

You have **2** free member-only stories left this month. [Sign up for Medium and get an extra one](#)

After Using Only Mormon Doctrine to Argue the LDS Church Has Fallen, This Couple Was Excommunicated From the Religion



Rhett Wilkinson

Follow

Dec 21, 2018 · 17 min read ★

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints these days is reportedly requiring non-disclosure agreements of participants in disciplinary hearings.

So, Nelson and Lacey Whiting had to keep silent on a lot about why the church excommunicated them.

But what is clear is that they were booted from the organization that they were raised in because they wrote a book that utilizes the church's own scripture to say that the religion has gone into apostasy.

That book is titled "The apostasy of the LDS church was prophesied, but the end is not yet."

From their home at the bottom edge of Spanish Fork, Utah, Nelson and Lacey described the excommunication affair and provided The Seer Stone with a copy of their book. They recounted their trip to each house in their neighborhood to announce their book and beliefs variant to Mormons and how fellow congregation members reported the couple to leadership. They also give an explanation as to why they believe Denver Snuffer, whose Mormon "remnant" religion now has thousands of followers, to be a "true messenger" — a code for Mormons indicating the highest regard for someone, given Mormon temple worship.

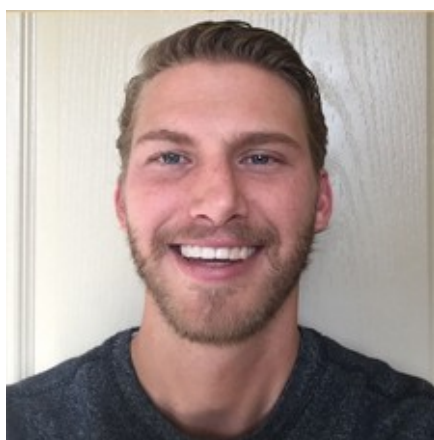
“Yes, I believe Denver Snuffer is a true messenger, for the Lord told me so while I was sitting in an endowment session at the Provo Temple,” Nelson writes. “I believe (Snuffer) is performing a similar role to (Book of Mormon prophets) Abinadi, Samuel the Lamanite, and/or even (New Testament prophet) John the Baptist.”

And Nelson writes in the book that he has had quite an experience with Jesus Christ.

“I have seen His face and I have embraced Him,” Nelson writes under the provision of his book “Part 5: A Preserved Restoration.” “It was prophesied someone else to happen to me, it happened when I did not expect it, when I was fully conscious and awake, and was powerful beyond description.”

I reached out to the LDS church for comment, calling the number listed for spokesman Eric Hawkins, though associate public relations representative Karlie Brand was the person identifying herself in the ensuing voicemail.

A response came from church media relations associate Odeh Pius Ondoma via email. “We got your request, but unfortunately we won’t be providing any comment,” he wrote.



Nelson Whiting, besides his wife Lacey Whiting, was excommunicated after using Mormon doctrine to argue that the Mormon church has gone into apostasy. (Nelson Whiting via WhitingTeam.com)

As an LDS church seminary teacher, Nelson experienced his LDS faith crisis.

The excommunication

Canyon Ridge Stake President Monte Marshall excommunicated Nelson and Lacey on Nov. 5, having stated in a letter that the couple “acted in clear, open, and deliberate

public opposition to the Church or its leaders.”

Nelson and Lacey had also written a letter of their own in their defense, saying “We wrote a book that outlined our understanding of how we in the LDS church have fulfilled scriptural prophecy in rejecting the gospel and subsequently fallen under condemnation. Prophecy is given so we can avoid judgment by being prepared for it, and recognizing it so as not to be alarmed or lose faith because of it.”

The excommunication occurred on Sunday morning, just before the service of their freshly former Aspen Heights Ward would begin.

And when Nelson’s brother Jerry Whiting played bagpipes.

“Right at 8:57, when everyone and their dog was going,” he told *The Seer Stone*.

The tune, a “hoorah” battle cry, rang from Nelson and Lacey’s yard, over the fences and into the chapel parking lot.

Prior to being excommunicated, Nelson and Lacey had “been barred from temple attendance and home teaching and all other callings in the church due to their beliefs,” they write in Part 5.

Congregation leadership called the night that the couple swept the neighborhood with their letter — Bishop Ricky Monroe and counselors had started their assignment of shepherding the ward only two days prior.

“They had no idea what they were getting themselves into,” Nelson said.

Monroe and a counselor visited Nelson and Whiting at their home before excommunication proceedings escalated. The counselor said there should be room in the church for differing opinion, and the couple thinks he dealt with a crackdown over that.

Monroe also confronted Nelson about his being re-baptized, and Nelson referenced Brigham Young (Young did that seven times, according to Nelson’s book) and Book of Mormon passages like Mosiah 18.

Before Monroe and his counselor’s visit, the couple had been barred from entering

Mormon temples or teaching in church as both had done before.

Marshall, three years prior, had been told of Snuffer, but Nelson said that the remnant leader was not what it was about for him and Lacey, but about the church's "apostasy."

There were four total meetings in the excommunication process, with "the very first thing" Nelson was told in the first meeting was a request that the couple not record the meetings, aside from the non-disclosure agreement that followed.

Then Marshall said 'OK, you guys, it seems you are really sincere, but you've made quite a stink in the ward here and people are asking us what is going on,'" Nelson reported.

Nelson spoke up when Marshall pointed out the couple's writing in the letter that the church is under "condemnation."

"I said, 'what are you talking about?'" Nelson explained. "We are under condemnation as a church, aren't we?"

Marshall said that was true, but that it wasn't because of what the church teachers or practices, Nelson reported.

When Marshall posed that the couple faced a disciplinary counsel, Nelson's response was "it's not like you run the disciplinary counsel according to the scriptures."

Marshall also said that he would send the book to the others who had a vote in the excommunication, but he then refused.

Marshall would say "I do believe there is a problem in the church, but most of the members are not in a place where they can handle that," Nelson reported.

Once the meeting to actually determine the severing action occurred, Marshall talked about Snuffer as a reason for his considering excommunicating Nelson and Lacey. Marshall showed letters from the church's highest-governing body, the First Presidency, which includes a perceived mouthpiece of God.

But the couple was not allowed to hold them, let alone keep them, and today remain baffled by a lack of question-and-answer period in the excommunication hearing.

"The spirit of the blank stare from the 16 men was just dumbfounding," Nelson said.

“What in the world?”



The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rejected an appeal from Nelson and Lacy Whiting to not be excommunicated from the church. (©2018 By Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.)

The couple appealed to the First Presidency. Nelson wrote that the disciplinary counsel was in error, in violation of the Mormon scripture D&C 102 and having “strayed from their own handbook,” Nelson said.

“(Marshall) wouldn’t tell me anything,” Nelson told The Seer Stone. “(He) wouldn’t teach me anything.”

When the third meeting came around, Marshall said that he had read the couple’s book — and because of that, it was “really refreshing for him to get back into the scriptures,” Nelson reported.

“I can’t reconcile my experience and how you understand (Mormonism) with my experience and what I understand,” Marshall said, according to Nelson.

Nelson asked him “you can’t reconcile it, but are going to make a judgment on it?”

A letter for the neighborhood

Nelson had a dream where he was preaching to leaders in his congregation upon being asked questions by them, he said.

So preached he and Lacey did, through the letter.

Nelson and Lacey put a letter on each door in their neighborhood to make their announcement to the residents and former congregation members, they told me. In the letter, they write:

“Over the years, we had many questions about various parts of the gospel, church, scriptures, traditions, etc., that the Lord has answered for us and we are grateful and happy for it. The book is now published,” they write. “We are not advocating polygamy and do not discuss in the letter ‘anti-Mormon’ issues such as the authenticity of the Book of Mormon or Book of Abraham, because we do in fact love Mormonism as restored through Joseph Smith. We simply believe the Lord has great desires to remove our condemnation as members of the Church, which we fail to enjoy because of what is currently taught and practiced.”

The letter includes four quotes from men that Mormons regard as “prophets, seers and revelators” at least suggesting that they are supposed to be investigating their faith, including this one from an apostle, George A. Smith: “If a faith will not bear to be investigated, if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined; their foundation must be very weak.”

Joseph Smith is the founder of Mormonism and the Book of Abraham, along with the Book of Mormon, are scriptural texts in LDS Mormonism.

‘The apostasy of the LDS church was prophesied, but the end is not yet’

Nelson’s dream about his letter to family also conveyed that he should “expand” the letter to his family into the book, he said.

“Lacey helped me,” he added.

Nelson writes in the book that he “skipped college homework and sometimes classes to study the scriptures in the library.”

“I would discover amazing truths when I stopped trying to fit the scriptures into my belief system, and rather let them inform me as to what God’s teachings truly are,” he writes.



“The Words of Joseph Smith” influenced Nelson Whiting to write about embracing the religion started by Denver Snuffer, which is part of the Latter-day Saint movement. (WorthPoint)

And Nelson studied the books “The Words of Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith” and “Lectures on Faith.” (Nelson “almost had to laugh” when his bishop asked him if he was reading “anti-Mormon material,” he writes.)

Nelson writes that the top Mormon leadership “were literally saying that all was well in Zion, even that we were Zion already (2 Nephi 28:24–27 (a Book of Mormon passage)). Two of my very outspoken and influential-on-the-family relatives kept telling me we already Zion already, simply waiting for Christ to show up!”

“What I was seeing was that the leadership, though they taught that they cared, mainly seemed to look at numbers. We seemed to become more and more like the evangelical sects I taught on my (Mormon) mission,” Nelson adds. “Good people, but lacking the power of godliness.”

In his studies, Nelson came away with the idea “that the church is not the gospel, nor is the gospel the church (3 Nephi 27:8–10, 21 (in the Book of Mormon)).”

He also came to believe that “the greatest and most destructive ploy and false doctrine that the (devil) has advanced, and so imperviously entrenched into the very fabric of our church, is that the leaders cannot lead us astray,” he writes.

“The idea that the current president of the church and twelve apostles (the LDS church leadership) are immune to deception and somehow protected from all ability to teach falsely is a damnable heresy, scripturally unfounded and disgusts God Himself,” Nelson writes. “I will give you one very good reason why comparing it to an institution many in our church believe is the whore of all the Earth: the Catholic Church, which in 1302 believed the Pope in his claim that there was no salvation outside the Catholic Church.”

“Sound familiar?” he adds.

Nelson also writes that he “had a lengthy conversation with Rob Elzy, a local area leader over (the Church Educational System) for Utah County who worked directly with the (church’s) correlation department, I learned that the correlation department has virtually no oversight.”

“The prophets, seers, and revelators don’t approve most statements to be published to

the church. Rather, a priesthood executive committee with no participation from the quorum of the twelve or First Presidency ‘clear’ items to go ‘to correlation evaluation,’” Nelson adds. “Correlation is made up of a team of experts, professors, scholars, and professionals (who) do not have their content reviewed by the (church leadership) because the brethren do not have the time to assure the church is being taught correct doctrine.”

“Instead, they are very unfortunately spending the bulk of their time managing the 100-plus legal entities over a great number of which they are board members,” Nelson writes.

Nelson writes “I woke up one morning not long ago, with the Lord telling me that the church handbooks of instructions are a fulfillment of (reported angel) Moroni’s prophecy that we stewards of the gospel in the last days would by our day have ‘transfigured the holy word of God,’” quoting former church prophet Harold B. Lee, who said that “all that we teach in this church should be couched in the scriptures. ... if we want to measure truth, we should measure it by (Mormon scriptures).”

“The bulk of church teachings” that are wrong, Nelson writes, come as a result of former Mormon prophet Ezra Taft Benson’s talk “Fourteen Fundamentals in Following a Prophet,” written when he was an apostle.

That’s all in the “Introduction.” Besides that and Part 5, parts two through four are “What does God think of the LDS church right now?”, “Summary” and “Conclusion — Where to from here?” A chief argument by Nelson is that “gentiles” referenced in Mormon scriptures are not people outside of Mormonism who are not descendants of a people in the Book of Mormon, but Mormons themselves. A reading of the scriptures Nelson provides in that way offers that it’s the LDS church and its members, rather than other churches and their people past and present, who are apostate. That allows for the need of a “remnant” that Snuffer sparked and Nelson and Lacey are a part of.

A reader emailed Nelson, saying that the book had “done more to (make them) repent and seek Jesus Christ more than anything I have ever read,” Nelson told The Seer Stone.

Seeing Christ, perceptions of Snuffer

“He lives! I bear record of that,” Nelson writes in Part 5, where he says that he has hugged Jesus.

Books that were published that Snuffer authored about conversing face-to-face with Jesus and the apostasy of the LDS church “began a separation of sorts between those who wanted that special relationship with Christ and those who felt such a relationship was overzealous and overstepping the teachings of the brethren in Salt Lake City,” Nelson writes.

“Another division came later,” Nelson writes. “Many of those beginning to wake up through reading Denver’s writings stopped listening to Denver when he got excommunicated in (2013) and began his yearlong lecture series, later published in 2015 under the title ‘Preserving the Restoration.’”

“After all, who wants to hear truth from an outcast?” Nelson asks.



Denver Snuffer leads the Remnant movement of which Nelson and Lacey Whiting are a part. (Denver Snuffer)

“Many more stopped listening to Denver when he gave his 10th lecture in the series, claiming the church had lost its claim to priesthood, and all should receive and act on the renewed commandment to be baptized,” Nelson writes. “Some, at this juncture, believed Denver was attempting to organize a church, and thus left the pursuit of paying

attention to such a man.”

“For who wants to follow a man who seems to just be building up another church offshoot?” Nelson also asks.

Still “thousands” have been baptized into the movement, Nelson reports.

“According to Denver, a new dispensation has begun,” Nelson adds.

Today, “some few fellowships are still intact, waiting upon the Lord for instructions,” Nelson reports.

A vote in Sept. 2017 for a new set of Mormon scriptures means that believers in the movement concerning them will “receive this (American) land” along with the Book of Mormon descendants “to whom this land belongs by right,” Nelson writes.

Nelson further reports Snuffer’s advocacy as found in “Things to Keep us Awake at Night”:

“If Mormonism is to achieve its prophesied success, that future must come through a return to pure ideals. Holy people must practice the religion,” Snuffer reportedly says. “To practice within a hostile legal, cultural and social environment requires the religion to assume a noncorporate form. It must become only a shared idea, privately practiced. Ideas cannot be taxed, controlled, organized or compromised by changing leadership. Ideas can stand apart from all commerce and law. The only thing an idea requires is for vitality is for someone to give it a voice. Governments and business interests are powerless to seize an idea and corrupt it. Ideas can be opposed, denounced and argued, but ideas remain free from all control. All that is needed for an idea to live is for it to be remembered.”

“We are obligated to repent and return,” Nelson further reports Snuffer saying. “We may not have created the problem, but we cannot expect God to accomplish the work He commanded man to do. Others may have neglected it, but we cannot.”

Snuffer asked that believers vote “yes” in a covenant to do it, and that is why people, including Nelson, participated in the project to create the new scriptures, Nelson reports.

Nelson, along with Bret Corbridge and another individual, advocates for the belief in “A Sacred Moment in Time: Deciphering the Restoration Scriptures and the New Covenant.” Nelson surely would have been excommunicated for had his former leaders known about it, he told *The Seer Stone*.

To explain why he believes Snuffer to be a “true messenger,” Whiting quotes Snuffer, also from “Awake”:

“The only examples we have of Zion are the two I have bypassed. Those two, Enoch and Melchizedek, did not follow the pattern of the others. They did one thing that escapes most people’s notice. They took disorganized people and assembled them into a unified body that was equal, of one heart and one mind, without any poor among them. There is no mention anywhere in scripture or hierarchy among other of these people. It is clear these two were both ranked among history’s most towering spiritual figures. But they led by two communities of equals. They assumed no authority other than that of a teacher and preacher of repentance.”

“When Enoch’s and Melchizedek’s successes are considered, the pattern of their dispensations stands in contrast to what all others did,” Snuffer reportedly writes. “Perhaps the Lord’s organization of the Palestinian and Nephite churches was done wittingly to prevent prematurely the third Zion foretold in the promises given from the time of Adam. Meaning that the institution of a community of equals who are possessing one heart and one mind was not the objective Christ intended for those of His day. Hierarchy always imposes inequality.”

“If you want me to claim the right to mediate as judge, I decline,” Whiting adds. “I have rebuffed two serious attempts to have myself ‘sustained’ as a leader. I will not regard myself as above my fellow man, nor will I assume I am any less in need of repenting and turning to the Lord. Even if the Lord has required some things of me, I do not claim that distinguishes me above any others. I confine myself to teaching and trying to persuade others. I hope to always allow them to govern themselves. I believe I have the same obligation as any other man: preach, teach, persuade, use longsuffering and love, exhibit pure knowledge and allow others to determine for themselves, free of constraint, if what is offered is light and truth, or darkness and error.”

“Lacey and I have taken upon ourselves offered through Denver Snuffer,” Nelson writes.

“The law, the scripture, the covenant, the sign must be accepted if the people are to have another chance to participate in the building of the new House of the Lord so He may have a dwell when He comes again.”

Nelson & Lacey’s journey

Nelson met Lacey when she was a gospel doctrine teacher in the congregation they were in for singles, Nelson told The Seer Stone.

“Where’s Zion?” Nelson would wonder before he started studying.

At first, Nelson could only think of “white shirts and ties” when he thought about “false traditions in the church” Joseph Smith talks about, that Nelson said he read.

But there ended up being more.

Nelson would go to congregation leadership meetings and see his bishop refer to the given manual even though scriptures were on his desk.

“It really bothered me,” Nelson said.

That and more, “I would share all these things with (Lacey),” Nelson said. “We talked about everything together. ... We were on the same page.”

Having already started teaching seminary, Nelson said he felt like he needed to pray about Thomas Monson, the church prophet at the time, being a prophet.

So he entered a room that for he and Lacey’s Mapleton, Utah house, was a temple room as seen in Mormon temples.

“I didn’t get an answer,” Nelson said.

Then he ended up praying for four hours, asking God “what the right question was.”

“I was told, ‘you need to go back to the scriptures,’” Nelson said.

After 10 days of considering, what Nelson “ended up hearing was that the church was essentially the-children-of-Israel-wandering-in-the-wilderness-condition,” Nelson said, referencing the biblical story. “It was a joint, systemic problem both among the lay members and the leaders ... just, Zion was no longer a focus.”

“So that shifted my direction,” Nelson added.

Reading Snuffer’s books confirmed views he had already gained, Nelson said.

Part of one, he read to his seminary students.

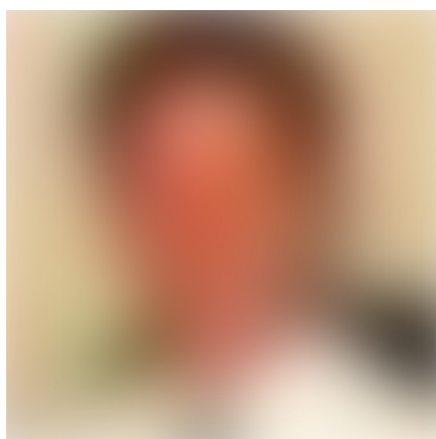
“The kids loved it, too,” Lacey said.

Nelson and Lacey listened to Snuffer’s 10-lecture yearlong series, in which the 10th, Snuffer calls for re-baptism, though Nelson had again already, unintentionally been on board.

“My friend and I had prayed about it and gotten re-baptism even before Denver had said anything about it,” Nelson said.

“I had to,” Lacey said, articulating her spiritual call.

Nelson’s family is descendants of early Mormon convert Elijah Whiting — “as good a stock as you can get,” Nelson said.



Mormon in Religion et Church Communication Books Nelson sent to an individual got to Paul’s son.
(Credit: Whiting via Whiting Team.com)

Nelson had sent an email to a fellow on the website LDS Freedom Forum about temple covenants — and it ended up in his little brother’s inbox. That resulted in Nelson’s father, Paul Whiting, calling him.

Nelson’s response? “I really feel like Joseph was right,” he said. “We need to be finding

out the sacrifices we need to make to re-create Zion.”

That started Nelson’s “writing career,” as he felt he needed to defend himself. He believes that God told him to write a letter for his family explaining his worldview, which became the book

Nelson changed his thoughts about giving the letter to anyone in his family without them asking, but an event changed developments on that front.



“I’m not going to spill the beans on what we believe,” Nelson said. “They were like, ‘what? You got re-baptized?’ ... what about tithing? What about priesthood?”

“We were really unprepared, really,” Nelson admitted. “And so Lacey gave them the letter.”

“But then they all, except for my mom, threw it away,” Lacey said.

“They threw it in the garbage,” Nelson said.

“And didn’t read it,” Lacey interjected. “They knew it was from the devil.”

It turns out that Nelson’s family had all fasted before the meeting in an effort to determine what Nelson and Lacey were saying was false, and they said that they thought that was the case “because they did not feel good about it,” Nelson said.

“Sometimes the Holy Ghost can convict you ... and it doesn’t feel good,” Nelson said. “Everyone has got their way of responding to religious claims.”

Lacey’s family harbored “a lot of fear” over she and Nelson’s beliefs, Nelson said.

Then Nelson and Lacey started paying their 10 percent in tithing directly to the poor, whereupon their temple recommends were not renewed. Temple recommends are miniature forms that permit entrance into Mormon temples.

The couple took the “covenant offer from Denver” in September and Nelson started having dreams, he said.

“Lacey started praying that she would have dreams like me,” Nelson said. “Instead of her having the dreams ... I would have the dream.”

“For 10 days in a row,” Lacey interjected again.

When Nelson presented at the 2018 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium, a conference of Mormon academia, Paul, Nelson’s mother and two of his youngest siblings attended.

Even if you no longer affiliate with the church but enjoy sociality with family and friends as before, you can still find social settings organized by the [Utah Valley PostMormons](#). There, you can find your people. And of course, if you don’t enjoy those relationships like before, the many UVPM events that happen each week can be even life-saving.

Led by wonderful people like Kirsten Barksdale and Larissa Norman, UVPM is also for folks who just are struggling with it or are “never Mormons” seeking a break from the predominant culture. Find their events on Facebook and Meetup.

— -

For more articles like this, please support The Seer Stone at the [Hero’s Journey Content Patreon page](#)