

A Message for Mormon Apologists

bob mccue

February 19, 2006

<http://mccue.cc/bob/spirituality.htm>

For the most part, when I re-enter the Mormon world (or even its fringes) I experience vertigo. This is the world Lewis Carroll wrote about - a postmodern place where words mean what anyone wants, we must pretend nonsense is sense, and probabilities are ignored. Hence, we can prove anything, and nothing, to those who've passed through this looking glass.

We are the blind little boy in "Dumb and Dumber", cuddling our dead budgie and wondering what all that tape is doing around its neck while we try in vain to make it sing. And where is that nice man we bought the bird from? He was so nice, and we trusted him.

The Pythons' "Dead Parrot" sketch brings the point home (see <http://bau2.uibk.ac.at/sg/python/Scripts/TheDeadParrotSketch>).

Our religion appears dead. We are distraught. And so we take our problem to smiling men and women whom we have until recently paid regularly and dearly for our beliefs. During one recent year, for example, FARMS received \$27mm in tax deductible donations. And Mormonism's revenues are estimate at \$6B annually. That's one hell of a dead budgie pile.

Our conversation with the nice shopkeepers is funny for everyone except we whose blood and tears by the bucket was handed over in exchange for what is now obviously a dead bird.

And so it maddens us, at least initially, to listen to your comic nonsense. Eventually we calm down, but our experience with you and your ilk have permanently jaundiced us toward you.

This is not Wonderland. Go consort with your own kind where intellectual survival depends on one's ability to skate the razor's edge between sense and nonsense, or numb yourself so thoroughly that it doesn't matter.

Your world is as Alice described Jabberwocky. "It seems very pretty," she said when she had finished it, "but it's rather hard to understand!" (You see she didn't like to confess even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.) "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas--only I don't exactly know what they are! However, somebody killed something: that's clear, at any rate---" (see <http://www.jabberwocky.com/carroll/jabber/jabberwocky.html>)

. We have our bellies more than full of you and your upside-down-ness.

We don't care how sincere you are. We don't care how smart you are. We don't care how many of you there are. We don't care how long you talk, how many books you write or if

you swear that you are eternal and hence can never, ever go away. All we care about is whether you make sense. If you don't, either leave or we will throw you out. It is that simple.

And don't whine about how unreasonable and closed-minded we are. Your whining is even more irritating than your talking. We are as interested in talking to you as to the Young Earth Creationists, Holocaust Deniers, JW's, Scientologists, Alien Abductionists and a host of others. You are all no doubt charming people in many ways. But we don't have time to explore every nonsense invented by man and desperately changed each time more of its puerility shows through. Particularly in light of all of the other wonderful things we have recently discovered.

So enjoy your lives. We are enjoying ours.

And you've got the count of three to be out of our sight. One, two ...

best,

bob

The following messages were posted relative to what is above at the bulletin board on www.exmormon.org

Subject: AMEN, brother n/t
Date: Feb 25 19:33
Author: activejackmormon
Mail Address:

Subject: The analogies (types & shadows for you tbms) are numerous...
Date: Feb 25 20:03
Author: Sally
Mail Address: sallyforthsilly@hotmail.com

"Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain...I am the great Oz" --Wizard of Oz

or how about:

"Morpheus: You take the blue pill and the story ends. You wake in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill and you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.(Long pause; Neo begins to reach for the red pill)

Remember -- all I am offering is the truth, nothing more." --The Matrix

The question of which pill to take illustrates the personal aspect of the decision to study philosophy. Do you live on in ignorance (and potentially bliss) or do you lead what Aristotle called 'the examined life'.

Any more out there?

peace out...sal

Subject: Sooo basically you are telling Mo'pologists (language of course!)
Date: Feb 25 20:17
Author: Polygamy Porter
Mail Address:

Fuck you and the Curelom you rode in on!!!

Nice!

Subject: I had my best laugh in a while ...
Date: Feb 26 09:07
Author: bob mccue
Mail Address: mccuer@telusplanet.net

when I opened this one up. I wasted words here.

best,

bob

Subject: Sweet! I gave some comic relief to Bob! (pats self on back) nt
Date: Feb 26 18:47
Author: Polygamy Porter
Mail Address:

Subject: They are furtive creeps.
Date: Feb 25 20:27
Author: gearheart

Mail Address:

They are afraid it's all false, so their ego is on the line, so they overcompensate with any excuse or lie that can delay the inevitable. They subconsciously know that if they can convince others, they can use this to persuade themselves that they are really smart for believing in it after all.

Subject: I especially like the part where we don't treat them unfairly

Date: Feb 25 20:27

Author: Tavah

Mail Address:

just make some reasonable sense!!
Oh, yeah, that can't be done.

Subject: I really enjoyed this, Bob. nt

Date: Feb 25 22:08

Author: Marvelous

Mail Address:

Subject: The Iraqi Minister of Information....

Date: Feb 26 00:52

Author: JW the Inquizzinator

Mail Address:

I'm sorry but this IS the closest analogy for me...when that guy (the Iraqi Info Minister...and there is a website dedicated to him if you google him)..talked about the Iraqi Army 'winning'...while American tanks could be heard in the background.....it's perfect...finally, at the last possible moment, he stated that the 'gig' was up and fled....but not until we actually drove tanks thru Baghdad. Until then he was spouting the Iraqi version of the fight [oh and how wrong it was].

Seems exactly what the Morg's apologists are doing...even as the evidence piles on brick by brick...amino acid by amino acid as it were....

Subject: And just for fun, the French version of Jabberwocky (link)

Date: Feb 26 18:06

Author: winter
Mail Address:

in case y'all were wondering how to translate nonsense into a foreign language.

Perhaps I should clarify. Jabberwocky is high-class nonsense translated into French. The BoM was not that tough.

<http://www.math.luc.edu/~vande/jabfrench.html>

winter

Subject: Re: A Message for All Apologists
Date: Feb 27 00:13
Author: Defender of nothing
Mail Address:

There is a word for people such as you(and Benedict Arnold)
"turncoat". Please don't take offense, but when a relatively highly placed individual, such as yourself, who was once in the Mormon hierarchy, turn on and attempts to destroy what was once the object of his affections, some credibility is necessarily lost.

Subject: I disagree
Date: Feb 27 00:27
Author: guy_from_alberta
Mail Address: talisman99999@hotmail.com

It takes guts and honesty to turn on something that was once a major part of your life. What's wrong with trying to destroy something that is a fraud? I commend people such as Bob.

Subject: I disagree with your disagreement
Date: Feb 27 01:19
Author: Defender of nothing
Mail Address:

What I am hearing from McCue is that "I was wrong before, but I am absolutely certain that I am not wrong now".

It's like Lee Harvey Oswald. Was he a double agent or a patsy? What version of Oswald's facts do you choose to believe?

Likewise, what version of McCue's facts do you choose to believe?

Subject: So I guess that ex-scientologists are turncoat too....

Date: Feb 27 14:01

Author: Rationalis

Mail Address: perapera77@yahoo.com

By your lights it would never be honorable to self deprogram and leave a cult. Your "which version of the facts" comment would have to apply to anyone leaving any cult or anyone growing out of, or beyond, any one of the many stupid prejudices or false ideologies that abound. No, for you, I guess one really is stuck with whatever you are born into! That or be accused of being a turn coat.

How utterly stupid!

Praise to the man who breaks away from the indoctrinations of foolish fantasies.

Subject: Re: I disagree with your disagreement

Date: Feb 27 14:03

Author: guy_from_alberta

Mail Address: talisman99999@hotmail.com

All of them. You see I was once a true defender of the church at one time as well. Perhaps I see things differently from you. I have been on both sides of the playing field. How about you?

Subject: See there you go twisting it and making it hard. It's only

Date: Feb 27 00:51

Author: 4 decades

Mail Address:

those who've been there who can truly understand the depths of the fraud, but you just said the opposite.

If you say it over and over and over, people will start to believe you. But it still won't make sense.

Subject: Give what you said a little more thought ...

Date: Feb 27 12:41

Author: bob mccue

Mail Address: mccuer@telusplanet.net

You suggest that anyone who decides that he has been wrong should not be believed in his reformed position. This is, in effect if not intent, a simple minded conservative position that says that change should be resisted. People who hold this position tend to only apply it in favor of their own institutions. I suggest that this is likely your case. Let's see how you do on a test of this hypothesis. Please answer the following questions:

1. There have been some high profile defectors from the Muslim terrorists groups who say that they were duped in various ways, have recognized the error of their ways and are now calling for peace and trying to help people both inside and outside the Muslim world understand how the extremist behaviors that they once displayed are made to seem reasonable. See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10199-2004Sep9.html>. Do you think that because these people have changed the perception of what is right and wrong, and the evidence supporting their former beliefs that they should be rejected out of hand?

2. There have been high profile defections from all of the well known cults - Scientology, the Moonies, the Hare Krishna, Jonestown, etc. (see Steven Hassan, "Breaking the Bonds..."). Do you think that because these people have changed the perception of what is right and wrong, and the evidence supporting their former beliefs that they should be rejected out of hand?

3. Mitt Romney recently changed his views regarding abortion. In a recent interview with Chris Wallace he said, "Chris, what I'm saying is that my position has evolved and it changed from where it was before. ..." (see <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,186080,00.html>). Does this fact make Romney's new position in favor of limiting abortion unbelievable to you?

4. And finally, science is based on the idea that we should always be uncertain of the truth claims we make. Major league scientists regularly change their point of view on the basis of scientific research as it progresses. (See Sudarshan and Rothman, "Doubt and Certainty" or Van Doren, "A History of Knowledge"). Should we disbelieve every scientist who acknowledges that he has been incorrect in his views, as Steven Hawking recently did? (see <http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn6151>).

5. If you are willing to accept that at least some of the people who admit that they are wrong in the cases I have outlined above should be taken seriously, how do you distinguish them from people like me who after an immense amount of research have become persuaded that our former beliefs in the literal truth of Mormonism were incorrect?

6. And finally, do you agree or disagree with the following statement: We should acknowledge that we are all subject to biases, cognitive dissonance and other perception warping mental dysfunctions and hence be forthright about our perceptions, the theories we are using to interpret them and invite others with access to different evidence and different points of view to correct us.

I have found that being proved wrong about my most important has a profoundly humbling effect on me, and has helped me to be more willing to accept the probability that I am at best part right in my beliefs now.

What I hear from you is a typical apologetic argument - one that seeks to avoid considering the substance of a position that makes you uncomfortable.

Let's see if you can defend your position on a rational basis.

best,

bob

Subject: Credibility is only lost to those who have a vested interest in protecting the status quo.

Date: Feb 27 13:51

Author: fh451

Mail Address:

Anyone else interested in reality and knows the facts will see his defection as an indication of how rotten the core is.

fh451

Subject: Are converts to mormonism turncoats too?

Date: Feb 27 14:10

Author: dick

Mail Address:

One group's turncoat is another group's hero. Was Joseph Smith a turncoat for turning his back on the local church's and calling them "whores"?

Subject: You're not worth my time, but what exmo's like Bob do is...

Date: Feb 27 17:33

Author: YooperApostate

Mail Address:

contrary to your specious argument, undercut the common misconceptions about apostates held by the faithful:

- 1) He was not a recent convert
- 2) He "had a testimony"
- 3) He was not burdened with unrepented sin
- 4) He did not find "living the gospel" too hard
- 5) He did not have the strong desire to sin
- 6) He was not offended by some member of his ward

Instead, he found out that he was a member of a polytheistic Masonic cult based upon a lie and perpetuated by a fraud. Accordingly, he fled, never looked back and is now unwilling to keep quiet about the lie and the fraud.

BTW, my super secret temple name is Amos. What's yours?

Subject: Yours and others misguided statements

Date: Feb 27 18:36

Author: Defender of nothing

Mail Address:

miss the mark entirely. I don't think it has been established "who is right" or "who is wrong". Fortunately our American justice system has a heavier burden of proof than you people require. You act like this board is a court of law. You try to go back almost 200 years in history and bring forth facts that cannot be cross-examined, and therefore hold no legal weight at all.

Benedict Arnold was a "traitor" in that he sold out his kinsmen and gave aid and comfort to the other side. I'm sure he thought his efforts were righteous, much as you do, but who won the war?

At issue here is personal integrity. It is OK for Bob to change his mind about life... this is America. Bob loses credibility when he attacks his former comrades with a vengeance.

If an American did to his government what Bob did to Mormonism, he would be tried for treason and hanged, and rightfully so. This is an issue of honor. You can't be an American one minute and a commie the next(to use a bad example).

Unless Bob was kidnapped, administered drugs etc, etc he has no one to blame but himself. It is extremely tempting to blame Mormonism for one's own bad choices.

Subject: You still have not answered the questions above ...

Date: Feb 27 18:40

Author: bob mccue

Mail Address: mccuer@telusplanet.net

and you are still not making any sense. It does not matter how many times you repeat nonsense, it is still nonsense.

Answer my questions and explain to me why I am incorrect.

best,

bob

Subject: I was a Methodist before I was a Mormon...am I a "traitor" to the Methodists?

n/t

Date: Feb 27 18:45

Author: JW the Inquizzinator

Mail Address:

Subject: I would have to say...

Date: Feb 27 18:49

Author: Defender of nothing

Mail Address:

that if you were a rank-and-file member, and then switched, you were merely a pawn in a larger game, and not a leader of many. The consequences are not nearly so grave.

Subject: Speaking of "burden of proof"

Date: Feb 27 18:46

Author: YooperApostate

Mail Address:

Bob and I are both lawyers. Are you?

Moreover, actually, it has been established who is right and who is wrong. You simply have not availed yourself of the information that would allow you to make a correct determination of the matter.

Integrity includes the personal courage to stop one's participation in a destructive lifestyle. Speaking out against that lifestyle is not only cathartic to that individual but beneficial for those still engaged in the lifestyle.

Bob's bad choices? Being Mormon is rarely a choice. Like most of us, Bob did not choose to be Mormon. He chose to leave when he discovered the truth, a process you are too cowardly even to commence.

Honor, you say? It is safe to say that you wouldn't know the first thing about the subject.

Subject: Well spoken...

Date: Feb 27 18:54

Author: Defender of nothing

Mail Address:

You are well on your way as far as crushing the "peons" that get in your way(me). You're starting to sound like the authoritarian Mormon leaders that have been so hardily condemned here. Congratulations, you have become what you hate.

Subject: What you have done...

Date: Feb 27 16:56

Author: Defender of nothing

Mail Address:

Is go from one extreme to the other(TBM to nomo). This has nothing to do with apologetics. It has to do with your personal character. I am absolutely certain that no one held a gun to your head and forced you to take on the responsibilities of a Bishop. Now you claim that you were duped, and have decided to do you homework. You should have done your homework long ago. This point of fact is your fault and yours alone. Man up and accept responsibility for your past actions, and let your future arguments be tempered by this fact.

Subject: Answer the questions above ...

Date: Feb 27 17:00

Author: bob mccue

Mail Address: mccuer@telusplanet.net

if you want a substantive discussion. Continue to prattle nonsense if you wish to be ignored. Your last offering makes as little sense as your first.

best,

bob

Subject: "Defender of nothing," I'm going to give you a free clue here.....

Date: Feb 27 17:19

Author: Randy J.

Mail Address:

If someone joins a corrupt, false, organization, and the facts which show that organization to be false and corrupt are wilfully and aggressively withheld and suppressed from the joiner, then the blame for the deception is on the corrupt organization, not on the deceived joiner.

Bob McCue, like most other people on this BB, abandoned Mormonism after he went against church leaders' admonitions to not study "anti-Mormon material," did the homework, and determined that the church is false and corrupt.

If there is a category of people who lack character regarding this subject, it is church leaders, apologists, and TBM trolls who have examined the facts which clearly show the church to be false and corrupt, and yet they remain "true believers," and criticize those who have exhibited enough character and personal integrity to abandon a false and corrupt organization.

If you think that there is as many as one person on this BB who agrees with or endorses your characterization of Bob and his behavior, you've got another think coming.

Subject: Amen....ditto to the nth degree..n/t

Date: Feb 27 18:41

Author: JW the Inquizzinator

Mail Address:

Subject: Bob, thank you for this...

Date: Feb 27 19:00

Author: Jn

Mail Address:

not just this, but so much of what you have written and have been willing to speak out about.

Subject: First, Bob is Canadian. We wouldn't hang him even if he re-converted to the Mormon Church
Date: Feb 27 19:00
Author: Nightingale
Mail Address:

The US examples fall a little flat when Bob is a Canadian but I get your general opinion.

I also question this statement of yours:

"...when a relatively highly placed individual, such as yourself, who was once in the Mormon hierarchy..."

I don't really consider "bishop" to be relatively highly placed or to be part of the "hierarchy". No offence intended to anyone who was/is a bishop but I see it more as a caretaker position in that there is no real power or decision-making authority vested there. I look at Mormon hierarchy more as the SLC suits who can actually make their voices heard. So what is that - like 2 guys? - maybe 3?

The mindset that once you have embarked on a certain course you must continue to forge ahead even if the situation changes (such as coming into possession of new information or changing your opinion or impression about something) seems somewhat peculiarly fundamentalist. In fact, this thinking is a big factor that kept me in the Mormon Church about a year past the last frail thread of my ability to endure it. When I went to the bishop with my questions (oh woe is me that I had got into such a fix that I actually had a question, not knowing that is a red flag for "convert with a problem") he just kept repeating over and over, "but you've been baptized, but you've been to the temple" as if that not only answered any and all questions but also binds you inexorably to the church for eternity with no possibility of a re-do.

It was a dark and yawning chasm that I stared into, this inexorable bondage until I realized it isn't in reality bondage at all. You can change your mind. And walk away. There is no Rule of the Universe and Injunction from on High that Nightingale (or anyone) must stick with every decision ever made even in the face of good reasons for review. In fact, it seems particularly blockheaded to me to do such a thing. If I take a road trip, having marked out my route ahead of time, if there are road accidents, detours, snowstorms, traffic jams or sites of special interest just over the next rise that it would be a shame to miss, I can actually choose to go outside the plotted lines and still arrive at my destination, having enjoyed the journey more than if I'd sat in a traffic jam breathing polluted air because after all, that is the route I'd first chosen.

Even if you are hell-bent on obeying The Ten Commandments and the WoW to the nth degree, there isn't a single one of the precepts that says, "On penalty of death, do not ever change your mind".

Or maybe there is, come to think, in fundy religion. In which case, I beg to differ with that approach. I found it takes a bit of effort to give your head a shake and loosen up on that a bit. But it's worth the time and effort to begin to see things in a different, more rational way. We can just be human and make mistakes and correct our course. In fact, one of the well recognized measures of intellectual maturity is that you arrive at that point.

I used to feel somewhat obligated to toe the party line; i.e., always agree with fellow Christians, always believe and adhere to the accepted dogma, etc. There are times where that just doesn't work, if you want to be a person of integrity. It is certainly not a treasonable offence to exercise your freedom to change your mind and live true to what you believe. To me, that is an honest and honourable course to chart. Even if you have to throw away a few used maps along the way.