# The Peculiarities Of Mormons' Culture

Everyone has a different culture based on how and where they were raised. I was blessed to grow up in a small town in Colorado where I grew up with my parents and my sister. My family and I spent a lot of time outdoors camping, fishing, and hunting. Both I and my sister played baseball/softball year-round. Ever since I could remember my family and I have been very devout LDS members. Over the years we became very close with missionaries and youth groups. I was a boy scout with my Dad as our Scout leader. My Dad and I spent a lot of time together at scout camp and at church and I am grateful for that because of the intentions my Dad had. He wanted me to learn about the gospel and how it changed his life. As I got older I became more aware of all the different cultures with similarities and differences. I came to realize that the Mormon culture in particular had a different perception in many places. Yet I learned that this happens with every culture. To this day I believe in what my parents taught me. I stayed true to my church and my family.

My dad grew in an even smaller town in Delores, Colorado, and had a rough childhood. My mom lived in a small town 10 miles from my dad and dealt with a lot of the same problems my dad did. Both of my parents' Dad’s dealt with addiction to alcohol. This affected both of them in a major way and that is what I believe changed my parent’s perception. My parents decided that they were going to raise us differently and give us a life they wished they had. They started to find themselves in the LDS community from the work of the missionaries. From that moment on my parents had a plan. They planned to show my sister and me a better life. One of my greatest memories was being able to see my mom and dad get sealed in the Salt Lake City Temple. Both my sister and I were also baptized when we turned 8 years old. As I grew up I learned to love the church and the meaning behind it all. I grew as a person more and more as my relationship with my Family and God grew. I am beyond thankful for my parents for all of the sacrifices they made and the opportunities they gave me and my sister.

Growing up my family and I had many customs and traditions both family-related and church-related. When it comes to church there are many things we practice. First was that Sunday was the Sabbath and that meant we worshiped God and relaxed as a family. We read scriptures and talked about anything we wanted to and we sometimes had the missionaries over. We also never watch TV or go swimming on Sundays. We don’t use the lords name in vain, we don’t swear, and we also fast the first Sunday of each month. On fast Sunday we give up two consecutive meals. We do this as an offering. We as members of the church sacrifice two consecutive meals and give the money of those meals (donation) to the church. We as a family had “Family Home Evening” where on Wednesdays we sat down as a family and spent time together. Whether it was watching movies or reading the scriptures we put aside time every week for each other. The Mormon religion has many beliefs just like any other religion. Mormons embrace concepts of Christianity (Editors 2017) and our founder Joseph Smith. Though they follow some Christianity beliefs there are differences with clothing, dating, and the certain thing we can not partake of.

Family life, good deeds, respect for authority and missionary work are important values in Mormonism (Editor 2017). Growing up in the church I learned the value of my elders. I learned that my elders are teachers. Not only of the gospel but in everyday life and I valued that. In

scouts, we were always searching for opportunities for good deeds. We respected everyone and everything because we were learning that good deeds are blessings that will be rewarded later in life. Not only did I learn this from the church but my dad as well. That is why missionary work is a big deal to us. Becoming a missionary has always been a goal of mine after my baseball and college career is over. Being a missionary is harder than some think. There are clothing specifications, schedules, and certain things a missionary can and cannot do. For example, during the mission are only allowed to write or email their families on preparation day (Missionary Conduct). Spreading the gospel all over the world is an amazing task. Missionaries strive to represent the Lord according to his highest standards of obedience and conduct (Missionary Conduct).

Mormons believe in the crucifixion, resurrection and divinity of Jesus Christ (Editor 2017). Mormon followers believe that God sent more prophets after Jesus's death and that the original church has been restored in modern times. Another belief Mormons differ from Christians is the concept of the trinity. Meaning that Mormons believe that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three gods compared to God existing in all three as one (Editor 2017). We also believe that there are three levels of heaven. There is Celestial, Terrestrial and Telestial and only those in the celestial kingdom will live in God's presence (Editor 2017). Celestial is the home of the gods and the future hope of faithful Latter-Day Saints. Terrestrial is the non- Mormons and unfaithful Mormons. Lastly is the Telestial kingdom the eternal destination of the wicked (Afterlife 2010).

Architecture in the Mormon religion is amazing. I have had the opportunity to visit the Salt Lake City, Gilbert, Mesa, South Jordan and St. George temples. Each time I visit the temple the feeling is surreal. The temples are beautiful in every way possible. My favorite as is for a lot of people is the golden Angel on top of the temple. The Golden angel is the ancient prophet Moroni. The angel statue represents the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations, calling all to worship and give glory to God, in preparation for the second coming of the Lord (Brown, M. B. 2007). Inside the temple are tons of paintings of prophets and stories from the Mormon culture. Mormons embrace in four different texts; The Christian Bible, The book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price all in which are just more testimonies towards the Gospel (Editor 2017). My favorite piece of art is from The Book of Mormon. The painting is of Samuel the Lamonite on the wall. The painting is Samuel on the wall as the Nephites shot arrows and threw rocks as Samuel spoke the word of God without fear of death (Gabbott, M. J.). This piece of art has always caught my eye even when I was younger. The meaning behind the painting is the trust in God and that has stuck with me for the rest of my life.

In the Mormon, culture clothing is very specific. Jackets, white button-up dress shirts, ties, slacks and shoes is our Sunday apparel. As for the missionaries, this is their everyday apparel. Mormons also have clothing rituals that include wearing special undergarments that have religious significance. These are known as Temple Garments. These are worn by adult members who make sacred promises to God (Editor 2017). When I was younger I came across my Dad's garments and being as curious as I was I asked the meaning behind them. My Dad goes on to tell me the promise he made to God. When my parents were ceiled my Dad made a promise to God to never leave my Mom. I noticed that on the garments there were stitches on different parts of the clothing, all meaning something different.

The Church is led by 15 apostles and the most senior of them is the President of the Church,

who selects two other apostles as counselors. The present-day President is Russell M. Nelson. These apostles travel and encourage large congregations of members and nonmembers on joining the church (Learn More 2014). The Bishop is the leader of the congregation and he is in charge of a “ward”. A group of wards forms a “stake”. Stake presidents and bishops are leaders of the members of the church. These leaders are unpaid and have a significant amount of local autonomy. A lot of time and effort is put into running a stake or award and that is why the needs of the church are met by members. Stake presidents and bishops delegate specific roles whether it be teaching classes, service-oriented positions and local administrative (Learn More 2014). The church provides local organizations through the church such as Relief Society, Sunday School, Young Men/Women, Primary and Scouts. The church also operates an educational system, welfare system and a missionary program.