

“upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage” (D&C 138:50). When the Savior visited the spirit world, he taught these righteous spirits in paradise and “gave them power to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father’s kingdom, there to be crowned with IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE, and continue thenceforth their labor as had been promised by the Lord, and be partakers of all blessings which were held in reserve for them that love him” (D&C 138:51–52). As teaching and missionary work proceed in the spirit prison and ORDINANCES for the dead are performed in temples on the earth, the once uninformed and the disobedient but now repentant and purified spirits may enter into paradise and enjoy association with the righteous and the blessings of the gospel. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “There is never a time when the spirit [of man] is too old to approach God. All are within the reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, which hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. There is a way to release the spirits of the dead; that is by the power and authority of the Priesthood—by binding and loosing on earth” (TPJS, pp. 191–92).

[See also Spirit World.]

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M. CATHERINE THOMAS

PARMLEY, LAVERN WATTS

Martha LaVern Watts Parmley (1900–1980) served as general president of the PRIMARY of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1951 to 1974, a period when the Church was adapting its programs to serve the needs of a rapidly growing, worldwide membership. She was born January 1, 1900, in Murray, Utah, to LDS parents. LaVern served as a Primary teacher at age fourteen. She married Thomas Jennison Parmley on June 28, 1923. After her husband completed a doctorate at Cornell University in New York, the Parmleys returned to Utah. They were the parents of three children.

When she returned from New York, LaVern Parmley became a member of a STAKE Primary board. After serving on that board for three years, she was called as a member of the Primary General Board in 1942. Six months later, she was appointed second counselor to Primary President May Green Hinckley. She became first counselor to a new president, Adele Cannon Howells, a year later, a position she held until her call as Primary general president in 1951.

As president, LaVern Parmley was instrumental in adapting the Primary programs to meet a new set of challenges. When the Boy Scouts of America lowered its admission age to eleven, Church and Primary leaders discussed whether the Primary or the YOUNG MEN’S organization should direct the activities of the eleven-year-old boys. Although the National Scout Committee initially opposed having women leaders direct a scouting program, the Primary obtained permission for women to administer SCOUTING activities for boys until they turned twelve. The Primary also adopted Cub Scouting, thereby assuming responsibility for four years of scouting. LDS women



LaVern W. Parmley (1900–1980), fifth general president of the Primary Association, served from 1951 to 1974.

helped open the Boy Scouts program to women leaders nationwide. They served not only in local troops but eventually on local and national boards. In 1967 Parmley became the first woman member of a national scouting committee and later served on several scouting boards. She received the highest honors awarded by the Boy Scouts of America, including the Silver Buffalo award.

President Parmley also supervised the adaptation of the Primary organization to serve the needs of a growing, widely distributed world membership. When Primary membership doubled during her first decade as president, she doubled the members on the Primary General Board. She set up committees to establish new activities, including an annual sacrament meeting presentation by the children, special Primaries for handicapped children, and a reverence program. As editor of the CHILDREN'S FRIEND, she restructured its format to make it a magazine for children (*see* FRIEND). Under her direction, teacher training, which began with Primary, developed into a well-ordered general Church program.

As the Church grew, stake Primary conventions and general Primary conferences were discontinued. The Church began to centralize the publication of educational materials, and Primary publications were reduced. President Parmley responded to these challenges by standardizing lesson materials and by preparing audiovisual and printed materials for presentation to Primary leaders in regional meetings.

A major challenge during her administration was the need to accommodate the Primary program to the CORRELATION process implemented in 1961 to place all Church programs under the authority and direction of the priesthood. As part of the process, responsibility for Primary lessons was transferred to the Church Correlation Committee. In a spirit of cooperation, President Parmley helped merge the goals and programs of the Primary into a larger Church-sponsored program for children.

President Parmley helped promote the construction of a new Primary Children's Hospital (later Primary Children's Medical Center), completed in 1952, and encouraged donations from Primary children. As Primary president, she served as chairman of the board for the hospital until 1970. When the Health Service Corporation was organized later that year to oversee all LDS hospitals, she was appointed a board member. In

1975, after she was released as Primary president, the Primary Children's Hospital was transferred to Intermountain Health Care, a private nonprofit corporation (*see* HOSPITALS).

LaVern Parmley presided over the Primary Association at a time when its programs became more complex and wide-ranging than at any earlier time in its history. As its president during a period of rapid Church growth and expansion, she traveled more than any Primary president before her, providing firsthand supervision and unity in an organization otherwise subject to much local variation. Her contributions are reflected in the organization and direction of Primary today.

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PASSOVER

See: Law of Moses

PATRIARCH

[*This entry consists of two articles: Stake Patriarch and Patriarch to the Church. A patriarch is a Church priesthood calling. Each stake has one or more patriarchs and their duties are given in the first article. The second article gives the history of the Church office Patriarch to the Church.*]

STAKE PATRIARCH

Each STAKE in the Church has at least one patriarch ordained, as the Prophet Joseph SMITH wrote, "for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints as it was with Jacob in giving his patriarchal blessing unto his sons" (WJS, p. 6). Age is not a factor, and the call, which is for voluntary service in giving patriarchal blessings to stake members, may come to any worthy, spiritually mature high priest.

The fathers from Adam to Jacob are seen as patriarchs of this order. The word "patriarch" is often used in the Bible as a title of honor for the early leaders of the Israelites. It is perhaps in this sense that Peter spoke of "the patriarch David"