

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

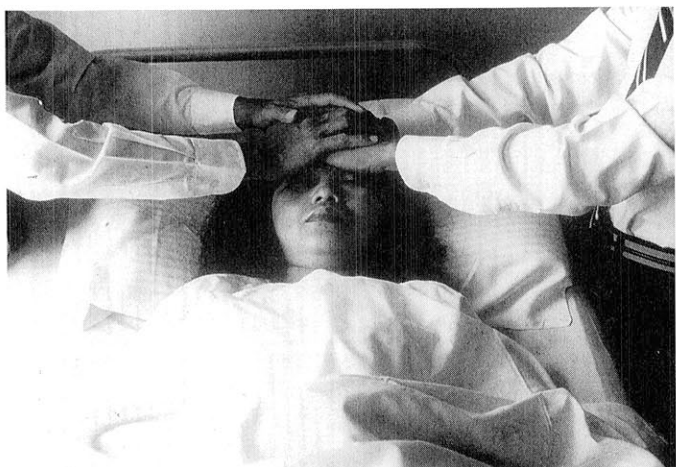
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## SICK, BLESSING THE

Latter-day Saints are committed to the reality of healing through faith in Jesus Christ, to a health code (the WORD OF WISDOM) that is a form of preventive medicine, and to the proper use of modern medical skills.

Latter-day Saints believe that Christ ordained and sent his disciples, in ancient and modern times, with the promise that through faith they might heal. The gift of healing is one of the gifts of the Spirit, a gift that may be present both in the



A young woman receives a Melchizedek Priesthood blessing of comfort and, if it is God's will, healing. The elders anoint the sick with consecrated olive oil (see James 5:14). Photograph, 1986; courtesy Floyd Holdman.

one who administers and the one who receives. The admonition of James is reenacted in LDS practice. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:14-15; cf. D&C 42:43-44).

It is clear from modern REVELATION that even though not all have this gift of faith, they may still have faith in Christ and the gospel. In many LDS homes there is exercise of the gift of healing through administrations of the father's priesthood. Blessings of the sick are generally given by two MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD bearers. There are no prescribed prayers for this kind of blessing, but one of the priesthood bearers anoints the head of the sick person with a little consecrated olive oil and says in substance: "In the name of Jesus Christ and by authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, I lay my hands upon your head and anoint you with this consecrated oil, which has been dedicated for the blessing of the sick." Additional words may be said in harmony with, and under the guidance of, the Spirit.

Following this anointing, two or more priesthood bearers lay their hands upon the head of the sick person, and one being spokesman calls the person by name and says in substance, "In the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, we seal and confirm upon you this anointing with which you have been anointed to the end that . . ." He then voices a prayer of supplication and of blessing as the Spirit directs. The ORDINANCE concludes in the name of Jesus Christ. If two priesthood bearers are not available for the ceremony, one may perform both parts of the blessing.

In the temples of the Church throughout the world, frequent prayers are offered for those who are sick, bereaved, or in need. The names of those afflicted may be placed upon a temple prayer roll by request of family or friends. This practice derives from abundant scriptural counsels regarding unity in prayer—"Be agreed as touching all things ye shall ask" (D&C 27:18)—and the conviction that the modern temple, as anciently, is a house of prayer (D&C 109:8). United prayer and fasting, sometimes by an entire WARD or STAKE and in some historic instances by the full world membership of the Church, is occasionally advocated. This

is the fulfillment of a divine admonition: “If ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

Historically, miraculous healings have followed spiritual administrations to the sick for every kind of affliction, in every generation, and in every part of the Church. The promise is that the blind may receive sight, the deaf hear, the paralytic regain the use of limbs. Illustrative scriptural references are: “He that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed” (D&C 42:48). And those who “have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness” (verse 43).

Three scriptural cautions apply to the principle of blessing the sick. First, worthiness is to be cultivated by all. At any time, men or women may face the crisis of disease or injury and be asked to exercise faith in behalf of themselves or loved ones. Second, blessings are not to be given as SIGNS for the skeptical, to satisfy curiosity, or to “consume it upon their lusts” (D&C 46:9). Faith in Christ is the prerequisite, not the consequence, of blessing the sick. Third, the resulting relief, healing, and fulfillment are not to be boasted about or heralded, but rather to “be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64; 84:73; 105:24). This is consistent with the plea of the Master in the New Testament after many of his miraculous healings: “See thou tell no man!” (Matt. 8:4; cf. D&C 50:33).

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## SIGMA GAMMA CHI

See: LDS Student Association

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## SIGNS

*[Signs mark, indicate, represent, symbolize, give direction, or point to other things beyond themselves, and are sometimes miraculous or extraordinary in nature. The scriptures speak of God’s “signs and wonders” by which his work, power, and wisdom are made known or recognized by people in the earth (Ex. 7:3–5). True signs provide objective evidence that an event can reasonably be expected, such as the new star in the east being a sign of Christ’s birth (Matt. 2:1, 2) or certain dark clouds heralding a storm (Matt. 16:1–4). False or counterfeit signs are deceptive and give a false hope of security if accepted (Ex. 7:11–12; 8:7; D&C 63:7–9.)*

*Articles pertaining directly to this subject are Sign Seeking; Signs as Divine Witnesses; Signs of the Times; Signs of the True Church. Related articles are Jesus Christ: Birth of Jesus Christ; Miracles; and Second Coming of Jesus Christ.]*

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## SIGNS AS DIVINE WITNESS

Signs have been given by the Lord to manifest his power “both in heaven and in earth” (Jacob 7:14); to witness that Jesus Christ shall come (Jacob 7:14; D&C 39:23; 68:10); to strengthen the faith of believers (D&C 35:8; 58:64; 84:65); and to ratify the condemnation of unbelievers (D&C 63:11).

In revealing his power in the heavens and on earth, God has used numerous signs and wonders. He “hath given a law unto all things, by which they move in their times and their seasons; and their courses are fixed, even the courses of the heavens and the earth, which comprehend the earth and all the planets, . . . and any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power” (D&C 88:42–47). Miracles performed by the power of God are signs of his might and majesty (cf. Ex. 7:3). He parted the Red Sea for the children of Israel after bringing the ten plagues upon the Egyptians (Ex. 7–12; 14:1–31). He confirmed Gideon’s divine call by several signs (Judg. 6:17–23, 36–40).

During his mortal ministry the Lord filled empty nets with fish after the disciples had fished all night but caught nothing (Luke 5:6). He healed the sick, raised the dead, caused the lame to walk and the blind to see, and calmed the storm (*see* MIRACLES). The foregoing, and with hundreds of other instances, attest to the power and might of God, both in heaven and on earth.

Signs strengthen the faith of believers and therefore are beheld by those who already believe in Christ as confirmations of their belief. Jesus Christ revealed to the Prophet Joseph SMITH, “I will show miracles, signs, and wonders, unto all those who believe on my name” (D&C 35:8) and “he that believeth shall be blest with signs following, even as it is written” (D&C 68:10). Signs that follow faithful believers are many. They “shall heal the sick, . . . cast out devils, and shall be delivered from those who would administer . . . deadly poison,” and if occasion warrants, they could even “raise the dead” (D&C 124:98–100; cf. Mark 16:17–18). In addition, faithful Saints have a com-