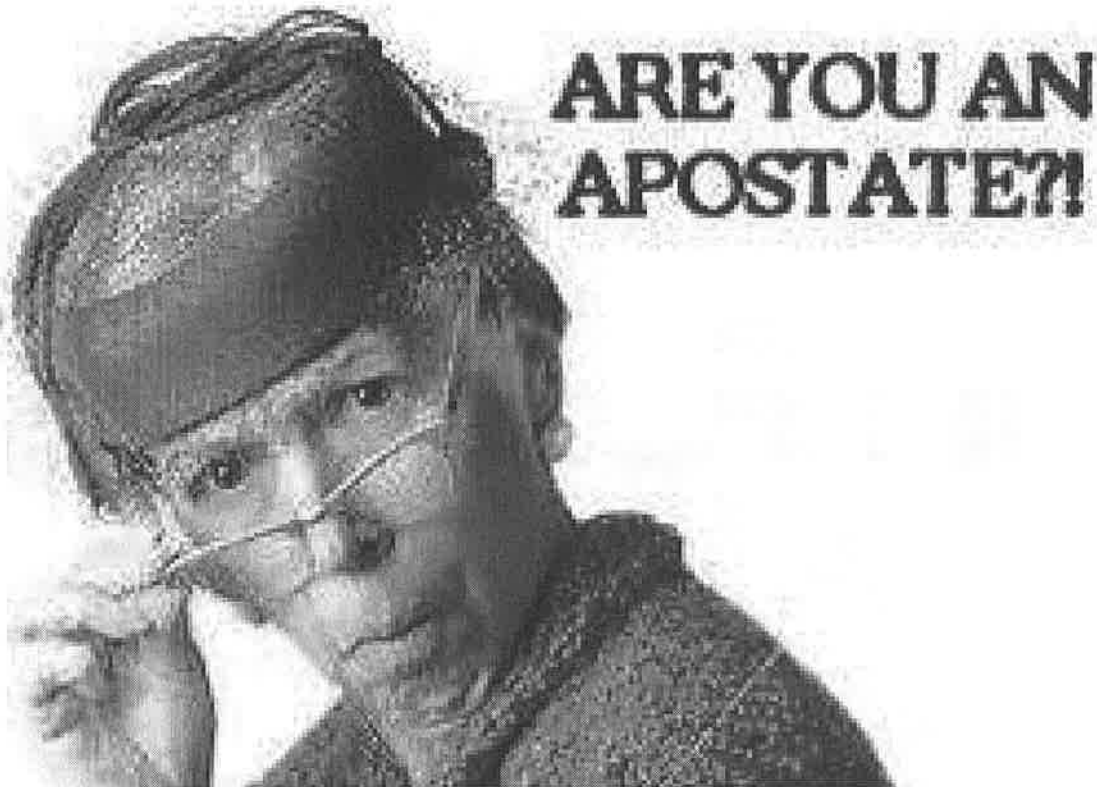


I, Apostate

by Corbin Volluz | Mar 11, 2014 | Agency, Charity, Faith, Featured, Gospel Topics, Mormonism | 47 comments



I am an apostate.

Or so I hear.

It has recently come to my attention that certain members of my ward have taken to calling me an apostate, likely because of articles I have posted at Rational Faiths.

It is hard for me to tell precisely what it is I may have said or written that causes others to view me as an apostate; largely because they haven't been willing to
to my face.



So I am left to speculate.

Am I an apostate because I received a spiritual witness of the Book of Mormon when I prayed my way through it at the age of 18; a witness that has never left me and which I could never deny?

Am I an apostate because of the articles I wrote arguing the Book of Mormon is a product of the ancient world? (See here and here.) Or because of the article I wrote showing the Book of Mormon is a product of the modern world?



Am I an apostate because I have demonstrated a complexity to Book of Mormon narratives evincing patterns likely beyond the abilities of an early nineteenth century upstate New York farm boy? See here, here, here and here.

Am I an apostate because I believe Joseph Smith to have been in touch with the Divine during his brief prophetic career? Or is it because I recognize he was a person who, like the rest of us, struggled with his humanity and suffered from numerous character defects?

Am I an apostate because I voted to legalize gay marriage? Or is it because I believe the overturning of state laws forbidding gay marriage by federal judges to be unconstitutional?

Am I an apostate because I agree with President Uchtdorf that “leaders in the Church



have simply made mistakes”?[i] Or is it because I disagree with Elder Oaks that Church leaders are above criticism for such mistakes, and that “it does not matter that the criticism is true”?[ii]

Am I an apostate because I do not believe God instituted a policy denying the Priesthood to black men, and temple ordinances to black men and women? Or is it because I believe the Church should apologize for this racist policy?

Am I an apostate because I believe I have personally experienced all the spiritual gifts set forth in the seventh Article of Faith?

Am I an apostate because I stood up for Mother Eve when she was being denigrated at church, and raised my voice while so doing?

Am I an apostate because I posted a profile at Ordain Women, joining my voice with a rising tide of Church members who believe the Priesthood ban on women should

be lifted, even as the Priesthood ban on black men was lifted in 1978?

Am I an apostate because I agree with the LDS definition of hell and damnation as "The state of being stopped in one's progress"?[iii] Or is it because I perceive the Correlation Committee has managed to create a church that matches the definition?



Am I an apostate because I agree with Joseph Smith that "One of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may"?[iv] And that "We should gather all the good and true principles in the world



and treasure them up, or we shall not come out true Mormons"?[v] Or is it because I disagree with Elder Boyd K. Packer's comment that "some things that are true are not very useful"?[vi]

Am I an apostate because I agree with Joseph Smith that "the creeds set up stakes, and say, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further'; which I cannot subscribe to"?[vii] Or is it because I am at odds with Elder M. Russell Ballard's discouragement of teachers who "stray from the approved curriculum materials"? Is it because I sense that one can faithfully attend Church meetings for a lifetime and never really graduate from Primary?

Am I an apostate because I disagree with President Eyring when he suggests a faithful Mormon should accept any calling extended by Church leaders, and that the failure to do so puts one in "spiritual peril"?[viii] Or is it because I see this position as conflicting with the fundamental doctrine of agency; the agency scripture tells us Satan sought to destroy when he rebelled?[ix] Is it because I believe many in the LDS Church have effectively redefined "agency" to mean the freedom to do what you are told?



Am I an apostate because I believe it is more important to be a good person than it is to be a member of the LDS Church?



Am I an apostate because I believe God's revelations and visions are available to all people everywhere, and are not restricted to members of only one organization?[x]

Am I an apostate because I recognize that the last

revelation published by the LDS Church was received in 1918, a full 96-years ago?[xi]
Or because I can do the math and calculate that, for more than the last half of the LDS Church's existence, it has been without new canonized revelation?

Am I an apostate because I believe there is a substantive difference between a revelation of God's will and a declaration that such a revelation was received? Or is it because I do not recognize continuing revelation in sermons that simply rehash the same subjects over and over again?[xii]

Am I an apostate because I agree with Jesus that prophets will be known by their fruits?[xiii] Or is it because I wonder that the decisive qualification for the LDS Prophet seems to be the ability to outlive fourteen of his colleagues?



Am I an apostate because I disagree with Elder Bruce R. McConkie's "Seven Deadly Heresies"? Or is it because I agree with Joseph Smith that a man isn't "damned for believing too much; but they are damned for unbelief"?[xiv] Is it because I, like



Joseph Smith, "want the liberty to believe as I please," and that "it feels so good not to be trammled"? Is it because I agree with Joseph Smith that, "It don't prove that a man is not a good man, because he errs in doctrine"?[xv]

Am I an apostate because I have slipped the surly bonds of correlated dogma? Because I have realized that there really are "words of wisdom" to be sought out of the "best books" if only I take the time to read them? Or is it because I have found that in so doing, the heavens are now open as never before, and God is more willing to speak freely to me as one person speaks with another?

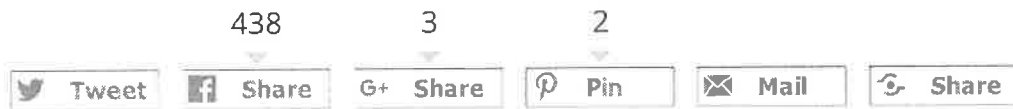


And finally, am I an apostate because I believe the LDS Church should accept and fellowship members of various opinions and orientations? Or is it because I believe Mormons should not be labeling other members with differing viewpoints as apostate?

Perhaps those who have called me an apostate behind my back will read this post and clarify to my face why they think I deserve that appellation.

I hope they do.

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- [i] Dieter Uchtdorf, *Come Join With Us*, October 2013 General Conference
 - [ii] *The Ensign*, Feb. 1987, Dallin H. Oaks, *Criticism*
 - [iii] LDS Guide to the Scriptures—Article on “Damnation”
 - [iv] *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 199.
 - [v] *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 316.
 - [vi] Boyd K. Packer, *The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect*, Address to the Fifth Annual CES Religious Educators’ Symposium, 1981.
 - [vii] *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 327.
 - [viii] Henry B. Eyring, *To My Grandchildren*, October 2013 General Conference
 - [ix] Moses 4:3
 - [x] 2 Nephi 29:7; Alma 29:8
 - [xi] D&C 138
 - [xii] See any and all General Authority talks available on the Church website, lds.org
 - [xiii] Matt. 7:15-16
 - [xiv] *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 373.
 - [xv] *The Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 183-184.



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