DİN EĞİTİMİ
ARAŞTIRMALARI
DERGISİ
FAMILY IN MORMONISM

Doç. Dr. İlhan YILDIZ

Introduction

In Turkey, there is no published research in Turkish on Mormonism. For this reason, I want to start my article by giving general information about Mormonism. Essentially, using data derived from LDS Church publications.

According to Mormon belief, the religion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, informally known as Mormonism, begins in 1820 when Joseph Smith, a young man in western New York, spurred by a Christian revival, prayed to God for guidance as to which church was true. In answer to his prayers he was visited by two separate beings, God the Father and God the Son, who told him to join no church because all the churches at
that time were false, and that he, Joseph Smith, would bring forth the true church. This event is called "The First Vision."

In 1823 Smith is claimed to have another heavenly visitation, in which an angel named Moroni told him of a sacred history written by ancient Hebrews in America, engraved in characters known as Reformed Egyptian, on tablets of gold and buried in a nearby hill. Accordingly, Smith was told it was the history of the ancient peoples of America, and that he would be the instrument for bringing this record to the recognition of the world. Smith obtained these gold plates from the angel in 1827, and translated them into English with the Spirit of God and the use of a sacred instrument accompanying the plates called the "Urim and Thummim." The translation was published in 1830 as *The Book of Mormon.*

*The Book of Mormon* is a religious and secular history of some of the primary inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere from perhaps about 3,000 B.C. to about 421 A.D. It tells the reader about three groups of immigrants who were led by God from their original homes in the Near East to America. The first group came from the Tower of Babel, but eventually became extinct. The other two groups came from Jerusalem just before the Babylonian Captivity, in about 600 B.C. They were led by prophets of God who had the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is thus preserved in their history, the *Book of Mormon.* Many of the descendants of these immigrants were Christians, even before Christ was born in Palestine, but many were unbelievers. Believers and unbelievers fought many wars, the last of which left only degenerate unbelievers as survivors, whom Mormons believe are the primary ancestors of the American Indians. The most important event during this long history was the visit of Jesus Christ to America, after his crucifixion and resurrection, when he ministered to many of the inhabitants.

According to Mormon sources, Joseph Smith was directed by a revelation from God to reestablish ("restore") the true church, which he did in 1830. He was visited several times by heavenly messengers, who ordained him to the true priesthood. He continued to have revelations from God to guide the church and to give more knowledge of the Gospel. Many of these revelations are published in the *Doctrine and Covenants.*

Joseph Smith and his followers were frequently persecuted for their

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2 Talmage, *The Story of the Philosophy of Mormonism,* 17.
religious beliefs, and driven from New York State to Ohio, then to Missouri, then to Illinois, where Joseph Smith was murdered in 1844 by a mob. The church was then led by Brigham Young, Smith's successor, to Utah, where the Mormons settled successfully.

The LDS church is led today by the successors of Joseph Smith. The current president of the church, Gordon B. Hinckley, is believed to be a "prophet, seer and revelator" just as Joseph Smith was, and to guide the members of the church through revelations and guidance from God.

According to Mormons, the modern LDS Church is the only true church, as restored by God through Joseph Smith. All other churches, derived from the early Christian church, are in apostasy due to some false leaders corrupting scriptural teachings, changing the ordinances of the original church, or leading wicked lives, thus losing their authority. Only by accepting baptism into the LDS church other Christian sect members can take the first step necessary toward salvation and ultimate entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Today the LDS Church is the fourth largest religious body in the United States and the sixth largest international Christian religious body in the world. The LDS Church owns over 16,000 meetinghouses (church buildings) throughout the world. Approximately 12% of the 11 million members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints live in the state of Utah in the US. Approximately 48% of LDS live in the United States. In 19% of the states in the United States, at least 1% of the population consists of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For statistical reasons, the LDS Church demands a reader's attention: in just 170 years, the Church has grown from six members to more than 11 million; if current rates

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1 Baptism: The question as to when an individual should be baptized has been a source of endless discussion among Christian peoples. In the second and third century, the practice of baptizing infants was inaugurated and has since continued, although without scriptural warrant. In fact, one of the fundamental purposes of baptism - the remission of sins - indicates that the recipient must be capable of repentance and of leading a better life. The Book of Mormon clearly teaches against the baptism of infants as a denial of the mercy of Christ, and According to Mormon Beliefs, it November 1831, Joseph received a revelation establishing eight years as the age at which children should be baptized. (Gordon B. Hinckley, Truth Restored, a Publication of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 40.)

2 Gordon B. Hinckley, Truth Restored, A Publication of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1.
of growth continue, membership could hit 60 million at the end of 2080, which would make it the most important world religion to emerge since the rise of Islam.

**Family**

In our modern society a complex question has surfaced; "What is a Family?" Not so long ago that was a simple question, with a simple answer: a family is a father, mother, brother and sisters living together, spending time together, and pulling together in a spirit of love and harmony. With the passage of time, however, and as a result of powerful social and economic conditions, the traditional concept of family has been turned inside out and the "nuclear family" became the common model in developed and developing countries.

Alternative styles of family life are appearing in our time, although the nuclear family still predominates. In the present-day striving for innovative family patterns, it is important for information to be available concerning the failures and successes of those in the world and who made similar attempts.

Throughout history there have been many types of family organization. Generally, one can say that for any specific period of history there is a characteristic type of family life. But at the same time, within those time periods there were family life practices, which deviated from the widely accepted norm.

In recent years, not only in Turkey, but also throughout the entire world, the subject of love has been utilized in the media in a greatly exaggerated manner. The reason for this is the fact that there is no base for the institution of family other than religion. The manner of production has changed to make it possible for everyone to live alone. In other words, the economic basis of the family has become meaningless. Yet the family is an institution designed to achieve the happiness of both men and women and

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3 Jerry M. Lewis, the Birth of the Family, New York, 1989, 1.
the healthy upbringing of children. Sociologically, the family is the primary group of people in which face to face relations are the strongest. It is not possible for any individual to give up the family because it provides a ground for the socialization of behavior and values.  

In addition, the family serves the function of regeneration. A project of civilization can only be implemented by emphasizing the value of family in educational institutions. In the family, wives and husbands, boys and girls have equal rights and responsibilities toward each other. Outside the family, women have all the rights as men as prescribed by Quran. It is an archaic idea to argue that women have lesser rights, there is no valid reason why they should become the most famous practitioners of every field of occupation. This is also the essence of democratization in any society. According to the Quran and traditions of the Prophet, family is described as a holy environment. From the Islamic perspective, family has no alternative. No other institution can create the warmth, love, friendship and confidence bonds among partners, children and other relatives. In this sense, family is unique.

We should be open to all sorts of formulas that would strengthen the family. This paper tries to explain the importance of family life in Mormonism and analyzes its different results regarding the social life. I suggest that we should examine Mormonism in its successful efforts to keep families intact in an age of tremendous social, economic and technical change occurring at a global scale.

Family in Mormonism

I chose the Mormons as the subject of this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, at the onset of the organization of this American religion in

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2 Bakara, 2/187; Āli ʾImrān, 3/14; Nisa, 4/19; en-Nisā, 4/23-24; en-Nisā, 4/34; Meryem, 44/55; Zumer, 59/15; Tahrim, 106/6; Lokman, 31/14; Isrā, 17/23-25; İbrahim, 14/41; Nūr, 24/58; en-Nūr, 24/30; Rūm, 30/21; Rum 30/54; Tāhā, 20/132; Buhārī, Edeb, 2; Buhārī, Nikāh, 16; Buhārī, Nikāh, 66 vd.; Buhārī, Nikāh, 93; Buhārī, Nikāh, 116; Mūsliμ, Ḍirr, 1.2; Mūsliμ, Imār, 56; Ebū Davud, Nikāh, 41; Ebū Davud, Talāk, 18; Ebū Davud, Vesāyi, 14; Ebū Davud, Edeb, 120; Avnu‘l Ma‘būd Şerh Ebī Davud, 1, 173; İbn Māce, Nikāh, 3; İbn Māce, Nikāh, 50; Nesā, Cihad, 6.
3 "Mormon" is the common term to designate a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or LDS. In this article the terms Mormon and LDS will be used interchangeably.
1830, there were converts including a mixture of people from a variety of geographic locations. There were Americans such as New England Puritans, Mid-Western Protestants, the wealthy and poor of England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany, France and Italy. Thus, we have people representing many cultures and subcultures who eventually participated in a type of family life experiment. This cosmopolitan picture turned out to be a new family model where a number of different family types were included.

Being known as a record-keeping people, the Mormons have excellent written sources from which to study their lives. Both in depth, breadth and variety, these sources have begun to be tapped as to family information and other types of information that they can yield. Mormons established an institution under the name of “Family History Center” and regularly collected the family information in “Granite Mountain Vault.”

The family plays a basic role of importance in the theology of Mormonism. Their commitment to family life has always been very apparent. To study the family life of a group of people such as this is very pertinent to family studies because of the variety of people in the group, numerous and available sources which yield much data and the group’s interest and devotion to the family.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for many years has projected an image of fostering strong, wholesome, closely-knit family units. Their strong emphasis on family is based on their beliefs about eternal destiny. People of other faiths often are amazed by the apparent stability and size of LDS families. Indeed, the LDS church encourages strong family relationships, lasting marriages, and parenthood. The TV screen in Utah fades with a husband and wife warmly embracing each other and their several children. An announcer says a message from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This short, public service announcement leaves people thinking, that’s what a home really should be; those Mormons sure have good families.

Baptists and other Christians commend the Mormons for their promotion of healthy families. Most Christians naturally assume that Mormons stress family relations for the same reasons as other churches. Christians often are surprised to learn of the underlying theological reasons for the Mormon Church’s emphasis on the family.

Today Mormons, like everyone else, are influenced by what goes on in the world. On the other hand, Mormons try to respond to real-life pressures by clinging to each other just a little more tenaciously than most
other families in western societies do. You can still find efforts to keep “the traditional family” in most Mormon homes. The main reason for the Mormon’s family success is the central place of family in LDS theology. The church teaches that the family unit is sacred and that it can exist intact forever.

In recent years there have been a number of studies of Mormonism and the Mormon family, using data derived from LDS Church publications. The following principles in LDS theology show how significant the family is to Mormon members:

1. **Human Race as One Family**

   While the Supreme Being is referred to as “God,” in the Mormon faith he is most often called “Heavenly Father” or “Father in Heaven,” and all humans are considered to be his spirit children. Jesus Christ, whom Mormons worship and revere, and most often called “Lord” or “Savior,” is sometimes even referred to by some as being their “Elder Brother.” For Mormons, the human race is one extended family. In this connection, when Mormons address each other, there is no Mr. or Mrs. or Miss. or Ms. – it is Brother or Sister, spoken with familial love and respect.

2. **Marriage**

   Marriage is one of the fundamental doctrines in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to Mormon beliefs; shortly after laying the foundation of the Church, Joseph Smith, the first Mormon Prophet, received a revelation in May of 1831 that “marriage is ordained of God.”¹ There is a strong belief that “it is not good that ... man should be alone.”² Celibacy is not looked upon with reverence in the LDS theology. Church leaders encourage single members to marry. The Church does recognize that not everyone will have the opportunity to marry in this life, but there is a belief that all will have the opportunity to marry whether in this life or the next life. Later on after the Prophet Joseph Smith received the

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¹ Doctrine & Covenants 49:15
² Genesis 2:18
revelation to build temples, marriage in LDS temples became a commandment and a majority of Mormon marriages are performed there. Mormons believe that marriage performed in the temple is more than an ordinary civil marriage, these marriages last for eternity.

3. Families Can Be Together Forever

As stated above marriages performed in temples are believed to literally seal the couple for time and all eternity. A righteous male member who holds the priesthood keys of sealing performs this ordinance. Not only is the couple sealed together forever but any children they beget are also sealed to them. If a couple have children before they are married in the temple, then the “Sealer” must also seal any living children to their parents. According to Mormon beliefs, the idea is that the sealing of parents to each other and to their children creates an eternal chain of generations bound for all time by love and faith. It’s no wonder then that Mormons tend to view heaven as an extension of earthly domestic existence, often referring to the life after this one as a return to their “heavenly home.” Nor is it surprising that Latter-day Saints devote considerable time and money to genealogical work for their “kindred dead.” The ordinances of the temple can be performed vicariously on behalf of those who have already passed on, forging ancestral links in an eternal family chain. Thus, for members of the LDS faith there is no cliché “till death do us part.” Families will be together for all eternity. All of which has an impact on the way Mormon families get along. Therefore fewer children are born out of wedlock in the Mormon faith in comparison to the rest of America. Because of Mormon doctrine, relationships in this life suddenly assume new meaning when their eternal nature is taken into consideration. After all, Mormons are taught that “families are forever.”

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1 Temples are dedicated buildings in which worthy members may perform ordinances of eternal significance.
2 Aaronic Priesthood, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 147-148.
3 Mormons define priesthood as the power of God, given to man to perform divine works here on earth.
4 Francis M. Darter, Celestial Marriage, Salt Lake City, 1937, 51.
4. Children are a Gift from God

In this modern world families with a lot of children are becoming very scarce. This is not the case with Mormon families. Utah, a predominately Mormon state, has the highest birth rate in the United States. Mormons tend to have large families because they believe that the commandment given by God to the first family, Adam and Eve, has never been revoked: “and God said unto them [Adam and Eve] be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth.” Mormons believe that the responsibility of a parent should come before any other duty. David O. McKay, the ninth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stated, “no other success can compensate for failure in the home.” Other Church leaders have also spoken on how important it is to attend to one’s family duties and place being a parent above that of career or hobbies. Mormons try to live by the proverb found in Psalms “Lo, Children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed.”

Families can be one of the greatest sources of happiness. According Mormon belief: “one of their most precious possessions is their families.” Within a family no love is so deep; no joy is so full as that which can exist within the family circle. Families can help bring the society the best that life has to offer. Within the family one can also feel the deepest heartache. Families can falter and even fail. Yet happiness in a family is often possible even when heartaches come.

Mormons have developed many new institutions and methods about protecting the family. The following are five examples:

2. Granite Mountain Vault

Much of the Church’s vast genealogical holdings are stored at the Granite Mountain Vault, a huge facility carved out of a solid stone mountain

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1 www.utah.gov/admn/didyouknow.html
2 Genesis 1:22; Aaronic Priesthood, published by The church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 160.
3 Conference Report, April 1964, 5.
4 Psalms 127:3-5.
5 Conference Report, April 1964, 5.
just east of Salt Lake City. Under tight security and careful environmental controls, precious documents are preserved and studied, and the genealogical data they contain are extracted. In most cases, the original documents are photographed and transferred to microfilm; staff members retrieve and copy documents from the microfilm, which are then made available to family historians around the country for their genealogical research.  

Each section includes in Granite Mountain Vault, such as the following:

- A storage facility for original microfilms.
- A film processing lab for developing microfilm and making copies to send throughout the world.
- A storage facility for a small collection of old books and artifacts from Mormon history.
- A storage facility for first edition Mormon Book.

2. Family History Center

To help these members in tracing their genealogies, the LDS Church has microfilmed vital records throughout the world that identify hundreds of millions of persons who have died. The Church provides access to these records through the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and in over 3,000 local family history centers. The LDS Church has also developed large databases of genealogical information. Further information about these resources is available on the Internet. It is interesting that most of the people who use the library are not Mormons. Many are professional researchers who come from all over the USA and the world.

Why do members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do family history research? They probably do it because they are motivated by love for their deceased family members and desire to serve them. According to Mormon belief, this life does not end at death. Members of the

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1 The Mission Inside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 72.
LDS Church believe that their deceased ancestors can also receive the blessings of being eternally united with their families. Meanwhile members of the LDS Church are taught that they have a religious obligation to trace their own genealogies and perform temple ordinances for their ancestors. For this purpose, Church members make covenants in temples in behalf of their ancestors, who may accept these covenants, if they so choose, in the spirit world.

Family history begins by remembering identifying information about each family member. Each person can be identified by personal information, such as the following:

- Name,
- Other members of the family,
- Dates and places of important events such as birth, marriage, and death,
- Ancestral village,
- Occupation.¹

3. Family Home Evening

According Mormon beliefs; every family should hold a Family Home Evening each week. A family may consist of one person or a husband and wife. It may include children and other relatives. Every family, regardless of their circumstances, will be blessed by holding family home evenings. Therefore LDS families are encouraged to schedule one night a week at home together for a time of study, communication, and fun activities. LDS leaders encourage church members to participate in a weekly Family Home Evening to promote this emphasis. Local LDS congregations, called wards, are prohibited from scheduling activities that would conflict with the Family Home Evening. In this context the Church keeps Monday evenings free of other activities so families can be together for family home evening.

As patriarch of his family, the father presides. He conducts or appoints

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¹ The Mission Inside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 70.
a family member to conduct the home evening. He teaches the lesson or delegates the teaching to his wife or to children who are old enough to teach. Everyone who is old enough should have opportunities to participate. Younger children can help in such ways as leading music, quoting scriptures, answering questions, holding pictures, passing out refreshments, and praying. In the father's absence, the mother presides.¹

4. Home Teaching

Each ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints assigns priesthood holders as home teachers to visit the homes of members every month. They go in pairs; often a youth holding the Aaronic Priesthood² accompanies an adult holding the Melchizedek Priesthood³. Home teachers are called by their local priesthood quorum leaders and are typically assigned to visit between three and five families. They report on the needs and Welfare of their assigned families in regularly scheduled interviews with their priesthood leaders.⁴

Organizationaly, home teaching provides a system for effective Churchwide communication. Through stakes, wards, and home teachers, Church leaders have a direct line to every member and have the potential, if necessary, to communicate quickly with the total Church membership, via the local priesthood leaders.

Effective home teaching makes significant contributions to members' lives. Alert, insightful home teachers find various ways of rendering service,

¹ Family, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7; refer to: S. Dilworth Young, Family Night Reader, Salt Lake City, 1958, 1 etc.; Shirley Brockbank Paxman – Monroe J. Paxman, A How Book of Family Activities, Desert Book Company, Salt Lake City, 1959, 1-5.
² According to Mormon beliefs; on May 15, 1829, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery near Harmony, Pennsylvania, and bestowed the Aaronic Priesthood on them. (see. Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol. 1.)
³ The Melchizedek Priesthood was given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. As directed, they ordained one another first and second elders of the Church on April 6, 1830. The Melchizedek Priesthood is an eternal priesthood. The Melchizedek Priesthood is the authority, responsibility, and power to act in the name of Jesus Christ and to organize and direct part of his work. Every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. (Milton V. Backman, The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio 1830-1838, Salt Lake City, 1983, 237-56; Widtsoe, John A. Priesthood and Church Government, rev. ed. Salt Lake City, 1954; Kimball, Spencer W., et al. Priesthood. Salt Lake City, 1981.)
⁴ William Hartley, "Ordained and Acting Teachers in the Lesser Priesthood, 1851-1883", Brigham Young University Studies 16 (Spring 1976), 375-98.
such as providing recognition for achievements; informing families of Church activities; assisting during family emergencies, including illness or death; strengthening and encouraging less active members; and arranging transportation. They serve as resources and share the burden of support that would otherwise be carried by the bishop.1

5. The Law of Chastity

According to Mormon beliefs, parents can begin teaching children to have proper attitudes toward their bodies when children are very young. Talking to children frankly but reverently and using the correct names for the parts and functions of their bodies will help them grow up without unnecessary embarrassment about their bodies. Children are naturally curious. They want to know how their bodies work. They want to know where babies come from. If parents answer all such questions immediately and clearly so children can understand, children will continue to take their questions to their parents. However, if parents answer questions so that children feel embarrassed, rejected, or dissatisfied, they will probably go to someone else with their questions and perhaps get incorrect ideas and improper attitudes.2

Meanwhile parents can teach children the importance of respecting their bodies and the bodies of others. Parents should advice children to dress modestly. They should correct the false ideas and vulgar language that children learn from others. By the time children reach maturity, parents should have frankly discussed procreation with them. Children should understand that these powers are good and were given to us by the Lord.3

In short, Mormons are to have sexual relations only with their spouse to whom they are legally married. No one, male or female, is to have sexual relations before marriage. After marriage, sexual relations are permitted only with their spouse. These teachings constitute what is known in Mormonism as the Law of Chastity.

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2 Harold B. Lee, Teaching of Presidents of the Church, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 2000, 185.
The Demographic Effects of Mormonism on Family in Utah

Utah supports 1,000 churches representing 67 religious denominations.\(^1\) Over 70\% of Utah’s population claims membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.\(^2\) The Demographic effects of Mormonism on family in Utah can be categorized as follows:

**Drug Use**

Drug use has become a major social problem in the United States. In a 1990 Gallup poll of adults in the United States, 30\% said that drug use was the most important problem facing the country. Religion is one social characteristic that affects drug use. Considerable evidence suggests that religious involvement tends to retard drug use. According to researches, individuals affiliated with a religion have lower rates of drug use than those not affiliated.\(^3\)

In recent years there have been a number of studies of Mormon drug use. Using data from a national survey of high school seniors, Acheampong Yaw Amoateng and Stephen J. Bahr (1986) found that religiosity was negatively associated with alcohol and marijuana use and that this association was stronger among Mormons than among other religious groups. A comparison of inactive LDS adolescents with inactive adolescents from other religions revealed only small differences in drug use. Active LDS youth, however, had rates of drug use considerably less than active adolescents from other religions.\(^4\)

**Smoking and Drinking**

Active Latter-day Saints generally adhere strictly to their health code which prohibits the use of tobacco and alcohol. These practices have

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2 Deseret News 2001-2002 Church Almanac.
4 Stephan J. Bahr, ‘Religion and Adolescent Drug Use: A Comparison of Mormons and Other Religions’, 123.
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frequently shown up in national health data, which consistently rate Utah as having the lowest rates of smoking, alcohol use, lung cancer, etc. The latest report (1999) by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta confirmed that Utah still has the lowest smoking rate in the U.S. The report said that in Utah, 14.2% of adults smoke. The smoking rate among Utah teens is the lowest in the nation: 7.3% in Utah compared to 16.9% nationally.

Healthiest City

In 2000 Self Magazine ranked Provo, Utah as the number one healthiest city in the country for women. The article said that the Mormon influence is the reason women in Provo experience such low incidents of cancer, smoking, drinking, violence, depression, etc. In November 2000, Money Magazine ranked Salt Lake City as the "West's most livable metropolis." So Salt Lake City was chosen for the best place to live in USA in 2000. The 1999 Places Rated Almanac (IDG Books) ranked the Salt Lake City-Ogden metro area as the best place to live in North America.

Based on a large variety of factors, Utah was ranked as the best state in which to raise children in the 1996 rankings by the Children's Right's Council. It gave Utah high marks for low levels of infant mortality, a low percentage of single-parent families and low numbers of children living in low-income families. Utah also has the lowest child poverty rate in the county. The number of single-parent families in Utah increased by 7% during the 1990s, less than half of the national increase of 13%.

2 Mike Cooper (Reuters) "Utah Has Lowest Smoking Rate in U.S.", 19 November 1999; Center for Disease Control statistics, 1998.
3 Center for Disease Control, 1998.
4 Phil Sahm. 'Money' Magazine Lists Salt Lake as the West's Most Livable Metropolis in Salt Lake Tribune, 14 November 2000.
6 Children's Rights Council Annual Ranking of States Based on Child Well Being.
Education

A study by Stan Albrecht and Tim Heaton published in the Review of Religious Research in 1984 reported that opposite to the experience of most churches in the United States, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints become more religiously active as they become more educated. The study included around 7,000 participants. The Church funds all Brigham Young University campuses, which include those in Jerusalem, Provo, Idaho and Hawaii. Church members are encouraged to get all the education they can. LDS church emphasis on secular education and learning, in addition to religious education, can be seen in federal education statistics.1 The American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) Report Card on Education 1996 reported that Utah was ranked 7th academically in the nation, despite the fact that the state spent less money (49th in expenditures per pupil) than most other states.2

By a large margin, Utah produces more scientists per capita than any other state. 75% of scientists from Utah are Latter-day Saints (while only 70% of the general population are Latter-day Saints). Utah scientists are primarily physical scientists, mostly physicists, chemists, biologists, geologists, etc.3

LDS women are more likely to graduate from college than Catholic or Protestant women, but less likely than Jewish or nonaffiliated women. For graduate education the pattern was similar a higher percentage of LDS than Catholic or Protestant women have received graduate education. LDS women are more likely to be employed in professional occupations than Catholic or Protestant women. Of LDS women, 23% are employed in professional occupations, which is similar to Jewish women and women with no religious affiliation.4

According to Newsweek, Salt Lake City, Utah, is ranked first among U.S. cities in proportion of households with personal computers (65%), partially because computers are ideal for the genealogy research important to

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1 Joel A. Flake, Secular Education As a Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Studies in the Mormon Educational Ethos, the College of Human Resources and Education of West Virginia University, West Virginia, 1987, 168. (Unpublished Dissertation)
2 Center for Education Reform, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 204, Washington, D.C.
Latter-day Saints. New York City-based Scarborough Research also ranked Salt Lake City first among cities in computer ownership and fourth among U.S. cities in Internet use. A Deseret News poll found that in Provo, Utah, where over 85% of residents are Latter-day Saints, had even higher personal computer ownership than Salt Lake City (71% of households owned a PC).  

The Problems Connected With Marriage

The latest federal health figures (1997) rank Utah as having the fewest births to unwed mothers. Meanwhile, Utah also led the nation with the lowest percentage of out-of-wedlock births: 16.7%, or one of every six. That was less than half the national average of 33.0%, marking the first time that a full third of all U.S. births were to unwed mothers.  

The new federal study reported that Utah's "fertility rate" the number of live births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44 was 93.1. That is 27% higher than the national average of 65.9. The report also figured the state's "birthrate" the number of live births per 1,000 residents. Utah's birthrate was 21.7 per 1,000 residents again, the highest in the nation, and a third higher than the national average of 14.5.  

Utah ranked highest in the number of married-couple families, with an average of 63.2%. Utah ranked highest in the number of family households, with 76.3%. Utah ranked highest in the number of persons per family, with an average of 3.57. Utah ranked first for the youngest total population, with nearly one-third of its population 17 years old or younger.  

The data from U.S. Bureau of Census lists Utah as the state with the lowest teen pregnancy rate and the lowest abortion rate in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control's abortion statistics (1993) listed only two states with lower abortion ratios than Utah: Idaho and Wyoming.

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2 Life in the Valley, Published by Salt Lake Chamber, 2002.
3 Lee Davidson, "Utah's birthrate is highest in the nation: But out-of-wedlock birthrate is lowest", 18 April 2001.
6 CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.
National demographic studies indicate that couples in which both partners are Latter-day Saints have the lowest divorce rate among all U.S. social and religious groups studied. The divorce rate of temple marriages is 30% lower than the normal divorce rate in America. Of firstborn children, 89.5% are born within Mormon wedlock. This is in contrast to the only 60.1% of firstborn children born within wedlock in America. Only 13% of LDS couples have divorced after five years of marriage, compared with 20% for religiously homogenous unions among Catholics and Protestants and 27% among Jews.¹

**Population**

Utah was the fourth fastest-growing state, with a 29.6% population increase during the past decade (from 1.7 million in 1990 to 2.2 million in 2000). Utah's growth rate more than doubled the nation's growth rate of 13.2%.²

**Conclusion**

The power of the Mormon community is based on Mormon's religiousity, the influence on the world of young missionaries, and the strong family life of Mormons. Like everything of value, family relationships take work, but they are worth the effort. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has provided many helpful teachings and services that can be applied to families from all faiths. As I have experienced first-hand here in Utah, Mormons tend to have strong family ties. In particular, Mormon homes are frequently filled with harmony, resulting directly from their religious services. This has also proven to have a great affect upon their social interactions in Salt Lake City. When walking down the streets of Salt Lake City, one finds a quiet and safe environment. This is probably because residents prefer to spend their evenings with their families rather than to go out. Moreover, even at midnight one can see a family or woman, walking alone on the streets of Salt Lake City quite safely, unlike other places in the U.S. These positive social outcomes make us to think that we would be wise to implement some of their principles in our daily lives.

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¹ Bob Mims Mormons: High Conservativism, Low Divorce, Big Growth, 6 March 1999, Salt Lake Tribune.