



Letter: Elder Holland's musket fire speech directly led to my leaving the LDS Church



(Trevor Christensen | Special to The Tribune) On Friday, August 27th, 2021 protestors gathered on the edge of Brigham Young University campus to demonstrate against recent remarks by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints apostle Jeffery R. Holland. Holland criticized family members and students who do not support the faith's teachings on same-sex marriage and invoked the metaphor of using muskets to defend the church.

By Jillian Bennett | The Public Forum | Sep. 22, 2024, 6:00 a.m.

Comment

I was disappointed by [Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's recent statement](#) that “if anybody was hurt” by his musket fire speech, “then I was hurt. And I have wept.”

I don't know if Elder Holland reads The Tribune, but if he does, I would like him to know that three years ago, I was struggling to reconcile my faith and my gender identity. When I read his talk, I felt something break inside as I realized that he and other church leaders were aiming their metaphorical muskets at me and people like me. Elder Holland claimed that, “No one can say that I do not love [transgender people],” but I felt no love in his words.

Elder Holland's talk directly led to my leaving the church. In a way, I have to thank him for showing me that I could either stay in the church as a mostly closeted trans person and be miserable or I could step away and come out. Being an openly trans person in the 2020s hasn't been easy, but it has been worth it.



weep, like President [Russell M. Nelson in 2019](#), they should start erring on the side of inclusion and love and make it easier for marginalized people to feel welcome in their pews instead of making us [feel second-class](#). They should begin to practice the repentance they preach by apologizing to those they have harmed, resolving to do better, and doing what they can to make amends.

It won't be easy, but it will be worth it.

Jillian Bennett, Alexandria, Virginia

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By Jillian Bennett | The Public Forum

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