

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

November 13, 2014

OAKTON VIRGINIA STAKE

Kathleen Marie Kelly

By email: kate.kelly@gmail.com

Dear Sister Kelly:

As I advised you on October 30, 2014, a disciplinary council of the Oakton Virginia Stake has reviewed and affirmed the decision of excommunication by the bishop's disciplinary council of the Vienna Ward. I want to explain to you why we have reached that conclusion, not only because you are entitled to know, but because we want you to return to active Church membership. We care about you very much.

First, we took very seriously the extensive file of materials you provided us. Our decision was reached only after every member of the stake disciplinary council had reviewed the more than 1000 pages of letters and other writings that you submitted. I personally read every page. I am satisfied that the bishop's council followed appropriate Church procedures in reaching its decision, and that its judgment of excommunication for apostasy on your part was justified.

Second, the process was fair. You have asserted that the disciplinary council was unfair because it was held in the Vienna Ward after you had moved and that you were not given sufficient notice of the council. Consistent with Church policy, the disciplinary council was held in the Vienna Ward because Bishop Mark Harrison and I were the Church leaders most familiar with your conduct and the ones who had counseled with you repeatedly. When you moved temporarily to your parents' stake in Provo, I consulted with their stake president and he concurred with the decision to retain jurisdiction in the Oakton Virginia Stake.

As for notice, you and I met twice before formal discipline was initiated, at which times I advised you that you were on a path of apostasy that would lead to formal Church discipline, including the prospect of excommunication, if you continued. When you failed to heed this counsel, Bishop Harrison notified you by email that a disciplinary council would be convened on a particular date. Bishop

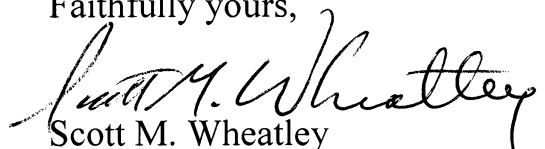
Harrison offered to adjust that date to a time when you could personally attend, or to provide a secure video link that would allow you to personally participate from a remote location. You refused both of these alternatives, choosing instead to send the large file of documents referred to above.

Third, there is no question that your conduct regarding the Ordain Women movement constituted apostasy justifying excommunication. This is not because you have questions or doubts about matters of Church doctrine, history or practice as to which you seek answers. Neither is this a matter of “free speech.” As a matter of civics, you have every right to speak your mind on any matter. But this is not about honest questioning or free speech, rather it is about appropriate public conduct in your capacity as a member of the Church.

As a member of the Church, you spoke out vociferously in open opposition to Church leaders and doctrines in an effort to persuade others to your point of view. This you did repeatedly in an exceptionally public way over a period of months, even after being counseled otherwise. This is apostasy. For this reason, the bishop’s disciplinary council decided, and the stake disciplinary council has affirmed, that you engaged in behavior warranting excommunication.

But, finally, and most importantly—as already mentioned, we want you back! And there is a way back, through the process of repentance. However it may seem to you at the moment, the actions of the ward and stake disciplinary councils have been motivated out of a genuine concern for you, as well as a concern for the welfare of other Church members potentially influenced by your actions. I earnestly hope that in due course you will find your way back to membership in good standing in the Church. Wherever your travels may take you, I stand ready to help you if I can.

Faithfully yours,


Scott M. Wheatley
President, Oakton Virginia Stake