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HOW TO WITNESS TO A MORMON

A compassion and “hurt” for lost souls is the best witness. One’s ultimate purpose should not be to demonstrate the error of Mormonism but to point to the need of receiving the “real Jesus” as Savior and Lord. Yet Jesus Himself stressed the need to know the truth when He said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). He went on to say, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). Witnessing is never complete unless some information is given concerning Jesus Christ.

The language barrier can be a major problem in witnessing to a Mormon. Mormons use Christian terminology but with a vastly different meaning. Therefore, an understanding of basic Mormon doctrine is essential for communication.

The Bible also instructs believers to be always ready to give an answer to every person with an attitude of respect. First Peter 3:15 states: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

Actually, we are under obligation *from* Mormon leaders to refute any false LDS doctrines or untrue claims. Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth prophet of the Latter-day Saints (LDS) church, pronounced: "If Joseph Smith was a deceiver, who willfully attempted to mislead the people, then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 188).

The most important thing to remember is that Christians are called to "plant" and "water" for the glory of God, but it is God that gives the increase (see 1 Corinthians 3:7).

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE MORMON CHURCH

The beginning of Mormonism can be traced to a miraculous event that supposedly happened in upstate New York to a fourteen-year-old boy named Joseph Smith in the year 1820.

A great revival sweeping the area in which Joseph Smith lived moved him to go into the woods near his home to pray and ask God which church he should join.

As he knelt in prayer, God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him in a pillar of light. Jesus Christ's response to Joseph's question is recorded in Mormon scripture, *The Pearl of Great Price*: "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those

professors were all corrupt” (Joseph Smith 2:19).

Three and a half years later, Joseph was again praying and an angel appeared in a bright light identifying himself as Moroni, who informed him that God had a work for him to do. He told Joseph about a book written upon gold plates by the former inhabitants of this continent.

After four more visits by Moroni over the next four years, Smith was given the gold plates and two special stones by which he translated the “Reformed Egyptian” characters engraved on the plates into English. The book was published in 1830 as “The Book of Mormon.”

Fourteen years later, Smith was arrested and jailed for treason in Carthage, Illinois. The acclaimed prophet accepted a smuggled gun, which he used when an angry mob stormed the jail. Joseph and his brother Hyrum were killed.

Brigham Young became Joseph’s successor and led the Mormons west to the Salt Lake Valley where the headquarters are still today.