

21 May 2014

The Office of the First Presidency
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

Dear Presidents Thomas S. Monson, Henry B. Eyring and Dieter F. Uchtdorf,

I wish you well and every blessing as you administrate the affairs of the Church.

I appeal to the First Presidency to overturn the decision to excommunicate me from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for apostasy. I am not an apostate. I believe the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, live its principles to the fullest of my ability and support the manifold missions of the Church. I have been a near-life-long member; served an honorable mission; graduated from BYU; introduced my wife to the gospel and the Church; was sealed to her (and our three oldest children) in the temple; and (with her) have raised a family of nine in the fullness of the gospel for the past 14 years. I have been a full-tithe payer since I joined the Church at age 15; held a valid temple recommend at the time of my excommunication; have been faithful to my covenants and remain active in the Church in every way.

How, then, am I an apostate?

Palm Desert California Stake President Matt Morris claimed that I “espoused and persisted in teaching false doctrine after having received counsel and correction by priesthood leaders.” I have repeatedly asked him, Bishop Chris Risenmay and others to clarify the “false doctrine” I have “espoused and persisted in teaching”, pledging to denounce such if they would only show me where I have gone astray, but they have inexplicably and invariably declined to do so. One might expect, if I had embraced false doctrine, they would have opened the scriptures to me and showed me the error of my ways. The only scriptures they quoted, however -- by way of “counsel and correction” -- were Doctrine and Covenants 1:38 and 68:4, which I fully support.

At my disciplinary hearing, President Morris polled each member of the stake high council for his opinion. I am told that none suggested I be excommunicated. During that hearing, I heard no evidence presented suggesting that I espouse, believe, or teach false doctrine of any kind. I have since spoken with over half of the high council and leaders in attendance and asked each why I was excommunicated. While I received many answers, none suggested that I violated any actual commandment of God, contradicted any scripture, or taught anything contrary to the revelations and teachings of Joseph Smith or even current Church leaders!

So how, then, am I an apostate?

When I asked the stake clerk at my disciplinary hearing to read aloud the “charges” against me so that I might refute them, he couldn’t because (he said) he couldn’t figure out what they were and couldn’t write them down! Likewise, President Morris couldn’t recite them because (he said) he couldn’t “remember” them! Nevertheless, he found me guilty of apostasy, which decision was then sustained by the stake high council.

When I later asked several high priests present and/or privy to my case to explain the rationale (which they later “sustained”) for excommunicating me, they gave the following reasons:

- “It’s not so much what you said, but how you said it.”
- “You seem to be going one way, while the Church is going another. It’s a gray area.”
- “You believe that the Church is neglecting to teach important doctrines. You believe that not enough members are coming unto Christ or reading their scriptures. You believe that we must be saved personally by Jesus Christ.”
- “I believe the Church is a divine institution that can never go astray. It has been prophesied that the Lord will remove any leader before he leads the Church astray. You believe the Church can go astray and might be going astray. I don’t. I believe our leaders are inspired in whatever they say and do.”
- “You need to bow and kneel to the scepter of their authority.”

There is enough evidence in those quotes above to deduce that I have only taught the truth. Where is the false doctrine?

Inasmuch as I have never taught false doctrine; fully support and sustain the programs, policies and general leadership of the Church; live the gospel – and teach and encourage others to do likewise – I am not an apostate and therefore should not have been excommunicated from the Church.

I therefore respectfully ask the First Presidency to restore my membership, expunge my excommunication, return me to full fellowship, and remove any “annotation” from my record that might otherwise prevent me from freely serving in any capacity in the Church.

Sincerely,

William T. Carter

cc

Stake

Bishop