

Am I recovered?

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 12:45PM

TL;DR An uncle I've been very close to my whole life just learned of my unbelief and wrote a letter. I had the confidence not to take the bait but still responded firmly and lovingly. I am recovered.

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My mother is the eldest of nine children. I am my mother's eldest. I have two aunts younger than me. One uncle was (he died at age 10) two years older than me and his brother just older than he is 5 years older than I am.

This said to indicate a close relationship with my mom's brothers and sisters. They are closer than the usual aunts and uncles in that they were also some of my best friends growing up!

On uncle is 10 years my senior. He was almost a surrogate father while I attended BYU after high school and before I served my mission. I served in Australia. So did he. He was a Stake President when my second wife and I got married and he performed the civil ceremony. He also served as a Mission President in Croatia somewhat recently.

We've been close our whole lives.

I recently received a letter from him, about a week after he learned of my unbelief.

I quote:

"I am filled with sadness and disappointment after reading your "nonsense" letter to family. It came across to me that you are very prideful. You glory in being "learned". Learning the truth only happens by #1 the power of the Holy Ghost (Moroni 10: 5-6) and #2 by doing the will of the Father (John 7: 15-18)."

"Bruce read Jacob 4: 14. This applies to you. You have desired to prove the church is not true, so you can cover up your own weaknesses. God has given you agency and you have desired to use that agency to prove the church is not true. Because you have desired it God has allowed you to fall."

"You have not done the will of the Father. Instead you have pursued "learning" which is tainted by the Adversary. Part of your problem is your life has always been about you. Where is the service to others? Especially where is the service to your family. Get rid of personal pride. Forget yourself and instead live a life of service to others."

"You are not honest with family, yourself, nor are you honest with God. Quit breaking covenants that you have made. You can not justify evil thoughts and actions by your "learning". Your "learning" will not only lead you down, but it will drag others down. You will be accountable for this. What about Mary? What about your children? What about family? You can not excuse your actions both past and present by announcing you have "learned". The truth of all things is only learned by the power of the Holy Ghost and by doing the will of the Father."

"Your life is headed in a direction that will bring much sorrow in this life and in the world to come. You have rejected God and his blessings. Repent and change your ways. Reconcile yourself to the will of God (2 Nephi 10: 24). If you don't you will be very unhappy (D&C 63: 13-20). Wickedness never was happiness (Alma 41: 10)."

"Get back to doing simple things that will increase your faith in Jesus Christ. #1 Pray morning and night. Ask and ye shall receive. #2 Attend Church. #3 Partake of the sacrament and ponder and worship as you do so. #4 Live a worthy life. Be worthy of and obtain a temple recommend and use it every week. #5 Give service to others."

"Remember being 'learned' is not a compliment. I love you and encourage you to change. Use your idle time in a wiser way than seeking to disprove the church."

"I have watched you and loved you all of your life. I remember tending you when you were an infant baby. I also remember you living in our home for a while. Please do not disappoint me and your family. If you choose to continue this path I will still love you, but I will and others will have a lot of heart ache because of your actions."

In my response I did not address many of the accusations made simply because I think he wrote as a knee-jerk reaction. It's obvious to me he put little thought into it. My response follows.

Again I quote:

"I very much appreciate your concern and your love. You are more than just a 'respected elder' in the family to me! But I do need to clear up some misconceptions."

"I certainly don't consider myself 'learned'. That label was applied to me by my Bishop but his intent, after I reminded him of its negative connotation, was nothing more than recognition of the study I had undertaken while unable to regularly attend church in 2013 and 2014 due to work. At the time I was a leader in the High Priest Group (First Assistant) as well as a frequent instructor when able to attend and I needed a way to maintain my spirituality, aside from attending to all my priesthood assignments. Anyway, that garnered me the "learned" label from my current Bishop."

"My intent was never to prove the church wrong. In fact, my intent was the exact opposite: to protect my spirituality during a time when I could not regularly attend church!"

"The fact is, I did learn. So I'm 'learned' in one sense but I do not boast about it. I only offer this by way of background and explanation. So, we can let that label drop. I was not the one who considered himself 'learned.'"

"My Bishop, Stake President and our local Area Seventy have all been concerned in a similar fashion to you. I have given them a portion of the information that drove my own decision. Only a portion, mind you. None of them have an answer to it yet. In the meantime, I have promised them I will not teach this information. My Bishop is now our Home Teacher. He hasn't yet brought up my state since that first meeting back in July. Since my one meeting with the Stake President and Area Seventy (they came together) in

August I have only had one letter from the Area Seventy. I replied and copied my Stake President and Bishop, so they all stay current with one another. I have nothing further from my Stake President. In over 5 months they have not found any way to counter. They're basically leaving me alone for now."

"Since I promised not to share/teach my information, I'll just leave you with the following quotes to help you understand where I am coming from:

"We believe in all truth, no matter to what subject it may refer. No sect or religious denomination [or, I may say, no searcher of truth] in the world possesses a single principle of truth that we do not accept or that we will reject. We are willing to receive all truth, from whatever source it may come; for truth will stand, truth will endure." – Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Sermons and Writings of President Joseph F. Smith*

"Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground. If Joseph Smith was a deceiver, who wilfully [sic] attempted to mislead the people, then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false, for the doctrines of an impostor cannot be made to harmonize in all particulars with divine truth. If his claims and declarations were built upon fraud and deceit, there would appear many errors and contradictions, which would be easy to detect. The doctrines of false teachers will not stand the test when tried by the accepted standards of measurement, the scriptures." – Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1954, vol. 1, p. 188

"Well, it's either true or false. If it's false, we're engaged in a great fraud. If it's true, it's the most important thing in the world. Now, that's the whole picture. It is either right or wrong, true or false, fraudulent or true. And that's exactly where we stand, with a conviction in our hearts that it is true: that Joseph went into the Grove; that he saw the Father and the Son; that he talked with them; that Moroni came; that the Book of Mormon was translated from the plates; that the priesthood was restored by those who held it anciently. That's our claim. That's where we stand, and that's where we fall, if we fall. But we don't. We just stand secure in that faith." – Gordon B. Hinckley – Interview "The Mormons" – PBS Documentary, April 2007

"If we have the truth, it cannot be harmed by investigation. If we have not the truth, it ought to be harmed." – J. Reuben Clark: *The Church Years*. Provo, D. Michael Quinn, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1983, p. 24

"The four statements above are clear and unmistakable."

"Everything rides on Joseph Smith. Everything. If even one claim is provably false, the whole house of cards falls. I'll just say that my proof has been given to my church authorities and remains unchallenged. Meanwhile, my mental church house of cards is in ruins. Before you suggest I'm not paying attention to the spirit, I'll respond that I most certainly did during the process of reading all that material I read. I prayed more intensely than ever before in my life as my study revealed things I never knew before. You say what I've studied is tainted by the Adversary. What I studied is all church authorized, sanctioned and published and includes the scriptures, as I've pointed out.

But I have to say now that whatever my spiritual feelings were and are, they cannot refute the knowledge I've gained. So, should I exercise more faith?"

"I refer you to Alma 32:34. Alma explains that faith is used to obtain knowledge of a thing (idea, hypothesis) and once knowledge is obtained, faith is dormant with regards to that one thing. This is essentially the scientific method (simplified but comparable). This means the facts (repetitively provable truths) I have obtained renders any further faith regarding that same thing to be dormant/moot. Further faith would be an exercise in futility."

"Lastly, again I appreciate your love and concern. I do not treat this lightly and certainly realize reprisals like yours probably will come from other family members. Some may choose to turn against me. That's their choice, not mine. I love my family! So I really do appreciate you and your acceptance while not accepting my current state! That's fair and expected. Just know I cannot un-know what I now know. I cannot live a lie. "To thine own self be true" is what I have now chosen. Anything less is false."

=====

Recovery is confidence and bliss.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: Tevai ()

Date: December 22, 2015 12:56PM

This is a solidly thought through, and impressive letter, Bruce.

I am impressed, and I think any other person who read this would be too---even if they did not want to be...

Very well done.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: 2thdoc ()

Date: December 22, 2015 01:07PM

Wow, you are certainly more recovered than I am. I feel angry after reading your uncle's letter. This struck too close to home for me because the letter from your uncle is very similar to one I received from my brother. You would think, from your uncle's and my brother's attitude, that we had admitted that we were actually serial killers, rapists, and animal torturers.

My own approach to my brother's letter is that if he intended it, as stated, as an expression of his love, then I can live without that love. I haven't communicated with him since then.

Your response is impressive in its maturity (and evidence of your recovery).

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: the1v ()

Date: December 22, 2015 01:21PM

You like me left the church because their own words condemned them. I never looked for outside sources.

Mine was more simple.

If the church is true the G15 are prophets and apostles of god. Jeff Holland showed me what they were on my mission to get me doubting.

Calling both of my MP's to the 70 (same conference), drove the nail home. They are unquestionably corrupt, I know those men well. I saw their works and they were of lies, manipulation, and power.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: spiritist ()

Date: December 22, 2015 01:34PM

Very impressive!

I am just wondering why you have any relations with LDS leaders other than small talk. Tell them they are brain washed and have not had any significant 'spiritual experiences' validating Mormonism and be done with it.

Of course I can say that and if they come back repeat a number of 'spiritual experiences' disproving Mormonism.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()

Date: December 22, 2015 02:19PM

Thank you spiritist. I respect your right to believe what you will, but my "belief" is that there are no such things as spiritual experiences. We have experiences, yes. Some are inexplicable. Our own interpretation declares them to be spiritual. Again, that's my belief and I won't convince you and you won't convince me.

But I respect you and your right to believe.

By the way, the letter from the Area Seventy was nothing but testimony. No proof. Nada. During the visit from both he and my Stake President, my SP shared spiritual experiences. I told them both what I thought, politely yet firmly.

They have yet to offer a counter.

At all.

Again, recovery is confidence and bliss.

My best to you, sir.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: spiritist ()

Date: December 22, 2015 03:06PM

Just interested, if you can remember, I would love to hear the basics of a 'spiritual experience' from an LDS leader that proved the church was true ----- other than a 'feeling'.

JS claimed to have visions and so do I claiming Mormonism 'false' ----- documentation was included when I asked not just a 'feeling'. Just sayin ----- to see if their 'spiritual' support was anything other than 'feelings'.

I was in the church quite a while and heard of and had 'spiritual experiences' but none proving the 'church' true ----- other than feelings. The non feeling only 'experiences' occurred to warn people of danger, or similar type of experiences that did not involve the 'church' at all.

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 12/22/2015 03:10PM by spiritist.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: byuboner ()

Date: December 22, 2015 01:37PM

Moose, you wrote a remarkably clear and precise response to a letter that was designed to be hurtful and unsettling. Shame on your uncle for putting his own biases before his nephew! I hope that your uncle will do his own repentance and respect you for the thoughtful honorable man you are. I hope that the rest of your holidays are happy without more Mo drama. The Boner.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: elderolddog ()

Date: December 22, 2015 01:42PM

You're much more the Saint than any of the saints.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()

Date: December 22, 2015 02:01PM

Thanks for your kind responses.

As I said, recovery is confidence and bliss.

My mother celebrates her 80th birthday this coming January 2nd. My wife and I will travel to Springville, UT to stay with my parents for a week or so and will be able to join with family and friends in her celebration. My parents are welcoming and told me they are looking forward to our visit. I am absolutely certain many relatives (including this uncle) will attempt to discuss my issues and/or will try to persuade me back into belief.

My response will be that they do not wish to really understand and that I made a promise to not share or teach my reasons for unbelief in order keep peace with my wife by not being excommunicated for apostasy or resigning my membership (my wife fears both!). However, if they press, I will share.

Since I no longer have any fear from the church or its minions, including relatives, I can be very calm and direct in my responses, if push comes to shove. Being calm and direct should keep angry tones to a minimum. But if anger rears its head, I will let them know they just aren't ready and we might continue later, when they are.

And all done in love, for I do love my family!

Thanks again for your comments and your kindness!!

Merry (insert preferred holiday here) and a Happy New Year, my friends!

Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 12/22/2015 02:02PM by Bruce A Holt.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: Elder Berry ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:25PM

Bruce A Holt Wrote:

-
- > My mother celebrates her 80th birthday this coming
 - > January 2nd.

So glad you can go. This makes me jealous. My father turned 80 last month. I didn't go to the celebration. My parents are not welcoming.

I wonder if it is harder for your recovery? I think a letter like the one you received is justification for cutting off contact with the sender.

Jeffery Holland sent Tom Phillips such a missive. It didn't do much more than seek to shame.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:38PM

I have made a couple posts today (this thread and a comment on another) that may make me appear to believe I'm impervious, better than others, aloof or any number of other adjectives. I don't consider myself any such thing! I'm no better than anyone else. I have to admit that my own situation is certainly fortunate – so far. That may change.

But my attitude is most definitely confident. I have no control over another. I can only control myself. How others react is their business. How I act (rather than react) is mine.

That's where my own control and confidence come from. It's very freeing.

Maybe I'm just comfortably numb! *grin*

YMMV

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: Elder Berry ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:59PM

Bruce A Holt Wrote:

> Maybe I'm just comfortably numb! *grin*

It is a coping mechanism and one I have used before. I've tried to insulate myself mentally from the judgments and love bomb attempts.

It didn't work for me. I call people on it when it is obvious.

[Call me on anything you wish, cousin.](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:08PM

My "Maybe I'm just comfortably numb!" was just a joke. I'm not numb. I'm not angry. I'm confident.

And I'm not deluding myself with repetitive aphorisms.

The proof is that when "they" (TBM relatives and authorities) attempt to stare me down, it's their gaze that shifts. No brag. Just fact.

That's just how things stand for now. I'll keep you posted if there's a change.

[Re: Call me on anything you wish, cousin.](#)

Posted by: Elder Berry ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:16PM

Bruce A Holt Wrote:

> That's just how things stand for now. I'll keep
> you posted if there's a change.

Good for you. We both know the grasp of heredity and haughtiness in our relations.

They have their righteous indignation and we have our rage at their protestations.

I'm glad it doesn't consume you but gets channeled into confidence.

I wish I were more so. I'm a bit passive aggressive. I'm "learned" in that from my mommy. In dealing with her husband's kin of heredity and haughtiness she perfected Mormon passive aggression fueled by her own narcissism.

I do find it funny that your uncle claims you are so self-absorbed that your are missing his truths. Helping people is admirable. Helping them with an ulterior motive is religion.

[Yes, I do indeed find that "funny"!](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()

Date: December 22, 2015 03:30PM

There were so many things in his letter to me that I could have addressed! Pride is the biggest "sin" of which he accused me! His tone seemed to me to be rather prideful.

Maybe when we're at my parent's house, he'll come over (he recently bought a house in the same neighborhood) and we can chat. Maybe he'll feel chastened enough to discuss calmly. He's a good enough person that I have hope.

But I'll see for sure!

Re: Yes, I do indeed find that "funny"!

Posted by: Elder Berry ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:50PM

Age can improve things or worsen them. I hope for your sake his wine isn't too bitter.

Re: Am I recovered?

Posted by: elderolddog ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:05PM

Thanks for the Merry Golf! The same to you, sir!

Thank you, respected elderolddog! (n/t)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:20PM

Re: Am I recovered?

Posted by: seekyr ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:53PM

Beautifully and lovingly crafted letter. You were definitely the one who took the high road. I guess your uncle envisioned himself as being righteously indignant or something, but it really just sounded arrogant and mean spirited.

It's been many years since I've been in an LDS church, but I just can't recall when being "learned" was considered a bad thing. When did that happen? Or maybe I just missed it back in the day. But that just seems bizarre to me.

I guess that people who study and know a lot, ALSO must learn how to protect themselves from those who find their knowledge threatening. It is sort of like regime changes in some countries where the college professors start disappearing.

I'm guessing that's you next. After a few have taken their shots at you without success, they'll then try to make you disappear – figuratively anyway.

I'm so sorry that someone you care about has turned on you like that. It's very sad.

Re: Am I recovered?

Posted by: amyjo ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:56PM

All I read in your uncle's letter was his constant shaming, guiltig and ridiculing you for daring to leave the one and only true church on the face of the earth aka cult (screaming loudly C-U-L-T.)

You handled it with diplomacy and civility probably way more deserving of your uncle than he merits.

Ask him if he believes in the freedoms and liberties he espouses, what's wrong with freedom in choosing religious beliefs over the tyranny of some? You rose above the chatter, and figured out things for yourself that separated you (the cream) from the milk.

Sorry you have to endure the ridicule of people you once looked up to. You stood up to him very well.

Are you recovered? There may be that inner child inside you still longing for a more innocent time when all was well in the world including your beliefs in the unfounded fraud of Mormonism. That little child will always be there, but you can now be the parent to that inner child through the same love, gentleness, and diplomacy you showed your uncle.

I try to embrace my Mormon heritage by acknowledging the sacrifices my ancestors made for me and their posterity. On the same token, they didn't have access to the same resources we do, or perhaps even capacity to do their own homework if they did. I believe I can still honor those who came before and their legacy without sacrificing truth or reason in the process..

The fact we're Americans and have freedom of religious expression supersedes all claims by Mormonism on my soul. It's because of that particular freedom we were indoctrinated into the cult by our well meaning parents. And through the same freedom we found the means to leave and stand on our two feet.

That for me is something to smile about. :)

Re: Am I recovered?

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:16PM

My inner child is obvious and visible in the outer adult!

My ancestry has pioneer stock. People who endured derision from family when they left the mainstream and followed JS. My third great grandfather Holt was disowned, for example.

I see myself as one of their ilk. I am bucking my family's beliefs to follow my own.

If they respect our ancestors, they ought to be able to see similar traits in me. I don't expect them too, though. If they do, it will be a welcome surprise. If they don't, it won't be unexpected.

I am a realist.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: You don't know me ()
Date: December 22, 2015 02:58PM

Your response showed calm, clarity and wisdom.

Well done Mr. Moose!

["You don't know me"](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:17PM

Maybe I should!

[Re: "You don't know me"](#)

Posted by: You don't know me ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:39PM

If I'm ever in Greely again, I'll buy you a beer!

[Re: "You don't know me"](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:41PM

You know, I've never gotten into beer. But coffee? Yeah!

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: ificouldhietokolob ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:37PM

Yeah, Moose -- you're recovered :)

Your reply was excellent.

Him starting off with the "learning the truth only comes through the Holy Ghost" thing...sigh.

Get him to show evidence there IS a "holy ghost" first. :)

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:44PM

Thanks, man! To me, that means something.

As for things I can discuss with him, when I'm put in a position where I can't put him off longer (see my letter again), I have a step by step process I'll take him through which should allow him to see things for himself. I cannot impose belief on anyone else, but I can help illuminate the way.

[Re: Am I recovered?](#)

Posted by: iris ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:50PM

Nicely done!

Re: Am I recovered?

Posted by: blueorchid ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:52PM

That was excellent.

I personally would not have read past "nonsense letter" and you are "very prideful" except for the entertainment value. It has been a long time since I have come across that much overt condescension.

I just don't care anymore.

Your reply however was the best. Using their own words against them is "truly inspired."

I am happy for you
I find it all amusing
bit of fun at a co

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u anymore. I am the same.
and can't wait to use it as a

Re: Am I recovered?

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:57PM

Sadly, the closest I get to a cocktail party is shrimp with cocktail sauce...

;^)

Yes you are doing well

Posted by: Eric K ()
Date: December 22, 2015 03:58PM

You can be a poster child on recovery. It is tough dealing with people, especially relatives, who are so damn condescending.

I will archive this as an example. Thanks for letting us know. Well done on handling such an awful letter.

Re: Yes you are doing well

Posted by: Bruce A Holt ()
Date: December 22, 2015 04:05PM

Thank you, Eric! I am humbly at your service.

Re: Am I recovered?

Posted by: hurting ()
Date: December 22, 2015 04:31PM

I am fairly recently coming to a knowledge of the truth, so I look to you for example. I may even memorize some of your lines—they are true for me, but I often become flustered and emotional when I try to explain my new position. It will take time for me to get more confidence.

What comes to my mind is "The Glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and TRUTH." Lies are not helpful, we must have the truth!

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