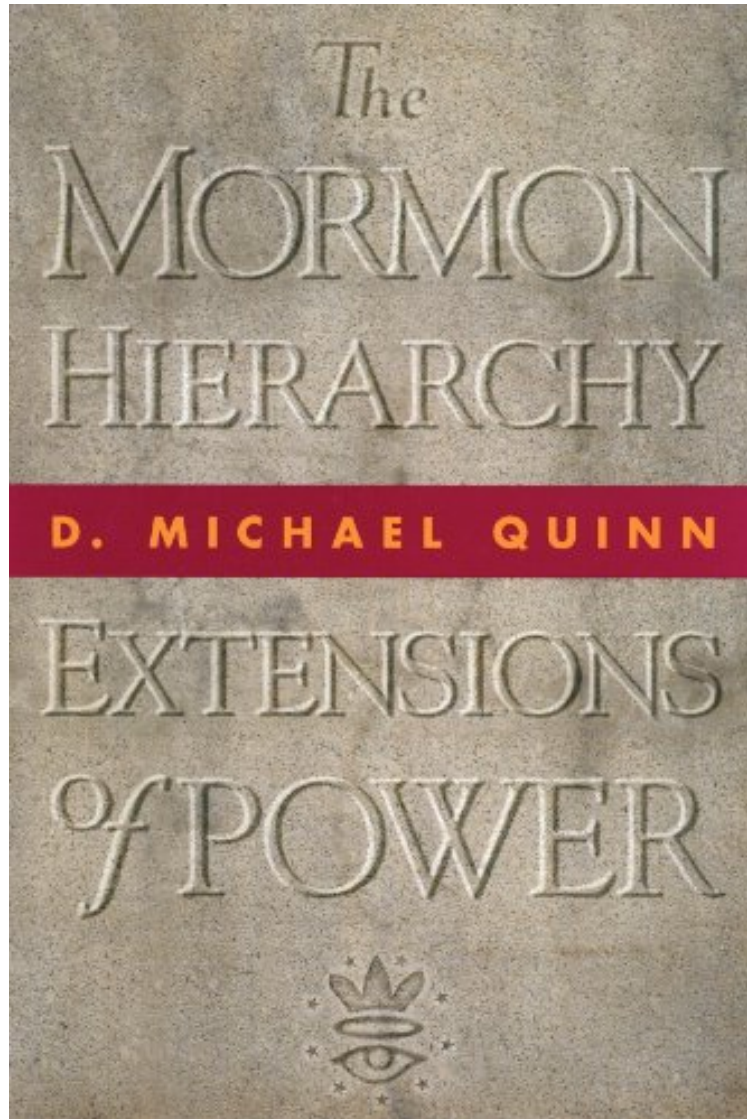


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The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power

D. Michael Quinn

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D. Michael Quinn : The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. THE SECOND VOLUME OF QUINN'S ENGAGING (IF CONTROVERSIAL) HISTORYBy Steven H ProppDennis Michael Quinn (born 1944) is a historian who has focused on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From 1976 he was a professor at Brigham Young University, until he resigned in 1988. He is one of the "September Six" Mormons who were excommunicated or disfellowshipped in

September 1993 for speaking against Church doctrine and leadership. He is also controversial for his sexual orientation (see his book *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A MORMON EXAMPLE*.) He writes in the Preface to this 1997 book, "I have tried to be true to the spirit of candor I found in the spoken and written records of the Mormon hierarchy. This study ... also examines the evidence of historical process and institutional change over time, rather than selecting evidence to reinforce current definitions and policies. That single-minded determination on my part led to conflicts with LDS leaders. I am now a believer outside the church for which I still have affection and fond hopes." Here are some more quotations from the book: "Harmony and unanimity became so important to the twentieth-century hierarchy that some authorities have even assented to what they regarded as violations of God's will." (Pg. 13) "The presiding quorums have sometimes tailored their minutes to fulfill the requirement of unanimous voting." (Pg. 19) "Despite such conflicts, church leaders regard the final result of their deliberations as revelation." (Pg. 20) "(In July (1946) the hierarchy was stunned to learn that Patriarch Joseph F. Smith was homosexual. Publicly they cited 'ill health' as reason for his resignation and released him..." (Pg. 128) "(B.H. Roberts') alcoholism continued to strain his relationships with fellow general authorities, and in 1901 Roberts confessed to the First Council 'as to his violation of the word of wisdom.'" (Pg. 145) "Under such circumstances the Mormon hierarchy bore full responsibility for the violent acts of zealous Mormon(s) who accepted their instructions literally and carried out various forms of blood atonement." (Pg. 256) "Although affirming that they act as private citizens when urging political positions, general authorities expect to be treated differently than private citizens in the political arena." (Pg. 371)

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* By Bobdog
The used copy I received was in very good condition with a clear plastic cover installed by the library where it was originally acquired. Professor Quinn's work is amazing and highly valuable. He has accumulated source material over a 20-30 year period from sources now closed to outside historians, as well as from other sources found through a historian's hard rock mining. The result is a detailed history of the organization and institutional life of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints into modern times. Although he might have reason to be, given his excommunication from the Church, he is not antagonistic to the Church or voyeuristic. He is professional. His earlier volume in this two volume work is equally valuable as a historical resource and interesting read. One thing missing is a Bushman-esque commentary placing some of the facts in historical and cultural context. Quinn leaves to the reader whether to accept the facts as largely explainable by a different culture and time or as continuing evidence of fallible man's involvement in God's work.

9 of 12 people found the following review helpful. I bet you didn't learn this in Sunday School
By Ashtar Command
D. Michael Quinn is a dissident Mormon who has authored or edited several books on the history of the Mormon (LDS) Church. Naturally, they stray quite extensively from official Mormon hagiography. Quinn's best known work is probably "Early Mormonism and the Magic World View", but his other books are equally worth delving into. "The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power" is the second volume of a two-volume series. The first is subtitled "Origins of Power". The book is really a collection of essays on various controversial topics of Mormon history. Half of the book consists of appendices, footnotes and references. One of the essays deals with the controversies surrounding Ezra Taft Benson and his support for the extremist John Birch Society. Another essay describes the successful Mormon campaign to stop ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Quinn has also included an extensive discussion of 19th century Mormonism in Utah. He reaches the surprising conclusion that the secretive, theocratic Council of Fifty played only a minor role. Despite this, Mormon Utah clearly was a theocracy. Not without some irony, the author describes how LDS-approved candidates in Utah elections would get 99% of the votes, and never less than 95%. For a period, the Mormon-controlled "People's Party" didn't even have a central committee, but was controlled directly by Church authorities! Please note the names "people's party" and "central committee" and the 99% election results. Are we talking Utah or Estonia in 1940? Appendix 5 is easily the most interesting part of the entire volume, a veritable treasure trove of downright bizarre information on Mormonism you won't learn from those clean-cut LDS missionaries. The "elders" probably don't even know about it! Thus, we learn that the famous Miracle of the Seagulls wasn't considered particularly miraculous when it first happened. Brigham Young prohibited Mormons from digging gold in Utah only to send a Mormon group to California to do precisely that. Sodomy was legal in Utah from 1852 to 1876. Young prohibited Blacks from entering the priesthood, but nevertheless invited Elijah Abel to a social event in Salt Lake City. Abel was an African-American who had been ordained by Joseph Smith! Young also denied the virgin birth, claiming that God had a physical body and had a carnal relation with Mary. In 1857, Young allowed a polyandrous relationship and preached in favour of marriage between siblings. One of his apostles said that Muhammad might have been a true prophet! And so on... More shocking is the trail of violence, murder and mayhem that characterized Utah during the rule of Mormon theocrats. The Mountain Meadows Massacre is the most well known instance, but it seems that "blood atonements", decapitations and castrations were the order of the day, Brigham Young not being wholly innocent of stirring things up. Of course, the Wild West was a brutal place in those days, and the problem isn't so much that this or that horse thief was summarily dealt with. The problem, of course, is the religious-theocratic dimension, as when the Mormons and the federal authorities together attacked the Morrisites, or when Mormon dissidents were attacked, or when "loose" women were found decapitated, etc. "The Mormon Hierarchy" is more forthright than Leonard Arrington's bland work "Brigham

Young: American Moses". Arrington, of course, is *The Living Prophet's Loyal Opposition*. Quinn, it seems, is something else again. The only criticism I have of this book is that Quinn's style of writing frequently gets dry, tedious and over-detailed. Still, I cannot recommend this volume high enough. Five stars.

The Mormon church today is led by an elite group of older men, nearly three-quarters of whom are related to current or past general church authorities. This dynastic hierarchy meets in private; neither its minutes nor the church's finances are available for public review. Members are reassured by public relations spokesmen that all is well and that harmony prevails among these brethren. But by interviewing former church aides, examining hundreds of diaries, and drawing from his own past experience as an insider within the Latter-day Saint historical department, D. Michael Quinn presents a fuller view. His extensive research documents how the governing apostles, seventies, and presiding bishops are likely to be at loggerheads, as much as united. These strong-willed, independent men like directors of a large corporation or supreme court justices lobby among their colleagues, forge alliances, out-manuever opponents, and broker compromises. There is more: clandestine political activities, investigative and punitive actions by church security forces, personal loans from church coffers (later written off as bad debts), and other privileged power-vested activities. Quinn considers the changing role and attitude of the leadership toward visionary experiences, the momentous events which have shaped quorum protocol and doctrine, and day-to-day bureaucratic intrigue from the time of Brigham Young to the dawn of the twenty-first century. The hierarchy seems at root well-intentioned and even at times aggressive in fulfilling its stated responsibility, which is to expedite the Second Coming. Where they have become convinced that God has spoken, they have set aside personal differences, offered unqualified support, and spoken with a unified voice. This potential for change, when coupled with the tempering effect of competing viewpoints, is something Quinn finds encouraging about Mormonism. But one should not assume that these men are infallible or work in anything approaching uninterrupted unanimity.

From *Library Journal* Quinn's first volume of *The Mormon Hierarchy (The Origins of Power, Signature, 1994)* was a landmark in Mormon studies. This latest volume demonstrates the ways and methods by which the leadership maintains and applies its authority. Some believers may not be pleased with the portrait Quinn paints, but his documentation is so thorough and indisputable that few will be able to challenge his arguments. Some chapters are case studies in the rise to leadership of particular individuals, most notably Ezra Taft Benson (13th president/prophet of the church and Eisenhower's secretary of agriculture), and their employment of power. Other chapters look at the means by which power is exercised in governance. The biographical and chronological appendixes are worth the price of the book. Quinn, now an independent scholar, is unquestionably Mormonism's leading historian. A magisterial study; recommended for all libraries with collections in American history. — David S. Azzolina, Univ. of Pennsylvania Libs., Philadelphia Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. The Mormon church today is led by an elite group of older men, nearly three-quarters of whom are related to current or past general church authorities. This dynastic hierarchy meets in private; neither its minutes nor the church's finances are available for public review. Members are reassured by public relations spokesmen that all is well and that harmony prevails among the brethren. But by interviewing former church aides, examining hundreds of diaries, and drawing from his own past experience as an insider within the Latter-day Saint historical department, Michael Quinn presents a fuller view. His extensive research documents how the governing apostles, seventies, and presiding bishops are strong-willed, independent men (much like the directors of a large corporation) who lobby their colleagues, forge alliances, out-manuever opponents, and broker compromises. Quinn's *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions Of Power* reveals clandestine political activities, investigative and punitive actions by church security forces, personal "loans" from church coffers (later written off as bad debts), and other privileged power-vested activities. The *Mormon Hierarchy* considers the changing role and attitude of the leadership toward visionary experiences, the momentous events which have shaped quorum protocol and doctrine, and day-to-day bureaucratic intrigue from the time of Brigham Young to the dawn of the twenty-first century. -- Midwest Book About the Author D. Michael Quinn (Ph.D., history, Yale University) is an Affiliated Scholar at the University of Southern California's Center for Feminist Research. He has been a full-time researcher and writer, a professor of history at Brigham Young University, and a visiting professor of history (2002-03) at Yale. His accolades include Best Book awards from the American Historical Association and the Mormon History Association. His major works include *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark*, the two-volume *Mormon Hierarchy* series (*Origins of Power*, *Extensions of Power*), and *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example*. He is the editor of *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* and a contributor to *American National Biography*; *Encyclopedia of New York State*; *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education*; the *New Encyclopedia of the American West*; *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*; and others. He has also received honors, fellowships and grants from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Henry E. Huntington Library, Indiana-Purdue University, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In addition, he has been a keynote speaker at the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture,

the Chicago Humanities Symposium, Claremont Graduate University, University of Paris (France), Washington State Historical Society, and elsewhere, and a consultant for television documentaries carried by the Arts and Entertainment Channel, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the History Channel, and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).