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"A MAJOR VICTORY FOR SATAN"

Nicknames Pronounced Blasphemous by President Nelson

A revelation from God? Refraining from using "LDS," "Mormon" demanded by Nelson

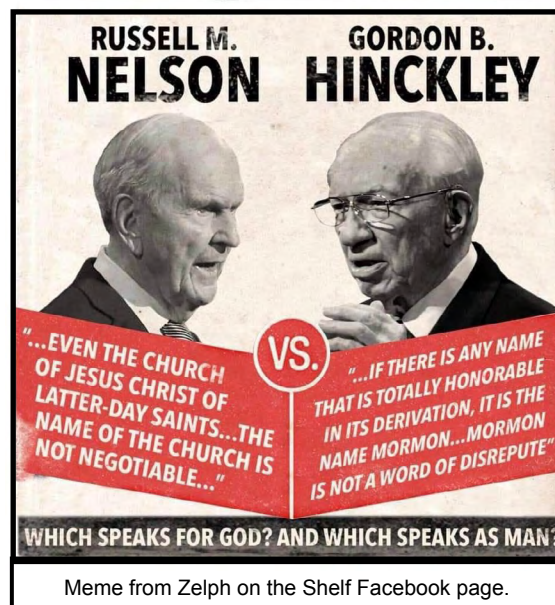
By Eric Johnson of Mormonism Research Ministry

Russell M. Nelson, the 17th president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, made a claim that God personally revealed to him how "LDS," "Mormon," "Mormonism," and other nicknames referring to the church, the religion and its adherents are offensive to God. Nelson first explained this revelation on August 16, 2018, where he said that "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."¹

As he toured central and eastern Canada a few days later, he seemed surprised by the hubbub caused by his announcement. He told one crowd, "We released that announcement to the media on Thursday, and oh, they're pretty excited about it—it can't be done.' I know it can't—but it's going to be, because the Lord wants it that way."

Speaking at the October 2018 general conference, Nelson argued that the new policy was not a "name change," "rebranding," "cosmetic," "a whim," or "inconsequential." He started his main talk by saying,

Some weeks ago, I released a statement regarding a course correction for the name of the Church. . . . Instead, it is a correction. It is the command of the Lord. Joseph Smith did not name the Church restored through him; neither did Mormon. It was the Savior Himself who said, "For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." . . . Thus, the name of the Church is not negotiable. When the Savior clearly states what the name of His Church should be and even precedes His declaration with, "Thus shall my church be called," He is serious. And if we allow nicknames to be used or adopt or even sponsor those nicknames ourselves, He is offended.²



Meme from Zelfh on the Shelf Facebook page.

To say that God is offended when people use nicknames of this church is a pretty serious charge, seemingly on the same level as the breaking of the First Commandment. Such a claim has no biblical origins, as no biblical apostle or prophet ever argued about what the early church and its people ought to be called. According to Acts 11:26, "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Referenced only three times in the New Testament, the word "Christian" appears to have been a derogatory reference used by the enemies of the early

church—notice, the name was "given" to them and not something they apparently appointed for themselves.

¹ Also see another article by Eric Johnson, "Russell M. Nelson draws a line in the sand over *LDS* and *Mormon* describing his church and people," <http://www.mrm.org/nelsons-mandate>

² Russell M. Nelson, "The Correct Name of the Church," General Conference (October 2018), <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2018/10/the-correct-name-of-the-church?lang=eng>

It certainly was not used positively by King Agrippa in Acts 17:28 when he asked Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

Nelson continued in his conference talk,

What’s in a name or, in this case, a nickname? When it comes to nicknames of the Church, such as the “LDS Church,” the “Mormon Church,” or the “Church of the Latter-day Saints,” the most important thing in those names is the absence of the Savior’s name. To remove the Lord’s name from the Lord’s Church is a major victory for Satan. When we discard the Savior’s name, we are subtly disregarding all that Jesus Christ did for us—even His Atonement. . . . When we omit His name from His Church, we are inadvertently removing Him as the central focus of our lives.³

If Nelson’s church is supposed to be a restoration of Christianity, where do we find anything in the Bible to say that the early church was called after the name of Jesus? In the quotes given by Nelson above (including the name of his conference talk), notice how Nelson continually uses “the Church” (capitalized, of course, as he is referencing “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints”). Shouldn’t God be offended by Nelson’s lack of reference to Jesus in reference to the “Church” in the same way that He is said to be “offended” when someone uses “LDS” or “Mormon”? After all, both examples fail to use “Jesus” in the name God supposedly gave to Joseph Smith.

Another question. Was God “offended” when Nelson’s church did not have the name of Jesus Christ in its early years? MRM founder Bill McKeever writes,

If Mormons wish to use this argument, they must answer as to why their own church was called merely “The Church of the Latter-day Saints” from 1834-1838. By their reasoning their own church must have been in apostasy for at least four years. Those who belonged to the early Christian church were known more by their geographic location rather than an “organizational” name. In I Thessalonians 1:1 Paul addresses “The church of the Thessalonians.” Are we to assume that Paul was addressing a false church?⁴

Nelson decided to give two pragmatic reasons for why the change was needed:

For much of the world, the Lord’s Church is presently disguised as the “Mormon Church.” But we as members of the Lord’s Church know who stands at its head: Jesus Christ Himself. Unfortunately, many who hear the term

Mormon may think that we worship Mormon. Not so! We honor and respect that great ancient American prophet. But we are not Mormon’s disciples. We are the Lord’s disciples.⁵

The idea that “Mormon” in “Mormon Church” is a reference to the fictional character by the same name found in the Book of “Mormon” is something I certainly have never thought of, nor do I think the average person thinks this is the case. It sure seems to be a stretch to even make this point.

For his second reason, Nelson said,

In the early days of the restored Church, terms such as *Mormon Church* and *Mormons* were often used as epithets—as cruel terms, abusive terms—designed to obliterate God’s hand in restoring the Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days.

As mentioned above, the term “Christian” was not self-appointed by the biblical apostles. Rather, it was given and apparently used by outsiders in a deriding manner. Yet the days of “Mormon” being a “cruel” or “abusive” term are long over. Nobody watching the Broadway play *The Book of Mormon* will walk away thinking such a thing. Neither do the Latter-day Saints themselves who have used these terms in an affectionate manner in reference to themselves. This is why, until October 2018, there was a “Mormon Tabernacle Choir.” And what about the “I am a Mormon” campaign, the *Meet the Mormons* movie that began playing at Temple Square in 2014, or the website “Mormon.org”? Over the years the word *Mormon* has been a common descriptor used by the church leaders and its members as well as outsiders such as the media and MRM. With so many other issues that God could communicate to Nelson about, why this one? And why now?

WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH BE CALLED?

At the end of Nelson’s talk, he said,

Our revised style guide is helpful. It states: “In the first reference, the full name of the Church is preferred: ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.’ When a shortened [second] reference is needed, the terms ‘the Church’ or the ‘Church of Jesus Christ’ are encouraged. The ‘restored Church of Jesus Christ’ is also accurate and encouraged.”

There are problems with the command given by Nelson. For instance,

⁵ Nelson, General Conference (October 2018).

³ Nelson, General Conference (October 2018).

⁴ Bill McKeever, “Examining the ‘17 Points of the True Church,’” <http://www.mrm.org/17-points>

See FREE OFFERS on last page!

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints takes 47 keystrokes to write. It is unwieldy and would be laborious to write (and read) over and over again.
- It is redundant. When we talk about a person, we can use personal pronouns (he, him, etc) that help minimize the redundancy. The same is needed for the proper name of this church.
- Imagine how many Latter-day Saints might think the Christian is mocking them by repeating the church's whole name over and over again.
- There is a theological problem with Christians referring to this religious organization as "the Church" (capitalized), the "Church of Jesus Christ," or "the restored Church of Jesus Christ." These names are truth claims. Christians don't hold that this is God's "Church," nor do they believe it is Jesus's church or that Christ's church even needed to be "restored." (Calling it the "restored church" would mean that we agree with the "great apostasy," something Christians completely reject.)

Nelson references *Doctrine and Covenants* 115:4 (from the Standard Works) to support his case. It says, "For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." If this is the church's name, then why does Nelson encourage his followers to use names that are different from this command? After all, if "Mormon Church" or "LDS Church" are offensive to God because they are not the "real" names of the church, then how is it any better to call it the "Church of Jesus Christ" or even "the Church," a name that completely omits the name of Jesus? His reasoning seems inconsistent.

The church-owned *Deseret News* printed a story regarding the name change that explained how difficult it is to come up with suitable alternative references. On August 25, 2018, reporter Doug Wilks wrote,

Fundamentally, there is no Mormon church nor Latter-day Saint (LDS) church. Yet over the decades those terms have been accepted, perhaps as a way to draw distinction from other Christian denominations, or in an effort to reclaim a term (Mormon) that was once used as a slur against church members.

Wilks went on to say that the church has every right to self-name itself and therefore journalists should consider the wishes of this organization. It is true that the church leadership can ask to be called by any name it wants. But when its leaders demand that truth claim names ought to be used in replacement, the line is drawn and we won't cross it. This revelation is going to cause many problems with headlines in newspapers—imagine having to use the full name of the church in headlines and

take up all the space. What is most frustrating for both the secular media as well as apologetic ministries such as Mormonism Research Ministry is that Nelson does not provide suitable alternatives while merely offering faith-promoting choices that are not appropriate for outside organizations to use.

Despite Nelson's edict, *Salt Lake Tribune's* Peggy Fletcher Stack—Nelson said at a press conference that he knows this religion reporter's family personally—continues to use "LDS," "Mormon" and "Mormonism" throughout her writing. Typically, she uses the church's complete name at the beginning of her story before referring it with these other abbreviations and names.

The headline writers at this paper are also not catering to this church's whim. Here are some recent article headlines from the past month that were used in the online edition of the *Salt Lake Tribune*:

- "A dozen new **LDS** temples announced"—Oct. 8, 2018
- "Put serving God and his children before chores, urge **Mormon's** women leaders"—Oct. 7, 2018
- "About the new **Mormon** Sunday meeting schedule"—Oct. 7, 2018
- "**Mormons** rejoice at news of shorter Sunday services"—Oct. 7, 2018
- "With the church's blessing, **Mormon** girls are passing the sacrament"—Oct. 3, 2018
- "USU names finalists to head up **Mormon** studies program"—Oct. 2, 2018
- "Nelson and the 'R' word: Why this **Mormon** prophet speaks more openly about revelations from God than his predecessors did"—Oct. 2, 2018
- "More millennial **Mormons** are choosing a middle way"—Sept. 29, 2018
- "No Scouting doesn't mean an end to church-sponsored camping for **Mormon** youths"—Sept. 21, 2018
- "**Mormon** church takes another step in its anti-Prop 2 push"—September 20, 2018

When Latter-day Saints are questioned by outsiders about their religious affiliation, Nelson gave a way to respond:

If someone should ask, "Are you a Mormon?" you could reply, "If you are asking if I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, yes, I am!" If someone asks, "Are you a Latter-day Saint?" you might respond, "Yes, I am. I believe in Jesus Christ and am a member of His restored Church."



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The first response sounds prideful. The questioner wasn't asking if the person was a "member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" but whether the person is a "Mormon." Instead of simply stating it as it is (i.e., responding with "our prophet has asked us to refer to Latter-day Saints and not 'Mormons'"), a correction is given in the answer that is the question that ought to have been asked and is nothing more than an end-around. If it were me, I'd rather the Latter-day Saint be upfront than play the game that Nelson is encouraging.

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CHANGES OF NAMES IN CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Before the October 2018 general conference began, the church announced that the name of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was changed to "The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square." The old website "mormontabernaclechoir.org" has been rerouted to "thetabernaclechoir.org," even though the first sentence on the site still reads "Visitors to Salt Lake City may attend a live broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word featuring the **Mormon Tabernacle Choir** on Sunday mornings." (Imagine the impossible job given to the webmaster in charge of the church's websites to change all of the thousands of articles using the wrong names!)

At the time of this article, the website Mormon.org has not been rerouted anywhere else. However, its main page has been changed and begins this way: "Welcome. This is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a community where we're all trying to be a little bit better, a little bit kinder, a little more helpful—because that's what Jesus taught. Welcome."

Many other websites or names have not been changed, including "Lds.org" and "Ldschurchnews.com." Hundreds of videos that came from the "I'm a Mormon" campaign that took place between 2010-2015 are still listed on a church-owned website. Unless the church decides to take these videos down, this series seems to be at great risk, especially if God is truly offended at the nickname "Mormon."

A REVELATION FROM GOD? OR AN OLD GENERAL AUTHORITY'S PREJUDICE?

Nelson is claiming that he has received nothing less than a "revelation" from God, making it clear that God "impressed" this into his mind. We must wonder if this policy change will need to be added into the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the place where other modern revelations of God—mostly given to Joseph Smith—have been placed. In her October 2, 2018, article *Salt Lake Tribune* writer Peggy Fletcher Stack wrote,

By his own account, Russell M. Nelson speaks often to God, or, rather, God speaks often to him. Nelson, the 94-year-old president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said recently that he was awakened at 2 a.m. with a distinct impression that he should go to the Dominican Republic. Within days, the Church News reported, the energetic nonagenarian was on a plane to that Caribbean nation. . . . Indeed, in his first nearly nine months as the Utah-based faith's top "prophet, seer and revelator," Nelson has used the term "revelation" again and again to describe his motivation for initiatives and changes.⁶

Noting that few of Nelson's predecessors have used the "revelation" card when it came to receiving communication from God, Stack writes that Nelson has never shied away from the word, saying,

In January, the month Nelson took the faith's reins, his wife, Wendy Watson Nelson, reported that one night she was prompted to leave her husband alone in their bedroom. "Two hours later, he emerged from the room," Wendy Nelson told apostle Neil L. Andersen, who reported it on Facebook. "Wendy, you won't believe what's been happening," the church president told his wife, according to Andersen's account. "The Lord has given me detailed instructions on what I am to do."⁷

When Nelson wanted "to strengthen [his] proposal to his second wife Wendy (his first wife, Dantzel, had died), he told his prospective wife, "I know about revelation and how to receive it." (Wouldn't every single guy like to have such an advantage?) When he was the president of the apostles in January 2016, Nelson used the word "revelation" to describe a church policy on homosexuals mandating that married same-sex couples be considered "apostates" and their children be excluded from church rituals until they are 18.

According to Wendy, her husband "thrives on change." In a five minute video interview that aired the last week of October 2018, she said,

I have seen him changing in the last 10 months. It is as though he's been unleashed. He's free to finally do what he came to earth to do. . . . He's free to follow through with things he's been concerned about but could never do. Now that he's president of [the church], he can do those things. He's not afraid to do something different. If we're really preparing the church and the world for the Second Coming of the Savior, he is sincere about that. He doesn't want us spending money, time, energy on anything that isn't really focused on that. . . . I've seen him become younger. I've seen him become happier because he's doing what he came to earth to do.⁸

6 Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Nelson and the 'R' word, Why this Mormon prophet speaks more openly about revelations from God than his predecessors did," *Salt Lake Tribune*, (October 2, 2018).

7 Ibid.

8 "LDS Church Leader Thrives on Change, his wife says," *Salt Lake Tribune* (October 1, 2018): p. A5.

In that same video, Nelson said to buckle up because we haven't seen anything yet. He enthusiastically stated,

If you think the church has been fully restored, you're just seeing the beginning. There is much more to come. . . . Wait till next year. And then the next year. Eat your vitamin pills. Get your rest. It's going to be exciting.⁹

Latter-day Saints who may have enjoyed the "status quo" may be a bit concerned. After all, is this a man who has taken his personal views—including the idea that "Mormon" and "LDS" are offensive to God—and manipulated his people to think that it is God who is directing him to act. What incredible power there is to be the top dog in this religious organization!

HAS THE CHURCH BEEN DOING IT "WRONG" ALL ALONG?

To me, the most amazing comment in his general conference address is where he references Jesus:

After all He had endured—and after all He had done for humankind—I realize with profound regret that we have unwittingly acquiesced in the Lord's restored Church being called by other names, each of which expunges the sacred name of Jesus Christ!¹⁰

Notice carefully what Nelson is saying when he says "*we have unwittingly acquiesced in the Lord's restored Church being called by other names.*" Whether it was done intentionally or not, he is saying that it has been wrong by leaders to have left the name of Jesus out of any reference to the church.

To understand the power of the statement, it needs to be made clear that Latter-day Saint leaders do not "apologize." The words used by Nelson ("profound regret") is the closest an LDS leader gets to admitting something was not right. As an example, consider the words of Henry B. Eyring who, at the time the first counselor in the First Presidency. Speaking at a special ceremony commemorating the 150th anniversary of the tragic Mountain Meadows Massacre, he said:

What was done here long ago by members of our Church represents a terrible and inexcusable departure from Christian teaching and conduct. We cannot change what happened, but we can remember and honor those who were killed here. We express **profound regret** for the massacre carried out in this valley 150 years ago today and for the undue and untold suffering experienced by

⁹ "Latter-day Saint Prophet, Wife and Apostle Share Insights of Global Ministry," (video) <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/latter-day-saint-prophet-wife-apostle-share-insights-global-ministry>

¹⁰ Nelson, General Conference (October 2018).

the victims then and by their relatives to the present time. A separate expression of regret is owed to the Paiute people who have unjustly borne for too long the principal blame for what occurred during the massacre. Although the extent of their involvement is disputed, it is believed they would not have participated without the direction and stimulus provided by local Church leaders and members.¹¹

Although several media outlets (including the church-owned *Deseret News*) announced that Eyring had "apologized," although this was not accurate. In fact, church spokesman Mark Tuttle felt the need to clarify the media's mistake soon afterward when he told the media, "We don't use the word 'apology.' We used 'profound regret.'" The phrase "profound regret" is purposely meant to be a rung below "apology," but it is still mightily strong.

By using the word "we" in the above quote, we should understand that this is a reference to previous LDS leaders. As an apostle speaking at the April 1990 general conference, Nelson firmly laid out his thinking in a message titled "Thus Shall My Church Be Called." He cited *Doctrine and Covenants* 115:4 ("Thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints") and said,

Note carefully the language of the Lord. He did not say, "Thus shall my church be *named*." He said, "Thus shall my church be *called*." Years ago, its members were cautioned by the Brethren who wrote: "We feel that some may be misled by the too frequent use of the term 'Mormon Church'" (*Member-Missionary Class—Instructor's Guide*, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982, p. 2). Before any other name is considered to be a legitimate substitute, the thoughtful person might reverently consider the feelings of the Heavenly Parent who bestowed that name.¹²

I am unclear about the difference between the words "named" and "called." Wasn't the church "named" The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? And isn't that what it is supposed to be called? If so, I fail to see how these are different.

Then, at the end of the talk, Nelson cited from *Doctrine and Covenants* 63 and said that

¹¹ Henry B. Eyring, "150th Anniversary of Mountain Meadows," (September 11, 2007), <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/150th-anniversary-of-mountain-meadows-massacre>

¹² Russell M. Nelson, "Thus Shall My Church Be Called," General Conference (April 1990), <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1990/04/thus-shall-my-church-be-called?lang=eng>

just as we revere His holy name, we likewise revere the name that He decreed for His church. As members of His church, we are privileged to participate in its divine destiny. May we so honor Him who declared, “Thus shall my church be called . . . The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.¹³

Six months later, future 15th President Gordon B. Hinckley—who was Nelson’s superior and served at that time as the first counselor in the First Presidency—gave additional insight. In his October 1990 talk “Mormon Should Mean ‘More Good,’” Hinckley made a direct reference to Nelson’s message. He cited the following poem:

Father calls me William,
Sister calls me Will,
Mother calls me Willie,
But the fellers call me Bill.

After citing this, he said,

I suppose that regardless of our efforts, we may never convert the world to general use of the full and correct name of the Church. Because of the shortness of the word *Mormon* and the ease with which it is spoken and written, they will continue to call us the Mormons, the Mormon church, and so forth. They could do worse.

When he asked a friend how Latter-day Saints could get people to use the proper name of the church, his friend replied, “You can’t. The word *Mormon* is too deeply ingrained and too easy to say.” He went on, “I’ve quit trying. While I’m thankful for the privilege of being a follower of Jesus Christ and a member of the Church which bears His name, I am not ashamed of the nickname *Mormon*.”

“Look,” he went on to say, “if there is any name that is totally honorable in its derivation, it is the name *Mormon*. And so, when someone asks me about it and what it means, I quietly say—‘*Mormon* means *more good*.’” (The Prophet Joseph Smith first said this in 1843; see *Times and Seasons*, 4:194; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 299–300.)

Later, Hinckley said, “We may not be able to change the nickname, but we can make it shine with added luster.” Referring to the name *Mormon*, he said,

After all, it is the name of a man who was a great prophet who struggled to save his nation, and also the name of a book which is a mighty testament of eternal truth, a veritable witness of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. May I remind you for a moment of the greatness and of the goodness of this man Mormon.

In a quote that must have chafed the current president’s hide and clearly contradicts the Lord’s feelings as supposedly revealed by Nelson in 2018, Hinckley went on to say,

And so, while I sometimes regret that people do not call this church by its proper name, I am happy that the nickname they use is one of great honor made so by a remarkable man and a book which gives an unmatched testimony concerning the Redeemer of the world. Anyone who comes to know the man Mormon, through the reading and pondering of his words, anyone who reads this precious trove of history which was assembled and preserved in large measure by him, will come to know that *Mormon* is not a word of disrepute, but that it represents the greatest good—that good which is of God.

Hinckley concluded by saying how “in a very real sense *Mormonism* must mean that greater *good* which the Lord Jesus Christ exemplified.”

I must ask what Nelson meant when he expressed “profound regret” for those who “unwittingly acquiesced” by not using the name of Jesus in conjunction with the church’s name. Could he have been referencing someone like Hinckley more than a quarter century before seemingly upstaged Nelson’s earlier talk?

It’s not as if other leaders haven’t talked about the issue in apparent agreement with Nelson. For instance, Marion G. Romney, a member of the First Presidency, believed with Nelson that the correct name of the church is its full name, though he wasn’t fazed by the use of “Mormons” or the “Mormon church.” He said,

Members of the Church do not resent being referred to as Mormons, nor does the Church resent being referred to as the Mormon church. As we have said, however, it is not the correct name of the Church. Its correct name is, as we have already explained, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (D&C 115:4).¹⁴

At the April 2011 general conference, senior apostle Boyd K. Packer explained,

Obedient to revelation, we call ourselves The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rather than the Mormon Church. It is one thing for others to refer to the Church as the Mormon Church or to us as Mormons; it is quite another for us to do so.¹⁵

14 Marion G. Romney, “We, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, General Conference (April 1979), <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1979/04/we-the-church-of-jesus-christ-of-latter-day-saints?lang=eng>

15 Boyd K. Packer, “Guided by the Holy Spirit,” General Conference (April 2011), <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2011/04/guided-by-the-holy-spirit?lang=eng>

13 Nelson, General Conference (April 1990).

At the October 2014 conference, Ballard said he had been given a “clear impression” to tell his people how “we should not” reference the church as Mormon Church or LDS Church.” A divine commandment, it wasn’t. But, then contradicting Nelson’s latest edict, he also said,

The term Mormon can be appropriately used in some contexts to refer to members of the Church, such as Mormon pioneers, or to institutions, such as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Church members are widely known as Mormons, and in interactions with those not of our faith, we may fittingly refer to ourselves as Mormons, provided we couple this with the full name of the Church.¹⁶

Let’s consider some of the other leaders who have used these synonyms when referring to their own church or people, as referenced from Bill McKeever’s wonderful resource book *In their Own Words*:

John Taylor:

“CHRISTIANITY WILL BEAR HONEST INVESTIGATION.—We call ourselves Christians, that is, we Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians and **Mormons**, we all call ourselves Christians. Well, perhaps we are, and then, perhaps we are not” (John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, p. 75).

“Now I come to us, **Mormons**. We are the only true Church, so we say. We have the only true faith, so we say and believe. I believe we have many great and true principles revealed from the heavens. I will tell you how I feel about it, and what I have said many times when I have been abroad among the priests, people, and philosophers. If any man under the heavens can show me one principle of error that I have entertained, I will lay it aside forthwith, and be thankful for the information” (John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, p. 50).

Joseph Fielding Smith:

“The **Latter-day Saints**, so commonly called “**Mormons**,” have no animosity towards the Negro. Neither have they described him as belonging to an ‘inferior race’” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* 4:170).

B. H. Roberts. In a book titled—ironically—“Mormon Doctrine of Deity:”

“Some of the sectarian ministers are saying that we **Mormons** are ashamed of the doctrine announced by President Brigham Young, to the effect that Adam will thus be the God of this world. No, friends, it is not that we are ashamed of that doctrine. If you see

any change coming over our countenance when this doctrine is named, it is surprise, astonishment, that any one at all capable of grasping the largeness and extent of the universe, the grandeur of existence and the possibilities in man for growth, for progress, should be so lean of intellect, should have such a paucity of understanding as to call it in question at all. That is what our change in countenance means—not shame for the doctrine Brigham Young taught” (B. H. Roberts, *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, pp. 42-43).

John A. Widtsoe:

“Enemies of the Church, or stupid people, reading also that Adam is ‘our father and our God’ have heralded far and wide that the **Mormons** believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of Adam” (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, p. 56).

Hugh B. Brown:

“All men, regardless of the degree of their guilt or innocence, will be resurrected from the dead, and this belief also becomes a foundation stone in the structure of the **Mormon Church**. But in addition to this general salvation through the atonement, every soul that lives in mortality to the age of responsibility may place himself within the reach of divine mercy and may obtain a remission of sin” (Hugh B. Brown, *Conference Reports*, April 1965, p. 43).

Bruce R. McConkie:

“**Mormons** are true Christians; their worship is the pure, unadulterated Christianity authored by Christ and accepted by Peter, James, and John and all the ancient saints” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, p. 513).

Bernard P. Brockbank:

“It is true that many of the Christian churches worship a different Jesus Christ than is worshiped by the **Mormons** or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (Bernard P. Brockbank, “The Living Christ,” *Ensign* (Conference Edition), May 1977, p. 26).

Many other examples from church leaders could be given. (In fact, go to my earlier article here for similar citations.) Were these the type of citations for which Nelson expressed “profound regret”? Did these men wrongly use these nicknames “unwittingly”? Or did these leaders know better and were not in step with God’s will? (If they are general authorities of the church, shouldn’t they have known better?)

Another question: If Nelson understood that it was wrong to use LDS and Mormon in 1990—and he clearly did—then why did it take him (and the church) so long to reveal God’s will for this religion? More than

16 M. Russell Ballard, “Following Up,” General Conference, (April 2014), <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/following-up?lang=eng>

a quarter of a century has passed by and yet the leaders sat back, doing nothing officially, while approving the “I am a Mormon” campaign and hosting websites such as Mormon.org and LDS.org?

Facebook commentator Steve McKnight makes a great point when he commented,

It has been my experience that when a new boss is put in charge, the first thing they want to do is renovate their office, give it a new look. This has to be a personal preference as this issue with the names hadn’t been a problem in the past and was even promoted at one point. Had this been an issue with the Mormon god as LDS President Nelson has suggested, why has their god(s) not impressed this upon past LDS prophets?

We must state the obvious: By his statement, Nelson has now placed any misuse of the name of the church into the sin category. If this is the case, then what about those leaders who used these inappropriate nicknames and abbreviations who are now passed away? If they offended the Lord by using these terms, wasn’t repentance required? In fact, how many living Latter-day Saints who commonly used “Mormon,” “LDS,” and “Mormonism”—all the while offending God—have repented of their sins on this issue? Doesn’t all sin need repentance, even if it isn’t recognized by the person as sin? It seems Nelson has placed his people, both dead and living, in quite the precarious position.

Meanwhile, a number of LDS authors writing about their own religion have referenced a banned term such as “Mormon” in the titles of their books. Consider just four:

- What should we now call Bruce R. McConkie’s classic work *Mormon Doctrine* (“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint Doctrine”)?
- Popular young writer Al Carraway’s book *More than the Tattooed Mormon* needs to be changed to *More than the Tattooed Latter-day Saint*.
- Charles R. Harrell needs to reinvent his book’s title, *“This is My Doctrine”*: *The Development of Mormon Theology*.
- And BYU professor Stephen E. Robinson needs to adjust his title of *Are Mormons Christian?*

I’m just touching the tip of the iceberg.

MISUSE OF THE CHURCH’S NAME ON WEBSITES

Current church website www.mormon.org (when will that site’s name be changed?) references the religious organization and its people in the old ways. For instance, consider just one page on the site <https://www.mormon.org/beliefs/church-community>:

- “What’s the Mormon community like? Generally speaking, Mormon Church communities are where we learn about our relationship with God and His plan for us and are founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ.”
- “Because they follow Jesus, Mormons actively care for and help each other. One way Mormons do this is by participating in a monthly fast where they don’t eat or drink for two consecutive meals. They then donate the money they would have spent on the two meals—or more money if they choose—to help people in need.”

On the “mormonnewsroom.org” website (again, when will that site’s name get changed?), an article titled “What to expect at Mormon Church services” has been changed to eliminate the word “Mormon.”¹⁷ Another article on that site, “Church Leaders Break Ground on Two South American Temples,” used the word “Mormon” in front of “church leaders” from March 4, 2017 until just after Nelson’s announcement.¹⁸

WILL MRM CHANGE ITS NAME?

Some have asked if we at MRM will be changing our ministry name. The answer is, simply, no. While Nelson did not mention “Mormonism” as a banned word in a Latter-day Saint’s vocabulary, it is talked about on the church’s oxymoronic website www.mormonnewsroom.org. It says,

The term “Mormonism” is inaccurate and should not be used. When describing the combination of doctrine, culture and lifestyle unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the term “the restored gospel of Jesus Christ” is accurate and preferred.

This is in complete disagreement with another page on this website titled “Mormonism 101: What is Mormonism?” An article here (current at the time I wrote this piece) reads

Mormonism is a term defining the religious beliefs and practices of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as Mormons. Mormonism describes the doctrines of the Church that were restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith. When asked what Mormonism is, members of the Church will often speak of their love of the Savior Jesus Christ. To them, the Savior is central to Mormonism.¹⁹

¹⁷ “What to Expect at Church Services,” <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/what-to-expect-at-church-services>

¹⁸ “Church Leaders Break Ground on Two South American Temples,” <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-leaders-break-ground-on-two-south-american-temples>

¹⁹ “Mormonism 101: What is Mormonism?” <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormonism-101>

We agree with this statement, even if the top leader of today's LDS Church has changed his mind.

The next question people ask is if we will change our current use of "LDS" and "Mormon" when referencing this church and its people. While we will not, on purpose, use the name "Mormon Church," we will continue to utilize these nicknames and abbreviations instead of continually using the full name of the church. This was commonly done by many different leaders and Latter-day Saints over the years, as described above. While Russell M. Nelson is the leader of his followers, he is not a recognized Christian leader. Therefore, he does not have authority to instruct us. Because we don't believe God has spoken to him, we feel perfectly in line to use these same terms in a respectful way, just as many others in the media are doing so.

The reader must understand that our intentions are good. After all, we don't want to purposely anger the Latter-day Saints. To show that what I am saying is genuine, consider the new book *Sharing the Good News with Mormons* (Harvest House, 2018) that I co-edited with my friend Sean McDowell. On the first page of the introduction, I explained how I and the book's contributors would reference the church and its members. I cited LDS apologist Gary C. Lawrence who once wrote, "Our members are properly referred to as Mormons or as Latter-day Saints. Our church may be referred to by its full name or as the LDS Church. We prefer not to be called the Mormon Church." Based on that citation and other directives given by other leaders, I explained,

Thus, to be respectful and prevent any unnecessary arguments, we will refer to those who belong to this religion as "Latter-day Saints," "LDS," or "Mormon." While we will leave direct quotes using the term "Mormon Church" intact, we will not use this designation in our writing; instead, we will refer to the church using its full name or as "LDS Church."

Now Nelson demands for us to stop using these other synonyms for the church and its people by claiming God instructed him to ban these words and abbreviations. Please, Mr. Nelson, give us viable alternatives where we, as non-Mormons, can reference your people and church without a) offending you or, gasp, God; b) making a truth claim that supports the veracity of this church.

CONCLUSION: WILL THIS BE THE END OF THE DEROGATORY TERM "ANTI-MORMON"?

I want to be a "the-glass-is-half-full" kind of guy and say that perhaps some good can come from Nelson's edict. The term "anti-Mormon" has been used on me many hundreds of times by well-meaning Latter-day Saints who want to ignore my public evangelistic ways. I have always disliked this term because "Mormon" has

traditionally been a nickname for a person who belongs to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Certainly I am in disagreement with the theology of this organization, but I take the risk to share my faith with Latter-day Saints because I honestly love them and care about them. Yet so often LDS leaders have attacked our approaches and motives. Consider Apostle Bruce R. McConkie:

Ignore, if you can, the endless array of anti-Mormon literature and avoid cults like a plague . . . There are, of course, answers to all of the false claims of those who array themselves against us—I do not believe the devil has had a new idea for a hundred years—but conversion is not found in the dens of debate. It comes rather to those who read the Book of Mormon in the way Moroni counseled. Most members of the Church would be better off if they simply ignored the specious claims of the professional anti-Mormons.²⁰

And check out this amazing quote found on an apologetic website:

"The term anti-Mormon is herein used to describe any person or organization that is directly and actively opposed to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, its doctrines, policies and programs. It is not, as critics sometimes mischievously try to claim, a catchall term for anyone who does not accept or believe in the Church, but is applied only to those who actively campaign against it. As an adjective, it applies to those specific activities that may with reasonable accuracy be described as attacks upon the Church . . . So we return to the question with which we began this survey: are anti-Mormons Christian? The answer: of course not. They were never even in the hunt. Their clerical collars and pious platitudes are simply a smokescreen to hide the ugly reality that anti-Mormonism is one of the clear manifestations of the darkest side of human nature; the side that made possible the death camps and burning crosses, the massacre of the Hutus and the wholesale slaughter of the Native Americans. Just as vicious and repressive dictatorships like to give themselves grandiose and liberal-sounding titles like 'The People's Democratic Socialist Republic of Such-and-such,' so these nasty religious haters appropriate the label of 'Christian' in order to claim for themselves a specious respectability that their deeds and attitudes do not merit."²¹

For those Christian believers like me who choose to share their faith with Latter-day Saints, I think Nelson's edict may be good news! After all, if there are no more "Mormons" in existence, then there can be no more "anti-Mormons." I can't wait to respond with this comeback the next time someone accuses me of being "anti-Mormon"!

²⁰ *Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), p. 233. Italics in original.

²¹ Russell McGregor, "Are anti-Mormons Christian?" <https://www.fairmormon.org/archive/publications/are-anti-mormons-christians>

IN THE NEWS

CHANGING A WEB ADDRESS.

While President Nelson, speaking at the October LDS General Conference, declared that nicknames are “a major victory for Satan,” he failed to offer a good alternative. In the religion section of the *Salt Lake Tribune* for September 27, 2018, David Noyce wrote about the dilemma facing the LDS Church web developers.

Click on Become.org or Worshipwithus.org and what do you get? Well, it turns out, Mormon.org. What’s with that? Not surprisingly, it has to do with the faith’s efforts to steer away from use of the “Mormon” nickname. [www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/09/27/this-week-mormon-land/]

Will they be able to come up with a good alternative to “LDS” or “Mormon” in their various web addresses? “Become.org” and “Worshipwithus.org” are easily confused with other faith-based web sites. Adding to the problem, the LDS Church has already invested millions of dollars in their 2011 “I’m A Mormon” campaign.

[See <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/18/us/mormon-ad-campaign-seeks-to-improveperceptions.html>]

Utilizing the web name Mormon.org as a gateway for outsiders to learn about their faith, the LDS Church heavily promoted the new site. In 2014 they even set up “New Mormon Kids” app on www.mormonchannel.org [<https://www.mormonchannel.org/blog/post/the-new-mormon-channel-kids-app>]

It remains to be seen if the LDS Church can come up with a new short way of referring to itself that will also work on public media.

NO MORE “MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR”

In accordance with President Nelson’s edict to stop using the terms “Mormon” and “LDS,” their famous choir has now been renamed “The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square.” [*Associated Press*, October 5, 2018]

Since Nelson’s concern with using nicknames was that it left out the name of Christ, one wonders why they didn’t rename the choir the “Church of Jesus Christ Tabernacle Choir?” Isn’t “Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square” just as lacking as “Mormon Tabernacle Choir?”

TWO-HOUR SUNDAY MEETING BLOCK UNVEILED

At the Saturday session of the October 2018 General Conference, President Nelson announced that the LDS Church was changing the Sunday services from a 3-hour

block to a 2-hour block. Apostle Quentin Cook explained that the traditional three-hour block will be shortened as of January 2019, to

60-minute sacrament service, down from 70 minutes, will be followed by a 50-minute class period after a 10-minute transition period.

Classes will alternate by week, with traditional Sunday school meetings on the first and third weeks of each month, and the faith’s all-male priesthood, female Relief Society and youth classes held on the second and fourth weeks. [11:20 a.m. – Sunday church schedule wasn’t just “shortened,” apostle says, it was “strengthened.” <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/10/06/mormon-general-conference/>]

NO MORE HIGH PRIEST GROUP IN THE WARD

Another change announced at the LDS General Conference was the disbanding of the local ward High Priests meeting.

During the general priesthood session on Saturday, March 31, President Russell M. Nelson announced a “significant” restructuring of ward and stake Melchizedek Priesthood quorums that will help Melchizedek Priesthood holders “accomplish the work of the Lord more effectively. In each ward, the high priests group and the elders quorum will now be combined into one elders quorum,” he said. There will continue to be a stake high priests quorum, but it will [be] based on “current” priesthood callings.

[<https://www.lds.org/church/news/first-presidency-announces-restructuring-of-melchizedek-priesthood-quorums?lang=eng>]

One is left to wonder if this was, in part at least, a necessity due to lower attendance.

DOWN WITH HOME TEACHERS, UP WITH MINISTERING

The LDS Church newsroom reported:

During the Sunday afternoon session of April general conference, President Russell M. Nelson announced a significant change to the way members serve and care for each other.

The separate programs of home teaching and visiting teaching will be “retired,” he said, becoming a coordinated effort called “ministering,” a “new and holier approach” to Christlike caring for others and helping meet their spiritual and temporal needs.

Further on in the same article we read:

Elders quorum presidencies will assign ministering brothers to every household, and Relief Society presidencies will assign ministering sisters to each

adult sister. Sister Bingham suggested elders quorum and Relief Society leaders counsel together prayerfully. Then, she said, “rather than leaders just handing out slips of paper,” they make assignments in person in a conversation about the strengths, needs, and challenges of those to whom brothers and sisters minister.

[<https://www.lds.org/church/news/ministering-to-replace-home-and-visiting-teaching?lang=eng>]

However, some have observed that it just looks like reshuffling titles. How is “ministering” different from assigning visiting teachers?

LDS WOMEN TO TAKE 10-DAY FAST FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

On October 6, 2018, Fox 13 reported:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints President Russell M. Nelson invited women church members to participate in a 10-day fast from social media Saturday during the General Women’s Session. Nelson stated the following during his speech at the session:

First, I invite you to participate in a 10-day fast from social media and from any other media that bring negative and impure thoughts to your mind. Pray to know which influences to remove during your fast. The effect of your 10-day fast may surprise you. What do you notice after taking a break from perspectives of the world that have been wounding your spirit? Is there a change in where you now want to spend your time and energy? Have any of your priorities shifted—even just a little? I urge you to record and follow through with each impression.

[<https://fox13now.com/2018/10/06/lds-church-president-invites-women-to-make-10-day-fast-from-social-media/>]

While the LDS women may have benefitted from a 10-day fast from social media, one is left to wonder why the same advice wasn’t given to the men of the church?

LDS GIRLS PASSING THE SACRAMENT?

This year saw a few LDS wards allowing girls to help with passing the sacrament. While it doesn’t seem to be a concession to women wanting LDS priesthood, it does signal a lessening of restrictions on women participating in areas that were previously male-dominated. One bishop justified the change in practice by saying it is “no different than deacons handing trays to members in the pews, who then hand them from person to person, regardless of gender.” [<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/10/03/whats-this-mormon-girls/>]

TWO-TRANSFER MISSIONARIES?

In recent years the LDS Church has sought ways to insure a successful missionary experience, especially for special needs people. In 2017 one blogger observed:

What are two-transfer missions? A two-transfer mission is a temporary, three-month mission where a missionary facing unique challenges (e.g. social anxiety disorder, autism spectrum, post-traumatic stress disorder, etc.) stays in their home area and serves with local missionaries. In effect, it’s a “trial run” for a missionary who may not be confident in their ability to serve a full-length mission and needs a chance to experiment. Two-transfer is different from a “mini-mission,” where a prospective missionary goes out with local missionaries for a week or two. The two-transfer option is suggested by church headquarters, not requested by the missionary.

Two-transfer missionaries don’t go to the MTC when the mission begins. Instead, they get dropped off directly at the mission home and get to work in the community immediately. If their performance doesn’t go as hoped for, they are honorably released from their mission call after three months. If they find success and maintain their desire to serve, they can be called to a church-service mission or full-time mission. They might stay in their home area or be called to another part of the United States. A trip to the MTC occurs in-between their two-transfer and full-time missions. [<https://theprogressivemormons.com/two-transfer-missions-yes-these-missionaries-have-every-right/>]

12 NEW LDS TEMPLES ANNOUNCED

Russell M. Nelson, 94-year-old president of the LDS Church, announced at the October general conference plans to build 12 new temples. One will be in southern Utah, bringing the state’s total to 20 temples. Also planned is the renovation of the historic Salt Lake City temple. [<https://www.lds.org/church/news/president-nelson-announces-plans-to-build-12-new-temples?lang=eng>]

President Russell M. Nelson recently spoke of the importance of temple rituals, and future revelation:

“The Book of Mormon teaches over and over again that you need to have the ordinances,” he emphasized. “And of course, that’s why we have temples so that all the potential that God has in store for His children can become a fact, a reality. . . . No one else can offer perpetuation of the family unit beyond the grave. And that, according to our Heavenly Father, is the greatest gift that He can give to His children.”

“We’re witnesses to a process of restoration,” said the prophet. “If you think the Church has been fully restored, you’re just seeing the beginning. There is much more to come. . . . Wait till next year. And then the next year. Eat your vitamin pills. Get your rest. It’s going to be exciting.” [Oct. 30, 2018, <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/latter-day-saint-prophet-wife-apostle-share-insights-global-ministry/>]

TITHING ENDS POVERTY CYCLE?

President Nelson recently declared tithing can break cycles of poverty in poor nations and families.

“We preach tithing to the poor people of the world because the poor people of the world have had cycles of poverty, generation after generation,” he said. “That same poverty continues from one generation to another, until people pay their tithing.”

The law of the tithe was followed by ancient peoples as taught by Old Testament prophets. LDS faithful believe God restored the law and its blessings for those who follow it by giving one-tenth of their income to the church.

[<https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900016023/dowry-is-not-the-lords-way-in-kenya-lds-president-nelson-says-tithing-breaks-poverty-cycle.html>]

END OF MORMON PAGEANTS?

According to the *Deseret News*, October 27, 2018, the LDS Hill Cumorah Pageant in New York will end after its 2020 season. The other six pageants are also coming under review. If the Mormon Miracle Pageant, held in Manti, Utah, continues it is assumed it will see a name change as well as a paring down of the size of the cast. [<https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900039117/mormon-church-statement-says-changes-coming-for-local-celebrations-including-pageants.html>]

For some reason, the LDS missionaries were forbidden to attend the Hill Cumorah pageant this past summer. The attendance at the pageant evidently reached its height in 1997, with about 73,000 attending. But this year the number dropped to 25,000, and most were already members of the church. [<https://www.sltrib.com/news/nation-world/2018/07/20/first-time-its-year/>]

LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST LDS CHURCH RELATING TO CHILD ABUSE

The *Salt Lake Tribune*, on October 3, 2018, reported:

A lawsuit filed in Salt Lake City’s federal court on Wednesday alleges sexual abuse and a cover up involving family members of the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FOX 13 is reporting that the lawsuit lists six unnamed plaintiffs, identified as “Jane Doe” and “John Doe” and two unnamed defendants. Brenda and Richard Miles, who are the daughter and son-in-law of LDS Church President Russell M. Nelson, are those unnamed defendants and they vigorously deny the allegations, according to their attorney. [<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/10/04/lawsuit-accuses/>]

FORMER LDS BISHOP, SAM YOUNG, EXCOMMUNICATED FOR CHALLENGING BISHOP INTERVIEWS.

Every young Mormon has at one time or another been asked to meet with the local bishop for a “worthiness interview.” Part of the bishop’s interview is to determine if the youth is honest, morally clean, and abstaining from sexual activity. According to CNN, “While all bishops are required to ask whether members ‘obey the law of chastity,’ abstaining from all premarital sexual activity, Young says more than 3,000 people, including four of his daughters, have said their bishops probed for the explicit details of their sexual conduct as children. . . . The church calls the practice of bishops’ interviews a “sacred responsibility” and offers the opportunity for mentorship; critics argue it is traumatizing and creates opportunities for grooming and emotional or sexual abuse.” [<https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/24/us/mormon-young-excommunicated/index.html>]

After hearing stories of inappropriate questioning by some bishops, Sam Young

built up the courage to ask one of his daughters if she had ever been asked sexually explicit questions during an interview for the church.

She admitted that she had, “all the time,” from ages 12 to 17. After her first interview, she told her father that she had to look up “masturbation” online, since she had never heard the term before her bishop brought it up. [<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/houston-belief/article/Behind-closed-doors-12524563.php>]

After enduring a 23-day hunger strike, Sam Young was formally excommunicated from the Mormon Church. [<https://www.newsweek.com/mormon-bishop-sam-young-excommunication-sexually-explicit-children-interviews-1096856>]

Sam Young reported the following from a Stake Conference in Southern California on November 4, 2018:

Stake President: “Brothers and Sisters, OUR STAKE IS DYING! Tithing and Fast Offerings have DRASTICALLY dropped in the past 6 months. Temple attendance is way down. We have never had fewer endowed members with a current recommend. Few members are accepting callings. We need to start calling the Lord’s church by its revealed name or the curse will get worse.”

Stagnant growth and people streaming out of the church have nothing to do with what we call the Church.

It has everything to do with a culture that is toxic to open and honest discussions. Not to mention how Mormons allow children to be treated.

Institute for Religious Research irr.org/mit

Material available in several languages.

Online support group for those leaving Mormonism.

Excerpts From Letters and Emails

April 2018: After 48 years of membership in the church, after being converted at the age of 17 from Catholicism and serving an honorable mission in France and Switzerland ... after having served in every calling a male can serve in a ward (with the exception of the bishopric...) and after having researched the inconsistencies in the historicity of the church and having watched your exquisite interviews with John Dehlin, in this last week I have made the decision to completely disassociate myself from the Mormon church. On April 6, 2018 I stopped reading the Book of Mormon. The next day I disposed of my temple garments. Now, I'm spreading the word to friends that I am out.

May 2018: I just listened to your talk on the Biblical Temple ... versus the Mormon temple(s). [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Zc2wkfPqrs>] Thanks so much for the clarification. I already knew the difference, but I so much appreciate you giving the explanation about the differences between them. It is a much need explanation.

June 2018: I don't expect you to remember me but I spoke to you on the phone a few years ago. Asking forgiveness for being unkind to you when I served a LDS missionary in Salt Lake. I am a Christian and love Jesus. I have enjoyed many videos that you are in on the internet.

June 2018: Greetings from ... Canada. After 41 years as a member of the LDS church, my shelf broke (splintered is more like it) and I went from fully active, serving as Ward Clerk to inactive in less than 6 weeks.

One of the things that destroyed my faith was realizing that things I had been told were anti-Mormon lies were now being taught as legitimate Mormon history. An example I've used with others is that Joseph Smith was a treasure hunter and used a seer stone to search, unsuccessfully, for treasure prior to receiving the plates.

June 2018: I want to let you know how much I appreciate your years of research and care you've given to share the truth of the gospel!

God gave me, _____ years ago, a new (and now most precious) friend. I didn't find out until about four months into our friendship that she was Mormon. I was so unknowledgeable about the LDS at that point. All I knew was that which my parents told me (something like "they're not real Christians") My friend and I started having short conversations about the LDS—she suggested I read "How Wide Is the Divide." That book left me more confused than ever! But it did do me one service, and that was to validate the fact that even though I would say "grace" or "the trinity" it didn't mean the same thing to my friend. We were speaking two different languages. I came out of that book knowing I needed help understanding truly "how wide was the divide."

I got online & found your material right away. What a blessing! I have poured over your material—I've learned so much! My friend and I have quietly skirted around our differences—she's not willing to talk much about theology. But I know God's working in her life. He's been so gracious to us by keeping our friendship strong—I feel such peace knowing that when the Holy Spirit lifts the veil, if she wants, she's got a friend to turn to that can answer questions or at least point her to your research. :-)! !

Thank you for helping me to develop and grow in my faith. I pray that God will continue to draw out His own from the LDS!"

June 2018: Sandra Tanner is a very disrespectful, inconsiderate, argumentative DAMNED LITTLE BABY!

July 2018: My whole world collapsed recently after the passing of my wife three years ago. I am a mormon in exile. I was baptised into the LDS faith on ____, 1969. I am/was a High Priest and went through the usual steps of priesthood progression.

However, after having read the bible through from cover to cover for the first time in my life, my eyes began to be opened and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit I came to realize that I have been terribly deceived for so many years and by those I had fully trusted with my eternal soul.

I feel so lost right now and don't know where to turn for help, as far as this life is concerned. The one thing I never let go of, however, is my faith and hope in my Saviour, Jesus Christ, my master, my Saviour, my King, my atoning one.

I miss going to church each week and participating in and partaking of the sacrament. I miss my friends and family for they have abandoned me for my decision to leave the LDS faith. However, I do cling to my faith and hope in Christ Jesus, the true and living Saviour, the true messiah of the bible. Not the false Christ of Mormonism. I never realized there was a difference until my eyes were opened through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. . . .

I turned to the internet and started my search for true Christian fellowship and stumbled onto your website and felt that I needed to contact you to see if you would want to help a lost brother find his way back into true fellowship with Christ. I don't think that Jesus wants me to be alone any longer. I believe He led me to your website and the Holy Spirit is guiding me to seek your help and reach out for your help and support. . . . Thank you for any help you might be able to render to a lost brother in Christ. He said He will never leave us or forsake us and I truly believe that with all my heart, and if it turns out that I must live the rest of my life in loneliness and isolation then so be it. But I do think and believe that He is leading me out of that state of mind and back into a community of true Christian fellowship and believers.

July 2018: I came across this site by accident and I have been struck by the nasty, inane and vitriolic comments made against the Mormon church. I did not expect to see the comments I did from a supposedly Christian mission.

I am a Mormon and I am not uneducated, as one commentator stated, I speak several languages and am educated past degree level. I have always been respectful to other people's faiths and have attended many services in many different types of buildings.

All I have seen here is disrespect, mocking of things people hold sacred and a general superiority of mood. I see no evidence of Christian love to the sinner. I feel you would have been the first to throw the stone and it saddens me so much.

Life is too short to be nasty to people. It is perfectly alright to disagree.

July 2018: For as long as I live, I will not have enough breath to thank Jerald and Sandra Tanner for the work they've done.

They have been one of the primary sources for all of my work, and a huge influence in my exodus from Mormonism.

July 2018: [From a Mormon] They believed that to kill the [LDS] church was to cut off the head, they did and it didn't.

Why? Every other cult has died after cutting off the head, why not LDS?

July 2018: I'm former LDS. Too long of a story short, I was a Baptist up until 2000 and then I got suckered into the Mormon church by a girl. I was baptized into it and stayed in it for 4 or 5 years. I'm currently getting my name removed from their membership rolls and have a solid foundation in the Bible.

July 2018: Thank you so much for your quest for truth and for the materials you have written or made available. Your contributions in terms of sharing, speaking, publishing and encouraging are admirable. Your motivation has been misunderstood by those who vilify you as LDS church haters. Instead your "lighthouse" shines a light. That is so important in assisting people like myself, who are looking for answers—questioning or weighing the evidence for deciding whether to leave or join.

It has become so evident to me over years of reading your material that for whatever reasons the Church in general and the prophets, particularly Joseph, decided that LDS members had to be fed "facts" that hid the truth. How is it a victory to win members when their belief and loyalty can only be held together with numerous distortions and half-truths? I know I felt duped and cheated when I learned the truth regarding so many aspects of Church doctrine and history. This led to my resignation after 50+ years of devout membership. You were supportive of me during that painful process.

Knowing that members including missionary converts all over the world were being fooled as a whole church which was not only our religion/belief system but our entire way of life was and is really heartbreaking. It is still painful and it certainly has split families apart. I wonder what those priesthood holders who orchestrated the fraud and have continued it for over 188 years will say to their Maker at the Judgement bar. Even now with recent supposed "transparency" the Brethren continue to mislead in areas of doctrine and practice.

This has been a long e-mail but I've had a lot to be thankful to you for. I am grateful you are in Christianity. I am healing as I have been baptized into Christianity. May your burdens be light as you continue on in your Christian ministry work. God bless you.

July 2018: Thank you for this opportunity to write to you. My parents were tricked into the Mormon faith by them telling them what she believed, not what the Bible says. My daughter was at one time given a blessing and within a short period was to meet a Mormon, get married and have children who are now Mormons. They very rarely go to church though. If they would study the Bible they would see the truth as so many are now finding the truth as you did and stand up for the truth.

August 2018: I along with my wife and one of my daughters, had the privilege of meeting you earlier this summer. We were there on a day when a young woman, who recently resigned from the Mormon church, was there, and she talked to my daughter for quite a while. I was able to buy a few books that day from you.

I wanted you to know that I have greatly benefitted from books you and Jerald have written, especially *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* and *The Changing World of Mormonism*. I have also benefitted from *Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons*, and have been in contact with the author and his ministry at tilm.org.

August 2018: I apologize for mocking the death of your husband. It was wrong of me to do that. I've since made amends. I'm sorry. I am . . . [a] former member of the church.

September 2018: I recently listened to a Mormon Stories podcast where you discussed Joseph Smith's First Vision. Your knowledge and interpretations frankly out shown everyone else. [<https://www.mormonstories.org/podcast/joseph-smiths-first-vision/>]

September 2018: This is both a thank you and a letter of encouragement. . . I read The Book of Mormon and realized there was no Mormon doctrine in it. I heard about the Doctrines and Covenants and ordered one from the missionaries but I never got it. Later on I found out the reason. It contains the real teaching which they don't want you to know. . . .

Then I met a missionary and he told me about your book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* I read it and was astounded. But I said: "There can't be that much proof that Mormonism is wrong and yet it is growing." So I wanted to check out this book. I bought quite a number you mentioned so I could read them in context. To my happy surprise everything you wrote was very accurate and you could use it with assurance. . . .

I know you have had a lot of opposition from Mormons but the Lord has used your ministry to explain the truth to Mormons and I am sure many have left and been saved because of your ministry.

October 2018: The Book of Mormon is the word of God. Translated by the power of the Lord, it is another Testament of Jesus Christ. If you read and pray you will know if it is true by power of the Holy Ghost. People say the Bible is just a book. The Lord said by two or three witnesses shall his word be established. So the Lord gave us the Bible and Book of Mormon to let us know he lived, he taught and he died for our sins and was Resurrected the third day. I know Jesus is our Savior, I also know the Bible and the Book of Mormon is the word of God. Find out for yourself, you can only know if true if you study & pray.

October 2018: So sad for you. We [LDS] do study the Bible. 2019 is New Testament time again. Where do you get they did for greed? someday they will find architectural evidence until then go by faith. Evidence does not always lead to faith.

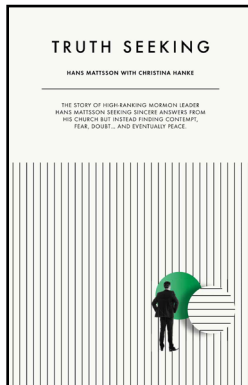
October 2018: Thank you for the decades of helpful information you have researched and shared with those of us who have searched for the truth and honesty in what we've been taught. You have made a difference and I wish you continued blessings in your work.

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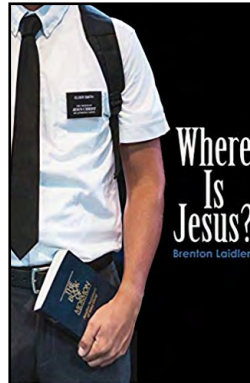
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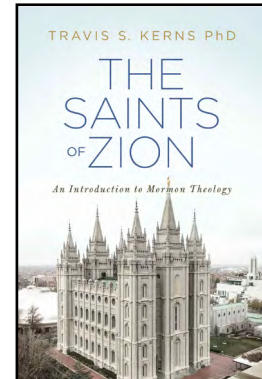
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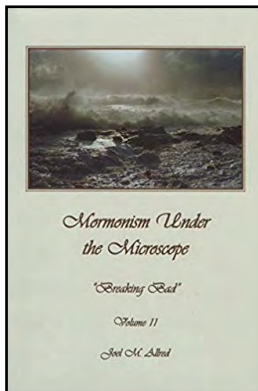
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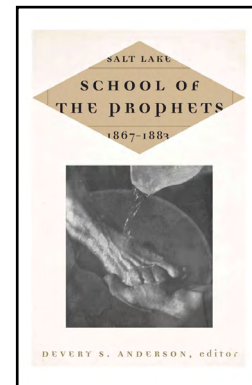
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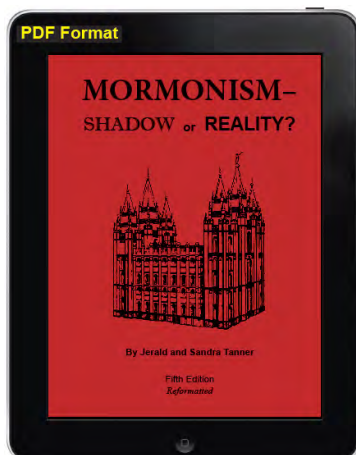


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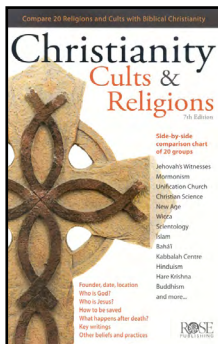
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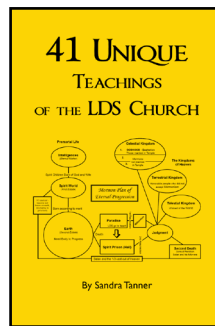
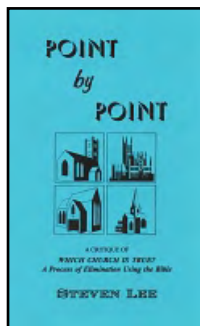
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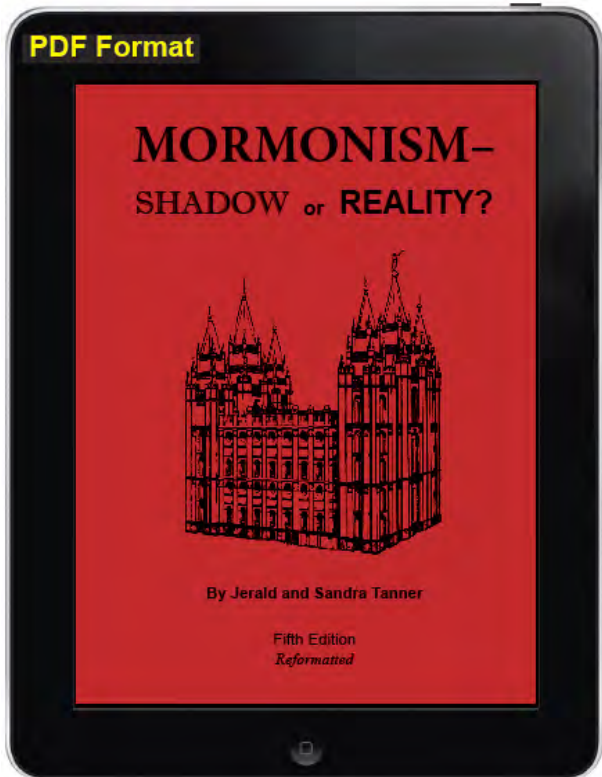
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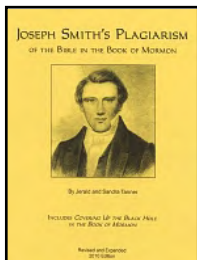
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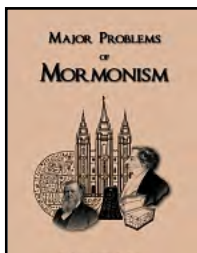


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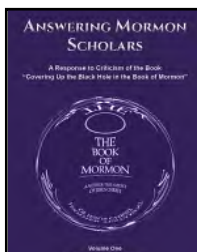
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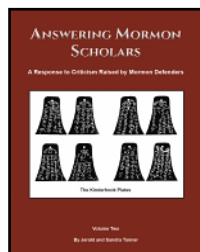
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