the proper way (Mosiah 23:17; D&C 20:73; 132:13; 2 Sam. 6:6–7). For example, Paul rebaptized cer-
tain 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 

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 
edowed 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; 
MECHIZEDEK 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. Organiz-
ations such as the Church are sometimes per-
ceived by outsiders as authoritarian, primarily be-
cause of confusion over the meanings of authority. 
If authority in the Church were based on politics, 
personal attributes, or expertise, then a charge of 
arbitrariness might have some validity. How-
ever, 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 with-
drawn, 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 responsi-
bility 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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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 pur-
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 
anizational entities: PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS and 
organizations auxiliary to the priesthood. Members 
of priesthood quorums, or groups of priesthood 
holders, along with those called to priesthood lead-
ship positions, have the ecclesiastical responsi-
bility 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 auxilia-
aries are the RELIEF SOCIETY (women, eighteen and 
older), SUNDAY SCHOOL (all members twelve and 
older), YOUNG WOMEN (twelve through eighteen),