

respects, admires, wishes to emulate, and finds easy to talk to.

[See also Individuality; Values, Transmission of.]

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## SOCIAL SERVICES

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints calls upon LDS Social Services, a separate corporation, to help meet the social and emotional needs of Church members and others. Services include:

1. Placement of children for adoption with couples who meet legal requirements and the Church's personal worthiness standards.
2. Counseling and support for unwed parents, to help them with issues and decisions pertaining to MARRIAGE, ADOPTION, and single parenthood.
3. Placement of children in foster homes that will promote healthy individual development and positive family relationships.
4. Therapy and referrals for members having personal or family problems, to allow them to receive help from resources that are respectful of LDS values.

Members are generally referred for assistance to LDS Social Services by their BISHOPS. The agency staff strives to work in harmony with ecclesiastical leaders and, at moderate fees, to provide services consistent with LDS values, such as individual responsibility, the sanctity of the FAMILY and human life, the eternal worth of souls, and the importance of experiences in mortality.

Charitable work among Latter-day Saints dates back to the organization of the Church in 1830. In the nineteenth century, most charitable work was done through the women's RELIEF SOCIETY, whose representatives began regularly calling upon members in their homes to obtain contributions for the poor, assess the needs of families, distribute food or clothing, or perform other compassionate services. Care of the needy is still viewed as a local responsibility, best addressed at the WARD level and provided through local ecclesiastical leaders, mainly the bishop. The bishop regularly involves the RELIEF SOCIETY and, when needed, the local Social Services agency.

To help with the relief effort in World War I, the Church sent Amy Brown LYMAN, General Relief Society President, together with another Relief Society delegate, to the National Conference of Charities and Correction in 1917. There these two women learned of charity and relief methods used by the Red Cross and became convinced that adopting these could strengthen their own charity program. Encouraged by Presidents Joseph F. SMITH and Heber J. GRANT, Sister Lyman founded the Relief Society Social Service Department in 1919. The department provided casework services for LDS families, served as a liaison between the Church and public and private charities, operated an employment bureau for women, and provided

social work training for volunteers from local Relief Societies. It also provided adoptive placements and family services, including foster care and counseling for unwed mothers. During the Great Depression of the early 1930s, this department expanded its cooperation with Salt Lake County, providing commodity relief to the poor.

In the 1930s many federally funded public assistance and Social Security programs were established in the United States. Consequently, the Relief Society Social Service Department, like many other private agencies, changed its focus from providing financial relief to offering direct services, or counseling, mostly on child welfare matters.

During the next three decades (1937–1969), the department began hiring trained professionals, mostly social workers. Adoptive placements increased and services to unwed mothers expanded. More children were placed and supervised in foster care. An extensive youth guidance program was developed. The INDIAN STUDENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, a special foster care program for NATIVE AMERICANS, officially began in 1954. It provided Native American children with educational, religious, and cultural experiences in LDS homes. Belle S. SPAFFORD, General Relief Society President, provided direction during those years. In 1962, geographical expansion began, and, by 1969, Social Service agencies had been established in Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, and California.

In October 1969, Church leaders consolidated the Relief Society adoption services, the Indian Student Placement Services, and the Youth Guidance Program under a single department known as Unified Social Services. The change was part of the CORRELATION of all Church programs. Counseling and adoption services continued to increase. Professional employees were encouraged to obtain at least a master's degree in the behavioral sciences, preferably in social work. They began responding to requests from local Church leaders for assistance in counseling members with a variety of social-emotional needs and problems.

In September 1973, Unified Social Services became a separate corporation, renamed LDS Social Services. The new corporation began charging moderate fees for clinical, adoption, and foster care services. Services were expanded with Church growth and with the demand for licensed and clinical services. Agencies were established in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand,

and Great Britain. In 1974, there were 16 agencies and 9 suboffices; in 1979, 35 agencies and 13 suboffices; in 1991, 41 agencies with 24 suboffices. Staff size increased to a peak of 280 in 1980, then began decreasing slightly due to reductions in the Indian Student Placement Services and a trend toward emphasizing referral services for personal and family problems.

Shortly before 1990, LDS Social Services began placing greater emphasis on services for adoptive and unwed parents. Outreach efforts were instigated to assist greater numbers of unwed parents. The First Presidency issued letters to local leaders encouraging unwed parents to ensure their children are raised in stable homes with two parents, placing them for adoption through LDS Social Services when marriage is not feasible. At the same time, LDS Social Services changed the focus of its foster care program with a greater emphasis on placing troubled children in the homes of relatives, and on working closer with community agencies to provide services.

Currently, LDS Social Services continues to respond to the requests of Church members for adoption services, counseling for unwed parents, foster care, and referral or therapy for personal or family problems.

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## SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

The vitality and relevance of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have spawned the formation of a wide assortment of unofficial organizations serving various Church-related interests and needs. Because the Church encompasses a comprehensive belief system about deity and the purpose of life, some members feel an intense need for outlets that allow them to share their personal insights, question ideas, and apply religious beliefs to daily living.