



# Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons and Found My Faith

By Martha Beck

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As “Mormon royalty” within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Martha Beck was raised in a home frequented by the Church’s high elders in an existence framed by the strictest code of conduct. As an adult, she moved to the east coast, outside of her Mormon enclave for the first time in her life. When her son was born with Down syndrome, Martha and her husband left their graduate programs at Harvard to return to Utah, where they knew the supportive Mormon community would embrace them.

But when she was hired to teach at Brigham Young University, Martha was troubled by the way the Church’s elders silenced dissidents and masked truths that contradicted its published beliefs. Most troubling of all, she was forced to face her history of sexual abuse by one of the Church’s most prominent authorities. The *New York Times* bestseller *Leaving the Saints* chronicles Martha’s decision to sever her relationship with the faith that had cradled her for so long and to confront and forgive the person who betrayed her so deeply.

*Leaving the Saints* offers a rare glimpse inside one of the world’s most secretive religions while telling a profoundly moving story of personal courage, survival, and the transformative power of spirituality.

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## Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons and Found My Faith By Martha Beck Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

When graduate student Martha Beck's son Adam was born with Down syndrome, she and her husband left the chilly halls of Harvard for Utah and the warm, accepting embrace of the Mormon community. Determined to assimilate back into her childhood faith after years of atheism, Beck's disenchantment resurfaced when censorship from the church heavily influenced the curriculum at Brigham Young University where she taught part-time. More disturbing was Beck's eventual belief that her father, a virtual celebrity in the Mormon Church, had sexually molested her as a child.

Beck frames her narrative around a conversation with her aged father, dipping in and out of stories of her childhood, marriage, third pregnancy, and teaching. She contrasts her perceptions of the leadership of the institutional church as controlling and patriarchal with stories of the warmth and generosity of her Mormon community. Beck unfolds her search for identity, forgiveness, and a personal faith in competent prose, punctuated with surprising dark humor and glimpses into her anorexia, suicidal obsessions, and alleged abuse. Although she leaves readers with many unanswered questions after the last page is turned, one thing is clear: Beck believes that "no matter how difficult and painful it may be, nothing sounds as good to the soul as the truth." --Cindy Crosby

#### From Publishers Weekly

Beck follows her bestselling spiritual memoir *Expecting Adam* with this shocking accusation of sexual abuse and betrayal. The book is full of Beck's laugh-out-loud hyperbolic wit and exquisitely written insights, but it also has a hard, angry edge. She asserts that after returning to Utah in the early 1990s, she began to recall horrific memories of childhood sexual abuse at the hands of her father, well-known Mormon intellectual Hugh Nibley. Although all her immediate family members vehemently deny her claims (and one has already published the positive full-length biography *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life*), some readers will find that Beck builds a compelling case. She questions the legitimacy of Nibley's prolific apologetic writing and attributes his abuse in part to the pressures he was under to defend the faith even at the expense of truthful scholarship. Although marred by shallow, formulaic anti-Mormon criticisms and an exaggerated description of the LDS Church that will sound foreign to Mormons outside the insular culture of Utah, the book also describes how institutionalized religion can do terrible wrong to some adherents while still being a force of good for others. It will devastate faithful Mormons, satisfy disenchanted ex-Mormons and offer hope to those who believe they have suffered from ecclesiastical abuse. (Mar.)

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#### From [Booklist](#)

Beck is an extraordinarily good writer--not that she doesn't have a lot to work with in this compelling (and controversial) memoir. After the birth of a son with Down syndrome, Beck and her family left Harvard, where she and her husband were studying for degrees, to return to Utah and the comfort of a supportive Mormon community. As the daughter of one of the leading apologists for the Mormon faith, Beck was used to being blessed by strangers for her father's work. But back in Utah and teaching at Brigham Young, her rebellious scholarship gets her in trouble with church authorities. At the same time, her revelation that her father sexually abused her leads to religious, mental, and physical breakdowns. Told in alternating chapters that find Beck confronting her 90-year-old father in a hotel room and flashing back throughout her life, the book offers a powerful testament to the stranglehold that family and faith can put on people, even when both seem to harm rather than help. The highlight, however, is the way that Beck writes about her spirituality.

Even in the face of her experiences with organized religion and with her father, she is able to express her newfound connection to God in a manner so pure that it can lift a willing reader to the place of all-encompassing love that she has found for herself. And one other thing: the book can be hilarious. In the midst of all this pain, sorrow, and deeply felt spirituality comes such humor that one can almost hear God laughing. *Ilene Cooper*

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### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Richard Riggins:**

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite book and reading a guide. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled *Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons and Found My Faith*. Try to the actual book *Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons and Found My Faith* as your buddy. It means that it can to get your friend when you feel alone and beside regarding course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortunated for yourself. The book makes you more confidence because you can know almost everything by the book. So , let's make new experience along with knowledge with this book.

#### **Jerry Bates:**

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**Betty Jordan:**

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