

Church

(June 6, 2006)

DRIFTING

- **When I was a teenager, Dad had a small fishing boat.**
- This live call in show, easy to drift from where we want to be.
- **Easy to get sidetracked.**

RE-ESTABLISH OUR POSITION

- Our purpose is to introduce LDS to the reality of genuine, life-altering, spiritual regeneration and to emphasize the infallibility of the Bible.
- **This is our mission, ministry, book, and show.**
- So while I maintain strong opinions on LDS doctrines, practice, and theology, they are at best secondary when compared to the importance I place on Latter-day Saints being spiritual reborn through faith on Jesus Christ.
- **In others words, our motto might be: “Jesus first, religion later.”**

“MAN WAS MADE TO WORSHIP”

- **All people have an intrinsic need to worship.**
- Some people worship God, some Church, some authority, some pagan Gods.
- **Some people worship money, fame, material, family, some even worship a celebrity, an idea, or even a spouse.**
- Bob Dylan: “Well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord but you’re gonna have to serve somebody.”
- **God built the need to worship into the human make-up just like his built the need to swim in a fish.**
- It’s a tool that enables everyone to find Him.

RELIGION

- **Corporations, institutions, and organized religion has capitalized on this human need and offered “structured mechanisms” to help people fulfill their need to worship, to belong, to be accepted, and to stand apart from the shuffling masses.**

- When it comes to organized religion in this fallen world, we seem to face two general approaches:

A legalistic approach and a “Liberty in the Lord” approach.

There are positives and negatives to both.

- **Mormonism provides one of the finest examples of a legalistic church:**
 - 1) Top down authority
 - 2) Name brand rituals required for life with God.
 - 3) Dress codes
 - 4) Standard rites of passage in priesthood, missions, temple marriage.
 - 5) Standardized organization (McDonalds)
 - 6) Own culture, language, definitions and terms.
 - 7) It is very corporate, very centralized, and extremely rigid in the delivery of its message.
- **The majority of Churches representative in the Body of Christ generally represent a more liberal organizational structure, including:**
 - 1) Singular and/or localized authority.
 - 2) An absence of demanded rituals and rites.
 - 3) Lack of dress codes or grooming standards.
 - 4) Discontinuity from other like-minded churches.

In the face of these differences, Latter-day Saints tend to find solace in the fact that anywhere you go you will find the same Gospel taught, from the same authorized manuals, presented in similar settings, and supported by a common culture, depending on the country.

To Mormons, this order and sameness evidences divine truth, the absolute will of God, and the self-proclaimed fact that they are the “only True Church on the face of the earth.”

For Latter-day Saints, the Church, among other things, offers the “comfort of consistency.” But the by-product of such an approach produces, “a demand for conformity and the denial of human complexity.”

A “conform or be cast out” type of thing

Hard as this is to hear, in Mormonism - the Church - is God. And it makes thinking, decision making, and questions of allegiance very simple because it has all been done for them in advance.

Christianity, on the other hand, faces an assortment of blessings and problems that legalistic religions (like Mormonism) rarely experience.

A sense of divine and diverse liberality generally overflows truly Christian services making worship, prayer, and genuine expression normative.

With less standards of conformity imposed from the pulpit, many Christian congregates are free to bask in their relationship with God instead of worrying about meeting the standards of their neighbor, Bishop, or culture.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The law, ordinances, rituals, cultural conformities, health codes, Sabbath-days, endless genealogies, temple works, and pass-down priesthood authority have all been crushed by the liberty of the cross and believers are to walk after the Lord in the liberty of His love. Praise God!

But liberality has the tendency to invite an abuse of power, the misappropriation of funds, soft-selling biblical truth to appealing entertainments, and bickering within the Body itself.

There are pros and cons to dining at McDonalds or the Mom and Pop Corner Café.

(BERLIN WALL EXAMPLE)

RECOMMENDING CHURCHES

Of late, we have been getting a number of requests for recommended Churches in the greater Utah area.

This has become a problem for our ministry because we want to send our searching LDS friends and family to places where they are going to truly experience what the Lord wants them to experience.

(EXAMPLE OF ATTENDING A GREAT FILM OR RESTAURANT AND WANTING YOUR FAMILY TO EXPERIENCE IT?)

In Acts chapter two, shortly after the day of Pentecost where the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church, we read of how the earliest Church functioned:

*ACT 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the **apostles' doctrine** and **fellowship**, and in **breaking of bread**, and in **prayers**.*

And later it reads

*And they, continuing **daily** with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from **house to house**, did eat their meat with **gladness and singleness of heart**, **praising God**, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved**.*

- I think THIS is the model for the Church of Jesus Christ.
- They study the Word of God.
- They Worshipped God
- They Walked with God
- They Witnessed God

As we open up the phone lines tonight, let's conclude by discussing these areas briefly.

First, the Word of God.

- teach the Bible.
- to arm congregates than from teaching the Word of God.
- I think congregates should have their Bible with them – it's their manual.
- I think Pastors should teach from it, get references from it, refer to it, and thoroughly understand it front to back.

Personal stories and seeker friendly tactics do little to prepare people for the onslaught of warfare Satan will pour out upon them as new believers.

Believers need to be fed the Word of God.

Look back on my life as a child, I don't remember every meal my mother made, in fact I remember very few actual dinners, but I know I was fed and fed well. The same is true of preaching and teaching the Word of God.

Second, Worship God

- Prayer and worship are a large part of being Christian.
- Songs from the heart to the Lord are a blessing.
- Good, viable, living worship is a must for any thriving Christian church.
- It should be a house of prayer.

Third, the people and leaders should Walk with God.

- Most Churches carry on the personality of the Pastor.
- The believers attitude and approach to Jesus are amplified and evidenced in him.
- A church must have an attitude of joy in the Lord, faith, praise, love, mercy, longsuffering, kindness, cheerfulness.
- If a Church pastor is mean, greedy, focused on money, power, or hate for other people – including hate for the LDS – you should run from them. Find a Church where the Pastor really, truly walks the walk of Love. A shepherds heart.
- Why would a sheep want to stay on the ranch of a person who beats it if it is on the farm of a person who loves and feeds it?

Finally, the church must “Witness for God.”

- The Church should evidence some aspect of the great commission.
- They should be dedicated to peaceably and lovingly sharing Jesus with others.
- The first three W’s – the Word, Worship, and Walk – all lend to this last one, witnessing.
- Witnessing for Jesus in love. Representing to the world what they stand for, not what they stand against.

I challenge the Christian Churches of Utah to be Churches that a Latter-day Saint would feel welcomed attending. NO SOFTSELL, but truth in love.

I challenge each of the pastors to feed the flock and not fleece or beat them.

I challenge every Christian Church in Utah to lovingly share the truth with your Mormon neighbors, friends, and family in word and deed.

AND I CHALLENGE YOU TO WALK FROM ANY CHURCH THAT ATTEMPTS TO ROB YOU OF ONE BIT OF THE LOVE AND LIBERTY JESUS OFFERS.