

A Diversionary Respite

(March 13, 2007)

We're going to veer off our path of LDS history tonight for a little respite, of sorts.

Things sort of pile up in a ministry like this, clogging the pipes up after a time, and I've found it important to the health of our ministry take a break and respond to the most consistent questions, concerns, and challenges we consistently receive and face.

So let's begin by answering the Most Frequently Asked Questions.

1. *What is the purpose of your ministry?*

To share Jesus with the LDS, hoping it will lead to them personally experiencing spiritual regeneration and that it will ultimately lead to the Church becoming part of the Body of Christ.

We seek the seekers, the sinners, the lost, and the disaffected of Mormonism. If stalwarts have their eyes and ears opened, well praise God. But our primary ministry is to those who struggle.

Now our detractors say that I am after the ignorant or uninformed because we can beguile them with lies. If bringing people into a genuine regenerative relationship with Jesus is what you call beguiling, then call me a beguiler.

2. *Why do you attack the Church? Jesus never attacked another church?*

Let's put this into perspective.
And try and remember this when you find yourself insulted by my approach and methods:

- a) Mormonism attacked first. (Remember, the First Vision)
- b) Mormonism continues to attack Christianity today. (Missionaries - OTC)
- c) Mormonism holds people captive. Mormonism also destroys lives.

Let me explain this:

1. It teaches children, teens, and the unsuspecting (over and over) that it is "*the only true Church.*"
2. You either must conform to its doctrines or you are cast out.
3. When and if you are cast out, you have nowhere to go because you have been taught since you were young that it is the only way.
4. The fallout, the struggle, the mind-tweak is insane - for some.

If you commit what LDS call sin, you are cast out - if not officially, then socially.

If you disagree with them, you are cast out.

If you reveal truths about them -

<p>This story is a great lead-in to the next frequently asked comment. This comment, and many others like it, came to me by email:</p> <p>3. <i>“You (Shawn McCraney) have just gone from one faulty belief system (Mormonism) to another (Christianity). Get off the crutches</i></p>	<p>like Grant Palmer did – you are cast out.</p> <p>If you don’t fit with their endless cultural expectations you are cast out.</p> <p>You might say, “Well, that’s their right as a group.” But here’s the rub:</p> <p>They have saturated people with the false rhetorical claims that say there is no other way!</p> <p>That say Christianity is an abomination!</p> <p>That say you must do and agree with all things Mormon in order to live with God the Father!</p> <p>And then they reject you if you are not like them. If you don’t play their game.</p> <p>And the result is spiritual carnage in the lives of thousands and thousands of people every year!</p> <p>I “attack” Mormonism because I hate what it does to even strong people who have seen it for what it is.</p>
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and start walking on your own.

Just last week I met with a group of adult men . . .

1. All returned missionaries.
2. All accomplished in the things of this world.
3. Intelligent, witty, and kind.
4. And all resigned to the fact that Mormon doctrine is a farce.
5. Yet at the same time, they each had - for lack of a better word - a certain amount of distain for almost everything religious.
6. Each of them - in their own respective way - had been spiritually "raped by the States dominant religion" and were now living with the unconscionable memories of lost time, talent, and wasted dedication.

In an effort to illustrate how this happens, imagine that when you are a young child a medical doctor comes to your parents and tells them that if they drink this potion everyday - and if they have you drink the same potion - you will all be cancer free as long as you live.

They believe him and he begins to sell them their weekly supply.

Because you trust your parents, and it

seems to have worked for them, you too believe, and buy and drink the elixir.

Then, sometime in your thirties, a dark spot appears on your forehead.

Co workers and friends point it out as suspicious, but you know it's not cancer because your whole life you have known you could never get cancer.

The blotch gets darker, and you start to wonder, but your parents tell you its nothing because you've done taken all the right steps to prevent cancer and there is no way you could get it.

And so you push your suspicions to the back of your mind until the day arrives where the mark has grown far too large to be ignored any longer.

You get online and google skin cancer pictures and suddenly up pops ten thousand photographs that look just like the mark on your face!

You're sick inside. You're devastated. You're angry. You're hurt.

"Maybe it is my fault?" you say in your head. "Maybe that day I only drank half the bottle is the reason I got it?" you wonder. "Maybe the potion didn't work on my because of something I've done wrong."

So you decide to go to another doctor and he biopsies the ulcer and calls you back on the phone.

"I've got good news and bad," he says.

"The bad news is you do have skin cancer."

And at these words you become enraged because you realize you've been duped, tricked, lied to, manipulated, misinformed, and taken.

You've bought and drank this stuff your whole life!

You got your friends to buy it and take it.

You even allowed them to use your testimony about it so they could sell it to others!

And now you find you were DUPED big-time!

The doctor continues. "But here's the good news . . . THE GOOD NEWS . . . There is a very simple cure."

This time, the doctor is telling the truth. But for you it is too late.

Once burned twice shy, right?
You have become jaded.
You have been burned.
And the last thing you will do is trust another doctor with some half baked product to sell.

And so you reject his promise of a cure.

“Just listen,” the doctor says, “the expectation for a full and speedy recovery is extremely high in cases of this type of cancer. All you have to do is take this medicine for six weeks.”

“Nothing doing,” you state. I will never trust a doctor or the medical profession again.”

And you don’t.

In time, the cancer grows.

In time, it spreads across the face, to the bones and the brain.

And in time, you die a bitter man because you met and believed a charlatan before you made contact with the Great physician.

We receive a great deal of criticism for either my not responding to the self-appointed apologists who believe it is their duty to defend the Church to me.

Let me say the following:

First, our ministry is to teach those who are seeking to learn those things they have not learned in the LDS Church.

It is not to debate.

Somehow, many self-appointed LDS apologists have come to the conclusion that they have some special knowledge or information about the truths of Mormonism that

I have never considered before, or that they have a special skill to present Mormonism to me that will prove it true!

I am not interested in hearing about Mormonism from Mormon apologists.

I am not interested in jousting with you.

My lack of interest is ALWAYS interpreted by the self-appointed apologist as proof that I fear their abilities or do not have the ability to defend my faith.

The reality is:

- 1) I've been LDS and I know what you believe.
- 2) We seek those who are looking FOR answers, NOT people who believe they possess all the answers.
- 3) And finally, you have no authority to speak on behalf of your church. In fact, the LDS Church doesn't even recognize you as anyone having a say in the doctrines of the Church, so if your Bishop, and Stake President, and Apostles, and Prophet don't give you the respect and voice you think you deserve, why should I?

Additionally, there have some public complaints about the fact that we will only have "official representatives of the LDS Church" on our show because I am fully aware that no official representative of the LDS Church would

ever come on the show.

I'd like to point out that this is the LDS Churches problem, not mine.

Again, we are not here to argue with Billy Bob Bishop about his special feelings or take on doctrine.

We want what the Church stands for doctrinally and we want it officially.

It is LDS Church policy that nobody has the right to speak for the Church but official representatives.

And since our objective is to speak of the doctrines of the Church and not to the divergent beliefs of individual members, we will stand by this policy unless convinced otherwise.

A Billy Bob Bishop can get up here and say just about anything he wants - and believe it - but it doesn't make him correct.

If you are a self-appointed LDS defender of the faith, who, like all of them, think you have some special skill in how to refute criticism, have the Church set you apart as an official defender of the LDS doctrine and I've got a chair just waiting for you right at my side.

I do not believe the Lord will help Mormon doctrines collapse until the Churches in this nation and state are prepared to assimilate the people into the Body.

Our churches don't need better technology. We don't need bigger

venues. We don't need funnier sermons or more entertaining seeker friendly programs.

We need to teach the Word. Period.

We are in a very disturbing and problematic time in the history of Christianity.

A time when the all-mighty buck, white-washed sermons, and half baked emotionalisms are being used to draw people in.

I am often just frankly embarrassed by what people - who say they follow Jesus - are doing in His name.

Take a look:

(SHOW VIDEO CLIP)

How sick. And disturbing. And what a detriment to bringing simple living people to Him.

Heart of the Matter is about reaching out to searching Latter-day Saints with the desire to bring them to Jesus through spiritual rebirth.

We pray that the Body of Believers in this state will take a stand for true Christianity and represent Him in truth, love, and order.