

In a Dream

by Blaire Ostler | Jun 20, 2017 | Authority, Body of Christ, Featured, General authorities, LGBTQ, Ordain Women, Theology | 1 comment



(Photography Art by Seb Janiak)

My closest friends know I dream. I dream a lot.

I have dreams about fantasy worlds that don't exist, and dreams that are so closely aligned with memories that I question if they really happened. I have beautiful dreams, gruesome dreams, violent dreams, adventurous dreams, vivid dreams, abstract dreams, sexual dreams, and humorous dreams. I dream about loved ones from my past, and loved ones in the present. I dream about the future. I dream about time travel. I dream almost every night. Sometimes I write them in my journal.

Some mornings Drew will ask me, "What were you dreaming about last night? You were smiling in your sleep again." Other times I'll wake up startled and sweating and he will ask, "Did you have another nightmare?" Sleeping in the same bed as me must be utterly exhausting. I don't know how he does it. I supposed he's gotten used to it over the years.

I had a dream I would like to share.

Women were ordained to the priesthood. It finally happened. Just prior to the public announcement, I was granted a private audience with the Q15, because in my dream why wouldn't I be granted a private audience with the men who run the Church?

I walked into a spacious room where elderly white men sat in opulent, red velvet chairs behind an oversized dark, mahogany desk. I stood in the center of the room with a considerable distance separating me from them. I felt no need to step any closer, nor a desire to sit down. I was wearing my usual Sunday attire, while they were dressed in their usual dark suits. Some seemed happy, some seemed relieved, some seemed annoyed, and some seemed indifferent.

One of them said to me impatiently, "Well Blaire, are you happy now?"

I looked at him, a little confused of how to respond or how I even ended up in this room with them. I said, "Happy? Why would I be happy?"

Another one with a much kinder tone continued, "You're finally getting what you want, female ordination. Aren't you satisfied?"

I paused, gaining my composure before calmly answering, "No. I'm not satisfied."

Another looked confused and questioned, "Is this not what you wanted? You fought for it like you did."

I responded, "No. I care very little about my personal ordination. I suppose I'm happy for others that desire ordination, but my personal desires are almost irrelevant in this context."

Another one with an attractive accent said, "Are you still upset about our policies on homosexuality? We are planning on changing those as well. That will take more time."

I mildly chuckled and said, "I trust policy would change eventually. You've changed in the past, there's no doubt you're capable of doing it again. You change when the institution is threatened. I see how preserving the institution is of paramount importance. It's in atrophy."

The one sitting at the center of the desk, the leader, firmly questioned, "Blaire, what do you want?"

I furrowed my brows while thoughtfully considering his question. I glanced to my left, out the elongated windows to see light breaking through dark clouds. The windows were the only source of light. Everything else seemed dim.

I smiled and turned my gaze back to the men before replying, "I don't know exactly what I want, but it's not here. To be sure, I want to be Mormon. I'll always be Mormon—it's quite literally in my blood. I imagine I'll wear the label Mormon 'til the day I die, hopefully longer. Mormon theology is my theology, but your institution is not my institution.

Everyone seems to be an expert on why Millennials are leaving religion. Yes, your policies and positions are outdated and unnecessarily exclusionary. Yes, it's disappointing it has taken you this long to ordain women to the priesthood. Yes, we are tired of gerontocracies. Yes, we are done being preached at from authoritarians who don't encourage our autonomy, authenticity,

and flourishing. Yes, we're unimpressed with patronizing rhetoric. Yes, we are annoyed by literalistic interpretations of scripture that hinder the genuine pursuit of Truth. Whether or not a narrative is literal isn't where its power lies. The power lies in human potential, but you're still in Plato's Cave marveling at shadows on the walls unable or unwilling to remove the shackles of escapism and bask in the exposure of wonderment, curiosity, and humility. You can't know God when you cling to the shadows that make you feel safe. God is a risk, not a security blanket.

I can't speak for other Millennials, but for me, I didn't need the Church to be 'true' from a literal perspective. Honest, yes, but not true. We are shaping the reality of our existence through stories, narratives, ideas, art, theologies, and even dreams that inspire a belief in Godly potential. Religions are the communities that mobilize us to accomplish great acts, and God has always been the projection of human desire. The problem is you don't believe in my potential. You may say it, but you don't encourage it. I sometimes wonder if you even believe in God. It's clear you believe in maintaining the status quo, but God is not the status quo. What if Joseph Smith never reached out beyond the status quo? What if he had been content with the existing religions of his time? What if he let external authoritarians override personal revelation? God can only meaningfully reveal what we would meaningfully accept. You cannot put limits on God without limiting humanity, and ironically perpetuating asinine limitations on God is the sort of hubris the scriptures warned us of.

Many Millennials have lost interest in your institutions. We're moving on. If it's any consolation it's not entirely your fault. There is a global shift occurring bigger than you, me, the Book of Mormon, the Bible, Mormonism, Christianity, or any other religion. I'm not interested in tearing you or any other religion down—that will happen naturally if traditionally recognized religion fails to pass the gauntlet of natural selection. Even Mormonism, my beautiful home, isn't immune.

The failure to adapt will lead to extinction, and you're not adapting fast enough in our technoprogressive world. We're the generation that grew up with cell phones and the internet. We fact-check you as you speak. We are part of an ever-expanding network of decentralized information and authority. You cannot control Truth. Radical technology has led to radical transparency, and it's creating unprecedented accountability. I pray these turn of events will lead to radical compassion. However, I am only one small cell in the body of compassion, the body of Christ. I need grace, as do you.

I'm interested in the construction of something better. I'm interested in the transformation of the mind. Transforming policy is helpful, but insufficient. Gods evolve. Gods change. Even more importantly, our perceptions of God change. The death of a God will lead to the birth of a new God, a new myth, a new theology, predicated by our past. We're storytellers and I pray the Gods made in our image might eventually lead us to Truth. I don't know when or if that day will come, but I choose faith. Even if I am wrong and this is all a futile protest against meaninglessness, I will have died trying—facing the uncertainty of the unknown, head on without the allusion of a safety net that you so desperately cling to.

You would think I would be more upset at this moment, like a girl saying goodbye to a lover, but I'm not. I'm grateful. The institution has fulfilled the measure of its creation. Something better is coming—a shift in cognition. This is grander than any of us. I don't know what it is or what it

will look like, but I want to be a part of it. Is this desire of my own volition, or am I a slave to my biological programming? I don't know. I only know the reality of desire.

I imagine others will feel differently, and will continue to find value in your pews, but you'll have to forgive me—I have found your pews wanting.

Thank you for your time. I'll see myself out now."

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Blaire Ostler is one of the leading voices on the intersections of Mormonism, feminism, and transhumanism. She presents and writes on many forums, and speaks at conferences promoting Mormon Transhumanist ideals. Blaire holds a BFA in Design from the International Academy of Design and Technology-Seattle. She is pursuing a second bachelor's degree in philosophy with an emphasis in gender studies. She is passionate about aesthetics, religion, human sexuality, queer theory, social philosophy, and art. She and husband Drew reside in Utah with their three children.

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A Happy Hubby on June 20, 2017 at 6:29 am

Blaire – you speak so clearly what seems to me to be on many people's minds.

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