

the proper way (Mosiah 23:17; D&C 20:73; 132:13; 2 Sam. 6:6–7). For example, Paul rebaptized certain Ephesians who had been previously baptized by an unauthorized person (Acts 19:1–6). King Limhi and many of his followers were converted to Christ and were desirous of being baptized, but they waited to receive that ordinance because the one with authority did not feel worthy (Mosiah 21:33–35).

A fourth fact concerning divine authority is that it was lost from the earth sometime after the resurrection and ascension of Christ into heaven (*see* APOSTASY), so a restoration of divine authority was needed (2 Thes. 2:1–4; 1 Tim. 4:1–3; 2 Tim. 3:1–7). In 1829 heavenly messengers, previously endowed with divine authority by Christ himself, conferred authority upon Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY as part of the RESTORATION of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (*see* AARONIC PRIESTHOOD: RESTORATION OF; MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD: RESTORATION OF). Members of the Church ordained to this authority now record their personal “line of authority.” This record indicates the path of ordinations connecting their priesthood authority to Jesus Christ himself.

Fifth, the authority to preside is efficacious for an individual only when it is accompanied by the COMMON CONSENT of the members of the Church over whom that person will preside (D&C 20:65; 26:2; 42:11).

Abuses of authority and authoritarianism are inherent in any organized system, and such abuses are especially associated with authority based solely on position, strength, or knowledge. Organizations such as the Church are sometimes perceived by outsiders as authoritarian, primarily because of confusion over the meanings of authority. If authority in the Church were based on politics, personal attributes, or expertise, then a charge of authoritarianism might have some validity. However, divine authority (definition 4) is inseparably connected to principles of righteousness, and when we “undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man” (D&C 121:37).

Members of the Church understand that the exercise of divine authority includes the responsibility to bless people and minister to their well-

being. Proper use of this authority is inconsistent with authoritarianism and the abuses of authority, so the negative connotations sometimes associated with authority are not generally present in the Church.

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KIM S. CAMERON

AUTOPSY

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints holds that an autopsy may be performed if the family of the deceased gives consent and if the autopsy complies with the law of the community. The purpose of an autopsy is, where possible, to examine the results of trauma or disease recorded in the vital organs of the body so as to define the specific cause of death for the family, the community, and the professionals who attended the deceased. It also permits the training and instruction of those who continue the search for better ways of coping with disease. It is one of the methods whereby both those who die and those who examine them contribute to improving the quality of life and health of their fellow human beings.

FRANK D. ALLAN

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

The LDS Church is characterized by two types of organizational entities: PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS and organizations auxiliary to the priesthood. Members of priesthood quorums, or groups of priesthood holders, along with those called to priesthood leadership positions, have the ecclesiastical responsibility and authority for carrying out the missions of the Church. The auxiliary organizations are complementary to priesthood line organization and exist primarily to assist the priesthood. The auxiliaries are the RELIEF SOCIETY (women, eighteen and older), SUNDAY SCHOOL (all members twelve and older), YOUNG WOMEN (twelve through eighteen),