

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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by the General Authority assigned by the Quorum of Twelve Apostles to preside at that stake's conference. He typically interviews many MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD leaders in the stake and then seeks inspiration from God to determine whom to call. The General Authority calls the stake president and instructs him to nominate two counselors who are interviewed and called. These three men constitute the stake presidency. They serve voluntarily, receiving no financial remuneration from the Church. Counselors to the stake president advise and assist him in his responsibilities and counsel with him in decision making. As with all officers in the Church, members of the stake presidency must be sustained by the vote of the members over whom they preside (D&C 20:65; *see* COMMON CONSENT). Each stake president supervises and is responsible for the progress of the Church in his stake, including all Church activities, callings, ORDINANCES performed, and programs.

Members of the stake presidency hold the office of HIGH PRIEST, and they serve as the presidency of the high priest quorum and supervise all Melchizedek Priesthood quorums. This means they hold the proper priesthood authority to act as the Lord's agent in behalf of the members (*see* KEYS OF THE PRIESTHOOD).

What the stake president performs and authorizes within the scope of his calling is recognized as official and binding by the Church. For example, the stake president authorizes ordinations of worthy men to offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood, such as ELDER and high priest. He submits to the FIRST PRESIDENCY for their approval the names of men to be called as BISHOPS. When the approval is granted, the stake president issues the call and ordains the man a bishop, after he has been sustained by his ward. The stake president calls the presidents of the women's organizations of the stake. He sets them apart after they have been sustained by vote of the stake. Both stake and full-time MISSIONARIES are SET APART and later released by stake presidents. With a few exceptions, stake presidents may delegate to their counselors, or to high councilors, the authority to perform ordinances, issue calls to serve, ordain others to priesthood offices, and give spiritual blessings. Stake presidencies are to draw upon the scriptures and are to seek inspiration through prayer. The stake president is the one ultimately responsible for decisions made, but the stake presidency is to act as a unified quorum when decisions

are made and actions taken. The stake presidency is accountable to members of the General Authorities of the Church for the administration of their stake.

During semi-annual stake conferences, members of the stake gather to hear instruction and inspirational messages from the stake presidency and other leaders. Stake presidents provide additional spiritual direction through counseling individuals and families and by visiting members' homes.

The stake president also presides over certain council meetings in which the spiritual welfare of Church members is the focus, such as meetings to address the needs of the poor or to prepare for emergencies, or councils that conduct DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES for Church members who have transgressed fundamental standards of the gospel. Through personal interviews, stake presidencies certify the worthiness of members to enter TEMPLES and to be ordained to Melchizedek Priesthood offices, after they have been recommended to the stake president by their bishop. Bishops are to report their stewardship and the welfare of their congregations to their stake president.

Stake presidents are charged with fiscal responsibility for the stake. CLERKS are called to help with RECORD KEEPING and payments, but the expenditures of all wards, priesthood quorums, and AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS within the stake are the responsibility of the stake president. Financial assistance provided to needy individuals is administered by ward bishops, supervised by the stake president. In addition, since most wards meet in Church-owned buildings, the maintenance and operation of all physical facilities in the stake fall under the auspices of the stake president.

The stake president serves until he is released. As is the case with all callings in the Church, he neither campaigns for the position nor chooses the time of his release.

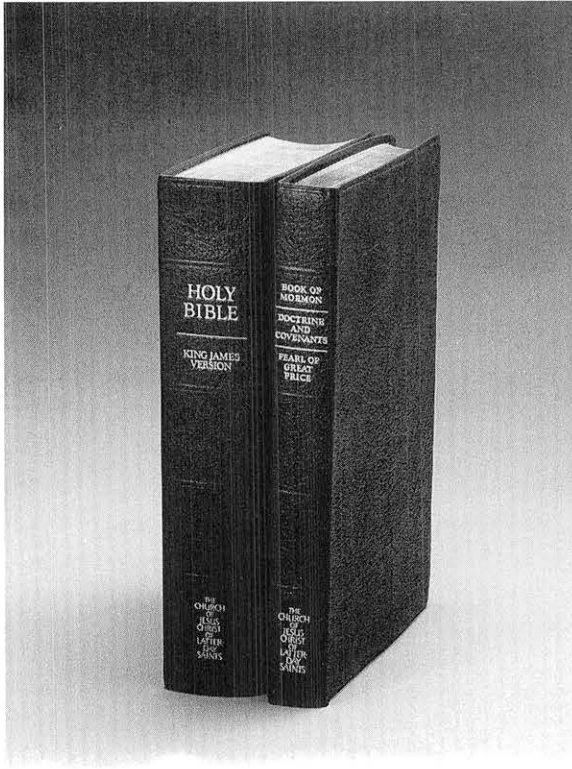
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STANDARD WORKS

Standard works are the books accepted by Latter-day Saints as SCRIPTURE: the BIBLE, BOOK OF



LDS editions of the scriptures from 1979 (King James Version of the Bible) and 1981 (Book of Mormon; Doctrine and Covenants; Pearl of Great Price). Latter-day Saints accept these four books as “standard works” containing the word of God.

MORMON, DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS, and PEARL OF GREAT PRICE. In early Latter-day Saint usage, the term apparently included more writings than the scriptures. In 1874 George A. Smith described “standard works” as the scriptures and other works published by the Church that illustrate “the principles of life and salvation made known in the gospel of Jesus Christ” (*JD* 17:161; cf. 11:364). By 1900, however, the phrase “standard works” came to refer only to the scriptures (Smith, pp. 363–65; *AF*, p. 7).

Anciently, the Lord declared to the prophet NEPHI that the words of his seed, joined with the Lord’s words, would be declared “unto the ends of the earth, for a standard unto my people” (2 Ne. 29:2). In this sense, a standard is a rule for measuring or a model to be followed. The scriptures contain the DOCTRINE and principles that serve as the rules and models by which Latter-day Saints are to live. Hence, they become the standard by which spiritual and other matters are to be judged or measured.

The standard works are different from other writings in the Church, for they have been formally accepted by the Church as revelation and are viewed as containing the word of God. It is his voice that has given them through his PROPHETS (see D&C 18:34–36). Latter-day Saints accept the Bible as the word of God, but recognize that some errors and omissions have occurred in the processes of transmission and translation (A of F 8). The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price, brought forth in modern times by the Prophet Joseph SMITH, are likewise accepted as the word of God (see *MD*, p. 364).

Although The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts the present scriptures as “standard works,” the canon of scripture is not closed. “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (A of F 9). Latter-day Saints also esteem the words of the living prophets of God as scripture, for when they “speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost,” they speak the will, mind, and word of the Lord (D&C 68:3–4). Latter-day Saints are encouraged to study and ponder all these in connection with the standard works and to apply them to their own lives, that all “might be for our profit and learning” (1 Ne. 19:23).

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CLYDE J. WILLIAMS

STEREOTYPING OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

From the time Joseph SMITH’s visions became public knowledge, many stereotypes—pejorative and nonpejorative generalized impressions—have shaped the public image of the Church and its members. In general, stereotypes travel by word of mouth or through the media of popular culture and tend to exaggerate or to distort selected characteristics.

The Church’s first century produced media stereotypes that were largely pejorative and relatively uniform. In the early years, Joseph Smith and the fundamental claims of the Church were the principal targets. The dominant images ques-