

Evangelist to speak in Tabernacle  
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By Carrie A. Moore  
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Almost 10,000 tickets to hear Christian philosopher and author Ravi Zacharias speak in Utah have already been distributed, and local evangelical and LDS representatives hope to see the Tabernacle on Temple Square packed during the evangelist's Nov. 14 appearance.

Pastor Greg Johnson, director of a local group of evangelical ministers called Standing Together, told reporters during a press conference last month that the response to word of Zacharias' visit to Utah has been "overwhelming." He said his office has turned down hundreds of requests for tickets and asked those without them to consider forming standby lines at the Tabernacle or at Kingsbury Hall, where Zacharias will speak Nov. 13.

He is also scheduled to speak at Weber State University on Nov. 15, and tickets for that appearance are nearly gone.

The famed evangelist and author has been compared by many admirers to Christian philosopher C.S. Lewis. He has addressed audiences worldwide in international venues including the United Nations, the White House, Harvard, Cambridge and Princeton. Pastor Johnson said he has been pleased with all the positive discussion the evangelist's visit has generated among people of various faiths in Utah.

Johnson and Bob Millet, who holds the Richard L. Evans Chair for Religious Understanding at Brigham Young University, have organized Zacharias' visit. They said Wednesday that a few evangelicals and Latter-day Saints have questioned his appearance in the Tabernacle — the former concerned that local Protestants are becoming too "cozy" with the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the latter worried that the evangelist has ulterior motives.

A few have wondered whether the other side is "using" its counterpart to try to smooth over what has in recent years been disputed territory as to whether Mormons are Christians, and some have complained to Zacharias' office in Atlanta, he said.

Zacharias is listed as an editor of the most recent version of a book called "The Kingdom of the Cults," which classifies the LDS Church as a cult along with Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Bahai and Jehovah's Witnesses. The book is widely regarded by evangelicals as "the authoritative reference work on major cult systems for nearly 40 years." Written by Walter Martin, it was first published in 1965.

Johnson told the Deseret Morning News a few weeks ago that he has discussed with the First Presidency's office the editor role that Zacharias played in the latest edition of "The Kingdom of the Cults" — "basically, he agreed to lend his name to it, but he didn't write any of it" — and LDS leaders were understanding.

He earlier had drafted a letter to top LDS leaders asking if Zacharias could appear in the Tabernacle. After discussions with Millet, the First Presidency not only granted permission for Zacharias to speak there, but they also plan to meet with the evangelist during his visit to Utah.

Johnson said Zacharias is the first internationally renowned evangelical to speak in the LDS Tabernacle since Dwight L. Moody, founder of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago last appeared there in 1899. Moody was apparently invited to speak in the Tabernacle, first in 1871 and again in 1881.

Zacharias' topic while in Utah will be Christian truth, and the title of his address in the Tabernacle will be "Defending Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life."

For information, see [www.standingtogether.org](http://www.standingtogether.org) or [www.rzim.org](http://www.rzim.org)

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