



**POLITICS** 02/14/2012 12:26 pm ET

# Elie Wiesel: Mitt Romney Should Tell Mormon Church To Stop Performing Posthumous Proxy Baptisms On Jews

By Andrea Stone

Romney Baptized Dead People, No "Cafeteria Mormon"



The Nobel Peace Prize winner spoke to The Huffington Post Tuesday soon after HuffPost [reported](#) that according to a formerly-Mormon researcher, Helen Radkey, some members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had submitted Wiesel's name to a restricted genealogy website as "ready" for posthumous proxy baptism. Radkey found that the name of Wiesel had been submitted to the database for the deceased, from which a separate process for proxy baptism could be initiated.



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had been submitted to the site.

A spokesman for the Mormon Church claimed that the names were simply entered into the database, and none were submitted for baptism, which he described as a separate process. The entry of a living person, he said, was a mistake, and he provided no explanation for the submission of Wiesel's father and maternal grandfather. By Monday the records for the names of Wiesel and his family had been changed to "not available," according to Radkey.

The incident follows years of controversy and efforts by Jewish leaders, including Wiesel, to get the Mormon Church to stop the practice of posthumous proxy baptism that many find objectionable.

"I think it's scandalous. Not only objectionable, it's scandalous," Wiesel said of the baptisms.

Negotiations between Mormon and Jewish leaders led to an agreement in 1995 for the church to stop the posthumous baptism of all Jews, except in the case of direct ancestors of Mormons, but Radkey says she found that some Mormons had failed to adhere to the agreement. Wiesel was among a group of Jewish leaders who campaigned against the practice and prompted a 2010 pact by which the Mormon Church promised to at least prevent proxy baptism requests for Holocaust victims. Wiesel said that proxy baptisms have been performed on behalf of 650,000 Holocaust dead.

If the Mormon Church has begun the process of proxy baptisms for the living, Wiesel said, "I object fervently. It's an outrage."

Wiesel said that the situation has gotten so out of hand that the most prominent Mormon in the country should speak out about it.

"I wonder if as a candidate for the presidency Mitt Romney is aware of what his church is doing. I hope that if he hears about this that he will speak up," Wiesel said, noting that a presidential candidate "should comment on everything."

Supporters of Romney have accused the media of linking him to controversial church practices even as they give other Mormons, such as Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, a pass. The Republican frontrunner has said that he has personally



HuffPost reached out via email to the Romney campaign for comment. In an email accidentally sent to the reporter, spokeswoman Gail Gitcho suggested that the campaign ignore the request.

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