

Disciple of Christ Study: Lesson 9
Addendum B. Witnessing to Cult Groups

As you reach out to others for Jesus Christ, it will become apparent that there are individuals or groups of individuals that claim to be professing Christians but will give you the impression that something is not exactly right.

Although we at CLI clearly do not wish to be critical of anyone or any specific group, we do feel that it is important for us to communicate to you some warning signs. We also want to share with you some helpful tools that will enable you to clearly and confidently share your faith in Jesus Christ.

Warning Signs - Definition of a Cult Group

Definition of a Cult: Any religious movement that is organizationally distinct and has doctrines and or/practices that contradict those of the Holy Bible as interpreted by traditional Christianity.

Premise: There are so many good, loving, sincere people that are very devout in their beliefs. They attend church, love their families, and serve their communities. These people have a strong belief in their god, live moral lives and hurt no one. So why don't we leave them alone, live and let live? After all, these are good, sincere people; they can't all be condemned to go to hell? Can they?

1. Jesus is the only way – John 14:6, 2 John 1:7-11, Mathew 7:14-15

When people take their eyes off Jesus and say there are other ways, beware. Cults do not believe in the Jesus of the Holy Bible, or that Jesus is the only way.

2. Jesus is God - 1 John 1:1-3, Revelation 1:18

When anyone declares that Jesus is not God, period, beware. Cults believe Jesus is not God.

3. The Trinity – Colossians 2:9, 1 John chapter 5

When they say anything other than, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, beware. Cults believe in a separation of God, or they will deny the trinity.

4. False doctrines – If anyone brings up another or higher revelation of God by:

a. Earning your salvation. (Eph 2:8-10) b. Believing in special prophets or extra biblical publications on par with the Bible (Revelations 22:18-19.) c. Any methods, rules, limits that either: control your life or take your focus off of the Bible (Job 29:3, Psalm 119:105.) d. Non biblical emphasis on special beliefs, or positions of being “the special, the chosen, or the elite group” (Colossians 1:26-28): This may be centered around doctrines regarding: Sin, Sacrifice, Obedience, or Rules about the Sabbath, Hell, Works, or any special revelation not found in the Bible (Colossians 1:9-14).

Toolkit for evangelism

It would be very difficult for us at CLI to list out every cult group in existence today. We do feel, however, that it is profitable for us to do a basic study for you that briefly outlines one of the cult groups. The following guidelines are for general use in witnessing to Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, but the technique of gathering these tools and information can be applied across the board to other groups. If you have a particular group that you are interested in, we will gladly compile the information for you and a partner in prayer with you to help you with your witnessing.

Witnessing to a target group: Mormons(LDS)

1. In order to effectively witness to a Mormon, it is important to know what they believe. To be better prepared, study what follows and "Mormon Basics." If you attend a Mormon Church service, you may be surprised to know that there are only subtle differences from many traditional Christian services. Hymns are sung by the congregation, prayers are offered by church members, Communion is passed by priesthood holders (Bread, Water), and there is an exhortation by two or three assigned speakers (preachers).
2. It is always best to know foundational Biblical truths. What the Bible says about what we believe. We must encourage Mormons to "trust in what is trustworthy" rather than believing what is subjective or emotional.
3. Don't go it alone. Take a friend and develop a strong prayer support base such as at church or a local prayer group before you witness to a Mormon. It is most important for someone to be in prayer at the same time you are witnessing. Mormon missionaries travel in twos and are highly trained to lead all discussions with a well prepared delivery.
4. Do not get into a debate with a Mormon. Cornerstone beliefs include direct extra biblical prophesy and revelation, so it is best to avoid confrontations. They need to be delivered and released from bondage, which can only come through love and employing the fruits of the Spirit. (2 Tim. 2:24-26, John 13:23-35, Col.4:5-6)
5. Be ready to explain your faith in simple terms, always explain Biblical views in your own words and try to avoid confusing vocabulary such as mature Christian terminology. Use only the King James Version of the Bible as it is the only version accepted by Mormons.
6. Witnessing can be more successful using the following steps: 1. a. Make friends or get to know them on a personal level. b. Serve and assure them that you are genuine and care about them. c. Be patient and diligent in prayer partnering with others, this should include several encounters. 2. a. Listen, b. Become in-offensive but powerful, c. Establish common ground, d. Introduce the real Jesus and present the Gospel. Remember, they believe in Jesus, but not the Jesus of the Bible.

Mormon Basics - Terminology and Error

1. **The Church** – The Mormon Church claims to be the only true church. Mormons believe in a general Apostasy of the Church and a need for a restoration. They believe that the Mormon Church is this restoration accomplished by their prophet Joseph Smith who established the true Church, Priesthood, Temple, Apostles, and proclaimed himself to be a prophet.
2. **Book of Mormon** – Mormons believe the Book of Mormon is true. They say it is a companion Bible written by Joseph Smith and was decoded from Hieroglyphs written on

gold plates, using special glasses, while looking into a hat. Smith claims the plates and glasses were given to him by an angel called Moroni. The book of Mormon was written in King James English and published in 1830. The setting for the Book of Mormon is on the American Continent and describes large cities, large battles, and Native Americans encounter with Jesus. Evidence shows the Book of Mormon was compiled by Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdrey, and additional input from Parley Pratt and Smith himself using sources such as: 1. “Manuscript Found” by Solomon Spaulding. 2. The King James Bible – especially Isaiah and Matthew. 3. “View of the Hebrews” by Ethan Smith. 4. Other 19th century literatures. According to Stanford University Wordprint analysis, there is no evidence that demonstrates the Book of Mormon is an ancient work.

3. **Joseph Smith** – For Mormons their prophets are to be obeyed. There are sixteen Mormon Prophets, including Brigham Young and the current prophet Gordon Hinkely. The most prominent prophet is the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, who introduced the Book of Mormon and founded the Mormon Church (LDS). Smith reported a vision in 1820 from God, not to join any church because they were all wrong. Smith states that in 1823 the angel Moroni told him that he would be translating ancient plates. In 1826 Smith states that he received the gold plates, which were finally translated into the Book of Mormon in 1830 when he started the church.
4. **Priesthood, Temples** – Mormons believe Joseph Smith restored the true Church along with a restoration of a form of Old Testament priesthood authority and temple rites because of “the great apostasy” in the church in his time. The Priesthood includes Aaronic and Melchizedek. Priest offices are High Priest, Patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle. Masonic symbols decorate the inside of the “Temples,” which are not worship centers but rather are used for ceremonies for the living and the dead. Mormon worship centers are called Wards or Stakes.
5. **Other Sheep doctrine** – Is vital for Mormons because this doctrine hope to verify the book of Mormon and its biblical claim that Jesus visited his other sheep. Mormons believe the Native American (Indians) on the American continent were descendants of Lehi from the remnant of the house of Israel who arrived by boat to the Americas. In spite of clear DNA evidence to the contrary, Mormons stubbornly embrace the belief that American Indians are of Hebrew decent.
6. **God** – Separation of Gods: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit all of which have separate bodies. They believe in a pre-existence before our world, when God the Father bore Mormons as his children by a plurality of wives. Mormons believe that God was once a mortal man who progressed to Godhood and lives on a planet near the star Kolob in a physical body. Mormons believe Mormons can progress to god-like status like God the Father and become saviors like Jesus for people on other planets.
7. **Jesus Christ** – Mormons believe Jesus is literally their older brother. Jesus was the first born of Heavenly parents who progressed to Godhood in His pre-existence. In that pre-existence both Jesus and Lucifer submitted salvation plans. Jesus and His plan was chosen, which caused Lucifer to rebel and take one third of the angels with him to become Satan and his demons.
8. **Holy Spirit** – Mormons believe in two. A Holy Spirit who is a person without flesh and bones and a Holy Spirit who is the power and presence of God.
9. **Heaven and Hell** – Mormons believe in three heavens: Celestial - Where baptized faithful Mormon members go, or eternal life. Terrestrial - Where Mormons go if they receive an after-death Mormon conversion, which they call saved by grace or immortality. Telestial - The lowest level of heaven where non-Mormons and unfaithful Mormons go, also called

spirit prison. Hell - Is where Celestial residents will end up. To summarize, Mormons believe in two places they go when they die: Spirit prison - Where they can still be witnessed to, or baptized for, and could actually ascend to or end up in Terrestrial heaven. Paradise - Where Mormons progress to godhood.

10. **Baptism for the Dead** – Mormons believe in special Temple baptism ceremonies for their dead or non-Mormon believing relatives so they can reach the Terrestrial kingdom. They themselves are actually re-baptized for their dead relative in a special temple ceremony. There are other ceremonies where couples are sealed and when they reach heaven, will live forever in Celestial marriage called the eternal family doctrine. Other endowments include receiving magical underwear that is worn by every Mormon at all times except when bathing. The underwear when worn, protects Mormons from all evil.
11. **Authority of the Word** – Mormons believe the Bible is good but corrupt and should not be followed as complete. The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of great price, are for Mormons on par with the Bible and when used in conjunction with the Bible make the Bible complete.
12. **Works and Law** – Mormons believe in a works-based salvation that is required to enter the Celestial Heaven. Mormons also believe in a legal system that involves a dual salvation: a. Saved by grace which means they go to Terrestrial heaven. b. Their works and obedience to Mormon ordinances qualifies them to reach Celestial heaven.
13. **Mormon Missionaries** – Every “Ward” (church) has a “young single adult mission committee”. Its purpose is to help **every** young man in the ward over 19 but under 25 go on a two year mission. There are over 50,000 active missionaries world wide. Their mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ equally with Mormon beliefs and the plan of salvation equally with eternal family doctrine. (Mormons teach families members live together forever if they live righteously and according to the covenants made in the temple).
14. **Mormon Approach to Conversion and Truth** – Several people will tell the person they are trying to convert that the church is true. This person is then told to read and pray to know the answer “for themselves.” He is then told that he will receive a confirmation of the prayer with a burning in his bosom. Thus Mormon truth is established exclusively by prayer.

Witnessing to a target group: Jehovah’s Witnesses

7. In order to effectively witness to a Jehovah’s Witness it is important to know what they believe. To be better prepared study what follows or go to their website for more information. Unlike the Mormons and many other groups, Jehovah’s Witnesses really do tell it straight on their own website watchtower.org (It is all inclusive and explains everything very clearly).
8. It is always best to know foundational Biblical truths. What the Bible says about what we believe. We must encourage Jehovah’s Witnesses to trust the Bible and to question Watchtower publications which are not inspired by God nor are they the only proper guide to interpreting the Bible.
9. As with all cults don’t go it alone. It is best to go with a friend and develop a strong prayer support base such as at church or a local prayer group before you witness to Jehovah’s Witnesses. It is most important for someone to be in prayer at the same time you are witnessing.

10. Do not get into a scripture trading debate with Jehovah's Witnesses. In fact the less you appear to know the more open they will become. They seem more open and genuine if you listen, appear interested, and give them do time. If you hammer them with scriptures they are trained to use a canned response or rebuttal. They only read Watchtower publications and know their doctrine well (primarily, "What does the Bible really teach" and the magazines "Watchtower" and "Awake"). They need to be delivered and released from bondage, which can only come through love and employing the fruits of the Spirit. (2 Tim. 2:24-26, John 13:23-35, Col.4:5-6)
11. Be ready to explain your faith in simple terms, always explain biblical views in your own words and use life changing experiences and your testimony. They may be a little confused by church doctrine and terminology because of their steady diet of Watchtower publications. Always stay cool and never loose your temper while witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses. If you do they will believe Satan sent you to test them and they will go into a rehearsed speech quoting Mathew 10:14. They will never accept any non-Watchtower materials so whatever you explain must be done verbally.
12. In summary 1. a. Understand what they believe. b. Be loving and do not try pick a fight as they will quote Mathew 10:14 and leave. The newer Jehovah's Witnesses are schooled to send in their mentor when challenging people are encountered. c. Assure them that you are genuine and care about them. d. Be patient or even play dumb if you want to win them or draw them out quicker. If you encounter a door to door team and want a second encounter don't accept their Watchtower materials, this drives them crazy and I assure you that they will be back. 2. a. Listen, b. Appear interested and in-offensive, c. Establish common ground. d. Introduce the real Jesus and present the Gospel. They believe in Jesus, but not the Jesus of the Bible.

Jehovah's Witness - Terminology and Error

15. **The Church** – Jehovah's Witnesses claim to be the only true church. Their church or house of worship is called the Kingdom Hall, all of which have a Library or member area to pick up Watchtower literature. Jehovah's Witnesses have there own Bible and are instructed to study this Bible using Watchtower literature (Watchtower is the publishing house used for distributing their materials). You will not see any religious symbols inside or outside of the Kingdom Hall. The focus is clearly on visitors which are immediately swamped at the door. Visitors are encouraged to get a copy of their own Bible (New World Translation Jehovah's Witnesses version) and begin taking Watchtower study courses. The main service is normally a half lecture followed by a one hour question and answer period. The mid-week service is normally a twenty five minute study of a Watchtower brochure or book that is used to direct a question answer Bible study. Public speaking classes are also offered.
16. **New World Translation** – Jehovah's Witnesses claim this translation to be "Reasoning from the Scriptures". It is claimed to be translated directly from the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek into modern day English by a committee of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Watchtower society believes all other translations of the Bible to be corrupt. They claim the New World Translation properly uses Jehovah's name 237 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures which is their version of the New Testament. They call the Old Testament – Hebrew.
17. **Beliefs** – Jehovah's Witnesses beliefs stem from the teachings of founder Charles Taze Russell. His beliefs were distributed through "Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence" beginning in 1879. After several name changes over the years it finally became

“Watchtower Announcing Jehovah’s Kingdom” in 1939. Charles Taze Russell in the 1870’s started a revival from the “Great Apostasy” that they believe occurred at the death of the last Apostle. The intent of the publications was to promote Russell’s restoration and end time’s predictions about the Kingdom of God coming to earth in 1914 which is centered on Daniel’s prophecies and the date of the Babylonian captivity. Russell’s successors were J.F. Rutherford in 1916, Nathan Homer Knorr in 1942 and finally to the current governing body in 1977.

18. **Kingdom of God – 144,000 Chosen** – Jehovah’s Witness believe that their religion is the only right one. They believe the present age is about to be terminated. According to Russell’s end time’s predictions the “Kingdom of God” came to earth in 1914 where Jesus was invisibly enthroned as king. They believe that since the time of the Apostles God has been selecting 144,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses. These 144,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses will rule in heaven with God and Jesus over the remainder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Those left behind will spend eternity in an earthly paradise as the “other sheep”. They believe the second coming already happened in 1914 after a battle with Satan. After the 1914 battle they believe Satan was hurled down to earth with his demons and Jesus began to rule the Heavenly Kingdom. They believe that in the very near future the Battle of Armageddon will begin against all non-Jehovah’s Witnesses. After the battle, a peaceful paradise or New Kingdom will be established on Earth for the “other sheep” or meek, for 1000 years. Satan and his demons will be removed from Earth and abyssed. The wicked will be destroyed. After Jesus’ 1000 year peaceful reign on Earth there will be a resurrection of righteous Jehovah’s Witnesses to eternal life on Earth. The unrighteous will be given a second opportunity to accept Jehovah’s Witnesses doctrine, those that don’t will be destroyed forever and his work completed, Christ will hand the Kingdom back to his father.
19. **God** – Jehovah’s Witnesses believe God’s name is Jehovah and not God or Lord. They do however accept the name Yahweh. They teach that Jehovah God is a single monotheistic person not a trinity, does not know all things and is not everywhere but rather lives in the spirit realm in a specific place on His throne. They once taught that His throne was near Alcyone, the brightest star in the Pleiades star group (J.F. Rutherford 1928). They now say that is unwise to fix God’s throne as being in any particular place in the universe and from this dwelling place he uses his active force to reach out to both the spirit and physical realms.
20. **Jesus Christ** – Jehovah’s Witnesses teach Jesus was created, is separate from, and is inferior to God. They teach Jesus is another name for Michael the arch-angel. Jehovah’s Witnesses do not believe in a bodily resurrection of Jesus but rather that Jesus was resurrected and called back to a spirit life. Finally that Jesus died on a stake not a cross and is subordinate to Jehovah.
21. **Holy Spirit** – Jehovah’s Witnesses believe the Holy Spirit is not a separate entity or distinct person but rather Gods power in action or Gods powerful active force.
22. **Heaven and Hell** – Jehovah’s Witnesses believe heaven is the place for the 144,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses born again as spiritual sons of God. Heaven is where the Earth will be ruled from. They believe Earth is where the non 144,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses will live forever. They believe Earth will never be destroyed or de-populated that there be a resurrection for the non-144,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses to the new Earth. This before and after new Earth will be transformed into a “Garden of Eden” type existence. Jehovah’s Witnesses deny a literal hell. They believe that the popular idea of hell was created by Satan to turn people against God. They believe hell is where all Jehovah’s Witnesses go when they die and is not a place of torment but rather a place of unconsciousness until they are resurrected to

the new Earth. They believe the wicked do not go to hell but will be eternally destroyed. Jehovah's Witnesses believe the human soul ceases to exist at death which implies the soul is mortal and that the only hope for life after death is in the mentioned resurrection.

23. **Information Control** – Jehovah's Witnesses discourage contact with the secular world. This means discouraging friendships with non-members and people critical of their faith and encouraging friendships with members. The teaching process involves exclusive reading of Watchtower materials. Key words are intentionally used in all Watchtower publications. The keywords are used repeatedly and promote and praise Jehovah's Witness doctrine, while continually criticizing other religions and pastors. Loyalty, submission and attendance are required by all baptized members. All services include question answer session questions where answers are provided from Watchtower materials. All independent material is shunned.
24. **Works** – Every Jehovah's Witness is considered a minister and is expected to devote as much time as possible teaching the knowledge of a promised earthy paradise (they call "the truth"). Each Kingdom Hall has a defined territory where members attend congregations within the territory. Each member is a part of a field service group that organizes door to door preaching. Salvation to an earthy paradise through God's grace is promoted along with the premise that only members in good standing will survive the end times and go to their earthy paradise (Which implies grace plus a demonstration of Christian faith). The governing body through Watchtower publications determines the rules and conduct for good standing with the Kingdom Hall. Elders control the good standing list. Those members not in good standing are dismissed from fellowship (disfellowshipped). It is possible to be restored to fellowship but it is a difficult embarrassing process.
25. **Authority of the Word** – Jehovah's Witnesses beliefs and doctrines are controlled by a governing body or government they believe was established by Jehovah. All members are directed to abide by the doctrines dictated by this governing body. Watchtower publications distribute the doctrine to all members which is to be followed, all others are disfellowshipped. They believe Jehovah employs and directs the Jehovah's Witness organization which is the authoritative source for all beliefs, teachings, and activities. Those not in the organization are in Satan's organization. Watchtower publication teaches that the Bible is true, but is loaded with symbolism. They also teach the Bible is an organizational book that does not belong to individuals and that the Bible cannot be properly understood without the guidance of the Jehovah's earthy governing body.

A final word about evangelism to any Cult group

Love - John 13:34-35 and Galatians 6:2

1. You must show a genuine love for the person you are witnessing to. Read: 1 Corinthians Chapter 13. That same love and mercy that brought you to the kingdom of God must be genuine.

Never: Bash, confront, or try to use logic. This is a spiritual battle won only through employing the 9 fruits of the spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Also read Matthew chapters 5-7

Testimony - John 20:28 and Ephesians 4:15-17

2. Share your faith and never turn it into a debate. Your testimony and true life-changing experience is the most important aspect in effectively sharing Jesus.

Truth - Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19; Matt 22:29 and John 17:17

3. Focus on the word of God, which is solid, dependable, unchangeable and true.

Discernment - (prayer) 1 John 4:1-6 and 2 Peter 2:1

4. Prayer is your first line of defense. Partner with others before witnessing. Pray for discernment. Pray before you speak.

Boldness – 2 Corinthians 9:15; 2 Corinthians 3:17 and John 16:12

5. God's Holy Spirit lives in you and will guide you into all truth. The Holy Spirit will give you the courage and boldness to speak the truth in love. Ask God to speak through you by His Spirit.

Disclaimer

This is not a complete document on the fundamentals of the Mormon or Jehovah's Witness beliefs. Tools are just that and cannot be compared with you sharing your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We must also trust or understand that God's timing is not our timing and continue to pray that God will give us special opportunities to share about our relationship that we have with Jesus Christ. We want to remind or emphasize the importance on the three best tools we have: 1. our personal testimony, 2. us memorizing and quoting key Bible verses, 3. by partnering with others to pray for the lost for Jesus Christ.

We at CLI do wish to partner with you and pray for you so that when you do go out to witness for the cause of Jesus Christ, that God will grant you: **Love:** 1 John 4:7-8, **Wisdom:** Matt 10:16, **Hope:** John 10:27-30. **Guidance:** John 14:16-17, **Boldness:** Matthew 16:15-17, to testify to the saving power of our Lord and Savior **Jesus Christ** 1 Peter 1:2.

Man's relationship with God was lost when Adam and Eve sinned (known as the Fall). Our mission and Christ's are identical. We proclaim Christ as Restorer (Redeemer, Savior, High Priest) of our relationship with God and others and the means to keep it healthy, unified and joyful.

The information in this document was prepared by the Rev. D.F. Marshall AOG 272851-7 from his personal experiences with the Mormon LDS Church, Mormon Missionaries, and with the Jehovah's Witnesses. To ensure accuracy, the following sources were consulted: LDS official church website, The Ex-Mormon Foundation website, The Stanford University Wordprint analysis. The official Jehovah's Witnesses website and Watchtower information services website.

Advancing Christ's Light in Prisons

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