ment to one’s emotional, physical, social, and spiritual well-being (see abortion; abuse, spouse and child; adultery; chastity).

Using the power of procreation does not alienate one from God. Rather, properly used, it enables mortals to become co-creators with him in the divine PLAN OF SALVATION, which stretches across the eternities and includes the opportunity for the faithful to participate in family life and eternal increase (see eternal lives).

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BRENT A. BARLOW

PROFANITY

GENERAL AUTHORITIES of the Church have defined profanity to include the following: (1) blasphemy (irreverent use of the Lord’s name); (2) swearing; (3) vulgarity (coarse jokes, foul stories, lewd words); (4) use of the Lord’s name without proper authority; and (5) any type of filthiness in speech that is degrading and soul-destroying.

Profanity has become a common practice among both young and old, both male and female, in today’s society. Some may be inclined to say that the commandment “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” (Ex. 20:7) is outdated. However, the wide use of profanity in contemporary society does not excuse Latter-day Saints from using any form of profanity or other blasphemous speech: “The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his [God’s] name in vain” (Ex. 20:7). President Spencer W. Kimball told the Church, “We, as good Latter-day Saints . . . do not use foul language. We do not curse or defame. We do not use the Lord’s name in vain” (1981, p. 5).

To strip profanity and vulgarity from one’s vocabulary not only is commendable and a mark of refinement but it is also a commandment from God. Early members of the Church were told in a general epistle that “the habit . . . of using vulgarity and profanity . . . is not only offensive to all well-bred persons, but it is a gross sin in the sight of God, and should not exist among the children of the Latter-day Saints” (MFP 3:112–13). Profanity makes the holy profane, the sacred commonplace, the serious flippant, and the precious cheap.

To refrain from profane and vulgar speech also shows self-control. H. Burke Peterson, of the Seventy and former First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, said, “We might consider vulgarity in a couple of ways: first, as an expression of personal weakness, and second, as a contribution to personal weakness” (Peterson, p. 38). Similarly, President Kimball described profanity as “the effort of a feeble brain to express itself forcibly” (1974, p. 7).

Instead of using profane speech, Latter-day Saints should “enlighten, edify, lift, motivate, elevate, build and uplift” others through their words (Brewerton, p. 73). By doing so, they will not forfeit the multitude of blessings promised them if they “bridle [their] tongues” (James 1:26).

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GRANT VON HARRISON

PROHIBITION

Partly because belief in the WORD OF WISDOM supported abstinence from alcoholic beverages, Prohibition was an important political and moral issue for LDS leaders and members in the early twentieth century. Although LDS voters were naturally inclined to support legislation that limited the consumption of liquor, Utah, the state most affected by LDS votes, differed little from other western states in its position on Prohibition, with a variety of moral, political, and social issues influencing the position.

In 1908, when four states had already passed statewide prohibition laws, 600 saloons were operating in Utah. That year the national Anti-Saloon League began to recruit Prohibition supporters
among the Protestant clergy and LDS General Authorities in the state. Heber J. Grant, then an apostle, became the leader among Latter-day Saints in lobbying for Prohibition. Utah Republican leader Senator Reed Smoot, also an apostle, was concerned that support for Prohibition might alienate non-Mormon Republican supporters. President Joseph F. Smith was also torn between his desire for Prohibition and his desire for defeat of the American Party, an anti-Mormon third party in the state. With many views affecting its vote, the 1909 state legislature narrowly defeated a statewide prohibition bill, and Governor William Spry later vetoed a local option bill that would have given cities authority to ban alcoholic beverage sales.

In 1910 President Smith instructed the Quorum of the Twelve to ignore statewide prohibition and work for local option. After a local option bill passed the state legislature in March 1911, Church leaders encouraged members to vote their communities “dry” in statewide elections. Most communities did so, but Salt Lake City, Ogden, and other cities with large non-LDS populations continued to allow the sale of alcohol.

Statewide prohibition again became a major political issue in 1915, with Elder Grant leading the supporters. Although Senator Smoot was no longer opposed to Prohibition, Governor Spry was. A prohibition bill easily passed the Utah legislature, but not in time to avoid the governor’s pocket veto. During 1916 many LDS leaders were chagrined that Utah had not yet voted for Prohibition, particularly since Idaho, Colorado, Arizona, Washington, and Oregon had already done so.

Utah joined the ranks of the “dry” states on February 8, 1917, when newly elected Governor Simon Bamberger signed a law making Utah the twenty-third state to adopt statewide prohibition. In 1919 Utah joined other states in ratifying the Eighteenth Amendment to the federal Constitution, making Prohibition national in scope.

After the depression began in 1929, anti-Prohibition forces gained strength in Utah and the rest of the country. Nevertheless, led by Grant, who had become President of the Church in 1918, LDS leaders continued to support national Prohibition. Despite this support, the citizens of Utah voted in November 1933 for both national and state repeal. One month later Prohibition ended in Utah and the rest of the nation.

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BRENT G. THOMPSON

PROLONGING LIFE

Medical science has made it possible to sustain physical life by artificial support systems under circumstances where functional and productive life may be no longer feasible. Prolonging life in these situations presents a moral and ethical dilemma for the medical profession and the family of the afflicted individual. On the one hand is the emotion of hope for recovery of useful function in a situation where the science of prognosis is imperfect and based to a certain extent on probability analysis, while on the other hand is the reality that physical death is imminent without life-support measures. Members of the medical profession deal with this dilemma by calculated evaluation of the data presented in the clinical situation and may present recommendations to the family and other concerned individuals as regards prognosis and what should be done. The family must analyze these recommendations in a situation clouded by the intense emotion of anticipated separation from a loved one.

Latter-day Saints are sustained during these trying times by their faith in Jesus Christ, whose teachings provide the strength, reason, and hope to guide one in making difficult decisions regarding life and death. “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24).

Jesus Christ presented himself as the Savior of mankind through the atonement and the resurrection: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25–26).

Belief in everlasting life after mortal death should allow faithful Latter-day Saints to make wise and rational decisions regarding artificially prolonging life when medical means to restore useful and functional existence have been exhausted. This is reflected in Church policy regarding prolonging life: