

6/30/25

## AN OPEN LETTER TO: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

My name is Samuel Warren Shaffer, inmate #236944. I grew up in the Church. I went on my mission to Tulsa, OK. I was Sealed in the Idaho Falls Temple. My wife and I were faithful members of the Church until 2008, when we both felt inspired to investigate polygamist groups. We joined the Parowan Prophet, which proved to be a bad group. Once my wife asked that we leave, I moved us back up to Idaho Falls. I was confused at that time of my life. I began studying many different religions including Hinduism. I felt lost and didn't know what to do.

During this time, around 2011, I encouraged a member named Jared Jones to become active again. I knew what was good for him, but not for myself. He was timid, and so I went with him to institute. He met a woman there and told her that I had been in a polygamist group. She pretended to be interested in what they believe and so I reluctantly agreed to share some of their doctrines across email. I found myself in a Stake President's office. The Stake President really tore into me, calling me a "predator" and even said that he could use his legal power as a prosecutor to investigate me. My heart was pounding as I have anxiety disorder, and I was so scared that I was willing to do anything to get out of that situation. The Stake President told me to resign from the Church or else he would have to "handle" me. When I left that interview I went straight home and wrote a resignation letter.

The resignation letter that I wrote was one of the most embarrassing things that I have ever done, or written. It referenced Hinduism and was very accusatory and strange. I don't know what I was thinking, and I regretted it just as soon as I had sent it. From that day until now I have wanted an appeal, so that I can have my day in Church court. Even though I was lost, I still valued my membership in the Church that Christ restored in these latter-days. I believe that even if someone disagrees with Church doctrine, or leadership, it doesn't mean that they want to leave a Church where they could still have a voice, and where they have fellowship with their own culture and people. That is like forcing someone to move because they disagree with the mayor. We love the Church.

The Church sent me a pamphlet in the mail in response to my resignation which said that I was welcome to return someday. I breathed a sigh of relief, even though it was premature. About four years passed by as I was still in the process of discovering myself and exploring many paths. Finally in 2016 I tried to come back to the Church at a ward in Orem. The Bishop of that ward obtained a copy of my resignation letter and wished to go over every point. I emphatically and totally denounced that letter, explained that I had repented, and expressed that it was foolish and stupid. He told me to remain silent in Church, and that it would be five years before I could even speak to a General Authority about getting baptized. My heart sank! I mournfully attended that ward for six months or so. As my Patriarchal blessing says one of my righteous associations became very important to me, and for her sake I am now in prison. I spoke up to defend her in my plea, and I do not regret it. One day you will understand what happened.

I have been active off and on during my 7 years in prison. I have explained all this, and confessed my sins, to the Branch Presidents of Olympus and Current. I am currently fully active in the Bear low side Branch, and President Burnett has told me that this can all be taken care of outside of prison; it seems unfair though as no one will look into me being blackmailed in Idaho Falls. Many inmates have repented of many things and wish to be baptized, but the Church will not baptize men in prison.

D+C 20:37, Matthew 25:44. Please Consider Baptizing repentant inmates. Thank you!

Sincerely Samuel Shaffer-