

The Name of the Church Is Not Negotiable

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When we willingly follow the counsel of the Lord as revealed through His living prophet, especially if it runs counter to our initial thinking, requiring humility and sacrifice, the Lord blesses us with additional spiritual power.

In a press conference on August 16, 2018, President Russell M. Nelson said: “The Lord has impressed upon my mind the importance of the name He has revealed for His Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹ We have work before us to bring ourselves in harmony with His will.”²

Two days later, on August 18, I was with President Nelson in Montreal, Canada. Following our member meeting in the impressive Palais de Congr s, President Nelson answered questions from reporters. He acknowledged that it was “going to be a challenge to [reestablish the name of the Church and] undo [a] tradition of more than a hundred years.” But, he added, “the name of the Church is not negotiable.”³

Seven weeks later, President Nelson spoke in general conference: “The Lord impressed upon my mind the importance of the name He decreed for His Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ... It was the Savior Himself who said, ‘For thus shall my church be called.’” Then President Nelson repeated, “The name of the Church is not negotiable.”⁴

A Good Question

A good question surfaced: Why now, when for many decades we had embraced the nickname “Mormon”? “The Mormon Tabernacle Choir,” the video spots “I’m a Mormon,” the Primary song “I Am a Mormon Boy”?

The doctrine of Christ is unchanging and everlasting. Yet specific and important steps of the Savior’s work are revealed at their appropriate time. This morning President Nelson said, “The Restoration is a process, not an event.”⁵ And the Lord

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will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.”⁷ The Lord described the work of this dispensation as “a marvelous work and a wonder.”⁸ He spoke of a “covenant [that would] be fulfilled in the latter days,” allowing “all ... the earth [to] be blessed.”⁹

The words of this conference are being translated live into 55 languages. Eventually, these words will be heard and read in 98 languages in more than 220 countries and territories.

When the Savior returns in majesty and glory, faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be among all nations, all people, all races, and all cultures of the world.

The Growing Influence of the Church

The influence of the restored Church of Jesus Christ will not only be upon those who are members of the Church. Because of the heavenly manifestations in our day, because of the sacred scripture restored to the earth and the powerful gift of the Holy Ghost, we will be a shining light on the hill as the somber shades of disbelief in Jesus Christ darken the world. Although many may allow the world to cloud their faith in the Redeemer, we will “not be moved out of [our] place.”¹⁰ Christians who are not among our membership will welcome our role and our sure witness of Christ. Even those Christians who have viewed us with skepticism will embrace us as friends. In these coming days, we will be called by the name of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your noble efforts to advance the true name of the Church. In the conference three years ago, President Nelson promised us “that our rigorous attention to use the correct name of the Savior’s Church ... [would bring us] increased faith and access to greater spiritual power.”¹¹

This promise has been realized by devoted disciples across the world.¹²

Brother Lauri Ahola from the eastern United States admits that at times he finds it awkward to share the full name of the Church. But because of the prophet’s counsel, he persists. On one occasion, he was visiting a friend at a church of another faith. Here are his words:

An acquaintance asked, “Are you a Mormon?”

“I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, yes,” I said. He started asking me several questions, each beginning with: ‘Does the Mormon

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“So I asked him if he knew who Mormon was—he didn’t. I told him that Mormon was a prophet ... [and I was] honored to be associated with [him].

“But,’ I continued, ‘Mormon didn’t die for my sins. Mormon didn’t ... suffer in Gethsemane or die on the cross [for me]. ... Jesus Christ is my God and my Savior. ... And it is by His name that I want to be known. ...’

“... After a few seconds of silence, [the acquaintance exclaimed], ‘So, you are a Christian!’”¹³

Remember President Nelson’s words? “I promise you that if we will do our best to restore the correct name of the Lord’s Church, He whose Church this is will pour down His power and blessings upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints, the likes of which we have never seen.”¹⁴

The Lord Always Opens the Way

The Lord always keeps His promises. He opens the way for us as we do His work.

For years we had hoped to purchase the internet domain sites ChurchofJesusChrist.org and ChurchofJesusChrist.com. Neither was for sale. About the time of President Nelson’s announcement, both were suddenly available. It was a miracle.¹⁵

The Lord has magnified our efforts in revising names that have long been attached to the Church.

Moving forward in faith, the name of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was changed to The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square. The website LDS.org, which received more than 21 million visits each month, was transitioned to ChurchofJesusChrist.org.¹⁶ The name of LDS Business College was changed to Ensign College. The website Mormon.org was redirected into ChurchofJesusChrist.org. More than one thousand products that had the name “Mormon” or “LDS” attached to them have been renamed. Faithful Latter-day Saints have adjusted their websites, podcasts, and Twitter accounts.

We adopted a new symbol centered in Jesus Christ.

“At the center of the symbol is a representation of Thorvaldsen’s marble statue the *Christus*. It portrays the resurrected, *living* Lord reaching out to embrace all who will come unto Him.

“Symbolically, Jesus Christ is standing under an arch [reminding] us of the

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Appreciation for the Help of Others

We appreciate the many good and gracious people who have honored our desire to be called by our correct name. I read an article recently that quoted a Catholic cardinal referring to “the Latter-day Saints.”¹⁸ As I visited with a leader of a Christian church a month ago in the eastern United States, he referred to the Church in his first reference with our entire name and followed it up more than once with “the Church of Jesus Christ.”

We realized that adding six words to our name would not be ideal for the media, but, as President Nelson foretold, “responsible media will be sympathetic in responding to our request.”¹⁹ Thank you for extending to us the same consideration given cultural, athletic, political, or community organizations by using our preferred name.

There will be a few who, hoping to detract from or diminish the seriousness of our mission, will continue to call us “Mormons” or “the Mormon Church.” With courtesy, we again ask the fair-minded of the media to honor our desire to be called by our name of nearly 200 years.

The Courage of the Latter-day Saints

There are thousands and thousands of Latter-day Saints who have courageously proclaimed the name of the Church. As we do our part, others will follow. I love this story from Tahiti.

Ten-year-old Iriura Jean resolved to follow the counsel of President Nelson.

“In her school class they discussed their weekend ... and Iriura talked about ... church.

“Her teacher, Vaite Pifao, said, ‘Oh, so you are a Mormon?’

“Iriura stated boldly, ‘No, ... I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!’

“Her teacher replied, ‘Yes, ... you are a Mormon.’

“Iriura insisted, ‘No teacher, I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!’

“Ms. Pifao was amazed at Iriura’s conviction and wondered why she was so insistent on using [the] long name of her church. [She decided to learn more about the Church.]

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especially if it runs counter to our initial thinking, requiring humility and sacrifice, the Lord blesses us with additional spiritual power and sends His angels to support us and stand by us.²¹ We receive the Lord’s affirmation and His approval.

I am an eyewitness to the power of heaven that rests upon our beloved prophet, President Russell M. Nelson. His most sincere desire is to please the Lord and bless our Heavenly Father’s children. From sacred, personal experience, I testify of the Lord’s love for him. He is the prophet of God.

I witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. 1. See 3 Nephi 27:7–9; Doctrine and Covenants 115:4.
2. 2. Russell M. Nelson, in “The Name of the Church,” Newsroom, Aug. 16, 2018, newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
3. 3. “President Nelson Discusses the Name of the Church,” Newsroom, Aug. 21, 2018, newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
4. 4. Russell M. Nelson, “The Correct Name of the Church,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 87.
5. 5. Russell M. Nelson, “The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2021, 116.
6. 6. Doctrine and Covenants 64:32.
7. 7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 137.
8. 8. 2 Nephi 27:26.
9. 9. 1 Nephi 15:18.
10. 10. Doctrine and Covenants 101:17.
11. 11. Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 114.
12. 12. See Henry B. Eyring, “Thus Shall My Church Be Called,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2021, 6–9.
13. 13. Lauri Ahola, “Using the Full Name of the Church Was Awkward but Worth It” (digital-only article), *Liahona*, Apr. 2020, ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

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15. 15. The Church’s Intellectual Property Office had been monitoring the domain name of ChurchofJesusChrist.org since 2006, and it had not been available. It was remarkable that it was offered for sale about the same time as President Nelson’s announcement, and the Church purchased the domain name at a very modest amount.
- In the same manner, the Church had begun monitoring the status and availability of the domain name ChurchofJesusChrist.com since 2011. Surprisingly, it too became available in August 2018 and was also purchased.
16. 16. In the October 2018 general conference, President Nelson said:
- “Brothers and sisters, there are many worldly arguments against restoring the correct name of the Church. Because of the digital world in which we live and with search engine optimization that helps all of us find information we need almost instantly—including information about the Lord’s Church—critics say that a correction at this point is unwise. ...
- “... I promise you that if we will do our best to restore the correct name of the Lord’s Church, He whose Church this is will pour down His power and blessings upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (“The Correct Name of the Church,” 88, 89).
- Since the transition of LDS.org to ChurchofJesusChrist.org, the domain authority (the ability and power of a site to rank in search engines) is stronger than it was previously. For example, the ChurchofJesusChrist.org home page is now, and has been for more than a year, the top search result in the United States on Google when someone searches for the term “church,” where previously it could not claim this distinction.
17. 17. Russell M. Nelson, “Opening the Heavens for Help,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 73.
18. 18. See Tad Walch, “‘If We Can’t Get Along, It’s Downright Sinful’: The Partnership between Catholics and Latter-day Saints,” *Deseret News*, July 1, 2021, deseret.com.
19. 19. Russell M. Nelson, “The Correct Name of the Church,” 89.
20. 20. “The Correct Name of the Church: A Tahitian Story,” Pacific Newsroom, Sept. 15, 2019, news-nz.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

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