the law, and I am he who covenanted with my peo-

lce Israel” (3 Ne. 15:4–9).

2. The entire law was in several senses fulfilled, completed, superseded, and enlivened by Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “In me it hath all been fulfilled” (3 Ne. 12:17–18). Its “great and eternal gospel truths” (MD, p. 398) are applicable through Jesus Christ in all dispensations as he continues to reveal his will to prophets “like unto Moses” (2 Ne. 3: 9–11).

3. Latter-day Saints believe that the law of Moses was issued to the Israelites as a preparatory gospel to be a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ and the fulness of his gospel (Gal. 3:24; cf. Jacob 4:5; Alma 34:14). The authority to act in the name of God is embodied in two priesthoods, the Melchizedek or higher, which embraces all divinely delegated authority and extends to the fulness of the law of the gospel, and Aaronic or lesser, which extends only to lesser things, such as the law of carnal commandments and baptism (D&C 84:26–27). While Moses and his predecessors had the higher priesthood and the fulness of the gospel of Christ, both of which were to be given to the children of Israel, “they hardened their hearts and could not endure [God’s] presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath . . . took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued” (D&C 84:23–24; see Heb. 3:16–19; Mosiah 3:14; TPJS, p. 60).

4. Book of Mormon people brought the law of Moses with them from Jerusalem. Even though they endeavored to observe it strictly until the coming of Christ (e.g., 2 Ne. 5:10; Alma 30:3), they believed in Christ and knew that salvation did not come by the law alone but by Christ (2 Ne. 25:23–24), and understood that the law would be superseded by the Messiah (Mosiah 13:27–28; 2 Ne. 25:23–25).

5. For Latter-day Saints, all things are given of God to man as types and shadows of the redeeming and atoning acts of Christ (2 Ne. 11:4; Mosiah 13:31). Thus, the law of Moses typified various aspects of the atonement of Christ.

6. Covenant making, promises, and obedience to commandments are part of the fulness of the gospel of Christ: “Through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (A of F 3). Both for Latter-day Saints and regarding Jewish observ-

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LAWSUITS

Church members are usually inclined to avoid litigation and to find less contentious ways of resolving differences that may arise. This inclination is based primarily upon teachings in the New Testament and the Doctrine and Covenants. The early experience of the Church added powerful reinforcements to scriptural condemnations of litigation. In the 1840s the Prophet Joseph Smith and other early leaders were obliged to defend themselves repeatedly against false charges. So oppressive were those charges that the Prophet at one time even said that he looked forward to the next life, where people would be reunited with their loved ones and where there “will be no fear of mobs, persecutions, or malicious lawsuits” (TPJS, p. 360).
The disparaging view of litigation begins with the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus taught his followers to settle disputes quickly and avoid court proceedings, to "turn the other cheek," and, if an adversary should obtain judgment against them in court to "let him have thy cloak also" (Matt. 5:25-26, 39-40). The apostle Paul condemned the practice that "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers" (1 Cor. 6:6). He counseled the Corinthian Saints to find a wise person from among them to judge the matter and, failing that, to suffer the wrong rather than to take it to legal authorities for a decision (verses 5-7).

More detailed instructions for dealing with offenses are contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, which counsels members to resolve their differences. But it also recognizes that some offenses are violations of criminal law that should be reported to civil authorities, while other categories of offenders should be dealt with by the Church (D&C 42:79-92). Instructions for Church disciplinary procedures are detailed (D&C 102:13-23).

When the main body of the Church was established in Utah in the mid-1800s, there was no civil authority, so Church courts exercised jurisdiction over secular as well as religious matters for the next several decades (see Courts, Ecclesiastical, Nineteenth Century). However, following the establishment of civil courts, the need for Church courts diminished. They were formally discontinued in 1989 in favor of disciplinary councils.

Church courts never were intended to absolve members from the duty of resolving their disputes by reconciliation and mutual understanding whenever possible. Even when Church courts were available, members were regularly admonished to settle their conflicts by informal means and to avoid litigation. A typical example: "Be reconciled to each other. Do not go to the courts of the Church nor to the courts of the land for litigation. Settle your own troubles and difficulties" (J. F. Smith, GD, p. 257).

The preference for forbearance, forgiveness, and informal means of resolution of disputes, both among Church members and with people outside the Church, continues today, as shown by counsel given in a 1986 general conference of the Church: "We live in an environment . . . of litigation and conflict, of suing and countersuing. Even here the powers of healing may be invoked" (G. B. Hinekley, Ensign 18 [Nov. 1988]:54).

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LAYING ON OF HANDS

The laying on of hands on the head of an individual as a religious ceremony has served many purposes historically and continues to do so for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The most common are the following:

The Sacrificial Ceremonies of Ancient Israel. Anciently, in burnt and sin offerings, the offerer laid his hands on the sacrifice prior to its being slain (e.g., Ex. 29:10; Lev. 1:4; 4:4; 2 Chron. 29:23). In the case of the scapegoat, hands were laid on the head, symbolizing transference of the sins of the people to the animal (Lev. 16:21). The hands of the people were laid upon the Levites, and they in turn laid their hands upon the offerings (Num. 8:10-12).

Bestowal of the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Confirmation and bestowing of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands follows baptism. The Doctrine and Covenants explains that the one performing the ordinance is acting as proxy for the Lord himself: "I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant Sidney Rigdon, and you shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which shall teach you the peaceable things of the kingdom" (D&C 36:2; cf. Moro. 2:2). This ordinance may be performed only by Melchizedek priesthood holders, not by those of the lesser or Aaronic priesthood (D&C 20:58). This explains why John the Baptist, though he performed water baptism, did not bestow the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands (Matt. 3:11), and it may explain why Philip did not do so for his Samaritan converts (Acts 8:5-17), or Apollos for the Ephesians (Acts 19:6; see also Acts 8:12-20). In Philip’s case, he baptized the Samaritans, but Peter and John, who held the higher priesthood, were sent to confer the Holy Ghost, and they laid "their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:17).

Paul may have referred to this gift when he counseled his companion Timothy to “neglect not