

ever, empirical studies, even by critics, are ambivalent. One claims that the program has failed to raise achievement and IQ scores of placement students, but notes that placement students read more than their reservation counterparts. A second suggests that students suffer intercultural conflict within their foster families, but expresses surprise that these students function without major symptoms of psychological distress. Still another asserts that the placement experience interferes with the process of identity formation, but acknowledges that the program has done more for the Indian people than any other program to date.

Many theses, dissertations, formal reports, and published articles find that the program has been successful and valuable. Placement students usually come from rural families with stable but limited economic and cultural opportunities. Starting with limited language skills, the students in the placement program come out with less fear of failure, more confidence in their future, and higher academic skills and grades, and a better self-image than their reservation peers. Other studies indicate that placement services graduates are aware of a great variety of occupations open to them and are anxious to continue their education to prepare for them. They typically have come to believe in working hard for future rewards and feel that being Indian does not hold them down. They graduate from high school in larger numbers than non-placement Native Americans, and the college grades of rural placement students are on a par with the grades of urban Indian students.

Most placement students express more pride and interest in Indian culture than do students from Indian boarding schools. That they perceive themselves as truly bicultural, at ease in both societies, is confirmed by their rate of interaction with Indian students as well as with Anglo peers. They also become Church leaders. Most of them are active in the Church, go on missions, and agree with major Church beliefs; many marry in the temple.

Foster parents volunteer for religious reasons and remain in the program to see the child grow and develop emotionally and spiritually. They typically become very attached to their Indian children, maintaining a close relationship with them after graduation from school.

Accusations that the LDS Church used its influence to push children into joining the program prompted the U.S. government in 1977 to commission a study conducted under the auspices of

the Interstate Compact Secretariat. Its findings rejected such accusations. In the resulting report, written by Robert E. Leach, Native American parents emphatically stated that they, not the children, decided to apply for placement. These parents typically stated that they were pleased that the program led their children to happiness and a better economic situation while the children still identified with their Indian heritage. This participation, they claimed, also helped the rest of the family to understand and deal more effectively with Anglos. They consistently expressed appreciation to the foster families for caring for their children. Some Indian leaders were intent on limiting the placement of Indian children among Anglos. However, after hearing testimony and examining current research, the committee agreed in 1977 to permit the LDS Indian Student Placement program to continue.

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INDIVIDUALITY

It is LDS doctrine that every human being has an eternal identity, existing from the premortal state and continuing forever (Abr. 3:22-23). Moreover, all individuals are responsible for their own choices, and all will stand before the Lord to present an accounting of their lives at the Judgment Day (A of F 2; Moro. 10:27). This, however, does not mean that individuals are autonomous or alone. All individuals are spirit children of God the Father, who organized them into relationships in order to maximize their growth and happiness through loving and serving one another.

LDS teachings make clear that living the gospel of Jesus Christ means voluntarily submitting the self to the will of God. Joseph F. SMITH felt that it shows “a stronger characteristic of individuality” to bring the self into harmony with God than to be separate from him (*JD* 25:245). An individual must voluntarily obey God’s will to achieve righteousness (John 7:16), and God’s will requires service to others in one’s family and community (Matt. 20:26–27). Paradoxically, “he that loseth his life for [Christ’s] sake shall find it” (Matt. 10:39); and as David O. MCKAY stated, “A man’s duties to himself and to his fellow men are indissolubly connected” (p. 289). The Church cannot force individuals to become one with God and others. That must be done “only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness” (D&C 121:41–43).

The ultimate objectives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are as inclusive and extensive as can be imagined, both individually and collectively—namely, to attain ETERNAL LIFE for all individuals and eternal continuity for families and to maintain a supportive, unified community of Saints on earth who live the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The scale and profundity of these objectives are equal to the depth of commitment they require. Christ promises righteous men and women that they shall be joint-heirs with him, inheritors of “all that my Father hath” (D&C 84:33–39; Rom. 8:14–18). Having offered the RICHES OF ETERNITY, the Savior may require the faithful to voluntarily sacrifice all their earthly possessions, including life itself, in order “to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation” (*Lectures on Faith*, Lecture 6, paragraph 7). Latter-day Saints express this principle in a beloved hymn: “I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, . . . I’ll be what you want me to be” (*Hymns*, p. 270).

Salvation is both an individual and a collective matter. Individuals are punished for their own sins, but the personal choices that foster growth and exaltation necessarily involve other people. The atonement of Jesus Christ is relational: “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” the Savior said, and people demonstrate their love for him by keeping his commandments (John 14:6, 15). The BAPTISMAL COVENANT is both personal and social: it involves personal willingness to remember Christ always, and it encourages members to “bear one another’s burdens” (Mosiah 18:8).

While the singular focus of the Church on achieving its ultimate objectives unifies its members in ways that contrast markedly with organizations having internally competing objectives, there are limits to the diversity in individual beliefs and practices that the Church can tolerate and still achieve its mission (*see* ORTHODOXY, HETERODOXY, AND HERESY). Neither Joseph Smith’s oft-quoted statement that “I teach the people correct principles and they govern themselves” (*JD* 10:57–58) nor Lehi’s insistence that people are free to choose liberty and eternal life or captivity and death (2 Ne. 2:26–27) means that the Church can ignore internal challenges to its integrity or principles (Matt. 18:17; 2 Thes. 3:14–15; D&C 42:24, 74–93). Severe cases of disruption and violation may be subjected to DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES and may result in disfellowshipment or even excommunication.

Christ affirms great diversity and individuality in gospel service. Each person has abilities to perform Christlike service that others may not be able to perform. Jesus taught that personal spiritual gifts and talents are to be cultivated and shared: “the best gifts” are given “that all may be profited thereby” (D&C 46:8–12; *see also* GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT).

Organizations may in a measure constrain behavior, and the Church has a constraining influence on individuals insofar as they choose to conform or fulfill the requirements for holding CALLINGS or a TEMPLE RECOMMEND. However, there is ample room for the expression of individuality and appreciation for those who may take a novel approach to the righteous fulfillment of their responsibilities. God counsels his children to use their gifts creatively and intelligently in his service: “It is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant” (D&C 58:26–28). Moreover, most Church constraints, such as the law of chastity or the directive to avoid addictive substances, are intended to free the individual for a happier life. Voluntarily following Jesus Christ is the ultimate liberty, and sin, the ultimate captivity (John 8:32; 2 Ne. 2:26–27).

Latter-day Saints are taught that they and all the rest of the human family are eternal children of a loving Heavenly Father. Their individuality is priceless and eternal. The recognition that the Church is enriched by a diversity of individual endowments, experiences, and interests always

has been fundamental to the LDS faith. The concluding sentence of the Articles of Faith celebrates the diverse individual paths that are part of the righteous life: "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."

[See also Socialization; Unity; Values, Transmission of.]

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INFANT BAPTISM

[This entry has two parts: the LDS Perspective concerning this practice, and the Early Christian Origins.]

LDS PERSPECTIVE

Children are baptized as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when they reach age eight and receive a bishop's interview to assess their understanding and commitment. This age for baptism was identified by revelation (D&C 68:25, 28). The Church does not baptize infants.

The practice of baptizing infants emerged among Christians in the third century A.D. and was controversial for some time. According to the Book of Mormon, it similarly became an issue and was denounced among the Nephites in the fourth century A.D. When MORMON, a Nephite prophet, inquired of the Lord concerning baptism of little children, he was told that they are incapable of committing sin and that the curse of Adam is removed from them through the ATONEMENT of Christ. Hence little children need neither repentance nor baptism (Moro. 8:8–22). They are to be taught "to pray and walk uprightly" so that by the age of accountability their baptism will be meaningful and effective for their lives.

[See also Accountability; Children: Salvation of Children; Fall of Adam; Original Sin.]

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EARLY CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

Although the New Testament never mentions infant baptism either to approve or to condemn the practice, many passages therein associate BAPTISM with FAITH in Jesus Christ, REPENTANCE, and forgiveness of SINS, none of which are appropriate requirements for infants (Mark 1:4–5; 16:15–16; Acts 2:37–38; 19:4; 22:16; Rom. 6:1–6; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Gal. 3:26–27; Col. 2:12–13; Heb. 6:1–6; 10:22; 1 Pet. 3:21).

The assumption that those baptized are committed disciples continues through the second century in Christian literature (*Didache* 7.1; *Shepherd of Hermas*: "Vision" 3.7 and "Mandates" 4.3; *Epistle of Barnabas* 11; Justin, *First Apology* 1.11, 15). The earliest explicit reference to the practice of baptizing infants dates to shortly after A.D. 200 in the writings of Tertullian, a North African theologian who opposed it on the grounds that baptism carries an awesome responsibility and should be delayed until a person is fully committed to living righteously (*De baptismo* 18). A decade later Hippolytus, who would become a schismatic bishop in Rome, wrote a handbook of rules for church organization and practice. Some versions of his *Apostolic Tradition* (21.3–4) refer to baptizing "little ones," who should have an adult relative speak for them if they are unable to do so themselves. However, since Hippolytus prescribed a normative three-year preparatory period of teaching, reading, fasting, and prayer prior to baptism (*Apostolic Tradition* 17), the infant baptism passage has been questioned as a later interpolation.

The first Christian writer to defend infant baptism as an apostolic practice was apparently Origen, the preeminent theologian of the Greek-speaking church, who wrote on the subject around A.D. 240 in Alexandria, Egypt. Origen referred to the frequently asked question of why the church should baptize sinless infants (*Homily on Luke* 14). In response, he argued that baptism takes away the pollution of birth. Origen's *Commentary on Romans* further elaborates this theme, asserting that because of hereditary sin, "the church has a tradition from the apostles to give baptism even to infants" (5.9). However, this passage is suspect be-