has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also” (D&C 130:22). This is not to be understood crassly; the matter of exalted bodies is purified, transfigured, and glorified. LDS teachings draw no ultimate contrast between spirit and matter. Indeed, “all spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure” (D&C 131:7). This position avoids traditional difficulties in explaining the interaction of spirit and body.

The reality of matter implies the reality of space and time. Scripture speaks of the place where God dwells and of “the reckoning of the Lord’s time” (Abr. 3:9). So God himself exists within a spatial and temporal environment. In accepting space, time, and matter as constitutive of reality, Latter-day Saints take the everyday world of human experience as a fairly reliable guide to the nature of things. But this acceptance is no dogma, and their belief remains open to the possibility that these three ideas, as presently understood, may be auxiliaries to more fundamental ideas not yet known.

PLURALISM. LDS thought clearly emphasizes the importance of the fundamental plurality of the world, with its continuing novelty, changes, conflicts, and agreements: “For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Ne. 2:11). The world is not static but dynamic, not completed but still unfolding. This unfinished and future-oriented aspect of things provides the basis for growth and improvement. A monistic world or universe in which all differences are finally absorbed in a higher unity is viewed as impossible. The LDS Church has been less inclined than some other religions to regard the world of common experience as an inferior order of that which must be distinguished from a higher and altogether different realm. Heaven itself is regarded as offering the hope of endless progression rather than the ease of final satisfaction.

NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL. Latter-day Saints see a continuity between the traditional categories of natural and supernatural. They do not deny the distinction, but view it as one of degree, not of kind. God’s creative act, for example, is not, as traditionally conceived, a creation ex nihilo, but an act of organizing material that already exists (Abr. 3:24). And creation is not a single, unique event, but an ongoing process that continues through the course of time: “And as one earth shall pass away . . . so shall another come” (Moses 1:38).

God acts upon matter within the context of space and time. In comparison with human attributes, God’s attributes are supreme and perfect. But the difference between God and mankind remains one of degree. God seeks to provide the guidance and the necessary help for human beings to overcome the differences and become like him. The injunction to be perfect “even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48) is taken to mean that mankind may indeed become like God by faithfully following his commandments. The principles or laws of goodness that underlie these commandments have their own abiding reality. God exemplifies them but does not arbitrarily create them.

FREEDOM AND PERFECTIBILITY. Nothing is more central to LDS metaphysics than the principle of freedom. The weaknesses of humanity that lead to error and sin are acknowledged. But the claim that human nature is totally depraved is denied. The LDS Church affirms that ideally “men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” and that “men are free according to the flesh, . . . free to choose liberty and eternal life . . . or to choose captivity and death” (2 Ne. 2:5, 27). Human experience has as its final goal the development of virtue and holiness in a world that is not totally the product of God’s will. Reality itself poses the challenge to overcome obstacles and achieve greater good. Everyone’s life is a response to this challenge.

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DENNIS RASMUSSEN

MEXICO, PIONEER SETTLEMENTS IN

LDS colonization in Mexico was planned as a place of refuge from persecution in the United States and as a springboard for teaching the gospel in Latin America.

In 1875, President Brigham Young sent Daniel W. Jones and others to Mexico to look for possible places to settle. They found the Mexican gov-
government anxious for colonization in the sparsely settled areas of northern Chihuahua and Sonora. LDS colonization in Mexico did not begin, however, until after the first severe persecution precipitated by the passage of the 1882 Edmunds Act (see Antipolygamy Legislation). In 1885, hundreds of families, many of which practiced polygamy, crossed the border into Mexico. In the next several years, seven colonies were founded on the Casas Grandes River and its tributaries in northwestern Chihuahua: Colonia Díaz, Colonia Dublan, Colonia Juárez, and the mountain colonies Cave Valley, Pacheo, García, and Chihuapa. In addition, Latter-day Saints established Colonia Oaxaca and Colonia Morelos on the Bavispe River in northern Sonora.

Hardship marked the early years as land-title problems, hunger, drought, hostile Apache Indians, and such diseases as smallpox and diphtheria challenged the Saints’ determination to make the desert valleys their home. With capable leadership they persevered. In addition to local leaders, at one time or another six of the Twelve Apostles of the Church resided in the Mexican colonies.

Most of the settlers had already helped establish colonies in the western United States. With this experience, they imported to Mexico the best varieties of fruit trees for their orchards and selected breeds of cattle and horses. Within ten years, the colony lands were covered with canals, dams, man-made lakes, and irrigated crops. Thriving villages had wide streets lined with maple trees and lilacs and red-brick homes reminiscent of villages where many of the settlers had had their roots. There were stores, mills, and factories. Each community built schools to ensure the acquisition of cultural, literary, and technical skills. Through hard work, the colonists achieved a high degree of self-sufficiency.

On December 8, 1895, the first stake in Mexico was formed, with Colonia Juárez as its center and Anthony W. Ivins as stake president. In 1912, during the Mexican Revolution, local Church leaders led a general exodus and abandoned the colonies as the members sought refuge in the United States. Before the revolution, more than 4,000 Latter-day Saints lived in the colonies. Nearly one-fourth later returned and became part of Mexico’s revolutionary history, enduring the raids of Pascual Orozco’s “Red Flaggers” and American General John J. (“Black Jack”) Pershing’s search for Pancho Villa.

In 1990, there were again approximately 4,000 Latter-day Saints in the area, about 500 of
them descendants of the original pioneers, and the area was still a major supplier of fresh fruits to other parts of Mexico. The Church schools in Mexico are bilingual, with the Juárez Academy a regional center of culture and learning (see Academies). A striking number of Church leaders have roots in the Mexican colonies. The area also produces a high number of Spanish-speaking missionaries and mission presidents, whose work has extended beyond Latin America to Spain and the Spanish-speaking population worldwide.

While visiting Colonia Juárez on November 11, 1989, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the president of Mexico, commended the LDS colonists in Mexico in these words:

We appreciate your dedication, honesty, sobriety, and respect for law. You have contributed to the elevation of the regions where you live together, work and labor intensely, and with this you also elevate the level of our nation. You have incorporated new technology, more efficient productive processes, and have shared your knowledge and experience with the rest of your fellow citizens, adding generosity to the characteristics that distinguish you. We know that you are a good people who do good [transcribed and translated by Guillermo Toscano Arrambí, on file at Juárez Academy].

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SHIRLEY TAYLOR ROBINSON

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA, THE CHURCH IN

MEXICO

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints first sent missionaries into Mexico in 1875. It had long been a hope of Church leaders to teach the gospel to these descendants of the Book of Mor-