

remains, partly because of the Church's claim of unique legitimacy.

"Churches" and "denominations" in sociological terminology differ from sects in that both of the former are organizationally complex and have positive relationships with society. Denominations accept the legitimacy claims of other religious groups, while churches do not (Roberts, pp. 181–202). There are several problems in classifying The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints according to this typology. Its claim to unique legitimacy makes it something other than a denomination, while its lack of societal dominance makes it something other than a church (except in Utah and certain other locations).

To explain unclear cases like this, sociologists developed an additional classification—the "established sect" (Yinger, pp. 266–73). An established sect is organizationally complex while retaining moderate tension with society and the claim to unique legitimacy. While the LDS Church meets these criteria, social scientists increasingly argue that it deviates sufficiently from conventional religious traditions to warrant even further classification outside of the church-denomination-sect typology. They argue that the term "new religion" is perhaps the most accurate and that modern-day Mormonism is on the verge of becoming a major new world religion (Stark, pp. 11–12).

[See also Cult.]

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SEED OF ABRAHAM

The "seed of Abraham" are those who, through righteousness, inherit the blessings promised Abraham through the covenant he made with the Lord and who themselves are a promised blessing to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–5; 13:16; 17; Abr. 2:6–11). The phrase also has messianic overtones: Abraham saw the days of the Messiah and rejoiced (John

8:56). Jesus Christ is of the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16).

In a lineal sense, two groups are called the "seed of Abraham" in scripture. The first comprises the literal descendants of Abraham through Isaac (Gen. 26:1–4) and Jacob (Gen. 28; 35:9–13), who are thus the twelve tribes of Israel. The second comprises the descendants of Ishmael and the many other children of Abraham.

In addition to those who are of lineal descent, all who are not of Abrahamic lineage but who become adopted by their acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ and continued obedience to God's commandments are heirs of all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant (*TPJS*, pp. 149–50). Adoption is completed by the gospel ordinances, including baptism and confirmation; ordination to the PRIESTHOOD, and magnifying one's calling in the priesthood; the TEMPLE ENDOWMENT; and eternal MARRIAGE, through which husbands, wives, and families share "all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Modern REVELATION assures that these people will have a fulness of blessings, even "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38). They are "sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies," and they become "the seed of Abraham" (D&C 84:34).

[See also Abrahamic Covenant; Gospel of Abraham.]

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SEER

In ancient usage, "seer" is an alternative term for PROPHET (1 Sam. 9:9). A seer is a person endowed by God with a special gift for seeing spiritually. In the modern Church, members of the FIRST PRESIDENCY and the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES serve as seers. These fifteen apostolic officials are designated PROPHETS, SEERS, AND REVELATORS who direct the Church by means of divine REVELATION, with the President of the Church being the only one in whom the keys are fully active at any one time. Though all three titles describe revelatory capacity, the terms are not fully synonymous. A "prophet" is one who speaks for GOD; the office of "seer" extends that divine endowment to a capacity for envisioning future and past. The Book of Mormon teaches that a "seer is greater than a prophet," because a seer is "a