Mormon State of the Union 2018
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(With Crowdsourcing Help from the Mormon Internet)

Mormonism "Then"	**Mormonism "Now"**
No caffeinated beverages of any kind. Proud of that.	BYU serving caffeine
Church of Charismatic, Confident, Doctrinal General Authorities who "told it like it is." Mark E. Peterson. Sterling W. Sill. Joseph Fielding Smith. Bruce R. McConkie. Ezra Taft Benson. Boyd K. Packer. Gordon B. Hinckley Books like Doctrines of Salvation Vols. 1-3, Mormon Doctrine, Miracle of Forgiveness were viewed almost as scripture and heavily emphasized.	GA's Public Defection and apostasy of Area Authority (Hans Mattsson). GA's speak less and less of distinctive Mormon doctrine and speculative theology. GA's ask to not have any talk except Gen Con recorded or shared or sometimes even notes taken. GAs hide behind lawyers and PR. New revelations and policies are secretly added to handbook 1 Certain books, such as Mormon Doctrine or Miracle of Forgiveness, have been either discontinued or de-emphasized.
Church leaders hoped that science would gradually corroborate the Mormon church's doctrine, narrative (e.g., Book of Abraham translation in the 1960s, Meso-American explorations to validate Book of Mormon).	Science has consistently contradicted the Mormon narrative
Other Christian churches, such as Catholics and Evangelical Christians, were considered enemies of the church. We emphasized and took pride in our differences from these other churches.	Mormon church now befriending Catholic and evangelical churches, minimizing differences, and partnering with them to pass anti-LGBT legislation, and to promote "religious freedom." Emphasizing our similarities to these other churches. Downplaying our differences.

Mormons were proud of their distinctive theology/doctrine such as: Lots of emphasis on pre-existence valiance as explanation for things (e.g., black or dark skin, church membership) Men/women becoming Gods Polygamy Last Days/Signs of the Times Missouri as the New Jerusalem, gathering place	Mormons are now de-emphasizing many distinct doctrinal/theological positions. Sometimes it appears as though obedience to Patriarchal/Priesthood Authority is the most sacred Mormon doctrine
Criticism of Mormon Leaders forbidden, little to no discussion about imperfections of church leaders.	Criticism still forbidden, but increased willingness to discuss/admit imperfections of leaders.
LDS Church Handbook of Instructions completely private	Significant portion of the LDS Church Handbook of Instructions now available online.
Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham taught to be literal translations of ancient records	Headings to both Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham changed to lower expectations
Focus on church being exclusively true	Focus on encouraging people not to leave, “Stay in the boat,” “Doubt your doubts,” focus on the “goodness” of the church
Emphasis on spiritual gifts, direct/grand spiritual manifestations/miracles, faith healings	De-emphasis of spiritual gifts, direct/grand spiritual manifestations/miracles. De-emphasis and downplaying on faith healings (faith to NOT be healed)
Proud of our Mormon heritage and identity. Grew up singing songs like “I’m a Mormon, yes I am!” Mormon Tabernacle choir was the most popular choir in the world. Perform at inaugurations of presidents	Church is distancing itself from our own identity. Calling us or ourselves Mormons is forbidden, and referred to as a victory for Satan. Church renaming itself and its world famous choir because its reputation has become so problematic

Church pageants. Manti. Hill Cumorah.	Church pageants are being cancelled.
Mormon wards and stakes had rich cultural lives. Road shows. Athletic leagues. Dance festivals. Stake and ward theatrical productions. Gold and Green Balls. Vibrant ward and stake youth dances. Film nights and dime a dip dinners. Budgets were provided for these types of activities.	Ward and stake cultural activities are being eliminated or gutted. Budgets have been cut to the bare bones, and emphasis is to be on the ""spiritual purpose" of every activity. Most activities are more like Sunday School lessons than social activities.
Home Teaching program was a pillar of Mormonism.	Home Teaching program renamed to “Ministering,” assigned visits de-emphasized.
Elder and High Priest Quorums distinct and vibrant/active.	Elder and High Priest Quorums merged.
Boy Scouts of America was a centerpiece to U.S. Mormon life	Boy Scout participation has been eliminated after 2019.
In the Early years, Mormons went to church twice on Sundays. Condensed to a single three hour session	Church has been shortened to 2 hours starting in 2019.
Church prophet Gordon B. Hinckley gave expansive press conferences. Was willing to answer any question publicly.	After Jeffrey Holland’s debacle with the BBC, Church leaders are afraid to speak to press.
Those interested in the behind-the-scenes working of General Authorities could read about these happenings after they died and their journals were released	General authorities are forbidden from keeping journals.
Church refused to acknowledge and LGBT identity	Mormonsandgays web site Not a sin to have the thoughts. Only to act on

Being gay or lesbian is a choice. Sinful. Sin to even have gay thoughts. Conversion therapy fully backed by church. Church officially supported Evergreen, Conversion therapy. Celibacy and mixed-orientation marriages openly encouraged	them. Conversion therapy no longer backed by church Evergreen is officially dead. Church still supports NorthStar. Celibacy and mixed-orientation marriages are indirectly encouraged
Parents siding with church against their LGBT children.	Mama Dragons
Church had 6 million members! Stone cut forth without hands, consume all nations. Rodney Stark predictions	Church claims 16 million members, but has 5 or 6 million active members. Church growth rates has declined to less than 1%. U.S. Birth rate and third world baptisms sustaining growth rate. Church is collapsing in Western Europe, Japan, Native American reservations. Church membership in the U.S. is forecasted to shrink within 20 years. Church hiding its collapse by combining wards and stakes
Church proudly shared its growth statistics annual in General Conference	Church no longer shares its growth statistics in General Conference
BYU National Champions in Football. UofU and USU were also-rans, hasbeens.	BYU football struggles to stay above 500. U of U Football team 2018 PAC West South Champions U of U and USU Football teams nationally ranked in 2018. Both teams regularly beat BYU in football.
Donny and Marie, Steve Young If they left the church, they did it quietly and discreetly	Public defection of Mormon Pop stars, TG, Dan Reynolds, Mindy Gledhill, Benji Schwimmer

Julie de Azevado Hanks and Mindy Gledhill were writing songs for EFY	Tyler Glenn's music videos. Dan Reynolds' "Believer" documentary. Julie de Azevado Hanks and Mindy Gledhill are appearing on Mormon Stories podcast and writing songs about their faith crises and apostasy.
Missions and temples dotting the globe	Missions collapsing. Temples still dotting globe, but mostly because they provide lucrative real estate opportunities, and have been found to increase tithing receipts (as attendance to marriage ceremonies is held hostage to the payment of tithes to the church)
White Horse Prophecy. Mormons almost became presidents (George Romney, Mitt Romney, Jon Hunstman Jr.).	Fewest Mormon representatives in Congress in 30 years.
BYU had conservative and liberal professors. Honors colloquium classes with liberal professors like Eugene England, Ted Lyon, etc.	Liberal BYU professors either silent, or they are removed. Mostly, liberal-minded PhDs avoid BYU
Women couldn't pray in sacrament meeting for a long time and in general conference untill recently Women couldn't wear pants to church	Women can pray in sacrament meeting and general conference Women can wear pants to church, though few dare to do so.
Birth control and women working outside the home strongly discouraged	Birth control and women working outside the home no longer strongly discouraged.
Only GA's sat up in the red chairs during general conference	Women sit up in the red chairs during general conference
Only males were strongly encouraged to serve missions, men at 19, women had to wait until 21.	Due to hemorrhaging of Mormon youth from church activity, Mission age lowered to 18 for men.

	Women also strongly encouraged to serve missions, age lowered to 19.
No missionary leadership for women	Female missionary leadership
Church was able to hide or contain troubling information about its history, or about the harm it does to its members.	Joseph Smith Papers Rough Stone Rolling Gospel Topics Essays Updated CES and Sunday School curriculums. These efforts are becoming “Trojan Horses” for many, causing them to doubt. Internet driving all these changes, not foreseen or understood by “prophets”
Mountain Meadows Massacre rarely spoken about or denied by church leadership.	Church has quasi-apologized for MMM. Published a book about it.
Prominent Apologists like FARMS, Maxwell Institute, FAIRMormon. Hugh Nibley. Daniel Peterson. Lou Midgley. Mormon Apologetics 1 .0 - Try to defend Mormon truth claims using pseudo-science, ad hominem attacks on critics	FARMS is dead. Maxwell Institute no longer does apologetics. FAIRMormon seems to be less relevant than it once was. V1 Apologists like DCP, Midgley are losing relevance. V2 Apologists (neo-Apologists) like Terryl/Fiona Givens, Patrick Mason, Phil Barlow are relying on post-Modern thought. De-emphasizing focus on “one true church”, science. Many paths. Mormon scripture doesn’t need to be historical, nor translations of ancient records. The Books of Mormon and Abraham can be inspired revelations even if they are not translations.
Credible Mormon historians/critics (Fawn Brodie, Juanita Brooks, Sandra/Jerald Tanner, September 6, Brent Metcalfe, etc.) were marginalized.	Credible Mormon historians/critics (Fawn Brodie, Juanita Brooks, Sandra/Jerald Tanner, September 6, Brent Metcalfe, etc.) are celebrated/vindicated.
Excommunications for apostasy rare (Fawn Brodie, September 6)	Excommunications for apostasy much more common. Kate Kelly, Denver Snuffer, Rock Waterman, John Dehlin, Jeremy Runnells, Sam Young, Bill Reel, Carson/Marisa Calderwood, Jake/Amy Malouf, Tons of Snuffer followers, Bill Reel.

Church was often able to intimidate scholars or doubters into silence. Only outlets for thoughtful Mormon discourse or dissent were Sunstone Magazine/Symposium and Dialogue.	Mormon Podcasts Mormon Think CES Letter Open expression of doubts, questions, Many outlets for discourse and dissent including blogs, Facebook, Instagram, Exmormon reddit. Sunstone symposium stronger than ever.
Apostates were quickly dispatched via Excommunication, each time that happened it would send a chill through Mormon discourse for at least a decade out of fear	Excommunications for apostasy are still tragic and barbaric, but they have have become a badge of honor and a celebration of sorts.
Young Ambassadors and Lamanite Generation entertained the world	Lamanite Generation has been renamed to “Living Legends.”.
Lamanites were taught to be Latin Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders Heavy emphasis on converting/”developing” (some would say colonizing) Native Americans, from Joseph Smith to Spencer W. Kimball We had a program for Native Americans called the Lamanite Placement program	BOM title page altered to be more vague about Nephites/Lamanites/Native Americans. As a church, we no longer have any idea who the Lamanites are. Church’s Lamanite programs have disappeared.
Black priesthood ban defended as doctrine.	Black priesthood ban dismissed and denounced as bad policy.
Lamanite curse included skin color. Talk about Lamanites blossoming in righteousness and having their skin turn whiter as a result.	Lamanite curse now not about skin color, but about spiritual light/darkness. No more talk about skin color lightening/whitening as a result of righteousness.
Interracial marriage forbidden	Interracial marriage accepted
Temple ceremony more disturbing. Naked under a poncho for washings/anointings, touched by person in strange places.	Temple ceremony changed dramatically. No more naked under poncho with strange

Endowment violente/barbaric (penalties, slit throat), more sexist, massive relics from Masonry.	touching. Many (but not all) Masonic relics removed. Less sexist.
Temple ceremony was secret/sacred.	Temple ceremony placed on the Internet for the world to see
Garments were long. Onesie Mormon Garments still existed that reached your wrists and ankles	Options for garments are getting shorter, and shorter, and shorter.
Second Anointing generally unknown, not spoken about.	Multiple first-hand accounts of Second Anointing now publicly available (e.g., Tom Phillips, Hans/Birgitta Mattsson).
Mormonism stood for families and good, clean, American values.	Mormonism is viewed by many in the public as a bigoted organization that is anti-non-traditional-family and racist/sexist/homophobic.
Church has net worth in the billions	Church has net worth in the hundreds of billions
Fast Offering funds assistance to the needy was given somewhat freely, but with an ask for "work" such as cleaning the building.	Assistance is discouraged. There is intense management at the stake level and above of the use of these funds, and help is refused far more often--especially if the need is larger or runs for a longer length of time. Units that use more funds than they give are scrutinized and micromanaged, including repeated talks from the pulpit on self reliance, classes for the ward members on self reliance, etc. Doesn't matter if the need is really there or not. Needing help is looked down on.
Most Mormon Testimonies were rock solid	Many remain Mormon not because of sincere beliefs, but out of financial interests or fear of losing family or social standing. Massive number of Non-believing active Mormons
Church used to be less strict about “modesty” Shorts and bare shoulders were less vilified.	Stricter “modesty” standards. Shorts and bare shoulders are vilified.

Masturbation and sexual shame. Children, youth, and adults were interrogated and sometimes even abused alone, behind closed doors	These practices have been publicly called into question by Sam Young. Church beginning to reconsider its policies.
Oral sex prohibited	Oral sex no longer prohibited
Polygamy was a deep, dark secret that no one spoke about, Something Brigham Young did and others did only for a short time, and only because they had to (due to excess women)	Information about polygamy is everywhere. Todd Compton's book. CES Letter. MormonThink. Year of Polygamy podcast. Greater awareness about Polyandry.
Church's depiction of BOM translation process was literal. Golden Plates, Urim and Thumim, etc.	Church is now willing to artistically depict BOM authorship with Hat, Stone, no plates.
Church refused to acknowledge the sincere and credible difficulties of intellectuals/doubters/ex-Mormons.	Church beginning to acknowledge the credibility of doubts and doubters, and to urge compassion/empathy for doubters/ex-Mormons.
Ex-Mormons often suffered alone. Without community. Public Post-Mormon activities confined to an annual ex-Mormon conference in Las Vegas where the temple ceremony would be replicated with drinks in a hotel room.	Hundreds, if not thousands of public, online ex-Mormon and post-Mormon communities. http://MormonSpectrum.org/map
Resignations from the LDS Church were difficult and rare.	With quitmormon.org, resignations from the Mormon church are much easier, and much more common.
Being Ex-Mormon/Post-Mormon was stigmatized. Stereotypes of being weak, offended, wanting to sin were easily and carelessly advanced.	Being Ex-Mormon/Post-Mormon is becoming normalized. Ex-Mormons are becoming more public/visible, showing that they are often leading healthy lives of integrity, courage, strength, and resilience.

Things that have stayed the same

- Patriarchy
- Obedience to authority still the most sacred Mormon thing.
- Utah still the multi-level marketing and fraud capital of the United States
- Church still requires 10% of your income

- Masturbation and pornography still forbidden.
- Still too much modesty and sexual shaming.
- Men can still meet with women and children behind closed doors
- Church has a long way to go to become less racist, sexist, and homophobic.
- Church continues to protect abusers at the expense of the abused
- Church still unwilling to apologize.
- Church still sceptical of science, factual history, scholarship.
- Church still labeling critics as ex-Mormons, anti-Mormons
- Church still discouraging reading/learning/thinking/talking about church problems.
- Church continues to deceive its members regarding its history (see the book “Saints”)

Things that have gotten worse

- Depression and prescription drug use and abuse in Utah have skyrocketed
- Suicide rates (youth suicide rates) in Utah - leading the nation. Double and/or tripled
- November 2015 Policy.
    - Same sex married Mormons who find love are judged as worse than murderers, pedophiles. Automatic apostasy. Mandatory disciplinary council.
    - Children of same-sex couples forbidden from baptism or membership in good standing until 18, and only if they denounce their parents’ marriage
- Mormon Studies/progressive Mormon community has been largely eviscerated

Things that Give Me Hope

- **Broader Trends:** Rise of the Nones.
- **Statistics**: Mormon Stories Podcast 6.2 Million downloads and views in 2017. Keeps growing. Exmormon Reddit up to 100,000 members.
- **Communities**: So many vibrant post-Mormon communities. Davis County. Oasis. UVPM. WOCA. Strong post-Mormon communities are CRITICAL to people feeling the freedom to make a change.
- **Post-Mormons**: So many incredibly strong, healthy, kind, fun, courageous, truth-loving post-Mormons out there.