

# An Open Letter to White Progressive Mormons

by Tinesha Zandamela | Nov 1, 2016 | Featured, Politics, Racism | 8 comments



Dear White Mormon Progressives:

I'm waiting for Election Day, eagerly. I'm tired of this election season. I've been exhausted for months. I know you all feel the same.

Because the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, is the worst, right? He's the worst – but only since recently, right?

I've watched on social media for almost a year now as the Orange Monster has moved his way up in the Republican party. He has been called disgusting, and you despise him. No one was voting for him then, but no one was spending much time condemning his words either.

Until the tape with Orange Monster and Billy Bush was released.

Then, and only then, did you step up and speak up. Only then did you really, really condemn Orange Monster for his words and actions. I heard nothing beforehand.

What about before? What about when he said Mexicans were rapists? What about when he said he would ban Muslims from entering the United States? Silence.

You have argued with me that the video is about action, and the hateful vitriol he spewed about immigrants and Brown and Black people is nothing but talk. I cannot vehemently disagree enough. It may sound like talk to you—if you are not on the receiving end of the violence and hatred this man has incited by othering People of Color (PoC) and giving more power to the hate group known as the “alt right”.

I have been a victim of sexual violence many, many times. It makes me sick what the Republican nominee did to women. It angers me deeply. It hurts. This is not unimportant at all, and I do not want my words to be misconstrued that way. It is not more or less important than what Trump said about Black people “living in hell”.

I am a woman of color who has been living in pain for months as I have seen a man who does not care about women, women of color, immigrants, and anyone else who isn't a cis-het white American man. This is a man who has given his followers a platform to spew their racism. Followers who call themselves the “silent majority.”

So until you found someone you cared about protecting/defending —i.e. White women being sexually assaulted—you were silent. You didn't like him. But you didn't speak up.

Progressive Mormons of color hurt for months, amidst the silence of people who were not openly outraged. Wait—didn't Republicans do the same thing? Where have you all been? Your neutrality is just as harmful as supporting the oppressor.

I am unmoved by self-aggrandizing statements of “we hate Trump because we want to protect women” when I heard nothing like “we hate Trump because he is a racist and a xenophobe”.

“These are our daughters, our sister, our friends,” you said about women after the Billy Bush/Trump tape was released. This line is already wrong because it gives women humanity only through their connections to men, but I could not help also thinking “Excuse me? Are women of color so far removed from you that the racist words you heard spewed before did not make you think ‘these are our sisters, our friends’? Am I not your sister in the gospel too?”

I do not think Clinton is the beacon of all that is good and right in the world either—several months ago when I called attention to her issues with race and her White Feminist approach, I was quickly torn apart by you for daring to call out the modern White Feminist hero.

And there it is again: in too many ProgMo spaces, racism does not matter. The slow sure change is there, but it is not enough or as widespread or as quick as it needs to be.

So, my White ProgMo friends who waited this long to say anything: what took you so long?

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Tinesha Zandamela



Tinesha Zandamela is a 22-year old BYU student double majoring in Sociology and French and plans to go to law school. She currently works as a director of a nonprofit in Utah. She has published a book about her experiences as a biracial Mormon woman that is available on Amazon Kindle [hyperlink: <https://www.amazon.com/Just-Pick-One-Stories-Biracial-ebook/dp/B00YO2UZLO>]

All posts by Tinesha Zandamela

## 8 Comments



**Amateur Parent** on November 1, 2016 at 2:14 pm

There are plenty of us who have seen him from the beginning as an asshole and misogynistic bigot.

Our words are drowned out somewhat by a loud fringe of LDS and evangelicals who have lost their moral compass while wandering the desert of political drama.

The press is fanning the flames and adding to the drama as a way to increase their revenues.

Many people are economically afraid. They think they want a business man to lead this country. They see that as more important than his personal life and craven attitudes. The problem is, those same people haven't stopped to think about what kind of business decisions would be applied to the country. So many surgeons think Trump is going to save the medical industry by bringing money back into the pockets of providers. Trump has a history of not paying vendors. He cuts jobs. He cuts wages. He is their worst nightmare .. they just haven't figured that out yet.

Your friends on your social media feeds are not speaking up. I am. My husband is. My kids are. My friends are. Sounds to me like you are running with the wrong crowd. You need some new social media friends.

The best thing we can all do is vote. I have done so already — my first national election in which I voted for a democrat. It felt good.

Reply



**Mark Sells** on November 1, 2016 at 2:20 pm

Is there a big divide between progressive Mormons and progressives in general? I'm Catholic and a social conservative, but I challenged Trump at every step as soon as he became a candidate. I know of many progressives who've

done the same thing, but I'm not really familiar with Mormon progressives. Many in the GOP leadership have denounced Trump. Though they waited way too long and many possibly only did so for strategic reasons, I believe some of these are sincere. Southern Baptist leader Russell Moore has been an outspoken critic of Trump, calling him out for his racism, his nativism, his sexism, and for his general lack of civility from the very start. I think I understand your general point, though. The Republican Party has been tainted by this man. He should never have been nominated in the first place and the only thing to do now is repudiate him at the polls.

Reply



**LaShawn Schultz** on November 1, 2016 at 2:57 pm

TZ!!!!

Salute!!!

<3

LS

Reply



**A Happy Hubby** on November 1, 2016 at 7:34 pm

Ditto to what Amateur Parent said. I agree with most everything she said – including that I have voted and for the first time I voted non-republican. I am not torn about the decision in the least

I was about to say “I get where you are coming from”. But I probably don’t get EXACTLY where you are coming from. But I would agree with your general point and I too am apalled that so many people are supporting such a vile man. As my grandma would say, “Lord save us!” That is more true now than anytime in my adult lifetime.

Reply



**A Happy Hubby** on November 2, 2016 at 5:14 am

Tinesha – I for one would welcome feedback even on my comments if they are making you yell, “he just doesn’t get it!!!” I spend times on this site and others to try and learn. So teacher, tell me more. I am trying to learn.

Reply