

**Melanie Hill's response to her email request for resignation of her membership
December 2003:**

So in my quest to find out what happened to my records, I got on the church website and tried searching for name removal under the "search" option.

You will be shocked to find that I came up with nothing. I was pretty fired up and, as you know, sometimes when I get fired up I do hasty things. Well, I went to feedback and sent an email (the exact content of which I don't remember because I had no idea I would actually get a reply back) to the effect of how inconvenient local leaders had made this and how nice it would be if they would put the steps for name removal on the official church website.

I believe I ended the letter with a snide remark about how it didn't really matter since I had found the information I needed on the exmormon.org website.

This is what I got back today.

From: "MIS Support FRD" <MISSupport@ldschurch.org>
To: Melanie Hill
Subject: name removal
Date: Tue, 09 Dec 2003 14:18:00 -0700

If you desire to have your name removed, the process is to write a letter (not a form letter) stating such. You then are to sign it and turn it in/send it to your priesthood authority, (bishop or branch president). He should meet with you and make sure you understand the consequences of this, as well as tell you what is required should you ever desire to come back. He then sends that letter to the stake president with a form he fills out. The stake presidency will review your request to be removed and if they concur your name should be removed, they ask the bishop to send you a letter stating your name is being removed. You will then have 30 days to rescind the request by letter. If you do not wish to rescind, your name will be removed.

You may wonder why we go through such a long process. It is actually protecting you and us. Put yourself in our position. You don't believe the Church is true, or else you would not be requesting to have your name removed. But, for arguments sake, suppose that it is, and when you get on the other side, the Lord tells you that you had the truth, but you rejected it. You then turn to us and tell us we didn't make it clear what you were doing and rejecting. The issue then falls on us to be responsible for your not knowing. So we want to be sure you understand or else it is our shortcoming, not yours.

I am always sad to receive requests like yours. I am sure you found many people willing to help you have your name removed. But for every one of them I am sure I could find a sincere person wanting you to stay with the Church and give it another chance. The people in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not perfect, but I believe the majority of the members are striving for perfection.

However, I know the Gospel of Jesus Christ is perfect and it is upon that Gospel the Church is built. The Church is not some cult that will pester you and hound you, trying to get you to do things, or participate, pay tithing, etc. God will force no man to Heaven. Sometimes members, in their desire to be missionary minded and to fellowship, go overboard in trying to make sure people are taken care of, which can be a turn off for some brothers and sisters.

Or sometimes it is just the opposite, where once someone has been baptized, that person feels left alone without the fellowship they received while investigating. I don't think anyone in the Church ever intentionally alienates anyone else, but it still happens. Listen to what the Prophet has been saying and how he says it. Can you imagine him pestering anyone? I can't.

The Gospel is a way of life. We never want anyone to feel like they are trapped and can't get out, but we sincerely hope they don't want to get out. We never want anyone to feel as though they have been brainwashed, that only by the intervention of those who have "escaped" or who "see clearly" can the effects of the brainwashing be overcome. We encourage every member to gain for herself or himself a personal testimony of the Gospel and all that goes with it, by prayer and by living the precepts, by testing the Lord to see if what we believe is true.

Unfortunately, many members live by the testimony of others, never gaining their own. Thus they are swayed by the fluid tongues of well-meaning others, for right or wrong, and when a challenge to their faith comes, they are not ready for it.

People in our Church, in other churches, or belonging to no church, can be very persuasive with their words. But the scriptures (both the Bible and Book of Mormon) teach that answers we receive by the Spirit, that testify of truth, give comfort, or warn, are available to all, not just members of a particular church or who already believe a certain way. Those answers are not always easy to find, but when or if we find them and we cannot deny their truthfulness, we should act on them.

Joseph Smith did this, I know it. But I cannot make you believe it. So I hope before you write the letter to the Bishop that you get on your knees in private, away from all the influences of friends or enemies, supporters and detractors, and pray from your heart to your Father in Heaven to know what you should do. Talk to Him and tell Him what you need to know. Then listen for an answer. I know prayers are answered. Whatever your answer, and your decision, may God bless you.

Sincerely,
-mwb

p.s. sorry for the epistle. I didn't mean to write so much, but I really care.

Melanie's mother responds below:

From: Merilynn
To: Melanie Hill
Subject: RE: name removal--you'll just LOVE this
Date: Tue, 9 Dec 2003 20:39:15 -0500

Oh My Gawd!!!! Like what??? You're going to get up there and find out they were right and then you're going to sue them in the Celestial District Court for the Fourth District of Kolob???? You're going to ask for all your tithing money back to compensate you for the fact that they didn't try harder to make you understand what you were doing????

This is incredible! Just when you think you've heard it all! How freakin arrogant!

Well, I'm sorry if my fluid tongue has swayed you because you were too stupid to think for yourself! The funny thing is that he is absolutely right--too many people live by other's testimonies because they can't get that burning bosom feeling for themselves and they are swayed (to stay in and keep playing the game).

Honey, you will have to give a letter to the bishop, but let him know you don't need to talk to him, you know the consequences, you've been trying to take care of this for three years and you just want him to go through the channels and get it taken care of for you. He's supposed to forward it to the stake president and let you know you have 30 days to contact the SP if you change your mind. At the end of that time the SP should forward it to SLC and they should send you a cheesy little 1 paragraph form letter letting you know you're no longer a member. Legally, once you give them your letter, they aren't supposed to hassle you. Go to mormonnomore.com for other hints and sample letters.

Love ya.

Melanie's happy ending:

The happy ending to this story is that I copied all of this and submitted it with my notarized letter in addition to excerpts from the MormonNoMore web page, and finally got TCOJCOLDS to admit that I am not a part of their organization on December 19, 2003.