

**WITNESSING EFFECTIVELY TO LATTER-DAY SAINTS (LDS)**  
**(aka PROFESSED MORMONS): PART 1**  
**Equipping Hour at Saving Grace Bible Church, Osprey, FL; 7/16/2017**

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the last several weeks, Colin Jordon faithfully presented truth from the Word of God whereby he contrasted a number of “faith” movements that, over time, have strayed from the doctrines of historic Biblical Christianity. With that precursor, for the next several weeks, I am scheduled to present a series on how to witness effectively to professed Mormons.

**PURPOSE**

To compare LDS Church doctrines with the Bible so that you may be better equipped to witness effectively to professed Mormons. The purpose is not to “bash Mormons” as people, but to address doctrinal issues. In fact, you may ask, “Why should I care about knowing some of what the LDS Church teaches? Sooner or later, someone you know is going to join the LDS Church. The LDS Church sends out over 50,000 missionaries who convert over 240,000 people into their church “system” every year. Many of these people were already members of some Christian church before embracing Mormon doctrine and joining the LDS Church. You need to be informed on the issues in order to reach out to those who are being deceived as well as deepen your knowledge of God’s Word, the Bible.

**PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

- Our family moved to Tooele County, UT, in early 2000 (our children were 2, 4, 6, and 8).
- I was employed in a supervisory position at US Army Dugway Proving Ground, Dugway, UT. During the 12+ years I served in this position, the majority of my co-workers and employees (of whom I was responsible for) were professed Mormons (several served as LDS Bishops in their local community wards).
- Read besetting burdens account of J.A.C. Redford: steps, lists, things to be done –good works. (I Love Mormons, Chapter 7, page 96; see reference list/recommended readings.)
- Read besetting burdens account of Janet (and Stephen) Robinson. (I Love Mormons, Chapter 7, pages 99-107; see reference list/recommended readings.)
- In the community we resided, we lived among professed Mormons; many were our neighbors – real and very sincere people dedicated to the LDS Church’s teachings/doctrines:
  - o Alfalfa Hay Farmer; US Pony Club – Local Erda Chapter President; Computer/IT repair specialist; Orthodontist Practice; Dentist Practice; Veterinarian; Hairdresser for my wife and daughter; Medical Physician’s Assistant; Car Repair Specialist; UPS Driver/ Deliverer, et al.
  - o Vanpool 45+ miles each way from home to Dugway– majority were professed Mormons.
- Utah: known as the Beehive State for their industrious work ethic.
- Some LDS people leave their church for various reasons: (1) Hunger for God (sincere); (2) Deal breaking inconsistencies; and (3) Besetting burdens.

**INTRODUCTION**

- Professed Mormons are real people; most in UT are very sincere about what they believe.
- Those living in the US are very loyal/conservative Americans; make beautiful music, many are talented musicians, teach family values, pursue moral correctness, promote virtues, and believe they follow the gospel as their church defines and understands it.
- They maintain that their name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, states whom they follow and wholeheartedly believe they are Christians.
- If you have ever visited, SLC, the LDS Temple grounds are a popular place for visitors to attend and the LDS Church makes a very strong marketing pitch that they are just another “Christian denomination” (but they will make it clear that they are neither a Protestant or Catholic sect.)

## **The Origin of Mormonism According to the LDS Church's Teaching**

When Jesus lived on earth, He organized His church. He had 12 apostles that He ordained. When Jesus was crucified, His apostles were killed and the truth was lost.

According to the LDS Church, 14-year old Joseph Smith was visited by God the Father and God the Son after reading James 1:5 and praying about which church he should join. Joseph Smith prayed to God for answers to his questions and the heavens were opened before him. Heavenly Father and his son Jesus Christ appeared to the boy Joseph Smith. He was searching for the truth because he wanted to know which of the religions was true. His mother belonged to one church and his father belonged to another. He was told that he should join none of them because they were all an abomination to God.

Three years later, Joseph was visited by a messenger from heaven. He told Joseph about a record written on golden plates, a record written by ancient prophets who lived in the Americas long ago. Eventually Joseph was given the power to translate these records from Egyptian into English. Soon the record was translated and published as the Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ.

While he was translating the plates, Joseph and his companion, Oliver Cowdrey, prayed to God about baptism. As an answer to their prayer, John the Baptist appeared and gave them the authority to baptize in God's name. Joseph Smith founded it at the age of 24, in the state of New York on April 6, 1830. It was originally named the Church of Christ, and then in 1834 the name was changed to the Church of the LDS, established in 1830 through the prophet Joseph Smith. Soon missionaries of the Church were sent to England and beyond.

The LDS Church claims that many people were moved by the power of the Book of Mormon and the testimony of the members of the church. In 1844 persecution mounted against the church forcing the members to flee from state to state. Joseph Smith was martyred and in 1846 Joseph Smith's successor Brigham Young led their followers west to what is now known as Salt Lake City. It was not as it is today. It was barren. It was a desert. So they had to work very hard to cultivate the land to plant crops. And this legacy of hard work and faith and perseverance belongs to every member of their church. They sent missionaries all over the world. Today LDS church membership stretches all over the world and like me more than half of the members of the church live outside of the United States. So it's not an American church but it's a worldwide church. The LDS church keeps on growing and is creating new chapters in the history of the church worldwide.

### **How many professed Mormons are there?**

The LDS Church published in 2008 *Deseret News Church Almanac* lists USA total as 5,779,316, world total 12,868,606. Most of those outside of the USA are in Latin American countries (see <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/statistical-information>).

### **So, Why do Mormon missionaries come to your door?**

The LDS Church claims to be the "only true church" and the only church with the authority to act in God's name. They do not accept any other Christian church's (including Protestant or Catholic) baptisms. According to their teachings, their baptism is the only one recognized by the Lord. This belief, coupled with their belief in the need for a Mormon temple marriage to gain eternal life, compels them (in obedience to LDS church expectations) to spread their message throughout their world.

## The Four Primary Sources the LDS Church Relies on to Support Their Faith/Doctrines

### 1. **KJV Bible (only):**

The First Presidency (recent ones: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson) of the LDS Church have confirmed that since the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the LDS church has used the KJV Bible for English-speaking members.

In the LDS Church's Articles of Faith it states: The Bible, as it has been transmitted over the centuries, has suffered the loss of many plain and precious parts. '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.' (Articles of Faith 1:8). (Note: translated = interpreted to the LDS Church.) That said, the LDS church believes that the most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical passage is not by comparing different texts, but by comparison any Bible passage with the Book of Mormon and modern-day revelations (given by the First Presidency of the LDS Church).

The LDS edition of the Bible (1979) contains the KJV supplemented and clarified by footnotes, study aids, and cross-references to the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These four books are the standard works of the LDS church. All LDS church members are encouraged to own copies of the complete standard works and to use them prayerfully in regular personal and family study, and in Church meetings and assignments. (Note: The Book of Mormon is the primary (usually only) book which LDS church members bring to their local wards on Sundays.)

### 2. ***The Book of Mormon.***

It contains the purported stories of three different groups who sailed to the Americas. The Jaredites (Book of Ether) came to the New World at the time of the tower of Babel. The Mulekites came to America from Jerusalem in 586 BC. The major group was the family of Lehi. Two of his sons, Nephi and Laman, became the leaders of the Nephites and Lamanites. The last battle between the two groups, in 421 AD, wiped out almost all of the Nephites. Moroni, the last surviving Nephite, buried the records of his civilization in the Hill Cumorah. Hundreds of years later, Joseph Smith was directed to the spot by Moroni (some records say Nephi), now a resurrected being who had become an angel. Smith then "translated" the record and published it in 1830 under the title, "The Book of Mormon."

Read: Galatians 1:6-10 and explain that in that passage the word "different" (akin to heterogeneous not homogeneous).

3. ***The Doctrine and Covenants.*** It contains 138 sections and two Official Declarations. The first 135 sections contain Joseph Smith's revelations from 1823 to 1844; section 136 is a revelation by Smith's successor, President Brigham Young, in 1847; section 138 is one by President Joseph Fielding Smith in 1918. Declaration No. 1 is dated 1890 and is referred to as "The Manifesto," which declared an end to the practice of polygamy. Declaration No. 2 is dated 1978 and declared that "all worthy male members" could now hold the Priesthood and participate in the temple ceremonies. This ended the LDS Church Priesthood ban on black-skinned people.

4. ***The Pearl of Great Price.*** This document contains:

- The Book of Moses – "An Extract from the Translation of the Bible as Revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet, June 1830—February 1831."
- The Book of Abraham – "A Translation of Some Ancient Records that Have Fallen into our Hands from the Catacombs of Egypt."

- Joseph Smith – Matthew. “An Extract from the Translation of the Bible As Revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet In 1831: Matthew 23:39 And Chapter 24.”
- Joseph Smith – History. “Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. History of the Church, Vol.1, Chapters 1-5.”
- The Articles of Faith. A list of 13 specific beliefs of the LDS Church written in 1842.

LDS Church officials also trust *The Journal of Discourses*, which is a 26-volume compilation of LDS Presidents’ and LDS apostles’ sermons covering about 35 years. There were several men who were officially assigned by the LDS Church to record the talks. Volume One of the series contains a letter from the LDS First Presidency (Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards), dated June 1, 1853, authorizing the publishing of the sermons. The *Journal of Discourses* is listed as an official publication of the LDS Church in the following books:

- *Essentials in Church History*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, published by the LDS Church, p. 674.
- *Deseret News 1989-90 Church Almanac*, p. 188, published by the LDS Church via the LDS Church-owned newspaper in Salt Lake City, UT.

The *Journal of Discourses* is quoted repeatedly in LDS publications and in LDS conference reports [e.g., *Doctrines of the Gospel, Student Manual, Religion 231 and 232*, published by the LDS Church Educational System, 1986, p.83; and *Ensign Magazine* (official publication of the LDS Church) May 1996, Conference talk by James E. Faust, of the First Presidency, p.7].

### **HELPFUL RESOURCES / FURTHER READING ON WHAT THE LDS CHURCH HAS TAUGHT AND CURRENTLY (SIC) BELIEVES AND TEACHES**

Anderson, Roger, I. *The Bible and Mormonism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Faith, Prayer & Tract League, n.d.

Ankerberg, John, and Weldon, John. *Facts on Mormonism*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003.

Benson, Cindy. *A Struggle to Peace (A Story of a Sixth Generation Mormon)*. Bernalillo, NM: New Testament Ministries, n.d.

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Decker, Ed. *Mormonism: What You Need To Know (Quick Reference Guide)*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1997.

Martin, Walter. *The Kingdom of the Cults (Limited Edition)*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1985, 1996.

McConkie, Bruce, R. *Mormon Doctrine*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1966.

Ransom, Ira, T. *Ask Your Bishop*. Sacramento, CA: United Missionary Fellowship, n.d.

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- Ransom, Ira, T. Three Septs for Witnessing to Mormons (Instruction Manual for Visualized Witnessing Notebook). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Sacramento, CA: United Missionary Fellowship, 1981.
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- Rhodes, Ron, and Bodine, Marian. Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Mormons. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995.
- Rowe, Ph.D., David, L. I Love Mormons (A New Way to Share Christ with Latter-Day Saints). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005.
- Smith, John L. Witnessing Effectively to Mormons, Marlow, OK: Utah Missions, 1975.
- Tanner, Sandra. The Bible and Mormon Doctrine, Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1971.
- Whitney, Orson F. BAPTISM: The Birth of Water and the Spirit. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Deseret News Press), n.d.
- The Bible*. Authorized King James Version (KJV).
- The Book of Mormon*. Ed. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2006. Print.