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For Immediate Release

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Mormon Podcaster and Scholar John Dehlin Threatened with Excommunication

Summary: As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS or Mormon church), I have been summoned by my LDS Stake President, Dr. Bryan King, to appear before a disciplinary council to be held on January 25, 2015 at the North Logan Utah Stake Center, located 2750 North 800 East, North Logan, Utah beginning at 6 p.m. The charge is apostasy, and I have been informed that the likely outcome of the disciplinary council will be either disfellowshipment (i.e., official censure) or excommunication (i.e., termination of my membership). The main items specifically mentioned to me by President Bryan King and Bishop Brian Hunt as contributing to my alleged apostasy include:

- 1) My 10-year effort with Mormon Stories podcast (<http://mormonstories.org>), wherein difficult historical and cultural issues are discussed in an interview format
- 2) My public support of same-sex marriage (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MxCXjfAunk>)
- 3) My public support of the Ordain Women movement (<http://ordainwomen.org/project/hi-im-john/>)
- 4) My publicly expressed doubts regarding key elements of orthodox LDS theology (<http://mormonstories.org/questions-and-answers/>)
- 5) My publicly expressed criticism of the church's approach to LGBT members, feminists, intellectuals, as well as its lack of transparency regarding finances

While my family and I would prefer to be left alone by LDS church leadership at this time, I would much rather face excommunication than disavow my moral convictions. In the coming weeks, months, and years ahead, it is my intent to provide increased support to Mormons who are transitioning away from orthodoxy.

Bio: John Dehlin is the founder of Mormon Stories Podcast (<http://mormonstories.org>). He is a former employee of Bain & Company, Microsoft Corporation, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is currently a Ph.D.

candidate at Utah State University's Department of Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychology. John's research interests involve the nexus of religion and mental health, and his research has been accepted for publication in numerous peer reviewed scientific journals including the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Behavior Modification*, the *Journal of Homosexuality*, the *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, and *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*. John's work has been featured on ABC's *Good Morning America* and *Nightline*, as well as in the *New York Times*.

Background

In 2001 I was called to serve as an early morning seminary teacher for the LDS church while working for Microsoft in Washington state. During that time, I began to study LDS church history in depth with the intent of strengthening my beliefs about the church, and becoming a better teacher. While studying, I discovered many very troubling and hard-to-find historical facts regarding the church, which included:

- 1) Joseph Smith, LDS church founder, married over 30 women, some as young as 14, and 11 women who were already married to other living men.
(<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng>)
- 2) That Joseph Smith concealed the practice of polygamy from his wife and close associates for many years, and publicly lied about his practice
- 3) That when some young and vulnerable women declined Joseph Smith's proposals, Joseph Smith would publicly slander them to protect his own reputation. When his own wife, Emma, objected to the practice, Joseph told her that she would be "destroyed" if she continued to object (D&C 132:54; <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132>)
- 4) The Book of Abraham, which claims to be a translation of ancient Egyptian papyrus purchased by Joseph Smith, is not, in fact, a translation of the papyrus, and that by the LDS church's own recent admission, the papyrus does not even mention the word Abraham anywhere in the text (see <https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng>)
- 5) The Book of Mormon, which claims to be a translation of ancient Native American records written by Israelite descendants between 600 B.C. and 400 A.D., posits a version of the ancient Americas that more resembles the Roman Empire than the pre-Columbian Americas, mentioning several anachronisms such as horses, sheep, cattle, steel swords, chariots, wheat, and barley, which never existed in the Americas during that time period (<http://mormonstories.org/michael-coe-an-outsiders-view-of-book-of-mormon-archaeology/>). In addition, a vast accumulation of archaeological, anthropological, linguistic, and genetic discoveries provide conclusive evidence that Native Americans descended from Asia, and not from Israel, as LDS church leaders have consistently taught for over 170 years

(<http://cesletter.com>; <http://mormonstories.org/simon-southerton-dna-lamanites-and-the-book-of-mormon/>).

- 6) The LDS church has a long history of attempting to silence and/or punish the courageous individuals who tried to speak openly about these, and other historical problems (e.g., [Juanita Brooks](#), [Fawn Brodie](#), [Michael Quinn](#), [Grant Palmer](#))

This accumulation of evidence served to unsettle and transform my world. Consequently, I spent several depressed years trying to reconcile these facts with the church that I loved (and still love). When I discovered that many of my LDS colleagues at Microsoft were also experiencing severe depression and distress over these issues, and that many of their marriages were in jeopardy because of their doubt or disbelief, my wife (Margi) and I made the very difficult decision to leave Microsoft in 2004 to try to be a part of the solution.

In 2005, I started Mormon Stories podcast (<http://mormonstories.org>). At the time, I had been inspired by writers such as [Lowell Bennion](#), [Eugene England](#), and [Leonard Arrington](#) – all of whom had been aware of these difficult historical issues in the 1960s and 1970s, were eventually punished in one way or another for their open discussion of these issues, but who had found a way to remain faithful to the church. My goals with Mormon Stories were to:

- 1) Help bring awareness to these difficult and hidden issues, so that others would not be blindsided by the information.
- 2) Help to model the thoughtful, balanced, yet faithful discussion of these topics.
- 3) Begin to provide support for the thousands of current and former LDS church members I have encountered whose mental health, marriages, and/or extended familial and social relationships were continually jeopardized by the discovery of these troubling facts (since the LDS church continued to hide this information, and punish those who spoken openly about it).

As years progressed, I gained increased awareness of other unsettling aspects of LDS church culture such as gender inequality and the church's [damaging treatment of its gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members](#). Given the [high rates of suicide of LDS LGBT youth](#), I earnestly sought to develop and nurture [research and resources for LDS LGBT church members](#), and for those who struggled to stay in the LDS church after experiencing a crisis of faith (<http://staylds.com>, <http://mormonmatters>, and <http://athoughtfulfaith>). In 2011, I also worked both directly and indirectly with LDS church leadership, teaming with several close friends, to conduct a large survey to better understand why so many educated LDS church members are leaving the church (<http://www.whymormonsquestion.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Survey-Results-Understanding-Mormon-Disbelief-Mar20121.pdf>). I have been told from sources within LDS church headquarters that all of these efforts were important parts of the LDS church's [new initiative to be more forthcoming about its history](#).

Investigations. Over the past ten years of my work with Mormon Stories podcast, my local LDS authorities have initiated formal investigations of my work on at least three separate occasions. Instead of feeling supported in my earnest efforts to alleviate suffering within the church, these investigations have always felt very intrusive, threatening, and coercive to my family and me. I could never fully understand why the church would continue to harass me when I was working so hard (along with many others) to provide much needed aid, comfort, and support to struggling church members – especially when the church itself had done virtually nothing over the years to support these people in desperate need.

The first investigation was in March, 2007 – which ended in my exoneration. The second began in May, 2011 – during which I spent well over a year meeting almost weekly with my former stake president, Mark Jensen. During these discussions with President Jensen, I was fully open and honest about my doubts regarding key aspects of LDS theology. Nonetheless, at the conclusion of these discussions, *President Jensen concluded that in spite of my doubts and disbelief, I was worthy to remain a member of the church, and to baptize and confirm my son. From this time to the present, my love of and positive feelings for the Mormon community, along with my doubts and disbelief about LDS theology, have not changed.*

While I concluded my ongoing discussions with President Jensen in early 2013 content to remain a member in good standing, several prior and subsequent events began to make me feel increasingly concerned about the way the LDS church treats its struggling members, often leading to people losing the support of their families and social support networks, their livelihoods, and even, in case of LGBT church members, their lives.

In June of 2012, I interviewed a former London, England, U.K. stake president ([Tom Phillips](#)) who provided details of his experience receiving a secret LDS church temple ordinance, called the “Second Anointing,” during which he was anointed directly by LDS apostle M. Russell Ballard, and “sealed up to eternal life” (promising him exaltation in heaven). In this interview Tom also detailed how he subsequently lost his faith in the LDS church, and had several [unpleasant interactions](#) with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland as he tried to reconcile, and receive support for his shattered beliefs. This series of events tragically resulted in Tom losing the support of his entire family.

In July of 2013, I interviewed former Swedish LDS area authority 70 Hans Mattsson (<http://mormonstories.org/hans-mattsson/>), who spoke of his significant concerns regarding the way doubt/disbelief continued to be handled by the church. Hans’ story uncovered [significant troubles experienced by LDS church members in Sweden](#), and showed very clearly that the LDS church was/is deeply inept in its ability to support LDS church members struggling with their faith.

In October of 2013, Elder Dallin H. Oaks gave a general conference talk entitled “[No Other Gods](#)” that was deeply troubling to me. Having counseled as a mental health

professional with dozens of young LGBT Mormons who were/are tormented over their inability to change their sexual orientation, I was deeply concerned that such language from Elder Oaks and others would contribute to, and possibly accelerate the rash of suicides experienced by LDS LGBT members.

From that point forward, I decided that as a matter of conscience, I would need to begin speaking up more forcefully, to provide additional attention and context regarding LDS church teachings or policies that I believed to be harmful to its members. This was followed by my delivery of a [TEDx talk in public support of LGBT individuals and same-sex marriage](#), and [my public support of the Ordain Women movement](#).

In February of 2014, I was summoned by my bishop, Brian Hunt, and informed that he would be initiating yet another investigation into my efforts with Mormon Stories. He explicitly listed my work with Mormon Stories, my support of same-sex marriage, and my support of Ordain Women as primary causes of the investigation.

At that point my wife and I felt tired of feeling harassed by these ongoing investigations, and concluded that we would no longer cooperate with them. We did, however, continue to attend church with our children through June of 2014.

On June 7, 2014, I was contacted by letter by my current stake president, [Dr. Bryan King](#) (whom I had never met), and informed that he would be initiating a disciplinary council against me, with the intent of either disfellowshipping me from the church (i.e., putting me on probationary status), or excommunicating me.

At my request, Bryan King met with me to discuss my situation and concerns. This meeting occurred in late June of 2014. In early August of 2014, we met for a second time, wherein Bryan King verbally enumerated several specific terms for avoiding church discipline and remaining in good standing with the church. These terms included:

- 1) Censoring and removing all past episodes of Mormon Stories podcast that were not favorable and/or faith-promoting to the church.
- 2) Agreeing to never again interview anyone for Mormon Stories podcast who expressed doubt, disbelief, or criticism of the LDS church or its leaders.
- 3) To never again voice any public doubt or criticism of the LDS church or its leaders.
- 4) To cease my [public support of same-sex marriage](#), and of the [Ordain Women movement](#).

On August 10th my wife (Margi) and I responded in letter to Bryan King, letting him know very explicitly that we would not be able to agree to these terms, and requested a speedy resolution to the investigation.

Yesterday, January 14th 2015, my wife and I met with Dr. Bryan King and his two counselors. We were informed that a disciplinary council has been set for me for “January 25, 2015 at the North Logan Utah Stake Center, located 2750 North 800 East, North Logan, Utah beginning at 6 p.m.” At present, we plan to attend this disciplinary council, though the date and time are subject to change.

While I acknowledge that LDS church leaders are in a very difficult situation as they [attempt to retain membership during very difficult times](#), I consider it a matter of conscience to continue to advocate publicly for the many LDS LGBT members, feminists, and intellectuals who experience deep and continued marital/familial/social/spiritual/occupational/psychological distress as a result of the LDS church’s history, teachings, and policies. The past ten years of my life have been dedicated to providing support to these individuals, and while my family and I would prefer to be left alone by LDS church leadership at this point, I would much rather face excommunication than disavow my moral convictions.

Over the coming months and years I will be teaming with my wife (Margi) and others to provide additional information, comfort, and support to Mormons in transition. The goal will be to help provide information, community, resources, and support for those transitioning away from the current view of LDS orthodoxy and towards greater health and well-being – whether they remain in or leave the LDS church. For those interested in collaborating in this effort, check back at <http://mormontransitions.org> in the coming weeks/months/years for additional information.

Sincerely,

John P. Dehlin
Mormon Stories Podcast
<http://mormonstories.org>

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

North Logan Utah Stake

June 7, 2014

Brother John Dehlin
2754 North 920 East
North Logan, UT 84341

RE: Your Membership in the Church

Dear Brother Dehlin,

As your stake president, I hope you know I care deeply for every member of the stake, including you and your family. Because of the love I have for you, I have become concerned about some of your recent statements and actions regarding the Church and your place in it. That includes your recent public posting from earlier this month that you “no longer believe many of the fundamental LDS church truth claims . . .” I am greatly concerned about the impact these and other statements and actions are having upon the members of the stake.

Ordinarily, I prefer to speak in person and in private about such matters and I offer you the opportunity to do so. I am aware of your recent email to Bishop Hunt, dated January 2014, in which you requested that you not be contacted by ward members or church leaders. The email also requested that you not be considered a member of the ward, and that your names be removed from the home teaching and visiting teaching rolls of the Church. Although I wish it were otherwise, I respect this request. But at the same time, given your recent actions and statements, I need to know exactly where you stand regarding your membership in the Church.

I have chosen to write this letter to you and inquire whether, by your earlier email to Bishop Hunt and your recent public statements, you desire to have your name removed from the records of the Church. As you know, if you make such a request I am bound to honor it. You should know, however, that such name removal will revoke your temple and priesthood blessings. I would urge you to consider this carefully, as it is a very important decision.

If you choose not to have your name removed, then I think we are to the point where I should convene a formal disciplinary council on your behalf for apostasy. Together we would need to arrive at an acceptable time to hold such a council.

If you desire to have your name removed from Church records, please inform me in writing no later than June 18, 2014. If I do not hear from you by that time, I will assume that you do not desire to avail yourself of this option, and I will proceed to schedule a disciplinary council.

You should also be aware that if you choose to have your name removed from Church records, I feel it is important to make an appropriate announcement to the adults in the stake that you have chosen this option.

I have a deep love for you and your family. I am very willing to confer with you in person about these issues. I hope you will carefully consider your options. If you choose not to meet with me I want you to know my love and concern for you and your family will remain.

May the Lord bless you and your family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bryan C. King', written in a cursive style.

Bryan C. King
Stake President

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

North Logan Utah Stake

August 7, 2014

Dear Brother Dehlin,

I appreciate your patience as I have taken this issue to the Lord. I have been prayerfully considering our initial meeting.

As the stake president, I have the responsibility for caring for all the members of my stake, including you and your family. I believe that the answers to the problems of life are found in a testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and literal Savior of mankind. I do not just believe in His good works or attributes. I testify to His divine mission as Savior and Redeemer. I also testify that the gospel was restored in its fullness through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I witness to you that we are led by a living Prophet of God who receives revelation for the Church and who holds all the priesthood keys necessary for this dispensation.

These are some of the most fundamental doctrines that God has revealed. They stand as a foundation in His plan of happiness for all of His children. They also serve as a foundation in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are among its core teachings and beliefs.

I have carefully studied the materials that you provided to me about your current beliefs. I have also reviewed many other materials that you have authored and – at one time or another over the past few years – have placed on the Internet. They stand in direct contradiction to the fundamental doctrines of the church. For example:

- You have taught that “the probability that God exists is quite low” and that “if God and Jesus really do exist” you “believe that they have a lot of ‘splaining to do.”
- You have expressed your belief that the odds are very low that Christ was the Son of God and that He was actually resurrected. You have criticized the Church’s teachings about the Atonement, stating that it “bothers” you that an act of atonement is even necessary. You have rejected the very basis of the Atonement, claiming that “punishing that guy over there for what I did doesn’t make sense at all.”

- You do not believe – and actively teach against – the concept that God restored His true Church to the earth with exclusive priesthood authority through the Prophet Joseph Smith. You have stated that the “LDS Restoration” is “just not a credible narrative” and you have declared that you are “repulsed by the teaching of ‘one true church’, and would rather roll around in thumb tacks than ever teach or support that notion.”
- You teach that the Book of Mormon is a 19th Century work of fiction.
- You contend that Church governance is “no longer about doctrine and/or revelation.” Instead, it’s “about 1) power, and 2) money.” You have also been critical of senior Church leaders, stating that they are hastening the Church’s demise.
- You have become an ordained minister in another faith so that you can perform wedding ceremonies.

The views that you have expressed on the above topics are not in harmony with the revealed doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through your podcasts and Internet posts, you have broadly disseminated these views. Additionally, you have provided a forum for others to criticize the Church and to disseminate their views that are contrary to the revealed word of God.

I realize that you have removed some of these materials from your Internet sites. But as you know, once something has been posted to the Internet, it can never be totally removed. The repentance process does not only require that one forsake the improper conduct, it also requires that one do everything possible to set things right.

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them. (Mosiah 4:9-10).

Accordingly, if you are to sincerely begin the repentance process in your own life, I have concluded that you must:

1. Publicly renounce and apologize for the false concepts you have widely expressed regarding God, Jesus Christ, the Atonement, the restoration of the Gospel, and the Book of Mormon.
2. Cease providing a public forum for any person who is critical of Church doctrine.
3. Stop promoting groups or organizations that espouse doctrines contrary to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
4. Resign your status as an ordained minister in another faith.

I am asking for your absolute commitment to these steps—in both word and deed—these steps are essential for you to be able to center yourself in the gospel. I stand ready to assist you in this effort. If you choose to follow this counsel, I promise that you will feel increased light in your life and that the doubts you currently have will begin to dissipate. I also want you to know that I have been given the priesthood keys to help you and have prayed daily about this matter. I have not approached this lightly.

I acknowledge that you have the right to speak your mind and to criticize the Church and its doctrines if you so choose. It is just that you do not have the right to do so while remaining a member of the Church in good standing.

Please let me know whether you are willing to accept my counsel regarding the repentance process as outlined above. If so, then you should view yourself on informal probation as you move through the repentance process. We will need to meet often to review your progress. I commit to you my time, my attention, and my love as we do so.

On the other hand, if you are not willing to accept my counsel regarding the repentance process as outlined above, then I feel it necessary to convene a disciplinary council. I can work with you to find an acceptable date in the near future.

I truly hope and pray that you will choose the former course and move forward in the repentance process. But whatever course you choose, I once again want to reassure you that your stake and ward leaders will continue to love, help, and minister to your family. I also express my love to you and my witness that the Lord stands ready to help you and guide you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'BK' or a stylized 'B' and 'K'.

Bryan C. King
Stake President

August 10, 2014

President Bryan King
North Logan, UT Stake

Bryan,

Margi and I would like to thank you and David for meeting with us on August 7th to discuss the possibility of a future disciplinary council for me. In this letter, we would like to summarize for you what we heard regarding:

- The reasons that you are considering a disciplinary council for me, along with all other issues that you explicitly mentioned in our two meetings that would place my membership status in jeopardy.
- The conditions that you are requiring me to meet to avoid a disciplinary council.

According to our memories and record of our two face-to-face conversations, you have listed the following items as reasons for my current membership status being in jeopardy:

1. We discussed various specific doctrinal and historical issues including:
 - a. My doubts about the existence of God.
 - b. My doubts about Jesus (e.g., literal resurrection), and my concerns about the requirement by God that an innocent person (Christ) be brutally and inhumanely punished to atone for the sins of other people.
 - c. My concerns about the idea of “one true church with exclusive authority,” along with the accompanying implication that other beautiful churches are in any way either false or inferior to the LDS church (See [Joseph Smith History 1: 19](#)).
 - d. My doubts about the historicity of the Book of Abraham (which the church has recently acknowledged is not likely to be a translation of the Egyptian papyrus, which it had previously claimed), and the Book of Mormon (e.g., Native Americans descending from Asia not the Middle East, horses and steel swords being mentioned in the text, when we now know through science that Native Americans during the alleged Book of Mormon time period did not likely possess horses, and were not likely able to forge steel swords). See <http://cesletter.com/> for full details.
 - e. My deep concerns and disbelief regarding Joseph Smith’s polygamy (marrying over 30 wives), Joseph Smith’s polyandry (marrying other mens’ wives), Joseph Smith’s marrying of young girls (some as young as 14 years old), along with the LDS church’s continued doctrinal support of polygamy to this day (see <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132>).
2. We also discussed at least three specific concerns and/or criticisms I have made in the past regarding LDS church leaders and/or policies, which included:
 - a. My concern that the LDS church’s position on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) members, along with its continued opposition to the legalization of same-sex marriage, were contributing to incredible sadness and despair amongst the LDS LGBT population, along with contributing to Utah’s nation-leading suicide rate for young men between the ages of 15 and 24 (as reported by the Deseret News).
 - b. My concern about the LDS church’s decision to invest billions of dollars in a commercial shopping mall, and that I was doubtful that Christ (were He at the head of the church) would choose to invest the church’s resources in this way.

- c. My concern (based on numerous substantiated and credible reports) that LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson might be suffering from dementia, and that he might be unable to competently lead the church at this very important time.
3. You were explicit in our conversations that simply having doubts or criticisms regarding the church are not (in and of themselves) grounds for church discipline. Instead, you stated multiple times that it is my decision to discuss these doubts and concerns publicly (via Mormon Stories Podcast, via radio and newspaper interviews, and via my Facebook page) that is the cause of my membership status being jeopardized.
4. You stated that my continued public support of same-sex marriage would not allow me (or others in your stake) to remain in good standing with the church, because the public support of same-sex marriage (in your words) constituted the “support of teachings and doctrines that are not in harmony with the teachings of the church” (i.e., the LDS Proclamation on the Family -- <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation>). Again, you emphasized that the private support of same-sex marriage was fine – just not the public support.
5. You stated that my public support of Ordain Women would also not allow me to remain in good standing with the church.
6. You told me that my signing up on the Universal Life Church Monastery web site to allow myself to perform marriage ceremonies for friends/family also placed my membership status in jeopardy.

As conditions to avoid a disciplinary council, and/or to remain in good standing with the church, you requested the following:

1. That I publicly renounced and apologize for any/all past doubts and criticisms that I have made regarding the church, its theology/doctrine, its historicity, or its policies (listed above).
2. That I do my best to remove any past podcast episodes, blog posts, or Facebook posts that contain the public expression of either doubt about, or criticism of, the LDS church – whether these comments were made by me, or by any of the people I have interviewed over the past nine years.
3. That I stop my public support of same-sex marriage, and my public support of Ordain Women.
4. That I resign from the web site that allows me to perform marriage ceremonies (listed above).

Over the weekend Margi and I have earnestly discussed these concerns and accompanying conditions together as a couple. We feel as though we genuinely understand why you and the church are concerned about these matters.

Here are the things that we feel willing/prepared to do in response to your concerns:

1. Seek to publicly clarify the sources of my doubts/criticisms (as I have already sought to do here: <http://mormonstories.org/questions-and-answers/>).
2. Work harder to ensure that the tone and substance of my/our work with Mormon Stories Podcast going forward, along with any of the public statements that I make in the future, are as thoughtful, measured, and as constructive as possible.
3. Resign from the web site listed above that allows me to conduct marriages, and seek to find another means to conduct marriages if the need arises.

Unfortunately, as a matter of conscience, we do not feel as though we would be able to agree to the following:

1. **Removing past Mormon Stories podcast episodes that contain the public expression of doubts or criticisms of the church.** We believe that all of those stories are valuable to the church and its membership – even the ones that express doubt, disbelief, or criticism.
2. **Never again interviewing people on Mormon Stories who possess significant doubts about the church, or who voice substantive criticisms of the church.** We certainly hope to continue our longstanding tradition of interviewing both faithful and non-faithful LDS church members, but do not feel comfortable silencing the stories of those who have substantive doubts/questions/concerns about the church. **As we have now reiterated numerous times, it is our belief that the LDS church’s inability to facilitate the open discussion of difficult issues is perhaps the single biggest problem the church and its members are facing today.** We sincerely believe that continued silence on these issues will only prolong the pain and suffering experienced by church members. We believe that understanding and healing comes through open, earnest, sincere dialogue – and that sadness, depression, and anxiety are often the byproduct of the suppression of earnest doubts/questions/concerns.
3. **Rescinding my right/ability to publicly express any doubts or criticisms of the LDS church in the future.** While I am willing to become more constructive in my speech/efforts, I do not feel comfortable silencing myself in this way.
4. **Ceasing to publicly support the legalization of support same-sex marriage and Ordain Women.** For us, the reported rates of depression for women and LGBT individuals in Utah, along with the reported suicide rates of LGBT individuals in Utah – simply prevent us from being silent on these important issues.

As you confirmed during our Thursday meeting, we understand that our inability to agree to your conditions will likely lead to your decision to hold a disciplinary council for me. We understand why you feel like this decision is necessary, and we sincerely regret that we have not been able to find a better way to resolve these concerns (in our two meetings). We fully respect your right, and the right of the LDS church, to decide who should and should not remain a member in good standing.

We would like to reiterate that it was never our intention to go to the media with our concerns, until we received the following statement from you in writing:

“You should also be aware that if you choose to have your name removed from Church records, I feel it is important to make an appropriate announcement to the adults in the stake that you have chosen this option.” (letter from you dated June 7, 2014).

As we mentioned to you in our first meeting, we felt like this threat from you to publicly disclose our possible resignation from the church left us no reasonable choice but to speak publicly about these issues and interactions (vs. allowing you to speak on our behalf). We should note that we were very surprised/alarmed in our first meeting with you when you actually denied having written this sentence in the letter – and that you admitted to having written that sentence only after I read the letter to you aloud (this made us wonder if others had helped you prepare the letter).

Bryan, we would like to offer our sincere apologies for the stress that this situation has placed on you, your family, the stake, and the church. We know that you and the church are only trying to do what you

feel is right, and we regret that a better solution could not be achieved. Margi and I would like to extend to you, David, your families, and the church our sincere love and esteem.

We will end with this. Mormon Stories began with a simple and earnest desire: to help bring awareness and support to individuals and families who were struggling with matters of church history, church doctrine/theology, church policy, gender, and sexuality within the LDS church. Having been through our own “faith crises,” Margi and I knew how incredibly difficult LDS faith transitions could be – both on individuals and on families – and we simply could not stay silent as we witnessed many marriages and families being torn asunder over these issues.

For us, creating Mormon Stories was very much an act of faith/hope – that open, candid discussion (even if occasionally angry, negative, or critical) would ultimately help the LDS church and its culture begin to move in more positive directions with regard to these issues. While we are genuinely heartened to see that the LDS church has, indeed, moved in many positive directions over the past ten years, we are obviously saddened that you and the church feel the continued need to silence and punish some of us who openly seek to instigate positive change.

For what it’s worth, we want you to know that (in spite of our mistakes), our efforts have been born out of a sincere love for Mormonism (the church, its members, and its former members), and out of a sincere belief in the teachings of Christ related to love and charity.

We would like to end with Moroni 7:44-47 – not as a rebuke to anyone -- but as a reminder to us all:

44 ...and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.

45 And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

46 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

47 But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

Our faith/hope has been placed in the idea that Mormonism can become a big enough tent to support all kinds – the faithful and the faithless, LGBT individuals, feminists, and intellectuals alike.

While the events of late are not particularly encouraging in this regard, we sincerely hope that charity will ultimately prevail – on all sides.

Sincerely,

John and Margi Dehlin

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

North Logan Utah Stake

January 8, 2015

John Parkinson Dehlin
HAND DELIVERED

Dear Brother Dehlin,

Over the past few months that you have been on informal probation, I have carefully weighed the activities of your social media sites, your response to my requests contained in my letter of August 7, 2014 and your recent public declarations. I have come to a clear direction in the responsibility I have as your Stake President.

The stake presidency is considering formal disciplinary action in your behalf, including the possibility of disfellowshipment or excommunication, because of apostasy.

You are invited to attend this disciplinary council to give your response and, if you wish, to provide witnesses and other evidence in your behalf. The disciplinary council will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2015 at the North Logan Utah Stake Center, located at 2750 North 800 East, North Logan, Utah beginning at 6:00 PM. I am willing to work with you in making reasonable adjustments to the date or time if necessary.

Please know of my continued love and concern for you.



Sincerely,
Bryan C. King
Stake President