

they are shared as needed throughout the Church and are available to local bishops for the aid of needy persons in their wards. In extraordinary circumstances, as in the case of the 1985 Ethiopian famine, the Church has called a special fast to raise relief funds for a specific disaster (*see* ECONOMIC AID; HUMANITARIAN SERVICE). For many years, the value of the two meals foregone during the fast determined the amount of the monthly fast offering contribution. Today Church leaders suggest that the amount of the voluntary offering be associated less with the value of the two meals and more with ability to respond generously to need.

A third kind of contribution made by Church members supports missionary work, a major activity of the Church that is financed largely by individual families. Young men and women can be “called” on missions, usually at the ages of nineteen and twenty-one, respectively, and are responsible for most of their own financial support, including food, rent, clothes, and local transportation. Major travel expenses and medical care are provided from Church funds. Parents and Church leaders urge young people to begin earning and saving money for their missions at an early age. Contributions from parents, family members, and friends supplement the missionaries’ own funds to make up the total financial support required. Beginning in 1991, support for missionaries called from North American stakes is donated directly to the Church at uniform rates, but redistributed by the Church to missionaries according to varying costs of living in different areas of missionary service. Married couples may also be called to serve missions, and they, too, are responsible for their own financial support.

Members confidentially submit tithing and other donations to their local BISHOPS. Each ward bishop receives tithing and then remits it to central Church offices. Assisted by financial clerks, bishops provide contribution slips to donors and maintain complete records. They also review contribution summaries confidentially with each member once a year. Contribution records are forwarded to Church headquarters in accordance with uniform practices. Stake officers conduct regular audits of these records and practices.

Bishops, assisted by other ward leaders, prepare and submit annual ward budgets to be approved by stake presidents (*see* WARD BUDGET). Funding levels are determined by the membership and activity level of the ward. One outcome of this procedure is that local expenditures are deter-

mined by local need and not by the resources of members in a particular ward.

Until 1990, ward operating budgets were mostly dependent on contributions from local members made in addition to regular tithes, fast offerings, and missionary fund contributions. Youth and adult activities, instructional manuals and equipment, and building maintenance were funded locally. Since 1990, in North American stakes tithing paid by Church members is used to fund all local programs, activities, and maintenance of physical facilities. Members perform some maintenance functions as a voluntary service.

The method of funding construction of Church buildings has also varied considerably over time. For many years, the building of meetinghouses was financed largely through contributions from the local members who would use the building. These building fund contributions were made in addition to the tithes, fast offerings, and missionary funds contributed by Church members. Building fund monies could be raised through request (assessment of members), through a variety of fund-raising projects (dinners, socials, etc.), and sometimes through donations of labor and materials (*see* BUILDING PROGRAM). Temples, which are buildings for special religious ceremonies, were financed for many years in much the same manner as local meetinghouses. Now meetinghouses and temples are constructed largely out of tithing funds.

Because the Church has no professional clergy, it is administered at every level through LAY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP, and officials other than the General Authorities contribute their time and talents without remuneration. Thus, events such as weddings, funerals, and baptisms are conducted by the lay ministry in Church-owned buildings at no charge to the member for services or facilities. Because the General Authorities are obliged to leave their regular employment for full-time Church service, they receive a modest living allowance provided from income on Church investments.

STEPHEN D. NADAULD

FINE ARTS

[Historically, the fine arts have been important to Latter-day Saints, who have encouraged participation in, and provided support for, art, dance, drama, litera-

ture, music, and public speaking. For articles about LDS fine arts, see Angel Moroni Statue; Architecture; Art; Artists, Visual; Christus Statue; Folk Art; Material Culture; Sculptors; and Symbols. On dance, see Dance. On drama, see Cumorah Pageant; Drama; Pageants; Polynesian Cultural Center; and Salt Lake Theatre. On literature, see the entry Literature with articles on Drama, Novels, Personal Essays, Poetry, and Short Stories. On music, see Hymns and Hymnody; Mormon Tabernacle Choir; Mormon Youth Symphony and Chorus; and Tabernacle Organ. On public speaking, see Public Speaking.]

FIRESIDES

Firesides are informal gatherings of Church members and friends, often in homes or other congenial surroundings, as if around a fire. The premises are that the home is sacred ground and that all members are to “teach one another” and share experiences and training, that “all may be edified of all and that every man may have an equal privilege” (cf. D&C 88:122). Typically, firesides feature a single speaker reporting new developments, insights, or interesting experiences.

Religious firesides exhibit ties to the ancient fascination of the warmth and protection of a fire. In LDS life, firesides may be traceable to the exodus across the plains. After an arduous day of travel, the PIONEERS in the evening would arrange their wagons in a circle, and gather around the campfire to pray, sing, share their spiritual experiences, and rejoice in the progress and blessings of the day. Eliza R. SNOW wrote a typical song of this exodus:

The camp, the camp—its numbers swell—
Shout! Shout! O camp of Israel!
The king, the Lord of hosts is near,
His armies guard our front and rear [Journal of Eliza R. Snow].

In this spirit, one journal records, “It verily seemed that the glory of God rested down on the wagons and overspread the prairie.”

Holding firesides has become a common Sunday evening practice for socializing, fellowshiping, and learning. WARDS, STAKES, or REGIONS commonly sponsor firesides. They are frequently a forum for returned MISSIONARIES presenting cultural insights from their mission experiences, often with the use of slides, tapes, photos, and so forth.

By extension of the term, there are “morningsides” for high-school SEMINARY students who

attend religious classes before school, and “noon-sides” for some who want to add meaningful religious moments to their lunch hour. Multistake firesides with large audiences are regularly held at BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY. Some satellite broadcasts beamed throughout the world from the Salt Lake TABERNACLE and featuring presentations from the general Church leaders are also called firesides.

In all firesides, essential elements prevail: prayer, music, the spoken word, and sometimes special activities or workshops. All in all, they encourage lay participation, sharing, and free expression, and lead to deeper comprehension of one’s heritage, both religious and cultural, and a “knowledge of history and of countries and of kingdoms” (D&C 93:53; 88:79).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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RONALD W. PATRICK

FIRSTBORN OF GOD

See: Jesus Christ: Names and Titles of

FIRST ESTATE

First estate refers to the unspecified period of time otherwise known as PREMORTAL LIFE. The words “first estate” in Jude 1:6 are the King James translation of the Greek *arché*. In other English versions the word is translated as “principality,” “domain,” “dominion,” “appointed spheres,” “responsibilities,” and “original rank.” In the context of Jude 1:6 each of these implies that certain intelligent beings existed in significant positions in the pre-earth life and fell from their favored status with God.

Latter-day Saints believe that all MANKIND were begotten as individual spirit children of God, with individual agency, prior to being born into MORTALITY. Using this agency, a third part of these spirits followed Lucifer and rebelled against God and the PLAN OF SALVATION that God proposed to bring about the eventual EXALTATION of his children through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Because of their rebellion, these spirits “kept not their first estate” (Jude 1:6) and were subsequently cast out of heaven, being denied the