers "are [not "may be"] subject to Church discipline," "should not" have callings or temple recommends, and even after full reinstatement should not work with children or youth "unless the First Presidency authorizes removal of the annotation on the person's membership record." The "first responsibility of the Church"—by which it presumably means the local Church leader—"is to help those who have been abused and to protect those who may be vulnerable to future abuse." The handbook acknowledges the probability of "serious trauma and feelings of guilt" and urges leaders to be "sensitive . . . and give caring attention to help them [survivors] overcome the destructive effects of abuse." It spells out the probable need for "professional counseling" for both victims and perpetrators, instructs bishops to inform their stake presidents and to call the help line (there is no help line for ordinary members or abuse victims), and advises the bishop to "urge the member [perpetrator] to report these [illegal] activities to the appropriate government authorities." The bishop should also advise the perpetrator to get "qualified legal

advice" but should personally "avoid testifying in civil or criminal cases or other proceedings involving abuse."<sup>8</sup> If similarly specific information were widely available to the membership at large, I think it would go further than the relatively few (though strongly worded) denunciations of abuse that have appeared at infrequent intervals in general conference addresses.

A few additional items seem to reflect current emphases related to social issues. Under "Addiction" is the advice to "See gambling, pornography, and Word of Wisdom." The book reassures the reader: "You can overcome addiction through personal effort, the enabling power of the Lord's grace, help from family members and friends, and guidance from Church leaders" (187).

Birth control, which was defined as a manifestation of selfishness and resistance to God's will in official statements up through the 1980s, has now been privatized. Though strongly pronatalist ("Ponder the joy that comes when children are in the home. Consider the eternal blessings that come from having a good posterity . . . Prayerfully decide . . ."), *True to the Faith* concedes: Decisions about "how many children to have and when to have them . . . are between the two of you and the Lord," and it also acknowledges that "sexual relations within marriage" also have the purpose of "express[ing] love for one another" (26).

*True to the Faith* rather awkwardly straddles a conceptual fence by asserting that husband and wife are equal partners while assigning to the husband traditional patriarchal duties: "Each husband and father in the Church should strive to be worthy to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. With his wife as an equal partner, he presides in righteousness and love, serving as the family's spiritual leader. He leads the family in regular prayer, scripture study, and family home evening . . ." (125). "Remember that marriage, in its truest sense, is a partnership of equals," reads the entry on marriage, "with neither person exercising dominion over the other, but with each encouraging, comforting, and helping the other" (100).

### Omitted Topics

As benchmarks of change are topics that might have appeared in earlier versions of *True to the Faith*, had such a book existed, but that have quietly disappeared from what is now considered "essential" to know. For example, for the past thirty years, Church doctrine and member behavior have been organized according to the three-fold mission of the Church:



perfecting the Saints, preaching the gospel, and redeeming the dead. That mission statement appears nowhere in *True to the Faith* and neither, for the most part, does the language. The book refers to "sharing the gospel," rather than preaching it. "Redeeming the Dead" is a mere subheading under "Family History Work and Genealogy," but the phrase is not used again in the entry (61).

"Polygamy" or "plural marriage" appears nowhere, which is certainly not surprising; however, a puzzling sentence explains that Abraham "entered into celestial marriage, which is the covenant of exaltation" (5). I'm somewhat at a loss to explain this statement. "Less active member" has apparently gone the way of the "prospective elder," the Adam-God doctrine, and blood atonement.

There are entries for "Priesthood" and "Relief Society" but no entries, not even "see" references, for Primary, Young Women, and Sunday School. The auxiliaries are treated in a single sentence under "Church Administration," not as organizations but as local meetings organized according to age groups. For example: "the Relief Society, [is] for women ages 18 years and older, Aaronic Priesthood quorums, for young men ages 12 through 17 . . ." (36). I find it significant that the Relief Society is listed before the boys, since it reflects the new order of the sustaining vote in solemn assemblies initiated by President Hinckley.

### New Concepts

Topics not previously addressed in standard Church materials are time-sensitive topics and therefore among the most interesting, since time will tell whether they will become core knowledge or trends that will be replaced by future development. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," is quoted verbatim. It comprises the complete entry under "Family," except for a brief historical introduction about when it was first introduced. In what may be preparation for this document's eventual canonization, *True to the Faith* announces: "This inspired proclamation . . . has become the Church's definitive statement on the family" (59).

Another topic that has received much recent attention is pornography, which receives a strong denunciation but, unfortunately, has so sweeping a definition that it seems eventually unworkable: "Pornography is any material depicting or describing the human body or sexual conduct in a way that arouses sexual feelings" (117). Does this mean that the Song of Solomon will disappear from the next LDS edition of the Old Testa-

ment? The language in the entry is uncharacteristically vivid and emphatic, considering the subdued tone of most entries. Pornography is “tragically addictive. . . . If you experiment with it and allow yourself to remain caught in its trap, it will destroy you, degrading your mind, heart, and spirit. It will rob you of self-respect and of your sense of the beauties of life. It will tear you down and lead you to evil thoughts and possibly evil actions. It will cause terrible damage to your family relationships. . . . Ask the Lord to give you strength to overcome this terrible addiction” (117–18).

There are entries on both body piercing and tattooing, also recently emphasized by President Hinckley. Both entries follow President Hinckley’s approach in applying 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 (“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy . . .”) to discourage these practices. The entry on body piercing begins: “Latter-day prophets strongly discourage the piercing of the body except for medical purposes. If girls or women desire to have their ears pierced, they are encouraged to wear only one pair of modest earrings.” The entry then continues with a strong warning: “Those who choose to disregard this counsel show a lack of respect for themselves and for God. They will someday regret their decision” (27). Similarly, tattooing is characterized as “a lack of respect for themselves and for God. . . . If you have a tattoo, you wear a constant reminder of a mistake you have made. You might consider having it removed” (167).

Even more interesting was a cluster of entries that, taken together, may signal serious alarm on the Church’s part about ongoing evangelical claims that Mormons are not Christian. One of these entries is “grace,” defined as “the divine help and strength we receive through the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ” and twice later in the entry as an “enabling power” (77–78). *True to the Faith* encourages: “Effort is required on our part to receive the fulness of the Lord’s grace and be made worthy to dwell with Him” but it also promises that we can receive strength at moments of discouragement or weakness from this “enabling power.”

The related entry on original sin (110–11) acknowledges that we live “separated from God and subject to physical death” but also states clearly that “we are not condemned by what many call the ‘original sin.’ In other words, we are not accountable for Adam’s transgression in the Garden of Eden.” But the most interesting related entry is the one on “Salvation,” rather a lengthy one at three and a half pages long. The introductory paragraph poses the situation of being asked by “other Christians” the ques-

tion, “Have you been saved?” The correct answer is yes because we believe in Christ and have entered into a covenant relationship with him. Furthermore, we can claim to be born again if we have been baptized and confirmed.

The entry provides a list of six different meanings of “salvation.” Depending on what the questioner means, the answer to the question about being saved will either be “yes” or “yes, but with conditions” (151). These six definitions are: salvation from physical death, salvation from sin, being born again, salvation from ignorance, salvation from the second death, and eternal life or exaltation.

President Boyd K. Packer has wielded enormous influence on Mormon culture and belief during the last thirty years. I was not surprised to see that “free agency” appears nowhere in *True to the Faith*, including in the “Agency” entry, but I did expect to see the term with which he has replaced it: “moral agency.” But “moral agency” does not appear in the entry on “Agency” (12). Also, the entry on “Plan of Salvation” is called just that, rather than President Packer’s consistently used “plan of happiness,” although the defining paragraph gives a list of equivalent terms with their scriptural references, including “plan of salvation,” “great plan of happiness,” “plan of redemption,” and “plan of mercy” (115). “The Plan of Salvation” is also the term used in identifying God the Father as its author (75).

Although these examples use more neutral or more commonly accepted terms than those President Packer has popularized, I think it is possible to speculate that his influence accounts for the fact that *True to the Faith* includes an entry on “Light of Christ.” President Packer spoke on this topic on June 22, 2004, at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, at a seminar for new mission presidents.<sup>9</sup> Since the copyright information for *True to the Faith* gives a date of 2004 with an “update” in July 2004, I can’t help wondering if the update added this entry after his address. A careful reading of both the address and the entry, however, leaves me somewhat mystified at the rationale for including this topic in the first place, since it seems to have, as its main purpose, maintaining a distinction between the specialness of Latter-day Saints, who can have the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the less-special status of non-Mormons who can be influenced by the Light of Christ to investigate the gospel. Rather confusingly, the entry in *True to the Faith* explains that even Church members still have and need the light of Christ but that it manifests itself as one’s

conscience, although there's no explanation of why the Holy Ghost can't also perform this function of enabling us to "judge good from evil" (96).

### Conclusion

How would I evaluate *True to the Faith* overall? On the positive side, I think the heightened attention to Jesus Christ is very commendable, a spiritually uplifting focus on a relationship with the Savior rather than a more exclusive focus on institutional duties and responsibilities.

Second, for the most part, the prose is clear, positive, and simply phrased. Addressing the reader directly is a technique that is usually friendly sounding, not intimidating. The book also makes a commendable effort to use gender-inclusive language.

As a third advantage, it brings at least a few Church policies out of the handbook and makes them available to members.

On the negative side, the anonymity and authoritativeness of the entries means that even problematic expressions cannot be dismissed as the personal opinion of the author. I have concerns that the simplicity and clarity of the language will not serve at least some members well as they struggle to deal with the messy and complicated realities of their lives. Real people thirst for answers because they have real questions. Getting the answers from someone who hasn't listened to the questions does not always aid the questioner, and it sometimes means that the answers are painful mismatches for individual needs. In many ways, even given this book's strengths, it simply does not accommodate the lived realities of many members of the Church, perhaps the most pressing of which are the growing poverty of members in Third World countries, the inequality of women in the Church, and the theological paradoxes of how the Church treats gay and lesbian members.

*True to the Faith* will probably have both good and bad effects. On the one hand, it will probably reduce the authority of self-appointed proclaimers of esoteric doctrines and, by giving leaders and members the same handbook of beliefs, inject a little more equality into that lopsided relationship. On the other hand, it will almost certainly continue to foster the lamentable habit of proof-texting and reading the scriptures out of context that already afflicts us. I suspect that it also means that those who find themselves following the counsel to study the scriptures but who come up with insights that do not reinforce existing interpretations will be labeled as heretics even more quickly. In any case, this snapshot of au-

thorized Mormon beliefs and behaviors in the early years of the twenty-first century will provide a benchmark against which future change will be measured.

### Notes

1. Permission to make translations and abstracts of this article, or to make copies of it for classroom or other use, must be obtained from the author.

2. No author or editor identified, *True to the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, June 2004). Quotations from this work are cited parenthetically in the text.

3. One of this article's anonymous reviewers commented that she had not heard of *True to the Faith* until reading this article; but when she asked her husband, a counselor in a stake presidency, he recalled that it had come in about a year earlier and had been distributed to all bishoprics in the stake "as a resource" but without more specific instructions. It was not distributed to youth or other lay members.

4. For example, the following youth and Primary guide books have the same dimensions: *Young Woman Personal Progress: Standing as a Witness of God* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1995); *Aaronic Priesthood—Deacon: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 2001); *Aaronic Priesthood—Priest: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 2001); *Aaronic Priesthood—Teacher: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 2001); and two Primary booklets: *Faith in God—Boys* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, May 2003) and *Faith in God—Girls* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, May 2003). My thanks to Marina Capella for supplying these examples.

5. This entry assures the reader that there will never be "another general apostasy" but that "we must each guard against personal apostasy . . . by keeping your covenants, obeying the commandments, following Church leaders, partaking of the sacrament, and constantly strengthening your testimony through daily scripture study, prayer and service" (14).

6. This entry includes the organization's comprehensive ten-point mission statement: "Sisters in the Relief Society work with priesthood holders to carry out the mission of the Church. They support one another as they: increase their testimonies of Jesus Christ through prayer and scripture study; seek spiritual strength by following the promptings of the Holy Ghost; dedicate themselves to strengthening marriages, families, and homes; find nobil-

ity in motherhood and joy in womanhood; love life and learning; stand for truth and righteousness; sustain the priesthood as the authority of God on earth; rejoice in the blessings of the temple; understand their divine destiny and strive for exaltation" (131).

7. *The Church Handbook of Instructions: Book 1, Stake Presidencies and Bishops* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 157, differs only in using third person throughout.

8. *Ibid.*, 1:157–58.

9. Boyd K. Packer, "The Light of Christ," *Ensign*, April 2005, 8–14.