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THE MEANING OF “GOD” IN MORMON THOUGHT

What Does “God” Mean in Mormon Discourse?

The ways in which Mormons speak of God are distinctive. Like other religious traditions, “God” is an equivocal and often abused word. The word is used in so many different ways that confusion is bound to arise unless we carefully unpack the different ways in which the word is used in the tradition. A large part of the confusion regarding the ways that Mormons use the term is that there is no official theology, no creed, no authoritative statements that articulate with philosophical precision what is addressed in Mormonism. In large part, the refusal to define “God” is characteristic of Mormonism’s approach to theology as a whole. Indeed, there are good arguments that merely adopting the analytic method of dialogue about “God” as a concept is misleading. Mormons generally regard theological discussions as superfluous at best and as engaging in a way of discourse that denies living interaction with God in the here and now at worst.

Those who ask Mormons what we mean when we use the same words they do, but coming from different religious traditions, often inquire in good faith. They are genuinely asking what we are attempting to convey. A response to such good-faith inquiries seems quite essential to facilitate