

# McCue's

June 5, 2003

Elder Jeffrey Holland  
The Church of Jesus Christ of  
Latter-day Saints  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Elder Holland:

You have long been one of my heroes. Your leadership while at BYU was remarkable. Your approach as a speaker and writer to challenging issues has usually in my experience been both enlightening and uplifting. I particularly remember hearing you speak while I was in university in the early 1980s respect the nature of human dignity, the challenges you faced as a graduate student laboring through "dark" times during which you did not have enough time or energy to go around, and other related things. You encouraged me while in similar circumstances – a young family, not enough money, way too much to do comfortably, and sometimes doubt as to whether I could keep going.

Maureen Ursenbach Beecher is a family friend, and has been liberal in her praise of you from both personal and professional points of view. Because of these things, I have chosen to write this letter to you. It would mean a lot to me and many like me if you would read it yourself, and assess the significance of the issues it raises. They are of great concern to a growing percentage of the LDS community, of which I still count myself a member.

## *Personal Background*

I should provide a little personal background. I am of pioneer stock. I served a mission to Peru in the late 1970s and from then until about a year ago I served continually and faithfully in a variety of Church positions. I was called to be a bishop at age thirty-one and served for a five-year term. I am now forty-five years old. I have also served in most other callings at the Stake and Ward levels. I released myself from my last calling, that of Stake Mission President, just over a year ago. Last December I resigned my membership as a result of being required not to talk about things like those published in Grant Palmer's recent book "An Insider's View of Mormon Origins". I had agreed not to discuss these matters in public, but the requirement was that I not do so in private, even with other members of the Church who were already well aware of things of that nature. I was not prepared to agree to that.

My Stake President, who I still count as a friend, developed his strategy respecting me in consultation with Salt Lake City based General Authorities. Hence it is fair to assume that he was following either formal or informal Church policy in my case. I have heard of numerous other similar cases that were dealt with in much the same way. Spiritual and

social isolation through the suppression of communication appears to be the common denominator in these cases, presumably to prevent the spread of the kind of "germs" Elder Packer described in his influential 1981 talk entitled "The Mantle is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect".

I am a tax attorney and partner in one of Canada's largest law firms. I enjoy reading and thinking, and was one of the more respected speakers at Church meetings and firesides within our Stake and in other places where we have lived. My wife and I have seven children. Our oldest son is currently serving a mission.

One of my friends here in Calgary, Bryce Tingle, has told me a number of entertaining stories about his friendship with your son while at BYU, and your concern with respect to both their advancing bachelorhoods. Bryce is now happily married and raising a family. I hope the same for your son.

### *Free Will v. Authoritarianism*

As I trace the Church's attitude respecting freedom of thought, speech and enquiry, I see a disturbing trend. For many years, the Church's leaders from Joseph Smith through David O. McKay encouraged these things. But it seems that during the 1970s and early 1980s things changed, and since then questioning and exploration have been suppressed. I was most discouraged by President Hinckley's and your addresses at the last General Conference. President Hinckley said:

The book of Revelation declares: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15–16). ...

Each of us has to face the matter—either the Church is true, or it is a fraud. There is no middle ground. It is the Church and kingdom of God, or it is nothing.

And you said:

...may I address a rather specific aspect of [our children's] safety? In this I speak carefully and lovingly to any of the adults of the Church, parents or otherwise, who may be given to cynicism or skepticism, who in matters of whole-souled devotion always seem to hang back a little, who at the Church's doctrinal campsite always like to pitch their tents out on the periphery of religious faith. To all such – whom we do love and wish were more comfortable camping nearer to us – I say, please be aware that the full price to be paid for such a stance does not always come due in your lifetime... with payments coming out of your children's and grandchildren's pockets in far more expensive ways than you ever intended it to be. ...

In such basic matters of faith, prophets do not apologize for requesting unity, indeed conformity...

In these and a variety of other ways, your message seemed to me to be that Church members should not doubt or question in any way that would lead to disagreement with Church orthodoxy as interpreted from time to time by Church authorities. President

Hinckley added that the issue is one of black and white – there is no room for doubt or uncertainty.

Contrast these with the following quotes from earlier Church leaders. Joseph Smith taught:

I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by the force of reasoning, for truth will cut its own way. (History of the Church, vol. V, pp. 498, 499)

I ask, Did I ever exercise any compulsion over any man? Did I not give him the liberty of disbelieving any doctrine I have preached, if he saw fit? (Documentary History of the Church, vol. VI, 273-274, as quoted in Alma P. Burton, Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 105, 106)

It looks too much like the Methodists, and not like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have a creed which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine. The high counsel undertook to censure and correct Elder Brown, because of his teachings ... Whether they actually corrected him or not, I am a little doubtful, but don't care. (Documentary History of the Church, Vol. VI, 273-274, as quoted in Alma P. Burton, Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 106, 107)

And David O. McKay, at the General Conference just after his famous encounter with Sterling McMurrin and in reference to it, said:

Ours is the responsibility ... to proclaim the truth that each individual is a child of God and important in his sight; that he is entitled to freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly; that he has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. In this positive declaration, we imply that organizations or churches which deprive the individual of these inherent rights are not in harmony with God's will nor with his revealed word. (124<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, p. 24)

And my personal favourite, from Hugh B. Brown, who said:

I hope that you will develop the questing spirit. Be unafraid of new ideas for they are the stepping stones of progress. You will of course respect the opinions of others but be unafraid to dissent if you are informed. Now I have mentioned freedom to express your thoughts, but I caution you that your thoughts and expressions must meet competition in the marketplace of thought, and in that competition truth will emerge triumphant. Only error needs to fear freedom of expression. Seek the truth in all fields, and in that search you will need at least three virtues: courage, zest and modesty. The ancients put that thought in the form of a prayer. They said, "From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half truth, from the arrogance that thinks it has all truth – O God of truth, deliver us. (BYU Devotional, 1958)

There are many other such quotes, but you are probably familiar with them and so I will not take more space or time to repeat them here.

It seems to me that a sea change has occurred within the Church on this point. It appears to me that Church leaders once were confident that the more questioning and exploration occurred, the quicker the Church's claims would be verified, thus leading to a "Let's find out!" attitude. Now, it appears, a lack of confidence in that regard has created a "Don't look!" attitude. This, in my view, is a shame on a variety of fronts.

Where does that leave people who, with good reason, see issues that cry out for exploration, and as a result perceive a spiritual reality characterized by shades of grey? Is there no place for them? I felt that there was no place for me, and as a result my considerable energy and meagre talents have been directed elsewhere. Is that what the leaders of the Church want to happen? If they continue on their current course, I predict that it will happen with increasing frequency.

### *Obedience to Authority Overrides More Important Values*

I would like you to consider the nature of the influence that you and the other leaders exercise over Church members. One of the results of the trend toward increasing deference to Church authority is that the importance of orthodoxy within the Church has risen to levels at which it overrides almost all other values, such as the importance of love and respect within family relationships. Hence, if after the most careful study, prayer and spiritual effort of which he is capable a person feels to disagree with Church leadership, he is bad *per se*, regardless of what else he does or is.

Think of the difficulty in which I find myself with respect to my family. I am successful in most senses of that word. I have chosen to dedicate myself to providing for and raising seven children, and now one grandchild who lives with us. I have been faithful to my wife throughout our marriage, and continue to be faithful to her. I give heavily of my time and other resources to community causes, many involving my children, such as coaching sports teams and being involved in things at their schools. I am in the process of looking for another church to attend, where I will also give generously of my time, talent and other resources. I am recognized as someone within our community who has good judgement, is hard working and honest. Hence, people who know me seek my advice and other involvement respecting business, personal and community affairs.

I seem like a pretty good guy, right? Well, my parents and other family members are heartbroken and our relationships are in some cases in tatters because of one thing – I have chosen not to follow my religious leaders who first told me that I must not question them, and then told me that if I did not obey, I would have to relinquish my membership. My relationships with these family members has been badly damaged, perhaps irreparably so, because the value of obedience to Church authority trumps all other values.

It is any wonder that fine members of the Church who value obedience and Church orthodoxy to this extent also have trouble recognizing the condescending attitude with which they sometimes regard others who are not of their faith, which attitude I held myself until recently? Is this what Christ would want? I am sure you will agree that he would not. But how can this attitude be avoided by those who are taught to believe that anyone who does not experience spiritual life as they do is at best incomplete?

And what of my relationship with my wife and children? My wife and I were on the brink of divorce because she could not respect and love me as I am now in the fashion she did the priesthood leader I used to be. I could feel a loss of intimacy – an emptiness and sorrow where her love for me used to be. Something had died between us. Thankfully, she now recognizes the legitimacy of my concerns respecting the Church's influence in our lives and the importance of ensuring that our children are raised with an understanding that religious matters are not clear-cut. The world is full of shades of grey, and the Church is no different. And while she continues to be an active and faithful member, she respects what I have done and supports me. We made it over the precipice with nothing to spare. I recently became aware of an unpublished master's degree thesis in anthropology at a Canadian university that surveyed LDS returned missionaries who had gone through something similar to what I have, and found an 80% divorce rate. That does not surprise me given my recent experience.

And what of my missionary son? I am told that he wept for most of two days when he heard of my "apostasy." We have had great difficulty communicating since then. And what of my faithful LDS daughter who attends BYU? More pain and difficulty.

Other members of our family have reacted differently. Our twenty-one and sixteen year old daughters feel that their deep-seated concerns respecting many Church practises have been validated, as have they themselves, by what I have done. They are flourishing, but the fact that their views differ from that of their siblings, and to some extent their Mother, creates additional tension within our home. The three youngest children are confused by all of this difficulty between people who obviously love each other and yet behave in some ways as if they do not.

How can we justify religious beliefs that cause ruptures such as those I have described between good hearted, moral, family members who love each other, treat each other otherwise with respect, and have dedicated themselves to building their lives together? Does not such relationship rupture, which I assure you is common in situations similar to mine, suggest a dysfunction in the belief system that causes it?

### *Religious Faith Does Not Change Reality*

Religious belief is close to center of my life, as is the thoughtful examination of the world around me. I think that my experience of attempting to integrate the manner in which I experience the world with my religious faith will be close to that of many well-educated or thoughtful members. In short, in order for religious belief to inform me and help me to become more spiritual, more moral and a better person, it has to make sense in light of my understanding of how the world works around me. There is nothing new in this approach. Those who study the formation and evolution of religious belief tell us that this is how things have been for at least as long as human beings have kept records, and the many of the changes in most religions (including the LDS Church and Christianity in general) can be cogently explained on this basis.

If my religious affiliation is to serve a useful function in my life, it must not require me to believe things that, on the basis of reasonable evidence that I see all around me, are highly likely to be nonsense and to disconnect me from reality. And I must not be told by my religious leaders, in contradiction to those within prior Church leaderships who I believe to be among the most enlightened we have had, to suppress the natural and

healthy inclination I feel to try to understand reality and harmonize my faith with it. Religious history is full of examples of how this can and should occur. Why should I think that my religious beliefs will always triumph over evidence that strongly suggests they are out of sync with reality, particularly after learning about the many chapters in LDS Church history in which misplaced belief has given way as better information about reality has come to light?

I feel that I was being put by the Church in a position where my useful desire to explore legitimate questions was being suppressed, and by inference, that I was required to believe nonsense in a fashion similar to the Catholics of Galileo's day.

As Leonard Arrington said so well in one of his essays on this topic, whether something is literally true or metaphorically true does not matter. The Catholic Church first had to let go of the idea that the earth was flat and then that it was immobile and at the center of the universe, both clearly supported by biblical texts that continue today to enliven organizations such as the Flat Earth Society and various young earth creationist movements. Why should members of the Mormon Church be required to base their faith on the historicity of events that probably did not happen? Faith so based is fragile, and much less useful than faith based on the kind of metaphoric truth of which Arrington and many others have written. If after being given a reasonable chance and encouragement to consider the evidence, members choose to base their faith on the literal occurrence of certain events, that is fine. They have their agency, and can exercise it as they wish. However, it is wrong in my view to suppress the discussion or other consideration of anything that might conflict with such belief.

For example, I acknowledge the possibility that the Book of Mormon is an historic record. Whether it is historic or not, however, is not important to me and nor was it to Arrington and countless other respected members of the Church. What is important is its value as a tool with which to explore and improve my soul, and to enlighten my way through life.

The truth will, as Joseph Smith said, "cut its own way". It does not need me, you or anyone else to protect it. And those who protect partial, misleading truth that amounts to falsehood may eventually look like those who ran the Inquisition and persecuted Galileo. And the fact that the religious and other leaders who made those mistakes did so with the best intent and powerful religious faith will besmirch both them and that kind of faith.

### *The Reality Gap*

What about the cost in terms of human suffering that is inflicted by the Church's continued suppression of its history, and insistence that the members not question or look? The gap between the faith picture and the real picture will continue to widen, and ruptures like the one I experienced will become more common. And then marriages will founder on the rocks of that same reality gap, as one spouse is less able to navigate the treacherous waters surrounding them than the other. And other family relationships will also suffer, as have mine.

I note a tremendous irony with respect to this reality gap. The greater the gap, the more at risk a person is respecting the kind of things I have just outlined, and the more painful the experience will likely be when reality comes crashing in. For whom is the reality gap the greatest? Those who are most faithful to admonitions such as your "don't look, don't

question, don't doubt" advice last April. That is, the most obedient to what the Church tells them are in a sense those harmed the most.

I was faithful. My faith for a long time trumped all else. However, as it became increasingly clear that living as I was would lead to spiritual death and moral dysfunction in my case given my individual makeup, I began to try other things. Many of my friends, who are still active members of the Church have told me that my main problem was that I was too obedient and did not read "faith threatening" materials, and that had I done so (as they have for many years) that I would not have experienced the rupture I have, and that my spiritual life would have been more healthy all the way along. That is, were I less obedient I would have been better off. I suggest that any religious system that produces this kind of result is out of kilter.

I further note that I now spend a lot of time speaking and corresponding with Church members about heterodox things that are not taught through Church channels. Several of them have told me that I aid the development of their LDS faith (one said I was the "leaven" of his testimony) as we explore spirituality in broad terms and how it is connected to our common LDS roots. One of these friends lamented my departure from the Church because, he said, our conversations are so fruitful from his point of view. I reminded him that if I had remained a member, we could not have our conversations because of the agreement I was required to enter into which prohibited me from talking about the very things he finds helpful. I am assisting him to ingest the spiritual food that should avoid the decay in him that led to my questioning and eventual forced departure from the Church. I ask how suppressing this kind of spiritual growth can be consistent with Christ's teachings, or those of early Church leaders as set out above?

### *The Effect of Literalism and Authoritarianism on Spiritual and Moral Development*

Let's consider the effect that the Church's attitude toward its position at the pinnacle of truth and its leadership's practical inerrancy have on the spiritual and moral development of members of the Church. Many studies have been done that show how people, as they mature, tend to grow out of beliefs that are literalistic and exclusive in nature, and into beliefs that recognize the metaphoric value of religious teachings and the harm that is often done by believing that any particular religious tradition is God's one and only. Please do not equate this with mere sceptical questioning or a loss of faith. I am more excited about learning to be a better, more moral, more spiritual person than ever. My experience in this regard is typical of people who approach life as I do, and we are legion, as well as being many of your potential local leaders.

Can religions function on this metaphoric basis? Of course they can, and during the past couple of months I have found some much larger than the LDS Church that do. Many of them do not trumpet the "hard questions" or their answers, but when those so inclined begin to question, they are provided with ways to keep their faith intact as they evolve toward the kind of metaphoric, inclusive view of religion and humanity described above. They are also encouraged to be respectful of those of their co-religionists who might find such views threatening to their more brittle, less mature, faith. Why can't we do that?

My faith needed to continue to grow, and the narrowness of LDS orthodoxy did not provide the necessary room or encouragement. In fact, it actively discouraged the growth that I needed, making me feel for the past number of years that I was dying from

a spiritual point of view, despite my efforts to "lengthen my stride" etc. in the conventional Mormon way. Many, of course, do not experience life as I do, and feel that Mormon orthodoxy is as good as spirituality can possibly be. I am not critical of them, while wishing that those who are part of my life had the chance to at least consider a broader point of view. But why would we assume that all will be like them, or that such is "the" way to be? Life is not that simple. Many people are similar to me, and the Church's current tendency to further narrow the acceptable ways of approaching spirituality will drive such people out, as it did me. I again ask, is this what you want? Is this what Christ would want?

Other studies have shown a strong correlation between people who think in broad, metaphoric and inclusive terms and those who engage in the most advanced forms of moral reasoning. That is, people who believe that their religion is "the" religion and that their scripture is to be literally interpreted and is 100% "true" are often those who have trouble making moral judgements that require a broad understanding of humanity, its diversity, complexity and needs. Think of September 11<sup>th</sup> and what we know about how fundamentalist communities of all types operate. Regrettably, the LDS Church is much further up the fundamentalist scale than is, in my respectful opinion, healthy for many people. As a result, Mormons tend toward a mild version of the kind of narrow thinking that produces abhorrent, immoral, religiously motivated behaviour.

In that vein, we should ask ourselves why a material percentage of the Church's members in Utah and certain other areas are still inclined toward a polygamous lifestyle, based on a literal interpretation of certain LDS scriptural passages that are no longer "emphasized". I was recently informed of a family in Cardston, Alberta near where I live, who after fasting, praying etc. and receiving answers in which they confided, moved to Arizona to join a polygamous group. I suspect that you are aware of many more stories of this type than I am. It seems to me that the tendency toward literalism and deference to religious authority makes members of the Church vulnerable to this kind of thing. Section 132 of the D&C still says what it says. When this scripture is combined with the behaviour of the Church's leadership between the first and second Manifestos, some charismatic authority figures within the polygamous groups, and the tendencies of Church members that I have noted, it does not surprise me that these seemingly archaic and dangerous groups continue to thrive in many places, including Canada. The Church has inadvertently sown the wind in that regard, and as a result some unfortunates reap the whirlwind.

Based on personal experience and on my review of the relevant research, it is my view that the Church's approach to spirituality, regrettably, augers against the development of inclusive and flexible moral judgement by insisting that it is the "one true church", that its scriptures are to be interpreted literally, and that its authorities are not to be questioned. These attitudes shut down the ability to learn anything that conflicts with the orthodox line in all areas they touch, and so short-circuit the development of many important moral judgement and reasoning functions.

### *We Have Entrusted Church Leaders as Our Spiritual Guides*

We have entrusted you as our spiritual guides. We look to you as both judge and jury. It is not right for you to respond to that trust by giving us a one sided story and leaving us to make up our minds on that basis. This is what the so-called "faithful history" policy does. As Elder Oaks said at a CES conference at BYU in 1985,



Balance is telling both sides. This is not the mission of the official Church literature or avowedly anti-Mormon literature. Neither has any responsibility to present both sides.

In this he echoes Elder Packer's "The Mantle" talk which was the keynote from which my Institute of Religion instructors taught me.

I can't tell you how disappointed it made me feel to read things of this nature coming from those to whom I had entrusted my heart and soul, and to whom I had given all of the time and other resources for which they had asked over a period of more than twenty-five years. I did not know that they expected me to act as judge in this exercise, while they presented one side of the story and the anti-Mormons presented the other. In fact, I believed them when they told me that I should not read anything that was faith threatening. How, in that case, could I possibly have acted as judge? And if I could not act as judge, who was looking after my interest in this matter? The Church led me to believe that it was doing that for me, and now I find out that it never intended to do more than advocate a one-sided position. It still makes me feel ill each time I think of this.

I respectfully suggest that you and your confreres have a moral obligation to close the reality gap that is causing the problems I have described. The longer you put off discharging that responsibility, the more people like me and my family needlessly suffer, and the more other Church members are being set up to do the same as the Internet in particular brings vast amounts of information into our lives that we did not have access to previously.

The only reason I am no longer a member of the Church is that as a Church member my right of free speech was taken from me, and an attempt was made to repress my spiritual development by cutting me off from the only others with whom I was able to discuss the things required to continue to progress. I have trusted and looked to my church for spiritual guidance. It has been the most disappointing and painful experience of my life to see honest, sincere inquiry treated in the fashion it has been in my case, and many others of which I have been made aware. This ran contrary to everything for which I believed the Church stood.

I recognize that the things which have so disappointed me respecting the Church are likely done by well-intentioned people who think that by suppressing free speech and thought a greater good is accomplished. I do not believe that to be the case, given my reading of religious history and my own experience. Throughout history those who have suppressed speech and thought have done more harm than good – much more – and in many cases have ended up looking, if not playing, the fool.

The gap between faith and reality referred to above has created massive problems for members of the Church, and will create more. This is like deficit financing – the larger the accumulated debt becomes the greater the price eventually to be paid.

### *New Fuel in a New Age*

We have much to be proud of with respect to our history and theology. The real story is much more interesting and uplifting than the sanitized one, once it is put in context. I marvel at what was accomplished by flawed – even tragically flawed – human beings

such as Joseph Smith while illuminated by inspiration's faltering spark. Those that came after him fanned that spark into first a small flame and then a refiner's fire that attracted and purified my great-grandparents as well as many others, and that still burns, but in my view not as brightly or usefully as it once did. The nature of the fuel piled upon it has changed, and the fire is choking and sputtering. That new fuel is the information readily available to an increasing percentage of members of the Church and others over the Internet with respect to the origins and current reality of their religious faith and the Church itself.

Where are baptismal rates falling? What I learned during my recent tenure as Stake Mission President suggests that they are falling where Internet access, and hence access to information respecting the Church, is greatest. That is not a good sign. The truth does cut its own way. More information about the truth should hence mean more converts, and the opposite is occurring.

Investigators in "wired" areas tend to check the Church out independently much more often than used to be the case, just as they do when purchasing a car or house. When they do this, they find credible information that contradicts the simple story told by the missionaries. I have checked this theory with some of my friends who, while I was Stake Mission President, I encouraged to join the Church. After expressions of initial interest, they politely declined my advances and then seemed uncomfortable when religion was hinted at during our social encounters. Now I know why.

What I describe above is not the force of evil anti-Mormons amplified by the Internet. Shriill, anti-Mormon rhetoric is not effective. Well-reasoned, relatively impartial scholarship is, and there is lots of that now available at a few mouse-clicks distance. It is the gap between that and the Church's version of many events that catches the eye. And after the most careful research I can do, I am not certain as to the nature of the Church's foundational events, and do not expect ever to be. But I am certain that my Church and its leaders, who I trusted with all my heart, have grossly misled me as to the probability that the story they told me is an accurate summary of the facts. There is great uncertainty with respect to many important aspects of the stories I was told, and have repeated and borne testimony to countless times. This breach of trust has created a terrific sense of loss in me.

I do not know about apostasy rates, but you would. Do they display the same trend as falling baptism rates? I will be astonished if they do not.

Abundant information is rich fuel that will drown fires that have insufficient oxygen to deal with it, and create great blazes out of what may now only be sparks somewhere that have the openness required to use that fuel.

Mankind, now as ever, needs a meaningful spirituality. Most traditional religions fail to deliver what is needed, at least in the developed world. My perception is that the Church is also failing in this regard. However, it is my view that the Church has imbedded in its foundational theology and current social structures some ideas that well suit it to provide spiritual leadership and meaning in a world where science and theology will walk increasingly overlapping paths.

You can increase the amount of oxygen around the fire. That is what it needs – the oxygen that will come from leadership openness and honesty, combined with the greater

exercise of agency and freedom on the members' part. This will clear the smoke, re-harness much energy (such as mine) that is currently lying idle or directed elsewhere, and permit the best ideas to step forward.

I implore you to use your tremendous talents as an educator, expositor and storyteller to help us understand our history and why it has not been told properly until now. And then turn us loose to govern ourselves. Encourage and nurture us with your wisdom as we seek paths through the ever-changing forest that will provide the joy of which the Book of Mormon speaks. Encourage us to nurture each other in any way we see fit, even if this means crossing organizational boundaries in ways that complicate your administrative tasks. We do not need to be controlled. We need to be nurtured. If you do these things, you will provide the oxygen needed to restore the fire, and close the reality gap. Future generations will bless your name.

And please, get us out of our current predicament in which we are surrounded by ticking information bombs that at any time can explode and disintegrate a picture that never should have been painted, while crippling marriages and other important relationships. The good intentions of those who painted the picture do not help in the end. Give us the meat that we have heard about for so long. When is a 45-year-old former bishop with three university degrees going to be ready for some meat? Treat us like we do our children when it comes to Santa Claus and sexuality. When we begin to ask legitimate questions, do your best to help us understand instead of telling us that our questions, and by implication we, are bad.

### *Conclusion*

I hope you will do what you can to reverse an unfortunate trend. And I again thank you for all of the wonderful things you do. You have a weighty responsibility made even more difficult because of the virtually blind faith millions of members of the Church vest in you. Such responsibility brings awesome duties. I do not envy your position, and exercise all of my small but growing faith in your behalf.

All the best,

Bob McCue