member of society, and finally as a participating member of the kingdom of God.

The ultimate responsibility of a mother, then, is to lead her child lovingly through its personal development and toward its divine destiny. Latter-day Saints believe that if a mother is prayerful and totally committed to such a weighty responsibility, she will receive divine intuitions and spiritual whisperings to aid her in her mothering. Living as a conduit for divine instruction to her child, a mother can greatly enhance its opportunity for joy and exaltation. The child who has been mothered in this profound way usually develops a moral conscience, a respect for society, a desire to contribute to the well-being of humankind, and, most important, a love of God and a love for self that will bring everlasting joy and inner peace.

Perhaps the most distinctive Latter-day Saint doctrine regarding motherhood emphasizes the role of a mother after death. The eternal nature of the family unit, when that unit is bound together by priesthood ordinances and temple covenants, guarantees to a faithful LDS mother the privileges, opportunities, and joys of motherhood with her children in a relationship that lasts eternally.

[See also Mother in Israel; Women, Roles of.]

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PATRICIA TERRY HOLLAND

MOTHER IN ISRAEL

Every worthy woman who lives a virtuous life and who promotes righteousness in her family and in the Church and her family is entitled both to the designation "mother in Israel" and to the promises given to Sarah and other biblical mothers in Israel (see Abraham; Abrahamic Covenant; Israel; Sarah). These promises are open to all faithful women who teach others to love the Lord and keep his commandments. The title designates intelligent and faithful support of the Church and its leaders, and historically it has been applied most frequently to leaders among women. It is often found in patriarchal blessings and is a title and a promise with more than earthly significance. Motherhood is a God-given role vital to the exaltation of a woman and her family.

"Mother in Israel" first appears in the song of Deborah that describes the travail of the people under Jabin, the king of Canaan, until Deborah, a mother in Israel, arose to lead them out of bondage (Judg. 5:2–31; cf. 2 Sam. 20:19).

In Old Testament times, a woman’s strength and authority were found in her mothering of faithful children, especially sons. Besides Eve, other outstanding examples of mothers who influenced Old Testament history include Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Hannah, and Naomi. Sarah, of course, figures indispensably in the blessing given to Abraham, and the Lord promised her explicitly that she would be "a mother of nations" (Gen. 17:16). That such a blessing was culturally significant is apparent in the admonition given to Rebekah by her family as she left to marry Isaac: "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions" (Gen. 24:60). Barrenness in biblical culture was often seen as a reproach to a woman and to her family, a matter of sorrow for a woman, and often a matter for sincere prayer to God, but not rejection (e.g., 1 Sam 1:4–8).

In the Christian era, after the death of the apostles, a tradition developed that gave precedent honor to women who offered themselves celibate to religious service. However, as the Protestant reformation emerged, motherhood again became a crowning glory and “the home, not the convent, became the center of woman’s highest religious vocation” (Madsen, p. 184).

The expression "mother in Israel" can be found in writings of post-Reformation England and more prominently in Puritan New England. Among Latter-day Saints, who consciously identify with biblical themes and ancient Israel, the appellation appeared early, but was applied infrequently and then only to such outstanding women as Lucy Mack Smith and Eliza R. Snow. At the October 1845 general conference of the Church, a year following the deaths of her sons Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel, Lucy Mack Smith "wished to know of the congregation, whether they considered her a mother in Israel." President Brigham Young put her question to those assembled, who answered with a resounding, “Yes” (CHC, 2:538–39).
In 1916 the Relief Society Magazine published a series of articles entitled "Mothers in Israel." One prominent woman honored was Eliza R. Snow. Though childless, she was called a "mother of mothers in Israel" and praised for her leadership among women, for her intelligence, and for her faithful support of the Church and its leaders (Gates, pp. 183–90).

As in New England, the phrase "mother in Israel" appeared in early Utah history in the obituaries of many faithful women who succored the Church and their families. Sometimes they were older women with large families and sometimes notable women in other circumstances. For example, Mary Fielding Smith had only two children of her own, both young enough when she died that no claim could be made of their future significance, yet at her death, evidently in recognition of her character and commitment, she was called a mother in Israel. A son and a grandson later became Presidents of the Church.

Currently the term is most often found in patriarchal blessings when a woman is promised in substance that she will stand "as a mother in Israel." President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "To be a mother in Israel in the full gospel sense is the highest reward that can come into the life of a woman" (p. 883). It is a promise open to all faithful sisters who love and serve the Lord and keep his commandments, including those who do not have the opportunity to bear children in this life.

The Book of Mormon recounts the history of 2,000 righteous stripling warriors who were able to accomplish great things and receive great blessings because they believed in what they had "been taught by their mothers" (Alma 56:47–48; 57:21). Modern mothers in Israel also have a responsibility to teach their children—and others whom they are in a position to influence—to love the Lord and keep his commandments. The prophets of this dispensation have consistently stressed the importance of committed motherhood both by those who bear and those who care and have counseled that this is a divinely given role important to the salvation and exaltation of God’s children.

[See also Motherhood; Women, Roles of.]

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MOTION PICTURES, LDS PRODUCTIONS

As early as 1913, when the motion picture industry was in its early stages, leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints expressed an interest in using the film medium: "The moving picture together with all the other modern inventions is to help us carry the Mission of Christ to all the world, and to bring humanity home to the true principles of salvation" (Young, p. 80). With the sanction of President Joseph F. Smith, Shirley "Shirl" Young Clawson and his brother Chester filmed many Church events and leaders from 1916 to 1929 in black and white and without sound. This era of film production for the Church ended tragically, however, when a fire killed Shirl Clawson and destroyed the studio and many of the films. The Church’s next major move into film production began in the 1950s and has resulted in many award-winning films among the programs produced for home, classroom, and missionary use.

In 1946 Wetzel O. "Judge" Whitaker, chief of animation for Walt Disney Studios, invited three members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Elders Harold B. Lee, Mark E. Peterson, and Matthew Cowley—to tour the Disney Studios in Burbank, California. They were impressed with the potential of motion pictures to teach principles of the gospel. In that same year, wards, stakes, and missions began to be provided with motion picture projectors. Whitaker produced the first two films for the Church on a volunteer basis: Church Welfare in Action and The Lord’s Way.

In January 1953 Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, created a department of motion picture production to produce films to be used by