

Is Mormon Church a Heretical Cult or Not?

Mormons have made tremendous progress toward mainstreaming their religion in the past few years, running a presidential candidate in the 2012 election, disavowing racism against African-Americans in 2013 (though never outright apologizing), and finding common ground with mainline Christian denominations in the culture wars through high-profile voices like Glenn Beck.

But the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) manifested an oppressive nature when Kate Kelly, a prominent Mormon activist vying for women's ordination, was flat out excommunicated. So far as the LDS church is concerned, her activities qualify as apostasy. The LDS church defines apostasy as "when individuals or groups of people turn away from the principles of the gospel." Interestingly enough, it was also "apostasy," by the Mormon application of the concept, that led Joseph Smith to start the Mormon church and initiate "the restoration of the fullness of the gospel" in 1820.

Whether or not the Mormon church ever ordains women doesn't change the fact that the LDS church preaches heresy. In the traditional Mormon view, Father God is the literal, biological father of Jesus Christ, as well as all mankind, and they are both believed to have physical bodies. Mormonism also teaches that mankind can attain a state of godhood, making Mormonism is polytheistic. This is not in line with what the Bible teaches by any stretch of interpretation.

Constituting only 2 percent of the U.S. population, Mormons say they feel misunderstood and often discriminated against, according to a 2012 Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life study—despite the fact that most Americans don't know the half of what the LDS doctrine actually teaches. Even still, 63

percent of Mormons also say Americans are “becoming more likely to see Mormonism as part of mainstream society.” By excommunicating a woman for violating its “laws and orders,” the LDS church will face a setback on the mainstreaming of Mormonism it’s enjoyed in the United States in recent years—and that’s a good thing.

As painful as it was for Kelly to be excommunicated by a religion that held the former Washington human rights attorney captive to false doctrine—she called the day “tragic” for her and her family—I pray her boldness will ultimately set her free. Her bishop indicated she could rejoin the church after at least one year if she showed “true repentance” and rejected teachings and activism that “undermine the Church, its leaders and the doctrine of the priesthood.” As she sees it, she’s got nothing to repent for.

We need to pray for Kelly, who had the boldness to come up against a controlling, oppressive institution and charge its leaders with seeking God’s direction on women in ministry. According to Reuters, she says she continues to believe in Mormon leaders and has suffered no crisis of faith—but she still questions policies that bar women from the priesthood. My prayer is that she will start questioning more than policies that bar women from the priesthood.

My prayer is she’ll start questioning the story about how Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon from Golden Plates or how humans have pre-mortal existences with spirit-children of God the Father and a heavenly mother. My prayer is she’ll start questioning LDS doctrine on how humans can become angels and angels can become humans, or how there is no hell but a spirit prison where the wicked are cleansed. My prayer is she’ll start questioning how the highest level of the so-called Celestial Kingdom is reserved for married couples that are “sealed” in a Mormon temple and have an “eternal marriage” and Mormon doctrines about the Trinity.

My prayer is she'll start questioning why LDS scripture still sanctions polygamy, or why coffee and tea is strictly prohibited, or why you can only get officially married in an LDS temple, or the strange thought that if you have dark skin you are under a curse? The Mormon belief system is almost like science fiction and definitely incompatible with the Bible on many levels.

Getting excommunicated from the Mormon church could be the best thing that ever happened to Kate Kelly. So, ultimately, here's my prayer for Kelly:

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to her the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus, the eyes of her understanding being enlightened; that she may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward those who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (based on Eph. 1:17-21).

In fact, that's my prayer for people trapped in Mormonism, Islam and every other religion that blinds them to the glorious truth in Christ. Amen.

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