

Mission, Ministry, & Methods

(November 7, 2006)

Last week an LDS caller named Bob claimed that the word “obeisance” is used in the Greek as a synonym for “worship.” I said not so.

The reality? We were both right.

Where I was focused on the word “obeisance” as not being a Greek term, which Bob said it was, Bob was focused on saying obeisance means the same as worship (proskuneo) in the Greek – we were both correct.

There are a few key things to remember in this exchange:

1) This side-bar had nothing to do with my point, which was the LDS do not worship Jesus.

2) The Hebrew word for obeisance, *shaw-khaw*, and the Greek word for worship *proskuneo* both mean to bow down in adoration, to raise hands, to prostrate in devotion. I believe the Greek word is most emphatic.

When applied to Jesus in Mormonism, its still missing all together, Bob.

Okay, turn to Psalms chapter 9 with me for a moment. I want to point something out that is very important today, right here in Utah.

Hear we read David’s devotion to

the Lord:

“I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.”

Let's look at three of these phrases in the Hebrew:

I will praise <yadah> thee,

Yad in Hebrew means “hand.”

Yada literally means lifting the hands in worship, extending the hands, raising the hands.

O LORD <Y@hovah>

YHWH means “the self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God:-- Jehovah, the Lord.

Mormons say Jehovah means the pre-incarnate, created Jesus.

with my whole heart <leb>

leb, in Hebrew means, feelings, will, and even intellect. It is comparable to the Greek term psuche, where we get our words psyche, psychology, psychiatry, etc.

So, to fully understand this single verse in our language, it would read something like this:

“I will lift my hands in worship for you, oh self-existent and uncreated God of all things, and I do this with my entire being!”

Off the I-15 is a very disturbing billboard for a movie about Joseph Smith.

The billboard reads in bold letters:

	<p>“Praise to the Man.” Compare and contrast what David said in Psalms with this man-centered directive.</p> <p>This is just disturbing.</p>
<p>Tonight’s show should really have been done as our first show back in March.</p> <p>I’ve titled it: Mission, Methods, and Ministry.</p> <p>I hope it becomes the show we can point people to who have questions or issues about our approach.</p> <p>I apologize in advance for all the first person references but they are essential in telling the story.</p> <p>First a brief (and I’m sorry, possibly redundant) history to help set the stage.</p>	<p>I was born in Los Angeles in an LDS home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My parents were converts prior to my birth.• Served a full time mission.• Married in LA Temple.• EQ President/Seminary Teacher• High Priest – Bishopric, SHC. <p>Shortly after marriage I began a search of standard LDS writings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First LDS scripture• Then LDS History• Then critical LDS History• Philosophy• Eastern Metaphysics• Islam• Remained active all the while

- Grew disenchanted with all
- 13 years ended as a verifiable nihilist

1997 came to know the Lord at the side of a busy highway

- Gave me new life.
- Made me a man of faith.
- Changed my heart, ways, and will.

Continued on as an active LDS for four years thereafter.

Began study of the Word and had discussions with people about the questions I had had over the course of my life.

In 2001, approached the Stake President and requested to be excommunicated. I gave the following reasons:

- 1) I deserved it, and quoting Jean Paul Sartre, believed that I had “never met anyone more evil than myself.”
- 2) Had a number of issues with LDS doctrines and practices while could not be reconciled.
- 3) If I ever wanted to be a member of the LDS church, I sought to choose it on my own terms, and not by virtue of the fact that I became a member by virtue of my parents.

I demanded excommunication on these grounds and rejected any suggestions during the court proceedings that would lend to any other action.

My request was granted.

In 2002, I felt inclined to sort of summarize my views in writing as a

born-again Christian.

I wrote the book primarily for my three daughters who were still actively engaged in the LDS church.

I had no idea that they, and my wife, would ever leave the Church, but simply wanted them each to know about the Lord I had come to know apart from it.

A few people suggested that the book was worthy of publication and not being the patient “find a publishing company” kind of guy, I self published the book myself and started giving it to family and friends.

As a means to get the book out to a larger audience, I built a website to support it and sent an average of five copies out per month for the first few of years.

Word got out to the leaders of my families ward that I had written a book and had a website.

One of the most common responses I got from my LDS friends and family was to the by-line of the book: *Moving toward Christian Authenticity*.

“We are authentic Christians,” they would say. Or “the Church is Christian,” so your book is wrong from the start.

I began to listen to many LDS people, leaders, etc., claim the title Christian.

In light of what I had become and what I knew and saw in the LDS Church by comparison, I decided to take some action and push this issue to its fullest.

A couple of years had passed since my excommunication and my wife and I set up a meeting with her stake president.

In the meeting I requested to become a member of the LDS Church again. This was 2003.

Our Stake President was a kind and patient man and in my eyes possesses many enviable Christ-like characteristics. He gave much time and effort to see my desires through.

We discussed in detail my testimony and the dictates of my conscience. We talked about my love for the Bible, my exuberant faith in Jesus Christ, my repentant attitude, dedication to following the commandments, willingness to live up to the Church's expectations of service and my desire to help other members know the Lord personally.

I expressed a willingness to attend the LDS meetings faithfully and I also promised to keep my radical opinions to myself if that would help.

I even said I would toss the book and shut the website down if that would make the difference in my becoming a member of the LDS Church as a born-again Christian.

But this was not allowed.

To be a member of the LDS Church, which claims is Christian I had to accept Joseph Smith too - completely.

And to be allowed back into the LDS Church, I had to say that Mormonism is the only true Church on the face of the earth.

I could not do this. And was therefore not allowed me to become a member again.

My life-changing faith and adoration of Jesus was not enough. I had to have faith in Joseph Smith as well.

Just take a minute and think about this.

The Church claims to represent Christianity on the earth today. The ONLY recognizable form of Christianity.

It claims to possess all the requirements necessary for exaltation, but in order to obtain these you must be a “member” and in order to be a member, you have to embrace Joseph Smith!

Jesus is NOT enough for them.

Mary and I thanked him for his time and trouble, offered a prayer, and said our goodbyes.

As we drove home that night Mary asked me what I thought about the whole thing.

I replied that I had done the only thing I could – I stood by my total and complete faith in Jesus Christ – that’s all I’ve got! I could not do any more or less. She agreed.

It’s frankly hard to believe that a repentant individual who professes real, undying faith in Jesus Christ, a willingness to love, obey, and serve God, and a desire to live according all of the outward demands and expectations of a religious institution would be refused baptism in the name of Christ because he would not verbally embrace or acknowledge faith in a man who founded the organization over a hundred and fifty years ago or acknowledge that the organization is the only true Christian religion on the face of the earth.

A few days later, I was led to action. My journal at the time reads:

Perhaps most importantly, if the same questions were presented to current members of the Church, the majority of responses – the MAJORITY, if honest – would echo mine in one way or another.

In essence, I was refused membership in the LDS Church because I am a complete Christian, because I have an expressed faith in Jesus and Jesus ALONE, and because I refuse to place or admit one iota of trust or faith in a man.

“I am about to embark on a most aggressive religious battle since Luther because Jesus is not found in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints.

Joseph is. Brigham is. The “church” is.

“Yesterday I fasted and prayed all day for direction. The gates of hell and depression engulfed my soul for a time. I am actually afraid to some extent and, if I didn’t know the truth from first hand experience, I would run.

May God be with me, strengthen me, support my resolve, and bathe me in patience, kindness, and love. I most certainly need it. It is either the Biblical Jesus or it is the Mormon God. Because I have experienced rebirth, I must reject the LDS attractions, and go to war.”

The next year I was lead to enter the Calvary Chapel School of Ministry which I attended full time for two years.

Toward the end of my studies the opportunity opened up for me to host this

#4 **“You are rude and unkind to LDS callers. You get angry, you cut people off, you are not like Jesus at all.”**

what the understanding of the doctrine is in the general membership at large.

When I was a teenager, I began working at the beach as an ocean lifeguard in Southern California.

I still work at the beach today when I am not here.

- I learned early how to work with the public.
- How to use different approaches depending on the situation.

If I was personally accosted, I learned to take such invectives in stride.

Just last week I had a man use vulgar and insulting words against me and I did nothing but smile and give him the information he sought.

But there are times, when forceful, in-your-face communications are necessary.

Let me give you some examples:

Rescue of a person drowning.

- fear makes them do ridiculous things.
- forceful, direct, uncompromising.
- “climbing the rope”

Pier or rocks.

We are in the process of rescuing people from believing that a religion can save or exalt them.

There are times that dictate courtesy and

#5 “You have been derailed from your original intentions. Get back on talking only about Jesus.”

#6 “You are just out to destroy the Church.”

times that demand abrasive and uncompromised directness.

Sometimes we are dealing with fear, sometimes anger, sometimes blindness and deafness.

I would no more play nice-nice with a persons salvation than I would their physical safety.

I've learned an important lesson in this ministry. This is what it is:

With the LDS, if you give an inch, they take a mile.

(Discuss)

I am out to expose Latter-day Saints to undeniable spiritual regeneration (available to them outside of the religion) and to share the beauty and strength of the Bible.

If this means destroying the “Church,” then let it fall.

The Church is an earthly institution no different than any other “ism.” It will fail you. Jesus never has nor ever will.

I care about people and their relationship with Him – period.

Do they know Him as God in the flesh?

Do they worship Him?

Do they know they are saved to live with

God by Him alone?
Do they have His assurance?
Do they know His Word?
Are they free from the cares of this world?
Do they rejoice in His finished work?

This is the crux of our Mission, Ministry and Methods.

I hope it lends to your understanding of why we do what we do and the way we do it.