"I BELIEVE" EVANGALISM SERIES

"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."

Background

"Go Ye and Teach" was a series of missionary slide presentations that were developed by the church in the 1960s for priesthood members to present the gospel to others. Projectors were heavy and bulky, slides often jammed, and you needed extra projector lamps in case they went out. "Go Ye and Teach" consisted of six lessons:

- ◦ Church of Jesus Christ
- ◦ Falling Away
- ◦ Restoration
- ◦ Book of Mormon Evidences
- ◦ Christ in America
- ◦ Life After Death

The very **first lesson** began by *telling the story of Jesus' ministry and then explained the various functions within the church*. In the early 1960s, there had been a strong Christian influence in public institutions. Most people had some limited exposure to Christianity because they were acquainted with people who were raised in a Christian religion or had, at one time, attended church when they were young. So starting with what distinguished this church from others was a reasonable approach at that time.

Starting in the 1960s, the United States and many other countries rapidly devolved into a secular society. **Christian influence in the public arena diminished**, families moved away from traditional religion, and atheism became the dominant theme on college campuses. Christian influence has been waning since that time. The United States lost its roots and forgot its heritage, while other countries who have suffered greatly are growing spiritually. To begin by talking about church distinctives sometimes brings a yawn from people because they are not even convinced there is a God, let alone a faith or doctrine that has any relevance for their lives. We have to back up and explain why we even think that God exists.

Why Was This Lesson Series Developed?

The "I Believe" Series tries to accomplish a few objectives:

- ▪ Make the presentations readily available on **internet sites** so that church members can readily have access from anywhere in the world. The lessons can

be pulled up on a smartphone, a tablet, a laptop, or even a television in the home of friends you want to share the gospel with.

- Encourage **all church members**, not just priesthood, to share the gospel story.
- Use **PowerPoint format** that will be more modern and flexible. This presentation was done in PowerPoint 2007. The challenge will be to provide instructions for those who are using a different generation of PowerPoint.
- Include the narrative, text of a quote, or **scripture verse on each slide**.
- Provide modern sources and **better footnote documentation**.
- Provide **a script that the presenter can read** as he makes his presentation.
- Where possible, provide a lengthy **appendix of optional subjects** that the presenter can use according to the needs of his audience.
- Create **lessons for our friends who might not believe in God** at all or who struggle with even recognizing he exists.
- And the greatest challenge of all, try to dramatically **improve the graphic images that we use to illustrate a point**. It is one thing to show a few pictures in a Sunday school class with a handful of people, but obtaining permission to use hundreds of graphic art pieces on a public website is a daunting and time-consuming task.

Lesson Topics and Content (nine presentations are complete and ready to be used right now):

1. **Does God Exist?**

   This is a presentation of **scientific evidence** for our friends who strongly reject the idea that God exists. There are only three scriptures in the entire lesson.

2. **Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?**

   For those who think that all religions are the same, this is a purely **historical investigation** of the eyewitness accounts of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection appearances.

3. **Life and Ministry of Jesus**

   Who did Jesus claim to be, what did he do, and what did he teach? This lesson distinguishes Christ from other religious leaders by his virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and resurrection. It aligns with the first half of the first presentation in the Go Ye and Teach series.

4. **What Difference Does the Gospel Make?**

There should be a lesson with excellent graphics that provides a more specific explanation of the gospel of Christ and its benefits. This is not found in the old Go Ye and Teach presentations.

5. **I Will Build My Church**

Using the same graphic representation of a church building, we identify the elements of Christ's church such as ministerial offices, gifts of the Spirit, principles of the gospel and holy ordinances. This lesson follows the same sequence as the last half of the first lesson in Go Ye and Teach.

6. **Apostasy (Falling Away)**

Footnote sources are better documented, quotations are placed in the context of the original writing, there are pictures of those being quoted, and a very large appendix identifies examples of doctrinal error in much greater detail.

7. **The Restoration**

This presentation provides greater historical context about the country, population growth, maps and dates. It describes the RLDS Church and takes us up to the present day. This lesson also includes a large appendix on various subjects related to the Restoration.

8. **Internal Evidence in the Book of Mormon**

The first half covers chiasms, a Hebrew literary device used in scripture. It is based on the research of John W. Welch, one of the world's foremost experts, who first identified chiasms in the Book of Mormon in 1969. The second half identifies 10 different Hebraisms used repeatedly in the Book of Mormon. This is based on the findings of Angela M. Crowell, a Hebrew scholar.

9. **External Evidence for the Book of Mormon**

This is presently under development. "Go Ye and Teach" material is badly outdated at this point and needs a major overhaul because of all the new evidence that has arisen. I am seeking help to develop this material. I want to keep it in the same format as the other lessons.

10. **Restored Truths in the Book of Mormon**

In this lesson, we take four aspects of the gospel (i.e., free will, faith, repentance and baptism) and describe 12 restored truths in the Book of Mormon regarding

these four areas. This lesson helps the presenter articulate what we mean by the "fullness of the gospel."

11. Life After Death

Jim Noland has graciously provided his lesson on this subject for us to use. It is my intention to eventually reformat this lesson to look like all the others.

12. More Lessons

As the need arises, more lessons could be added that might equip members with material to present to their friends. The idea would be for the presenter to choose which of these lessons they think are most appropriate for the audience they are teaching.

Other Issues

Appendices – Every lesson but one contains an appendix that is loaded with valuable information on specific topics related to the main presentation.

Presenter Notes – A presenter will need to access the internet or download these presentations ahead of time. If you are using a laptop, you can use presenter notes. To see presenter notes, it is necessary to pull up the bottom of the PowerPoint screen. It is possible to have two different views: one on your laptop with presenter notes and one on the screen without the notes.

Configurations – Probably the easiest way is to have these lessons downloaded ahead of time and memorize the narrative in the presenter notes beforehand. Church members will need to have instructional classes on different ways to set this up.

In the United States, we find ourselves in a time when 95% of those considered to be living in poverty have a television (and most have flat screens). If you are showing these lessons on someone's television you will need to set up your tablet (e.g., using AirPlay) or laptop (e.g., using an HDMI cable) as the monitor. It might not be possible to have a different view (with presenter notes) on the monitor; so you will need to memorize the narrative ahead of time just like we presently do with Go Ye and Teach.

If you plan to make a live presentation straight from the internet, show this presentation to a large group via teleconference, or convey this material to a group across the world, you might want to test Wi-fi connections and equipment ahead of

time. If you are just sitting at lunch and want to pull out your smartphone to share the gospel, have lessons downloaded ahead of time or else check Wi-fi speeds first.

Who Needs to Learn These Lessons? It is the responsibility of every member of Christ's church to "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."