

# Community of Christ Multimedia Publishing Style Guidelines

*In all writing, the primary goal is to communicate with the reader. To that end, this stylebook is to guide print- and electronic materials generated by the church. The stylebook will supplement The Chicago Manual of Style. In incidences of conflict, this stylebook shall take precedence. For spelling reference, use Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition.*

## -A-

**A Disciple's Generous Response:** This offers six principles for living: practice generosity as a spiritual discipline, respond faithfully, respond financially, share generously, save wisely, and spend responsibly. Note the capitalized article and use of the apostrophe.

**Aaronic Order:** An appendage to the Melchisedec Order of priesthood. It was named after Aaron, who was ordained by Moses. Offices are deacon, teacher, and priest.

**Abbreviations:** Use sparingly. Unless used as part of a postal address, spell out names of states and provinces. However, abbreviate the District of Columbia when used with Washington. (The president will return to *Washington, D.C.*, in two weeks.) Military ranks are abbreviated only when used as a title (*Lt. Dan Taylor; the lieutenant*).

**Academic degrees:** Use no periods with PhD and other academic degrees.

**Acronyms:** Generally, try to avoid using on first reference, if not altogether. Frequent acronyms:

*CCHSF* Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

*CPI* Co-Missioned Pastor Initiative

*CLW* Congregational Life Workshop (formerly, Congregational Leaders Workshop)

*EWCLC* Expanded World Church Leadership Council

*HMA* Community of Christ Health Ministries Association

*ILM* International Leaders Meeting

*IYF* International Youth Forum

*JWHA* John Whitmer Historical Association

*MAR* (lowercase master of arts in religion; just because something is capped in an acronym doesn't mean it must be when spelled out)

*MEADS* Ministerial Education and Discipleship Studies

*MHA* Mormon History Association

*OI* Outreach International, a participatory human development agency affiliated with the church

WCLC World Church Leadership Council

WMCT World Ministries Coordinating Team

**Ampersand:** Use the ampersand (&) only if space is tight, as in an ad, or in proper names:

*Johnson & Johnson, Power & Light.*

**Articles:** Use *a* before “historic,” “hotel,” but *an* herb garden. Pronunciation is the key—if the “h” is silent, use “*an*”; otherwise, use “*a*.”

**Auditorium:** When referring to the building in Independence, Missouri, capitalize in stand-alone usage or when preceded by Community of Christ.

## -B-

**Bibles:** Bible is capitalized when referring to the book of scripture, but biblical is not. Do not capitalize when used in reference to another book. (*The Chicago Manual of Style* is the copy editor’s bible.)

When quoting a scripture, indicate the version of the Bible after the verse, *John 3:15 NRSV*. Remember, the names of scriptures “and other highly revered works” are capitalized but not italicized. Commonly used Bibles:

American Standard Bible (ASB)

Good News Bible (GNB)

Inspired Version (IV)

JB (Jerusalem Bible)

King James Version (KJV)

Living Bible (LB)

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

New Century Version (NCV)

New English Bible (NEB)

New International Version (NIV)

New King James Version (NKJV)

New Living Translation (NLT)

New Revised Standard Version, the most commonly used (NRSV)

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

The Message (TM)

**Bi-vocational minister:** Someone who is a minister, but not employee, of the church who fulfills another role or career as well. See lay minister for preferred public relations/media language.

**Books:** If submitting a manuscript, send copies of quotes and sources, including the copyright page, to the editor so all quotes can be checked.

**British spellings:** Defer to British spellings involving proper nouns (British Isles Mission *Centre* or Australia Mission *Centre*). Also use the British spelling throughout if the author or editor of the project believes it will help communicate better. Otherwise, defer to standard U.S. spellings.

**Brother:** Capitalize when used as a title in reference to a specific church member, such as a title. E.g. Hello, Brother Clark; or a general salutation would be uncapped, such as, “Hello, brother.”

## -C-

**Capitals:** USING CAPS IS SHOUTING—DON’T DO IT! Instead, consider italics or bold to emphasize a word.

**Church:** The word is not capitalized when it refers to a building; it is capitalized when it is part of the name of a denomination (the *Methodist church* down the street; the *United Methodist Church*). An exception is *Stone Church*, which is the proper name of an Independence, Missouri congregation. Also, use church to refer to either an official religious body (*the Catholic Church*) or a local building (*the Walnut Gardens church*), but use congregation to refer to the body of people who gather to worship in the church. *The classes will be held at the Walnut Gardens church, sponsored by the Walnut Gardens congregation.*

Do not capitalize church when used to refer to the Community of Christ denomination. Do not use “church” immediately following Community of Christ.

**Church bodies:** Among them are the First Presidency, the Presiding Bishopric, the Quorums of Seventy (sometimes known as the Seventy); Quorum of High Priests; Order of Evangelists; Presiding Bishopric; Council of Twelve Apostles (sometimes known as the Second Presidency or the Twelve); Standing High Council, Expanded World Church Leadership Council.

**Communion:** Capitalize when it refers to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

**Community of Christ:** avoid preceding with “the,” unless used as an adjective, such as, “Do not capitalize church when used to refer to the Community of Christ denomination.”

**Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation:** Among its tasks, this nonprofit group watches over, supports, and guides historic sites and Restoration heritage through financial support, education, preservation, and development. Formerly known as the Restoration Trails Foundation.

**Community of Christ International Peace Award:** Given annually since 1993 (except for 1996) it is important to reference this award with its full name in the first reference. Later references in the same text can be to the “international peace award” or “peace award.” Recipients include men

and women from a variety of faiths and backgrounds. Recipients receive a grant, to donate to a charity of their choice, which is sponsored by the Bank of America Guy I. Bromley Trust. More at [www.CofChrist.org/peaceaward](http://www.CofChrist.org/peaceaward).

**Cyber terms:** *Internet and World Wide Web* are capitalized, but lowercase *webmaster*, *web*, and *website*.

Website is one word and lowercase unless it starts a sentence. Lowercase *e-mail* unless it starts a sentence, and use a hyphen. If citing *CofChrist.org*, be sure to use capitals for the two C's, even though they're not required for it to function as a URL.

Capitalization for other CofChrist.org e-mail addresses: *HeraldHouse@CofChrist.org*, *Herald@CofChrist.org*, *10-MinuteNews@CofChrist.org*

*Websites and e-mail addresses:* Place website URLs in italics, *www.CofChrist.org*. Do not underline because some web addresses contain an underscore in place of a letter, and it's hard to see if you underline the whole address. Also note that some addresses carry a deliberate hyphen, such as *www.outreach-international.org*. If you leave it out, you will get a different organization. Material posted on the web automatically will underline addresses to indicate a hot link.

If possible, keep an address all on one line. Never insert a hyphen unless it's part of the address. It is common to split an address at the period, placing the period on the new line.

## -D-

**Dashes, hyphen:** Use hyphens (-) with words, phone numbers, and zip codes (nonsequential numbers). Use an en dash (–) between page numbers and dates (*1830–1844*). Use em dashes (—) to set off thoughts. Use an en dash instead of a hyphen between sequential verse numbers, *Genesis 2:4–7*. For scripture that starts in one chapter and goes to another, use an em dash, *Genesis 2:10—3:5*.

When em and en dashes are used in this way, there should be no space before or after them. The dashes can be found in Word under Insert/Symbol/Special Characters. (Click on Insert, Symbols, Special Characters, En dash).

**Deadline:** The origin of this word comes from guards shooting convicts who crossed a line around a prison. Over time, the term metaphorically changed to indicate the absolute latest time for work to be done. Editors are not quite as tough as guards, but they do expect writers to meet deadlines. Work always may be turned in earlier.

**Divine:** Capitalize when used as a noun referring to God. *He called on the Divine.* When used as a modifier, lowercase. *It was a case of divine intervention.* When referring to something superb, lowercase.

**Doctrine and Covenants:** Capitalize “Section” in references involving the Doctrine and Covenants. *In Section 85 of...*, but just *Doctrine and Covenants 85*. Always spell out Doctrine and Covenants on first reference and usually on succeeding mentions. On occasion it is OK to abbreviate it, *D. and C.*, but never on first reference.

## -E-

**Earth:** When clearly referring to the planet with a proper name, capitalize *Earth*; when referring to soil, lowercase it. In idioms such as *down to earth* or *move heaven and earth* use lowercase. *Earth revolves around the sun. Put your feet on the earth. Jesus came to Earth.*

**Enduring principles:** Do not capitalize the umbrella term, but capitalize each principle. These are essential components of church identity and mission. The principles: Grace and Generosity, Sacredness of Creation, Continuing Revelation, Worth of All Persons, All Are Called, Responsible Choices, Pursuit of Peace (Shalom), Unity in Diversity, and Blessings of Community.

**Evangelist blessing:** Generally, avoid using a possessive. The source of the blessing is the Spirit, rather than the evangelist. Also, in referring to the blessing, avoid the plural form of evangelist, even if multiple ministers are participating. It still is the *sacrament of the evangelist blessing*.

## -F-

**First Presidency:** The prophet-president and his or her two counselors form the church’s top leadership group. Each person carries the title of president.

**Footnotes:** Many sources, such as the *Herald*, do not use footnotes. If attribution is necessary, work it into the text.

**Format:** Be consistent with font, headings, indents, spacing, and other formatting techniques.

**Foreign words:** Italicize foreign words (at first mention), unless they are found in the *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (11<sup>th</sup> Ed.).

## -G-

**Graceland:** Use *Graceland University* unless making a historical reference or in a quote. (Before June 1, 2000, it was Graceland College.)

**Gentiles:** Capitalize. Refers to people who are not Jewish and who lived in Jesus' time.

**God:** Always capitalize when referring to the Christian deity. Other names for God also are capitalized (*Creator of sunrises*). Pronouns referring to God (or Jesus) are not capitalized. Adjectives to describe God are lowercased: "We pray to our heavenly *Guide* (*Father, Parent*)."

Capitalize adjectives if part of an address to God: *Our Heavenly Parent*.

It is preferable to use *inclusive imagery* when referring to God: *as Creator* rather than *Father*.

**Good news:** Lowercase. *He preached the good news*.

**Gospel:** Capitalize when referring to books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Use lowercase when referring to the message of Christ. Also, lowercase *sacred story*.

## -H-

**Heaven:** Lowercase heaven and its derivatives.

**Hell:** Lowercase hell and its derivatives.

**Herald:** From 1860 to 1876, the title of the church's magazine was *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald*. From 1877 to 1953, it was *The Saints' Herald*. From 1954 to 1972, it was *Saints' Herald*. From 1973 to 2000, it was *Saints Herald*. It currently is the *Herald*.

**Historic sites:** Joseph Smith Historic Site (Nauvoo, Illinois), Kirtland Temple (Kirtland, Ohio), Far West (Caldwell County, Missouri), Haun's Mill (Caldwell County, Missouri), Plano Stone Church (Plano, Illinois), Liberty Hall (Lamoni, Iowa), Heritage Plaza (Independence, Missouri)

Other historic locations include: Palmyra, New York, location of the grove where Joseph Smith Jr. sought God's guidance in prayer, leading to formation of the church; Kirtland, Ohio, a hotbed for missionary work from 1831–1837; Nauvoo, Illinois, a rapidly growing community built by church members beginning in 1839; Carthage, Illinois, where Joseph and Hyrum Smith were imprisoned and later killed by a mob.

**Holy Spirit (or Spirit):** Capitalize only when theologically referring to a member of the Trinity. Do not capitalize "spirit" in *healing of the spirit*. In that instance, it is the human spirit that is being referred to.

## -I-

## -J-

**Jesus:** Use Jesus when referring to the period before his resurrection. For references after the Resurrection, use Christ, Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus.

**Jurisdictions:** Uppercase congregation only when referring to a congregation's proper name. Thus: *Colonial Hills Congregation*. Do not insert the city and/or state before congregation. E.g.: Colonial Hills Congregation in Blue Springs, Missouri, or Colonial Hills Congregation (Blue Springs, Missouri).

Uppercase "mission center" only if it's with the official name, *Central USA Mission Center*.

## -K-

**Kingdom:** The kingdom of God and God's kingdom usually are not capitalized. (You will see exceptions—especially in Doctrine and Covenants.)

**Kirtland Temple:** Erected from 1833–1836 in Kirtland, Ohio, then site of the church headquarters. Occasionally still referred to as its original name: *the House of the Lord*.

**Kirtland Temple Visitor and Spiritual Formation Center:** This facility, supported by Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, was dedicated in June 2007. It complements, but does not replace, Kirtland Temple.

## -L-

**Lay minister:** Unpaid ministers. For public relations/media materials, use "lay minister" instead of priesthood or bi-vocational minister for consistency and clarity.

## -M-

**Melchisedec Order:** Named after a great high priest. This order holds the right of presidency and has power and authority over all offices in the church. Offices for these spiritual leaders are president, apostle, bishop, seventy, evangelist, high priest, and elder.

**Mission center:** See *Jurisdictions*.

**Mission initiatives:** Do not capitalize the umbrella term, but capitalize each initiative. These are essential components of how the church lives out Christ's mission. The initiatives: Invite People to

Christ; Abolish Poverty, End Suffering; Pursue Peace on Earth; Develop Disciples to Serve; and Experience Congregations in Mission.

## -N-

**Nauvoo Temple:** The Nauvoo Temple was dedicated April 30 and May 1 in 1846 in Nauvoo, Illinois. It was destroyed by arson fire in 1848 and tornado-force winds in 1850.

**Numbers:** Use either Arabic or Roman numerals for books of scripture. NRSV uses 1, 2, 3 (*1 Corinthians, etc.*). Use the same style of numbers as the version quoted. For example, IV uses Roman style; NIV uses Arabic. The Book of Mormon uses Roman numerals. However, if writing for an international audience, avoid Roman numerals.

With phone numbers, area codes generally go in parentheses (*816*) 833-1000. For toll-free numbers, use the style of 1-800-. We do not use the dot style to separate area codes from the local number.

When citing inclusive page number references, you may give the full numbers, 726–728, or drop the hundreds column in the second set, 726–28. Years may appear as 1963–1964 or 1963–’64.

Spell out numbers zero through nine. Exceptions: Use numerals for ages, references to 10 and above, and in front of *million, billion, etc.*: 5 million.

Percentages always are given in *numerals*. Spell out the word *percent* in copy other than scientific and statistical material, such as charts.

Never begin a sentence with a numeral.

## -O-

## -P-

**Peace Colloquy:** This annual event may be referred to as the *Peace Colloquy* or *Colloquy* (note the capitalization) after the first reference. Details at [www.CofChrist.org/peacecolloquy](http://www.CofChrist.org/peacecolloquy).

**Peacebuilder:** This term and its derivatives are exceptions to the dictionary. However, they are preferred because they are ingrained in our culture.

**Possessives:** Possessives are identified simply with an apostrophe, *Jesus’ and Moses’*, when a name ends in *s*. *It’s* stands for “it is.” *Its* (no apostrophe) is possessive.

**Prefixes:** Many do not take hyphens unless the following word starts with the same letter the prefix ends with, *anti-inflammatory*. Many exceptions exist, including *bi-vocational, co-pastor, co-leader, co-worker*.



**Plagiarism:** Don't do it. Attribute work that is not your own.

**Presidency:** Capitalize when referring to the church's First Presidency. Lower case when referring to other organizational or political entities.

**Prophet-President:** As leader of the church, this person presents revelation and heads the First Presidency. It is typical to use the title president. When announcing that the president will deliver words of counsel and/or inspired counsel, definitely use the full title prophet-president. Terms of prophet-presidents: Joseph Smith Jr., 1830–1844; Joseph Smith III, 1860–1914; Frederick M. Smith, 1915–1946; Israel A. Smith, 1946–1958; W. Wallace Smith, 1958–1978; Wallace B. Smith, 1978–1996; W. Grant McMurray, 1996–2004; Stephen M. Veazey, 2005–present.

**Priesthood:** Lowercase when used descriptively, *John was ordained to the office of elder, seventy, etc.*, but capitalize as a title, *Elder John Doe, Seventy Mary Doe*.

**Priesthood offices:** They are deacon, teacher, priest, elder, seventy, high priest, bishop, evangelist, apostle, president, prophet-president.

**Pronouns:** Use the third person in most writing—in a news report, for example. Do not mix pronouns indiscriminately. If it is a testimony, first person is OK (*first person—I, second person—you, third person—she*).

**Punctuation:** A *colon* is used only after a full sentence or as an introduction. *The high achievers: Mary Kay Speaks, Jack Martin, David Wheaton, and you!*

There is no *comma* between the biblical reference and the version, *Isaiah 6:1–3 NRSV*. Include the version used or state “adapted” if it has been changed in any way.

Do not use commas in names before Jr., Sr., III, etc., *Joseph Smith Jr., Brian Burnes III*. In indexing, it would become: *Smith, Joseph Jr.; Smith, Joseph III*.

## -Q-

**Quotes:** In a quote, do not underline unless it is that way in the original quote. Use italics for emphasis. **DO NOT USE italics, all caps, bold, and underlining** at the same time.

**Attribution:** If a quote runs for numerous sentences, attribute early so the reader isn't left wondering who is speaking.

*Generally, block and indent quotations of five or more lines.* If it is a scriptural quote, put the reference at the end with an em dash in front of it and the reference in Roman type: —*Romans 12:1 NRSV*. Surround the reference with parentheses only if it's a short quote within a paragraph. The period then would go outside the closing parentheses, at the end. Quotes in a narrative do not have to be done in block format.

The “straight style” of quotes ( " and ' ) are reserved for use as inch or foot marks. Be sure a curved style is used for quotation marks and apostrophes ( “ ” and ’ ).

## -R-

**Reorganization, Restoration:** For Community of Christ, the *Restoration* began when Joseph Smith Jr. wanted to restore the original Christian church, which had fallen away from the true gospel of Christ. The movement that followed led to a restored priesthood and the founding of our denomination. When referring to the *Reorganization*, capitalize it as well.

**RLDS:** Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Community of Christ is the public name of the denomination. For legal and cultural purposes, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and RLDS remain the church’s copyrighted property. These names are only to be used in historical context.

**Religious events and concepts:** Capitalize when used alone, such as the *Second Coming*, *the Exodus*, *the Crucifixion*, *the Resurrection*, or *the Restoration*. Lowercase if used with further explanatory words, *the second coming of Jesus*, *the crucifixion of Jesus*, etc.

## -S-

**Sacraments:** Community of Christ sacraments are baptism, confirmation, Lord’s Supper (Communion), marriage, blessing of children, evangelist blessing, ordination, and administration to the sick.

**Saints:** The word may be abbreviated or spelled out when used as the title of a Christian saint or a geographical location. When used in titles of organizations, use their preferred spelling. *St. John’s University*; *Saint Benedict’s College*.

It is not consistent, though not incorrect, with Community of Christ identity to use Saints in reference to church members in official publications.

**Seminary:** our seminary is Community of Christ Seminary. Although it is administered through Graceland, the university name is not part of the seminary name.

**Seventy:** The plural form is seventies.

**Shalom:** Do not capitalize or italicize (except in the enduring principle) because it has become common in religious circles.

**Scripture:** Do not capitalize *the scriptures* or *the three standard books*. Books of the Bible and Book of Mormon are spelled out. Do not italicize books of scripture (Bible, Book of Mormon, etc.).

**Sister:** Capitalize when used as a title in reference to a specific church member, such as a title. E.g. Hello, Sister Glenn; or a general salutation would be uncapped, such as, “Hello, sister.”

**Spacing:** One space between sentences, after colons, etc. This will affect characters with spaces count when writing to space specifications.

**SPECTACULAR:** All capitals. This fine-arts and sports gathering annually draws more than 1,000 students to Graceland University for a week that focuses on fellowship and activities while exposing the students to church beliefs and standards, as well as Graceland. SPEC is permitted on second usage.

**Spell check:** The last thing authors should do before submitting a manuscript. Please note that it will not catch the wrong word even if spelled correctly (there versus their; your versus you're, to/too/two, etc.).

**Spelling:** When a dictionary entry offers more than one valid spelling, go with the first one listed: *canceled, cancelled; totaled, totalled; theater, theatre*. Exceptions are forms of *worship*. Avoid the double-p: *Worshiper's Path*.

**Stakes:** Before adopting the mission-center format, the church organized many areas into jurisdictions known as stakes. Capitalize when used with a specific group, such as *Center Stake*.

## -T-

**Temple:** The temple in Jerusalem is not capitalized, but the Temple in Independence is. Also, it is the *Kirtland Temple* (used as a name). Community of Christ Temple was dedicated April 17, 1994 in Independence, Missouri.

*Temple terms:* Capitalize only key locations in the Temple. Lowercase ordinary locations such as *break room, foyer*. Capitalize *Sanctuary, Worshiper's Path, World Plaza, Continents Room, Peacemakers Room*. Generally, capitalize official names of rooms, but not necessarily every location in a building.

**Titles:** Capitalize terms such as apostle, executive minister, pastor, mayor only when they directly precede a name. *Pastor Mary Doe attended the meeting*, but *Mary Doe, pastor, attended*. If the title is used as an appositive, it is not capitalized: *the Independence mayor, Barbara Potts*.

The titles of books, movies, videos, CDs, TV series are italicized. Book series, however, simply use caps and lowercase, for example, the *Power & Light* series, but *Power & Light for Youth*. Use quotes for individual songs, stories within a book, or TV episodes.

Books of the Bible and Book of Mormon are spelled out. Capitalize *Section* if referring to such in the Doctrine and Covenants. Do not italicize books of scripture (Bible, Book of Mormon, etc.).

*In titles*, use capitals for the first and last words and all major parts of speech, especially verbs (*Is, Are*). Lowercase articles: *a, an, the*; prepositions, e.g: *on, off, in*; and coordinating conjunctions: *and, but, or*.

## -U-

**United States:** Refer to the United States rather than America to mean the United States. Use US only as an adjective. Use USA when identifying a person's country: *Mary Kohlman, Independence, Missouri, USA*.

**URLs / Web links:** For URLs that begin with "www." do not include "http://" at the beginning.

## -V-

## -W-

**World Church terms:** When referring to our worldwide church, capitalize *World Church*. Do not use World Church to refer to Community of Christ International Headquarters. Lowercase headquarters or *church headquarters*. Capitalize *International Headquarters* and *Community of Christ International Headquarters*. Do not use "world headquarters."

**World Conference:** Conference is capitalized, as in *the Conference*. Also, it is *the Conference Chamber* (of the Auditorium) and *the Conference floor*. *Other terms:* General Conference (before 1960), World Conference (after 1960), World Conference *Bulletin*, the World Conference daily *Bulletin*.

**World Conference language:** Resolution style—*Whereas, The...; therefore, be it (new paragraph) Resolved, That...*

**World Hunger and Oblation Funds:** Capitalize.

**World Service Corps:** Church organization that promotes missionary work and cultural exchange in numerous countries. Organization formerly was known as WorldService Corps.

## -XYZ-

**Young Peacemakers Club:** No apostrophe in name of group that offers activities and builds spirituality in youngsters.

**Zion and zionic:** Capitalize Zion (noun), but lowercase zionic (adjective) when referring to Community of Christ beliefs.

## General Tips

*While each person develops a personal writing style, some general tips still can help communicate in most usages without robbing copy of life.*

- Keep sentences short, often 15–20 words. Reader comprehension plunges beyond 30 words.
- Cliches. *If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times*: Don't use them.
- Use words that the reader would understand and at an appropriate educational level. In general, use vocabulary appropriate for middle school or early high school.
- In general, use active verbs rather than passive verbs, (*Jane turned on the lights* instead of *The lights were turned on by Jane*). Passive sentences tend to be stuffy, bureaucratic, and wordy. However, passive use is good when the writer wishes to make something less hostile, *the bill has not been paid*; to avoid taking the blame, *a mistake was made*; or when the subject or doer is unknown.
- Single verbs are punchier than verb phrases with two or three words. Instead of *speak to* use *talk*; instead of *take offense at*, use *resent*. However, verb phrases are better than split verb phrases.
- Generally, splitting verb phrases and infinitives robs copy of punch. Avoid unless awkward. Examples:  
*WRONG: She would eventually go.*  
*RIGHT: She eventually would go.*  
*WRONG: Her goal was to swiftly finish the job.*  
*RIGHT: Jennifer's goal was to finish the job swiftly.*
- Avoid using long or uncommon words when a simpler one will do. Examples:  
*Sue built (not constructed) the house.*  
*Paul bought (not purchased) a new car.*  
*Karen exercises in the new gym (not facility).*

*Patty started (not commenced) to write.*

*Jennifer helped (not assisted) the organizers.*

*John moved (not relocated).*

- Avoid pronoun confusion by repeating the noun when ambiguity exists.
- Qualifiers have their place, but when overused they suck the life from copy. Be cautious when using *allegedly, apparently, little, may, perhaps, probably, really, somewhat, very,, etc.*
- Unless you're certain, avoid absolutes: *never, always, none, forever.*
- In general, place adjectives and adverbs close to the things they describe.
- Use positive language. Readers want to know what happened, not what didn't happen. Examples:  
*WRONG: She did not pay attention to him.*  
*RIGHT: She ignored him.*
- Dump unneeded prepositional phrases. They lead to wordiness and rob copy of vitality. Many unneeded phrases occur at the end of sentences. If a sentence contains too many prepositions, break it into two or three sentences. Also, writers rarely need to use prepositions consecutively. Examples of common prepositions that you can omit:  
*Of the:* Instead of *Three of the ministers went downtown* use *Three ministers went downtown.*  
*Off of:* Instead of *Get off of the wagon* use *Get off the wagon.*  
*Out of:* Instead of *Three out of the four pastors retired,* use *Three of the four pastors retired.*
- In general, avoid **TAN (the adjective-noun)** constructions. These usually convey—in wordy fashion—information already given. Instead, consider using a pronoun or name. Examples:  
*WRONG: The Royals' manager believes in fundamentals.*  
*RIGHT: He believes in fundamentals.*  
*RIGHT: Yost believes in fundamentals.*  
*WRONG: The pop diva performed at Carnegie Hall.*  
*RIGHT: She performed at Carnegie Hall.*  
*RIGHT: Cher performed at Carnegie Hall.*

- Use StyleWriter as an aid, not as a final arbiter. It identifies areas of difficulty where alternate word choices and phrases may be considered. Revisions are the responsibility of the author. Making good choices can help writers preserve their original meaning, which otherwise might be difficult for editors.

## Getting Finicky

*Language can be incredibly precise and incredibly imprecise. This list is far from exhaustive, but these suggestions might prove helpful.*

- **Affect, effect.** There are exceptions, but the general rule is to use affect as a verb and effect as a noun.

Examples:

*RIGHT: The weather will affect the golf tournament.*

*RIGHT: The effect of rain would be postponement.*

- **Altar, alter.** An altar is a religious structure for the center of worship, a table for Eucharistic elements, sacrifices, or the burning of incense. Alter means to shift or change.

- **Anxious and eager** are not synonyms. Anxious denotes fear or worry. Eager denotes happy anticipation. Examples:

*WRONG: Steve was anxious to get his raise. (Unless he feared a low total.)*

*RIGHT: Becky was eager to go fishing. (Unless she feared drowning.)*

- **Assure, ensure, insure.** These are not interchangeable. Assure means to make safe or give confidence.

Ensure means to make certain. Insure means to provide or obtain insurance. Example:

*RIGHT: I will insure the car, which will assure my wife that we're legally covered and ensure that I'll be able to get to work on time.*

- **Complement and compliment.** Complement is a noun or verb that refers to completeness or the act of supplementing something. Compliment is a noun or verb that denotes praise. Examples:

*RIGHT: The shovel complemented the hoe and pick.*

*RIGHT: The pastor complimented the keyboardist for her performance.*

- **Convinced** and **persuaded** are not interchangeable. You are *convinced that* and *persuaded to*.

Examples:

*WRONG: She persuaded me that we all deserve a raise.*

*WRONG: She convinced me to work 10 hours a week for free.*

*RIGHT: I am convinced that the president is a good person.*

*RIGHT: Andrew tried to persuade me to work harder.*

- **Couple** usually takes an *of*. Examples:

*WRONG: Steve threw a couple touchdown passes.*

*RIGHT: Susan made a couple of three-point shots.*

- **Pedal, peddle**: Pedal is what you do when riding a bike. Peddle is what you do when you sell something. Examples:

*RIGHT: Jack pedaled up Pig Hill.*

*RIGHT: Patty peddled popcorn for her children.*

- **Principal and principle**. *Principle* is a noun that means law, doctrine, fundamental truth or motivating force. *Principal* is a noun or adjective. It refers to someone who is first in rank, degree, authority or importance. Examples:

*WRONG: The principle is your friend.*

*RIGHT: The principal is good to the teachers.*

*WRONG: They determined the principal of free speech.*

*RIGHT: We understand the principle of one person, one vote.*

- **Prior** and **before** are not always interchangeable. *Prior* denotes a requirement, while *before* generally refers to time. Examples:

*WRONG: Prior to going to work, Brent stopped at the store.*

*RIGHT: Prior to taking Political Science 301, students must take poli-sci 101 and 201.*

- You **center** something *on* rather than *around*. Examples:

*WRONG: The discussion centered around Communion.*

*RIGHT: The discussion centered on tithing.*

- You **swirl** or **revolve** *around* rather than *on*. Examples:



*WRONG: Controversy swirled on the council's decision.*

*RIGHT: Discussion revolved around the president's action.*

- **Infinitives of purpose.** Be precise in your meaning. Examples:

*WRONG: Rich scored 32 points to lead the Celtics.* (This implies that he purposely scored 32 points—not 31 or 33).

*RIGHT: Jaylene scored 32 points and led the Lakers. Or: Jaylene led the Lakers with 32 points.*

*WRONG: Kendra returned to find her house on fire.* (This implies that she intentionally came looking for a fire. Unless she's an arsonist, that's not likely.)

*RIGHT: Kendra returned and found her house on fire.*

- Be careful in placing **only**. If used in the wrong place it can change the meaning of your sentence or add ambiguity. A helpful tool is to think of it as meaning *alone*. Examples:

*WRONG: I only wanted to go to the store.* (Technically, this means that you, alone, wanted to go to the store.)

*RIGHT: I wanted to go only to the store.* (This means the store was the one place you wanted to visit.)

*ALSO RIGHT: I wanted only to go to the store.* (Though correct, this construction robs the *wanted to go* phrase of punch.)

- Consider recasting any sentence or clause that begins with **There is** or **It is**. Examples:

*WRONG: There's no good that comes from drinking and driving.*

*RIGHT: No good comes from drinking and driving.*

- **Raise, rear.** Only humans may be reared, but all living things—including humans—may be raised.

Examples:

*RIGHT: The family raised three children.*

*RIGHT: The family reared three children.*

*WRONG: The family reared three dogs.*

- **Reluctant** and **reticent** are not synonyms. Reluctant means unwilling to act, while reticent means unwilling to speak. Examples:

*RIGHT: The boss is reluctant to raise salaries.*

*RIGHT: The movie star's husband is reticent.*

## Writing for International Audiences

*Use StyleWriter to identify words and phrases that ensure greater clarity and consistency for documents to be translated. If you do not have StyleWriter, ask an editor to take this step in the editorial process.*

*While no list would be exhaustive, these suggestions in producing resources for the many cultures and languages of the church may prove helpful. These guidelines concern only items that are to be used intentionally by the global church. If you wish, the Translation Team can provide more suggestions.*

**Church history:** References to church history in the United States are difficult for others to assimilate because they have no basis for understanding it, not having had exposure to it. Conversely, an entire lesson or series of lessons *could* be written in which the historical story is depicted and in which the lessons drawn from it are made understandable. However, it would be good not to dwell on U.S. history, but to include stories from other nations, as well. Similar principles would be true for all nations.

**Clarity of thought:** Abstract thinking is difficult to translate accurately. Some cultures and languages are more story-based than concept-based. Narratives, testimonies, and parables work well in communicating abstract concepts.

**Dates:** International dates usually are written with the day/month/year format. An alternative is simply to spell the name of the month as in *February 2, 2004*. This allows the translator to understand the date and to put it into the format that works best for that language.

**Ecumenical, ecumenism:** These are considered four-letter words in many parts of the world that have difficulties with Catholicism. In such circumstances, consider synonyms such as *interdenominational, interfaith, cooperative endeavors*, etc.

**General rule:** If you think that a poor pastor living in a hut without electricity is likely to have experienced it—then use it.

**Heritage:** Many writers come with a distinct national heritage, so references that are specific to that national culture should be avoided. This also is true of idioms and other regional sayings. Examples might include *bulls and bears*, *out of the park*, or *easy street*.

**History:** When using a reference to any nation's history, describe the incident well. Those in other nations may not know the details. If it is not important enough to warrant a description, then re-evaluate the need to use it.

**Length:** Write tightly. In many languages, the church must rely on the time of volunteer translators.

**Lyrics:** Quotes from favorite hymns or poems rarely carry the same impact for a couple of reasons:

- The hymns usually are not available in the languages concerned.
- In translation of hymns, the same wording rarely is found.

An attempt to stay with the theme is common; however, translation of poetry and hymns is extremely difficult to produce so that it works with a given music and meter. Therefore, it is best to avoid referring to hymn lyrics.

**Names:** In *Chinese*, the surname, or family name, is listed first. For example, the surname for basketball player Yao Ming is Yao. On second reference he is listed as *Yao*, rather than Ming.

In *Portuguese* cultures, the family names of the father and mother generally are considered part of a person's name. The normal order is given name, mother's family name, and father's family name. Some people use an *e* (and) between the two family names. *Maria Castro e Ferreira*. On second reference use only the father's family name unless the person prefers otherwise. A married woman adds the husband's surname to hers. So if Maria Ferreira Santos married Joao Costa da Silva, her name full name would be *Maria Santos da Silva*. Customs sometimes vary with individuals and countries.

In *Spanish* cultures, the family names of the father and mother generally are considered part of a person's name. The normal order is given name, father's family name, mother's family name. On second reference, use only the father's family name unless the person prefers otherwise. Some people use a *y* (and) between the two family names. *Pedro Lopez y Martinez*. A married woman often uses her

father's name, followed by *de* (of) and her husband's name. A woman named Rosa Perez who married Juan Gutierrez would be known as *Rosa Perez de Gutierrez*. Customs sometimes vary with individuals and countries.

**Negatives:** Use simple, single negatives. Example: "*It is possible...*" rather than "*It isn't impossible...*"

**Numbers:** Use Arabic numerals when writing numbers for an international audience. Many cultures do not use or understand Roman numerals, even in Biblical references: *2 Timothy 1:7*.

**Pop culture:** References to scenes in movies, lines from popular music, etc., can be problematic because even when they are translated, they often are not understood. It is best to avoid them. Blockbuster international hits such as *Star Wars* may be exceptions, but it is easy to predict that a poor, rural pastor in Latin America will not have been to the movies.

**Roman numerals:** Avoid Roman numerals for international audiences.

**Scripture:** When making scripture references, it is best to use biblical citations. Sources can include most standard references such as NIV, NKJV, NRSV, etc., but do not use the Inspired Version because it is not available or useable in the international setting.

**Seasons:** Do not use seasonal terms such as *winter*, *summer*, etc., because they have different meanings around the world. Use the name of the month or months instead.

**Sexuality:** Human sexuality is difficult to address internationally because reactions vary widely, whether the topic is sex, abortion, divorce, sexual orientation, or many others. This is not to say that the topics cannot be addressed, but specific cases should be discussed with the translations team for suggestions.

**Slang, jargon, etc.:** These forms, as well as irony, idiomatic expressions, humor, and wordplay, sometimes are appropriate when writing for your own culture. However, translation of such phrases sometimes does not communicate well, and may be offensive. Example: A common African saying is "The heart of the pumpkin knows the knife!" but few Americans would understand its proper use.

**StyleWriter:** Use StyleWriter to identify words and phrases that ensure greater clarity and consistency for documents to be translated. If you do not have StyleWriter, ask an editor to take this step in the editorial process.

**Quotes:** Quotations from books and various literary sources often are translated into the language desired, though the citation may not be. A standard for translations is to keep the name of the book or magazine in its original language in the footnotes. This is because translating the name of the reference implies that it is available in that language. If the citation is available in a particular language, then of course the translated name of that resource is printed. Briefly identify the people you quote.

**Resources:** Resources that offer suggested questions for discussion or application should reflect various cultural settings.

**Simplicity:** English sometimes coins new words from old ones, often converting nouns to new verbs, *prioritize*, *strategize*, *theorize*. For translation purposes, use tried and true vocabulary.

Also, phrasing that sometimes adds richness or emphasis (but more often is just wordy) to English can create difficulties in translations. It's best to keep your writing simple and straightforward; instead of *have a knowledge of* use *know*.

### **Policy on Invited and Unsolicited Submissions:**

- Editing for clarity integration, and other factors, and copyediting for style are provided by editorial and communications staff. Because of deadlines and capacity, contributors will not typically be involved in the editorial process.
- When submitting material, writers must take responsibility for its accuracy and completeness. Do not leave blanks and expect editors to fill them in. Dial phone numbers and call up websites to make sure they are correct. If you're unsure of something, look it up. For example, if you don't know whether the Lamoni-Heartland USA Mission Center has a hyphen, look it up. Submit your piece only after taking all such steps.
- Publication dates for specific articles may change based on organizational priorities.