INTELLIGENCE

According to latter-day scripture, “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36). Mankind, too, may be glorified by gaining intelligence (D&C 93:28–30). As Christ did not receive a fullness of intelligence at first but continued from “grace to grace” until he received a fulness (D&C 93:11–13, 27–28), so it is with all persons. Whatever principles of intelligence they gain in mortality will rise with them in the Resurrection (D&C 130:18–19).

To gain increased intelligence, individuals must be agents to act for themselves (D&C 93:30), which means that they must be tried and tempted (D&C 29:39), and at the same time, the works of the Lord must be plainly manifest to them (D&C 93:31) so that they will have choice. In premortal life, men and women were intelligent beings (Abr. 3:21–22) who were given agency by God (Moses 4:3; D&C 29:36). In mortality, they are also given agency by God (D&C 101:78), to gain knowledge of good and evil (Moses 5:11). Intelligence increases as individuals forsake evil and come to the Lord, calling on his name, obeying his voice, and keeping his commandments (D&C 93:1–2, 28, 37). Intelligence is lost through disobedience, hardening of hearts, and clinging to false traditions (Mark 8:21; D&C 93:39).

Intelligence, however defined, is not created or made (D&C 93:29); it is coeternal with God (TPJS, pp. 353–54). Some LDS leaders have interpreted this to mean that intelligent beings—called intelligences—existed before and after they were given spirit bodies in the premortal existence. Others have interpreted it to mean that intelligent beings were organized as spirits out of eternal intelligent matter, that they did not exist as individuals before they were organized as spirit beings in the premortal existence (Abr. 3:22; JD 7:57, 2:124). The Church has taken no official position on this issue.

[See also Intelligences.]

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DENNIS J. PACKARD

INTELLIGENCES

The word “intelligences” (plural) occurs frequently in LDS literature, having reference to the period of the premortal existence of mankind. The term has received two interpretations by writers within the Church: as the literal spirit children of Heavenly Parents and as individual entities existing prior to their spirit birth. Because latter-day revelation has not clarified the meaning of the term, a more precise interpretation is not possible at present.

The scriptural source for the word “intelligences” is the BOOK OF ABRAHAM 3:21–22. The Lord instructed the patriarch Abraham regarding the premortal experiences of all who have been or ever will be upon the earth. Among those events was the COUNCIL IN HEAVEN, at which the Father’s PLAN OF SALVATION for his children was discussed. Abraham wrote of this, “Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; . . . for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them” (Abr. 3:22–23). The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of intelligences as follows: “God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them” (TPJS, p. 354).

Concerning man’s premortal existence, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, “Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29). "Intelligence," as used here, is singular, and it is not clear from this passage if it refers to individual, conscious identity. As noted, Abraham referred to the spirit offspring of God as organized intelligences, apparently using the word “intelligences” to mean “spirits.” Church authorities have indicated that spirit birth was not the beginning. Spencer W. KIMBALL, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote, “Our spirit matter was eternal and co-existent with God, but it was organized into spirit bodies by our Heavenly
Father" (The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 5, Salt Lake City, 1969). Marion G. Romney, of the First Presidency, speaking of people's divine origin as children of God, stated, "Through that birth process, self-existing intelligence was organized into individual spirit beings" (Ensign 8 [Nov. 1978]:14). Bruce R. McConkie, an apostle, wrote:

Abraham used the name intelligences to apply to the spirit children of the Eternal Father. The intelligence or spirit element became intelligences after the spirits were born as individual entities (Abr. 3:22–24). Use of this name designates both the primal element from which the spirit offspring were created and also their inherited capacity to grow in grace, knowledge, power, and intelligence itself, until such intelligences, gaining the fulness of all things, became like their Father, the Supreme Intelligence [MD, p. 387].

While the revelations leave no doubt as to the existence of intelligent matter prior to its being organized as spirits, speculation sometimes arises regarding the nature of premortal existence and whether there was individual identity and consciousness prior to birth as a spirit. Some hold that the terms "intelligence" and "intelligences" have reference to a form of prespirit conscious self-existence, which included individual identity, variety, and agency (so reasoned B. H. Roberts, pp. 401–423). Others maintain that while these characteristics, attributes, and conditions are eternal, they essentially came together for each individual at the spirit birth. The question of whether prespirit intelligence had individual identity and consciousness remains unanswered. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith gave this caution in 1936:

Some of our writers have endeavored to explain what an intelligence is, but to do so is futile, for we have never been given any insight into this matter beyond what the Lord has fragmentarily revealed. We know, however, that there is something called intelligence which always existed. It is the real eternal part of man, which was not created or made. This intelligence combined with the spirit constitutes a spiritual identity or individual [p. 10].

No formal pronouncements have been made by the leading councils of the Church to clarify what additional meanings and attributes may be assigned to the word "intelligences," beyond that which identifies intelligences as spirit children of God.

[See also First Estate; Intelligence; Premortal Life; Spirit Body.]

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PAUL NOLAN HYDE

INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS

This entry has three articles:

Christian
Jewish
Other Faiths

The articles focus on the efforts of the Church to relate, assist, understand, and cooperate with other faiths in common social, ethical, and religious quests.

CHRISTIAN

The Church has never existed in isolation or insulation from other Christian faiths. Its roots and its nurture are in, and remain in, the Christian heritage. But its claim that the heavens have opened anew, that a restoration of the lost radiance and power of the full gospel of Jesus Christ is underway at divine initiative, and its rejection of many long-standing traditions that have generated misunderstanding and ill will. In the first generation in the United States, the solidarity of the Latter-day Saints was thought to be inimical to pluralism and at the same time aroused the ire of sectarianists. Missionary efforts through personal contact more than through mass media and image making sometimes compounded the problem. In certain times and circumstances, there has been no will, or at least no lasting resolve by either side, for outreach and cooperation.

In three ways these tensions are being reduced:

1. Institutionally. Church officers now participate with leaders of other faiths in Christian interchange. LDS leaders in many countries are welcomed to interfaith devotionals with their Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox counterparts. This has been in keeping with the precept and example of early Church authorities (see TOLERANCE). For mutual support, they likewise meet and organize, across varied lines and programs, for example, the chaplaincies of many na-