

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

North Logan Utah Stake

June 7, 2014

Brother John Dehlin
2754 North 920 East
North Logan, UT 84341

RE: Your Membership in the Church

Dear Brother Dehlin,

As your stake president, I hope you know I care deeply for every member of the stake, including you and your family. Because of the love I have for you, I have become concerned about some of your recent statements and actions regarding the Church and your place in it. That includes your recent public posting from earlier this month that you "no longer believe many of the fundamental LDS church truth claims . . ." I am greatly concerned about the impact these and other statements and actions are having upon the members of the stake.

Ordinarily, I prefer to speak in person and in private about such matters and I offer you the opportunity to do so. I am aware of your recent email to Bishop Hunt, dated January 2014, in which you requested that you not be contacted by ward members or church leaders. The email also requested that you not be considered a member of the ward, and that your names be removed from the home teaching and visiting teaching rolls of the Church. Although I wish it were otherwise, I respect this request. But at the same time, given your recent actions and statements, I need to know exactly where you stand regarding your membership in the Church.

I have chosen to write this letter to you and inquire whether, by your earlier email to Bishop Hunt and your recent public statements, you desire to have your name removed from the records of the Church. As you know, if you make such a request I am bound to honor it. You should know, however, that such name removal will revoke your temple and priesthood blessings. I would urge you to consider this carefully, as it is a very important decision.

If you choose not to have your name removed, then I think we are to the point where I should convene a formal disciplinary council on your behalf for apostasy. Together we would need to arrive at an acceptable time to hold such a council.

If you desire to have your name removed from Church records, please inform me in writing no later than June 18, 2014. If I do not hear from you by that time, I will assume that you do not desire to avail yourself of this option, and I will proceed to schedule a disciplinary council.

You should also be aware that if you choose to have your name removed from Church records, I feel it is important to make an appropriate announcement to the adults in the stake that you have chosen this option.

I have a deep love for you and your family. I am very willing to confer with you in person about these issues. I hope you will carefully consider your options. If you choose not to meet with me I want you to know my love and concern for you and your family will remain.

May the Lord bless you and your family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bryan C. King". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Bryan C. King
Stake President

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

North Logan Utah Stake

August 7, 2014

Dear Brother Dehlin,

I appreciate your patience as I have taken this issue to the Lord. I have been prayerfully considering our initial meeting.

As the stake president, I have the responsibility for caring for all the members of my stake, including you and your family. I believe that the answers to the problems of life are found in a testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and literal Savior of mankind. I do not just believe in His good works or attributes. I testify to His divine mission as Savior and Redeemer. I also testify that the gospel was restored in its fullness through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I witness to you that we are led by a living Prophet of God who receives revelation for the Church and who holds all the priesthood keys necessary for this dispensation.

These are some of the most fundamental doctrines that God has revealed. They stand as a foundation in His plan of happiness for all of His children. They also serve as a foundation in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are among its core teachings and beliefs.

I have carefully studied the materials that you provided to me about your current beliefs. I have also reviewed many other materials that you have authored and – at one time or another over the past few years – have placed on the Internet. They stand in direct contradiction to the fundamental doctrines of the church. For example:

- You have taught that “the probability that God exists is quite low” and that “if God and Jesus really do exist” you “believe that they have a lot of ‘splaining to do.”
- You have expressed your belief that the odds are very low that Christ was the Son of God and that He was actually resurrected. You have criticized the Church’s teachings about the Atonement, stating that it “bothers” you that an act of atonement is even necessary. You have rejected the very basis of the Atonement, claiming that “punishing that guy over there for what I did doesn’t make sense at all.”

- You do not believe – and actively teach against – the concept that God restored His true Church to the earth with exclusive priesthood authority through the Prophet Joseph Smith. You have stated that the “LDS Restoration” is “just not a credible narrative” and you have declared that you are “repulsed by the teaching of ‘one true church’, and would rather roll around in thumb tacks than ever teach or support that notion.”
- You teach that the Book of Mormon is a 19th Century work of fiction.
- You contend that Church governance is “no longer about doctrine and/or revelation.” Instead, it’s “about 1) power, and 2) money.” You have also been critical of senior Church leaders, stating that they are hastening the Church’s demise.
- You have become an ordained minister in another faith so that you can perform wedding ceremonies.

The views that you have expressed on the above topics are not in harmony with the revealed doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through your podcasts and Internet posts, you have broadly disseminated these views. Additionally, you have provided a forum for others to criticize the Church and to disseminate their views that are contrary to the revealed word of God.

I realize that you have removed some of these materials from your Internet sites. But as you know, once something has been posted to the Internet, it can never be totally removed. The repentance process does not only require that one forsake the improper conduct, it also requires that one do everything possible to set things right.

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them. (Mosiah 4:9-10).

Accordingly, if you are to sincerely begin the repentance process in your own life, I have concluded that you must:

1. Publicly renounce and apologize for the false concepts you have widely expressed regarding God, Jesus Christ, the Atonement, the restoration of the Gospel, and the Book of Mormon.
2. Cease providing a public forum for any person who is critical of Church doctrine.
3. Stop promoting groups or organizations that espouse doctrines contrary to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
4. Resign your status as an ordained minister in another faith.

I am asking for your absolute commitment to these steps—in both word and deed—these steps are essential for you to be able to center yourself in the gospel. I stand ready to assist you in this effort. If you choose to follow this counsel, I promise that you will feel increased light in your life and that the doubts you currently have will begin to dissipate. I also want you to know that I have been given the priesthood keys to help you and have prayed daily about this matter. I have not approached this lightly.

I acknowledge that you have the right to speak your mind and to criticize the Church and its doctrines if you so choose. It is just that you do not have the right to do so while remaining a member of the Church in good standing.

Please let me know whether you are willing to accept my counsel regarding the repentance process as outlined above. If so, then you should view yourself on informal probation as you move through the repentance process. We will need to meet often to review your progress. I commit to you my time, my attention, and my love as we do so.

On the other hand, if you are not willing to accept my counsel regarding the repentance process as outlined above, then I feel it necessary to convene a disciplinary council. I can work with you to find an acceptable date in the near future.

I truly hope and pray that you will choose the former course and move forward in the repentance process. But whatever course you choose, I once again want to reassure you that your stake and ward leaders will continue to love, help, and minister to your family. I also express my love to you and my witness that the Lord stands ready to help you and guide you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'BK' or a similar stylized name.

Bryan C. King
Stake President

August 10, 2014

President Bryan King
North Logan, UT Stake

Bryan,

Margi and I would like to thank you and David for meeting with us on August 7th to discuss the possibility of a future disciplinary council for me. In this letter, we would like to summarize for you what we heard regarding:

- The reasons that you are considering a disciplinary council for me, along with all other issues that you explicitly mentioned in our two meetings that would place my membership status in jeopardy.
- The conditions that you are requiring me to meet to avoid a disciplinary council.

According to our memories and record of our two face-to-face conversations, you have listed the following items as reasons for my current membership status being in jeopardy:

1. We discussed various specific doctrinal and historical issues including:
 - a. My doubts about the existence of God.
 - b. My doubts about Jesus (e.g., literal resurrection), and my concerns about the requirement by God that an innocent person (Christ) be brutally and inhumanely punished to atone for the sins of other people.
 - c. My concerns about the idea of “one true church with exclusive authority,” along with the accompanying implication that other beautiful churches are in any way either false or inferior to the LDS church (See [Joseph Smith History 1: 19](#)).
 - d. My doubts about the historicity of the Book of Abraham (which the church has recently acknowledged is not likely to be a translation of the Egyptian papyrus, which it had previously claimed), and the Book of Mormon (e.g., Native Americans descending from Asia not the Middle East, horses and steel swords being mentioned in the text, when we now know through science that Native Americans during the alleged Book of Mormon time period did not likely possess horses, and were not likely able to forge steel swords). See <http://cesletter.com/> for full details.
 - e. My deep concerns and disbelief regarding Joseph Smith’s polygamy (marrying over 30 wives), Joseph Smith’s polyandry (marrying other mens’ wives), Joseph Smith’s marrying of young girls (some as young as 14 years old), along with the LDS church’s continued doctrinal support of polygamy to this day (see <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132>).
2. We also discussed at least three specific concerns and/or criticisms I have made in the past regarding LDS church leaders and/or policies, which included:
 - a. My concern that the LDS church’s position on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) members, along with its continued opposition to the legalization of same-sex marriage, were contributing to incredible sadness and despair amongst the LDS LGBT population, along with contributing to Utah’s nation-leading suicide rate for young men between the ages of 15 and 24 (as reported by the Deseret News).
 - b. My concern about the LDS church’s decision to invest billions of dollars in a commercial shopping mall, and that I was doubtful that Christ (were He at the head of the church) would choose to invest the church’s resources in this way.

- c. My concern (based on numerous substantiated and credible reports) that LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson might be suffering from dementia, and that he might be unable to competently lead the church at this very important time.
3. You were explicit in our conversations that simply having doubts or criticisms regarding the church are not (in and of themselves) grounds for church discipline. Instead, you stated multiple times that it is my decision to discuss these doubts and concerns publicly (via Mormon Stories Podcast, via radio and newspaper interviews, and via my Facebook page) that is the cause of my membership status being jeopardized.
4. You stated that my continued public support of same-sex marriage would not allow me (or others in your stake) to remain in good standing with the church, because the public support of same-sex marriage (in your words) constituted the “support of teachings and doctrines that are not in harmony with the teachings of the church” (i.e., the LDS Proclamation on the Family -- <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation>). Again, you emphasized that the private support of same-sex marriage was fine – just not the public support.
5. You stated that my public support of Ordain Women would also not allow me to remain in good standing with the church.
6. You told me that my signing up on the Universal Life Church Monastery web site to allow myself to perform marriage ceremonies for friends/family also placed my membership status in jeopardy.

As conditions to avoid a disciplinary council, and/or to remain in good standing with the church, you requested the following:

1. That I publicly renounced and apologize for any/all past doubts and criticisms that I have made regarding the church, its theology/doctrine, its historicity, or its policies (listed above).
2. That I do my best to remove any past podcast episodes, blog posts, or Facebook posts that contain the public expression of either doubt about, or criticism of, the LDS church – whether these comments were made by me, or by any of the people I have interviewed over the past nine years.
3. That I stop my public support of same-sex marriage, and my public support of Ordain Women.
4. That I resign from the web site that allows me to perform marriage ceremonies (listed above).

Over the weekend Margi and I have earnestly discussed these concerns and accompanying conditions together as a couple. We feel as though we genuinely understand why you and the church are concerned about these matters.

Here are the things that we feel willing/prepared to do in response to your concerns:

1. Seek to publicly clarify the sources of my doubts/criticisms (as I have already sought to do here: <http://mormonstories.org/questions-and-answers/>).
2. Work harder to ensure that the tone and substance of my/our work with Mormon Stories Podcast going forward, along with any of the public statements that I make in the future, are as thoughtful, measured, and as constructive as possible.
3. Resign from the web site listed above that allows me to conduct marriages, and seek to find another means to conduct marriages if the need arises.

Unfortunately, as a matter of conscience, we do not feel as though we would be able to agree to the following:

1. **Removing past Mormon Stories podcast episodes that contain the public expression of doubts or criticisms of the church.** We believe that all of those stories are valuable to the church and its membership – even the ones that express doubt, disbelief, or criticism.
2. **Never again interviewing people on Mormon Stories who possess significant doubts about the church, or who voice substantive criticisms of the church.** We certainly hope to continue our longstanding tradition of interviewing both faithful and non-faithful LDS church members, but do not feel comfortable silencing the stories of those who have substantive doubts/questions/concerns about the church. **As we have now reiterated numerous times, it is our belief that the LDS church’s inability to facilitate the open discussion of difficult issues is perhaps the single biggest problem the church and its members are facing today.** We sincerely believe that continued silence on these issues will only prolong the pain and suffering experienced by church members. We believe that understanding and healing comes through open, earnest, sincere dialogue – and that sadness, depression, and anxiety are often the byproduct of the suppression of earnest doubts/questions/concerns.
3. **Rescinding my right/ability to publicly express any doubts or criticisms of the LDS church in the future.** While I am willing to become more constructive in my speech/efforts, I do not feel comfortable silencing myself in this way.
4. **Ceasing to publicly support the legalization of support same-sex marriage and Ordain Women.** For us, the reported rates of depression for women and LGBT individuals in Utah, along with the reported suicide rates of LGBT individuals in Utah – simply prevent us from being silent on these important issues.

As you confirmed during our Thursday meeting, we understand that our inability to agree to your conditions will likely lead to your decision to hold a disciplinary council for me. We understand why you feel like this decision is necessary, and we sincerely regret that we have not been able to find a better way to resolve these concerns (in our two meetings). We fully respect your right, and the right of the LDS church, to decide who should and should not remain a member in good standing.

We would like to reiterate that it was never our intention to go to the media with our concerns, until we received the following statement from you in writing:

“You should also be aware that if you choose to have your name removed from Church records, I feel it is important to make an appropriate announcement to the adults in the stake that you have chosen this option.” (letter from you dated June 7, 2014).

As we mentioned to you in our first meeting, we felt like this threat from you to publicly disclose our possible resignation from the church left us no reasonable choice but to speak publicly about these issues and interactions (vs. allowing you to speak on our behalf). We should note that we were very surprised/alarmed in our first meeting with you when you actually denied having written this sentence in the letter – and that you admitted to having written that sentence only after I read the letter to you aloud (this made us wonder if others had helped you prepare the letter).

Bryan, we would like to offer our sincere apologies for the stress that this situation has placed on you, your family, the stake, and the church. We know that you and the church are only trying to do what you

feel is right, and we regret that a better solution could not be achieved. Margi and I would like to extend to you, David, your families, and the church our sincere love and esteem.

We will end with this. Mormon Stories began with a simple and earnest desire: to help bring awareness and support to individuals and families who were struggling with matters of church history, church doctrine/theology, church policy, gender, and sexuality within the LDS church. Having been through our own “faith crises,” Margi and I knew how incredibly difficult LDS faith transitions could be – both on individuals and on families – and we simply could not stay silent as we witnessed many marriages and families being torn asunder over these issues.

For us, creating Mormon Stories was very much an act of faith/hope – that open, candid discussion (even if occasionally angry, negative, or critical) would ultimately help the LDS church and its culture begin to move in more positive directions with regard to these issues. While we are genuinely heartened to see that the LDS church has, indeed, moved in many positive directions over the past ten years, we are obviously saddened that you and the church feel the continued need to silence and punish some of us who openly seek to instigate positive change.

For what it’s worth, we want you to know that (in spite of our mistakes), our efforts have been born out of a sincere love for Mormonism (the church, its members, and its former members), and out of a sincere belief in the teachings of Christ related to love and charity.

We would like to end with Moroni 7:44-47 – not as a rebuke to anyone -- but as a reminder to us all:

44 ...and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.

45 And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

46 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

47 But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

Our faith/hope has been placed in the idea that Mormonism can become a big enough tent to support all kinds – the faithful and the faithless, LGBT individuals, feminists, and intellectuals alike.

While the events of late are not particularly encouraging in this regard, we sincerely hope that charity will ultimately prevail – on all sides.

Sincerely,

John and Margi Dehlin

August 11, 2014

Dear Brother Dehlin:

Thank you for sending the letter from you and Margi. I fear that in my willingness to engage in a discussion on all of the issues that you chose to address during our lengthy conversations, the direction of my true concerns may have not been clear. As the letter I gave you states, I am focused on five core doctrines of the Church: (1) The existence and nature of God; (2) Christ being the literal Savior of the World and his Atonement being absolutely necessary to our salvation; (3) the exclusive priesthood authority restored through the Church; (4) The Book of Mormon as scripture and the revealed word of God; and (5) the governance of the Church by doctrine and revelation through inspired leaders. As you know, and as my letter outlined, in the past you have written and spoken out against these core doctrines on numerous occasions and in numerous public contexts. Your requirement of scientific proof to resolve your doubts is not the Lord's plan of asking us to walk by faith in this life.

If you are prepared to renounce your previous statements we can move forward together. From your letter, I take it that you are not intending to comply with the conditions stated in my letter. If that is the case, I will simply move forward to schedule the council.

Finally, as I read your response, it reinforces my concern that your letter is an attempt to produce an official document of what occurred during our meetings. I feel that it is impossible to fully recount the spirit and context of our discussions in a written document. I hope that in the spirit of confidentiality, you will not be releasing it to the media and posting it on your web site. I hope that I am mistaken about this, because I believe it would undermine the trust we need to have in order to move forward. But if you nevertheless decide to post your letter, I hope that you will have the fairness to post mine along with it, making clear that I presented my letter to you at the beginning of our meeting and that it contains the true focus of my concerns about your conduct.

Sincerely,

Bryan King
North Logan Stake President

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

North Logan Utah Stake

January 8, 2015

John Parkinson Dehlin
HAND DELIVERED

Dear Brother Dehlin,

Over the past few months that you have been on informal probation, I have carefully weighed the activities of your social media sites, your response to my requests contained in my letter of August 7, 2014 and your recent public declarations. I have come to a clear direction in the responsibility I have as your Stake President.

The stake presidency is considering formal disciplinary action in your behalf, including the possibility of disfellowshipment or excommunication, because of apostasy.

You are invited to attend this disciplinary council to give your response and, if you wish, to provide witnesses and other evidence in your behalf. The disciplinary council will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2015 at the North Logan Utah Stake Center, located at 2750 North 800 East, North Logan, Utah beginning at 6:00 PM. I am willing to work with you in making reasonable adjustments to the date or time if necessary.

Please know of my continued love and concern for you.



Sincerely,
Bryan C. King
Stake President