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, become 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 under way at divine initiative, and its rejection of many long-standing traditions 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 sectarians. 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-
tions of the free world, the Boy Scout movement, the National Council of Christians and Jews, and local and international service clubs concerned with social, ethical, and moral issues.

2. Educationally. The Church fosters the largest adult education curriculum in the world. Many of the courses are Bible-related, and some focus on Christian history and institutions. For high school and college-age students, who now exceed half a million, the Church provides similar courses in its seminaries and institutes adjacent to high schools and major universities. Teachers in the Church Educational System are given financial supplements to visit the Holy Land, to study the origins of the three great monotheistic religions, to become familiar with the vocabularies and worldviews of alternative Christian institutions, and to understand and recognize common ground in the lives of the youth they teach. LDS scholars of many disciplines are increasingly involved in the religious studies programs of academic and professional organizations.

The Church has opened its extensive broadcasting facilities to representative programming across the spectrum of Christian groups (see Bonneville International; KSL Radio). It has also been a major participant in religious broadcasts in the VISN Religious Interfaith Cable Television Network, which represents most major denominations in the United States.

To establish two-way interchange, the Richard L. Evans Chair of Christian Understanding was established at Brigham Young University. Funded and advised by a variety of Christian groups (the initial commitment came from a Presbyterian), this endowment fosters religious studies symposia, lectures, forums, exchange programs, and visiting professorships. It also sponsors interfaith meetings where common as well as controversial theological issues are presented by representatives of each tradition, and where workshops help resolve tensions in an atmosphere of goodwill.

The Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University produces distinguished volumes utilizing scholars of many faiths who represent interdisciplinary and comparative expertise. Although a literature of disparagement continues both from the left and from the right (see Anti-Mormonism), Church leaders continually remind the membership that whatever may be said of those who make a religion of anti-Mormonism, a retaliatory response is neither wise nor Christian.

3. Practically in Christian Humanitarianism. At its best the pattern of LDS life, institutionally and individually, has not been to demand rights but to merit them, not to clamor for fellowship and goodwill but to manifest them and to give energy and time beyond rhetoric. In a major address to regional Church leaders, former President Spencer W. Kimball set the tone:

We urge members to do their civic duty and to assume their responsibilities as individual citizens in seeking solutions to the problems which beset our cities and communities.

With our wide-ranging mission, so far as mankind is concerned, Church members cannot ignore the many practical problems that require solution if our families are to live in an environment conducive to spirituality.

Where solutions to these practical problems require cooperative action with those not of our faith, members should not be reticent in doing their part in joining and leading in those efforts where they can make an individual contribution to those causes which are consistent with the standards of the Church [Kimball, Ensign 8 (May 1978): 100].

Examples of recent Church-encouraged projects that reach across different affiliations include cooperative emergency assistance, support for homeless shelters in many cities, and linkage with the work of the Salvation Army. At BYU, students of other faiths are often elected to student offices, and various service clubs strive against intolerance and clannishness. In the same spirit, the Church was among the first to give aid, with other Christian bodies, to disaster areas in such places as China, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Los Angeles, Peru, Armenia, Japan, Iran, Chile, and Greece. Through two special fasts, the Church raised $11 million for the hungry in Africa and Ethiopia, and utilized Catholic services as a delivery system (see Humanitarian Service).

Because so much in contemporary society is dissonant, centrifugal, and divisive, interfaith understanding and mutuality seem indispensable. LDS history suggests that what appear to be intractable political, social, and economic clashes are often, at root, religious. To overcome needless divisions and to heal the wounds of modern life, including the religious life, are not just the commission of Latter-day Saints but of all who take
seriously the message and ministry of Jesus Christ. Unless in some there is Christlike concern for all, there is little hope for any.

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RICHARD P. LINDSAY

JEVISH

The chief nexus for interfaith relationships between Jews and Latter-day Saints has been Salt Lake City, Utah. A certain amount of contact has also occurred in the State of Israel as well as in cities in the United States with large Jewish populations, such as Los Angeles and New York. Generally, relations between members of the two groups have been characterized by mutual respect and goodwill. Exceptions include sharp differences between Mormons and some Jews on the issue of the purpose of the Brigham Young University Center for Near Eastern Studies in Jerusalem (dedicated 1989; see BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY: JERUSALEM CENTER FOR NEAR EASTERN STUDIES). However, a workable relationship prevails.

One of the earliest direct contacts between communities was initiated by Orson Hyde, an LDS apostle, who in 1841 traveled through Europe to reach the Holy Land. With rare exceptions, instead of seeking audience with European Jewish leaders to proselytize them, he warned them of difficulties that they would experience, and urged them to emigrate to Palestine. Orson Hyde continued on to the Holy Land, where, on October 24, 1841, he prayed on the Mount of Olives to "dedicate and consecrate this land . . . for the gathering together of Judah's scattered remnants" (H.C. 4:456–59).

Broader contacts began after 1853 with the arrival of the first Jewish family in Utah. While Jews tended to align themselves politically with non-Mormons, they enjoyed the goodwill of their LDS neighbors. Although some Jewish immigrants into Utah—particularly from eastern Europe and Russia—were ridiculed because of their language and their lack of acquaintance with frontier life, they found no cruelty, no restrictions of movement, and no ugly intolerance. While there were no handouts, charity, or dole, they discovered no restrictions on opportunity among the Latter-day Saints.

In 1900, when Utah Jewish leader Nathan Rosenblatt and his associates decided to build a synagogue for a second congregation, the principal help came from the LDS Church's First Presidency. When the building opened in 1903, Rosenblatt proclaimed his gratitude for the blessing and privilege of living in Utah with the tolerant, understanding men and women of the Mormon faith. He and his associates had always found them to be a people devoted to their own faith, yet a people who respected the Jewish Torah and knew what the noted teacher Hillel meant when he taught, "Do not do to your neighbor what you would not do to yourself."

Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, regularly offers courses that focus on the religion and history of Jews and Judaism. In addition, Jewish scholars have lectured and taught courses at the university, particularly in recent years. In 1921 President Heber J. Grant offered clear counsel to Latter-day Saints against anti-Semitism: "There should be no ill-will . . . in the heart of any true Latter-day Saint, toward the Jewish people" (in Gospel Standards, Salt Lake City, 1941, p. 147).

An indicator of the reciprocal respect that has existed between Utah Jews and Mormons is the number of Jewish public officials elected to serve the state. These include the state's fourth governor (Simon Bamberger, 1917–1921), a district judge (Herbert M. Schiller, 1933–1939), a mayor of Salt Lake City (Louis Marcus, 1931–1935), and several legislators.

[See also World Religions (non-Christian) and Mormonism: Judaism; Zionism.]

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JOSEPH ROSENBLATT
OTHER FAITHS
In August 1852, while the Church was still struggling to establish itself in the western United States, President Brigham Young issued a bold call for missionaries to go to China, India, Siam (Thailand), and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The seventeen missionaries who were sent formed some of the earliest contacts that LDS members had with non-Christians (see ASIA, THE CHURCH IN). Because of civil wars, rejection, and language and cultural difficulties, the work in most countries lasted only months; however, work in India continued until 1856. Although some attempts were made in the early twentieth century, the Church did not undertake further significant efforts to establish itself in non-Christian nations, including Asia, until after World War II.

Stimulated by experiences of LDS servicemen in Asia during and after the war, the Church established missions in East Asia at the end of the 1940s. Since then, WARDS and STAKES led by local members have been established in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Philippines; temples have been built in all these places except Hong Kong.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Church expanded into such Southeast Asian nations as Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and in the South Asian nations of India and Sri Lanka. Although small beginnings have been made in some Muslim countries, Church growth in such countries has been limited.

LDS health services programs in the Philippines and refugee assistance in Thailand have been favorably received. High-level contacts with government officials in many countries have elicited a positive response to the values of the Church and its members. Overall, the Church has made consistent efforts to remain sensitive to and abide by local laws and customs, including regulations based on religious sentiment.

Church growth in Africa has principally taken place in the last quarter of the twentieth century, particularly following the 1978 revelation allowing all worthy males to hold the priesthood (see AFRICA, THE CHURCH IN; DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: OFFICIAL DECLARATION—2). Congregations have been established in several countries, and Church membership is growing rapidly. In recent years, the Church has joined various charitable organizations in sending famine relief to stricken nations on the African continent (see ECONOMIC AID).

In an educational vein, MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTERS teach many foreign languages and courses on the religions and cultures of non-Western countries, and for educational purposes "culturegrams" have been developed that are now used by U.S. government agencies. In addition, courses on world religions are regularly taught in institutions of higher learning. Moreover, symposia on Islam and on the religions of Africa have been hosted at Brigham Young University, with a number of distinguished religious leaders and scholars participating.

In many countries, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is viewed as an American church. However, Church leaders have strongly emphasized that it is universal, a church for all people everywhere (see WORLD RELIGIONS [NON-CHRISTIAN] AND MORMONISM). A powerful presentation by President Spencer W. Kimball in 1974 stressed the responsibility of the Church to share the gospel with all of God's children (Ensign 4 [Oct. 1974]:2–14). Consequently, in the last half of the twentieth century the Church has made its most significant efforts to establish itself throughout the world.

Generally the LDS outreach to non-Christians has had a positive, invigorating effect on members of the Church, has strengthened Church membership significantly, and has brought about increased awareness of cultural differences as well as a willingness to work within those differences.

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The International Genealogical Index™ (IGI) is a vital records index, which at the beginning of 1990 contained more than 147 million names of deceased persons from the 1500s to about 1875. The IGI lists individuals alphabetically according to place of birth/christening or marriage, and clusters similarly spelled surnames under a standard spelling.

The Church publishes the IGI to assist genealogical research and help members determine