



By

Mark McGee

Leaving Mormonism: Why Four Scholars Changed Their Minds (RatioChristiBooks/Kregel Publications, 2017) is the best book I've read about the inner workings of Mormonism, but it's much more than that. Four former Mormons who are scholars in various academic disciplines also share their deep love for Mormons and their desire to help them understand the truthfulness of the Bible and the errors of the Mormon religion.

Drs. Corey Miller and Lynn K. Wilder are the book's editors and co-wrote chapters with Drs. Latayne C. Scott and Vince Eccles. Their combined range of doctorates from Philosophical Theology to Education to Biblical Studies to Physics brings a special perspective that makes *Leaving Mormonism* a must-have guide for every Christian who wants to better understand Mormonism and for every Mormon who may be having doubts about their religion.

The Authors

Dr. Corey Miller grew up in Utah as a sixth generation Mormon and became a Christian in 1988. He is an Adjunct Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Religions at Indiana University-Kokomo. Dr. Miller is also the President/CEO of Ratio Christi (Latin for “The Reason of Christ”), which is a global movement that equips university students and faculty to give historical, philosophical, and scientific reasons for following Jesus Christ.

Dr. Lynn Wilder became a Mormon in 1977 and was a tenured professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. She became a Christian in 2006 and is now a Professor of Special Education at Florida Gulf Coast University in Ft. Myers, Florida.

Dr. Latayne C. Scott became a Mormon at the age of 11 and became a Christian as a young woman. She attended Brigham Young University and received a doctorate in biblical studies from Trinity Southwest University. Dr. Scott is the author of *The Mormon Mirage* and more than 20 other books.

Dr. Vince Eccles was born to parents with a rich Mormon heritage, but he drifted from Mormonism as a young man and became a Christian in 1975. He is a Research Scientist with the Center for Atmospheric and Space Sciences at Utah State University.

The Book

It is quickly evident upon reading *Leaving Mormonism* that the authors share a deep insight into the challenges of “being Mormon” and excellent reasons for leaving it. The first chapter, by Dr. Corey Miller, looks at “Contemplating Mormonism Lovingly, Credibly, and Truthfully.” He follows that with great insight into the “Search of the Good Life.” Dr. Latayne Scott wrote personally and powerfully about her life as a Mormon in “I Was There. I Believed.” Dr. Lynn Wilder wrote about the “Social Consequences of Mormon Teachings: Finding Post-Mormon Mental Health.” Dr. Vincent Eccles wrote about his experiences as a Mormon and scientist in “Wrestling with Nature and God.” Drs. Miller and Wilder finish the book with an insightful look into the fact that many former Mormons become atheists in “Why Believe in God? Objections to Faith by the the New Atheism.”

Leaving Mormonism begins with an excellent Foreward by Dr. Richard Land, President of Southern Evangelical Seminary. Here are a few highlights –

“Leaving Mormonism is indeed a unique and valuable volume. As Dr. Corey Miller and Dr. Lynn Wilder, contributing authors and co-editors, explain, no other book on Mormonism is written by people who are former Mormons, are trained professional academics, and confessed followers and disciples of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Drs. Miller and Wilder explain the unique tenor of the book, which is not mean-spirited or hostile to Mormons as people. Speaking for the authors, Dr. Miller says, ‘As former insiders, we have a unique perspective. As scholars, we value truth. As Christians, our commitment to Christ compels us to genuine love without which we could not claim to be anything but mere critics . . .

Drs. Corey Miller, Latayne C. Scott, Lynn K. Wilder, and Vince Eccles are to be commended for producing a compelling narrative that will be invaluable in sharing the Gospel with Mormons and former Mormons, and in inspiring , informing, and equipping those who are seeking to defend the Gospel (especially in Miller and Wilder’s chapter 6).

I will keep two copies of this book in my library, one for reference and one to lend to others.”

One of the highlights of *Leaving Mormonism* is how each author shared their personal story from childhood. Origins are so important to who we become in life. As a former atheist, I also appreciated the last chapter of the book – “Why Believe In God? Objections To Faith By The New Atheism.” As the authors wrote –

“Truth, reasonableness, and morality are central to Christian faith. They matter to theists, and our thinking about them with our conscious minds should be sound.”

Each reader will certainly find something that will touch them at a deep level.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this review, *Leaving Mormonism: Why Four Scholars Changed Their Minds* is the best book I've read about Mormonism. I highly recommend it to you as you seek to love your Mormon friends and family members to the "real" Jesus Christ.

Publisher's Description

“Leaving Mormonism offers the expertise and personal experience of four ex-Mormon academics to explain why the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints proved to be intellectually and spiritually lacking to them and to others.

No previous book has pooled the collective wisdom of people who are former members of the Mormon church and who also possess the highest academic credentials. Far from rehashing tired apologetic arguments, this book presents fresh, thoughtful, respectful, and challenging insights. Speaking to both the heart and mind, the four contributors share their stories of leaving the LDS church and their well-considered reasons for doing so.’

Drs. Corey Miller, Latayne C. Scott, Lynn K. Wilder, and Vince Eccles are to be commended for producing a compelling narrative that will be invaluable in sharing the Gospel with Mormons and former Mormons, and in

inspiring , informing, and equipping those who are seeking to defend the Gospel (especially in Miller and Wilder’s chapter 6).”

Endorsements

“It is is truly a great book. In fact, I have never seen anything like it. Miller and Wilder have brought together a team of very knowledgeable ex-Mormon scholars to share from various perspectives why they could no longer stay Mormons. And while many who leave Mormonism simply fall o the grid, the good news presented by author a er author is that there is an intellectually and spiritually vibrant alternative: moving from Mormonism to historical Evangelical Christianity. The book is fair, irenic, and inviting. This is is now the first place to go for anyone who wants an honest, serious critique of Mormonism, along with an alternative to consider. I give it my top recommendation.” — JP Moreland, Ph.D. Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

“Leaving Mormonism is a new kind of book that gives the inside story of four former Mormons who are now Christian academics. Each tells how they came to understand the Good News of God’s grace, what sort of questions and challenges—intellectual, emotional, personal and professional—they faced, and how they integrated their academic work with their new Christian faith. There is great wisdom for academics, young and old, who are also navigating this difficult transition.” —Ken Mulholland, Ph.D. President, Western Institute for Intercultural Studies, Former President, Salt Lake Theological Seminary

“For anyone with family, friends, or contact with Mormons and the LDS movement, many questions arise. If you are from a traditional or conservative Christian background, you find yourself struggling to reconcile the claims made by those within Mormonism with what the Bible and historic Christianity both teach and claim. Despite the insistence that we are all talking about Christian thought and ideas, as soon as one explores, compares, and considers carefully the actual claims of Christ, they stand in stark contrast to LDS teaching and claims. We are compelled to ask what is

the truth? This unique volume is not only written by former “insiders”, who were all in their respective ways committed, but also by a group of deep thinkers who have taken the time to investigate and compare truth claims. Their histories, experiences, and education are all brought to bear on whether or not Mormon teaching is true, accurate, and reliable. As a resource to individuals, churches, or study groups, who will have to read carefully and thoroughly, this is a great tool. I learned much already from the insider view and experience which is a vital part of this work, as the ideas and teachings are rooted in a very demanding culture. I believe it deserves to be widely read, especially by those impacted or influenced by LDS teachings. It makes the Gospel clear by its amazing contrast. May that grace touch many as a result of this work.” —Stuart McAllister, D.D. Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

“‘Leaving Mormonism’ today all too often means rejecting Christianity entirely in the mistaken belief that if Mormonism isn’t true then no form of Christian faith is true. In *Leaving Mormonism*, four Christian scholars, each of whom also happens to be a former Mormon, show that faith in Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the Bible is intellectually and spiritually viable for disillusioned Latter-day Saints. The authors combine their authentic personal stories with scholarly analysis of critical issues and are not afraid to point out how evangelicals have sometimes failed to engage Mormons in a constructive manner. There is much for everyone to learn from this book.” —Robert M. Bowman Jr., Ph.D. Executive Director, Institute for Religious Research

“*Leaving Mormonism* provides a charitable and critical analysis of Mormonism by former Mormons who each reflect on their own stories of leaving the LDS Church and their reasons for embracing the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. The volume spans across the breadth of Mormon theology, plumbs into the depths of Mormon experience, and crosses through some of the murky waters that so

many former Mormons have to navigate. Readers will be encouraged and challenged by the unique expressions of anecdote, testimony, and renewed faith.” —John Anthony Dunne, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of New Testament, Bethel Seminary

“This book makes a noteworthy contribution to the ongoing academic dialog between Latter-day Saints and evangelical Christians. Even though former Mormons offer a unique perspective to that dialog—as their life experience bridges the gap between both sides—their voice has been missing from that conversation from the start. But this is not just an academic work. It is a stirring combination of inspiring personal stories told by people with warm hearts and vibrant souls as well as sharp minds.” —Ross Anderson, D.Min. Teaching Pastor, Alpine Church, UT

“I’ve read and highly recommend *Leaving Mormonism: Why Four Scholars Changed their Minds*. As a Pastor in Utah we have a shortage of reliable resources that we can recommend without hesitation to those who are leaving Mormonism and making their way into Gospel Christianity.

This is at the top of my list for that kind of resource. Because the greatest factor in ministering to former Mormons is trust, I'm grateful that we can partner with the authors in providing 'trustworthy' reading for our people." — Paul Robie, D.Min. Lead Pastor, South Mountain Community Church, UT

"A one of a kind book blending powerful personal testimonies with persuasive reasons for the truth and goodness of Christianity and the falsity of the Mormon faith. Written with compassion, charity, and courage, this will be the go-to book for those interested in Christian-Mormon dialogue for years to come." —Paul M. Gould, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Philosophy and Christian Apologetics, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

"Leaving Mormonism is a unique book that combines both personal stories and first-rate scholarship. Regardless of where you are on your spiritual journey, you will be challenged and equipped by reading and studying this book." —Sean McDowell, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Apologetics, Biola University

“Most who leave Mormonism leave faith altogether. With this understanding, *Leaving Mormonism* stands as a book like no other on this subject. Scholars formerly from within the ranks of the LDS community share not only their reasons for leaving Mormonism, but also the evidence for turning to the Christ of the New Testament.” —Steve Crane, D.Min. Senior Minister, Eagle Christian Church, ID

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