

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

Journal of Eliza R. Snow. Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

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

opportunity of having a mortal body on this earth (D&C 29:36–38; Moses 4:1–4; Abr. 3:26–28; cf. Rev. 12:4, 7–9). All the remaining spirits proved themselves sufficiently faithful to be permitted the privilege of experiencing earth life with a PHYSICAL BODY (Abr. 3:22–26).

[See also Birth; Second Estate.]

ALEXANDER L. BAUGH

FIRST PRESIDENCY

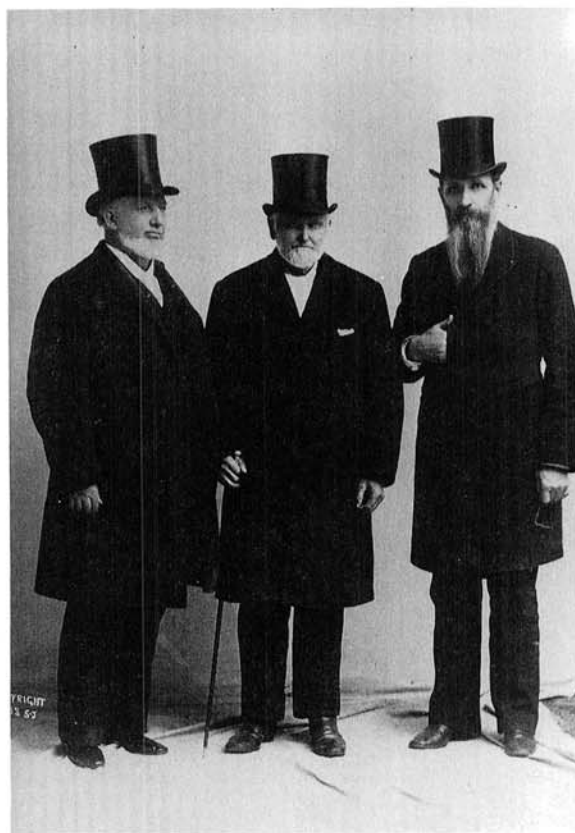
The First Presidency is the governing body of and highest ranking quorum in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Its AUTHORITY, duties, and responsibilities extend over every person and all matters in the Church. This quorum usually consists of three persons—the PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH and two counselors selected by the President. Joseph SMITH, the first President, called more than two men to assist him. Other Presidents have occasionally also used this practice of additional counselors as needed. Most recently, Spencer W. KIMBALL was assisted at times by three counselors.

The First Presidency was established in March 1832, two years after the founding of the Church. Jesse Gause and Sidney RIGDON were called to be counselors to Joseph Smith. Gause served in this position only until that December, when he proved unfaithful and was excommunicated. The calling was subsequently given to Frederick G. Williams, who was ordained on March 18, 1833 (D&C 81, 90). Further direction pertaining to the organization of the First Presidency was given in a revelation on priesthood in 1835. Three men were to be chosen and appointed, and ordained to that office by the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES, “and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church” (D&C 107:22).

Latter-day Saints believe that the New Testament APOSTLES—PETER, JAMES, and JOHN—comprised a first presidency with Peter as the presiding officer, and with James and John as counselors. As an ancient first presidency, they functioned in a manner similar to the First Presidency today. For instance, the Bible describes occasions when Jesus dealt with Peter alone (Matt. 18:19; Luke 24:34), and others when the three apostles were involved (Matt. 17:1–3; 26:37–39; Mark 5:37–42). These passages suggest that the roles of these three

men were different from the roles of the other apostles. As a first presidency, Peter, James, and John possessed the special authority to give Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY the KEYS of ministry in the DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES. It is these keys that control the exercise of the priesthood by all others in the vital functions of the Church in modern times.

Members of the First Presidency are not equal. The authority rests solely with the President, the counselors having a subordinate role, with the first counselor having precedence over the second counselor. In the absence of the President, the counselors preside in meetings with the Council or Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and other GENERAL AUTHORITIES, and in the conferences of the Church. If the President is ill and unable to carry out all his functions, the counselors



President Wilford Woodruff (center), with second counselor Joseph F. Smith (right) and first counselor George Q. Cannon (left), at the time of the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple, April 6, 1893. John F. Bennett Collection. Photographer: Charles Ellis Johnson. Courtesy the Utah State Historical Society.