of 18,090 wards and branches in 1,784 stakes, and 497 districts.

Today LDS wards continue many of the community functions of pioneer times. The Sunday meetings are just an outer evidence of the unit. Social life and friendship among members are largely developed within the ward. Youth programs bind teenagers and their parents to the ward. Education of children is supplemented by teachers of the youth and primary programs. Family education is furthered through training parents in the ward programs. Sports and other activities are promoted in the ward.

Great diversity exists among wards. Many are located in Mormon communities. Others are in areas where Mormons are a distinct minority. Some have an overabundance of leadership and talent. Others suffer from lack of leadership or lack of youth involvement. Some cover a small neighborhood; others, a widespread area. But wherever located, wards have much similarity, following the same curriculum, working under equitable budget allocations, and adhering closely to central authority from Church headquarters. Increasingly, materials such as videotapes or satellite broadcasts from the General Authorities in Salt Lake City are received in all wards, promoting uniformity and commitment.

As Latter-day Saints move throughout the world, they typically transfer from one ward to another with ease, finding acceptance, responsibility, and similarity of doctrine and practice everywhere. The ward system is successful partly because wards are kept small and because, ideally, everyone in them is needed and asked to accept a calling. Serving one another, bearing each other’s burdens, is the norm. Socializing the young is everywhere a mainstream activity, and the youth also contribute much to the dynamics of the ward.

The Hollywood Stake tabernacle and Wilshire Ward chapel was one of the most imposing church buildings of its day in Los Angeles. Built as a solid piece of reinforced concrete, it was dedicated in 1929. In the early 1900s, the Church expanded significantly in California.


DOUGLAS D. ALDER

WARD BUDGET

A ward budget is the fund from which local congregations (wards) finance their activities. Historically, the ward budget was raised through voluntary donations. Since January 1, 1990, ward and stake budgets in the United States and Canada are funded entirely from general tithing without additional local contributions. (Before 1990, bishops and ward members agreed privately on voluntary annual contributions. Wards sometimes organized supplementary fundraising activities.) Building operation and maintenance costs are reimbursed from Church headquarters. The quarterly allowance for each stake and ward is based on average meeting attendance. Additional fund raising is discouraged, and expenditures are carefully monitored. Donations are not solicited in worship services.

In parts of the world other than the United States and Canada, some local costs are still financed by voluntary contributions, although building rentals, maintenance, and some other expenses are reimbursed from central funds.

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The ward budget continues to cover costs of general operations, materials, and activities of the wards and stakes. Each unit of the ward organization prepares annually a detailed estimate of needs, which the bishopric then uses to develop a ward budget proposal. The bishop presents this for a sustaining vote of the ward membership at a special meeting, and then submits the proposal to the stake, from which it goes to Church headquarters.

ROBERT J. SMITH

WARD COUNCIL

The ward council (formerly known as the Ward Correlation Council) is the meeting of local leaders wherein the doctrines of the gospel are turned into plans of action. The shared activities that help turn ward members into a community of Saints are coordinated by the ward council. This council is composed of the ward priesthood executive committee and the presidents of the ward auxiliary organizations, and the chair of the Activities Committee. These leaders coordinate the efforts of all ward quorums and organizations to support the families of the Church, meet the needs of individuals from all age groups, and provide Christian service. The bishop presides in this monthly meeting, where ward programs are reviewed and activities are proposed. The bishop may invite other individuals to participate in the ward council as necessary. Approval of activities is based on such matters as their appropriateness, the ability to conduct them without additional cost to ward members (see tithing), and how well an activity will strengthen ward members. For example, if home teachers were to discover that a group of elderly members felt neglected, and if youth leaders reported that they were searching for a service project, an activity could be planned that would place the youth in the service of the elderly.

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DENNIS L. THOMPSON

WARD ORGANIZATION

A ward is a geographically defined Church unit organized to provide every member the opportunity to find fellowship with the Saints and give service to others. The ward is led by a bishop and two counselors (see bishopric). An executive secretary and ward clerks assist the bishopric with the tasks of record keeping and management. Priesthood and auxiliary presidencies (a president and two counselors) are assigned to attend to various needs of ward members. Other leaders supervise missionary activities, provide gospel instruction, and help ward members with temporal needs, such as searching for employment. Frequent social and service activities involve adults and youth.

Typically, the administration of the ward is carried out in a weekly bishopric meeting attended by the bishop, his two counselors, and his executive secretary. These same men hold a weekly ward priesthood executive committee meeting with the high priest group leader, the elders quorum president, the ward mission leader, and the young men president. They consider such matters as ward temple attendance, family history activity, missionary work, home teaching, and member activation. When the female relief society president attends this meeting (at least monthly) for a discussion of the temporal needs of ward members, it becomes the ward welfare services committee. The Relief Society president helps the bishop coordinate appropriate assistance and compassionate service to the sick, the aged, the lonely, and the needy. Under her direction, monthly home visits are made to each adult woman in the ward in which brief gospel instruction and encouragement are given (see visiting teaching). Once each month this ward welfare services group becomes the ward council when joined by the Sunday school president, the young women president, the primary president, and the activities committee chairman. The ward council discusses and plans all ward activities and correlates the services and programs of the Church in relation to individuals and families. Historically, youth usually have been given leadership roles in planning their own activities and in helping with events to which all ward members are invited. Since the mid-1970s, youth leadership has been nurtured on a monthly