

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT PERCEIVED TEACHER  
DISPOSITIONS OF CARE  
AND STUDENT OUTCOMES OF BELIEF, UNDERSTANDING,  
AND APPLICATION OF LDS DOCTRINE

by

Casey Alexander Fuhriman

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**DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS**

of the dissertation submitted by

Casey Alexander Fuhriman

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The following individuals read and discussed the dissertation submitted by student Casey Alexander Fuhriman, and they evaluated his presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

Richard Osguthorpe, Ph.D.	Chair, Supervisory Committee
Jonathan Brendefur, Ph.D.	Member, Supervisory Committee
Keith W. Thiede, Ph.D.	Member, Supervisory Committee
Chris Haskell, Ed.D.	Member, Supervisory Committee

The final reading approval of the dissertation was granted by Richard Osguthorpe, Ph.D., Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The dissertation was approved for the Graduate College by John R. Pelton, Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate College.

## DEDICATION

To my sweetheart, Marie, and soon to be 5 children: Kalia, Ethan, Lincoln, Daxton, and the baby.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between student-perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) doctrine. Since the release of the *Teaching Emphasis* in 2003, LDS seminary leadership has consistently emphasized the importance of positive teacher dispositions of care and the relationship it has with desired student outcomes of LDS seminary students. However, no known studies to date have gathered and analyzed data to determine if such a relationship exists. Data regarding student-perceived teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine were gathered via self-report survey from 801 LDS seminary students in Idaho's Washington, Payette, Gem, Canyon, Ada, Elmore, Jerome, Minidoka, Cassia, and Twin Falls Counties, as well as Malheur County in Oregon. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings indicated a statistically significant positive correlation ( $p < .01$ ) between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and application. Additionally, with information obtained from the data, a statistically positive correlation ( $p < .01$ ) was discovered between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and application as well as statistically significant correlations ( $p < .01$ ) between each of the individual factors of belief, understanding, and

application. This study explores the practical implications for future research from these findings.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LDS	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
S&I	Seminaries and Institutes of Religion

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the Church Educational System (CES) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) released a document entitled the Teaching Emphasis of the Church Educational System (Church Educational System, 2003). This emphasis encouraged educators within CES to focus not only on knowledge and methods of classroom teaching, but also on dispositions: what type of people they are and how they relate with the students in their classes. Subsequent discourses from CES leadership encouraged teachers to be clean (Hall, 2003); accepting of feedback and willing to change (Anderson, 2006); intelligent, devoted, and loving of the young (Johnson, 2008); humble and have a willing heart, and committed to apply feedback and direction (Webb, 2009). To date, 52% (30 of 58) of all published leadership addresses given by LDS Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (S&I) a division of CES leadership since 2003 specifically mention the importance of teacher dispositions – which include character, traits, attitudes, habits, and desires – as an essential part in the learning process.

S&I educators are repeatedly encouraged, even mandated, to live, teach, and administer in virtuous, or moral, ways. Though important to have the requisite knowledge and skill sets to be an effective teacher (S&I, 2012), S&I administrators suggest that an improvement in teacher dispositions will help facilitate desired spiritual outcomes for LDS seminary students (CES, 2003; Hall, 2012; Iba, 2004; P.V. Johnson, 2008; Kerr, 2005; Moore, 2007; Oaks, 2012; Webb, 2009). These desired spiritual

outcomes are primarily related to positive cognitive and affective in-class and out-of-class results for LDS seminary students. The ultimate goal is to assist students in believing, understanding, and applying what is taught in the classroom.

### **LDS Seminary and Spiritual Outcomes**

Through weekday classes centered on the study of LDS scripture, the LDS seminary program provides religious education to almost 400,000 teenagers (ages 14-18) worldwide (S&I, 2013). The purposes of LDS seminary are religious and spiritual in nature, as stated in the *Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* (S&I, 2012): “In Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, our task is not just education—it is religious education. Religious education has eternal implications and requires the influence of the Spirit of the Lord” (S&I, 2012, p. ix). The objectives of LDS seminary are related to spiritual outcomes in students’ religious beliefs and behaviors, such as to “understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven” (S&I, 2012, p. x). Because the primary outcomes of LDS seminary are spiritual in nature, providing in-class spiritual experiences (according to LDS theology) is fundamental to fulfilling the purposes of S&I. Having a teacher who is worthy, which is assumed to be primarily based on that teacher’s dispositions, is deemed absolutely essential to facilitate the process of providing in-class spiritual experiences (S&I, 2012; Sweat, 2011; Webb, 2007).

LDS theology teaches that spiritual experiences are the result of being influenced by the “Spirit of the Lord,” also referred to as the “Holy Ghost” (The Church of Jesus



Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS], 2004b, p. 81). LDS scripture states, “By the power of the Holy Ghost [you] may know the truth of all things” (LDS, 1981, p. 529). Both LDS doctrine and S&I leadership teach that if LDS seminary students are being influenced by the Holy Ghost, desired spiritual outcomes such as belief, understanding, and application will result (CES, 2003; LDS, 2004a; S&I, 2012; Sweat, 2011). S&I leadership maintains that good dispositions and character are essential to these spiritual outcomes. The S&I handbook (2012) states:

One of the greatest contributions a teacher can make toward helping students accomplish the purpose outlined in the S&I Objective is consistent and faithful obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. As teachers strive to develop Christlike character and seek to know and please Heavenly Father in every aspect of their lives, they are blessed with a measure of divine power that can influence the way the gospel message is received and understood by their students. (p. 2)

### **Facilitating Spiritual Experiences Through Teacher Dispositions**

In 2003, a focus on curriculum improvement was released to all seminary and institute educators entitled the *Teaching Emphasis of the Church Educational System* (CES, 2003). The purpose of this directive was to deepen the “faith, testimony, and conversion” (p. 1) of LDS seminary students. In 2009, the *Teaching Emphasis of the Church Educational System* (CES, 2003) was revised and renamed the *Teaching and Learning Emphasis* (S&I, 2009), and in 2012 the directive was further revised and included as part of the *Objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* (S&I, 2012). Although the document was revised, the basic content remained the same, particularly the focus on teacher dispositions as an integral part of facilitating in-class spiritual experiences.

The S&I handbook (2012) specifically links teachers' dispositions with desired spiritual outcomes:

The responsibilities of teachers in seminary and institute of religion are many, but in order to meet these responsibilities, teachers must first strive for personal righteousness. As teachers, we must live the gospel in such a way that we will have the Spirit to ever be with us. (p. 2)

As such it is maintained by S&I administration and LDS doctrine that LDS seminary student religious outcomes, such as understanding, belief, and application of LDS doctrine, are the result of spiritual experiences through the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, it is evident that student spiritual experiences are assumed to be best facilitated in a classroom with a teacher who possesses the necessary dispositions. Thus, teacher dispositions are theoretically linked to student outcomes.

### **Research on Teacher Dispositions and Academic Outcomes**

In public education there has been a similar discourse surrounding the need of teacher dispositions in the classroom. Though Katz and Raths (1985) first introduced the term in education, the real push began with the *No Child Left Behind* (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002) act in 2001, calling for highly qualified teachers and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE] (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2002), and requiring dispositions be included as part of the accreditation process. Up to this point the focus in teacher education was centered on knowledge and skills (Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010).

The importance of including dispositions was stated by Borko, Liston, and Whitcomb (2007). They explain that dispositions are individual's tendency to act in a given manner, and thus answer the question of whether teachers are likely to apply the

knowledge and skills they gained in their preservice instruction in their own classrooms (Almerico, Johnston, Henriott, & Shapiro, 2011). According to Schulte, Edick, Edwards, and Mackiel (2004), one of the most difficult situations faced by teacher educators is coming across a candidate who meets the requirements of knowledge and pedagogical skills but lacks the dispositions necessary in effective teaching.

Existing research does indicate a positive correlation exists between teacher dispositions and student cognitive and affective outcomes in academic disciplines, such as increased comfort in classroom situations, increased test scores, factual memory recall, and student/teacher relationships. (Claxton & Carr, 2004; Da Ros-Voseles, & Moss, 2007; Johnson, L. E., 2008; Notar, Riley, & Taylor, 2009; Obara, 2009; Wasicsko, 2007). Such findings suggest the potential for a relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes similar to LDS spiritual experiences. For example, LDS spiritual experiences are related to cognitive outcomes through the Holy Ghost such as remembering “ideas, concepts, or principles” and gaining “truth, knowledge, insights, understanding, and enlightenment” (S&I, 2012, p. 11). LDS spiritual experiences are also related to affective outcomes such as feelings of “joy, love, peace, patience, and gentleness” (S&I, 2012, p. 11). If teacher dispositions are positively correlated with in-class cognitive and affective outcomes in academic disciplines, it is possible that teacher dispositions might have a positive correlation with student outcomes in LDS seminary, specifically spiritual experiences, which lead to greater belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine taught in LDS seminary (Sweat, 2011).

There is, however, no empirical evidence to suggest that teacher dispositions positively correlate with student belief, understanding, and application. S&I

administrators, LDS church leadership, and LDS scripture (LDS, 1979a; LDS 1979b; LDS 2004a; LDS, 2004b; Johnson, P. V., 2003; Kerr, 2007) make theoretical claims, but it is not known if there is any positive correlation between teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application. Furthermore, if such a correlation exists, it is unknown which dispositions are most likely to lead to increased student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application. No known studies, to date, have measured the relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application. Because S&I has consistently emphasized this focus on teacher dispositions since 2003 (as means to facilitate in class spiritual experiences and thus increase student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application), a study specifically exploring the relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS seminary students might be helpful in order to better understand this S&I focus and inform future S&I decisions concerning the role of teachers' dispositions in LDS seminary.

Furthermore, in public education there is minimal research on the relationship between teacher dispositions and student application. It is not currently known if the dispositions of teachers assist students to use their knowledge obtained inside the classroom, outside of the classroom setting.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to explore and better understand the relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application in LDS seminary. The importance of teacher dispositions has been consistently emphasized since 2003 to S&I educators worldwide with no empirical

evidence to support the claims. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to obtain necessary data and investigate the relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS seminary students.

This study will be guided by the following questions.

1. What is the relationship between student perceptions of teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS Doctrine as taught in S&I?
2. What is the relationship between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in S&I?
3. What is the relationship between the scales of student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine?

### **Study Significance**

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion provide weekday religious education to almost 750,000 youth (ages 14-18) and young adults (ages 18-30) in over 150 countries worldwide (S&I, 2013). The emphasis placed on teacher dispositions as necessary to accomplish the objective of S&I is promoted in each of these countries to over 50,000 S&I educators. However, no known study to date has examined the relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application in LDS seminary to examine this emphasis on teacher dispositions and its theoretical and theological link to student outcomes. Through survey response and statistical analysis, this study will provide data on student perceived teacher dispositions and student reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in LDS seminary.

Although results from this study will be specifically generalizable to LDS released-time seminary in the western United States, the obtained data, statistical methods and analyses, conclusions, and recommendations have the potential to inform policy and practice for S&I teachers and administrators worldwide. This study also has the potential to provide a deepened understanding in the debate on dispositions in the public arena on how teacher dispositions affect student application outside of the classroom environment.

### **Summary**

Since the introduction of the *Teaching Emphasis* (CES, 2003), emphasis on teacher dispositions has been consistently recognized as being an essential component to increase the likelihood of perceived spiritual experiences, and thus increase student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application. S&I educators are mandated to “live the gospel of Jesus Christ and strive for the companionship of the Spirit” (S&I, 2012, p. x). Additionally S&I educators are asked to maintain and demonstrate “conduct and relationships” that are “exemplary in the home, in the classroom, and in the community” (S&I, 2012, p. x). According to S&I administration and LDS doctrine, teacher dispositions have a facilitating relationship with desired in-class spiritual experiences for LDS seminary students, which in turn will lead to increased outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. However, there is no research to support this theoretical and theological claim. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to obtain the needed data to explore the relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The responsibility of training, tracking, monitoring, and assessing teacher candidates as they participate in their teacher education programs, and then fully preparing them in the field to enter the profession is a daunting task. Ensuring that the teachers emerging from these respective programs are deemed high quality has been and continues to be a major portion of that responsibility, as it has long been held that teacher quality is the main factor influencing student achievement and success (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sanders, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Varol, 2011). In general, these programs dedicated to creating high quality teachers have been aimed at improving candidate knowledge and skills (Almerico, et al. 2011).

For many years, the language within education included the term attitudes lumped together with knowledge and skills. Around 1985, in large part beginning with the work of Katz and Rath (1985), there began to be a push in a different direction. Attitudes were no longer sufficient to describe and account for the requirements necessary in high quality teachers. In its place was introduced the term dispositions, and within a relatively short amount of time, dispositions seemingly won the race between words of similar meaning such as traits, habits, and temperaments, becoming the third leg in the high-quality teacher trifecta: Knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Freeman, 2007).

As such, in the public education arena, it is maintained that teacher preparation needs to include more than the bestowal of knowledge and skills in the classroom

(Almerico, et al. 2011; Da Ros Voseles & Moss, 2007; Johnson L. E., 2008; Schussler, et al. 2010; Shiveley & Misco, 2010; Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000). Similarly, since 2003, the leadership within the Church Educational System (CES) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has continually emphasized that the teachers of seminaries and institutes of religion (S&I) need more than knowledge and skills. Repeatedly words such as traits, attributes, conduct, worthy, and attitude are employed to describe the importance of developing something beyond mere knowledge and methodological skill (Anderson, 2004; Ballard, 2010; Beck, 2009; Kerr, 2005; S&I, 2012; Webb, 2009). According to both S&I and public education, dispositions are a key component to development of a professional educator. The purposes of dispositions vary slightly between the entities, but the importance is equally emphasized.

The purpose of this literature review is to outline the purpose and history of dispositions, particularly within the realm of S&I, specifically the seminary program. Related to this purpose there is also a review of the existing literature related to both S&I's and public education's emphasis on the role and necessity of dispositions as part of a professional educator. As part of this review, the nature and definitions of dispositions will be considered as well as similarities and differences between the role of dispositions in public education and S&I. The importance of teacher educators and pre-service directors will be linked to this review as well.

This review of literature is divided into six major subsections: (a) an introduction to dispositions and a history of the definition of dispositions, (b) outlining the role of dispositions in education, (c) a description of LDS seminary and a review of its purposes and objectives, (d) using the objective "live" as a disposition, (e) reviewing the role of



dispositions in both public education and S&I, and (f) describing the role and importance of teacher educators and pre-service directors in relation to the development and the assessment dispositions.

### **Introduction of Dispositions**

As stated previously, for many years the language in public education has centered on attitude, knowledge, and skills until the mid-1980s when Katz and Rath (1985) emphasized the term disposition. To successfully train teacher candidates, many researchers suggest it is important to have a language that is similar amongst the various teacher education programs (Almerico et al., 2012; Borko, et al. 2007; Diez, 2007a).

#### Dispositions Versus Other Terms

The discussion of dispositions began with Katz and Rath (1985). Since that time, disposition has become the third measurement for teacher candidates, along with knowledge and skills (Freeman, 2007).

In recent years dispositions have gained even more momentum and strength as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), as well as other professional accreditation organizations, have required that teacher education programs define, develop, and assess candidate dispositions. Up to this point, though dispositions were part of the conversation, the discussion on dispositions had not held a prominent role in the literature within the field of teacher education (Freeman, 2007; Schussler, 2006).

When NCATE first included dispositions in the standards of accreditation in 2002, dispositions were defined as “values, commitments, and professional ethics that

influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities, and affect student learning, motivation, and development, as well as the educator's own professional growth" (NCATE, 2002, p. 53). With the 2007 revision of standards, NCATE refers to dispositions as professional dispositions and now defines them as "professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development" (NCATE, 2007). This echoes previous teacher education literature where dispositions have typically been defined as behaviors based on how a person makes sense of life that results in attitudes, values and beliefs (Da Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007).

#### Challenges Related to Adopting Dispositions

Although the term disposition was not entirely new in educational literature (Diez, 2007b; Freeman, 2007), teacher educators were not as familiar with how to define, develop, and especially assess dispositions (Dottin, 2009). Due in large part to the requirements of NCATE to document teacher education candidates' dispositions, there has been a surge of interest and debate as faculties attempt to understand the term disposition (Freeman, 2007). There are several factors contributing to the difficulty of discussing dispositions. There is currently no clear definition of disposition due to the ambiguous nature of the word itself, causing many teacher education programs as well as educational researchers to create their own definitions leading to multiple definitions of the word and further muddying of the water (Damon, 2007).

Also, there are always difficulties that arise when trying to adapt and change established teacher education programs. Anytime a requirement is placed upon a

program from an outside source, there can be a lack of ownership of the program.

Perhaps this has occurred with dispositions, as teachers and teacher education programs have struggled with the definition, development, and assessment of dispositions (Diez, 2007a; Damon, 2007).

Finally, there has also been debate on the validity of using dispositions within a teacher education program. The arguments stem from whether or not dispositions can be developed. Many claim dispositions are a stable trait and, as such, can be developed and assessed having, therefore, no place in teacher education as part of a teacher candidates' requirements to graduate and enter the field of education as a professional (Mullin, 2003; Perkins, Tishman, Ritchhart, Donis, & Andrade, 2000). Others state that dispositions can be developed, and must be incorporated into all programs of teacher education (Diez, 2006; Johnson, 2008; Schussler, 2006; Sockett, 2009).

Difficulties in defining, developing, and assessing dispositions. It has been a universal struggle as teacher education programs wrestle with discovering how to teach, develop, and assess dispositions in systematic ways. In the past, teacher educators have relied on informal methods of observing, teaching, and assessing dispositions (Shiveley & Misco, 2010). With the NCATE requirements related to dispositions, teacher educators are pushed to create more formal methods. There are a few scholars who have begun to pave the way in the exploration of effective ways to develop dispositions in teacher candidates, but there is still much work to accomplish (Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2008).

Some difficulties of examining and assessing disposition arise as teacher educators wrestle with the idea of who is truly qualified to teach and then limit who

graduates from their programs based on their assessments. For example, if dispositions are based partly on professional beliefs, what does a teacher educator do when learning their personal beliefs differ from the students? Borko, et al. (2007) reported a teacher candidate who had been dismissed from a program because he advocated corporal punishment in a paper. The university claimed the candidate did not possess the correct dispositions to teach. The university reinstated the student following a court ruling that maintained the university violated the student's rights. Teacher educators face the challenge to assess teacher candidates dispositions in ways that are fair and do not violate individual rights.

Another difficulty in teaching, assessing, and developing dispositions lies in the challenge of defining what a disposition is and what it looks like. It would be wise to first understand the current definition of disposition and to examine how dispositions are being taught by teacher educators now to determine if change does need to take place (Schussler et al., 2008).

An additional difficulty in defining, assessing, and developing dispositions revolves around whether or not dispositions should or even can be assessed. Diez (2007a) suggests this is, in part, dependent upon the definition of dispositions. Whether dispositions are fixed or whether they are able to be developed and modified.

The challenge to create an assessment to fill the requirements as outlined by NCATE, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and each institution's own desires to produce high quality teachers is daunting. Minnesota State University has created an assessment that both the teacher and student fill out that follows a simple Likert scale, rating how both teacher and student perceive

the student to be performing in those dispositions deemed most important by the university (College of Education & Human Services, 2013). Faculty at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg (Lang & Wilkerson, 2006) follow and suggest that any assessment on dispositions include questionnaires, focus group questions, attitude scales, self-report inventories, and observation.

In any assessment, a limitation that persists focuses on the idea that each institution is assessing for those dispositions they deem important. One assessment may not fill the needs of a different education program as that program's goals may differ. As such many scholars state that defining what a disposition is should be a first step to fulfill the requirements of NCATE, create an assessment that fits the needs and requirements of the institution, and develop highly qualified teachers (Edick, Danielson, & Edwards, 2006; Notar, Riley, & Taylor, 2009; Shiveley & Misco, 2010).

### Defining Dispositions

It has been argued that it is imperative that there must be a working definition on which to base the framework of dispositions before development and assessment can take place (Borko et al., 2007; Schussler et al., 2008). Thus, there are a multitude of definitions and explanations of dispositions as each program has developed their own working definition of dispositions to fit their needs in their particular circumstance.

### Categories of Disposition Definitions

Currently, each attempt to define dispositions (and from that base, develop and then assess dispositions) has fallen into multiple different categories or levels. Shively and Misco (2010) classified dispositions under the headings of personal virtues (such as,

caring, respectful, honesty), educational virtues (such as, sensitivity for difference, ability to reflect, and critical thinking), and societal transformation (such as, creating equity and commitments to democratic values). Wasicsko (2007) organized dispositions into three different categories: teacher behaviors that are more observable, teacher characteristics that represent attitudes persistently demonstrated, and teacher perceptions that represent core values and perceptions. Diez (2007b) distinguished between moral dispositions, including empathy and a sense of integrity, from more observable professional dispositions, such as activities showing a belief all children can learn. Sockett (2006) labeled dispositions as either those dealing with character (e.g., integrity and courage), intellect (e.g., consistency and fairness), and caring (e.g., receptivity and building trust). Burant, Chubbuck, and Whipp (2007) claimed dispositions all fall into one of three camps: dispositions as beliefs and attitudes, dispositions as personality traits, and dispositions inferred from observable behavior. Several researchers (Perkins et al., 2000; Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000; Schussler et al., 2008) focus on dispositions across three domains: intellectual, cultural, and moral.

The point is that there is not one correct definition or organizational structure of dispositions to exclude all others. There are different needs in different institutions and different definitions to fit those needs (Schussler et al., 2008; Shiveley & Misco, 2010).

### History of Disposition Definitions

To better grasp the complexity of the challenges surrounding dispositions, it becomes incumbent to view the word historically, what it has meant and how the meaning has morphed over the years. Though there are an abundant number of definitions, many of these current definitions lack clarity and provide little direction for teachers and teacher educators (Barrant, et al, 2007; Schussler, 2006). It is difficult for teacher education programs to be more intentional in developing and assessing dispositions in potential teachers without a clear and understandable definition of dispositions from which to base their decisions (Johnson, L. E., 2004).

Originally included with knowledge and skills was the term attitude. A high quality teacher was one who possessed the correct knowledge, skills, and attitude. Although the word disposition had been linked to education in research as early as John Dewey (1933), the term disposition as connected to knowledge and skills began to appear in educational studies in the early 1980s. Buss and Craik (1983) defined dispositions as “summaries of act frequencies” (p. 105), making dispositions a summary of trends or tendencies to act in various situations. This definition was very similar to what was also described as a habit. A few years later Katz and Raths (1985) defined disposition as “an attributed characteristic of a teacher, one that summarizes the trend of a teacher’s actions in particular contexts” (p. 301). They argued that education programs should develop skills and dispositions as they go hand-in-hand. The difference between skills and dispositions, according to Katz and Raths, is that a skill is indicative of some type of mastery toward a behavior and a disposition is the ability to employ that behavior. Here

we have the beginning of dispositions as a thoughtful action, or being purposeful in the decisions we make based upon our dispositions.

Both definitions agree that dispositions are visible characteristics and/or actions arising in situational contexts ( i.e., teachers tend to act in certain ways under certain circumstances). These definitions are also ambiguous in that they describe dispositions as characteristics and actions, but do not provide guidance on what types of characteristics and actions are dispositions and which are not, and which dispositions are most necessary for good teaching. Years later Shiveley and Misco (2010) argued that without being explicit in the listing the dispositions that are most valuable and necessary to high quality teaching, there is a danger of a program becoming reductionist and losing the core of what dispositions are all about.

During this period of time, many researchers similarly used the term dispositions without defining what the word meant. For example, Barnes (1989) stated, “Developments in the study of teaching, learning, and teacher education . . . identify constructs, understandings, knowledge, skills, and dispositions that can increase the capacity of teachers to promote learning for all students” (p. 13). Barnes clearly stated the importance of dispositions, but the definition of and process for developing dispositions remains unknown. In the same volume, Strom (1989) also called for the advance of dispositions, and he gave a clearer definition of disposition, but he is speaking specifically to a moral disposition. Strom pleaded for “the development of distinctly moral dispositions or feelings of positive practical concern for all persons” (p. 268). Strom implies that dispositions equate to feelings, but this equation is erroneous. A pre-service or teacher education program cannot and should not prescribe how a pre-service



teacher should feel in any given situation. Nor should the teacher educator and pre-service director attempt to manipulate emotions (Schussler, 2006).

Over the next decade, the definition of disposition had begun to morph into a more descriptive form. The Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) (1992) created the following descriptors to encompass the concept of dispositions: adopts, appreciates, believes, is committed, has enthusiasm, persists, realizes, recognizes, responds, seeks, is sensitive to, understands, and values. The inclusion of more than external behaviors demonstrates the shift taking place in thinking about quality teaching, but the definition of dispositions is still less clearly defined than the counterparts of knowledge and performance. Readers were left with a list of attitudinal actions, but the water remained muddy concerning the actual understanding of how to teach and assess dispositions among teacher candidates.

Modern definitions of disposition. Taylor and Wasiczko (2000) defined dispositions as the personal qualities or characteristics that are possessed by individuals, including attitudes, beliefs, interests, appreciations, values, and modes of adjustments. Schulte et al. (2004) defined disposition as a pattern of behavior exhibited frequently and in the absence of coercion, constituting a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control, that is intentional and oriented to broad goals.

In 2002, NCATE described disposition as the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities that affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. NCATE described dispositions as being steered by

attitudes and beliefs related to values like caring, honesty, fairness, empathy, respectfulness, responsibility, and thoughtfulness (Almerico, et al., 2011).

In an attempt to make their statement on dispositions and their expectation of developing and assessing dispositions clearer, NCATE (2007) released a revised definition stating that dispositions are “Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development” (para. 83).

#### Summary of Disposition Definitions

Each author and institution involved in the process of disposition development creates definitions attempting to quantify dispositions in a manner that is both understandable and approachable. The focus was on the knowledge and skills required to effectively teach and manage a classroom with all the various activities associated with teaching such as working with students, parents, social situations, administration, and etc. Some authors added that each of these definitions still lacked an essential component: the inclusion of the necessary inclinations and sensitivity to know when a situation calls for specific skills to be employed (Schussler et al., 2010). This same team of researchers were building off research done years earlier by Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) who examined dispositions as a psychological element as they discussed dispositions as part of mindfulness. They claimed that all dispositions, to be a true disposition, must include the inclination to act, the sensitivity to know when to act, and the ability to know how to act.

Dewey (1933) similarly recognized that dispositions provide the bridge to gap abilities to actions when he said “knowledge of methods alone will not suffice: there must be the desire, the will, to employ them. This desire is an affair of personal disposition” (p. 30). In a number of studies (Perkins et al., 2000; Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000), researchers found that although people might possess the ability and have the desire or inclination to employ them, without specific prompting they often lacked the sensitivity to know when to put their knowledge and skills to use. To be an effective teacher requires more than desire, beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics to achieve particular purposes as described by so many. An effective teacher must also know what knowledge and skills to use and when to use those knowledge and skills to achieve those purposes (Schussler, 2006).

To foster awareness of the context of a situation and know which set of knowledge and skills to employ also requires the ability to be aware of the self in the situation. Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994) claim “the attitudes and actions of each teacher are rooted in their own ways of perceiving the world” (p. 49). Schussler et al. (2010) use the example of a teacher inclined to help a struggling student learn to read more fluently. If the teacher believes that success results from effort, the teacher may attribute the lack of success by the student to lack of effort. If the student’s struggle to read stems from other causes, the teacher will likely be ineffective. According to Combs, Blume, Newman, and Wass (1974), “whether an individual will be an effective teacher depends fundamentally on the nature of his private world of perceptions” (p. 21).

Using past and present research as a guide, I have demonstrated that there is no current standard definition. Each author, using their own research and borrowing from

past research, has created a definition that fits their own philosophy and purpose. However, as Schussler (2006) argued, “For a meaningful understanding of what defines quality teaching – an understanding that extends beyond the superficial – the concept of a disposition requires a more explicit definition” (p. 254). In an attempt to synthesize extant research on the dispositional definitions, both Villegas (2007) and Schussler, et al. (2010) posited that dispositions involve the desires and inclinations, including attitudes, beliefs, and traits, of a teacher to achieve specific purposes as well as the awareness of the self and the context of any given situation to know when to appropriately use the knowledge and skills they possess to achieve those purposes. Those dispositions create a tendency for a teacher to act in a particular manner in a particular circumstance.

Institutions of education, whether public or private, continually seek to improve and increase their ability to effectively teach those students over whom they have stewardship. As such, the context of dispositions, or tendencies for teachers to act in certain ways in certain circumstances, could apply to all educational fields—particularly those involved in training future teachers. One such example is the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (S&I), a branch of the Church Educational System (CES) in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS).

### **Overview of LDS Seminary in S&I**

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion is a part of LDS CES. LDS seminary is a 4-year program of weekday religious education based on the study of LDS scriptures—the *Old Testament*, the *New Testament*, the *Book of Mormon*, and the *Doctrine and Covenants*—with each year in seminary dedicated to the study of one of the four aforementioned books of LDS scripture. To date, there are approximately 390,000 LDS

seminary students enrolled in 156 countries worldwide (S&I, 2013). Students who enroll in LDS seminary are generally members of the LDS church between the ages of 14-18 years old. Enrollment in LDS seminary classes is encouraged for every member of the LDS church within this age group, but enrollment is not compulsory. Seminary enrollment is not necessary to be considered a church member in good standing or to participate in LDS church programs, ordinances, or to serve within LDS church leadership. Seminary is not designed to prepare a professional clergy or to ordain persons to a religious ministry, but—as discussed later in the section on the objectives of LDS seminary—is intended to teach LDS youth the basic tenants of the LDS church, help familiarize youth with LDS scripture texts, and to foster desired religious beliefs and behavior (Sweat, 2011).

Two types of LDS seminary are most common: daily seminary and released-time seminary. Daily seminary classes—often referred to as *early morning* seminary—meet outside of regular school hours in the morning, afternoon, or evening each day that the local school is in session. Students are generally taught by a volunteer teacher, usually in a local church-owned meetinghouse or in an LDS member's home. There are 240,227 daily seminary students across the world (S&I, 2013). Released-time seminary classes are held during school hours each day the local public school is in session. Students are released from public school during one of their class periods to attend a seminary class. These classes are primarily taught by professionally trained and employed LDS religious educators in a church-owned seminary building located near or adjacent to the public school. There are 126,176 released-time seminary students, predominately in the western United States (S&I, 2013; Sweat, 2011).

### Purposes and Objectives of LDS Seminary

As outlined in the official handbook for the seminaries and institutes, the purpose of seminary:

is to help youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their father in heaven. (S&I, 2012, x)

Put more succinctly in *Seminaries and Institutes of Religion*, the task is not just education—it is religious education: “Religious education is education for eternity and requires the influence of the Spirit of the Lord” (S&I, 2012, ix). The objectives of LDS seminary are related to spiritual outcomes in students’ religious beliefs and behaviors.

Fostering scholarship of LDS religious doctrines and principles is also part of the S&I objective. Mastery of basic LDS doctrine and comprehension of LDS scripture is emphasized in seminary to help prepare the LDS youth for volunteer missionary service and future teaching, leadership assignments, and family life within and outside of the LDS church (Hall, 2003; S&I, 2012; Sweat, 2011). Goals related to gospel knowledge are secondary to the primary focus of spiritual outcomes of developing faith, testimony, and spiritual conversion in LDS youth, enabling to not just learning the gospel of Jesus Christ but living according to its principles (Howell, 2004; S&I, 2012; Sweat, 2011; Webb, 2009).

Due to the ambiguity of words such as faith, testimony, and conversion, the primary focus of LDS seminary purpose, the following are brief descriptions of the meanings in LDS context. Faith is to “hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, p. 289). Faith is a belief

that impels a person to action, specifically to believe on, have hope in, trust, and act on the teachings of Jesus Christ (LDS, 2004b). Testimony is a word used in the LDS context to pronounce a surety of faith in various doctrines and principles of the LDS religion, such as the reality of God, the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Savior, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that the *Book of Mormon* and the *Bible* are the word of God (LDS, 2004b). The sum of a person's belief and conviction of various LDS doctrines and principles constitutes his or her collective testimony. Conversion is defined as the spiritual process by which a person's thoughts, desires, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and character align with the teachings of Jesus Christ (LDS, 1979a, 2004b; Sweat, 2012). Conversion is a process by which a person has a "change in [his or her] very nature" (LDS, 2004b, p. 41) to reflect attributes consistent with LDS teachings of Jesus Christ's character (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, p. 218).

To better enable educators and facilitate the growth of spiritual outcomes such as faith, testimony, and conversion, S&I has listed three objectives as primary aims for all teachers and administrators: Live, Teach, and Administer (S&I, 2012). Although the focus of this review deals with the *live* portion of the objective, each of these individual objectives will be explained briefly.

Live the Gospel as an Objective. The principles outlined in the live portion of the objective in S&I become the primary focus of this review and will be examined with greater scrutiny. In this section, I will outline a few of the basic tenants upon which S&I have built expectations for seminary teachers to live the LDS doctrines.

“One of the greatest contributions a teacher can make toward helping students accomplish the purpose outlined in the S&I objective is consistent and faithful obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ” (S&I, 2012, p. 2). The first objective mandated for LDS seminary teachers is to “live the gospel of Jesus Christ and strive for the companionship of the Spirit” (S&I, 2012, p. 2). A discussion on LDS doctrine concerning the “Spirit” or Holy Ghost will be outlined later in this review.

In order to more effectively live the gospel and qualify for the companionship of the Spirit, the S&I handbook (2012) further outlines the requirements to ensure that the conduct and relationships of each teacher and administrator are exemplary in the home, in the classroom, and in the community. Employees within S&I are instructed that wherever they go they represent the First Presidency, which is the highest governing body of the LDS church. As teachers and administrators seek for the companionship of the spirit through living the gospel principles as outlined in LDS doctrine, they are then admonished to continually seek to improve performance, knowledge, attitude, and character.

As teachers faithfully live the gospel as described in LDS doctrine, “they qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. This companionship is crucial to the success of teachers in seminaries and institutes” (S&I, 2012, p. 2). LDS doctrine states that “if ye receive not the spirit, ye cannot teach” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979b, p. 71).

The Holy Ghost and spiritual outcomes. The LDS church’s authorized publication of basic LDS doctrine *True to the Faith* (LDS, 2004b) defines the Holy Ghost as follows:



The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. He is a personage of spirit, without a body of flesh and bones (see D&C 130:22). He is often referred to as the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, or the Comforter. (p. 81-82)

In LDS theology, the Holy Ghost is the source of divine belief, gospel understanding, and spiritual gifts such as tongues, healing, faith, visions, and miracles (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981). His role is to teach, testify, reveal, guide, enlighten, comfort, and sanctify individuals (LDS, 1979a, 2004b). The Holy Ghost is the facilitator of spiritual experiences and thus the main source of spiritual, or religious, education (Sweat, 2011). Repeated spiritual experiences develop spiritual outcomes such as faith, testimony, and conversion (LDS, 1979a, 2004b). *Preach My Gospel* (LDS, 2004a) links the spiritual outcomes of conversion, faith, and testimony to the Holy Ghost as follows:

True conversion comes through the power of the Spirit [or Holy Ghost]. When the Spirit touches the heart, hearts are changed. When individuals feel the Spirit working with them . . . they are edified and strengthened spiritually and their faith in Him increases . . . This is how we come to *feel* the gospel is true. (p. 93)

According to LDS doctrine, as seminary teachers live according to the standards outlined in the doctrines and principles of the LDS church, they will have the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, as a companion (LDS, 1979b; S&I, 2012; Sweat, 2012). This companionship enables the seminary teacher to teach by the Spirit and create an atmosphere where spiritual experiences may regularly occur and students more simply obtain the spiritual goals of faith, testimony, and conversion (LDS, 2004a; S&I, 2012). The purpose of including a short discussion on the Holy Ghost is not to propagate the LDS view on spiritual outcomes, but to build a foundation of understanding on the importance of living the LDS doctrines as a seminary teacher.

Teach the gospel as an objective. While living the gospel as outlined in LDS theology is of the utmost importance, keeping the companionship of the Spirit isn't enough to foster spiritual growth. A seminary teacher is then expected to teach by the Spirit. The S&I handbook (2012) summarizes the expectations of teaching thus:

We teach students the doctrines and principles of the gospel as found in the scriptures and words of the prophets. These doctrines and principles are taught in a way that leads to understanding and edification. We help students fulfill their role in the learning process and prepare them to teach the gospel to others. (p. x)

The underlying expectation still remains with the teacher to live the gospel as outlined in LDS theology in order to teach with the Spirit as well as administer with the influence of the Holy Ghost. As the S&I handbook (2012) emphasizes, "The responsibilities of teachers in seminaries and institutes of religion are many, but in order to meet these responsibilities, teachers must first strive for personal righteousness." Personal righteousness grants companionship of the Spirit and "this companionship is crucial to the success of teachers in seminaries and institutes" (p. 2).

Administer appropriately as an objective. A fundamental aspect of S&I includes administration also. The principals of the individual programs are often instructors in the classroom as well. As such, the mandate to administer the programs and resources appropriately rests on each teacher. This role of administrator primarily includes the responsibility to complete reports, care for Church property and resources, ensure safety, oversee programs, participate in councils, and communicate with student parents and church leaders (S&I, 2012).

### **Summary of LDS Seminary**

LDS seminary is a both a school and a church. A place where students come to gain knowledge and skills, and even more importantly where students come to learn how to “think, speak, and live” (S&I, 2012, p. 30) a gospel-centered life.

With such an emphasis on changing how we live rather than the primary focus of the acquisition of knowledge in the LDS seminary program, there is great emphasis put on teachers living the doctrines as outlined in LDS theology. As Neal A. Maxwell, a noted theologian and former Apostle (the second highest governing body in the LDS church), stated:

Each of you realizes, long since, that you teach what you are . . . . Your traits will be more remembered, compositely, than a particular truth in a particular lesson. . . . For if our discipleship is serious, it will show, and it will be remembered. Such perspectives about how you will be remembered, plus your personal righteousness, will permit you to make a genuine contribution to the lives of your students. (S&I, 2012, p. 3)

These characteristics, attitudes, desires, habits, traits, and personalities of a teacher are part of a larger body of work in the area of dispositions. There is little or no research on the affect a teacher’s example in class, such as examples of living the doctrines, has on a student’s ability and desire to live the doctrines.

### **Live as a Disposition**

As stated previously, the role of seminary is not just education, it is religious education (S&I, 2012), and as such there are different emphases than in public education. Still, however, seminary is focused on education and as such there are tremendous connections between S&I and public education. One of these connections is the role of dispositions as a necessary component of teacher education and classroom instruction.

Understanding dispositions to be a summation of the attitudes, beliefs, traits, characteristics, and personalities of educators (Schussler, 2010) helps clarify the role of dispositions within S&I. Remembering that Maxwell (S&I, 2012) claimed that teacher traits will make the “genuine” contribution to students, it is not a stretch to say it in slightly different words. The elements contained in the *live* portion of the S&I handbook, though not specifically stated as such, are inherently dealing with dispositions. Teacher’s dispositions, or the way a teacher lives, believes, and feels, could increase or decrease the influence a teacher has in a student’s life (S&I, 2012).

This key role of dispositions remains congruent within S&I as well as public education. In both institutions, there is a focus on positive dispositions such as belief that every child can learn, honesty, integrity, and positive attitude (Shiveley and Misco, 2010; S&I, 2012) to name just a few. The role and purpose of dispositions changes slightly between the two educational institutions, which shall be explained, but the ultimate idea that teachers are to live correct principles in order to achieve correct dispositions is consistent.

### Dispositions in Public Education

Although there is an argument opposing the incorporation of disposition in education (Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, & Ness, 2005; Hess, 2006), these arguments are less about the importance of dispositions but rather the lack of a consensual definition and the fear of using disposition as a hammer to support a social or political agenda of indoctrination. The argument for the incorporation of dispositions, those desires and inclinations, including attitudes, beliefs, and traits, of a teacher to achieve specific purposes as well as the awareness of the self and the context of any given situation to

know when to appropriately use the knowledge and skills they possess to achieve those purposes (Schussler 2010) has been emphatically stressed in recent years by numerous authors and educators (Almerico et al., 2011; Borko et al., 2007; Damon, 2007; Diez, 2007a; Johnson, L. E., 2004; Katz & Raths, 1985; Schussler et al., 2010).

One reason for the push of dispositions is explained by the research suggesting teacher quality, a part of teacher dispositions, has an impact on student learning (Aronson, et al., 2007). The correlation between teacher quality and student achievement is stronger than many other factors such as curriculum, class size, funding, family and community involvement and student's socioeconomic status (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ferguson, 1998; Fuller, Carpenter, & Fuller, 2008; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Stronge & Tucker, 2000).

In their research, Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (1999) have demonstrated that teacher quality, or disposition, is the most important educational factor predicting student achievement. In 2001, Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain found that 7% of the total variance in test score gains can be attributed to differences in teacher dispositions. They also found that higher teacher quality impacted student learning, as evidenced by higher test scores in math and science.

Another purpose backing the wave of requirements concerning dispositions is explained by Osguthorpe (2008): We want moral teachers of good dispositions in order to have morally good, or virtuous, teaching. This discussion concerning the difference between virtuous teaching and virtuous teachers will take place in the following sections.

Virtuous teaching versus virtuous teachers. The prevailing presumption in public education regarding the need for virtuous teachers in the classroom, and hence teachers of

positive dispositions, has been to provide the students with a moral example and model upon which to base their own decisions of morality, virtue, and dispositions. As Osguthorpe (2008) points out, this presumption does little to stifle the debate surrounding the definition and need for dispositions in teacher preparation programs and in the classrooms. This presumption can even add to the maelstrom by “bringing issues of moral education and moral development to bear on considerations of teacher candidate quality” (p. 288). Furthermore, there may not be a connection between the moral example of a teacher and the moral development of a student.

A stronger argument for teachers of good dispositions lies in the fact that we want morally good teaching. Osguthorpe (2008) argues there is a distinction between teaching morality and teaching morally:

Teaching morality is grounded in the moral development of students, whereas teaching in moral ways is based on good teaching – being a good teacher. The content of teaching morality is morality itself, whereas the content of teaching in moral ways is whatever content the teacher is teaching – be it social studies, math, French, science, and so forth.

This argument helps explain why teachers of good disposition are an absolute necessity. Character traits and dispositions are used to describe the practice of teaching, not what is being taught.

While public education emphasizes dispositions in teachers in order to obtain the best quality of teaching, S&I adds an additional step. Teachers in S&I are to have correct dispositions in order to teach morally, but S&I teachers are also required to teach morality as a basic content of the course.

### Dispositions in S&I

As has been stated, S&I deals with religious education. As such, it is necessary that more than knowledge is imparted and gained in the teaching and learning process. As Henry B. Eyring, a member of the First Presidency, which is the highest governing body of the LDS church, stated: “We must raise our sights. . . . Our aim must be for them [students] to become truly converted to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ while they are with us” (S&I, 2012, p. 2).

The role of dispositions emerges as a critical prerogative for S&I with the understanding that educators in S&I are not to just teach morally, but they are to teach morality. The focus of dispositions is enlarged beyond the scope of public education.

Virtuous teaching versus virtuous teachers in S&I. “One of the greatest contributions a teacher can make toward helping students accomplish the purpose outlined in the S&I Objective is consistent and faithful obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ” (S&I, 2012, p. 2). For educators in S&I, there is a consistent message that there is a larger responsibility than the imparting of knowledge and assessment of facts and figures. An S&I educator has the added emphasis of conducting “their lives with integrity and to be worthy examples of the doctrines and principles they teach” (S&I, 2012, p. 2).

In other words, the role of an educator in S&I is to teach virtuously, but also to be virtuous. Damon (2007) describes this type of virtue as “character virtues such as honesty, responsibility, and diligence” (p. 368). As will be demonstrated, based on the instructions and handbooks presented to S&I educators in the last ten years, there is no substitute for the personal, or character, virtues, and dispositions of the teacher.

### **S&I Views on Dispositions**

In 2003, a directive named the *Teaching Emphasis of the Church Educational System* (CES, 2003) was released to all seminary personnel in an effort to deepen the “faith, testimony, and conversion” (CES, 2003, p. 1) of LDS seminary students. To help accomplish these purposes, the *Teaching Emphasis* (CES, 2003) repeatedly focused on the need for correct teacher dispositions, though not ever explicitly using the word disposition in the wording. While the directives in the *Teaching Emphasis* (CES, 2003) were not new to S&I in some respects there was a heightened emphasis on increased student participation and teacher preparation, specifically in the wording “we are to teach and learn by the Spirit” (p. 1). In one of the first public addresses to Seminaries and Institutes of Religion after the release of the *Teaching Emphasis* (CES, 2003), S&I Assistant Administrator, Hall (2003), explained that “A fundamental prerequisite to raising the level of our teaching is the importance of cleansing the inner vessel.”

The following year in another global address to LDS seminary teachers, L. Jill Johnson (2004) stated that:

The challenge is to be the guiding lights to the youth of the Church. . . . For those employed teachers, as students sit in your classes and as the Spirit teaches them, they learn. But they will also observe your lives. They will notice how the gospel makes you loving, happy, and interested in them. . . . They will notice how much you love your family. Seeing the love and respect you feel for your loved ones will make impressions that can give them hope for the future and a faith in His promises to them that obedience brings forth the blessings of heaven.

In 2009, the *Teaching Emphasis* (CES, 2003) was revised and renamed the *Teaching and Learning Emphasis* (S&I, 2009). Then, in 2012, a further revision was made with the name of *The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* (S&I, 2012). Although the document was revised for clarity and focus, the basic curricular



content in the revised versions remained the same (Webb, 2009), particularly on the focus for teachers to live the gospel, have correct dispositions, in order to be effective teachers.

The principles of the *Objective* (S&I, 2012) and dispositions have been a consistent theme in formal addresses given by S&I administration. Since the release of the *Teaching Emphasis* (CES, 2003), to date there have been 58 formal published addresses to LDS Seminaries and Institutes of Religion personnel worldwide. These addresses were given by S&I administrators, members of CES's Board of Education, or by members of the LDS church's governing Quorum of the Twelve Apostles or First Presidency. In reviewing and analyzing each of these formal addresses given to LDS seminary and institute teachers and administrators, as well as the official handbook for S&I, there is a repeated focus on the need for educators and administration to live what they teach, or to have correct dispositions. Over half (51.7%) of the addresses to S&I since 2003 specifically mention the need for teacher dispositions, as shown in Table 1.

For the purposes of this research study, most notable in Table 1 is the frequency in which S&I administration and the official handbook for S&I emphasize the role of dispositions. Over 50% of all published addresses by S&I administration since 2003 accentuate the need for correct dispositions in S&I educators, this critical focus on dispositions is central to the research questions explored in this study.

### **Dispositions Emphasized in the Handbook and Administration**

In analyzing the handbook and published talks given by S&I administration to seminary personnel since 2003, 30 of the 58 addresses (51.7%) discuss the crucial role of dispositions in S&I educators as previously shown in Table 1. The following are some excerpts from these published addresses, as well as the official S&I handbook. These

excerpts are categorized using Sockett's (2006) three main categories of dispositions, namely dispositions of character, dispositions of care, and dispositions of intellect, starting from the disposition with the most frequent emphasis to the disposition with the fewest references.

**Table 1***Chronological Evaluation of Formal S&I Addresses Mentioning Teacher Dispositions*

Author	Year	Virtuous	Demonstrates Love	Creates a Safe Environment	Believes Every Student can Learn	Positive Attitude, accepts change	Self Motivated	Builds Appropriate Relationship with Students	Prepared	Humble	Classroom Administrator
Handbook	2012	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hall	2003	x									
Hammond	2003	x									
Johnson	2003	x									
Anderson	2004					x				x	
Iba	2004					x					
Howell	2004				x						
Johnson	2004	x				x					
Kerr	2005	x									
Monson	2005	x									
Anderson	2006					x				x	
Johnson	2006	x									
Moore	2006	x				x					
Ballard	2007	x									
Hall	2007	x									
Kerr	2007	x	x								

Moore	2007	x								x	
Webb	2007	x	x		x				x		
Johnson	2008	x	x								
Moore	2008	x		x							
Wilkinson	2008			x		x					
Beck	2009	x									
Webb	2009	x			x					x	
Ballard	2010	x	x		x						
Beck	2010		x		x						
Webb	2011	x	x								
Hall	2012	x			x						x
Hall, L.	2012		x								
Johnson	2012	x	x					x			
Brown et al.	2012	x	x	x					x		

Oaks	2012		x								
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Dispositions of Character. Dispositions of character, as defined by Sockett (2006), are those dispositions dealing with self-knowledge and integrity in the context of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. The following are excerpts from official S&I addresses concerning dispositions of character:

- S&I (2012): One of the greatest contributions a teacher can make toward helping students accomplish the purpose outlined in the S&I Objective is consistent and faithful obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. (p. 2)
- S&I (2012): Teachers have a responsibility to conduct their lives with integrity and to be worthy examples of the doctrines and principles they teach. In all circumstances, teachers should speak, serve, and live in a way that is consistent with a person who loves the Lord and has the companionship of the Holy Ghost (p. 2)
- S&I (2012): How faithfully teachers live the gospel influences every aspect of their teaching. No greater preparation can occur than that of living a life worthy of the guiding, enabling companionship of the Holy Ghost. (p. 47)
- Moore, G.K. (2006): Be virtuous to teach virtue, avoid all things that damage a moral character. Be obedient to the rules and policies of the organization. (p. 5)
- Ballard (2010): "The power of a good teacher is to be worthy. We, of course, must live in such a way that we are doing all we can to be worthy of that power."
- S&I (2012): "We continually seek to improve our performance, knowledge, attitude, and character."
- S&I (2012): "Those who approach inservice training in faith and with a sincere desire to learn and improve will experience steady growth and development."
- Andersen (2006): "The great teacher knows that accepting feedback and being willing to change is, likewise, the only responsible act."
- S&I (2012): "Teachers should keep in mind that teaching by the Spirit does not remove their responsibility for diligent, thoughtful lesson preparation, including using the curriculum that has been provided."
- Webb (2007): "Teacher preparation refers to worthiness, commitment, and even his motives for teaching."
- Anderson (2004): "Being too comfortable, too contented, and too unwilling to accept change—and the pain associated with it—can keep us from living a life in crescendo."

- Anderson (2006): “The great teacher knows that accepting feedback and being willing to change is, likewise, the only responsible act.”
- Moore (2007): "I feel confident that the progress of the work will largely depend on our willingness to implement divinely inspired changes."

Disposition of Care. Primary dispositions of care include receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness in the context of the creation of trust (Sockett, 2006). The following are excerpts from official S&I addresses concerning dispositions of care:

- S&I (2012): “Teachers should maintain a positive and appropriate relationship with students and avoid giving undue attention to anyone in a way that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted or cause speculation or rumor.”
- S&I (2012): "Teachers should develop the love and respect they have for their students."
- Webb (2007): “We must sincerely love and trust our students.”
- Ballard (2010): "Love your students. Love is a marvelous and glorious power. I don't know of anything that is more meaningful to a young person than to have a teacher or a leader express love."
- S&I (2012): "Cultivate a learning environment of love, respect, and purpose.”
- Moore. G. K., (2008): “We must create a classroom learning environment where, through their participation, the Holy Ghost can teach each individual things he or she needs to understand and needs to do.”
- S&I (2012): "Teachers can learn students' names and seek to know of their interests, talents, challenges, and abilities. They can pray for their students, collectively and individually. Teachers can personally welcome each student to class and give every student an opportunity to participate.”
- Johnson (2012): "We have students who trust you and know that you love them."
- S&I (2012): "If students are acting in improper ways and causing the Spirit to withdraw from class, the teacher needs to seek inspiration in dealing with the problem rather than ignoring it."
- S&I (2012): "As teachers correct improper behavior, they need to be firm but friendly, fair, and caring and then quickly return to the lesson."

Dispositions of Intellect. Sockett (2006), defined dispositions of intellect as “wisdom, consistency (in the application of rules), fairness and impartiality (from the principle of justice), and open-mindedness in the consideration of rules when the ethics of rules is rooted in justice” (p. 17). The following are excerpts from S&I leadership concerning dispositions of intellect:

- Webb (2007): “What a teacher truly believes about students has a significant impact on the spirit in a classroom.”
- Ballard (2010): "So don't ever look at a young person who is a potential student or a student that you are struggling with and get discouraged. See in them that they are precious.”
- S&I (2012): "The attitude teachers have determines to a great degree their own happiness and the ability they have to influence their students for good."
- Iba (2004): “A willingness to try new things and to venture out beyond traditional methods.”

In analyzing directives given by S&I leadership to LDS seminary teachers, it is evident that an emphasis on teachers having correct dispositions has been a consistent theme since 2003. It is also evident that the focus on teacher dispositions is theoretically linked to classroom success, particularly student understanding and application of the doctrines emphasized by the LDS church.

### **Teacher Dispositions and Student Application**

The emphasis by S&I administration on teacher dispositions in seminary classes is theoretically linked to positive outcomes in the lives of the students, particularly in understanding and application of LDS doctrines. However, there is no research pertaining to LDS seminary linking teacher dispositions and student outcomes. Although there is no research exploring this relationship in LDS seminary (hence the need for this



study), there is academic research supporting the philosophical foundation of S&I's emphasis on teacher dispositions. Multiple research studies indicate a positive relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes in academic subjects (Borko et al., 2007; Claxton & Carr, 2004; L. E. Johnson, 2008; Obara, 2009; Villegas, 2007). As previously discussed, research has shown there are positive correlations between teacher dispositions and student cognitive outcomes, such as improved test scores and factual memory recall, and affective outcomes such as increased class comfort and enjoyment (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2001), but there is little to no research on student application of what has been learned. This study will be a bridge between understanding and application, what is the relationship between teacher dispositions and student understanding and application.

In this study, I propose to capture the disposition of care (Sockett, 2006) related to verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students (NCATE, 2007). This study seeks to provide one more piece of the puzzle to better understand how teacher dispositions of care relate to student belief, understanding, and desire to apply what is being learned in the classroom.

This study lays the groundwork of attempting to understand the relationship between disposition and outcomes. This study looks at one aspect of teacher dispositions: care. There will still be much to study, research, and learn to understand the role teacher dispositions plays in the development of students.

## CHAPTER III: METHODS

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) seminary teachers' disposition of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. Since 2003, in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (S&I), teacher dispositions of care has been hypothesized to relate to important student outcomes; however, there is no empirical evidence to support this relationship. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to obtain and analyze necessary data to examine this relationship. The following chapter outlines the research questions and methods used in obtaining and analyzing data to explore the relationship between LDS seminary teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine.

### **Research Questions**

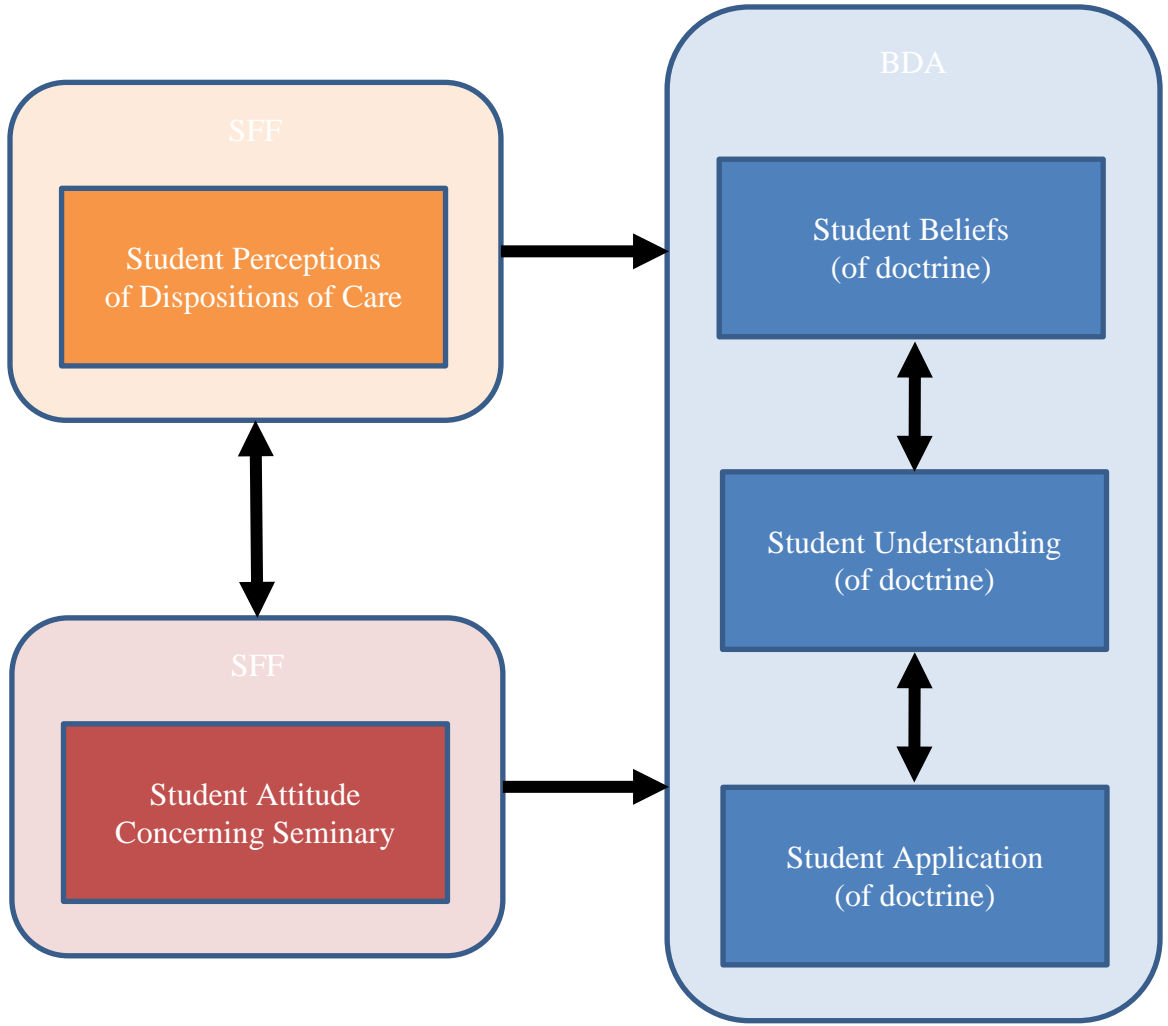
This study is guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the relationship between student perceptions of teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS Doctrine as taught in S&I?
2. What is the relationship between student self-reported attitude in regards to LDS seminary and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in S&I?

- 3. What is the relationship between student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine?

The following diagram (Figure 2) outlines the relationship between the questions that will guide this study.

**Table 2** Diagram Describing the Interchange between the Research Questions Guiding Study



## **Research Design**

The study used correlational methods in an effort to answer the research questions. The purpose of this non-experimental quantitative study is to explore the perceptions of LDS seminary students' view of their LDS seminary teacher's disposition of care and describe how this is related to their belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. The primary reason for using a descriptive design for this study over other formats is that this study is to describe LDS seminary students' perception of teacher dispositions of care and the affect it has on their belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. By its nature, a descriptive design describes the characteristics of a specific sample of individuals at one point in time, or over a period of time (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). According to Gall et al., one purpose of a descriptive study is to describe events and obtain information by answering the questions of "who," "what," "when," "where," and "how" about events that exist when the research is conducted.

The goal of any educational research is to explore, describe, and explain events (Varol, 2011). Descriptive methodology is typically used to summarize and describe the characteristics of individuals, groups, or educational environments (Gall, et al., 2003). As the primary purpose of this study is to describe the relationship between of LDS seminary students' perception of teacher dispositions, specifically teacher dispositions of care, and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine the descriptive method is appropriate.

## **Population and Sample**

The target population for this study is LDS released-time seminary students. As reported in the *Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Annual Report* for 2013, there are

126,176 LDS released-time seminary students, primarily in Utah and the surrounding Western United States and Canada (S&I, 2013). Released-time seminary classes are held during school hours each day that the adjacent local public high school is in session. These classes are primarily taught by LDS Church employed teachers in an LDS Church owned facility near the public high school. Enrolled LDS seminary students in grades 9-12 are released from public school for one class period to attend LDS seminary. Released-time classes differ from early morning classes or daily LDS seminary classes, which are generally taught by a volunteer teacher in a local LDS Church member's home or LDS Church owned facility (Sweat, 2011). As the accessible sample for this study drew from the released-time seminary students only, and not early morning or daily seminary students, the target population for the results of this study is specific to released-time LDS seminary student, with an even sample of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The accessible population for this study is all released-time LDS seminary students within the S&I Idaho West area. This area comprises all released-time LDS seminary students within Idaho's Washington, Payette, Gem, Canyon, Ada, Elmore, Jerome, Minidoka, Cassia, and Twin Falls Counties, as well as Malheur County in Oregon. Selection of seminary classes from these eleven counties provides a diverse and representative sample of students from urban, suburban, and rural communities, allowing conclusions more generalizable to the target population of released-time LDS seminary students. The conclusions will not be generalizable to the general public school population, although the findings may prove useful in determining future research within the public education domain. The 2013 combined LDS seminary released-time

enrollment for the S&I Idaho West Area is 6,354 (J. Davis, personal communication, November 12, 2013). The accessible population for this study represents 5% of the target population of all released-time LDS seminary students. The conclusions, however, can be generalized to all released-time LDS seminary students as the accessible population is an accurate sample of any area where released-time LDS seminary is currently available.

### Sample

Each LDS seminary educator, 60 total, in the Idaho West Area was asked to administer the BDA and *Student Feedback Form* to each of their classes. These forms were collected and sent to the researcher without any outward marking describing the class. One class from each teacher was chosen randomly for data analysis by the researcher from the data. From this sample of 60 teachers, 43 classroom data sets were collected and deemed accurately completed to serve as data in the research. These 43 classes provided a total of 801 LDS seminary students' data, which were then coded and analyzed. Prior to obtaining this sample, permission was sought and granted from the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Office of Research Manager to collect data from every LDS seminary student within the Idaho West Area (Winder, personal communication, October 31, 2013).

### Participants

Participants for this study are released-time LDS seminary students in grades 9-12, between the ages of 14-18 years old, enrolled in released-time LDS seminary classes. These classes are taught by full-time professional LDS seminary educators in the S&I Idaho West Area. For the purposes of this study, teacher descriptions will not be

necessary as the factor in question is teacher dispositions, which will be collected as part of data gathering. There are no personal indicators on the survey items; as such, there is no way to indicate how many participants fit in each age category or gender. Grade in school will be known as it is already a questions included within the BDA. This information does not provide any evidence of individual student identity, and because the instruments are already in use as part of the LDS seminary curriculum, in accordance with direction from Boise State University's Institutional Review Board, participating students will not be aware that their answers will be used for analysis in this study.

### **Selection**

Full-time LDS seminary teachers within the Idaho West Area were asked to administer the instruments in each of their classes. The assessments were collected and saved by class, but without any numbering or indication of which class it is. All assessments were sent to a single location and one class from each teacher was selected randomly for data analysis. Selecting one class from each teacher ensures a broad range of participants from LDS seminary in urban, suburban, and rural schools, helping provide representative ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of LDS seminary students within the sample and target population. This process also mitigates bias towards any one particular ethnic group, socio-economic groupings, or favorite class of the teacher, and makes findings more applicable and representative of the diverse students within the target population of LDS released-time seminary students.

The 60 LDS seminary educators within the S&I Idaho West Area were contacted by the researcher via e-mail to request that they administer both the *Student Feedback Form* and the BDA to each class and provide the data to the researcher (Appendix C).

The LDS seminary teacher's principal, as well as the area director, were also contacted for permission to administer the survey at a set time within the area.

### **Instrumentation**

This study seeks to understand the relationship between teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. In addition, relationships between student attitude regarding LDS seminary and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine will be examined. Finally, the relationship between the scales of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine will be sought out.

Data will be collected using instruments created by a team employed by S&I, who are members of the National Council on Measurement in Evaluation (NCME) and have a vast experience writing and following psychometric standards for test development in business, industry, and education. One of the team members writes the psychometric standards for a national certification agency. These instruments were created by conducting an item-writing training for a panel of researchers and curriculum writers (3 psychometricians, 1 disability specialist, 1 lawyer, 1 former manager of an international Church school, 3 staff members). Each item that the committee gave full approval of was then beta-tested with over 300 seminary students (initial item pool over 700 items). Classical item analysis and distracter analysis was then conducted (p-values, point-biserial correlations, cronbach's alpha if item deleted, etc). Items were revised by the committee and then retested by over 300 seminary students. On this second analysis, a 1-parameter and 3-parameter model of Item-Response Theory was used and several interviews were conducted to confirm and further revise the instruments. Mean



equivalency methods were initially used on each form. The final steps were for top S&I administrators and the Church's Editing and Correlation Departments to approve the forms. Slight revisions were made.

For the student ratings of teachers, the testing team used several similar methods with an emphasis on exploratory and later confirmatory factor analysis using SPSS and m-plus. Category analysis and step-parameter analyses' were also performed using appropriate IRT methodology (Winder, 2013).

Two existing instruments were used in this study: The *Student Feedback Form* (Appendix A) measures students' perceptions of teachers' disposition of care and student attitude regarding LDS seminary. The *Basic Doctrine Assessment* (Appendix B) measures students' belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. This instrument was chosen over other existing instruments due to the nature of the research and questions guiding the data collection. As outlined in Chapter II, there are many dispositions and each college of education is engaged in determining which dispositions are most important based on individual goals and desired outcomes. Thus, each assessment focuses on those dispositions important to assess and understand based on the needs of the institution. Within S&I, the disposition of care has been determined to be of great value and as such an instrument was created to measure teacher dispositions of care. As the target population is LDS seminary students, and the questions guiding this research is to determine the relationship between teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine, the instrument created to assess teacher dispositions of care and assess student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine will be used. The following tables depict

the questions and reliability of both the *Student Feedback Form* and the BDA, and then I will describe the instruments in detail.

**Table 3**  
*Student Reported Perception of Teacher Dispositions of Care*

<b>Disposition</b>	<b>Question to Capture Disposition</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Care</b>	1. My teacher makes us feel comfortable talking to him/her.	<b>.933</b>
	2. My teacher shows sincere interest in what we are doing in our lives.	<b>.935</b>
	3. My teacher shows love and respect to all of us.	<b>.933</b>
	4. My teacher teaches in a way that uplifts us.	<b>.938</b>
	5. My teacher earns the trust of the class.	<b>.928</b>
	6. My teacher shows that he/she understands teenagers.	<b>.925</b>

**Table 4**  
*Student Attitude Concerning Seminary*

	<b>Question to Capture Student Attitude</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Student Response</b>	1. I try hard to regularly study my scriptures outside of class.	<b>.915</b>
	2. I work hard to get as much out of seminary as I can.	<b>.915</b>
	3. Seminary is important to me.	<b>.910</b>
	4. I want to learn from the scriptures.	<b>.921</b>
	5. I try hard to pay attention in class.	<b>.923</b>
	6. I have a positive attitude about seminary.	<b>.913</b>

**Table 5**

*Student Reported Outcomes of Belief, Understanding, and Application of LDS Doctrine.*

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Belief</b>	<b>#41-47 on <i>Basic Doctrine Assessment</i></b>	<b>.943</b>
<b>Understanding</b>	<b>#1-40 on <i>Basic Doctrine Assessment</i></b>	<b>.878</b>
<b>Application</b>	<b>#48-59 on <i>Basic Doctrine Assessment</i></b>	<b>.948</b>

#### Teachers' Disposition of Care

For the purposes of this study, the disposition of care follow NCATE's working definition of dispositions: "Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students" (NCATE, 2007). These verbal and non-verbal behaviors expressing attitudes, values, and beliefs specifically as it relates to the disposition of care reported by the students using the following questions as given in the *Student Feedback Form* (Appendix A).

1. My teacher makes us feel comfortable talking to him/her.
2. My teacher shows sincere interest in what we are doing in our lives.
3. My teacher shows love and respect to all of us.
4. My teacher teaches in a way that uplifts us.
5. My teacher earns the trust of the class.
6. My teacher shows that he/she understands teenagers.

The *Student Feedback Form* was developed by the LDS Church Office of Research (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS], 2011a). As with any instrument used to collect data, the LDS Church ensured the instrument was both valid and reliable. Validity refers to the degree to which “empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores or other modes of assessment” (Kane, 2001, p. 327). Kane argues that the interpretation of the scores from the assessment and the intended use, and relevance of the intended use, of those scores is a more accurate source of validity. To achieve strong validity the researcher should be able to outline opposing viewpoints to the intended use of test scores, and state why the proposed use is a more sound argument. Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999).

To ensure validity and reliability the LDS Church Office of Research placed emphasis on exploratory validation (a statistical method used to uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables), and later confirmatory validation (most commonly used in social research to measure if the construct is consistent with the researcher’s understanding of the nature of the construct), factor analysis using statistical software SPSS and m-plus (Gall et al., 2003). The reliability score using Cronbach’s Alpha is .941 (LDS, 2011a).

#### Student Attitude Concerning LDS Seminary

The second section of the *Student Feedback Form* was created to measure student attitude towards LDS seminary. Developed by the LDS Church Office of Research, this

section was also developed using the same validation and reliability measurements as described above. The Cronbach's Alpha score for student attitude is .929 (LDS, 2011a).

Student attitude towards LDS seminary was measured using the following questions.

- 1) I try hard to regularly study my scriptures outside of class.
- 2) I work hard to get as much out of seminary as I can.
- 3) Seminary is important to me.
- 4) I want to learn from the scriptures.
- 5) I try hard to pay attention in class.
- 6) I have a positive attitude about seminary.

#### Students' Belief, Understanding, and Application of LDS Doctrine

The *Basic Doctrine Assessment* (BDA) was used to measure students' belief, understanding, and application of LDS Doctrine. This instrument was developed by the LDS Church Office of Research (LDS, 2011b). The LDS Church Office of Research ensured the instrument was both valid and reliable by following empirically sound methods of validation and reliability testing.

Proposed use of test scores. Kane (2001) argues that validity is first based on use or interpretation of the assessment scores, not the scores themselves. The instruments created by S&I were beta tested by LDS seminary students, revised, and tested again. Students were then interviewed to determine whether the interpretation of the scores was reflective of the student's perceived interpretation. In each case, the students agreed that the test scores were reflective of the student's perceived interpretation.

Evaluation of consequences of test use. Kane (2001) also suggests that for an instrument to be valid the interpretation of scores must demonstrate that more good is done than harm. The results must justify the use of the instrument. Over the past two years, when the BDA is administered, S&I analyzes the data and then provides the analysis to the individual teachers, enabling them to have a clear focus on which areas they can center their attention to improve. Results from the instrument have demonstrated that students' ability to explain LDS doctrine improves by 10% from the beginning of the year to the end, and 4<sup>th</sup> year students score 15% higher than 1<sup>st</sup> year students on the understand scale within the BDA (LDS, 2011b). Similarly, LDS seminary teachers are able to observe in which areas their students need more instruction and focus. The BDA gives clear feedback on key elements to LDS seminary instruction such as habits of personal scripture study, sharing beliefs with friends, and Sabbath day observance.

Item-response theory. Additionally S&I conducted item-writing training for a panel of researchers and curriculum writers, including 3 psychometricians, 1 disability specialist, and other specialists. Each item the committee gave approval of was tested with over 300 LDS seminary students. Classical item analysis and distracter analysis was then conducted using p-values, point-biserial correlations, cronbach's alpha, etc. On the second analysis, S&I used a 1-parameter and 3-parameter model of Item-Response Theory and conducted several interviews to confirm and revise the instruments. Mean equivalency methods were initially used on each form. Finally, top S&I administrators and the LDS Church's Editing and Correlation Departments approved the forms (Winder, 2013).

### Belief, Understanding, and Application

Belief, understanding, and application survey items of LDS doctrine come from the *Basic Doctrine Assessment* (BDA) created by the LDS church. This instrument has been used to capture the beliefs, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine by LDS seminary students in the past. There has never been a study to understand how teacher dispositions of care correlate to students' self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine, thus the importance of this study. Because the BDA measures outcomes of belief, understanding, and application, each of these scales will be addressed to demonstrate what data are being collected in the instrument and the reliability of each separate scale administered in the instrument.

Belief. A significant aspect of S&I education is helping LDS seminary students believe LDS doctrine. The S&I handbook (2012) theorizes that LDS seminary students who believe the LDS doctrine are more apt to understand the doctrine and then be able to apply the doctrine in their lives. This application will increase spiritual experiences, and as explained in Chapter I increased spiritual experiences will theoretically lead to increased conversion, which ultimately is the purpose of religious education.

Rokeach (1968) describes beliefs as a variable along a central-peripheral dimension. The more central a belief, described as a core belief, the more it will resist change. Religious beliefs are among the strongest core beliefs.

Within the BDA, there are 7 questions that demonstrate belief in LDS doctrine. The LDS Church office of research has demonstrated a reliability coefficient of .943 on the belief questions. This coefficient demonstrates an excellent internal consistency on the belief questions within the BDA (LDS, 2010).

Understanding. When a LDS seminary student believes LDS doctrine, theoretically they are more apt to understand what the doctrine means. The purpose of S&I is to help LDS seminary students “understand and rely on the teachings and atonement of Jesus Christ” (S&I, 2012, p. 1). When a LDS seminary student understands LDS doctrine, it is assumed they will subsequently refer to the LDS doctrines and apply them in their lives (S&I, 2012).

Within the BDA, there are 40 questions that demonstrate an understanding of LDS doctrine. The LDS Church office of research has demonstrated a reliability coefficient of .878 on the belief questions. This coefficient demonstrates a good internal consistency on the belief questions within the BDA (LDS, 2010).

Application. As stated previously, the purpose of S&I is to help LDS seminary students “understand and rely on the teachings and atonement of Jesus Christ” (S&I, 2012, p. 1). Application will presumably help LDS seminary students rely on the atonement in their personal lives outside of the classroom, thus increasing conversion in the lives of the LDS seminary students (S&I, 2012).

Within the BDA, there are 12 questions that demonstrate an understanding of LDS doctrine. The LDS Church office of research has demonstrated a reliability coefficient of .948 on the belief questions. This coefficient demonstrates an excellent internal consistency on the belief questions within the BDA (LDS, 2010).

### **Analysis**

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between teacher dispositions of care as reported by LDS seminary students and student outcomes of



belief, understanding, and application. As such, the *Student Feedback Form* and the BDA was collected and analyzed to understand the relationship between the two assessments.

Using current statistical programs, the data collected from the *Student Feedback Form* and the BDA were compared to test for correlational relationships between the two assessments.

### **Data Collection**

To obtain necessary data concerning teacher dispositions and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine, students were administered a short 12 question *Student Feedback Form* (Appendix A) as well as the BDA (Appendix B) during the regular classroom period on a randomly chosen day. These surveys are given annually or bi-annually as part of the LDS seminary curriculum and thus the students are familiar with the procedure and process. Before administering the survey, each teacher gave basic instructions as outlined by the LDS Church research department (Appendix D) and the LDS seminary students had the classroom period to complete the assessments. Data were collected by class and sent to the researcher in an anonymous fashion.

## CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between LDS seminary teachers' dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application. There has been a consistent emphasis on teacher dispositions of care within S&I since 2003 when the *Teaching Emphasis* was released. Although some studies indicate the relationship between teacher dispositions and student in class success, such as factual memory recall, improved test scores, etc. (Claxton & Carr, 2004; Da Ros-Voseles, & Moss, 2007; L. E. Johnson, 2008; Notar, 2009; Obara, 2009; Wasicsko, 2007), no known study to date has gathered and analyzed data specific to teacher dispositions of care and the relationship this disposition has with student outcomes of understanding, belief, and application of the subject being studied here. Therefore, the objectives of this study were to obtain and analyze data specific to LDS seminary teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of understanding, belief, and application of LDS doctrine. Additionally, the relationship between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and outcomes of understanding, belief, and application were examined as well as the relationship between each of the factors of understanding, belief, and application.

The present chapter provides data analysis for each research question regarding the relationship between LDS seminary teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of understanding, belief, and application of LDS doctrine, the relationship between

student attitude towards seminary and student outcomes of understanding, belief, and application, as well as the relationship between the factors of understanding, belief, and application of LDS doctrine. First, evidence that the data collected were reliable will be presented, and descriptive statistics will be reported. Research questions for this study are then presented, followed by data analysis and findings of each research question.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

#### Reliability of Instruments

Each set of questions in the *Student Feedback Form* and the BDA were examined to ensure the reliability of the data collected for the sample used in this study. SPSS was used to compute the Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for each scale. A  $\alpha$  coefficient score over .7 is considered acceptable in research, and over .8 is very strong (Gall et al., 2003). As seen in Table 6, the reliability of each scale was very strong. There were six questions regarding student perception of teacher dispositions of care with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  .897. There were six questions regarding student attitude towards LDS seminary with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  .881. There were 40 questions to capture LDS seminary student understanding of LDS doctrine with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  .886. There were 7 questions regarding LDS seminary student belief of LDS doctrine with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  .812. Finally, there were 12 questions to capture LDS student application of LDS doctrine with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  .879. Table 6 demonstrates each data set with its Cronbach's  $\alpha$ .

**Table 6**  
*Data scales with Accompanying Cronbach's  $\alpha$*

<b>Data collected from LDS seminary Students</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
Student perception of teacher dispositions of care	.897
Student attitude regarding LDS seminary	.881
Understanding	.886
Belief	.812
Application	.879

### Descriptive Statistics

Given the scales were reliable and measuring the same underlying construct, questions for each scale were added together to produce a total score. Each scale was then measured to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between grade levels. There were no statistically significant differences ( $p = <.05$ ) by grade level for student attitude towards seminary (one-way ANOVA,  $F(3, 797) = 1.204, p = .307$ ), student self-reported belief in LDS doctrine (one-way ANOVA,  $F(3, 797) = 1.822, p = .142$ ), nor student self-reported application of LDS doctrine (one-way ANOVA,  $F(3, 797) = .067, p = .977$ ). There were statistically significant differences ( $p = <.05$ ) by grade level for student perception of teacher dispositions of care (one-way ANOVA,  $F(3, 797) = 3.709, p = .011$ ) and student self-reported understanding of LDS doctrine (one-way ANOVA,  $F(3, 797) = 39.161, p = .00$ ). The mean and standard deviation of each scale is reported in Table 7. A post-hoc Tukey HSD test indicated that 11<sup>th</sup> grade LDS seminary students had a higher student perception of teacher dispositions of care score than all other grades and a significantly ( $p = <.05$ ) higher student perception of teacher dispositions of care score than 12<sup>th</sup> grade LDS seminary students. The post-

hoc Tukey HSD test also indicated that each grade level had a significantly ( $p = <.05$ ) higher understanding score than the grades beneath it. Both results are shown in Table 8.

**Table 7**

*Analyses of Mean Performance of each Scale across Grade Level*

<b>Student Perception of Teacher Dispositions of Care*</b>	<b>Mean (Standard deviation)</b>
Overall	9.06 (3.325)
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	9.34 (3.296)
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	8.84 (3.256)
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	9.53 (3.77)
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	8.52 (2.821)
<b>Student Attitude towards Seminary</b>	<b>Mean (Standard Deviation)</b>
Overall	10.49 (3.652)
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	10.50 (3.35)
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	10.35 (3.676)
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	10.88 (3.772)
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	10.22 (3.802)
<b>Student Understanding of LDS Doctrine**</b>	<b>Mean (Standard Deviation)</b>
Overall	28.22 (7.533)
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	24.59 (7.139)
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	27.23 (7.434)
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	29.55 (7.218)
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	31.98 (6.234)
<b>Student Belief of LDS Doctrine</b>	<b>Mean (Standard Deviation)</b>
Overall	9.78 (4.292)
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	10.05 (4.128)
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	9.96 (4.362)

11 <sup>th</sup> grade	9.9 (4.94)
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	9.14 (3.55)
<b>Student Application of LDS Doctrine</b>	<b>Mean (Standard Deviation)</b>
Overall	23.43 (7.414)
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	23.58 (7.273)
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	23.47 (8.325)
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	23.39 (6.579)
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	23.25 (7.311)

Note. \* indicates the correlation was significant at the .05 level.

\*\* indicates the correlation was significant at the .01 level.

**Table 8**

*Tukey HSD Results of Student Perception of Teacher Dispositions of Care by Grade*

Grade	Comparison Group Grade	Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% <sup>a</sup> CI	
					LL	UL
11	9	.189	.332	.941	-.67	1.04
	10	.685	.325	.152	-.15	1.52
	12	1.004	.340	.017*	.13	1.88

**Table 9**

*Tukey HSD Results of Student Self-reported Understanding of LDS Doctrine by Grade*

Grade	Comparison Group Grade	Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% <sup>a</sup> CI	
					LL	UL
9	10	-2.639	.687	.001*	4.41	-.87

	11	-4.962	.706	.000*	-	-3.14
					6.78	
	12	-7.395	.718	.000*	-	-5.55
					9.24	

Note. \*  $p < .05$

<sup>a</sup>CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit

### Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between student perceptions of teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in S&I?
2. What is the relationship between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in S&I?
3. What is the relationship between the factors of student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine?

### Research Question #1

The first research question to be examined from the gathered data was: What is the relationship between student perceptions of teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in S&I? The statistical method used to examine this relationship, as well as the relationships of question #2 and #3, was a two-tailed Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). The Pearson

correlation coefficient determines the direction and magnitude of a relationship between two variables that yield continuous scores (Gall et al., 2003).

### Correlations Across All Students

There were a total of 801 surveys collected and analyzed to determine the Pearson correlation coefficient. Of the 4 high school grades surveyed, 202 (25%) were in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 219 (28%) were in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 196 (24%) were in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 184 (23%) were in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The aggregate Pearson correlation coefficient between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine indicated a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive relationship for all three scales, obtaining a Pearson  $r = .188$  for understanding,  $r = .434$  for belief, and  $r = .472$  for application of LDS doctrine. The explained variance, or coefficient of determination, was  $r^2 = .035$  for understanding, or in other words, that student perceived teacher dispositions of care explained 3.5% of the variance in student self-reported outcomes of understanding LDS doctrine. The explained variance for belief was  $r^2 = .19$ , teacher dispositions of care explained 19% of the variance in student self-reported belief in LDS doctrine. The explained variance for application was  $r^2 = .223$ , or that 22% of the variance regarding student self-reported application of LDS doctrine is explained by student perceived disposition of care.

### Correlations by Grade

Examining the Pearson correlation coefficient by grade level outlines a clearer description of the relationship between the various scales. Further correlations by grade



level also indicated statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) results for all factors in all grade levels except for understanding. Interestingly, for those in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, there was no statistically significant correlation between understanding and student perceived disposition of care, and in the upper grades, there was a statistically significant negative correlation between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported understanding of LDS doctrine, as shown in Table 10.

When examined by grade level, the relationships between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine give a very different set of correlation scores. The strongest Pearson correlation coefficient for belief was with 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, with a Pearson  $r = .304$ . Now student perceived teacher dispositions of care explains only 9% of the variance in student self-reported belief of LDS doctrine. Though still a strong relationship, it is significantly less than the aggregate score. 10<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .298$  ( $r^2 = .09$ ), 11<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .206$  ( $r^2 = .04$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .260$  ( $r^2 = .07$ ). All grades retained a statistically significant **positive** relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief in LDS doctrine.

Similarly, the relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported application of LDS doctrine looks very different when examined by grade level. The strongest relationship existed with 10<sup>th</sup> grade students, with a Pearson  $r = .316$ . 10% of the variance within student self-reported application of LDS doctrine is explained by student perceived disposition of care. While this is considered a large percentage within educational research (Gall et al., 2003), it is 12 %

less than the aggregate score. 9<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .207$  ( $r^2 = .04$ ), 11<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .268$  ( $r^2 = .07$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .246$  ( $r^2 = .06$ ). Again each grade level maintained a statistically significant **positive** relationship between student perceived disposition of care and student self-reported application of LDS doctrine.

The relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported understanding of LDS doctrine by grade level reveals what may be an important difference when compared with the aggregate score. As mentioned, the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students had no statistically significant relationship, but grades 10, 11, and 12 all scored a **negative** relationship. 10<sup>th</sup> grade students scored a Pearson  $r = -.242$  ( $r^2 = .06$ ), 11<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.213$  ( $r^2 = .04$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.196$  ( $r^2 = .038$ ). Seemingly, the more a student perceives their teacher cares, the less likely they will understand the doctrine taught. This will be probed in depth in the discussion section.

**Table 10**

*Correlation of Student Perceived Teacher Dispositions of Care and Student Self-Reported Belief, Understanding, and Application of LDS Doctrine Collectively and by Grade Level.*

Belief	Pearson correlation coefficient
All grade levels	.434*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	.304*
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	.298*
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	.206*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	.260*

Understanding	Pearson correlation coefficient
All grade levels	.188*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.128
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.242*

11 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.213*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.196*

Application	Pearson correlation coefficient
All grade levels	.472*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	.207*
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	.316*
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	.268*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	.246*

Note. \* indicates the correlation was significant at the .05 level.

### Correlation Conclusions

Based on the statistically significant ( $p < .01$ , and  $p < .05$ ) result of the Pearson correlation coefficient between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, and application of LDS doctrine. When looking at an aggregate, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported understanding of LDS doctrine. When examined by grade level, there is a statistically **negative** correlation in all grades but the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, which did not have a statistically significant relationship, between these two scales.

### **Research Question #2**

The second research question to be examined from the gathered data was: What is the relationship between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in S&I?

The Pearson correlation coefficient between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine indicated a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive relationship for all three factors, obtaining a Pearson  $r = .137$  for understanding,  $r = .555$  for belief, and  $r = .728$  for application of LDS doctrine. The explained variance, or coefficient of determination, was  $r^2 = .04$  for understanding, or in other words, that student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary explained 4% of the variance in student self-reported outcomes of understanding LDS doctrine. The explained variance for belief was  $r^2 = .31$ , student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary explained 31% of the variance in student self-reported belief in LDS doctrine. The explained variance for application was  $r^2 = .53$ , or that 53% of the variance regarding student self-reported application of LDS doctrine is explained by student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary. Further correlations by grade level also indicated statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) results for all factors in all grade levels as shown in Table 11.

As previously noted, when separated by grade the relationships become weaker with one exception. 12<sup>th</sup> grade students had a slightly stronger relationship between belief and student attitude towards seminary when examined individually, obtaining a Pearson  $r = .556$  ( $r^2 = .3$ ), indicating that 30% of the variance for belief in LDS doctrine is explained by student attitude towards seminary for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, when separated, obtained a Pearson  $r = .362$  ( $r^2 = .13$ ), 10<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .345$  ( $r^2 = .12$ ), 11<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .453$  ( $r^2 = .21$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have already been described.

The relationship between student self-reported understanding of LDS doctrine and student attitude towards seminary changes from slightly positive to slightly negative when examined by grade level. 9<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.201$  ( $r^2 = .04$ ), 10<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.401$  ( $r^2 = .16$ ), 11<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.342$  ( $r^2 = .11$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.334$  ( $r^2 = .11$ ), indicating the more positive an attitude a student has towards LDS seminary, the less likely they will understand the doctrine taught.

It is interesting to note that the Pearson correlation coefficient between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary indicated a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive relationship, obtaining a Pearson  $r = .640$ . When examined by grade level, the relationship remains strong, the lowest score coming from 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, obtaining a Pearson  $r = .449$  ( $r^2 = .22$ ). It is not known if increased student perception of teacher care increases student attitude toward LDS seminary or if students' positive attitude towards LDS seminary positively impacts their perceptions of their teachers' dispositions of care (as correlation does not indicate causal relationships (Gall et al., 2003)). However, when examining the aggregate score, the explained variance for student attitude toward LDS seminary was  $r^2 = .41$ , or that 41% of the variance for student attitude toward LDS seminary is explained by student perceived teacher dispositions of care (see Table 12).

**Table 11**

*Correlation of Student Self-Reported Attitude towards LDS Seminary and Student Self-Reported Belief, Understanding, and Application of LDS Doctrine Collectively and by Grade Level.*

Belief	Pearson correlation coefficient
All grade levels	.555*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	.362*

10 <sup>th</sup> grade	.345*
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	.453*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	.556*

Understanding	Pearson correlation coefficient
All grade levels	.137*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.201*
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.401*
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.342*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	-.334*

Application	Pearson correlation coefficient
All grade levels	.728*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	.545*
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	.607*
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	.642*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	.675*

Note. \* indicates the correlation was significant at the .01 level.

**Table 12**

*Relationship of Student Perceived Teacher Dispositions of Care and Student Attitude Towards LDS Seminary Collectively and by Grade Level.*

Grade Level	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
All grade levels	.640*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	.533*
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	.574*
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	.461*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	.449*

Note. \* indicates the correlation was significant at the .01 level.

### Correlation Conclusions

Based on the statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) result of the Pearson correlation coefficient between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported belief and application of LDS doctrine. When looking at an aggregate, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported understanding of LDS doctrine. When examined by grade level, there is a statistically significant **negative** correlation between these two scales.

### **Research Question #3**

The third research question to be examined from the gathered data was: What is the relationship between the scales of student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine?

When examining aggregate scores, the Pearson correlation coefficient between student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine indicated a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive relationship between understanding and application, and belief and application. When looking at an aggregate score, there was a statistically significant relationship at  $p < .05$  between understanding and belief.

Analysis demonstrated a Pearson  $r = .173$  ( $r^2 = .03$ ) for understanding and application when examined as an aggregate, and when analyzed by grade level 9<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.297$  ( $r^2 = .09$ ), 10<sup>th</sup> grades students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.342$  ( $r^2 = .11$ ), 11<sup>th</sup> grades students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.334$  ( $r^2 = .11$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup>

grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.254$  ( $r^2 = .06$ ). This change—from a statistically significant relationship when examined as an aggregate to statistically negative relationships when examined by grade level—can be explained by the slight increase in the relationship score between understanding and application as students increase grade level.

Belief and application received an aggregate Pearson  $r = .633$  ( $r^2 = .4$ ), 9<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .495$  ( $r^2 = .25$ ), 10<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .522$  ( $r^2 = .27$ ), 11<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .505$  ( $r^2 = .26$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = .601$  ( $r^2 = .36$ ). Each grade demonstrates a strong statistically positive relationship between belief and application of LDS doctrine.

The relationship between belief and understanding of LDS doctrine demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship when examined as an aggregate, receiving a Pearson  $r = .083$  ( $r^2 = .007$ ). When examined by grade level, each grade obtained a statistically negative correlation coefficient as shown in Table 12, 13, and 14. 9<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.394$  ( $r^2 = .16$ ), 10<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.218$  ( $r^2 = .05$ ), 11 grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.241$  ( $r^2 = .06$ ), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students obtained a Pearson  $r = -.303$  ( $r^2 = .09$ ). As discussed previously, this change from a positive to negative correlation coefficients can be explained by the increase in scores by grade level. Each grade level individually has a negative relationship between understanding and belief, but each grade level also has a higher score than the grades below, giving an overall positive relationship.

When separated by grade, the relationships remain statistically significant. Understanding becomes a negative correlation between both belief and application. It



appears that when students believe and apply the doctrine taught in LDS seminary, they are less likely to understand the doctrine.

**Table 13**

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Student Self-Reported Belief and Understanding of LDS Doctrine*

Grade Level	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
All Grades	.083**
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.394**
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.218**
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.241**
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.303**

**Table 14**

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Student Self-Reported Belief and Application of LDS Doctrine*

Grade Level	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
All Grades	.633*
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	.495*
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	.522*
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	.505*
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	.601*

**Table 15**

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Student Self-Reported Understanding and Application of LDS Doctrine*

Grade Level	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
All Grades	.173*
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.297*
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.342*
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.334*
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	-.254*

Note. \* indicates the correlation was significant at the .01 level.

Note. \*\* indicates the correlation was significant at the .05 level.

### Correlation Conclusions

Based on the statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) result of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the three factors of student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the three factors of student self-reported belief, and application of LDS doctrine. There is a statistically significant **negative** correlation between understanding and belief, and understanding and application when disaggregated by grade level.

## CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings, and share conclusions and implications of the present study examining the relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in the LDS seminary release-time setting. First, I will restate the original questions. Next, specific and practical implications for LDS seminary teachers and administrators are explored and discussed. Lastly, the limitations of and suggestions for further research from the findings of the present study are outlined, followed by a final summary conclusion regarding the relationship between LDS seminary student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine.

### **Research Findings and Conclusions**

Three primary questions guided this study.

1. What is the relationship between students' perception of teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS Doctrine as taught in S&I?
2. What is the relationship between student self-reported attitude towards LDS seminary and student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine as taught in S&I?

3. What is the relationship between the factors of student self-reported belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine?

As was demonstrated in the analysis of data, there is a strong positive correlation in each relationship, except for those concerning understanding of LDS doctrine. When examined as an aggregate score, understanding also demonstrated a positive relationship with each factor. When examined by grade level, understanding displayed a **negative** relationship with **every other** factor.

### **Practical Implications**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the relationships between student perceived teacher dispositions of care, student attitude towards LDS seminary, and LDS seminary student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application, the following practical implications are concluded.

#### The Way Students Perceive Their Teacher Matters

This first implication cannot be understated. One of the primary purposes of this study was to ascertain whether a relationship existed between the two variables of student perceived disposition of care and student application. Since 2003, the emphasis on teacher dispositions of care by LDS seminary administration has been repeated time and time again and this study indicates there is merit to this emphasis. It cannot be determined with the present study whether student perceived teacher dispositions of care causes increased student outcomes of belief, and application of LDS doctrine. I can state with confidence that there is a statistically significant relationship between perceived

teacher dispositions of care and belief and application of LDS doctrine within the Idaho West Area of S&I.

Student perception of teacher dispositions of care explained 41% of student attitude towards seminary when examined as an aggregate score of all four grades. Student attitude towards seminary explained 53% of student application of LDS doctrine and 31% of student belief of LDS doctrine when examined as an aggregate of all grades. Although the relationship weakened when examined by grade level, the positive correlation was still significant, as discussed in the analysis of data. This is evidence that student perception of teacher dispositions of care may influence student belief and application of LDS doctrine.

There is no current research examining the relationship between student perceived disposition of care and student outcomes of belief and application. This study is a new and different approach to understanding dispositions. Collectively, the term disposition refers to attitudes, traits, characteristics, beliefs, and virtues (Diez, 2007b; Wasicsko, 2007). These dispositions fall into different groupings or camps, such as intellect, culture, and moral (Perkins et al., 2000; Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000; Schussler et al., 2008). Sockett (2006) labeled dispositions as those dealing with character (e.g., integrity and courage), intellect (e.g., consistency and fairness), and caring (e.g., receptivity and building trust).

To be accredited by NCATE (2007), teachers must demonstrate competency in knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Knowledge is loosely defined as information the teacher has collected, and skills are the ability to use that knowledge (Perkins et al., 2000; Sockett, 2009). Dispositions have been used to understand why, when, and how teachers

apply their skills in certain situations (Almerico et al., 2011; Diez, 2007b; Perkins et al., 2000). Research suggests that teacher dispositions as a whole, which encompasses any aspect not under the domain of knowledge and skills, may influence student outcomes in positive cognitive ways, such as improved test scores and factual memory recall (Claxton & Carr, 2004; Da Ros-Voseles, Moss, 2007; L. E. Johnson, 2008; Notar et al., 2009; Obara, 2009; Rivkin et al., 2001; Wasicsko, 2007). This study supports the claim that if teachers know **when** to employ their skills regarding demonstrations of care, then students might perceive their teacher as caring, which may increase student belief and application of the subject taught. If a purpose of religious education is to assist students in believing and using what they learn (S&I, 2012), then student perception of teacher dispositions of care may be an important part of the education process.

This study took one small piece of the disposition argument, the disposition of care as perceived by students, to better understand the role disposition plays in the development of students, specifically understanding, belief, and application. This study implies that the specific disposition of teacher care does have a positive relationship with belief and application. Contrary to previous research, this study indicates that some dispositions, specifically that of care as perceived by students, may not strengthen cognitive outcomes but may actually lead to a decrease of cognitive outcomes such as understanding the material taught. In this study, student understanding of LDS doctrine had a negative relationship to student perceived teacher dispositions of care. The discussion on possible explanations of this negative relationship will take place in the sections below.

This study cannot determine causality, as such it may be that when students are applying LDS doctrine they naturally enjoy the seminary experience more and see their teacher in a positive caring light. However, the converse is more plausible that when students perceive their teacher as caring they are more likely to view seminary in a positive light and be more willing to apply the doctrine being taught. More plausible because students who are naturally applying LDS doctrine may view seminary in a positive light, but if their teacher is harsh or cruel or any other negative disposition, those same students desire and ability to apply the doctrine is not likely to change their perception of a harsh teacher. Whereas those who perceive their teacher as caring may naturally feel comfortable in the seminary setting and have strengthened positive attitudes towards seminary. This positive attitude may lead to increased focus and desire to learn, which might strengthen the desire to live what is taught. Hence the more plausible explanation of the relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student application and belief of LDS doctrine is that the disposition is more likely to lead to application, rather than application leading to increased perception of care.

I see this when informing the students there will be a substitute teacher. Within S&I, there is no set list of substitutes that are on call and available when needing a substitute. The S&I teachers are required to find and invite substitutes to take the place of the teacher, but there are strong restrictions on who may teach in the seminary classroom. This leads to a very short list of available substitute teachers. Hence, upon informing students, immediately there are requests for a certain substitute. If the students who are naturally applying the gospel could have any teacher and their belief and application stayed the same, then it is not likely they would be interested in who would

be the substitute, as any would suffice. Also, if those students had a teacher they didn't like, or perceived as being uncaring, then they would bring that out on the BDA and instead of a strong positive correlation it is more likely there would be a negative correlation or no correlation.

It seems more likely that those students who are applying the doctrine would come to the LDS seminary setting with high expectations of a teacher. If those expectations were not met it seems as though it would be more likely those students would give their teacher low scores on disposition of care. Whereas if students come and perceive their teacher as caring, there might be more of an effort to follow what that teacher expresses by word and action, leading to increased application of LDS doctrine. This, by implication, means that if students do not see their teacher as caring, then they could have a negative attitude towards seminary and be less likely to apply the doctrine being taught.

It seems most teachers, parents, and LDS church leadership would be interested in this finding. If seminary teachers' disposition of care could affect the way students are believing and applying the doctrine taught, then the administration of the BDA and/or the *Student Feedback Form* could inform teachers and administration of the possible effects students' perception is having on the classroom.

S&I administrators have made the claim that the way students perceive their teacher matters for many years, especially since the release of the *Teaching Emphasis* in 2003. The S&I handbook (S&I, 2012) claims that the way a teacher lives and acts will increase or decrease the effectiveness of that teacher's ability to assist students in their desire to live the doctrine as taught in the seminary program. Holland (S&I, 2012) stated:



“If those [students] are unresponsive, maybe you can’t teach them yet, but you can love them. And if you love them today, maybe you can teach tomorrow” (p. 19). This study indicates that if students perceive their teacher as caring, such as feeling loved, they are also likely to be applying the doctrine taught. Although further research is required to determine causality, there appears to be some merit to the claims of S&I administration as demonstrated by the results of this study.

### The Effect of Students’ Progression through Seminary

The relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student attitude towards seminary remained fairly constant throughout all 4 grade levels as shown in Table 16. However, the relationship between student attitude towards seminary and student application of LDS doctrine consistently increased as student grade level increased as was demonstrated in Table 8.

**Table 16**

*Relationship of Student Perceived Teacher Dispositions of Care and Student Attitude Towards LDS Seminary Collectively and by Grade Level*

Grade Level	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
All grade levels	.640*
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	.533*
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	.574*
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	.461*
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	.449*

Note. \* indicates the correlation was significant at the .01 level.

It is possible that as students increase in grade level, they also increase in maturity and natural ability and desire to apply the doctrines taught. However, neither belief of LDS doctrine nor understanding of LDS doctrine had a similar increase by grade level when compared with student attitude towards seminary. This suggests that as students progress through the seminary program, their desires to apply the doctrine increases. This increase could be linked to repeated exposure to the doctrines taught in seminary (Saville, 2011). Students apparently perceived teacher dispositions of care similarly throughout all 4 years of seminary attendance, and their beliefs remain constant, but their level of application increases.

LDS doctrine implies that those who apply the doctrine will gain a strengthened desire to continue to apply it in their lives (LDS, 1981). The increased relationship between student attitude towards seminary and application of LDS doctrine by grade may support this philosophy. As students attend seminary each year, they are continually invited to apply the doctrines taught. As students take that invitation and see the results in their lives, they may be more willing to accept the next invitation given in seminary. As this pattern continues, it would follow that there would be an increase level of application by grade level by students enrolled in LDS seminary.

It may be that as students increased in grade level, they become more familiar with what it means to apply doctrine and more confident in their own ability (Saville, 2011). As was previously discussed, there was a strong increase in understanding doctrine as students increased in grade level. Ninth grade students who read the question about praying sincerely, or correctly observing the law of the fast, may be applying these

doctrines in their lives, but they might not fully understand what it means and give themselves a lower score than they actually merit.

It is suggested that further research take place to learn whether first year seminary students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade have a similar higher relationship to student attitude towards seminary as fourth year seminary students. If the relationship is equal between these two factors, then it suggests that with age comes a stronger ability and desire to apply the doctrines taught in LDS seminary, or perhaps increased understanding of the doctrine and confidence in their ability to apply the doctrine. If the relationship is dissimilar, there may be evidence that those students who begin seminary in the first available year (9<sup>th</sup> grade) and continue throughout their high school years will have increased the likelihood of their personal application of LDS doctrine.

Although there is already a strong tradition of promoting student enrollment of seminary in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year and continuing through, this information could be useful in demonstrating why it is important to do so. Such a demonstration may benefit those students and parents who are struggling with the decision of whether or not to take seminary during the first years of high school.

#### The Counterintuitive Findings Related to the Phenomenon of Understanding

This section will address the potential factors that explain the counterintuitive findings regarding the statistically significant **negative** relationship between understanding and every other factor measured. Firstly, a brief synopsis of S&I leaderships' current theory and theology will be addressed. Secondly, a reminder that this study only studied the relationship between one disposition: care. Thirdly, the potential factor of wording within the BDA will be addressed. Fourthly, a discussion on

the possibility that the BDA is measuring rapport and how that may affect the understanding/student perception of care relationship. Fifthly, the limiting factor of time restraints will be discussed as well as the lack of student grade attached to the assessments. Sixthly, the difference in wording between the understanding section and the belief and application section on the BDA will be discussed. Seventhly, the idea that there may be a negative correlation coefficient between student understanding and student perception of teacher dispositions of care may exist, followed by a discussion regarding other sources of LDS doctrinal understanding. Finally, a discussion on the possible factor of teacher focus on at-risk students will be presented.

The results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at a  $p < .01$  indicated that LDS seminary students increased in understanding of LDS doctrine as they aged and increased grade level. This increase may have caused that the overall Pearson correlation coefficient ( $p$ ) between understanding and each other variable demonstrated a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) slight positive correlation. However, when taken individually by grade level, there was a statistically significant negative correlation between each variable and understanding with the exception of student perception of teacher dispositions of care, which had no statistically significant relationship.

S&I administration have long taught that once a doctrine is understood, it can be more readily applied (S&I, 2012). Current research on disposition also makes the claim that teachers with positive dispositions may assist students in learning outcomes such as understanding the subject being taught. In this instance, understanding being defined as increased test scores and factual memory recall (Rivkin et al., 2001). Although this study cannot determine causality, it does indicate that understanding is related to application

and belief, but related in a statistically negative relationship! It is possible that factors such as test anxiety, time constraints, wording within the assessment, or any other limitation may have led to difficulty in the understanding portion of the assessment (Ackerman & Kanfer, 2009). It is also important to remember that this study looked at only one aspect of dispositions: teacher care as perceived by students. It may be that student perceived teacher of care has a negative relationship with student understanding, but other dispositions, such as dispositions of intellect and character (Sockett, 2009) lead to the increased cognitive outcomes other research has demonstrated.

One potential limitation to the study causing the statistically negative correlation could be the wording within the BDA assessment. It is possible that the current framework and wording of the BDA may not assess what it was designed to assess. For example, many of the questions ask LDS seminary students to take a passage of scripture and interpret the meaning from the passage of scripture in order to answer a factual question about LDS doctrine. It may be that the negative correlation found in this study is a result of difficulty in understanding the wording of scriptural passages and not a lack of understanding of LDS doctrine.

As an illustration of this point, question 19 of the BDA currently states:

19. “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). In this scripture, we learn that Heavenly Father.

- a. wants us to praise one another
- b. will give eternal life to all of His children
- c. desires that His children become like Him after this life
- d. has already chosen those who will inherit eternal life
- e. I don't know

The answer to this question is not stated in the scripture passage itself, but rather the student is required to know and understand specific terms such as immortality, eternal life, and glory, and then apply them to LDS specific doctrine. As such, it may be understanding the scriptural language that has a negative correlation to belief, application, perception of teacher care, and student attitude towards LDS seminary and not understanding doctrine.

It may also be that the students understand the doctrine, but the caring scales of the BDA are measuring teacher rapport. Research indicates that teachers with a high level of student-teacher rapport generally create classroom environments where students feel welcome and safe (Frisby & Martin, 2010). What if a teacher who is really focused on teaching doctrine, wastes little class time, loves their students enough to really push them cognitively into the scriptures and even spends more time in the scriptures than most teachers, somehow has lower teacher rapport scores but higher understanding scores? Conversely, what if a teacher who spends 15-20 minutes a day “talking” to students before they get going, teaches fluff and puff analogies that are fun to listen to for a teenager, but spends little time pushing the students to be in the scriptures and really understand them, has higher teacher rapport scores and lower understanding scores? Either situation could cause a negative statistically significant relationship between understanding LDS doctrine and student perception of teacher dispositions of care and attitude towards seminary.

The previous possibility seems unlikely as understanding demonstrated a statistically negative correlation with every other factor analyzed. It is difficult to justify that a teacher who focuses on building rapport and excluding teaching much of the

doctrine would have success in building student application of that doctrine. Hence, if a teacher built strong rapport-which leads to decreased understanding - then it seems more likely that there would also be decreased application and belief. The opposite is true, increased teacher rapport has a strong relationship with belief and application.

Another limiting factor in the relationship between student understanding and the other analyzed scales is the time restraints put on the students while taking the assessment (Bridgeman, McBride, Monaghan, & Educational Testing Service, 2004). A typical release-time LDS seminary class is from 50 minutes to 80 minutes. Within that time frame, students were asked to complete all 60 questions outlined in the assessment instrument as well as complete the *Student Feedback Form*. The belief and application sections of the assessment are straightforward questions and simple to answer whereas the understanding section was much longer and each question required more reading and thoughtfulness to answer.

This assessment was not a part of the student's grade, meaning there was no negative consequence for right or wrong answers. Each question had an optional answer of "I Don't Know," and while this option may have been chosen because of a true lack of understanding, students may have chosen this option more often to save time and move on rather than put in the effort to try and understand the question (Porter, Whitcomb, & Weitzer, 2004). It may be helpful for future editions of the BDA to have fewer questions, or to train S&I educators to plan on administering the BDA over two class sessions rather than one.

Another possibility is that the questions of belief and application asked in the assessment instrument are not related to the questions asked in the understanding section

of the assessment instrument, or at least the wording of the questions as it now relates to the three sections. The belief portion asks questions pertaining to student's belief in LDS doctrine such as modern day prophets, veracity of scripture, and Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. The application portion asks questions dealing with items such as students' efforts at prayer, Sabbath observance, and personal study of the scriptures. The belief and application sections of the BDA use language that is modern and casual. Within the understanding section, the questions deal with interpreting scripture and understanding a wide selection of LDS doctrine. It may be that students do not see the relationship between the three scales because the language used does not relate (Kobeleva, 2012).

This suggests the possibility that LDS seminary educators and individuals could improve their ability to read and understand the language of scripture. One of the very basic purposes of the seminary program is to assist students in reading from the scriptures personally and as a family, understanding the content and context of the scripture, and being able to teach what they learn to others (S&I, 2012). If students are having difficulty understanding the language of the scriptures, then it may be a worthwhile pursuit for teachers of scripture to better develop the ability to assist students in understanding.

The current handbook (S&I, 2012) gives much direction and guidance on how to assist students in learning and understanding scriptural language. It is suggested that further research be conducted to determine whether teachers are using the resources given them and what results are being seen from them.



It may be there is no relationship between understanding doctrine and believing or applying doctrine. Savasci-Acikalin (2009) argues that it is belief that leads to action, or application. Rokeach (1968) also claims that belief is a stronger tie to application than knowledge or understanding. With this argument, understanding could have a statistically negative relationship with belief and application, and belief and application would have a statistically positive relationship.

It may be that students are gaining their understanding from sources other than the scriptures: such as parents, church meetings and teachers, seminary instructors, etc... If this is the case, then LDS seminary students may have a difficult time understanding doctrine on their own, but are able to recognize their beliefs and how they are applying those beliefs in their life. This also might explain the negative relationship between understanding LDS doctrine and every other scale analyzed in this research.

Another potential factor may stem from the old adage “the squeaky wheel gets the grease.” Seminary teachers are taught: “Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved” (S&I, 2012, p. 18). It may be easy for a teacher to demonstrate love, or care, in ways students can perceive when those students reciprocate the feeling. It seems the students who are difficult to handle might require more effort to reach out to and demonstrate care, but this extra effort may create stronger feelings of perceived care from the student towards the teacher (NEA, 2013). It is possible that the students who struggle the most, and perhaps have the most difficulty understanding, are the same students who have the strongest perception of teacher dispositions of care. This relationship could lead to a negative correlation coefficient between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported understanding of LDS doctrine.

It can also be argued that an important reason for desiring students to understand doctrine is simply so that the population within the LDS church understands the doctrine of the church as set forth in the scriptures. Whether or not there is an immediate relationship to belief and application may not be as important as simply having a well educated church membership. This leads to the next claim.

#### There Is Room for Improvement in Understanding Doctrine

The objective of religious education as currently stated by S&I administration is to help youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and atonement of Jesus Christ (S&I, 2012). Additionally, S&I administration has emphasized the role of seminary educators disposition of care as being fundamentally linked to student success in understanding, believing, and applying LDS doctrine. As noted previously, Maxwell made this assertion:

Each of you realizes, long since, that you teach what you are . . . . Your traits will be more remembered, compositely, than a particular truth in a particular lesson. . . . For if our discipleship is serious, it will show, and it will be remembered. Such perspectives about how you will be remembered, plus your personal righteousness, will permit you to make a genuine contribution to the lives of your students. (S&I, 2012, p. 3)

It is assumed that the genuine contribution made in the lives of students is an increase of belief, understanding, and application of the doctrine.

As demonstrated in the first implication, there appears to be some success at achieving the “rely” portion of the objective through perceived teacher dispositions of care. There is a strong positive correlation between student perception of teacher dispositions of care and student belief and application of LDS doctrine, including the

application revolving around the atonement of Christ. Understanding, however, appears to have a negative statistical relationship to teacher dispositions of care.

S&I administration consistently emphasizes the importance of assisting the students of LDS seminary to understand the doctrines of the LDS church. The following quotes all come from the official S&I handbook on teaching and learning (S&I, 2012).

- ...doctrines and principles are taught in a way that leads to understanding and edification. (p. 21)
- Understand the context and content of the scriptures and the words of the prophets. (p. 21)
- Do students clearly understand the principles being taught? (p. 23)
- ...understand the scriptures, and discover and apply gospel doctrines and principles in their lives. (p. 31)
- Once a doctrine or principle is identified and understood, it can be more readily applied. (p. 39)

As stated previously, there may not be any issue with student understanding of LDS doctrine, but it may be an issue of time, wording, or survey fatigue. Just as likely is the possibility that it is genuine struggle for LDS seminary students to understand LDS doctrine.

Students may have scored high on understanding but low on belief and application. If this is the case, that students believe in and apply the doctrines of the LDS church, which is the primary goal of religious education, why is there a concern with understanding? Perhaps the answer is that S&I educators are concerned with

understanding because the administration has emphasized the importance of understanding as a primary objective in religious education as demonstrated by the previous quotes.

This scenario seems unlikely in that understanding had a statistically significant negative relationship with every scale measured. It appears reasonable that LDS seminary students are struggling with understanding the LDS doctrine as stated in scripture. Rokeach (1968) suggests that action is more likely tied to belief than to understanding. This data seems to agree as the relationship between belief and application were among the strongest emerging from the data. It is possible that LDS seminary students may struggle with understanding the doctrine as set forth in scripture, but have strong beliefs of the doctrine as taught by parents, church leaders, seminary teachers, etc... and live what they believe even if they don't entirely understand it.

Currently S&I administration is clear that understanding is a crucial element in religious education. Further research is needed to better outline the role of understanding in belief and application of LDS doctrine.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The findings of the present research study are limited in several aspects, which suggest the need for caution in applying the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. These limitations do give a foundation for further research to be conducted related to teacher dispositions and student outcomes. Based on these limitations, the following recommendations for future research are suggested by the researcher as extensions of the present study.

### Replicate the Present Study in Other LDS Seminary and Institute Settings

The findings of the present study are limited to the population of LDS release-time seminary students in the Idaho West S&I area. Although the sample from this population was relatively large and diverse, the sample represents only 5% of the target population of all release-time seminary students. Replicating this study in other LDS release-time seminary in other parts of the country and world to validate the present study's conclusions is recommended. Furthermore, over two-thirds of all LDS seminary students do not participate in release-time seminary settings (S&I, 2013) but are enrolled in daily seminary, early-morning or home study, classes taught by a volunteer from the local area. It is strongly recommended that the methods of the present study be implemented in the daily seminary setting to determine the relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine remain constant in a different environment with students who are taught by non-professional seminary teachers.

Also, the objective of S&I and its desired outcomes are shared with LDS institute programs. LDS institutes provide weekday religious education to single and married post-secondary students, generally ages 18-30. There were 352,488 LDS institute students enrolled in 2012 (S&I, 2013), just under the 391,680 LDS seminary students enrolled in the same year. As the LDS seminary population represents only half of the S&I program, and as the desired outcomes remain consistent between both LDS seminary and LDS institute programs, it is recommended that the present study be conducted on the LDS institute level to determine the relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and

application of LDS doctrine remains statistically relevant. Data from the present study indicate that grade level did not have a significant impact on the Pearson  $r$  correlation coefficient; although the Analysis of Variance as seen in Table 7 suggests there is a perception of teacher dispositions of care and understanding of LDS doctrine strengthens as student progress upwards in grade level. It is recommended that further research demonstrate if this remains constant at the LDS institute level.

### Conduct a Qualitative Study

Although the present study confirmed a statistically significant relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine, this finding did not imply causation. Many of the statements made by S&I administration and leadership suggest a cause and effect relationship, with student perceived teacher dispositions of care being the independent variable and student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application being the dependent variable. Note how Kerr (2005), the previous head administrator of S&I, emphasized that the desired student outcome of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine are preceded by teacher dispositions: “Teach students by precept and example so they will be encouraged, assisted, and protected as they strive to live the gospel of Jesus Christ” (p. 7). Similarly the S&I handbook (2012) states: “When students know they are love and respected by their teacher..., they are more likely to come to class ready to learn” (p. 14).

This study demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, application of LDS doctrine. This was previously undetermined. A potential next

step is to further evaluate this and determine if there is a causal relationship as well. I recommend a study with equal parts assessments and follow up interviews to ascertain from the students why they scored their LDS seminary teachers the way they did and how it affected their results of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. A qualitative study of this nature would help determine the causal relationship between student perceived teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine.

#### Find and Evaluate Variables That Account for the Unexplained Variance

Based on the finding that student perceived teacher dispositions of care explained only 19% of predicted belief in LDS doctrine, and 22% of predicted application of LDS doctrine, I recommended that future research finds and evaluates additional factors that account for the unexplained variance in student outcome scores. Part of the S&I objective states LDS seminary teachers are to “assist parents in their responsibility” to teach the youth of the LDS church (S&I, 2012, p. 2). It seems likely that a significant portion of the variance would be explained by the relationship between parent and child, and the example, patterns, and traditions in the home (Kazdin, 2009). The LDS culture also has a strong tradition of regular church activity and personal worship. Many of the youth attending LDS seminary also attend religious worship services on Sunday for up to 3 hours, attend a youth group activity weekly, as well as participate in personal worship activities of studying scripture and prayer. This influence may explain a significant portion of the variance for student outcomes of belief and understanding.

Even more compelling is the variance and explanation for the negative statistical correlation between understanding and **every** other scale and variable. As previously

discussed, there are multiple reasons that could explain the negative correlation. The most compelling that this study only looked at one disposition: teacher care as perceived by students. It may be true that this disposition has a negative relationship with student understanding, but that does not suggest that other dispositions also have a negative relationship with understanding. Further research is needed to help explain which, if any, dispositions have a positive relationship with understanding and how those relationships relate with student perceived disposition of care.

I recommended that a study be conducted that evaluates how much explained variance is accounted for by Sockett's (2006) other categories of disposition, namely character and intellect as the present study primarily investigated the disposition of care. A study that evaluates the overall explained variance of teacher dispositions by the combined variables of character, intellect, and care could prove valuable to S&I as well as public education to help identify leading factors contributing to student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application. This combined with research examining the roles of methodology and pedagogy of LDS seminary teachers could be of immense help in the training of new and current LDS seminary teachers.

#### Emphasize Teacher Dispositions at Pre-Service and Inservice Levels within S&I

The strong relationships between the scales of student perception of teacher dispositions, student attitude towards seminary, and student outcomes of belief and application indicate that it may be worth the time and effort needed to increase the focus on these factors. As has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout this study, S&I administration has strongly emphasized the importance of teacher dispositions of care. While this is important, this study suggests that S&I administration at all levels can go



one step farther and emphasize that when students perceive their teacher having the disposition of care, there is a strong relationship to student attitude towards the seminary program. Furthermore, when students have a positive attitude towards seminary, there is a strong relationship to believing in and applying the doctrines being taught.

As previously discussed, the most likely scenario of this relationship begins with student perceived teacher dispositions of care influencing student application of LDS doctrine. If this is true, which the present study cannot demonstrate, it could suggest the possibility of increasing training and understanding of teacher dispositions of care among LDS seminary teachers in order to meet the objective of helping students apply the doctrine. Further research determining causality could assist in determining this outcome.

#### Complete a Similar Study in the Public Sector

With such strong connections between student perceived disposition of care and student belief and application, it is recommended to determine whether these same results hold true in other disciplines of education. Currently, the debate on dispositions within the public arena draws upon two different types of claims—those based on values and those based on beliefs (Borko et al., 2007). One camp argues that dispositions are an important part of teacher preparation because of the “moral and ethical” (Villegas, 2007) responsibility teachers have to teach all students fairly and equitably. The other camp argues, in part, that dispositions ought not to be included as part of teacher accreditation because of the lack of empirical measurement regarding the relationship between dispositions for teaching and student achievement (Borko et al., 2007). This study provides empirical data to help build a bridge between these two camps. Within S&I,

there is a relationship between teacher dispositions of care and student outcomes of belief and application. If a similar study were to be conducted in a public education setting with similar results the argument for continuing to include dispositions as part of the accreditation process could be strengthened in regards to the existence of a relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes. The argument could potentially begin to move to what type of relationship exists and what is the causality of the relationship between teacher dispositions and student outcomes.

### **Summary Conclusion**

The primary aim of this study was to explore whether or not a positive, statistically significant relationship exists between LDS seminary students' perception of teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief, understanding, and application of LDS doctrine. Based on results from statistical methods I can state with confidence that a statistically significant, positive relationship exists between LDS seminary students' perception of teacher dispositions of care and student self-reported outcomes of belief and application of LDS doctrine. Interestingly and opposing much of current literature, this study also demonstrated that student perceived teacher dispositions of care has a statistically negative correlation with student understanding of LDS doctrine. The findings support S&I administration's consistent message emphasizing the importance of teacher dispositions within the LDS seminary classroom: LDS seminary teachers' disposition of care is related to student outcomes of belief and application of LDS doctrine and as such could be an important aspect of LDS seminary education. The findings also provide potentially valuable guidance for future research to understand the

role of understanding, and which, if any teacher dispositions have a statistically significant positive relationship with student understanding.

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APPENDIX A

**Student Feedback Form**

<b>Church Educational System</b>		<b>Student Feedback</b>									
<small>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</small>		This survey will help your teacher know where to improve. Thank you for taking the time to provide honest and helpful feedback.									
<b>General Information</b>											
Name of teacher				Name of seminary				Period		Date	
<b>Student Responses</b>											
<i>Circle the option that best describes how much you agree with the statements below:</i>											
1. My teacher makes us feel comfortable talking to him/her.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
2. My teacher shows sincere interest in what we are doing in our lives.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
3. My teacher shows love and respect to all of us.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
4. My teacher teaches in a way that uplifts us.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
5. My teacher earns the trust of the class.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
6. My teacher shows that he/she understands teenagers.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
7. I try hard to regularly study my scriptures outside of class.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
8. I work hard to get as much out of seminary as I can.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
9. Seminary is important to me.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
10. I want to learn from the scriptures.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
11. I try hard to pay attention in class.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		
12. I have a positive attitude about seminary.											
<i>Strongly Agree</i>			<i>Agree</i>			<i>Somewhat Agree</i>			<i>Disagree</i>		

APPENDIX B

**Basic Doctrine Assessment**

# Basic Doctrines Assessment

## Packet 1.1





Updated August  
2013

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS  
SEMINARIES AND  
INSTITUTES OF RELIGION

**Basic Doctrines Assessment Packet 1.1 Table of Contents**

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Teacher Instructions for Administering the Assessment ..... 3

Teacher Processing Form ..... 4

Answer Sheet..... 5

Basic Doctrines Assessment..... 6

Correct Response Guide ..... 13

## Teacher Instructions for Administering the Assessment\*

To enable electronic processing of *Answer Sheets*, do the following:

### 1. When you print or copy the *Answer Sheets*:

- Use white paper, size A (8.5 x 11 inch) or A4 (210 x 297 mm).
- The teacher may fill in the Class ID and Program ID before making student copies.\*\*
- Copy the *Answer Sheet* (page 5). Side margins should be around ¼-½ inch (6-10 mm) and have no staples. **Page margins must print/copy in the same place on each *Answer Sheet* you copy (e.g. page margins are NOT ¼ inch on one copy and ½ inch on another copy).**
- Make classroom copies of the Assessment (pages 6-11) and the *Correct Response Guide* (pages 12-19) so students can individually take the test and individually review the correct answers when finished.

### 2. Administer the Assessment (Average time: 50 min)

- Pass out the assessment, the *Answer Sheet*, and a dark colored pencil with an eraser to each student.
- How you present the Assessment will determine the effort that students put into it and the accuracy of your results. Read the following in a professional manner to your class:

The purpose of this assessment is to help you see how well you understand some doctrines and principles of the gospel. The results will inform me how I can best help you and will be used to improve The Church's Seminary and Institute Programs. Please give your best efforts on this.

There are two sections in this assessment: multiple choice and survey. When you complete the two sections, compare your answers to the *Correct Response Guide* to help you learn more. However, as you review the *Correct Response Guide*, do not change your answers or mark items incorrect on your *Answer Sheet* (bubble sheet). You may now begin.

### 3. After the Assessment

- Some students will finish before others. When an individual finishes the assessment, have them immediately review the *Correct Response Guide*.
- Collect *Answer Sheets*. To protect anonymity, do not review student's responses as you

collect their *Answer Sheets*. We recommend allowing students to put their own *Answer*

*Sheet* in a large envelope at the back of the room when they complete it.

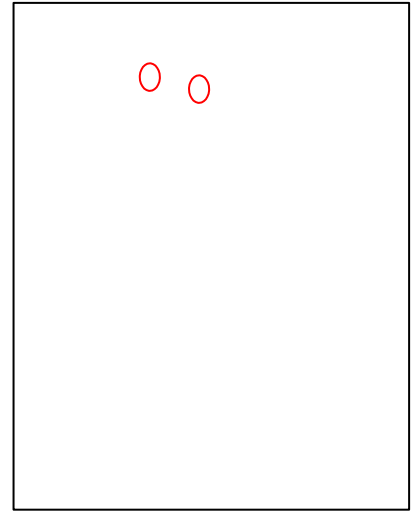
- Follow the instructions on the *Teacher Processing Form* (page 4).

\*Enter the search word "assessment" on <https://ids.org/si> for this and other approved assessment tools.

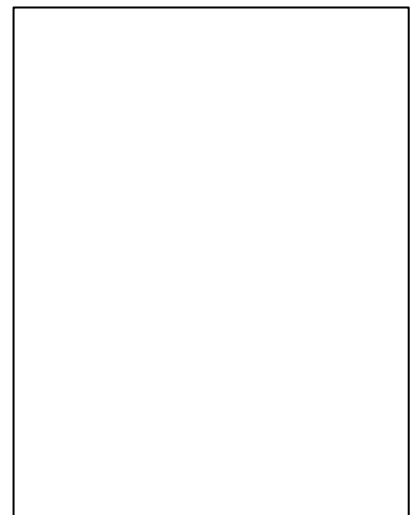
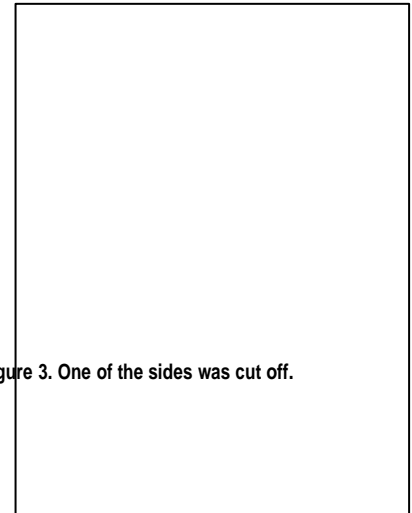
Common mistakes when filling in, printing, or copying *Answer Sheets*. Each of these problems makes it difficult or impossible for our machines to process the *Answer Sheet*.

**Figure 1.** The image is too skewed and the student did not correctly fill in the corresponding bubbles.

*Answer Sheet*



**Figure 3.** One of the sides was cut off.



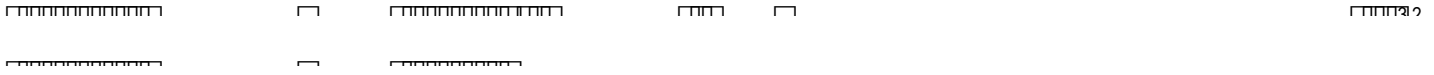
**Figure 2.** The printer or copier made lines on the

\*\*Stake-called teacher, use 999999 for your employee ID. Program ID numbers can be found on enrollment reports

This 5 digit number will be in (parenthesis). The teacher chooses a unique Class ID for each class they teach.

\*\*\*If you discuss the test as a class, do not single out those who missed the questions. For example, do not say "if you missed this question, raise your hand." Ensure students understand that this is *not* a test of their worth or their testimony. They should leave your classroom feeling encouraged.





**Class you are teaching in course**

**Time**

After you read the assessment instructions, about how many minutes did it take the majority of your class to finish?

I am administering this near the

Old Testament

New Testament

Book of Mormon

Doctrine and Covenants

Other

beginning of the course

end of the course

1-10

10-15

15-20

20-25

25-35

35-45

45-60

60+

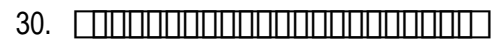
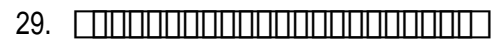
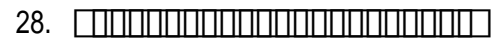
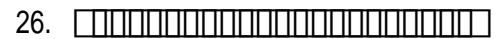
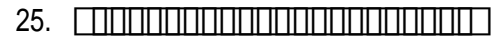
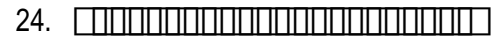
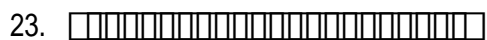
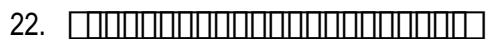
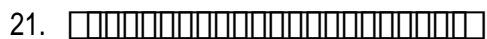
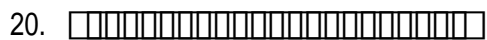
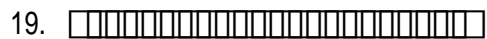
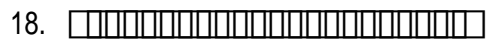
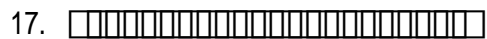
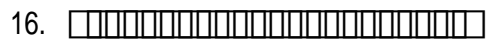
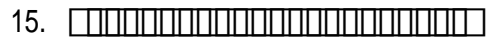
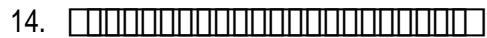
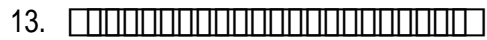
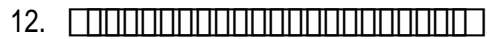
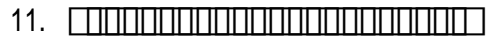
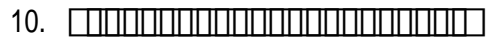
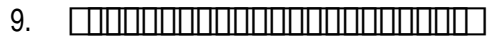
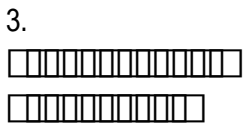
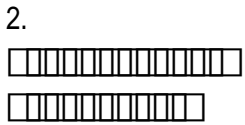
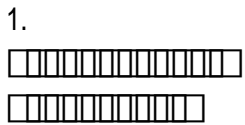
\*If you have the resources, you may scan and e-mail Answer Sheets rather than mail them. Answer sheets must be scanned as one PDF file per teacher, not 30 separate page files for 30 separate students. When scanning, use 300 dots per inch resolution. Each *Teacher Processing Form* will be an indication that the student's answer sheets that follow came from that teacher. Ensure that files do not skew or resize as they are scanned. Email PDF files to: [si-processing@ldschurch.org](mailto:si-processing@ldschurch.org) If the file is more than 12 mb, use filesend at: <https://filesend.ldschurch.org/> If you e-mail these, keep your hard copies until you receive a report.

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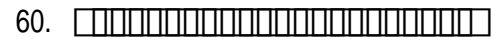
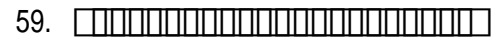
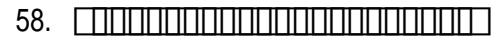
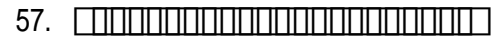
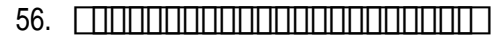
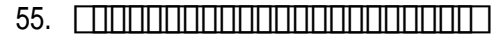
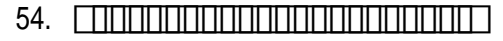
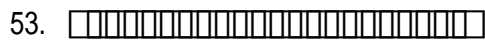
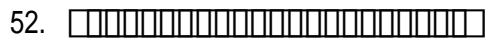
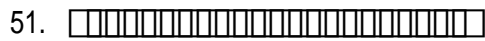
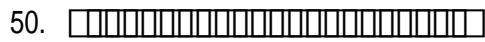
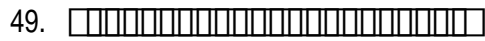
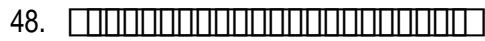
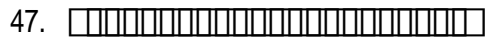
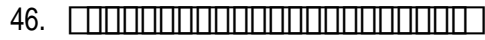
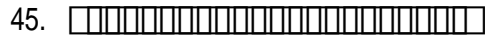
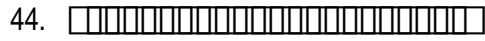
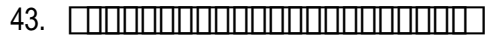
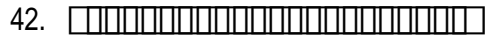
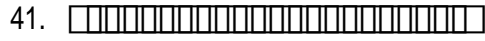
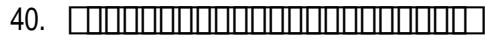
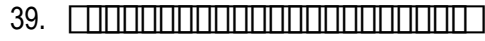
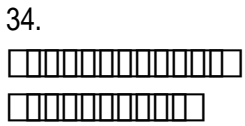
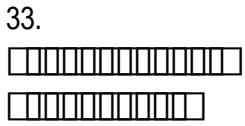
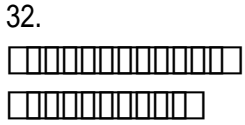
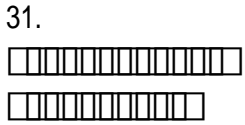
\*\*\***Employee ID** is a number for full-time S&I employees. Stake-called teachers use 999999.

\*\*\*\***Program ID** is a five digit number (in parenthesis) on enrollment and attendance reports.









## Basic Doctrines Assessment—Packet 1.1

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*Instructions:* 1) Do not write on this form. 2) Do not use your scriptures on this test. 3) As you take the test, mark your answers on the *Answer Sheet* provided. 4) Use a number 2 pencil with an eraser (not a red marking pencil). Neatly erase all mistakes. 5) Unless indicated, each question has one correct answer. If you do not know the answer, select “I don’t know” (do not guess). 6) At the end of the assessment your teacher will discuss the answers with the class.

### Section 1a.

Select *ONE* correct option for questions 1-28. Mark your answers on your *Answer Sheet*.

1. How are the Father and the Son different from the Holy Ghost?
  - a. In their physical nature
  - b. In their feelings toward mankind
  - c. In their ultimate goals
  - d. I don’t know.
  
2. “Andrew . . . first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah” (John 1:41). What does the phrase “the Messiah” mean?
  - a. The Creator
  - b. The Lord
  - c. The Prophet
  - d. The Christ
  - e. I don’t know
  
3. Why do we close all prayers in the name of Jesus Christ?
  - a. He is the same as the Father
  - b. We are commanded to do everything in His name
  - c. He created all things
  - d. He is always by the Father’s side
  - e. I don’t know
  
4. “...the body without the spirit is dead...” (James 2:26). This phrase refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. spiritual death
  - b. physical death
  - c. the death of the earth
  - d. the Fall of Man

e. I don't know

5. What part of our eternal existence is Alma referring to when he says, "Now, concerning the state of the soul between death

and the resurrection?" (Alma 40:11).

a. Mortal life

b. The resurrection

c. The postmortal spirit

world d. The premortal

spirit world e. I don't  
know

6. "The dead who repent will be redeemed through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God" (D&C 138:58). What is

this verse referring to?

After a person is dead he or she will be taught the gospel

a. but must stay in spirit prison until the  
Second Coming

b. and be baptized as a spirit

c. and have the opportunity to repent and accept ordinances performed for them in  
temples by mortals d. after they have been resurrected

e. I don't know

7. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). While there are many aspects to

the Final Judgment, *according to this scripture*, who will judge you at the Final Judgment?

a. Yourself

b. Heavenly

Father c. The

prophet

d. Jesus

Christ e. I

don't know.

8. What do the scriptures teach about the number of worlds Jesus Christ has created? Jesus Christ has created \_\_\_\_\_. a. no worlds
- b. one world—this earth c. worlds without number
- d. only those planets that we can see e. I don't know.
9. "For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall" (2 Nephi 9:6). This verse shows that the Fall of Adam was \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. part of the Plan of Salvation
- b. not expected to happen in the Plan of Salvation c. an adaptation to the Plan of Salvation
- d. a direct opposition to the Plan of Salvation e. I don't know
10. Which of these verses describe a main reason we came to earth?
- a. He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth (John 3:31).
- b. Preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning (2 Nephi 26:20).
- c. We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them
- (Abraham 3:25).
- d. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1). e. I don't know
11. Why do we need a physical body?
- a. To choose between good and evil b. To determine our gender
- c. To help us progress in ways not possible in our premortal life d. To exercise faith in the Lord
- e. I don't know
12. To be reconciled to God means \_ \_.
- a. to forgive each other
- b. to be called and chosen
- c. to become clean and worthy to return to Him d. to suffer the full

measure for one's own sins e. I don't know

13. Christ atoned for the sins of \_\_\_\_\_  
. a. all mankind

b. only those who would repent

c. those in the two highest kingdoms of glory  
d. only the broken hearted and contrite

e. I don't know.

14. Which scripture describes the beginning of a dispensation?

a. The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth

(D&C  
65:2)

b. The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil (Moroni 7:16)

c. I will give them one heart, and . . . put a new spirit within you (Ezekiel 11:19)

d. The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated (D&C 3:1)

e. I don't know

15. John's friends believe in the Bible but have different opinions about the nature of God. Which event would be the *best* one

John could share to help them understand our beliefs about God?

a. The first sacrament meeting  
b. The First Vision

c. The Second Coming  
d. The Fall of Adam

e. I don't know

16. The Lord told the Church members that “no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church

excepting my servant Joseph Smith” (D&C 28:2). What is a correct interpretation of this verse for our day?

- a. The revelations from the living prophet were also given to Joseph Smith.
- b. The current prophet is the only person on the earth who receives revelation to guide the entire Church.
- c. No one can receive personal revelation except the living prophet.
- d. Joseph Smith was the only prophet that could give us additional scripture.
- e. I don't know.

17. Which scripture best illustrates that one of the roles of a prophet is *to testify of Jesus Christ*?

- a. “By the help of the all-powerful Creator . . . I can tell you concerning your thoughts” (Jacob 2:5)
- b. “Did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people?” (Mosiah 13:33)
- c. “The judgments will come upon us which he [Nephi] has testified unto us” (Helaman 8:9)
- d. “And Malachi, the prophet who testified of the coming of Elijah” (D&C 138:46)
- e. I don't know

18. There have been many prophets, as recorded in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. What makes Joseph Smith's prophetic

calling unique or special? Joseph Smith—like Noah, Abraham, and Moses—

was \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. the only priesthood holder in his day who could heal the sick

- b. called to lead God's people to the promised land
- c. one of only four prophets who spoke with the Lord face to face
- d. the head of a dispensation, called to restore the true gospel
- e. I don't know.

19. “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). In this

scripture, we learn that Heavenly Father

- a. wants us to praise one another
- b. will give eternal life to all of His children

c. desires that His children become like Him after this life  
d. has already chosen those who will inherit eternal life

e. I don't know

20. Your friend's grandparents join the church when they are 70. Although they have been married for 50 years, why do they need to go to the temple for a marriage sealing?

a. the other marriage was not recognized by our church  
b. no other churches believe that families are eternal

c. all ordinances must be performed by the authority of the priesthood to be eternal  
d. temple marriage is too sacred of a doctrine to discuss outside of the temple

e. I don't know

21. What does baptism by immersion symbolize?

a. Our willingness to go to the depths of obedience even unto death

b. The death of a person's sinful life and the rebirth into a spiritual life  
c. The earth's burning at the Second Coming

d. The Fall and Redemption of Adam and Eve  
e. I don't know

22. Why are the blessings of the temple essential for eternal life?

Because the temple is the *only* place

a. you can find peace in this world

b. sacred enough to make covenants

c. where endowment and sealing ordinances are available  
d. where you can truly feel the Spirit

e. all of the above  
f. I don't know

23. The naming and blessing of children, patriarchal blessings, and administering to the sick are

a. not ordinances

b. not saving ordinances  
c. saving ordinances

d. ordinances that do not require priesthood permission  
e. I don't know.

24. In the scriptures we learn that blessings from God are always dependent upon what principle?
- a. Obedience to the law on which the blessing is based
  - b. Being a baptized member of the Church
  - c. Our desires for obtaining blessings
  - d. Our needs for a blessing
  - e. I don't know
25. What did the Savior teach were the two greatest commandments?
- a. The Sabbath Day and the Word of Wisdom
  - b. Love God and love thy neighbor
  - c. The law of the Sabbath and the law of sacrifice
  - d. To not kill and to not commit adultery
  - e. I don't know
26. Alma told Corianton, who had committed sexual sin, "Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?" (Alma 39:5). A correct interpretation of this verse is that sexual sins are \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. more serious than denying the Holy Ghost
  - b. worse than shedding innocent blood
  - c. the most abominable sin a person can commit
  - d. more serious than any other sins except murder and denying the Holy Ghost
  - e. I don't know
27. What statement from *The Proclamation on the Family* corresponds with the teachings in this verse? "And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin" (Mosiah 4:14).
- a. Children are entitled to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows
  - b. Each person is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and has a divine nature and destiny
  - c. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony
  - d. Parents are to rear their children in love and righteousness and provide for their spiritual and physical needs
  - e. I don't know
28. What principle does this verse teach? "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else"



(D&C 42:22).

- a. the only person you ought to be concerned with is your spouse
- b. no person, activity, or possession should be more important than your spouse
- c. the Lord allows us to love a righteous spouse more than we love Him
- d. spouses are responsible for each other's actions
- e. I don't know

**Section 1b.**

*Select ALL the answer options that are correct for items 29-40. Mark your answers on your Answer Sheet.*

29. Which of the following are true about God our Eternal Father? (select all that are correct)

- a. He is the Father of your spirit
- b. He has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's
- c. He is the Supreme Author of the Plan of Salvation
- d. He atoned for the sins of mankind
- e. His main role is to testify of the truth of all things
- f. I don't know

30. What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? (select all that are correct)

- a. Physical death
- b. Satan was cast out of heaven
- c. The creation of the earth
- d. Spiritual death
- e. They could have children
- f. I don't know

31. What are some other scriptural names for the Plan of Salvation? The Plan of \_\_\_\_\_. (select all that are correct)

- a. Redemption
- b. Paradise
- c. Mercy
- d. Good and Evil
- e. Happiness
- f. I don't know

32. A dispensation is a period of time when the Lord reveals \_\_\_\_\_ gospel doctrines. (Select all that are correct.)

- a. ordinances
- b. the light of Christ
- c. His priesthood
- d. the angel Moroni
- e. I don't know.

33. After the death of the Savior and His Apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in the Church organization and priesthood ordinances. Which scriptures best show that this occurred? (Select all that are correct.)

- a. "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:7).
- b. "Many covenants of the Lord have they taken away" (1 Nephi 13:26).
- c. "[They were] tried . . . according to the laws of their wickedness" (Helaman 6:24).
- d. "Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God . . . ?" (Mormon 8:33).
- e. I don't know.

34. When the prophet speaks, it's important to listen because prophets \_\_\_\_\_. (select all that are correct)

- a. warn us of future events
- b. preside in our homes
- c. speak on behalf of Jesus Christ
- d. make known God's will
- e. are perfect people

f. I don't know

35. Which of the following are Aaronic Priesthood offices? (select all that are correct)

a.

Bishop b.

Teacher c.

Elder

d. Priest

e. Deacon

f. Young Men's president

g. I don't know

36. Your friend has decided to join the Church but doesn't understand why she needs to be baptized again because she was already baptized as an infant. Which of the following doctrines explains why she needs to be baptized again? (select all that are correct)

a. Baptism must be performed by one having  
priesthood authority b. Baptism is necessary for  
membership in the kingdom of God

c. We can only believe in the Lord if we have an  
authorized baptism d. The Lord will not bless those who  
are baptized in other churches

e. I don't know

37. Why is marriage between a man and a woman central to the Plan of Salvation? (select all that are correct)

a. Having a family is the only way we contribute to the building  
of the Church b. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of  
matrimony

c. Marriage is the only way God's children learn to serve  
one another d. Marriage is a fundamental step to  
becoming like Heavenly Father e. I don't know

38. Select all of the following statements that are true about the doctrine of grace. (select all that are correct) Divine grace is \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. given only to those who are baptized in mortality
  - b. a means of help or strength given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ
  - c. made possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ
  - d. why there is no effort required on our part to be worthy to dwell with Heavenly Father
  - e. a way that individuals receive strength to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain
  - f. an enabling power that allows men and women to have eternal life after they have expended their own best efforts
  - g. I don't know

**Questions 39-40. "What is required for full and complete repentance?"**

39. Repentance includes the following elements: (select all that are correct)

- a. Sorrow for committing the sin (godly sorrow).
- b. Suffering the full measure of our sins.
- c. Righteous living, living a life of obedience.
- d. Missionary work.
- e. Abandonment of sin or forsaking the sin.
- f. Ordinances
- g. I don't know

40. Repentance includes the following elements: (select all that are correct)

- a. Helping others (service).
- b. Faith to rely on the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
- c. Restitution (seeking to restore the damage as far as possible).
- d. Studying the scriptures daily.
- e. Never being tempted again (for the sin you repent of).
- f. Confession.
- g. I don't know

## Section 2

Section 2 is a voluntary anonymous survey. Your honest responses to these survey questions will help improve the teaching and learning experience in seminary. Your teacher will not receive a report of your individual responses to these survey questions.

### Section 2a. Belief Survey

Instructions: Read each statement below and choose the response that completes this sentence: "I \_\_\_\_ this is true." Then mark your answer on your *Answer Sheet*.

- a.  
know
- b.  
believe
- c. sort-of  
believe d.  
don't know if

41. Heavenly Father created man in His own image.
42. The Book of Mormon is the word of God.
43. The Lord speaks to the world through His Prophet.
44. The Lord's only true and living church was restored to the earth through Joseph Smith.
45. The Savior provides the only way back to Heavenly Father's presence.
46. The covenants and ordinances of the temple are essential for eternal life.
47. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only church that has authority from the Lord to perform the ordinance of baptism.

**Section 2b. Apply  
Survey**

Instructions: Read each statement below and choose the response that indicates how often the statements describe you. Then mark your answer on your *Answer Sheet*.

- a.**  
**always**
- b. almost**  
**always c.**  
**sometimes**
- d.**  
**rarely**
- e.**  
**never**

48. I pray sincerely every day.

49. I keep the Sabbath day holy.

50. I fast on fast Sundays.

51. I willingly pay my tithing when I receive money.

52. I sincerely repent when I make a mistake.

53. I keep my body clean, sacred, and healthy.

54. My choices in life show that I am determined to be married in the temple.

55. I would feel comfortable with my dress and appearance if I were in the Lord's presence.

56. I share the truths of the restored gospel with my friends.

57. I feel the Savior would be pleased with how I behave around my friends.

58. I am honest in all my dealings (i.e. with parents, teachers, friends, businesses, etc).

59. I walk out of a movie, change a TV channel, or leave a Web site immediately if the content is immoral, vulgar, or pornographic.

60. How many years have you enrolled in seminary (include current year—for example, if you are in your 3<sup>rd</sup> year, select “c”).

a.

1

b.

2

c.

3

d.

4

e. I am an institute student, not a seminary student.

**When you finish, ask your teacher for the *Correct Response Guide*. As you review the *Correct Response Guide*, do not change your answers or make any marks on your *Answer Sheet* (bubble sheet).**

These are the correct responses to the questions in packet 1.1 You can review the questions on your own. In addition, your teacher will discuss the correct responses with the class. Please do not change your answers or mark your answer sheet as you review the correct responses. These answers have suggestions for learning more about the gospel topic in the question.

**1. How are the Father and the Son different from the Holy Ghost?**

*Correct Response*

- a. In their physical nature

*Explanation*

There are three separate personages in the Godhead: God the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost. The Father and the Son have tangible bodies of flesh and bone, and the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit. Although the members of the Godhead are distinct Beings with distinct roles, they are one in purpose and doctrine. They are perfectly united in bringing to pass Heavenly Father's divine plan of salvation.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Acts 7:55–56; Doctrine and Covenants 130:22–23; *True to the Faith*, 73–74; Basic Doctrines, “Godhead.”

**2. “Andrew . . . first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah” (John 1:41).**

**What does the phrase**

**“the Messiah” mean?**

*Correct Response*

- d. The Christ

*Explanation*

The “Messias” means the “Christ.” “Messias” is the New Testament Greek form of “Messiah,” which is the Hebrew form of the word “Christ.” To say, “we have found the Messiah” (John 1:41) is the same as saying “we have found the Christ.” Jesus Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Messiah (Messiah) or Christ of the New Testament.

*More Information*

To learn more, study the Bible Dictionary topics of: “Anointed One,” “Christ,” “Jehovah,” and “Messiah.” See also *True to the Faith*, topic of

“Jesus Christ” (p. 87) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Godhead.”

**3. Why do we close all prayers in the name of Jesus Christ?**

*Correct Response*



- b. We are commanded to do everything in His name

*Explanation*

All prayers, blessings, and priesthood ordinances must be done in Jesus Christ's name to be efficacious. Jesus Christ is the Great Mediator between us and the Father and therefore we have been commanded to do all things, including prayers, in the name of Jesus Christ.

*More Information*

To learn more, study D&C 18:18, Moses 1:17 and Moses 5:8. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of "Jesus Christ" (p. 87) and *Seminary Basic*

*Doctrines*, topic of the "Godhead."

4. "...the body without the spirit is dead..." (James 2:26). This phrase refers to \_\_\_\_\_.

*Correct Response*

- b. physical death

*Explanation*

Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the mortal body. In Ecclesiastes 12:7 it refers to the dust returning to the earth and the spirit returning to God. The dust in this verse refers to the mortal body.

*More Information*

To learn more, study James 2:26; Genesis 3:19; Mosiah 2:25. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of "Death, Physical" (p. 46) and *Seminary Basic*

*Doctrines*, topic of the "Plan of Salvation."

5. What part of our eternal existence is Alma referring to when he says, "Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection?" (Alma 40:11).

*Correct Response*

- c. The postmortal spirit world

*Explanation*

When we die, our spirits will enter the spirit world and await the resurrection.

*More Information*

To learn more, study D&C 138. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of "Death, Physical" (p. 46) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the "Plan of

Salvation."

6. “The dead who repent will be redeemed through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God” (D&C 138:58).

What is this verse

referring to?

After a person is dead, he or she will be taught the gospel \_\_\_\_\_.

*Correct Response*

c. and have the opportunity to repent and accept ordinances performed for them in temples by mortals

*Explanation*

In the spirit world, individuals will be taught the gospel and those who refused to repent in this life will suffer for their sins. Then all who have not had the opportunity to hear the gospel in mortality will have the opportunity to repent and accept ordinances of salvation that are vicariously

performed for them in temples.

*More Information*

To learn more, study D&C 138; 1 Peter 3:18–20; 1 Peter 4:6; 1 Corinthians 15:29. See also *True to the Faith*, topics of “Death, Physical” (p. 46)

and “Hell” (p. 81) as well as *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the “Plan of Salvation.”

7. “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22). While there are many aspects to the Final

Judgment, *according to this scripture*, who will judge you at the Final Judgment?

*Correct Response*

d. Jesus Christ

*Explanation*

The Final Judgment will occur after the Resurrection. Jesus Christ will judge each person to determine the eternal glory he or she will receive. This judgment will be based on each person’s obedience and the desire of his or her heart.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Revelation 20:12–13; 3 Nephi 27:14–15; Doctrine and Covenants 137:9; *True to the Faith*, 87–89; Basic Doctrines, “Life after Death.”

8. What do the scriptures teach about the number of worlds Jesus Christ has created? Jesus Christ has created

*Correct Response*

c. worlds without number

*Explanation*

Jesus Christ created the heavens and the earth under the direction of the Father. The earth was not created from nothing; it was organized from existing matter. The book of Moses reveals that Jesus Christ has created “worlds without number” (Moses 1:33).

*More Information*

To learn more, study Mosiah 3:8; Moses 1:30–35; 2:1; *True to the Faith*, 44–45; Basic Doctrines, “The Creation.”

9. **“For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall” (2 Nephi 9:6). This verse shows that the Fall of Adam was**

\_\_\_\_\_.  
*Correct Response*

- a. part of the Plan of Salvation

*Explanation*

The Fall was a necessary part of the Plan of Salvation.

*More Information*

To learn more, see the Bible Dictionary topic of “Fall of Adam” and study the scriptures listed there. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of “Fall” (p.

56) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Creation and Fall.”

10. **Which of these verses describe a main reason we came to earth?**

*Correct Response*

- c. “We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25)

*Explanation*

This part of our existence is a time of learning in which we can prepare for eternal life and prove ourselves to see if we will do all that the Lord has commanded us.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Alma 12:24; Alma 34:32–34; Abraham 3:22–28; *True to the Faith*, topic of “Plan of Salvation” (p. 115) and *Seminary Basic*

*Doctrines*, topic of “Plan of Salvation.”

11. **Why do we need a physical body?**

*Correct Response*

- c. To help us progress in ways not possible in our premortal life

*Explanation*

When our spirit is united with our mortal body, it gives us opportunities to grow and develop in ways that were not possible in our premortal life.

To learn more, study Alma 12:24; Alma 34:32–34; 3 Nephi 27:27; D&C 93:33–34; and 1 Peter 2:20–24. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of “Plan of Salvation” (p. 115) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the “Plan of Salvation.”

**12. To be reconciled to God means \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Correct Response*

- c. to become clean and worthy to return to Him

*Explanation*

Being reconciled to God means to become clean and worthy to return to Him. This was made possible because Jesus atoned for sin by suffering the penalty for sin, thereby removing the effects of sin from the repentant sinner and allowing him or her to be reconciled to God.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Romans 5:10; 2 Nephi 25:23; 2 Nephi 33:9; Jacob 4:11. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of “Atonement of Jesus Christ” (p.

14) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Atonement of Jesus Christ.”

**13. Christ atoned for the sins of \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Correct Response*

- a. all mankind

*Explanation*

Jesus Christ was the only one capable of making a perfect Atonement for all mankind. His Atonement included His suffering for the sins of all mankind in the Garden of Gethsemane, the shedding of His blood, His suffering and death on the cross, and His Resurrection from the tomb.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Isaiah 53:3–6; Luke 24:36–39; John 5:25–29; Mosiah 3:8–10; Alma 7:11–12; 11:42–45; Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19; Articles of Faith 1:3; *True to the Faith*, 14–21; Basic Doctrines, “Atonement of Jesus Christ.”

**14. Which scripture describes the beginning of a dispensation?**

*Correct Response*

- a. The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth (D&C 65:2)

*Explanation*

A dispensation is a period of time in which the Lord has at least one authorized servant on the earth who bears the holy priesthood and who has

a divine commission to dispense the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth. This servant holds and is authorized to use the keys to the kingdom of God on earth to administer priesthood ordinances, teach the Lord’s true gospel, and govern the Lord’s Church. This verse describes the keys being given and the gospel going forth in the earth.

*More Information*

To learn more, see D&C 27:13; D&C 110:12–16. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of “Melchizedek Priesthood” (p. 101) and *Seminary Basic*

*Doctrines*, topics of “Dispensation, Apostasy, and the Restoration” and the “Priesthood.”

**15. John’s friends believe in the Bible but have different opinions about the nature of God. Which event would be the best one John could share to help them understand our beliefs about God?**

*Correct Response*

- b. The First Vision

*Explanation*

The reason that different religions, which use the same Bible, have so many different ideas about God, is because during the Great Apostasy the true knowledge of God was lost. This Apostasy lasted until Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son appeared to Joseph Smith and initiated the Restoration of the fullness of the gospel. Sharing the First Vision is a great way to share the gospel with friends who sincerely want to know more about what you believe about God. Remember that the First Vision is sacred so you should speak with great care about it and share it under the direction of the Spirit (see D&C 63:64).

*More Information*

To learn more, study Joseph Smith—History 1:7–20. See also *True to the Faith*, topics of “Apostasy” (p. 13) and “Restoration of the Gospel” (p.

135) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Dispensation, Apostasy, and the Restoration.”

**16. The Lord told the Church members that “no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith” (D&C 28:2). What is a correct interpretation of this verse for our day?**

*Correct Response*

- b. The current prophet is the only person on the earth who receives revelation to guide the entire Church.

*Explanation*

A prophet is a person who has been called by God to speak for Him. The Lord communicates His will through His prophet. We sustain the President of the Church as that prophet. Although the counselors in the First Presidency and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are also sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators and, along with other General Authorities, receive revelation to guide the Church in their individual assignments, they act under the direction of the living prophet, who is the only person on the earth who is called to receive revelation to guide the entire Church.

To learn more, study Deuteronomy 18:18–22; Amos 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 21:4–7; 28:2, 6–7; 43:3–4; *True to the Faith*, 34–37, 129–

30; Basic Doctrines, “Prophets.”

**17. Which scripture best illustrates that one of the roles of a prophet is *to testify of Jesus Christ*?**

*Correct Response*

b. “Did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people?” (Mosiah 13:33)

*Explanation*

The entire verse reads: “For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began—have they not spoken more or less concerning these

things?” (Mosiah 13:33). The “Messiah” and “God” in this scripture refer to Jesus Christ. In other words, Moses prophesied and testified of Jesus

Christ. All true prophets testify of Jesus Christ and teach His gospel.

*More Information*

To learn more about the roles of a prophet, see *True to the Faith*, topic of “Prophets” (p. 129) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Prophets.”

**18. There have been many prophets, as recorded in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. What makes Joseph Smith’s prophetic calling unique or special? Joseph Smith—like Noah, Abraham, and Moses—was**

.

*Correct Response*

d. the head of a dispensation, called to restore the true gospel

*Explanation*

The Prophet Joseph Smith was God’s authorized servant at the head of this gospel dispensation. As with other prophets called to begin a dispensation, through him gospel truths and priesthood keys were restored. Understanding the role of Joseph Smith also shows that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Previous dispensations were identified with Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus Christ.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Bible Dictionary, “Dispensations”; Basic Doctrines, “Dispensation.”

**19. “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). In this scripture, we**

learn that Heavenly Father \_\_\_\_\_.

*Correct Response*

c. desires that His children become like Him after this life

*Explanation*

Eternal life means we not only live forever but that we live with Heavenly Father and become like Him. Immortality means never dying. This verse

means that it is Heavenly Father's work and glory to provide a way for us return to live in His presence for eternity.

*More Information*

To learn more, study D&C 14:7; Romans 6:23; Moses 5:11; *True to the Faith*, topic of "Eternal Life" (p. 52) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topics

of "Plan of Salvation," "Creation and Fall," and "Atonement."

**20. Your friend's grandparents join the church when they are 70. Although they have been married for 50 years, why do they need to go to the temple for a marriage sealing?**

*Correct Response*

c. all ordinances must be performed by the authority of the priesthood to be eternal

*Explanation*

Marriages outside of the temple are not wicked. Many people are legally married by other Churches for this life. However, marriage from the beginning was meant to be eternal. In order for a marriage to be eternal, a couple must be sealed in the temple by the authority of the priesthood. Like any saving ordinance of the priesthood, this sealing is accompanied by sacred covenants that can only be made in the temple and can only be performed for eternity by those who have the priesthood keys to seal things in this life for eternity.

*More Information*

To learn more, study D&C 132:7, 19; Matthew 16:18–19; Helaman 10:7; D&C 27:13; *True to the Faith*, topic of "Marriage" (p. 97) and *Seminary*

*Basic Doctrines*, topic of "Ordinances and Covenants."

**21. What does baptism by immersion symbolize?**

*Correct Response*

b. The death of a person's sinful life and the rebirth into a spiritual life

*Explanation*

Immersion is symbolic of the death of a person's sinful life and the rebirth into a spiritual life (Romans 6:4-5), dedicated to the service of God and His children. Although we are baptized for the remission of sins, children younger than age 8 are incapable of committing sin. Through repentance and partaking of the sacrament we renew our baptismal covenant and can continue to be forgiven of sins.



To learn more, study Romans 6:2–6; John 3:3–5; Mosiah 27:24–26; Mosiah 18:8–10; Moroni 8:8–10. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of

“Baptism” (p. 21) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “First Principles and Ordinances.”

## 22. Why are the blessings of the temple essential for eternal life?

Because the temple is the *only* place \_\_\_\_\_.

*Correct Response*

c. where endowment and sealing ordinances are available

*Explanation*

Some ordinances are essential to eternal life and are called saving ordinances. They include baptism, confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek

Priesthood (for men), the temple endowment, and the marriage sealing. Some of these ordinances are only made in holy temples.

*More Information*

To learn more, see D&C 138:47–48; D&C 110:9; D&C 124:39–41; *True to the Faith*, topic of “Temples” (p. 170) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*,

topic of “Ordinances and Covenants.”

## 23. The naming and blessing of children, patriarchal blessings, and administering to the sick are \_\_\_\_\_.

*Correct Response*

b. not saving ordinances

*Explanation*

Some ordinances are essential to gaining eternal life and are called “saving ordinances.” These saving ordinances include baptism, confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood (for men), the temple endowment, and the marriage sealing. There are other ordinances that are not saving ordinances, such as the naming and blessing of children, patriarchal blessings, and administering to the sick.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Doctrine and Covenants 84:18–22; Articles of Faith 1:3–5; *True to the Faith*, 109–10; Basic Doctrines, “Ordinances and

Covenants.”

## 24. In the scriptures we learn that blessings from God are always dependent upon what principle?

*Correct Response*

a. Obedience to the law on which the blessing is based

### *Explanation*

Keeping the commandments will always bring blessings from the Lord. However, sometimes the blessing we receive is not an immediate end to a challenge we are facing. Some blessings from the Lord may come immediately, some later in this life and some may come in the next life. It may be that Heavenly Father gives us a blessing to have sufficient faith to endure the challenge. However, if we obey the Lord we will receive the blessing associated with the law we obey on His timetable.

### *More Information*

To learn more, see D&C 130:20–21. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of “Obedience” (p. 108) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the

“Commandments.”

## **25. What did the Savior teach were the two greatest commandments?**

### *Correct Response*

b. Love God and love thy neighbor

### *Explanation*

The two greatest commandments are “to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind . . . [and to] love thy

neighbor as thyself” (see Matthew 22:37–39).

### *More Information*

To learn more, see *True to the Faith*, topic of “Love” (p. 96) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the “Commandments.”

## **26. Alma told Corianton, who had committed sexual sin, “Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?” (Alma 39:5). A correct interpretation of this verse is that sexual sins are**

–

### *Correct Response*

d. more serious than any other sins except murder and denying the Holy Ghost

### *Explanation*

In the world today, Satan has led many people to believe that sexual intimacy outside of marriage is acceptable. But in God’s sight, it is a serious sin. It is an abuse of the power He has given us to create life. In the above verse, the prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder and denying the Holy Ghost. Repentance for sexual sins is difficult, but possible. With the help of the Lord and His

priesthood leaders, a person who has committed sexual sin can repent and become clean again.

To learn more, study Alma 39:3-5; Genesis 39:7-12; Jacob 2:28; Moroni 9:9; D&C 121:45; *True to the Faith*, topic of “Chastity” (p. 29) and

*Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Commandments.”

**27. What statement from *The Proclamation on the Family* corresponds with the teachings in this verse? “And ye will not suffer your *children* that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin” (Mosiah 4:14).**

*Correct Response*

d. Parents are to rear their children in love and righteousness and provide for their spiritual and physical needs

*Explanation*

The Lord has commanded parents to multiply and replenish the earth, to rear their children in love and righteousness, and to provide for their physical and spiritual needs.

*More Information*

To learn more, study *True to the Faith*, topic of “Family” (p. 59) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Marriage and Family.”

**28. What principle does this verse teach? “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else” (D&C**

**42:22).**

*Correct Response*

b. no person, activity, or possession should be more important than your spouse

*Explanation*

The principle of this verse is that spouse’s whole hearts should be joined together, completely united, and one. The Proclamation on the Family shares a similar concept: “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other.” President Kimball taught that “the words *none else* eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes pre-eminent in the life of the husband or wife and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, p. 250).

*More Information*

To learn more, study *True to the Faith*, topic of “Marriage,” (p. 97) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Marriage and Family.”

**29. Which of the following are true about God our Eternal Father? (select all that are correct)**

*Correct Responses*

a. He is the Father of your spirit

- b. He has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's
- c. He is the Supreme Author of the Plan of Salvation

*Explanation*

God the Father is the Supreme Ruler of the universe. He is the Father of our spirits. He "has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22). He is the Supreme Creator and Author of the Plan of Salvation. When we pray, we pray to Him. He is perfect, has all power, and knows all things. He is also a God of perfect mercy, kindness, and charity.

*More Information*

To learn more about God the Father, study *True to the Faith*, topic of "God the Father" (p. 74) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topics of the

"Godhead" and the "Plan of Salvation."

**30. What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? (select all that are correct)**

*Correct Responses*

- a. Physical death
- d. Spiritual death
- e. They could have children

*Explanation*

Adam and Eve's transgression and the resultant changes, including spiritual and physical death, are called the Fall. As a result of the Fall, Adam and Eve and their posterity could experience joy and sorrow, know good and evil, and have children.

*More Information*

To learn more, study 2 Nephi 2:19–27; Moses 5:10–11; D&C 29:40–41; Genesis 3; and Moses 4. See also *True to the Faith*, topic of "Fall" (p.

56) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of "Creation and Fall."

**31. What are some other scriptural names for the Plan of Salvation? The Plan of \_\_\_\_\_. (select all that are correct)**

*Correct Responses*

- a. Redemption
- c. Mercy
- e. Happiness

### *Explanation*

The scriptures refer to the Plan of Salvation as “the plan of redemption,” “the plan of mercy,” and “the great plan of happiness.”

### *More Information*

To learn more about the scriptural names of the Plan of Salvation, study the Topical Guide entry for “Salvation, Plan of” in the Bible and

*Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the “Plan of Salvation.”

## **32. A dispensation is a period of time when the Lord reveals \_\_\_\_\_. (Select all that are correct.)**

### *Correct Responses*

- a. gospel doctrines
- b. ordinances
- d. His priesthood

### *Explanation*

A dispensation is a period of time when the Lord reveals His gospel doctrines, ordinances, and priesthood. It is a period in which the Lord has at least one authorized servant on the earth who bears the holy priesthood and who has a divine commission to dispense the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth.

### *More Information*

To learn more, study Ephesians 1:10; Doctrine and Covenants 27:13; 112:30–32; 128:9; Bible Dictionary, “Dispensations”; Basic Doctrines, “Dispensation.”

## **33. After the death of the Savior and His Apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in the Church organization and priesthood ordinances. Which scriptures best show that this occurred? (Select all that are correct.)** *Correct Responses*

- a. “There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:7).
- b. “Many covenants of the Lord have they taken away” (1 Nephi 13:26).
- d. “Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God . . . ?” (Mormon 8:33).

### *Explanation*

The Apostle Paul taught in Galatians that people in his day were seeking to pervert (or distort) the true gospel, and he sought to correct this by warning the people not to be turned away from the true gospel he taught them. Nephi and Moroni both had visions where they were shown the effects of the Great Apostasy. In 1 Nephi 13, an angel showed Nephi that parts of the scriptures and many covenants of the Lord would be taken

away. Moroni had a vision in which he saw that parts of the scriptures had been transfigured (or changed). During the Great Apostasy, parts of

the true gospel were corrupted and the saving ordinances were changed or lost. However, the Lord restored the fulness of His gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith, including His covenants, His ordinances, and His priesthood authority.

*More Information*

To learn more, study Matthew 24:4–14; Galatians 1:6–9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3; 1 Nephi 13:21–29; Mormon 8:32–38; Doctrine and

Covenants 1; *True to the Faith*, 13–14; Basic Doctrines, “Dispensation, Apostasy, and Restoration.”

**34. When the prophet speaks, it’s important to listen because prophets \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Correct Responses*

- a. warn us of future events
- c. speak on behalf of Jesus Christ
- d. make known God’s will

*Explanation*

Prophets testify of Jesus Christ and teach His gospel. They make known God’s will and true character. At times they prophecy of future events.

The Lord has said, “whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

*More Information*

To learn more, study Amos 3:7; D&C 1:38; D&C 21:4–6; Numbers 12:6; Luke 1:70; Ephesians 2:19–20; *True to the Faith*, topic of “Prophets” (p.

129) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Prophets.”

**35. Which of the following are Aaronic Priesthood offices?**

*Correct Responses*

- a. Bishop
- b. Teacher
- d. Priest
- e. Deacon

*Explanation*

The offices of the Aaronic Priesthood are deacon, teacher, priest, and bishop. In the Church today, worthy male members may receive the

Aaronic Priesthood beginning at age 12.

*More Information*

To learn more, study D&C 107:13–17; D&C 20:46–59; *True to the Faith*, topic of “Aaronic Priesthood” (p. 3) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Priesthood.”

**36. Your friend has decided to join the Church but doesn’t understand why she needs to be baptized again because she was already**

**baptized as an infant. Which of the following doctrines explains why she needs to be baptized again?**

*Correct Responses*

- a. Baptism must be performed by one having priesthood authority  
b. Baptism is necessary for membership in the kingdom of God

*Explanation*

Baptism by immersion in water by one having authority is the first saving ordinance of the gospel and is necessary for an individual to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Little children are not to be baptized until they reach the age of accountability, which the Lord has revealed to be eight years of age (see D&C 68:27).

*More Information*

To learn more, study John 3:5; Mosiah 18:10; 2 Nephi 31; D&C 29:46–47; D&C 68:27; Moroni 8:8–19, 21–24; *True to the Faith*, topic of

“Baptism” (p. 21) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “First Principles and Ordinances.”

**37. Why is marriage between a man and a woman central to the Plan of Salvation? (select all that are correct)**

*Correct Response*

- b. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony  
d. Marriage is a fundamental step to becoming like Heavenly Father

*Explanation*

The Proclamation on the Family states that: “Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.” In addition, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it” (D&C

131:1–3). Thus, marriage is a fundamental step to becoming like Heavenly Father because a person cannot have eternal life like our Father in

Heaven unless he or she has an eternal marriage.

*More Information*

To learn more, study *True to the Faith*, topic of “Family” (p. 59) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of “Marriage and Family.”

**38. Select all of the following statements that are true about the doctrine of grace. (select all that are correct) Divine grace is \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Correct Response*

b. a means of help or strength given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ  
c. made possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ

e. a way that individuals receive strength to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain

f. an enabling power that allows men and women to have eternal life after they have expended their own best efforts

*Explanation*

The final judgment will be based on each person’s obedience to God’s commands (Revelation 20:12–13). However, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Therefore, all mortals need divine help and strength that comes through the Atonement of Christ. This divine help is what the scriptures refer to as grace. The Bible Dictionary teaches that “the main idea of the word [grace] is divine means of help or

strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ. It is through the grace of the Lord Jesus, made possible by His atoning

sacrifice, that mankind will be raised in immortality, every person receiving his body from the grave in a condition of everlasting life. It is likewise through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins that they can be forgiven of past sins and receive strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts. Divine grace is needed by every soul in consequence of the Fall of Adam and also because of man’s weaknesses and

shortcomings. However, grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient. Hence the explanation, ‘It is by grace that we are

saved, after all we can do’ (2 Nephi 25: 23). It is truly the grace of Jesus Christ that makes salvation possible.”

*More Information*

To learn more, study 2 Nephi 25:23; Moroni 10:32–33; D&C 93:11–20; Bible Dictionary, topic of “Grace.” See also *True to the Faith*, topic of

“Grace” (p. 77) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the “Plan of Salvation.”



**Questions 39-40. What is required for full and complete repentance?**

**39. Repentance includes the following elements: (select all that are correct)**

*Correct Response*

- a. Sorrow for committing the sin (godly sorrow). c. Righteous living, living a life of obedience.
- e. Abandonment of sin (forsaking the sin).

*Explanation*

See question 40.

*More Information*

See question 40.

**40. Repentance includes the following elements: (select all that are correct)**

*Correct Response*

- b. Faith to rely on the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
- c. Restitution (seeking to restore the damage as far as possible). f. Confession.

*Explanation*

Repentance includes the following elements:

- *Faith to rely on the Atonement of Jesus Christ.* You must have faith that through prayer you will receive your Heavenly Father's help to repent and that *through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ*, you can have a change of heart and mind, be cleansed, and be forgiven.
- *Sorrow for committing the sin (godly sorrow).* Sorrow for sin comes from acknowledging that you have sinned and feeling godly sorrow for having committed the sin. Godly sorrow means that you feel such remorse for having sinned that it causes your heart to break with sadness for what you have done. You realize that you caused the Savior to suffer and bleed at every pore, and you are heartbroken for that. Godly sorrow gives you a sincere desire to change and a willingness to submit to every requirement for forgiveness. It is different from the natural consequences of sin or fear of getting caught.

- *Confession.* Confession is telling Heavenly Father through sincere prayer all that you have done wrong and expressing sorrow and a desire to repent and receive His forgiveness. You must confess to those you have injured or wronged. Serious sins, such as breaking the law of chastity, need to be confessed to your bishop or branch president.
- *Abandonment of sin (forsaking the sin).* You must abandon the sin by turning away from it, never doing it again, and regretting that you ever did it. Forsaking the sin is to cease sinning, to resolve never to commit it again, and to stay away from the situations where you may be tempted to repeat the sin.
- *Restitution (seeking to restore the damage as far as possible).* You must seek to restore as far as possible all that has been damaged by your sins.
- *Righteous living (living a life of obedience).* It is not enough simply to stop sinning—you must have a change of heart which brings a desire to fill your life with righteousness and engage in activities which bring spiritual power. You must strive throughout your life to obey all gospel teachings, not just the commandment you broke.

#### *More Information*

To learn more, study *True to the Faith*, topic of the “Repentance” (p. 132) and *Seminary Basic Doctrines*, topic of the “Atonement.”

APPENDIX C

**Letter Requesting Teacher's Support**

Fellow teachers in the Idaho West Area:

I am collecting data as part of the dissertation process in the doctoral program at Boise State University. I need your help and assistance. My research is based on teacher disposition and the role it plays in helping students believe, understand, and apply doctrine. Since the introduction of the *Current Teaching Emphasis* in 2003, and the subsequent changes that have taken place since then, there has been a consistent focus on teachers being a certain type of person and an attached promise that this would lead to greater change in the students' lives. I hope to demonstrate empirically that this holds true. By using the *Basic Doctrine Assessment* (BDA) and the *Student Feedback Form* (both are attached, on the bottom of the student feedback form click on the "forms" ribbon and you will see the one page printout – use this page) I will compare the student responses to determine what affect teacher disposition of care has on student outcomes of belief, understanding, and application.

Your role in this process is simple, but tremendous. This week or next would you please sacrifice a day to administer both the *student feedback* form and the *Basic Doctrine Assessment* (using the one I have attached so I don't have to input different answer forms)? It is essential they are given on the same day to ensure proper research practices. It is also absolutely essential that each student's *student feedback* form and their BDA are stapled together so I can compare the data by student. Again, if I have 20 students in a class each student would be given both assessments and each student's completed assessments would be stapled together individually. Johnny's *Student Feedback* form and BDA would be stapled together, but separate from Susy's BDA and *Student Feedback* form, which are also stapled together. Each class can be put into an envelope, separate from the other classes. I can then pick them up or you can mail them to me.

Please call if you have any questions – and thank you so much for blessing my life and assisting me in this. When I have run the data for my dissertation I will send the forms to Salt Lake so they can also run the forms and give you the data back so you can use the information to bless your lives and teaching. What I find will also be available to anyone who cares.

Alex Fuhriman

Capital Seminary

841-4928 (cell)/ 376-2181 (office)

APPENDIX D

**Basic Instructions for the Basic Doctrine Assessment  
as Written by the Church Research Department**

The purpose of this assessment is to help you see how well you understand some doctrines and principles of the gospel. The results will inform me how I can best help you and will be used to improve The Church's Seminary and Institute Programs. Please give your best efforts on this.

There are two sections in this assessment: multiple choice and survey. When you complete the two sections, compare your answers to the Correct Response Guide to help you learn more. However, as you review the Correct Response Guide, do not change your answers or mark items incorrect on your Answer Sheet (bubble sheet). You may now begin.