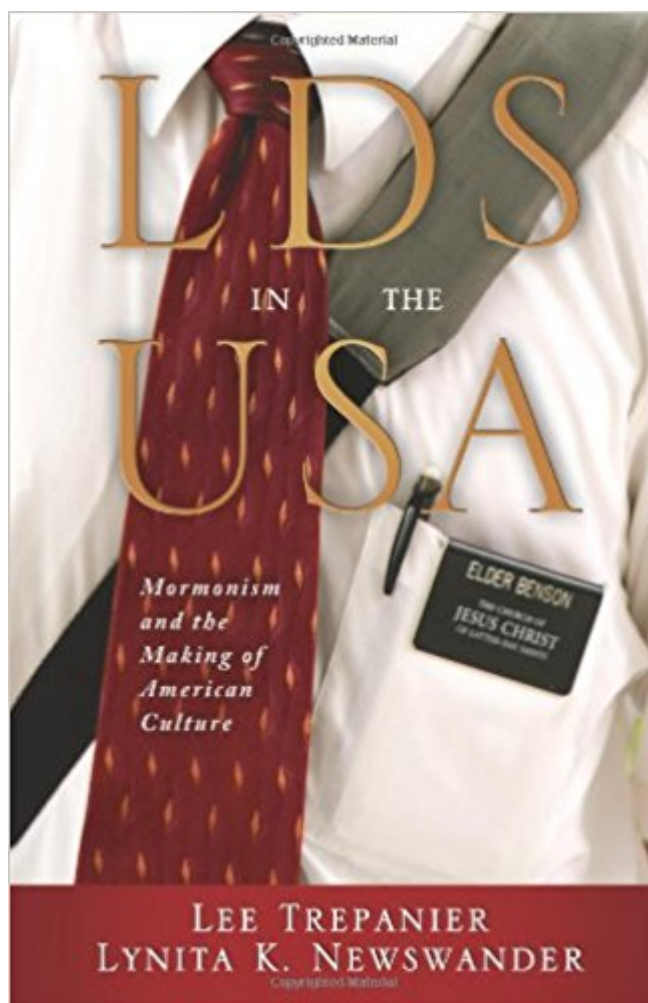


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# LDS In The USA: Mormonism And The Making Of American Culture



## Synopsis

From the politics of Glenn Beck to reality television's Big Love and the hit Broadway show The Book of Mormon, Mormons have become a recognizable staple of mainstream popular culture. And while most Americans are well aware of the existence of Mormonism—and some of the often exaggerated myths about Mormonism—the religion's public influence has been sorely understudied. Lee Trepanier and Lynita K. Newswander move beyond clichéd and stereotypical portrayals of Mormonism to unpack the significant and sometimes surprising roles Mormons have played in the building of modern America. Moving from popular culture to politics to the Mormon influence in social controversies, LDS in the USA reveals Mormonism to be quintessentially American—both firmly rooted in American tradition and free to engage in the public square. Trepanier and Newswander examine the intersection of the tension between the nation's sometimes bizarre understanding of Mormon belief and the suspicious acceptance of the most well known Mormons into the American public identity. Readers are consistently challenged to abandon popular perceptions in order to embrace more fully the fascinating importance of this American religion.

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## Customer Reviews

"An engaging and sympathetic introduction to the Mormon people and their religion. LDS in the USA makes clear the essentially American nature of this religion as well as the reasons for its ongoing struggle to gain greater tolerance in American society and politics."—Armand L. Mauss,

author of *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage*"Trepanier and Newswander examine the intersection of the tension between the nation's sometimes bizarre understanding of Mormon belief and the suspicious acceptance of the most well known Mormons into the American public identity. Readers are consistently challenged to abandon popular perceptions in order to embrace more fully the fascinating importance of this American religion."~Theological Book Review~"LDS in the USA is unique and welcome. Mormonism is the most American of religions, but it, perhaps like Islam, is the most marginalized. Trepanier and Newswander provide an indispensable guide to understanding Mormonism at this complex moment of American political, cultural, and religious history."~John von Heyking, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Lethbridge

Lee Trepanier is Associate Professor of Political Science at Saginaw Valley State University. He lives in the greater Saginaw, Michigan area. Lynita K. Newswander is Adjunct Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of South Dakota. She lives in Vermillion, South Dakota.

*LDS in the USA* covers an expansive history of the Mormon religion and its influence on American Culture today (as well as America's influence on Mormonism). Lee Trepanier, who is not Mormon, and Lynita Newswander, who is Mormon did a great job balancing out each impact. The reader is able to see an unbiased view into the American-made religion-- something that any American can be proud of. The subjects covered are both entertaining and informational ranging from "Twilight" and "Napoleon Dynamite" to more serious topics such as polygamy and Mitt Romney. Also, this being an election year and one of the main presidential candidates being Mormon, *LDS in the USA* gave some insight of what America would be like with a Mormon president. Would a Mormon leader be beneficial or detrimental for our country? Or, if elected would Mitt Romney being a Mormon make any difference at all? Overall, this book was a captivating read that I would recommend for the those interested in religion, Mormons, American culture and politics.

*LDS in the USA* is a candid and refreshing look at an American religion. This timely book frankly answers questions about Mormon beliefs and shows its growth from its inception in the 1800s, amidst suffering and persecution, to a modern day Christian religion that is still struggling to become main stream. The writing is clear and precise and is well worth the time to enrich your understanding of Mormon culture.

I cannot provide a review of the entire book, which I have not completed. But when the "largest branch" of Mormonism is misidentified in the introduction as "The Church of Latter-day Saints" instead of its actual name "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," I cannot help but question the credibility of the authors and editors. For a book that claims to correct misconceptions about Mormons and the "LDS Church," beginning by removing the name "Jesus Christ" from the name of the church is not a good beginning. I look forward to reading the book in its entirety as their project seems interesting. And I only hope this initial factual error is not the first of many.

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