**WITNESSING TO MORMONS**

First we have to understand the **Mormon’s dilemma.** Mormons who contemplate leaving the organization know that they risk losing their spouse, their children, parents, and other relatives and close friends. The social welfare program of the Mormons is another excellent inducement to Mormons to remain faithful, since if the “breadwinner” of the family is injured, loses his job, or dies; the church undertakes the care and support of his family. So effective is this work that during the Great Depression of the 1930’s, no Mormon family went hungry. Mormons also conscientiously invoke the biblical principle of helping each other. They lend to each other, work for each other, and cooperate toward the common goal of bringing “restored Christianity” to the world. These and other forces make Mormonism a family-centered religion, which ties the faith of the church to the indissoluble bonds of family unity and loyalty. This creates a complex system of pressures and intertwining values over which is superimposed the theological structure of the Mormon Church, which stand between the average Mormon and the attainment of “exaltation” or progression to godhood.

**ENCOURAGE AN EXAMINATION OF BELIEFS**

**DON’T ASSUME ALL MORMONS HAVE THE SAMES BELIEFS**

We must **define our terms clearly**. Mormons use many Christian words—such as God, Jesus, Christ, atonement, and salvation—but they put their own cultic meanings into these words. Walter Martin said:

What the Mormons mean by theological terms and what the Bible and the true church mean by them are entirely different. The importance of destroying the “terminology block” cannot be overemphasized. No matter how good your presentation is, and no matter how much you have researched and studied, so that you can present the gospel in an orthodox manner, if you cannot communicate, you are wasting your time. Always define your terms when witnessing to a Mormon.

Use only the **King James Version of the Bible.** This is the only version officially accepted and used by the Mormon Church. Also, do not allow a Mormon to cite a scripture verse off the top of his head. Mormons often misquote Bible verses. Always come back and say “let’s turn to that passage and read it in context.”

When Mormons visit you, they will seek to find common ground on many of the doctrines Christians believe. For example, they may begin by saying that God revealed the Old Testament through Moses and the Prophets. Then Jesus came, was crucified and resurrected. His disciples wrote books and letters that became the New Testament. We all agree on these facts. Then the differences begin. They will tell you that before Jesus’ ascension into Heaven; he appeared to the inhabitants of North America and gave them the Gospel as well. His message and the history of these inhabitants from 600 B.C. to A.D. 400 are recorded in the Book of Mormon.

**HOW TO ANSWER MORMONS:**

**The Bible is reliable.** Mormons claim the Bible has been corrupted over the years as evidenced by the many different translations. If you ask a Mormon if he believes in the Bible, he will refer to The Articles of Faith, Verse 8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

Most if not all of the New Testament was originally written in Greek. How do we know that the New Testament which we have today is what was originally written? Approximately 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament have survived in the original language. Within 300 years of Christ, almost 36,000 quotations of the New Testament appear in the writings of the early Church Fathers. Although there are variations in the New Testament manuscripts, there are literally tens of thousands of manuscripts from which to do a comparative study. And when scholars in the field of textual criticism do it, a text of the New Testament can be produced which is better than 99.5% pure to what the originals said. What about the Old Testament? The writers of the New Testament cite verses from the Old Testament a total of 330 times. Approximately 90% of the text of the Old Testament is without any variation, regardless of textual tradition. We can confidently assert that the Bible in our possession today, both the Old and New Testament, is a pure and trustworthy text we can rely on.

**Archaeology and history have confirmed the Bible.** The Smithsonian Institution’s Department of Anthropology has an official statement on “The Bible AS History.’ In it they say,

…much of the Bible, in particular the historical books of the Old Testament, are as accurate historical document as any that we have from antiquity and are in fact more accurate than many of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, or Greek histories. These Biblical records can be, and are, used in archeological work.

**Archaeology and the Book of Mormon** The Mormons at your door will tell you that many findings within archaeology have confirmed the Book of Mormon. Both Mormon archeologist and non-Mormon archeologist say there is no specific confirmation of the Book of Mormon from archaeology. BYU is owned by the Mormon Church and has a Department dedicated to Book of Mormon archaeology. According to BYU anthropologist, John Clark, virtually all of the professional archaeologists there admit that archaeological finds which specifically tie the past to events in the Book of Mormon are missing.

We have Hebrew and Greek manuscripts in our possession today that allow us to have an accurate translation of the Bible. Even by Mormon standards, we can be confident that we have the Word of God. We also see that secular history has attested to the accuracy of the Bible so that we can know with certainty that many of the events recorded in it took place. Unfortunately, the Mormon cannot have this same confidence when it comes to the Book of Mormon. Archaeology and secular history are silent when asked if the events took place.

**MORMON EVIDENCES?**

When talking to Mormons expect to hear them say, “I know the Book of Mormon is true because I have prayed to God and asked him to tell me if it is true. And he has confirmed it in my spirit that it is.” In other words, “We don’t need evidence. God has told me the Book of Mormon is true. He has confirmed it in my spirit so that no amount of evidence against Mormonism would convince me that it is wrong.” Mormon missionaries are trained to keep on telling you how the Holy Spirit has confirmed to them that the Book of Mormon is true, that Jesus has changed their life and has meant so much to them. Much of how much they will listen to you will depend on them having an open mind.

**Feelings:**

Have you ever doubted your salvation? Your feelings do not change the fact that either you are or are not saved. It is possible for someone to have doubts about being a Christian, and still be one. It is also true for someone to feel confident that they are okay in their relationship with God but in reality are not.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? (Matthew 7:21-22)

Think of the confidence many of the Jewish leaders in Jesus’ time had that they were doing to will of God. Yet, Jesus said to them,” Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44). The apostle Paul was a perfect example. He believed he was doing the will of God by persecuting and killing Christians, but found that he was actually persecuting the Son of God.

6And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutes. (Acts 22:1-8)

People of other religions claim a confirmation from within themselves as evidence that their religion is true. Islam makes the same claims and yet Mormons do not regard the Koran or Islamic doctrine as being divinely inspired. Mohammed made claims similar to Joseph Smith’s.

Is Islam true? No. Certainly Mormons do not believe that it is. So, one can be sincere and confident that God has shown them the way and still be mistaken, as in the case of Muslims. The Mormons say, “God has confirmed it to me.” But the Muslim says the same thing and so do Christians. What is the difference between the confirmations of Mormons, Muslims, and Christians? Probably all of us at one time or another has presented feelings and spiritual experiences as evidence that our beliefs are true. The peace that we feel as Christians is authentic. People of other faiths experience this as well but the only way to determine the true source is to look at outside evidence.

Be prepared to present the evidence for your position. You can say to the Mormon missionaries, “We both are confident and assured that we are correct in our own beliefs. Since or beliefs differ, and they do or you wouldn’t be here today, one of us is wrong. How will we know which one? Only by looking at the evidence outside of ourselves. When we do we observe the Bible is reliable and has been accurately preserved. This verifies my position, because I accept the Bible. When we look at Mormonism independently we observe that there is no confirmation of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon from archaeology or history. In fact, the lack of archaeological evidence that ought to be there is hurtful to Mormonism. Finally, since Smith’s translation of the Book of Abraham has been shown to be fraudulent, his ability to translate the Book of Mormon accurately is also in serious question. Since we both have inward feelings that our view is true, the outside evidence makes my position much more likely than yours.

**CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION:**

There is no need to be defensive or hostile to Mormon missionaries who come to your door. Do not view them as the enemy, but as dedicated people who have been misled. Love them. Pray for them. Make a difference. When talking to Mormons:

1. Set the agenda. You start the conversation not them.
2. Establish that the Bible is reliable.
3. Discuss the challenges to the Book of Mormon posed by archaeology and history.
4. Discuss the challenges to the Book of Abraham presented by professional Egyptologists who have translated the papyri that Joseph Smith used. This point in particular destroys the credibility of Joseph Smith. If Smith’s translation of the Book of Abraham is completely wrong, then there is no reason to believe his translation of the Book of Mormon is any better. His claims of having a God-given ability to translate and to being a chosen Prophet of God becomes suspect.
5. Be prepared to address the value of feelings.

When Mormons knock on your door, embrace the opportunity. Show yourself to be a loving and knowledgeable Christian. The object is not to win an argument but to try to lead a sincere person to the truth. Paul wrote:

24 And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)