

alone as a full-length treatment of a woman leader, but biographies of Eliza R. SNOW and Emmeline B. WELLS are in progress. Of a lay Mormon woman, one biography of significance has been published, that of historian Juanita Brooks by Levi Peterson (1988).

A few autobiographical accounts of Latter-day Saint women are already available. Besides *A Mormon Mother*, there are the self-told lives of such people as Ellis R. Shipp, Mary Jane Mount Tanner, Sarah Studevaut Leavitt, and Aurelia Spencer ROGERS, though it must be recognized that few of these accounts were written for distribution beyond the author's family. Another nineteenth-century woman, Fanny Stenhouse, used the autobiographical mode to produce her *Exposé of Polygamy in Utah* (1872), later revised and widely published as *Tell It All* (1874).

Modern female novelists such as Virginia Sorenson, author of *Where Nothing Is Long Ago* (1963), and Rodello Hunter, author of *Daughter of Zion* (1972), have published autobiographical material combined with some of the trappings of fiction. Several handwritten lives, such as that of Martha Cragun Cox, and others published to limited audiences, such as that of Louisa Barnes Pratt and Mary Ann Weston Maughan, remain largely untapped in obscure archives.

To encourage the writing of Latter-day Saint biographies, the David Woolley and Beatrice Cannon Evans family endowed a prize that has been awarded annually since 1983. It is now administered by the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies at Utah State University. Winners of that award are marked with an asterisk in the following selected main LDS biographies: Allen, James B. *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, A Mormon*. Urbana, Ill., 1987\*; Arrington, Leonard J. *Brigham Young: American Moses*. New York, 1985\*; Brodie, Fawn M. *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd rev. ed. New York, 1971; Brooks, Juanita. *John D. Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat*, rev. ed. Glendale, Calif., 1985; Bushman, Richard. *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*. Urbana, Ill., 1984\*; Fox, Frank W. J. *Reuben Clark: The Public Years*. Provo, Utah, 1980; Hill, Donna. *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*. New York, 1977; Hoopes, David S., and Roy H. Hoopes. *The Making of a Mormon Apostle: The Story of Rudger Clawson*. Lanham, Maryland, 1990; Kimball, Edward L., and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr. *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of*

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## BIRTH

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that every person experiences a series of "births." All were born as spirit children of God in a PREMORTAL LIFE. Second, these individual spirit children received a mortal, physical body when

they were born on earth. Third, those who accept and live the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST go through a process of being born again in a spiritual sense (*see* BORN OF GOD). Although these births are real, they do not in any way constitute any type of REINCARNATION.

Men and women become conscious of their divine origin and birthright when they recognize their relationship with the Supreme Being, address him as Father, and become aware that in scripture God addresses mankind as his children (1 Jn. 3:1–2; Matt. 6:9).

In the COUNCIL IN HEAVEN, God the Father offered his spirit children the opportunity to progress toward becoming like he is by leaving his presence and being born on earth in a mortal, physical body and learning to live by faith (Abr. 3:22–28). Mortal birth is the event by which one's SPIRIT BODY is temporarily joined with a mortal tabernacle begotten by earthly parents. The exact time when the premortal spirit enters the unborn physical tabernacle is not specified in divine revelation. Through the FALL OF ADAM, and birth into mortality, mankind becomes subject to two deaths: the physical or temporal death, which is a death of the body, and the spiritual death, which is being shut out of God's presence (*see* LIFE AND DEATH; PLAN OF SALVATION).

Through the ATONEMENT of Jesus Christ all people are given opportunity to be born again in a spiritual sense as his sons and daughters so as to return to God's presence as his spiritually begotten children (Mosiah 5:7–9; Alma 5:14). The process of being born of the spirit begins when one is baptized and receives the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. Since the HOLY GHOST is a member of the GODHEAD, the effects of the spiritual death, or separation between man and God, is lessened individually when one is truly born of the Spirit.

Birth as spirit beings and birth as mortals have already occurred to all of mankind on the earth. The spiritual rebirth necessary for salvation in the presence of God requires considerable additional individual effort through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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## BIRTH, SPIRITUAL

See: Born of God; Premortal Life

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## BIRTH CONTROL

The GENERAL HANDBOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS for Church leaders has the following instructions concerning birth control: "Husbands must be considerate of their wives, who have a great responsibility not only for bearing children but also for caring for them through childhood. . . . Married couples should seek inspiration from the Lord in meeting their marital challenges and rearing their children according to the teachings of the gospel" (*General Handbook*, 11-4).

Interpretation of these general instructions is left to the AGENCY of Church members. One of the basic teachings of the Church, however, is that spirit children of God come to earth to obtain a physical body, to grow, and to be tested. In that process, adults should marry and provide temporal bodies for those spirit children. For Latter-day Saints, it is a blessing, a joy, and also an obligation to bear children and to raise a family.

One of the cornerstones of the gospel is agency or choice. Latter-day Saints believe that everyone will be held responsible for the choices they make. Many decisions involve the application of principles where precise instructions are not given in the *General Handbook of Instructions* or in the scriptures. The exercise of individual agency is therefore required, and Latter-day Saints believe that personal growth results from weighing the alternatives, studying matters carefully, counseling with appropriate Church leaders, and then seeking inspiration from the Lord before making a decision.

Church members are taught to study the question of family planning, including such important aspects as the physical and mental health of the mother and father and their capacity to provide the basic necessities of life. If, for personal reasons, a couple prayerfully decides that having another child immediately is unwise, birth control may be appropriate. Abstinence, of course, is a form of contraception. Like any other method, however, it has its side effects, some of which may be harmful to the marriage relationship.

Prophets past and present have never stipulated that bearing children was the sole function of the marriage relationship. They have taught that