

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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habitants of the earth will continue under his direction. Meanwhile, a similar teaching program will continue among the spirits of those who have departed this life and are waiting the day of their resurrection (D&C 138). While such spirits may hear the gospel of salvation and accept or reject it in the spirit worlds, mortals on earth will perform saving ordinances such as baptism on their behalf (*see* BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD). Conditions of peace and righteousness will prevail during the Millennium to allow this work to proceed until essential ordinances have been made available to every individual who has lived on earth since the time of Adam and Eve (cf. D&C 138).

[*See also* Last Days; New Heaven and New Earth; Time and Eternity.]

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MINORITIES

[*In the Book of Mormon, God invites "all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God"* (2 Ne. 26:33). *As LDS missionaries have preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people," people from many ethnic groups from all over the world have accepted baptism and become members of the Church. See Vital Statistics.*

Emphasis has been placed on taking the gospel to the American Indians and to the other peoples of the Americas. See Indian Student Placement Services; Lamanites; Mexico and Central America, The Church in; Native Americans; South America, The Church in.

Substantial LDS populations also exist in the Pacific Islands. See Hawaii, The Church in; Oceania, The Church in; and Polynesians.

In 1978 a revelation extended the priesthood to all worthy males. This allowed the priesthood to be held by blacks. See Africa, The Church in; Blacks; Doctrine and Covenants: Official Declaration—2; Priesthood; South America, The Church in; Brazil; and West Indies, The Church in.]

MIRACLES

A miracle is a beneficial event brought about through divine power that mortals do not understand and of themselves cannot duplicate. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe in the reality of miracles as a consequence of their belief in the existence of God and of his power and goodness.

Just as a shepherd tends his flocks, watches over them, and uses his power to help them, so Jesus Christ used his power and knowledge to help others when he was on earth. For instance, when the supply of wine was exhausted at the marriage feast at Cana, at his mother's request, Jesus miraculously provided wine (John 2:1–10). This act was consistent with his love and compassion, but the means by which he changed the water into wine is not understood, and of themselves people cannot duplicate it. Thus, it is called a miracle. Numerous other examples of the beneficial results of miracles performed by Jesus include the raising from the dead of the widow's son at Naim (Luke 7:11–16), the cleansing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:12–19), and the restoration of the sight of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22–26).

Latter-day Saints value miracles because of their beneficial character. As stated in the Book of Mormon, "God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings" (Mosiah 8:18). Although God brings about marvelous events to bless humankind, it is known that not every spiritual manifestation necessarily comes from God (*TPJS*, pp. 202–214; Rev. 13:13–14; *see also* SIGN SEEKING).

Faith is considered necessary to bring divine intervention in behalf of those in need. For example, as the Book of Mormon prophet ALMA₂ noted, LEHI and his group of emigrants were given the LIAHONA, a compasslike device to direct their travels toward a new and promised land. "And it did work for them according to their faith in God; therefore, if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles [of the compass] should point the way they should go, behold it was done; therefore they had this miracle, and also many other miracles wrought by the power of God, day by day" (Alma 37:40).

God desires to bless his children, and sometimes does so in ways that require the manifestation of extraordinary power. He is restrained only



Catching Quails, by C. C. A. Christensen (late nineteenth century, tempera on canvas, 6'6" × 9'9"). The last of the Mormons driven from Nauvoo were forced out with few provisions. Many were sick, and some died. On October 9, 1846, many quail flew into camp on the river bank above Montrose, Iowa. Many were caught, cooked, and eaten. To the Saints it was a miracle paralleling a similar incident in ancient Israel (*cf.* Exodus 16:13). Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Brigham Young University.

by their lack of faith. Thus, the absence of miracles is evidence of the lack of faith among his children, “for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain” (Moro. 7:37). “For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them” (Ether 12:12).

When the faithful receive a blessing from God, especially one that requires a manifestation of his extraordinary power, the proper response is gratitude to God for the blessing (D&C 46:32). Manifestations of God’s extraordinary power usually come only after faith and do not necessarily create faith (*cf.* Ether 12:7); it is appropriate, therefore, not to make a public show of such sacred experiences as a demonstration of religious belief. Seeking manifestations of the extraordinary power of the divine for the purpose of coming to believe is rejected as improper sign seeking.

Of the miraculous GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT that come to the righteous, the Lord says, “For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts. . . . And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God” (D&C 46:9, 26).

A miraculous gift especially valued is the healing of the sick. However, not every faithful soul who ails will be raised, for the Lord has said, “And whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished and with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food. . . . And the elders of the church, two or more, shall be called, and shall pray for and lay their hands upon them in my name; and if they die they shall die unto me, and if they live they shall live unto me” (D&C 42:43–44). Thus though the sick may be healed (D&C 46:19), if that does not occur, the sick

are nourished by all prudent means, including those available in modern medical science. The **ELDERS** of the Church perform this ordinance of administering to the sick, as the scriptures prescribe (cf. James 5:14–15; D&C 46:20), and the healing or other blessings are then in accordance with the will of God.

Personal experience with miracles might confirm the faith of the recipients. Further, personal experiences with miracles may give others increased confidence in scriptural accounts of miracles.

Of all the miraculous gifts of God given to his children, the one of greatest benefit is the **ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST**. By powers and means not understood by mere mortals, Jesus was able to take upon himself the sins of the world and make it possible for anyone by **REPENTANCE**, to escape the otherwise inescapable suffering of sin and the doom of death, and thereby return to the presence of God. “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent . . . which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit” (D&C 19:16, 18). The miracle of forgiveness and the marvel of resurrection are supreme indeed.

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MISSIONARY, MISSIONARY LIFE

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accept Jesus’ injunction to his ordained disciples, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19). They accept, indeed, a reiteration of it in modern times: “Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 68:8). Missionaries consider themselves emissaries of the Lord in proclaiming his message.

WHO ARE CALLED. In the first generation of the Church, married men frequently were called to be

missionaries, and they left wives and families for an indeterminate length of time. In recent decades, the majority of missionaries have been young men and women who serve about two years.

Currently, the Church calls as missionaries, on a voluntary, temporary basis, single men from the ages of nineteen to twenty-six, single women twenty-one years and older, and older married couples with no dependent children. Missionary service is coordinated with military service as required.

Missionaries or their families generally cover the major costs of serving a mission. Missionaries called from developing nations may receive needed financial assistance from the general missionary fund of the Church. This assistance covers only basic living costs, as the Church has no paid ministry. No one is paid for missionary service.

As the Church has expanded, more and more missionaries have been called. Approximately 76 percent currently are young men, 18 percent are women, and 7 percent are couples. The number of retired couples accepting calls to serve missions is increasing, with many couples serving more than one mission.

CALLING AND TRAINING. The official missionary call is preceded by an interview, often requested by the prospective missionary, with the ward **BISHOP**, who assesses the person’s worthiness and spiritual preparation. Prolonged formal study to preach the gospel is not required, but LDS parents are expected to prepare their children for missionary service through family scripture study and participation in Church classes and programs. Parents are also encouraged to teach children basic nutrition, health care, and homemaking skills that are essential for missionary service.

When a bishop has approved a missionary candidate, he sends the recommendation to the **STAKE PRESIDENT**, who also interviews the prospective missionary. When this process is complete, the stake president sends the recommendation to the Missionary Department of the Church. Designated members of the **QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES** suggest a preliminary assignment for each missionary or couple. These assignments are then sent to the **FIRST PRESIDENCY** of the Church, who confirms or modifies them on the basis of inspiration. These procedures are in keeping with the scriptural admonition that “no man taketh this honour [of ministering in the Church or