

POST-MORMON FEELINGS

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When I finally became convinced that Joseph Smith was a clever con-man and that his *Book of Mormon* was not sacred ancient history but part of an ingenious mind game that he was playing with his gullible followers, this created some strong feelings in me. These feelings are probably typical of other Post-Mormon truth seekers.

FEAR

The first of my new feelings was fear. What will become of me? Will I lose my marriage and my family? And even if my wife stays with me, will she be angry and heartbroken? I was quite sure that my parents and my brothers and my sister would be either angry or heartbroken or both. Will I lose my job and have to move my family if I still have a family to move? Will they excommunicate me? (They did.) How many friends will I lose? Can I stand not being allowed to see my children and grandchildren get married if they choose to get married in an LDS temple?

And what if I am wrong? Should I trust my own mind or just follow Church leaders? My parents and my brothers and my sister are intelligent people. Why don't they see the same deception that I see? Also, I am a fairly intelligent person. Why did it take me so many years to discover the truth? This is really scary. My eternal salvation may be at stake here! Should I bet everything I have on this or should I fold?

My fears were so strong that for a number of years I kept my true thoughts and feelings to myself. I became a "closet doubter." This was not good for my physical or mental health. But after all, how much should a person be willing to sacrifice on the alter of truth?

Fear is what keeps many people, even Church leaders, active in Mormonism. A friend of mine went to her stake president to get her temple recommend signed. He said, "Where is your husband?" She said, "He doesn't believe in the Church anymore." The stake president said, "Why not?" The woman said, "My husband started doing research into Church history and it made him see things in an entirely different way." The stake president said, "I know what you mean. I started to read *The Journal of Discourses* and some other Church history books. It nearly destroyed my testimony. I had to quit reading those things."

A good question for every LDS man and for every LDS woman to ask is, "What would I do differently in my life if I were not afraid?"

SADNESS, BEREAVEMENT

Disillusionment with Mormonism has resulted in great sadness for me and for almost all of the other men and women I have talked with who have left the LDS Church. I think this bereavement has been even greater for me than the death of my parents. I don't know of one Post-Mormon person who started out to prove that Mormonism is not true or who has been gleeful with the results of their findings. The truth not only hurts, it is devastating! How can any active LDS Church member really believe that one of their friends or relatives enjoys finding out that their most sacred and cherished beliefs are not true! And yet, there is no sympathy or condolence for the person suffering from this bereavement. Instead, Post-Mormons can usually expect anger and ostracism.

CONFUSION, AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

Moving away from Mormonism can turn a person's world upside down. At least that is how it has been for me. Things that used to bring me pride, now bring me shame and embarrassment. Instead of being proud that I sold my car and spent entire my life savings going on an LDS mission to the Chicago area (a very dangerous and tough mission), I deeply regret wasting two years of my life and all of my college money bearing my testimony about things that I now know are not true.

Also, I helped to break up a number of families when one person, usually the wife, became converted and then left her unbelieving husband. Naturally she wanted to find an LDS priesthood holder who would take her to a temple for an eternal marriage. I probably should have been horse-whipped by some of those angry husbands. I sincerely wish I could go back and change all of this, but I can't. All I can say is that I am very very sorry.

I am no longer proud of being a faithful tithe payer. Almost all tithing goes for Church indoctrination programs, temple building, and missionary work. I no longer believe in these things. Very little tithing goes to help the poor.

I am not proud of being married in an LDS temple. I regret getting married in a place where Masonic rituals were presented as Christianity. I was told that learning these secret signs and passwords was necessary in order to pass by the angels and enter into God's clubhouse in the next world. Young family members (under about age 19), and "unworthy" friends and family members were excluded from my wedding. A temple marriage is **not** a celebration for the whole family. It is an occasion for ostracism of many family members. The Church is not family oriented but power oriented. It breaks up many families to enhance its power.

I am not proud of gaining my masters degree at Brigham Young University where the academic freedom of professors is very limited. LDS Faculty members need to pay tithing, have temple recommends, and carefully guard their comments in order to stay out of trouble. BYU is not widely respected in the academic world. I noticed a big difference when transferring to the University of Utah for further post-graduate studies.

My attitude toward my parents has also changed. Why were they so willing to indoctrinate me, a trusting little child, with Mormonism. Why weren't they more open-minded? Why didn't they do some serious research? And why didn't they seem to have any questions about the temple rituals? In many ways my world has been turned upside down.

ANGER, BETRAYAL, ENTRAPMENT

How is a person supposed to feel when she or he finally comes to believe that they and their entire family for generations have been duped by a very clever con-man? And what about all of those who have suffered and died on the plains and also those who have made great sacrifices in other ways for Joseph Smith's deceptions and myths? Are we to just look the other way and pretend that all of this pain and suffering never happened? This kind of spiritual deception is much worse than any stock fraud or pyramid scheme. It is passed on from generation to generation.

Powerful feelings of betrayal and entrapment emerge as a person begins to see the enormity of Joseph Smith's spiritual deception and the control of LDS entrapment. How can a person ever become free from this web of Mormon entanglement if a wife (or husband), parents, children, and grandchildren still **belong** to Joseph Smith and to his Church?

The amazing thing to me is how much anger management and self control Post-Mormons seem to have. Perhaps this is because we have learned that prolonged anger can be self destructive and that forgiveness seems to be better for one's own physical and mental health.

It has always helped me with my anger management to realize that if there is an afterlife and a judgment day, then Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other false prophets and adulterers are now being severely punished by the Lord. But if there is no afterlife or judgment day, then these men have ceased to exist. They would have no way of taking any satisfaction in how wildly successful their deception has become.

It also helps me to realize that it took many years for me to finally see through the cunning dishonesty of early Church leaders. Then how can I expect better than this from others? Dreams die hard!

Donating to web-sites, support groups, speakers, and books that provide encouragement for those leaving Mormonism can help a person with anger management and also be of great service to others.

HAPPINESS, FREEDOM, EXHILARATION

After leaving Mormonism, many of us have felt a strong sense of freedom and happiness. A heavy burden has been lifted from our shoulders. We can now read anything we want to read and do our own thinking. We no longer need to ask, “Does this information that I am reading go along with Mormonism? Is it faith promoting?” It doesn’t matter any more. And, we can even choose our own underwear!

We are now **free** to respect the beliefs of other churches and religions and reject Joseph Smith’s claim that the Lord told him that other churches were “all wrong” and that their ministers and pastors were “all corrupt.” What deceptive nonsense this “revelation” was and is! How could I have believed this baloney for so many years? And Post-Mormons no longer need to rationalize away or explain why over ninety percent of Joseph Smith’s many prophesies never happened. The answer is obvious to an objective observer. Joseph Smith was a false prophet.

We no longer need to explain away or defend the immoral and illegal activities of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other Church leaders. These activities included money digging, an illegal bank, secret police (Danites) a private army (Zion’s Camp), polygamy, and blood atonement. Involvement of Church leaders in the Mountain Meadows Massacre and other atrocities no longer reflect upon us Post-Mormons. We reject all of these things and the Church leaders involved.

We no longer need to explain away the many contradictions between *Book of Mormon* Mormonism and Nauvoo Mormonism. The overwhelming scientific evidence against the authenticity of *The Book of Mormon* including the Asian DNA of Native Americans is no longer our problem. But it is still a very big problem for LDS Church defenders.

We are also **free** from **guilt** for not attending endless meetings, and for not fasting, doing genealogy, temple work, home teaching, accepting all “callings,” and confessing our personal lives to the bishop. We are **free** from the financial stress of paying tithing, and sending our children on missions. We are also **free** to spend more time with our families.

In the immortal words of Dr. Martin Luther King: “Free at last! Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

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