
Name of the Church

D&C 20:1

It was not until April 26, 1838, in Far West, Missouri, eight years after the foundational meeting of the Church at the Peter Whitmer Sr. Log Home, that the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith the correct name of the Church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (D&C 115:4).

At the foundational meeting, the Church was known as the Church of Christ (D&C 20:1). From 1834–1838 the Church was known as the Church of the Latter Day Saints.

Unofficially, the Church was referred to as the Mormon Church and its members as Mormons, reflecting their belief in the Book of Mormon. Use of the word *Mormon* in reference to the Church and its members was not overly accepted by the faithful because it did not convey their belief that Jesus Christ is head of the Church, and members strove to be disciples of Jesus by living Christian lives. While today most Church members are not offended by the title *Mormon*, they prefer the name that properly underscores their relationship to Christ.

In the Book of Mormon, the disciples of the Resurrected Lord asked our Savior, “Tell us the name whereby we shall call this church” (3 Nephi 27:3). He answered, “How be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name then it be Moses’ church, or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man, but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel” (v. 8).

In the October 2018 general conference, President Russell M. Nelson spoke about the importance of the name of the Church:

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.¹

President Nelson asked the question, “Have we been so afraid to *offend* someone who called us ‘Mormons’ that we have failed to *defend* the Savior Himself, to stand up for Him even in the name by which His Church is called? . . . 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!’”²

¹ Russell M. Nelson, “The Correct Name of the Church,” *Ensign*, November 2018.

² Nelson, “The Correct Name of the Church,” emphasis in original.