

BELIEFS THAT MATTER

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them who are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Luke 4: 18, 19 (Inspired Version).



REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Headquarters—Independence, Mo.



THE NAME OF THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH is not a human institution, but was brought into being and is maintained by the will and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is therefore rightfully called by his name, “The Church of Jesus Christ.” This is in full harmony with the Scriptures.¹

In the years immediately following the organization of the church in 1830 there was much confusion between this and other churches which carried a similar name, e. g., “The Church of Christ (Disciples).” To avoid this confusion, and because the people of God have been called “Saints” in all ages,² the church soon came to be known as “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” Still later, when some members of the church apostatized but continued to function under the original name, the term “Reorganized” was again added as a mark of distinction. The Saints had been scattered, but now they were brought together and reorganized under the same power and authority by which they had been organized in the first place.

The church, then, is “the Church of Jesus Christ.” It is composed of those “called to be Saints,” who live in the latter days, and who have been reunited and reorganized after having been scattered through the modern apostasy.

¹. Philippians 2: 9-11, etc.

². Acts 9: 17, etc.

BELIEFS THAT MATTER

(BASIC BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH)

Divinity—

“We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” The church is distinctly Christian in the sense that we gladly acknowledge the leadership of Jesus Christ our Lord. The church exists to further his purposes among men.

Revelation—

We believe that our Heavenly Father is eager to reveal himself to his children, both individually and in and through his church. He has many things to say to every age and the men of every age need divine guidance. He will give “precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little”¹ as we grow in power to understand and willingness to obey.

¹. Isaiah 28: 10.

Priesthood—

We believe that men must be called of God by revelation and ordained by the imposition of hands of those who are in authority, to authorize them to preach the gospel and to administer its ordinances. There are good men in other organizations, and to them we give full credit. But the work of the kingdom must be carried forward by its properly accredited officers. This can be done effectively only when these ministers are in close touch with divinity and are bound together in the spirit of fraternity and mutual understanding.

Principles—

We believe that eternal life results from the practice of certain principles of life which have been revealed from heaven. These principles are not tentative or experimental, so that they can be put on one side or lightly passed over in emergencies. They are ordained of God, and form the inescapable condition of effective righteousness.

Faith—

We believe that without faith it is impossible to please God. This faith is an attitude of confident trust in God and in His way of life. The person who truly has faith in God seeks to discover His will and then obeys it with glad confidence. Such faith is not blind credulity, but is the confidence of love. It grows in prayer and meditation, in study of the Scriptures and in the act of living the best we know how to live.

Repentance—

We believe that it is the privilege and duty of good men to grow in

grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; turning constantly from evil to good, and from the lesser good to the greater good. All of us make mistakes. But much worse than any such mistakes is our insistence on having our own way when we know that it is contrary to God's way. This is sin. The children of our Heavenly Father must cease to do evil by learning to do well.

Baptism—

We believe that baptism by immersion in water at the hands of a properly ordained minister, is essential to salvation. Such baptism is a beautiful symbol of an important inner change, and itself becomes part of the change. By it the repentant sinner is enlisted with other repentant ones in the work of the church and kingdom: Without it repentance is a personal sorrow; with it repentance becomes a public crusade.

Laying on of Hands—

We believe that no person can serve God adequately in his own strength and wisdom. All of us need to be endowed with power from on high. Those who have truly joined the church, those who have been called to positions of special responsibility, those who are sick or immature, and all of us in times of special crisis, need to feel the touch of God and the special blessing of His Spirit. Such blessings are made possible through the imposition of hands of the elders, who are called of God to represent Him and to be His ministers in this way.

The Resurrection—

We believe in the resurrection of the body: that the dead in Christ will rise at His second coming when He appears to usher in His reign on earth, and that the rest of the dead will not live again until this millennial reign is ended. The resurrection may also be a present experience. We who were "dead in trespasses and sin" may be raised by His Spirit and walk with Him in "newness of life."

Eternal Judgment—

We believe that every man will be judged and rewarded or punished according to the nature of his own life. This judgment is already operative for we live by the choices that we make. If we choose to do evil, we become confirmed in our wickedness. If we choose to do right, we grow in Christian character. "God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."²

². Galatians 6: 7.

Atonement—

We believe that through the atonement of Christ all men may be saved by obedience to the requirements of the gospel. Without Christ we are lost. We have neither the wisdom nor the insight to find our

way back to God by ourselves. We are so steeped in sin that we have become accustomed to it and do not recognize how horrible it is. In taking upon himself our life, and living and dying with us and for us, Jesus has made it possible for us to be at one with God. He is our Leader, our Guide and our Example.

Spiritual Gifts—

We believe that under the inspiration of the Spirit of God the church in every age should enjoy such spiritual gifts as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.³ Yet the gifts here named are not exclusive. We believe that our Heavenly Father will enlighten those who love and serve him in many ways beyond our present understanding or deserts.

³ 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10.

Stewardship—

We believe that every man is accountable to God for his use of the various gifts and opportunities which are his. Every servant of the Master is called to manage the divine investment in him for the achievement of the divine purpose. No Christian has the moral right to be lazy, ignorant or shiftless.

Zion—

We believe, also, that men belong together, and that truly Christian men must and will work together for the establishment of the kingdom of God here on earth. This kingdom is a spiritual achievement, gradually wrought out under the direction of divinity through those especially called to this work. As the kingdom is more fully achieved a constantly growing number of men and women will give of their best and receive according to their needs, in communities where the will of God is law and where enlightened brotherhood is the prevailing spirit.

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