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Twelfth article of faith

We believe in one eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe; that He only is God, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose. The God who is holy love and light is Triune in essential being, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 6:4–5; Isaiah 5:16; 6:1–7; 40:18–31; Matthew 3:16–17; 28:19–20; John 14:6–27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4–6; Ephesians 2:13–18; 1 John 1:5; 4:8) We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was eternally one with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus united in one Person very God and very man, the God-man. We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He truly arose from the dead and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven and is there engaged in intercession for us. (Matthew 1:20–25; 16:15–16; Luke 1:26–35; John 1:1–18; Acts 2:22–36; Romans 8:3, 32–34; Galatians 4:4–5; Philippians 2:5–11; Colossians 1:12–22; 1 Timothy 6:14–16; Hebrews 1:1–5; 7:22–28; 9:24–28; 1 John 1:1–3; 4:2–3, 15) We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is ever present and efficiently active in and with the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus. (John 7:39; 14:15–18, 26; 16:7–15; Acts 2:33; 15:8–9; Romans 8:1–27; Galatians 3:1–14; 4:6; Ephesians 3:14–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:7–8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:24; 4:13) We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith. (Luke 24:44–47; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; 1 Peter 1:10–12; 2 Peter 1:20–21) We believe that sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, and death by sin. We believe that sin is of two kinds: original sin or depravity, and actual or personal sin. We believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually. We further believe that original sin continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate, until the heart is fully cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. We believe that original sin differs from actual sin in that it constitutes an inherited propensity to actual sin for which no one is accountable until its divinely provided remedy is neglected or rejected. We believe that actual or personal sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. It is therefore not to be confused with involuntary and inescapable shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other deviations from a standard of perfect conduct that are the residual effects of the Fall. However, such innocent effects do not include attitudes or responses contrary to the spirit of Christ, which may properly be called sins of the spirit. We believe that personal sin is primarily and essentially a violation of the law of love; and that in relation to Christ sin may be defined as unbelief. (Original sin: Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9–10; Mark 7:21–23; Romans 1:18–25; 5:12–14; 7:1–8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1–4; Galatians 5:16–25; 1 John 1:7–8 Personal sin: Matthew 22:36–40 {with 1 John 3:4}; John 8:34–36; 16:8–9; Romans 3:23; 6:15–23; 8:18–24; 14:23; 1 John 1:9–2:4; 3:7–10) We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by His death on the Cross, made a full atonement for all human sin, and that this Atonement is the only ground of salvation, and that it is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. The Atonement is graciously efficacious for the salvation of those incapable of moral responsibility and for the children in innocency but is efficacious for the salvation of those who reach the age of responsibility only when they repent and believe. (Isaiah 53:5–6, 11; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:46–48; John 1:29; 3:14–17; Acts 4:10–12; Romans 3:21–26; 4:17–25; 5:6–21; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14–21; Galatians 1:3–4; 3:13–14; Colossians 1:19–23; 1 Timothy 2:3–6; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 2:9; 9:11–14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:18–21; 2:19–25; 1 John 2:1–2) NOTE: Constitutional changes adopted by the 2017 General Assembly are in the process of ratification by the district assemblies at the time of printing. Where changes are being made, words in italics are new words and words in brackets [ ] are words being deleted. We believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight. We also believe that the human race's creation in Godlikeness included the ability to choose between right and wrong, and that thus human beings were made morally responsible; that through the fall of Adam they became depraved so that they cannot now turn and prepare themselves by their own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God. [But we also believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight.] [We believe that all persons, though in the possession of the experience of regeneration and entire sanctification, may fall from grace and apostatize and, unless they repent of their sins, be hopelessly and eternally lost.] (Godlikeness and moral responsibility: Genesis 1:26–27; 2:16–17; Deuteronomy 28:1–2; 30:19; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 8:3–5; Isaiah 1:8–10; Jeremiah 31:29–30; Ezekiel 18:1–4; Micah 6:8; Romans 1:19–20; 2:1–16; 14:7–12; Galatians 6:7–8 Natural inability: Job 14:4; 15:14; Psalms 14:1–4; 51:5; John 3:6a; Romans 3:10–12; 5:12–14, 20a; 7:14–25 Free grace and works of faith: Ezekiel 18:25–26; John 1:12–13; 3:6b; Acts 5:31; Romans 5:6–8, 18; 6:15–16, 23; 10:6–8; 11:22; 1 Corinthians 2:9–14; 10:1–12; 2 Corinthians 5:18–19; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 2:8–10; Philippians 2:12–13; Colossians 1:21–23; 2 Timothy 4:10a; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 2:1–3; 3:12–15; 6:4–6; 10:26–31; James 2:18–22; 2 Peter 1:10–11; 2:20–22) There are seven Articles of Faith in Islam. These basic beliefs shape the Islamic way of life.1 Belief in the Oneness of God There is One God, Supreme and Eternal, Creator and Provider, Who is Merciful and Compassionate. God has neither father nor mother, and no sons or daughters. God has never fathered anyone, nor was He fathered. God has no equals. He is God of all humankind, not of a special tribe, race, or group of people. He is the God of all races and colours, of believers and unbelievers alike. God is Mighty and Supreme, yet is also very near to pious, thoughtful believers, answering their prayers and helping them. God asks us to know Him, to love Him, and to follow His Law, for our own benefit and salvation.2 Belief in the Angels of God Angels are pure and spiritually obedient beings, created by God to fulfill His commands and worship Him tirelessly.3 Belief in the Revelations (Books) of God Muslims believe in the Revelations sent by Almighty God to His Prophets and Messengers, including the Qur'an, the Torah, the Gospel, the Scrolls of Abraham and the Psalms of David.4 Belief in the Prophets of God All Messengers and Prophets of God such as Noah, Moses, Solomon, Jesus and Muhammad were mortal human beings endowed with Divine Revelations and appointed by God to teach humankind how to submit to His will and obey His Laws.5 Belief in the Day of Judgment Muslims believe in an appointed Day of Judgment and in Heaven and Hell.6 Belief in Premeasurement (Qadar) Muslims believe that Almighty God has knowledge of, and control over, everything that exists in all time and space.7 Belief in Resurrection after Death After the world ends, Muslims believe that all people who have died will be brought back to life (or, resurrected) in order to face the Judgment rendered to each of them by Almighty God. Speaking at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, Illinois, President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles asserted that institutional integrity and religious tolerance would be "enhanced as we teach clearly and courteously the tenets of our religions."[1] To do this, President Nelson introduced his international, interfaith audience to the Articles of Faith. In his speech, he modeled how these thirteen statements could be employed to convey concisely and clearly the foundational beliefs, history, and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While the Articles of Faith were never intended as a comprehensive statement of LDS beliefs or practices,[2] this essay endeavors to make a case for the Articles of Faith as an apostolically endorsed organizing framework[3] for helping students systematically deepen their understanding of the history and doctrine of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.[4] As they do so, students will be better prepared to articulate their beliefs "clearly and courteously," as President Nelson suggested, thus providing an environment in which the Spirit of the Lord can attend their teaching and conversations. Modern Apostolic Endorsement Five years after President Nelson's address in Chicago, Elder L. Tom Perry reflected on the sesquicentennial celebration of the westward migration of the Mormon pioneers as "a grand opportunity . . . for the peoples of the world to learn more about who we are." He then challenged members of the Church to "determine whether we will just let [the celebration] stand as a great media event or whether it will be an opportunity to better fulfill our charge to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." Considering his own ability "to make a contribution to the kingdom," Elder Perry reported, "I reached the conclusion that if I studied the content of each of the Articles of Faith, I could explain and defend every gospel principle I might have the opportunity to expound to someone searching for the restored truth."[5] He then issued the following invitation and encouragement: What a great blessing it would be if every member of the Church memorized the Articles of Faith and became knowledgeable about the principles contained in each. We would be better prepared to share the gospel with others. . . . I encourage each of you to study the Articles of Faith and the doctrines they teach. . . . If you will use them as a guide to direct your studies of the Savior's doctrine, you will find yourselves prepared to declare your witness of the restored, true church of the Lord.[6] Elder Perry's challenge clearly indicates that memorizing the Articles of Faith to gain familiarity with them is a good start, but it is not enough. Members of the Church should also diligently study the Articles of Faith to deepen their understanding of the truths connected therewith and use them to clearly and concisely teach the fundamental truths of the Restoration to others.[7] Almost a decade after Elder Perry's apostolic admonition, Elder M. Russell Ballard offered the following assessment of our efforts to clearly teach our beliefs to others: "The many misunderstandings and false information about the Church are somewhat our own fault for not clearly explaining who we are and what we believe. The Public Affairs Committee, on which I serve, has learned that there is a great need for clear, simple statements that present those who are curious with the basics about the Church as it is today."[8] To prevent the spread of misinformation, misunderstanding, and prejudice concerning the Church, Elder Ballard recommended twice that members of the Church use the Articles of Faith in their conversations with people from other religious traditions.[9] Eighteen months after this recommendation, Elder Perry reported in the October 2009 general conference that "over one-half of the people in the United States and Canada have little or no awareness of our practices and beliefs." Elder Perry reiterated that when such persons are "exposed to clear and accurate information regarding Church beliefs and doctrines, their attitudes become positive and open."[10] Prophets, seers, and revelators have been indicating that we still have work to do in clearly communicating the message of the Restoration to others. Perhaps this was one factor that led Elder Perry to speak again about the Articles of Faith in general conference in October 2013. After recounting his own experience of memorizing the Articles of Faith in Primary and illustrating how they teach core truths of the Restoration, Elder Perry taught: The Articles of Faith supply us with key doctrines of the Restoration. Each article of faith adds unique value to our understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. My Primary teacher . . . taught me to seek the deep meaning contained in these simple Articles of Faith. She promised me that if I would invest in learning these sacred truths, the knowledge I acquired would change my life for the better, and I testify to you that it has. . . . I encourage you to use your bright minds to study and learn the Articles of Faith and the doctrines they teach. They are among the most important and certainly the most concise statements of doctrine in the Church. If you will use them as a guide to direct your studies of the gospel of Jesus Christ, you will find yourself prepared to declare your witness of the restored truth to the world. You will be able to declare in simple, straightforward, and profound ways the core beliefs you hold dear as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[11] While memorizing the Articles of Faith would mean nothing more than a lot of words unless we understood the doctrines and principles contained in them, Elder Perry's injunction promises that members of the Church who anchor themselves in the core doctrines found in the Articles of Faith will have greater clarity and power as they teach the truths of the Restoration to others. Historical Background Modern exhortations from Apostles and other General Authorities[12] reminding Church members of the value and impact of the Articles of Faith are rooted in their prophetic origin and historic durability. In 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith penned thirteen statements—known later as the Articles of Faith—as the conclusion to the Wentworth Letter, in which he proposed to provide a brief summary of "the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-day Saints."[13] From 1842 to 1857, the Articles of Faith were published numerous times in the United States and throughout the world as a concise statement of the fundamental beliefs of the Latter-day Saints.[14] The most notable of these publications was Elder Franklin D. Richards's inclusion of the Articles of Faith in his 1851 booklet, "The Pearl of Great Price." In the October 1880 general conference of the Church, a revised form of Richards's document was accepted by the membership of the Church as part of the standard works of the Church.[15] Thus, the Articles of Faith entered the LDS canon.[16] While the Saints were gathered in what would become a historic general conference in October 1890, Orson F. Whitney again presented the Articles of Faith by themselves for a sustaining vote just prior to reading a revelation from President Wilford Woodruff, known as "the Manifesto," to end the Church's practice of plural marriage. Perhaps this was to remind the saints of certain core beliefs that would fortify their commitment to follow their current prophet's counsel in "being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (A of F 1:12).[17] On the eve of the twentieth century in 1899, Elder James E. Talmage of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles published a series of lectures commissioned and reviewed by the First Presidency of the Church and other General Authorities, "delivered before Theology classes of the Church University and at other schools."[18] This work, titled A Study of the Articles of Faith, has been translated into thirteen different languages and been through more than fifty English editions. For many decades, it was part of the approved library for missionaries of the Church. As the twentieth century moved toward its close, another Apostle, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, prepared the manuscript for A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, which would be published posthumously in 1985. As is evident from the titles, both books use the Articles of Faith as a framework for studying and expounding the key doctrines and events relative to the restoration of Jesus Christ's gospel and Church on the earth, similar to what I am proposing here. The value of the Articles of Faith as "a guide in faith and conduct"[19] is further supported in the modern era by their frequent use in general conference by General Authorities and other general auxiliary leaders of the Church. Table 1 shows how often the Articles of Faith have been cited—singly, in various combinations, or as a whole—in general conference from 1950 to 2014. [] Throughout the last seven decades, the Articles of Faith have been cited at least six hundred times in general conference. In addition to the way the Articles of Faith were promulgated, canonized, and utilized throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the first half of the twentieth century, the frequency with which leaders of the Church have turned to the Articles of Faith in their public discourses in the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century attests to their importance and practical use in communicating the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Articulating Our Beliefs This historical background provides a powerful backdrop for examining just a few anecdotal examples in which Church leaders have extolled the value and impact of using the Articles of Faith to share our beliefs with others. After inquiring whether those in attendance at the priesthood session of the October 1975 general conference had the Articles of Faith memorized "word perfect," President Spencer W. Kimball related a story about a young Primary boy on a train from Utah to Los Angeles. When a fellow passenger found out the young man was a Mormon from Utah, he inquired about Mormon beliefs. As President Kimball recounted the story, the boy did more than just repeat the Articles of Faith "word perfect" in response. The recitation of each article led to a discussion about specific doctrines of the gospel and practices of the Church which inspired the man to inquire more diligently about the Restoration. He was astonished "not only at the ability of this young boy to outline the whole program of the Church, but at the very completeness of its doctrine." From this experience, President Kimball proposed, "You are always prepared with a sermon when you know the Articles of Faith."[21] While serving as the second counselor in the Primary general presidency, Susan L. Warner related the following experience regarding the usefulness of the Articles of Faith: Not long ago our granddaughter Susie received a copy of the scriptures. She lives in an area where her classmates and teacher are not members of the Church, so she wanted to share with them the Articles of Faith that were recorded in her new scriptures. She decided it would be appropriate to do this at school during the time that was scheduled for sharing something newsworthy. When the time came, eight-year-old Susie stood before her classmates and began, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost" (A of F 1:1). She continued, but when she got to the seventh article of faith, one classmate loudly complained, "This isn't a current event!" The teacher quickly responded, "Well, it's news to me!" Each of us can share the good news of the gospel and give words to our convictions. If we are sensitive to the whisperings of the Spirit, we can find opportunities to humbly express our beliefs. Even a shy, eight-year-old child felt the desire to share the articles of her faith.[22] Many members of the Church may be unwilling to share their beliefs with others because they are unsure about what they should say. They might not initiate conversations about religion with others because they worry that someone will ask a question that they aren't sure how to answer. For example, one recent study affirmed that a large sample of LDS seminary students in Utah may lack confidence in sharing the gospel with others.[23] Even for those who may be shy or unsure about sharing their beliefs with others, knowing the Articles of Faith and understanding more deeply the truths connected with them can give individuals a place to begin as they trust in the Lord's promise that those who open their mouths to declare the truth will have them filled with the words of the Lord (see D&C 33:8–10). During the 2006 worldwide leadership training broadcast, President Thomas S. Monson reported that his Primary teacher helped him develop a "knowledge of the Articles of Faith [which] was most helpful" during the difficult assignment to supervise the work of the Church in East Germany.[24] President Monson then recounted the conversion of a friend, which came as a result of a young girl who discussed the Articles of Faith with him on a bus ride from Salt Lake City to San Francisco. This man was so impressed and inspired by the little girl's knowledge of her faith that he further investigated the Church and later joined it, along with his wife and their six daughters. Considering the ramifications of this encounter, President Monson said, "Countless are those who have been brought to a knowledge of the gospel by the members of this family—all because a young child had been taught the Articles of Faith and had the ability and the courage to proclaim the truth to one who was seeking the light of the gospel."[25] These three experiences demonstrate how "the weak things of the world shall come forth" as ambassadors of the Restoration, "that every man [and woman] might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world . . . that the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world" (D&C 1:19–20, 23). The Articles of Faith as a Study Guide The Articles of Faith can only be a useful resource in preparing disciples to fulfill the divine injunction from Doctrine and Covenants section 1 as we move beyond merely having the Articles of Faith memorized "word perfect," though that may be a useful beginning. As Elder Perry suggested, we will need to help students accomplish the following: (1) "study the Articles of Faith and the doctrines they teach," (2) "[become] knowledgeable about the principles contained in each," (3)"seek the deep meaning contained in these simple Articles of Faith," and (4) "use them as a guide to direct [their] studies of the gospel of Jesus Christ, [so they] will find [themselves] prepared to declare [their] witness of the restored truth to the world."[26] While Elder James E. Talmage proposed that the Articles of Faith "suggest themselves as a convenient outline for a study of the theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,"[27] there may be many ways to approach and utilize the Articles of Faith. I will outline one approach that can help students learn how to study and use the Articles of Faith in a way that can empower them to teach and testify of the truths and practices of the Church with greater concision and clarity, both within the household of faith and in the broader arena of public discourse. Tables 2–4 [28] provide a basic outline for how the Articles of Faith might help us study the history and doctrine of the Restoration. Since not all potential doctrinal subjects associated with each Article of Faith could be listed here, only a few have been noted as examples. Likewise, there are many more texts that could be used to teach the gospel truths associated with a particular Article of Faith. The few examples listed here focus on passages from Restoration scriptures (Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price) that have relevant doctrinal value or represent key events of the Restoration associated with that Article of Faith. For example, the First Vision (JS—H 1:10–26) has significant impact on the LDS view of the Godhead; Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon's vision (D&C 76) plays a critical role in the LDS view of salvation; and JS—H 1:68–75, D&C 27:12–13, D&C 110, and D&C 128:20–24 all mention key events relative to the restoration of priesthood authority and keys. In table 2, the first four Articles of Faith seem to deal primarily with matters of theology and soteriology. Broadly speaking, theology deals with the study of God and the relationship between humans and the divine. Assuming the existence of God, theological inquiries focus on the nature of God, the role of God in the world, the relationship between God and the existence of evil, and other like questions. As a branch of theology, soteriology focuses on the nature of salvation, how salvation is made possible, who can be saved, and the roles of God and man in the process of salvation. Studying and discussing the following doctrinal subjects associated with the first four Articles of Faith, as they were restored through key events and revelations of the Restoration, can help students understand key theological and soteriological truths. [29] As students come to better know the nature of God, their relationship to God, and God's plan for the salvation of his children, they will have a solid foundation from which to share the truths of the Restoration with others. As they seek to live according to these truths, they will have an increased measure of the Spirit of God to guide them in their own lives and to bear witness of these doctrines and principles to others. As outlined in table 3, Articles of Faith 5–9 give primary emphasis to matters of ecclesiology and canon. Ecclesiology is the study of the Church and striving to seek to understand its role in the lives of God's followers and in establishing his kingdom on the earth. Ecclesiology explores the need for a Church, the need for divine authority, church organization, the role of the Church in God's work of salvation, and the place of spiritual gifts in the Church. Just as the Church is one resource God has established for the guidance of his children in the journey of salvation, the scriptures are another. The canon, which Latter-day Saints usually refer to as the standard works, refers to "the authoritative collection of the sacred books used by the true believers in Christ."[30] However, Latter-day Saints have a unique view of the canon in contrast with traditional Christianity, believing in an open canon that can be adjusted and added to by authorized prophets and apostles. Members of the Church should, therefore, be especially prepared to explain the Latter-day Saint attitude toward the Bible, the need and benefit of additional scripture, and the role of revelation in connection with scripture. The importance of these doctrines cannot be overestimated. Priesthood authority and ongoing revelation are key to the Restoration and the reorganization of the Church in the last days.[31] And the gift of the Holy Ghost with its attendant spiritual gifts is a distinguishing feature of the true Church of Christ.[32] Especially in an era when increasing numbers of people doubt the need to belong to any church,[33] the holy scriptures are often neglected,[34] and the words of prophets are rejected as either unenlightened or outdated, there is an increased need for Latter-day Saints who can clearly articulate the importance and impact of the Church, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the scriptures, and ongoing revelation. The final four articles, as shown in able 4, deal primarily with matters of eschatology and morality. Eschatology is a specific branch of theology that focuses on the final events in the history of the world and the fate of humankind. Within the Christian faith particularly, eschatology seeks to better understand the signs of Jesus Christ's return to the earth, the role of the Church and its members in preparing for the return of the Savior, and the ultimate destiny of the earth. The very name of the Church indicates our special interest in the events of the last days and our belief that we live in the final dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ before his triumphant return and global reign—we are Latter-day Saints.[35] One who accepts the literality of Jesus Christ's return to earth as Judge and King also accepts the obligation to live in such a way that he or she will be prepared to meet him, either in this life or in the next. This leads to the topic of morality, which is much broader in scope than pertaining to sexual purity alone. Morality has to do with right and wrong behavior required for establishing and living in the kingdom of God. Disciples of Jesus Christ deal with issues of morality every day as they determine how to follow the light in a darkening world and how to seek for, recognize, and live according to truth amidst error, confusion, and persecution. Together, articles 11–12 have interesting relevance to morality: "Members of the Church seek to live according to the moral values taught by Jesus Christ and His servants and to be an influence for sound moral values in society and government. . . . Freedom is inextricably linked to our morality, and religious believers and institutions are essential to preserving morality."[36] Further, speaking of the thirteenth article of faith as a guide for morality and discipleship, Elder Perry taught: "The thirteenth article of faith provides special insight into how we should conduct our lives and present ourselves." And, finally, regarding the Articles of Faith as a whole, Elder Perry declared, "All of us should aspire to embody these attributes and lead lives that exemplify them."[37] In a world of increasing doubt, despair, and discouragement, striving for a better understanding of and belief in our destiny as a Church under the influence of the Holy Ghost will lead to the kind of "redemptive faith" that Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said must be "exercised toward experiences in the future—the unknown, which provides an opportunity for the miraculous."[38] For example, Helaman connected the strong faith of his stripling warriors "in the prophecies concerning that which is to come" with their ability to "stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has made them free . . . [to be] strict to remember the Lord their God from day to day; yea, . . . [and to] observe to keep his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments continually" (Alma 58:40). Likewise, not only must Latter-day Saints know and have faith in the truth regarding our future, but they must live according to it. Orthodoxy must align with orthopraxy in order for discipleship to lead to exaltation. In other words, in the end, it will be of little use or benefit to us to be right if we are not also good. As we seek to live in harmony with our vision of the glorious kingdom of God to come, the Holy Spirit will guide us as we invite others, by word and example, to make that vision a reality with the grace of God attending us. A brief example of using the Articles of Faith in the classroom will illustrate how this structure for using them as a study guide for the Restoration can be helpful for students. After briefly introducing students in some of my classes to this approach to the Articles of Faith, I invited them to write down a question that someone who is not a member of the Church might sincerely ask them about the beliefs or practices of the Church. Students then considered which category (i.e., theological, soteriological, ecclesiological, moral, and so forth) that question most closely matches. They then took a few moments to consider how they might use Articles of Faith from that corresponding category as a starting point to begin a response to the question. They didn't just recite the Article of Faith or relevant parts as the answer to the question. Rather, I encouraged them to use the Article of Faith as a "springboard" into either key revelations or historical events that elucidate either the doctrines or practices of the Church. As students then discussed their questions and responses with a partner or in small groups, they found that the Articles of Faith provide a solid starting point for their conversation and increases their confidence when explaining or defending the truths of the Restoration to others. Conclusion For over 170 years, the Articles of Faith have stood as a succinct summary of the most basic tenets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They can be a powerful organizing framework for helping students deepen their understanding of and ability to teach the doctrine and history of the Restoration. Moreover, Elder McConkie's closing exhortation in A New Witness for the Articles of Faith encourages teachers and students to not only study the truths associated with the Articles of Faith but incorporate the saving doctrines and principles therein into their lives: It is the hope and prayer of this disciple that the doctrines announced and the truths taught in the Articles of Faith may live in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints and of all who will yet join with them in striving to gain that eternal life which is the greatest of all the gifts of God. There is no salvation in an unused truth; it is only when men conform to the truth and make it a part of their very being that they advance and progress and finally qualify to return to the Eternal Presence.[39] Studying and living according to the truths contained in and connected to these thirteen simple statements will provide us with a sure foundation for both faith and conduct as we carry forward the message and work of the Restoration of the gospel throughout the earth. Notes [1] Russell M. Nelson, "Combatting Spiritual Drift—Our Global Pandemic," Ensign, November 1993, 103. [2] While acknowledging that Latter-day Saints have no creed "as a complete code of faith," Elder Talmage recognized the Articles of Faith as "an epitome of the tenets of the Church" and "a convenient outline for a study of the theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." James E. Talmage, A Study of the Articles of Faith: Being a Consideration of the Principal Doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 12th ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924), 6–7. Similarly, Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted that while the Articles of Faith do not "mention all the basic doctrines" of salvation, "when we have mastered what is in them, we will be in a position to go forward in the University of the Universe, studying and believing until we believe and know all things." Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 16, 42. [3] An organizing framework provides a structure to guide the development and learning of content, concepts, beliefs, etc. President Boyd K. Packer suggested a similar idea when he encouraged religious educators to create a one-page summary of the plan of salvation. See "The Great Plan of Happiness," CES Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants/Church History, 10 August 1993, Brigham Young University. Not all of the doctrines of salvation can be included on one page, but a one-page summary provides a framework to which all of the truths of the gospel can be connected. Likewise, the Articles of Faith can serve as an organizing framework for studying the history and doctrine of the Restoration. [4] For a simple example showing how the Articles of Faith can provide a framework for simultaneously teaching the doctrines of the gospel and events from Church history, see John W. Welch, "The Articles of Faith and the Life of Joseph Smith," Ensign, December 2013, 70–75. Another model for teaching the doctrine of the restored gospel within the history of the Restoration can be found in D&C 20:1–37. Verse 17 reminds us that is "by these things"—i.e. the historical events alluded to in verses 1–12—that "we know" the doctrines set forth in verses 17–37. [5] Perry, "The Articles of Faith," Ensign, May 1998, 22–23; emphasis added. [6] Perry, "Articles of Faith," 23–24; emphasis added. [7] Steven P. Sondrup discusses the value of the Articles of Faith for use within the Church and in proselyting efforts in "On Confessing Belief: Thoughts on the Language of the Articles of Faith," in Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience, ed. Neal E. Lambert (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1981), 197–216. His examination of the rhetorical power and deeper implications of the formulaic statement, "we believe," demonstrates both the unifying power of the Articles of Faith for believers and their practical benefits when declaring these fundamental truths to others. [8] M. Russell Ballard, "Faith, Family, Facts, and Fruits," Ensign, November 2007, 25. [9] Ballard, "Faith, Family, Facts, and Fruits," 25, 27. [10] L. Tom Perry, "Bring Souls unto Me," Ensign, May 2009, 110. [11] Perry, "The Doctrines and Principles Contained in the Articles of Faith," Ensign, November 2013, 46, 48; emphasis added. [12] In addition to examples already cited, see Marion G. Romney, "Maintaining Spirituality," Ensign, November 1979, 16; Thomas S. Monson, "Preparing the Way," Ensign, May 1980, 6-7; Neal A. Maxwell, "Answer Me," Ensign, November 1988, 31; Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Seeking the Good," Ensign, May 1992, 86; Robert D. Hales, "Gaining a Testimony of God the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost," Ensign, May 2008, 30; and William R. Walker, "Three Presiding High Priests," Ensign, May 2008, 38. The New Era also ran a series of articles from July 2005 to July 2006 that included prophetic messages, personal experiences, and suggestions for application related to each of the Articles of Faith. [13]"The Wentworth Letter," Ensign, July 2002, 27; the original letter to John Wentworth was published in Times and Seasons 3, no. 9, 1 March 1842, 706–10. For more on the background of the Wentworth Letter, see "Church History, 1 March 1842," . For more on the historical development of the Articles of Faith specifically, John W. Welch and David J. Whittaker have explored the origins and development of the Articles of Faith in commendable detail in "'We Believe. . . . ': Development of the Articles of Faith," Ensign, September 1979, 51–55. RoseAnn Benson has also discussed the Articles of Faith within the theological context of nineteenth-century America in "The Articles of Faith: Answering the Doctrinal Questions of the 'Second Great Awakening'" in Joseph Smith and the Doctrinal Restoration (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2005), 46–64. [14] See Ed Brandt, "The Origin and Importance of the Articles of Faith," in Studies in Scripture, vol. 2: The Pearl of Great Price, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985), 411–20. [15] More on the canonization process of the Pearl of Great Price can be found in H. Donl Peterson, "The Birth and Development of the Pearl of Great Price," in Studies in Scripture, vol. 2, 11–23; Richard D. Draper, S. Kent Brown, and Michael D. Rhodes, The Pearl of Great Price: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 1–11; and in Encyclopedia of Mormonism, s.v. "Pearl of Great Price," 1070–72. [16] While some had reservations about including the Articles of Faith in the Pearl of Great Price, this question was settled in the October 1890 general conference of the Church; see Draper, Brown, and Rhodes, Pearl of Great Price, 9; and Peterson, "Birth and Development," 20. [17] See "The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," in LDS Gospel Topics, . [18] Talmage, Articles of Faith, iii. [19] Talmage, Articles of Faith, 6–7. [20] At the current rate for the present decade (roughly 13.25 citations per year), total citations for the first decade of the twenty-first century could total more than 130, making this opening decade the one in which the Articles of Faith were cited the most in the last 70 years. At any rate, barring a sudden cessation of the usage of the Articles of Faith, it will likely have the highest number of citations of any decade in the last fifty years. Data was collected using . [21] Spencer W. Kimball, "The Privilege of Holding the Priesthood," Ensign, November 1975, 79. [22] Susan L. Warner, "Bear Record of Him," Ensign, November 1998, 66. [23] See Anthony R. Sweat, "Student Oral Participation and Perceived Spiritual Experiences in Latter-day Saint Seminary" (PhD diss., Utah State University, 2011), 84. Of the twenty survey items students were asked to evaluate in regards to their in-class spiritual experiences, "I felt confidence in speaking to others about the gospel" was ranked the lowest. Latter-day Saints aren't the only youth who have this challenge. When this survey was administered to a sample of Evangelical youth in Canada, they likewise ranked this same item last in regards to their comparable in-class religious education experience; see also Arch Wong, Anthony R. Sweat, and Ryan S. Gardner, "Pedagogy of the Spirit: Comparing Evangelical and Latter-day Saint Youth Self-Reported In-Class Spiritual Experiences," Religious Education (2017), article accepted for publication. [23] Thomas S. Monson, "Examples of Great Teachers," Ensign, June 2007, 109. [24] Monson, "Examples of Great Teachers," 110. [26] L. Tom Perry, "The Articles of Faith," Ensign, May 1998, 22–24. [27] Talmage, Articles of Faith, 7. [28] While I alone am responsible for the content of tables 2–4, I express thanks to Dale Sturm, John Thomas, Tomm Chapman, Greg Venema, John Parker, Greg Palmer, and Gary Purse for their excellent contributions. [29] Gerald E. Smith has recently explored the contribution of the Book of Mormon to the development of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the theology of Mormonism in Schooling the Prophet: How the Book of Mormon Influenced Joseph Smith and the Early Restoration (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2015). As a major revelation of the Restoration, it seems entirely appropriate to include Book of Mormon passages when studying key doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. [30] LDS Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Canon," 630. [31] See Jeffrey R. Holland, "Our Most Distinguishing Feature," Ensign, May 2005, 43–45. [32] See David A. Bednar, "Receive the Holy Ghost," Ensign, November 2010, 94–97. [33] "The Christian share of the population [in the United States] is declining and the religiously unaffiliated share is growing in all four major geographic regions of the country. Religious 'nones' now constitute 19% of the adult population in the South (up from 13% in 2007), 22% of the population in the Midwest (up from 16%), 25% of the population in the Northeast (up from 16%) and 28% of the population in the West (up from 21%). In the West, the religiously unaffiliated are more numerous than Catholics (23%), evangelicals (22%) and every other religious group" Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," . [34] While 82% of Americans in a 2014 sample survey considered themselves somewhat to highly knowledgeable about the Bible, 26% of the sample reported that they never read the Bible. Only 15% of those surveyed reported that they read the Bible daily; only 43% could correctly name the first five books of the Old Testament; and 55% could name the four Gospels. Jennifer Barry Hawes, "Studies show many Americans not reading the Bible, lack basic knowledge," The Post and Courier, . [35] Grant Underwood has done exceptional work on the eschatological worldview of Mormonism, most notably in his book The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993). He explains: "Millennialism . . . is far more than simply believing that the millennium is near. It is a comprehensive way of looking at human history as an integrated system of salvation. . . . Mormon eschatology deals with more than just what Latter-day Saints [think] about the Second Coming or how they [envision] the millennium. It probes many related aspects of their mental universe." Millenarian World of Early Mormonism, 2. [36] "Citizenship," in LDS Gospel Topics, . This is an especially relevant topic considering the efforts of the Church recently to promote the protection of religious freedom; see "Religious Freedom," in LDS Newsroom, . [37] Perry, "Doctrines and Principles," 48. [38] Jeffrey R. Holland, Christ and the New Covenant (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 18. [39] McConkie, New Witness for the Articles of Faith, 702.

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