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“Much Dispute and Wonderful Contentions”: Modern First Amendment Values In The Book of Mormon

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Keywords

freedom of expression, First Amendment, Book of Mormon

Abstract

The First Amendment’s free speech clause, like the religious exercise clause, is profoundly counter-majoritarian. So the fact that a religious point of view is unpopular or out of step with a majority of society is not justification to suppress its expression. Rather, the unpopularity of religious views is the very reason why religious expression should be protected from government or private censorship. Free speech, including religious expression, strengthens and stabilizes society, enables the search for truth, provides a check on government power, facilitates self-governance and fosters autonomy. The Book of Mormon teaches Mormons to respect the contributions of free expression made by others of God’s children, and Mormons assert that others should likewise respect free-speech values of Mormon expression in the public square.

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Carter, Edward L., ““Much Dispute and Wonderful Contentions”:
Modern First Amendment Values In The Book of Mormon” (2014). *Faculty Publications*. 1331.
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/1331>

Document Type

Peer-Reviewed Article

Publication Date

2014-10-03

Permanent URL

<http://hdl.lib.byu.edu/1877/3316>

Publisher

Journal of Media and Religion

Language

English

College

Fine Arts and Communications

Department

Communications

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