Twitter Thread by Derek Andersen



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This article about the Mormon Church is the best I have read in +10 years. @mckaycoppins almost perfectly captures the faith experience for me and many others. Here are a few thoughts and stories about being Mormon in Silicon Valley the past 15 years.....

> Two hundred years ago, a purported opening of the heavens in upstate New York launched one of the most peculiar and enduring religious movements in American history\u2014one that I belong to.
>
> On faith, identity, and what the Mormon story says about America: https://t.co/u9LSR7JSTO
>
> — McKay Coppins (@mckaycoppins) December 16, 2020

2/ At my first job at Electronic Arts, I was told that a senior game developer wouldn't work with me b/c I wouldn't drink with his team. I was once offered to work on the Dante's Inferno videogame because of my "connection to spiritual things." I nervously laughed and passed.

3/ One colleague came to my desk every week asking about how my wives were doing. Then one day he approached somberly and said his father was very sick and implored me to pray for him b/c "God is more likely to listen to you than me." I replied that wasn't true, but I would.

4/ As a Mormon entrepreneur I am so grateful for @claychristensen who is idolized by most in Silicon Valley. He always had the perfect things to say about business, secular, and religious issues. He was one of the best humans I've ever met. RIP. https://t.co/d1ysUUhxiI

5/ Having 4 children gets a look that screams, "What is wrong with you??" To Bay Area people 4 children implies that you are surely a religious zealot b/c you wanted a "big" family. Having a startup+family at the same time has typically meant more unfundable than fundable.

6/ Once while speaking with a very well known Google billionaire, upon hearing I was Mormon, asked me with great concern, "Are you still practicing?" I energetically said I was. This ended our conversation. Insert nervous laughter.■

7/ I once had a successful Silicon Valley investor tell me that many Venture Capitalists profess to be enlightened atheists but actually when you dig in for the truth they actually aren't. They're just too worried to admit it publicly.

8/ My local ward is 600 people from Palo Alto and East Palo Alto. I have attended church there for 12 yrs. Differences between people couldn't be greater. Billionaires and renters in the same space worshiping together and helping each other's children learn and growth.

9/ The relationships and internal equality between the privileged and not is everything I love about Mormonism. Thousands of acts of service and selflessness without credit or press release. People just giving to others without any expectation.

10/ A local member, an immigrant construction worker with three children, recently tore his retina. While at Stanford Hospital, a humble member from our ward walked in. I had no idea he was a world renowned ophthalmologist! He persuaded Stanford to waive all surgery fees.

11/ Years ago the local Bishop asked me to go with him to visit a young man from our ward in jail. Phones to ears through thick glass, I watched a young Tongan man cry and pray with this volunteer leader, a man who worked in finance at eBay all day, and served the ward at night.

12/ For me and my family this is what the Mormon church is really all about. True conversion is about finding yourself through service and sacrifice of others put in the same bus on this earth journey with you. That's why I proudly keep attending.

13/ My neighbor with a "we believe in science" sign in the front yard, often says to me, "Your group, you really seem to genuinely look out for each other." I hope we become known for that more than anything else b/c to me that's what 21st century Mormonism is all about.

14/ And the last thing....everyone can stop telling me all the things you liked about Mitt Romney. I get it, I appreciate it, he seems great and all, but I really don't care that he didn't become President. We're not offended by him not winning. Seriously, none of us care. ■