

Even though Jonathan Streeter's "big hoax" took the wind out of poor essay's sails, I still like mine. I hope you like it too and can appreciate a good fake apology. One that I'm pretty sure no one would ever think is real. But just in case. Trigger warning! THIS is NOT a letter from the church.

Dear Mormon church and the world,

We, the modern leaders of the LDS Mormon church, say unto you the following. Even though we tried ending our policy of discrimination against certain black people in 1978, we know there is still a lot of confusion and trauma out there because of all the racist teachings of leaders including prophets and apostles in our history. We like to refer to these teachings as folklore now, but we have to admit it was more than that. For one thing we sent out an official statement in 1949, signed by the first presidency, that reeked of white supremacist notions. Even though much of the thinking was common to the times, we are sorry that those leaders were not able to separate fact from fiction even when it was presented to them by men like Mormon sociologist Nelson Lowry.

Another official statement was released in 1969, which recapitulated our commitment to racial bans but also began our pattern of not going into the weirdo reasons for the ban and saying things like, "we don't know why the Lord is so darn prejudice". We mainly did this to look better to the rest of the world but amongst ourselves, some still held to the old beliefs and kept them going in places like Mormon Doctrine, the book.

We suppose we/they clung to the old notions about race because without those justifications, what were we doing all this restricting for? By then it was getting super hard to figure out who had pure white blood anyway, with all the intermarrying in places like Brazil. And honestly some of us were getting a bit queasy about it all. By 1978, we saw the handwriting on the wall. Not real handwriting like the prophets in the Bible, but the other kind, where you just look around and go, "hey guys, this racial separating stuff, isn't working, the rest of the world seems to be leaving us behind, And, if we don't even claim to know why we we're doing it- other than God wants us to- then maybe we can go to God and say, "Hey God, this is really becoming a nightmare for us, can we please change it now?" This points to the fact that we only seriously looked at changing our doctrine/policy once it had become a social/political nightmare for us, not because it was wrong and hurtful to black people. But, oh well.

We also have to say we're sorry for setting up the members of the church to become racist by default. So we say to the members, we apologize for encouraging you to use pseudo logic for the ban. After all, you couldn't just sit there with your friends or investigators, and say, I dunno why the blacks can't get the priesthood, they just can't. So you looked up what past prophets had said on the subject and did some extrapolating on your own. And we never told you to stop writing books containing weird folklore about Cain and Ham and pre-mortal unworthiness. In fact we were quite happy to see the members carrying the torch for us.

The truth is, forget all the stuff we said before, again. We absolutely DO know why the church ban existed. It existed because leaders in the past weren't discerning enough to separate weird, evil, racist stuff from what our scriptures say, that "all are alike unto God". We want to clean up the mess we made over all these years by blaming our racist doctrine on an inscrutable God. Instead we should have just admitted the obvious. The leaders were racist in the past and we covered for them. We did this because they were prophets, and we are prophets, so we were afraid if you stopped believing in the divine role of prophets in the past, you'd might stop believing in us too.

But we've come a long way and now realize that what you really needed was for us to be honest, humble and contrite. Because that's how you create trust in relationships, and that's how you build Zion. They got it wrong in the past, they made mistakes and we are going to make mistakes too. But we are going to try to do a better job of fixing it when we do. We love you guys, all you Mormons out there in the trenches doing all kinds of service and good works for no pay. By the way, thanks for paying us top leaders, cause we're old and frankly this job is not all it was cracked up to be. So we're sorry and we're sorry we weren't sorry earlier. And sorry for excommunicating those guys who were really just telling the truth. And we probably shouldn't have demoted Hugh B Brown either. It turns out we could have saved ourselves a whole shipyard load of trouble if we'd listened to him in the first place.

Sincerely,

The guys at the top of the Mormon church