

My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: Nightingale ()

Date: November 29, 2016 02:13PM

In Richard Packham's thread about off topic posts, saucie referred to me as a nevermo. I'm taking my reply off that thread as, ironically, my comments veered quite far off topic, especially given Richard's subject matter.

Thank you so much, saucie, for your kind comment about me.

However.

And this embarrasses me.

I am not a nevermo!

Yes. I am one of those people who inexplicably, as an adult, actually chose to join the Mormon Church, after meeting the missionaries through friends. I was looking for a new church and didn't do enough research before getting involved. I won't say I 'converted' because I even told them I didn't have a 'testimony' and didn't believe in JS as anything more than a regular man and they said it didn't matter. I didn't hear any of the doctrine I later had serious trouble with as the missionaries carefully kept to their script and even found me a missionary whose family was formerly evangelical, my usual brand but I hadn't been to church for a long time as I didn't fit in, kind of a joke considering what I did next. So this mishie knew how to maneuver me into a decision to get baptized, selecting Mormon scriptures and tidbits that were familiar and comforting to me as they were reminiscent of biblical themes. (However, I take full responsibility for my decisions).

The night of the baptism service I regretted my choice even before I went into the font. Silly me, I thought I couldn't call it off (and indeed, my Mormon friend, whose husband was going to baptize me, said it was too late to change my mind).

I tried to toe the line for three years, got depressed and discouraged and confused and upset and finally had the bright idea that I was free to leave (rather than continuing the struggle to fulfil my 'commitments' – which I had never understood in the first place). Leave I did, the instant after that realization popped into my head. Just exited the chapel, walked across the lawn to my car, drove away and never went back.

I have worked out the whole experience by reading and posting here, enjoying all the input from a lot of fine people with great brains.

So I 'joined' without 'converting' and in that way didn't have to go through withdrawal from a cherished belief system or anything like that. I hung onto my previous basic EV Christian beliefs throughout. That was obviously one source of my struggles to understand Mormonism and to overcome doubts once I glimpsed some of the true Mormon doctrine that clashes with EV teachings. But there have been a lot of feelings to work through, like how suddenly your (few) friends are not there any more and you realize they never were real, like when you find out about the true (bad) character of the early church leaders and are shocked at the duplicity, like the day you read at RfM about the racist doctrine (that you never noticed before because you stupidly didn't read the standard works in any great detail), that made you feel ashamed to be associated, and the time you read Deconstructor's post about JS and the abortions he cruelly procured for his female victims and the disgust overwhelms you, and when you realize your PB that seemed special ('miraculously' including as it did your favourite BoM scripture) was instead at best run-of-the-mill, at worst a downright lie, and when you realize that you were never really wanted or valued and that asking questions made you suspect in their eyes.

I could go on.

But yeah. I was a Mormon. If only in name by dint of wading into their font, unwillingly and hesitatingly at that point in the proceedings (after the presiding bishop, whom I had never met, accused my friend, the married man referred to above, who was going to baptize me, of having an affair with me – not the least bit true and a devastating accusation to me as a Christian), but I made a bad decision to go ahead with joining and I find it hard still to push away the regret at my stupidity and participation and memories such as the doubting, struggling missionary who told me that my talk at a zone meeting bolstered his testimony of JS in a way he had never before experienced. I truly hope he hasn't based his life on that moment. I often wish I would bump into one of 'my' missionaries here at RfM.

Too, regret and dismay that my name is on their books forever, even if I ask for removal.

I'm glad though if I seem like a nevermo.

Thank you, Nightingale. Nice of you to remind us that you're an exmo.

Posted by: Cheryl ()

Date: November 29, 2016 02:49PM

I guess it's been awhile since you told us about your conversion, your horrific experiences around being baptized when you were unfairly accused and badgered. I remember your struggle to try to make sense of the church's nonsense, and my favorite story about when you went to the temple for the first time without being told about mormon garments until they were handed to you at that day.

You've certainly earned an honored place among us as a certified and seasoned former mormon.

Re: Thank you, Nightingale. Nice of you to remind us that you're an exmo.

Posted by: Nightingale ()

Date: November 29, 2016 03:04PM

Haha, thanks Cheryl.

Ah, the temple. I didn't know about the nekkid thing either, wandering around in that so-called shield, open at the sides and me in my birthday suit beneath, wondering what the Good HECK.

Not sacredness. Crazyiness.

The first time I went, to do the proxy baptisms, I was literally praying "please no white pantsuits, please, no pantsuits" (to me, pantsuits = Cult). So even then I must have had vague misgivings about What is Up.

Of course, there were pantsuits.

I refused to wear one and bought my own long white dress.

I wore that to my baptism. Another memory is of an old man approaching me in the hallway to say "You look like an angel. I am so looking forward to this". (It

was a pretty dress). I felt embarrassed, worried that he was expecting some kind of spiritual experience that I couldn't provide.

Sure enough – not spiritual.

I was all curled up inside after, ashamed, defeated, sick unto vomiting.

It was two weeks before I could even talk about what had happened, to the former-EV missionary. It took me a long time to spit it all out, crying the whole time (highly unusual for me, I usually hold tears inside). To his credit, he was completely shocked. He apologized to me "on behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

All righty then.

I didn't go back to SM for six weeks. Even then it was to a new ward. They hadn't told me I was not allowed to continue going to that same chapel with my only two Mormon friends as I lived outside the area. Just baptize me and throw me aside. To another church building with more people I didn't know. I had no clue you can't choose which area you want to attend in.

My baptizer at least talked to the bishop there (they were friends) and after teams of missionaries convinced me to return I met the bishop (being summoned out of the blue to his office after SM; scary! weird!). He was a convert (not me; I'm just a joiner). He said "I can understand why you didn't want to come back to church". So I stayed. And tried. But finally left (although I always hate to feel like a quitter, which delays me from making a reasonable decision at times to reverse direction).

That same bishop climbed down off the stage one day and said "NG, I was watching you through the [children's Christmas] concert and I thought, she just doesn't get it". What a shock. First, why was he watching me? Second, I didn't know what I had been thinking of during the singing but as far as I knew it was nothing sinister. So now you have to watch your facial expression or the bishop will speak with you?

Yikes.

Funny thing. Every time I think I'm "over it", this dratted baptism thing comes back. It's crazy. Why does it matter at this point?

Edited 4 time(s). Last edit at 11/29/2016 03:21PM by Nightingale.

Re: Thank you, Nightingale. Nice of you to remind us that you're an exmo.

Posted by: **Tevai** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 03:19PM

Nightingale Wrote:

- > Ah, the temple. I didn't know about the nekkid
- > thing either, wandering around in that so-called
- > shield, open at the sides and me in my birthday
- > suit beneath, wondering what the Good HECK.

This would have been me, too, Nightingale!!

I can't even imagine being suddenly put in that position without ANY prep or prior warning...

To me, it would have seemed like I had accidentally stumbled into an alternate universe or something!

Temple Prep

Posted by: **Nightingale** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 05:45PM

I did attend temple prep classes at the ward building. I think there are 6. I lasted for 2.5. There was zero info about actually going through the temple. I didn't really understand much of what the teacher was saying but it was more about architecture and other arcane info, not about the ritual or what the big fat hairy deal 'covenants' are.

So you go and make all these covenants that you don't know details of until you're there and of course they are not clearly explained, if at all.

Many Mormons told me that all my questions would be answered at the temple. Of course, I tend to take things literally and I was expecting a blackboard, at least, with pictures even, to enlighten me. Or better yet, an

actual textbook. I would have read it.

And every time I asked a question after that they said "Pray about it" or "Return to the temple". And the bishop would say with a shocked expression on his face, "But NG, you've been to the TEMPLE". I never did get why he kept on repeating that. And my one Mormon friend (her with the husband who baptized me) would say "We'll talk about it at the temple" when I asked her stuff, but we never did.

Definition of insanity – doing something over and over and over and expecting a different outcome – no matter how many times I attended enlightenment never struck, except maybe the thought that repeating the rituals in no way diminished the bizarreness of it all. Covering your head (if you're female). Shaking hands with a stranger at the veil and repeating rote words whispered at you by a stranger. Just not my cup of tea.

Many moons later I finally came to comprehend that their insistence that all would be made clear at the temple was not meant to be literal. Rather, they apparently thought that the temple trips would give me a profound spiritual experience and answers would hit me from outer space or else I would be lulled into forgetting my questions. Or something like that.

I did try. I took all the steps you're supposed to, right up to travelling to SLC to go to the temple the first time and on subsequent occasions. I even ran into one of 'my' mishies there on one trip. Many others had come to go through with me my first time. I did get along well with the missionaries I met. Drat. Because if not, I would likely have declined baptism. The members, weighed down with so many kids and all their callings, didn't notice me much. Except in Gospel Essentials class where I got the hairy eyeball from the stake missionaries for asking questions. (Excuuuuuuuuuuuse me. I thought that's what this class was for!)

Yeah. It was quite the little interlude.

But it led me here and I've had fun and met some great people, if only through cyberspace.

I would have skipped the bishop's solution though – sending me to a church psychologist. But ultimately, that was my last straw. I did not like the

psychologist one bit. He was not friendly. He ate his supper throughout our entire appointment. I refused to have the church pay for the session, as the bishop offered, but I was unhappy at forking over \$\$\$ to watch this dude eat. When he asked me why I was there and I replied, "I'm having a problem with the church" he gave me a glare that looked like he hated me. Not so very therapeutic. I don't remember what I said after that or anything he said that was the least bit helpful. At the end of the appointment he said "I don't think we're coming from a position of strength here" (translation: I think he meant there's no hope, Lady. Fine with me).

That's the building I left and the lawn I walked over the night I realized "I don't have to stay!" Talk about a rush of freedom. I asked myself why I was attending a church that was making me feel depressed (not my usual state of mind). And why a church leader would think I needed psych counselling. And why the psych was so **&^% miserable. Let's see: I was perfectly fine prior to joining, depressed after, from day one. Diagnosis: Churchitis. Treatment: Get the heck out of Dodge.

Finally I listened to myself.

Edited 3 time(s). Last edit at 11/29/2016 05:55PM by Nightingale.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **BYU Boner** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 03:19PM

Your posts, Nightingale, are always appreciated! Everyone is welcome here--the recovery Mormon, the curious Mormon, the TBM Mormon, the investigator, the lurker, everyone. The rules are clear--no politics, no personal attacks, no preaching.

Everyone who visits this board should have a welcoming experience if they're interested in Mormonism and recovery. Thanks again to Erik and the mods for giving us this space.

And I'm the Cabbie, and I Really am a Technical Nevermo...

Posted by: **SL Cabbie** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 03:30PM

However, as I've said here, you'd never know it from some of my issues in therapy.

BTW, I knew Nightie's story since she's an old friend and e-buddy (and one of the few I'm close to here I've never met in person).

Anyway, I just figure I apostatized kind of young... My folks are Jack Mormons (unbelieving, of course, although my dad was very much a believer until his 20's), and they sent me to Sunday School one Easter, and I was invited back the next week. Fate intervened, and I came down with the mumps... I was too embarrassed to go back since I'd volunteered to give a prayer.

By the time the missionaries wanted to talk to me in my teens (they snagged two of my friends, including one I'm still in contact with who's a former bishop), I was pretty much an atheist...

I guess I need to give some credit to a junior high biology teacher, an idiot headcase from Lehi, Utah, who brought up how Joseph Fielding Smith said you couldn't "believe in evolution and the Divine Mission of Jesus Christ."

Evolution won.

And of course there was the bishop's daughter I fell in love with my senior year... That one ended badly when she ditched me for an RM who said he'd had a revelation they were going to be married (they weren't; it was a pretext to get her into the sack; I don't know how that turned out but they split up).

I've been on my Exmormon Mission ever since.

**Re: And I'm the Cabbie, and I Really am a
Technical Nevermo...**

Posted by: **Amyjo** ()

Date: November 30, 2016 04:54AM

Yes, but if you were raised by jack Mormon parents, how can that not count for being one yourself?

So your parents didn't bother to baptize you? If so, that takes the cake for Jack Mos!

Ah well, join the club. You're as affected as the rest of us, no doubt.

;))

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **BYU Boner** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 03:35PM

Well, Cabbie, as they say, "You dodged a bullet!" I always enjoy your comments! Da Bone.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Amyjo** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 04:45PM

I read Nightingale. It isn't hard to see you were once a Mormon convert (until you weren't.)

What I didn't know until recently from reading your posts is that you're one of the handful of those who after leaving Mormonism, retained your Christianity, on this board.

Thanks for clarifying to those who missed or overlooked your previous postings.

Not that you need to validate yourself to us. I've been accused here of being a never-Mo and pretending to have been a Mormon by the same person who classified you as a never-Mo. So, you're in good company.

Who on earth would want to pretend to have been a Mormon? It's like someone pretending to be a Jew! No one would take that on. I've been accused of both by the same person who called you a never Mo. I just feel lucky my escape hatch was waiting for me when I exited Mormonism. I didn't have a parachute, but a window was opened for this lifer. :)

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 11/29/2016 05:34PM by Amyjo.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Nightingale ()**
Date: November 29, 2016 05:31PM

Amyjo: I think saucie just didn't know or didn't recall my details (no surprise, it's hard to remember everybody's life story). So I don't see it as an "accusation" in any way. Some of our finest contributors have been nevermos, so they are always very welcome.

But that's not me.

As for "retaining" Christianity after "converting" to Mormonism, no, I was an EV Christian, then I joined the Mormon Church (obviously unaware of its history and doctrine; knowing only what my very biased EV friends said about it and being dangerously obstinate when it comes to people saying "don't" to me, forging ahead to find out for myself). Joined, not converted, as I mentioned.

So in my eyes I just undid the Mormon thing. I refer to it as my Mormon Interlude. I didn't become Christian via Mormonism. Merely chose to leave the Mormon Church and revert to being a mainstream Christian. Went back to my previous denomination, mainstream Mennonite Brethren, where I attended with Christian friends. Had an unfortunate, prolonged, exceptionally negative experience there with wide-ranging consequences and left again. Never have got into trying again, there or anywhere.

I Just Don't Fit.

It's not them, it's me.

Or is it?

I have always selected a church because that's where friends go, although true enough I have to believe in the doctrine too (funny how I put that on hold when it came to Mormonism but of course they didn't emphasize doctrine, which misled me at the time; still, my fault for not looking before I leapt). I just made way too many assumptions (that they were normal and shared basic Christian tenets with other denoms) and relied too much on my two Mormon friends and another new member I met through the missionaries. If I had been in isolation, attending only via missionaries, I'm sure I either wouldn't have chosen baptism at all or would have left far sooner. It was a tough three years.

The baptism hurt that much because it meant a lot to me, the whole symbolism but also the choice to 'redo' my previous baptism, which had been – wait for it – JW, which had been highly significant to me for a long time. I would never redo that one in the EV churches and of course it marked me as an alien of sorts. So to wipe out the meaningful baptism with the horrible one doubly hurt.

The line that got me was the mishies' assurance, when I said I don't need another baptism and I loved my JW one, that "we don't take away, but we add to it". That really appealed to me. I thought a top-up would be harmless. EVs had always wanted to expunge my JW baptism and that just didn't fly with me.

Shows how you have to listen to people and see where they're coming from. The EVs didn't hear; unfortunately for me, the Mormons seemed to.

So, I ask, with friends like these, who needs... {{jk}}

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Amyjo** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 05:36PM

I understand. It didn't occur to me you were being wrongly accused of being a never Mo.

With me, I've actually corrected her as many times as she made the insinuation about me, so in my case it was more like an accusation that I wasn't being honest because she doesn't believe I was ever a Mormon or a Jew, according to her – including after I've corrected her.

Some people are quicker to jump to wrong assumptions, that's all I was saying.

Edited 3 time(s). Last edit at 11/29/2016 05:38PM by Amyjo.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Nightingale** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 05:59PM

I think it's really easy to misread or misremember or misunderstand each other here. It's so much busier than it was when I came (10+ yrs ago). I used to be able to read all the new posts in a day and still get a lot of work done. Now I can barely skim the first page. And writing posts can take up a lot of time.

If there's somebody you clash with the usual, if not pretty much only, solution is to put each other on ignore. We're no different that way than people are in real life.

Thank goodness we CAN'T talk politics or else we'd be at each other's throats. Religion is a minefield all by itself.

Happy posting!

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Amyjo ()**

Date: November 29, 2016 06:27PM

Which I've pretty much done, except when I've been falsely accused of making up my Mormon ancestry that dates back to Joseph Smith. If it happened once, that would be one thing. When it becomes a pattern, that's something else entirely. It becomes an agenda when someone perpetuates a falsehood time and again, after being corrected of their false assumption.

Re: happy posting – danke schoen, and likewise. ;-)

Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 11/30/2016 04:50AM by Amyjo.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **rhgc ()**

Date: November 30, 2016 08:19PM

I am a distant cousin of JS. The nearest persons from whom we are both descended are only two generations before he was born.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Amyjo** ()

Date: November 30, 2016 08:31PM

Two of my fourth generation great grandfathers that I know of, were personal bodyguards of Joseph. One walked with him on his last march to Carthage jail. That one came west with Brigham Young after Joe was murdered.

The other one died before he could make the journey. His body gave out from lots of persecution ie, being driven from home to home in the dead of winter for years on end. He was around 65 or 66 when he died. Left a wife and around 12 children. She came west with one of her sons and they settled in Springdale, Utah right at the tip where the entrance to Zion's National Park is today. It is truly beautiful country there.

Also prime real estate. I found some cousins from that line who are realtors in the southern Utah market. I met one of them while visiting there in 2015. Plan on visiting again in 2017. Not quite ready to make the leap yet to retiring there. But someday I hope to. Housing prices keep on climbing. So that means I need to work longer so I can afford to retire there (if indeed I live long enough to enjoy the lifestyle it offers.)

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **donbagley** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 06:31PM

Thanks for your story, Nightingale. It's good that you saw that kind of behavior early on. It's widespread in Mormonism, try as they might to hide it.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Nightingale** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 06:56PM

I can see, Don, why members' heads get turned inside out. Up is down and black is white in Mormonism.

My convert friend and I sat together in SM every week (nobody else offered!) We had both been baptized around the same time. She had a lot of doubts but got baptized almost solely because she believed the missionaries when they promised

that she would be together with her unborn child in heaven and she was desperate that it should be so (how could they possibly promise such a thing)?

A few months in, we would giggle together in SM (disrespectful, I know) and murmur "the emperor has no clothes" because we seemed to be witnessing that tale coming true before our eyes, with all the goings on. Every time we saw or heard or experienced something strange (often) we would whisper "emperor" to each other. It really struck our funny bones.

But it's not funny really, is it?

It's too bad that for many of us our instinct is to not trust in ourselves first but rather to think we are the ones out of step. Being taught to be assertive is a positive asset that parents and teachers could bestow on their children that would take them further in life than many of us who were taught to be unquestioningly obedient as the highest ideal, by parents and via religious doctrine.

Asking questions could save your life.

Perhaps literally.

And yet Mormons scorn you for asking questions (in my experience, certainly).

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **cinda** ()

Date: November 29, 2016 08:53PM

Nightingale, I, too, have enjoyed your posts. I am a true Nevermo but, unlike SL Cabbie, with no technicalities.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Trails end** ()

Date: November 30, 2016 02:59PM

Ahem...i only have one bone to pick...ahem...dratted just doesnt cut it when you really need to say ..DAMNED...just kidding...love your story

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **Princess Telestia** ()
Date: November 30, 2016 03:01PM

I'm so sorry the part of the gnawing sickening fear when you know you're making a bad choice by walking up to the font is all too familiar.

Re: My Name is Nightingale and I am not a Nevermo! (Unfortunately)

Posted by: **seekyr** ()
Date: November 30, 2016 06:28PM

"finally had the bright idea that I was free to leave (rather than continuing the struggle to fulfil my 'commitments' – which I had never understood in the first place). Leave I did, the instant after that realization popped into my head. Just exited the chapel, walked across the lawn to my car, drove away and never went back."

I LOVE that part! What a moment!